

# My First Half-Century in the Iron Game

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## Testing Strength: Part One

Literally thousands of people have been trying to measure human muscular strength for more than a century, almost always with absolutely nothing in the way of meaningful test results. Prior to early 1986, about eleven years ago, nobody on planet Earth had ever been capable of performing a meaningful strength test; because, earlier than that, neither the tools nor the knowledge required for meaningful strength tests existed. All previously-existing testing tools were worse than worthless, worse because their test results were not only worthless but were grossly misleading; and, secondly, because not a single person on the planet was even aware of the actual requirements for performing meaningful strength tests.

Today, in March of 1997, that situation has changed, and improved, to the extent that at least a few, damned few as it happens, people do have both the required tools and knowledge for the purpose of conducting meaningful and accurate measurements of strength. But it does not follow that many, if any, of the vast hordes of self-appointed “experts” in this field are even aware that meaningful strength testing is now possible. Thus we still have several thousand supposedly scientific articles being published every year by people who could not find their own ass even if given twelve attempts, with a bright light on the target, an arrow pointing at it and an Indian guide leading them by the hand. With damned few exceptions, such people are not only totally unaware of the facts of the matter but simply refuse to even consider them when the facts are presented to them in such a simple manner that they should be obvious to a goat.

To say that I am utterly disgusted with such people would be putting it very mildly, and since they are either incapable of learning, or unwilling to learn, with the results being the same in either case, I would be more than happy to supply the required fuel if somebody was in a position to burn them at the stake. Too strong? No, I think not; I know these people for just what they are, which is nothing short of an outright threat to mankind in general. Given the opportunity, just how would you treat a drug pusher trying to hook one of your kids on heroin, or a pimp trying to enslave one of your daughters?

As it says in the Bible . . . “Cast not pearls before swine.” Or, as somebody else once said . . . “I do not suffer fools gladly.” When you wake up in the middle of the night and find a scorpion in your bed you do not turn over and go back to sleep, not, at least, if you are sane; instead, you kill the scorpion; which is the way we should deal with all drug pushers, pimps, and a rather long list of other such utterly worthless and very dangerous people including quite a few so-called “experts” in this field. And don’t forget what Shakespeare said along those lines . . . “The first thing we must do is kill all the lawyers.”

Here and there, now and again, off and on, but more off than on, there actually have been a few, damned few as it happens, meaningful discoveries or developments produced by scientists, but most of today’s crop of scientists fall into a gray area somewhere between idiots and morons, generally not only do not understand even the simple rules of basic physics but are not even aware of them. And if that, too, strikes you as being too strong, an overstatement, then I suggest that you take a close look at just what results have been produced by these people in our society during the last sixty years: among other things, they have utterly destroyed our educational system, ruined our government while creating a level of debt that can never be paid, have done much more in the way of encouraging crime than they have in the direction of reducing or controlling it, have turned our cities into war zones where it is no longer safe to walk the streets, and are now doing everything possible to destroy the best healthcare system that ever existed. In short, everything they have touched has turned to shit. And if you have anything in the way of a contrary opinion, then you are too stupid for me to communicate with. And, you may be thinking, I have the solutions for all of these problems, right? Yes, I do, but you don’t want to hear about that, believe me.

But I will, at least, give you a hint: as a friend of mine puts it . . . “I don’t care what the problem is, the solution is violence.”

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While it is certainly true that there were violent criminals in this country throughout the years of the Great Depression, from the late 1920s through the late 1930s, people like Bonnie and Clyde, John Dillinger, Ma Barker and her sons, Pretty Boy Floyd and several others, it is also true that we had people who knew how to deal with them, and did not hesitate about doing so. They did not bother “reading them their rights,” and they did not waste millions of dollars on legal procedures that dragged on for ten years or longer; instead, they killed them. As it happens, Ma Barker was killed by the police within a few miles of where I am now living, and, secondly, I both met and talked to Pretty Boy Floyd when I was a child. So, while such people existed even then, they seldom remained on the scene very long, and their numbers were probably less than one percent of the numbers that exist in this country today.

In spite of the fact, or perhaps “because of the fact,” that many people in this country were as poor as church mice during the Great Depression, I am convinced, based upon my own experiences and observations, that most people were actually better off, and they certainly were better satisfied with their lives, than they are now. There were clearly-established rules for every aspect of human conduct, and most people understood and abided by these rules; while those exceptions who did not follow the rules were usually dealt with firmly and promptly.

But most of what has followed has been nothing short of an outrage, a seemingly never-ending series of outrages that were direct results of the influence of a long list of so-called “experts,” people calling themselves scientists and claiming to have the solutions to all of our problems.

Most of the actually very few things that have resulted from the activities of scientists, things like atomic bombs, ballistic missiles, electronic communications systems such as radios, television and now computers have done far more harm than good; rather than educating the masses, such things have produced a generation of functionally illiterate people who usually believe they know everything while actually knowing nothing of any real value. During the earlier period of relative sanity in this country, O. J. Simpson would have been hanged within a few weeks after his two murders; but now, given the current climate of “political correctness and affirmative action,” and a long list of other equally outrageous governmental (read: “scientific”) policies, they turned the bastard loose.

And just why, I have recently been asking myself, if it was legal, right and proper to bring criminal prosecution twice against the policeman involved in the Rodney King fiasco, then why was such action not applied against Simpson? Such unabashed, and supposedly prohibited, application of so-called “double jeopardy” was applied in the King case, but not used in the Simpson case, for supposedly “politically correct” reasons. Yet, so far, I have seen no mention of this obvious double standard in the media. Am I the only one in the country who even noticed it? I think not; but I may be the only one not afraid to mention it in public.

And before you jump to the conclusion that I am a racist, be informed that the mother of three of my children was a Mexican woman who was called “negro” by her family because of her dark skin; negro being the Spanish word for black. Those three children were raised in my home speaking Spanish before they spoke English, and, later, while living in Africa, they learned to speak Zulu. Personally, at one time or another, I have learned to at least get by in a total of eight languages; yet, now, in this country, we have a great hue and cry in favor of adopting so-called “Ebonics,” since, according to these self-proclaimed experts, it is not fair to African-Americans to require them to learn to speak English properly. Try to convince the authorities in Germany, Japan or Italy, or almost anywhere else, that they must conduct their school classes in Zulu or Swahili and see just how far you get. Or try living in Latin America while refusing to learn the local language.

Our current crop of teachers do not seem to be able to teach our children to even speak English properly, and have just about given up any attempt to teach any other language, so just how are they going to be able to teach Ebonics? Lots of luck.

All of which may not, at a glance, appear to have much if anything to do with the study of exercise physiology; but if that is your assumption, then you have your head firmly inserted where the sun does not shine. You are living in an almost utterly insane society, and the field of exercise is no exception to that general state of affairs. Now having devoted a large part of my attention for nearly sixty years to attempts to learn something of value about exercise, together with a total investment of my own money in excess of \$100,000,000.00, and having learned the hard way that

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it is impossible to communicate meaningfully with many, if literally any, of our current crop of scientists, I have finally reached a point where I am no longer even willing to make any further attempts to do so.

About twenty years ago, having just read one of my earlier IronMan articles, Bill Pearl told me . . . “My God, Arthur, you can’t publish things like that; you have insulted everybody except Jesus Christ and the Pope.”

To which statement I replied . . . “Not to worry, Bill, I’ll get around to both of them in later articles.” Which perhaps has a bit in common with the famous telegram . . . “Fuck you, strong letter follows.”

Many, perhaps most, of the things we do serve no purpose apart from amusing us or providing an answer in response to idle curiosity; but at least a few things do have practical value, and, as it happens, measuring strength meaningfully and accurately does have a real value. Given that one of the purposes of exercise is to stimulate increases in muscular strength, then it naturally follows that evaluating the results of any such exercise is impossible until and unless you can measure those results: what, if anything, has changed? In what direction has it changed, up or down? To what extent has it changed?

It was impossible to meaningfully measure changes in human body weight until two things were provided: a standard unit of weight (pound, ounce, kilo, or whatever, so long as it was standardized) and a device (a scale) capable of measuring body weight accurately. Testing strength requires the availability of two almost identical factors: a standardized unit of strength and a device capable of measuring it.

Given the existence of supersonic jet aircraft, rockets to the Moon and a long list of other highly sophisticated machines and devices, you might tend to believe that devices capable of measuring human strength were readily available and universally understood and applied. Ha! Guess again. While such devices have now been available for a bit more than eleven years, it does not follow that many members of the scientific community are even aware of them, and the number of scientists who are smart enough to understand them appears to be about equal to the number of Sabertooth Tigers in the Bronx Hilton hotel.

There is an almost universal bias in favor of using a dynamic testing procedure when trying to measure human muscular strength; and the fact that conducting meaningful and accurate strength tests in such a manner is simply impossible has occurred to damned few, if any, of the supposed “experts” in this field. “Oh,” they usually say, “we are not interested in static strength, we are interested in dynamic strength.” And, of course, they remain unaware of, or even deny, the fact that there is a direct relationship between static and dynamic strength; having changed one, you have changed the other to exactly the same degree. If you believe otherwise, as many people do, then you are a fool. But don’t blame me, I did not make you a fool, I merely pointed out the fact that you are a fool if you hold such stupid opinions. But not to worry, being a fool has several advantages: it means, for one thing, that you are a member of the majority, and it also keeps you unaware of, and thus not greatly disturbed by, the insanity that surrounds you.

The almost unbelievable level of general, almost universal, stupidity that still exists throughout the scientific community on the subject of testing strength has produced a wide variety of theories that are just as stupid as the people who dreamed them up. I am unavoidably reminded of a situation wherein a whole society of supposed “experts” are trying to design and build an airplane while remaining totally unaware of things like wings, engines and any of the other requirements for building an airplane. The blind leading the blind; or worse, the stupid leading the even more stupid. If you are a right-wing Republican, then you may have learned that trying to communicate with a liberal Democrat is simply impossible. After all, they are the “sole possessors of the truth,” or so they believe. And you, of course, are an idiot if you fail to agree with everything they say; while, in fact, you really are an idiot if you believe anything they say.

Having experienced the inevitable results of a large number of terrible mistakes that have been made during this century, I have sometimes wondered just which of these mistakes was the most damaging to society; the automobile? The motion picture leading to television? The now total perversion of the legal system? The insanities of big government? Take your pick, since any one of these had the potential to destroy everything of any slightest value in our society. Or, if not “what,” then “who” was responsible for most of our present problems? Hitler? Stalin? Roosevelt? Again, take your pick; personally, I would be hard pressed if forced to decide which of those three men did the most damage.

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But there was, and so far as I know still is, another person who did, and is still doing, far more damage than Hitler, Stalin and Roosevelt combined. Her name was (is?) Margaret Mead, and she wrote a book called *Growing up in Samoa*; thereby “proving,” she said, that primitive people are perfectly peaceful, happy, productive, crime free, and anything else you can think of that is considered “good,” until they are exposed to civilized society, whereupon everything goes to hell in a handbasket.

In effect: “nature” or “nurture” and the effect of these factors upon society. If Miss Mead had bothered to visit the local police station in Samoa while she was there, which she did not do, she would have learned that Samoa was, in fact, perhaps the most crime-ridden, violent society on the planet, anything but the Garden of Eden that she wanted to believe. Nevertheless, her book has been accepted as “gospel” by almost everybody since it was published, and social theories based upon such a stupid opinion have all but destroyed our society.

Directly contrary to the currently-popular, “politically correct” ideas first put forth by Margaret Mead, people are not “equal” in any sense of the word, are not born as some sort of “tabula rosa” (blank slate) upon which supposedly “proper” education can impose any sort of cultural characteristics that are desired; and, in the field of exercise, people like Joe Weider and a long list of others have become very rich by misleading millions of people into believing that “anybody can do it,” can, at least, if they buy this, that or something else. Additional damage has been done, and is being done, by the publication of hundreds of articles written by supposed “experts” that offer nothing apart from suggestions that fall somewhere between insanity and heresy. And, while the muscle magazines are very bad in that sense, the supposedly scientific journals are even worse. So you would be well advised, the next time you read or hear any such stupid suggestions, to ask the author just how he measured his results. What tool did he use? Did he consider nonmuscular torque produced by gravity, muscular friction and stored energy? Did he have tools capable of providing total isolation of the joints being tested? And if his answer to any of these questions is no, then his test results were worthless and any theories based upon these tests are nothing apart from pure bullshit.