

Arthur Jones
Working with The Master
Inside Nautilus Headquarters in Lake Helen, Florida©

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Fitness Scientist

First, I want to point out that the great Arthur Jones, has passed away since I wrote this chapter out from one of my books. At his Memorial at his beautiful ranch in Ocala, Florida, many friends, and former employees attended to pay respects for the man who truly was a man for all seasons. He was without peer, a genius who revolutionized the professions of total conditioning, health and fitness, physical therapy, occupational therapy, back to work conditioning, and improved sports performance.

It was very touching to see many of the people I knew from "the good old days of Nautilus" when I worked with them at Nautilus Headquarters, in Lake Helen, Fla. The following article was written out of respect for Arthur and the men and women who help mold the Nautilus image.

"No one person had greater impact on health and fitness training than Arthur Jones. He challenged and changed the attitudes of millions of people throughout the world beginning in the 1970's with the invention of Nautilus Exercise Machines.

Even his critics grudgingly give him credit for sparking a renaissance in the design of exercise equipment and advanced exercise concepts.

The commotion caused by Arthur Jones has given rise to many stories, some fact, and some fiction. As one example: I attended a seminar on the campus of Duke University, when heckled by a non-believer of the design of Arthur's equipment design and exercise concepts in the audience, Arthur Jones challenged the larger- framed man to "Step outside, and we will see whose training methods work better." The heckler decided not to check out the feisty Mr. Jones. Smart move!

He was the type of man, who should you be faced with going to war to protect your family and our country, you would hope to have a man like him in the fox-hole at your side. He understood right from wrong, and he knew no fear! Long lives Arthur Jones!

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Not one individual has greater impact on fitness training and physical therapy treatments than Arthur Jones did; not one magazine played a superior part in the evolution of High-Tech exercise machines and Arthur Jones than did Iron Man Magazine. It was Iron Man magazine and by extension, its founder Peary Rader that introduced me to Arthur Jones and Nautilus. It truly changed my life and many others, forever.

The intellect of Arthur Jones challenged and changed the mind-set of millions of people throughout the world. Even his detractors reluctantly credit him for leading a renaissance in the design of exercise equipment and the advanced of rational exercise concepts.

Before the invention of Nautilus equipment, the standard structure of progressive resistance training was barbells and dumbbells. These tools enjoyed widespread popularity for more than a hundred years, and remain the most popular form of exercise throughout the world. Primarily, because of the cost, durability and the adaptability to a great variety of exercises.

Arthur Jones often states, "Nautilus equipment is nothing more than an improved barbell". An understatement if I ever heard one. Comparing a barbell to Nautilus equipment is like comparing an abacus to a computer.

Credited by many as being a mechanical genius, Jones's quest to improve his personal fitness level guided him to analyze the shortcomings of barbell training.

Self-evident truth (as Arthur termed it), gleaned from years of barbell exercise, indicated the one major flaw of barbell training: barbells do not supply the basic requirement for exercise, which is variable resistance, throughout the complete range-of motion. Lacking this element, many exercises performed with a barbell are much less effective than high-tech exercise. A barbell exercises a muscle only during some of the movement rather than through the complete movement.

It was evident to Arthur Jones that "If you are working a muscle through only part of the movement, you are not working it during other parts of the movement". As simple as this statement sounds, it verifies a fact, overlooked since the origin of barbells and dumbbells.

Arthur Jones set about designing a machine that would "supply resistance, throughout a complete range of motion." He achieved a victory in 1948 as he designed a prototype of the first Nautilus machines. A curl machine that exercised the biceps of the upper arm was installed in the Y.M.C.A in Tulsa, Oklahoma. After that, other interests caused Mr. Jones to concentrate his energies elsewhere, for a while.

For two decades, he pursued his interest in flying, capturing, and exporting wild animals from areas of Mexico and Africa. An article in the April 21, 1975, issue of Sports Illustrated magazine summed up his exploits: "Behind his disguise as Mr. Middle Age, Jones is an adventurer, airplane pilot, one time mercenary, movie maker, and inventor.

He has been bitten by (1) rattlesnakes, (2) lions, (3) men and other dangerous critters. He has married four times, been near death even more often and figures that there is hardly a country he has not visited-at least on a bombing run." Legend has it that Arthur Jones was marking time in Lake Helen, Florida. Awaiting word on some equipment and his belongings, confiscated by the government of Rhodesia (Jones called it theft), because of a difference of opinion about his actions while he was there.

While trying to reclaim his roughly \$ 2 million worth of airplanes, a helicopter, and motion picture equipment via "proper" channels he began to tinker with other advanced prototypes of exercise tools. The time was right; there were too many hours for a curious mind to lay idle. Self-imposed stress is a way of life for Arthur Jones. Prototype after prototype began to pile up, as one improvement after another upgraded the basic concept.

Working with friends and cronies, using each other as guinea pigs they made an assault on building larger muscles and strength improvement. Many who contributed time, effort, and talent during this period never received credit for their contribution. They are the unsung heroes forgotten by time.

Finally, after many false starts, a finished product emerged! A Nautilus pullover-torso model. Dubbed "the blue Monster", it was first shown at a weight-lifting meet in Los Angeles. Bodybuilders and weightlifters are notoriously slow to adapt to change. Nevertheless, the impact of the apparatus was immediate. Enough sane people attended that first showing to sow the seeds for a future cult of Nautilus converts.

Among the first to grasp the significance of this new tool, was Ellington Darden, a young, blond, good-natured bodybuilder of high intellect. Respected for his broad shoulders, a minuscule waistline, and exceptional chest expansion. Many of you know him as Dr. Ellington Darden, author of profuse books and Director of Research for Nautilus/Sports Medical Industries. Dr. Darden refined and redirected the fitness concepts of Arthur Jones and made them acceptable to the public.

As a handful of rational thinking individuals began to ally with Arthur Jones and his contraption, critics sprang to the attack. Bodybuilders, the most gullible of exercise fanatics, were slow to adapt to Nautilus equipment or the exercise concepts. They were methodically brainwashed by publishers of certain "muscle mags" to avoid any use of this new equipment.

Muscle & Fitness Magazine publisher, Joe Weider, began a series of articles written (?) by the "top"

bodybuilders of that time. In these articles, the 'stars' rapped with Mr. Weider. Each one explained his view of Nautilus equipment. Vince Gironda, the iron guru, was quoted: "The basic technical concept is erroneous; ...it is far too costly for what little it can do; and ..Its appearance alone turns many persons away-frightens and confuses them." Obviously, Mr. Gironda thought that the bodybuilders of that time were a group of intellectual and emotional wimps, and could be frightened and confused by looking at a machine.

Luckily, the intellectual level of bodybuilder's has improved, and they can now comprehend the value of Nautilus.

Frank Zane supposedly said, "These Nautilus machines are mainly a gimmick. ... I actually dislocated my right shoulder." Mr. Zane evidently changed his mind.

Eventually, he is pictured using Nautilus equipment in his training. Reputably, he eventually purchased several machines for his in-home use.

Ken Waller, a Mr. Olympia competitor said: "I lost about three-quarters of an inch from my arms!" Roger Callard said, "Everyone I know who used these machines extensively became smooth" Present day bodybuilders know that becoming "smooth" reflects excess eating in proportion to energy expenditure.

Arnold Schwarzenegger, everyone's Mr. Olympia, and movie star, known worldwide as "The Terminator," initially did his best to discredit Nautilus. He said: "I don't feel that the Nautilus machines even come close to training with the standard barbell, dumbbells and pulley equipment It is my honest opinion there is no comparison at all."

It is important to acknowledge that, Mr. Schwarzenegger, in a letter printed in the February, 1971, issue of Iron Man magazine.

He was quoted as saying: "Mr. Jones just read me your letter which you wrote to him complaining about the facts he published regarding his new machines and training methods, and I laughed about your complaints because they don't make sense.

The best advice I can give you is this, visit Mr. Jones and try his machines yourself, because that is the way I did it I gained four pounds and increased my arm size in the first three days of training on the new equipment, and I am making immediate arrangements with Mr. Jones to obtain several of his machines for my use in California.

If this is not my true opinion, then I will give up all of the titles I have won in the past I really believe that the new machines are fantastic. Otherwise, I would not write this." The letter, is signed Arnold Schwarzenegger, five times Mr. Universe, Mr. World, and Mr. Olympia. Check it out yourself in the issue of Iron Man mentioned.

During the early 1970's, many of the country's best-built men journeyed to DeLand, Florida, to investigate Nautilus equipment and the highly intelligent Arthur Jones. Many, unfortunately, did not comprehend the machines or the exercise concepts Arthur and the Nautilus staff recommended. Those concepts were a radical departure from the standard exercise programs of that time.

Almost everyone connected with progressive exercise was training for several hours per day and at least three days per week. Arthur Jones was recommending less than two hours PER WEEK. He defined many of the common problems shared by trainees in his classic books: Nautilus Training Principles, Bulletin #1 and Bulletin #2.

After logically defining the problems, he went one-step beyond; he offered superior training methods, which he claimed benefits everyone. Bulletin # 1, Chapter 2: "Basic Physics of Conventional Exercise Methods" clearly explained the fundamental problem encountered in using conventional barbells. "Almost all conventional exercises are based upon resistance provided by gravity. Such resistance is unidirectional. This limitation in direction of resistance is probably the greatest limiting factor affecting most exercises since it thus becomes impossible to involve more than a small percentage of the total number of fibers contained in a particular muscular structure."

He continued: "While the resistance is provided in only one direction, the involved body parts are rotating; in effect, you are trying to oppose a rotational form of movement with a reciprocal form of resistance." It was this

one basic fact that led to the invention and design of Nautilus. "Function dictates design" was a basic law of the inventor's goals.

Countless design hours led to major changes in the shape of the new machines and their "heart": the Nautilus cam. Former prototypes of the pullover machines required several "helpers" to get the trainee in and out of the machine. The cam configuration was such that it measured several feet in diameter. Original cams shaped in a form that resembled the inner chamber of a nautilus seashell. Thus the Nautilus name for the new equipment.

Ready to test the validity of his inventions and exercise concepts, Mr. Jones set up a group of machines in an old Quonset hut on the DeLand, Florida High School campus. There, working with scores of fitness pioneers, they worked out any flaws in the machines and the exercise concepts. Everyone was welcome to participate in these test projects. It seemed that there was always an eager disciple around to guide a subject through the paces. Those early workouts can only be described as brutal.

Strongmen came from throughout the country to test the machines and question the sanity of Guru Jones. Because the workout and training pace were 180 percent out-of phase with other training concepts, many bodybuilders who tried them became nauseous. Understandably, many refused to continue this method of training. Who in his or her right mind would, or could, give 100 percent effort during every exercise of every visit.

Few had the mental discipline and physical resilience to reach deep down inside and drive them into physical obliteration. One who possessed this ability was teenager Casey Viator. Casey was blessed with astonishing genetics and forceful, one-on-one training, produced one of the most powerful and muscular physiques of all time.

Casey was driven "beyond failure" by the unrelenting Jones, who pulled no punches, spared no feelings and took no prisoners. A master of deductive logic and psychology, Jones would maneuver Casey during a workout in which squats with 500 pounds for 20 repetitions and barbell curls with 225 pounds reportedly became child's play.

At a height of 5'8", Viator claimed enormous measurements. His arms taped at "19 3/8", his chest at "50", waist "31 1/2", thighs "28" and calves "18" The mystique of Casey Viator played an important role in the early success of Nautilus. Often referred to by Arthur Jones as: "Our resident genetic freak", Casey and Arthur would later part company.

Iron Man magazine published many articles by Arthur Jones in the 1970's. Arthur Jones productions became as Nautilus Sports/Medical Industries. An important name change, it created a national image as needed to expand the interest in Nautilus equipment to larger markets such as colleges, hospitals, and the corporate fitness area.

Articles and advertisements in Iron Man magazine and Athletic Journal spread the Nautilus gospel For many years, it seemed that every issue contained articles, updates, franchise information, letters of endorsement, controversial editorials and, the expected muckraking.

Meanwhile, at Nautilus Headquarters in Florida, several key men joined the Nautilus staff. Ed Farnham became general manager, and played a major role in creating and protecting the Nautilus image for over a decade.

Ellington Darden published books that consolidated the Nautilus concepts, giving them balance and substance. Except for Arthur Jones, Dr. Darden is the person that visitors to Nautilus Headquarters most often ask to talk with. Dr. Darden leads (at that time) what many people, including me, would define as an idealistic lifestyle.

Living only a five-minute commute, by battered bicycle, to his office at Nautilus Headquarters, he is never far from his position at the right hand of Arthur Jones. A world traveller, the image of him peddling a rusty, balloon-tired bicycle through the streets of Lake Helen always brings a smile to my face.

Jim Flanagan, the eventual general manager, had been with the company since its inception. An impressive giant of a man at 6'5" and broad-shouldered, his calm, deliberate, and courteous manner of handling clients won him respect throughout the country. Unlike some of his contemporaries who

remained in virtual isolation at Nautilus Headquarters, Jim kept his finger on the pulse of the fitness business by crisscrossing the country, speaking at clinics and trade shows.

Responsible only to Arthur Jones, Dan Baldwin wields considerable power within the organization. In charge of the manufacturing plant in Virginia, his keen eye for detail and perfection reflects in the quality control of Nautilus equipment

He was also instrumental in the development of Nautilus Magazine. Dick Butkus, the former mauling linebacker of the Chicago Bears and a mainstay of the Miller Lite commercials served as a low-key representative for Nautilus, although his role was not widely known at the time. Only after a highly publicized trial of Arthur Jones for Income Tax evasion was, it revealed (by the Orlando Sentinel Newspaper in Florida) that Dick Butkus was officially on the Nautilus payroll. That trial resulted in a victory for Arthur Jones over the Internal Revenue Service. The judgment was not guilty. These men and others whose commitment was as sincere but shorter lived formed the core of the empire. During my tenure with Nautilus Headquarters, I had the advantage of observing the inner-workings of the company.

To this day, I must admit that I greatly admire the commitment exhibited by the Nautilus purists. It would be impossible to find a more dedicated, intense group in any major corporation. The commotion caused by their leader Arthur Jones, has given rise to many stories, some fact, some fiction. A few, I share in this article. For instance, at a seminar I attended on the campus of Duke University, when heckled by a non-believer in the audience, Arthur Jones challenged the larger-framed man to "step outside and we will see whose training methods work better." The heckler decided not to check out the feisty Mr. Jones. Smart move!

Anyone who has seen Arthur in action knows that he can be intense, demanding, profane, humorous, unsympathetic to bunglers, and possess a temper and tongue that can render an adversary senseless.

One time for example, he decided to videotape a short program about one of his HUGE rattlesnakes. Television cameras were set up for the event at the Nautilus Television Studios. One camera, with a telephoto lens, staffed by master cinematographer Harry L. is at the furthest end of a 100' hallway. Hovering to record the event, Harry's camera aimed down the long hall to a small stage setting that was to be the focal point of the videotaping.

The set consisted of two chairs with a small platform about two feet high placed between them. The plan was for Arthur to place the snake on the platform in a coiled position, while Mary P. sat in one chair and Arthur in the other. Theoretically, they were going to discuss rattlesnakes. The snake had other ideas.

A group of about 20 employees and visitors, including Joe Weider, the publisher of a popular bodybuilding magazine, began to gather around the set. Up to a point, all went fairly well. Arthur carried the snake from its second floor cage in the serpentarium, down a flight of 20 stairs to the stage setting. This feat was one to observe!

Accomplished with his bare hands and a long stick, curved on one end. This snake stick was the only barrier between Mr. Jones, the snake, and the increasingly nervous onlookers. Down the stairs he came, the sea of onlookers parting quickly to let him pass. Winding his way through the crowd, he placed the snake carefully up on the platform between the chairs.

At this time, the snake began having second thoughts about the whole affair. Mary, standing out of camera range was looking about as calm as you might expect under the circumstances. Mary had experience working with various wild animals during the taping of various wild life programs at Nautilus Television.

Her experience was about to come in handy. Arthur was now sitting in one of the chairs, the snake by his side on the small platform. Mary was sitting on the other side of the snake, which is between her and Arthur. The snakes rattling began to make people very nervous. The intensity seemed to be threateningly increasing.

Harry, the camera operator, under fire from an increasingly agitated Arthur Jones to focus the camera, and was trying to take orders from a director in a video booth, who is giving Harry orders via the headset Harry wears.

The onlookers, among them magazine publisher Joe Weider, are now edging away from the stage. Everyone is beginning to make rapid eye contact with each other.

For a short time, everything seemed settled. Mary and Arthur were in their respective chairs. Even the rattlesnake seemed to like the attention. Then suddenly, something got the snake's attention. It decided to leave the show! First plunking off the platform onto the floor, it slithered toward the crowd. Yikes! People scattered in all directions.

As the snake attempted to head for an open door, Arthur kept pulling it back into the room by grabbing the tail and pulling the snake backwards. He picked its tail up and plopped it back on the floor as if the snake were a piece of garden hose. Arthur decided it was time to measure the sucker.

He began screaming for someone to hold one end of a tape measure against the floor near the snake's tail "Hold the end of the tape right here," Arthur barked. I think to myself, "Here's my chance to endear myself to Arthur and prove that I am not afraid of a 10-foot rattlesnake. However, in a moment of more lucid thinking, I decide it is a no-no.

Finally, someone stepped forward and put his foot on the end of the tape.

Again, the brave tape person was told directly and in what can best be described as "barracks language." "I said to hold the #####&%\$#\$%% tape; I did not say to step on it!" One must be precise when around Arthur Jones. The brave soul knelt down on the floor and held the tape. Then, the snake is pulled in line with the tape measure, and the measurement taken. All was going well, but now, someone decided to get a picture of the snake with Arthur holding it at arms length.

Everybody adjourned to the next room, one of the large television studios containing a stage that rises from the floor to a level of about 4 feet up. On to the stage walked Arthur Jones, rattlesnake in hand. Decades of snake handling were apparent in the way Arthur handled the snake's elusive head with the snake stick.

About a foot from its end, the stick has a curve resembling a fishhook. Holding the snake in his hand Arthur skillfully maneuvered the curved end of the stick to keep a respectable distance between the snake's mouth and his body. Arthur walked to the front of the stage and the snake held at the height of Arthur's head, that its body stretched below the level of the stage floor. It was an awesome sight! A rattlesnake longer than the height of an average person. Yikes!

Paul H., the resident Nautilus photographer, snapped pictures of the event. Everyone relaxed, beginning to realize what he or she had witnessed. The snake is returned to its cage on the second floor, and employees began to filter back to their respective jobs. It was only the middle of the afternoon in at Nautilus Headquarters.

We have just witnessed their boss defy death and win the fight. A heady feeling! The ease Arthur displayed when handling the snake had a lasting effect on me. It was one of those "If he can do it, I can too" feelings. From rather humble beginnings, on the banks of Lake Helen, in the small town of Lake Helen, Florida, Nautilus grew into a fitness empire. Along with an expanded line of commercial Nautilus equipment, a new market opened the in-home market.

Projected, as a multi-billion dollar market over the next few years. Nautilus plans to get its share. Arthur Jones and Nautilus have come a long way. Their impact on fitness has been significant. Nautilus was the right invention at the right time. It is doubtful however; if Nautilus would have succeeded without the intelligent, forceful Mr. Jones as the focal point.

His ability to logically explain the flaws prevalent historic fitness tools and exercise concepts, combined with his ability to offer alternatives, is as critical in the success of Nautilus equipment. Arthur regularly alleged that, "There are only three things of value: younger women, faster airplanes, and bigger crocodiles."

If he truly believes this (and I do not believe he does), he has overlooked the obvious: there is nothing more valuable than a rational mind, capable of deductive logic and the inherent ability to educate others. His ability to perceive abstract concepts and integrate them into useful information is what sets him above his contemporaries.

As I understand it, a favorite essay of Arthur Jones is, "The Hunting of the Slan," by Edgar Allan Poe. It may sum up his view of life. It goes: "I have sometimes amused myself by endeavoring to fancy what would be the fate of any individual gifted, or rather accursed, with an intellect very far superior to that of his race. Of course, he would not be conscious of his superiority nor could he (if otherwise constituted as man is) help manifesting his consciousness.

Thus, he would make himself enemies at all points. And since his opinions and speculations would likely differ from those of all humanity, that he would be considered a madman is evident. How horribly painful such a condition! Hell could invent no greater torture than that of being charged with abnormal weakness on account of being abnormally strong.

In like manner, nothing can be clearer than that a very generous spirit, truly feeling what all merely profess, must inevitably find itself misconceived on every direction. Its motives misinterpreted. Just as extremeness of Intelligence would be thought fatuity, so excess of chivalry could not fall of being looked upon as meanness in its last degree and so with other virtues.

This subject is a painful one indeed. That Individual have so soared above the plane of their race is scarcely to be questioned; but, In looking back through history for traces of their existence, we should pass over all biographies of "the good and the great", while we search carefully the slight records of wretches who died in prison, in Bedlam, or upon the gallows."

Thus, it was during one wonderful, hot afternoon at Nautilus Headquarters in Lake Helen, Florida. The Mecca of rational exercise, which would change health and fitness forever.