

# What to Expect from Exercise

**Arthur Jones**

Eugene “Mercury” Morris of the Miami Dolphins professional football team is a product of heavy, progressive exercise. At a bodyweight far below the average in professional football, he is one the strongest athletes in the history of that sport...and one of the fastest.

His strength, and his speed...are in large part direct results of exercise. Proper exercise.

When Morris reported to the Dolphins’ training camp in 1973, he was approximately seven pounds heavier than he was a year earlier...but at a bodyweight of 197 he was stronger than he ever was before. And faster. During preseason trials, he ran the fastest 40 yard dash in his career.

Some people might feel that he was faster...”in spite of his increased bodyweight.” But in fact, he was faster **BECAUSE OF HIS INCREASED BODYWEIGHT.**

Which is not always the case. If Morris was a gymnast, for example...then the increased bodyweight might have reduced his speed of movement. Which is not meant to imply that exercise should not be used as a part of a gymnast’s training; on the contrary, it should be heavy, progressive exercise should form an important part of the training of all athletes, in every sport.

And, if Morris was a gymnast... then increased bodyweight might, or might NOT, be an advantage. Primarily depending upon where the bodyweight was added. Stronger, and thus larger and heavier, torso and arm muscles might help the performance of a gymnast...but heavier legs would almost certainly hurt his performance. Addressing the strength of a conditioned athlete almost always involves an increase in bodyweight...in some cases, this is an advantage...in other cases, an unnecessary burden that adds nothing to the performance ability.

But there is certainly no implication that exercise should not be used as a part of a gymnast’s training; on the contrary, it should be...heavy, progressive exercise should form an important part of the training of ALL athletes, in EVERY sport.

Increasing the strength of a muscular, conditioned athlete almost always involves an increase in bodyweight...so developing maximum strength in the arms and shoulders of a basketball player would not be desirable, since the penalty of increased bodyweight would not be justified in that sport.

Properly performed exercise will improve the condition, the overall system...of any athlete. And the conditioning results of exercise are produced regardless of what part of the muscular structure is being exercised. Working the arms has exactly the same effect on the heart and lungs as exercise involving the legs...if the total amount of work and the pace is the same.

The heart and the lungs don’t know, or care which muscles are working...foot-pounds of work performed and the pace of training are all that matter for conditioning purposes.

But strength increases are specific to a very high degree. Heavy exercise performed for the right arm will do very little for the left arm...and almost nothing for the legs. While it is perfectly true that some degree of “lateral effect” does occur, it is very limited in its results.

“Lateral effect” is growth produced in, for example, an unworked left as by exercise performed by the right arm.

And it is also true that an even greater degree of “indirect effect” is also produced by exercise...but again, it is limited in its results.

“Indirect effect” is growth produced in one muscular structure by exercise performed by the other muscles.

However, if we accept the limited results of lateral effect and indirect effect, then the strength increases resulting from exercise are almost specific in nature. Work must be performed by the muscle you are attempting to strengthen.

So, for our purposes here, it is safe to assume, that the conditioning results of exercise are general...and the strength increasing results are specific.

All Athletes need conditioning exercises, although some sports require much higher levels of conditioning...and all athletes need strength-building exercises. But in all sports activities, the training must be tailored to the requirements of the individual.

It must be clearly understood that you are dealing not only with the requirements of a particular sport...but also with the requirement of an individual athlete. Your goals should be, and the possible results from exercise are...(1) a level of condition required by the particular sport...(2) maximum strength in all if the musculature involved in that sport...(3) at least a reasonable level of strength in all of the muscular structures of the body...and (4) maximum possible flexibility.

When those four goals have been reached, then you have accomplished all that exercise is capable of doing for a healthy athlete...a great deal, far more than most coaches even suspect.

But don't expect exercise turn an inferior athlete into a super athlete...proper exercise will improve any athlete, and will improve some athletes to a degree that must literally be seen to be believed; but it cannot change bodily leverage, and it cannot improve "reaction time", and it cannot give an individual the judgement required by an outstanding athlete.

At some point in the distant future, coaches will look back on present athletic training practices as the "dark ages" of sport; and will seriously wonder how anybody survived several years of professional sport without permanent injury. And, quite honestly, not many players do. Within the last year I have heard two supposedly informed estimates of the number of serious knee injuries resulting from each year of football at all levels...one estimate was 23,000...the other was 63,000. But regardless of the actual number, it is far too high. And to a large degree unnecessary...many such injuries could be prevented by proper exercise.

Future, large-scale improvements in training practices will come primarily from a better understanding of exercise...but such improvements will not come soon.

At the present time (1973), most coaches are finally becoming aware that exercise offers something of value...but very few coaches have any real idea of the actual value of exercise, and even fewer know how to go about producing the results they are seeking.

You can make your athletes stronger, faster, and you can greatly reduce the chances of injury...and this book will tell you exactly how to go about producing those results, step by step, in very simple terms.

Repetition is unavoidable...and in any case, repetition is a required part of the learning process; so there will be a great deal of repetition throughout this book...in particular, you will be told repeatedly to "train harder", and to "train less". But repetition is necessary to make you understand exactly what is meant by "hard training"...and repeated examples are required to make you accept the fact that a large "amount" of training is neither necessary nor desirable.

AND...the whole field of exercise still suffers, and it suffers badly, from the old myths that have survived from the last century. Such myths must be rooted out and exposed, and they will be in the following pages...but this also requires repetition.

So long as any of the old myths still linger on in your mind, you will deny yourself and the athletes under your control at least part of the potentially great advantages of exercise.

You can expect a great deal from exercise, probably far more that you even suspect...so expect a lot, and if your training is properly conducted, your results will almost certainly exceed your highest expectations.