

The Two Most Important Factors in Exercise

Arthur Jones

The degree of results that CAN BE produced by any form of exercise will always be limited by individual potential...in plain English, “you cannot make a silk purse out of a sow’s ear.”

But within the limits imposed by individual potential, the degree of results that WILL BE produced will largely be determined by the quality of coaching that an athlete is exposed to.

So the most two important factors in exercise may well be INDIVIDUAL POTENTIAL...and QUALITY OF COACHING.

This book can obviously do nothing towards improving the potential of your athletes...but it can go a long way in the direction of giving you the information required for the intelligent coaching of athletes engaged in supplementary training for any sport.

But proper coaching consists of far more than an informed coaching staff...an ACTIVE coaching staff is a factor of at least equal importance. Don’t expect your athletes to coach themselves, not many of them can...and even fewer will.

And this is particularly true when applied to the subfield of supplementary training...which many athletes tend to view as un-required drudgery. Most truly outstanding athletes will do a surprisingly good job of coaching themselves when engaged in an activity directly related to their sports-specialty...but will also tend to view supplementary strength-training as something of far less importance, failing to realize that such non-directly related training can well be the difference between success and failure at their chosen sport.

The actual cause and effect relationships involved in exercise are really quite simple...but widely misunderstood, even viewed with suspicion or doubt in areas where there is no slightest room for any reasonable doubt.

This book will attempt to remove those doubts...on the only why that such doubts can be removed, by providing plain-language information based upon established facts.

Physiology simply means “the PHYSICS of biology”...or “biological PHYSICS”. But this seems to have been largely forgotten or overlooked.

Certain basic laws of physics apply with equal validity in all situations...which means that the human body and the engine of an automobile have a great deal in common. Clearly understanding the functioning of one will take you a long way in the direction of understanding the functioning of the other.

In later chapters, repeated comparisons will be made between the human “engine” and the engine of an automobile. In many cases it is not necessary to know exactly “why” something works as it does, but it certainly is necessary to know “how” it works...just what cause produces exactly which result.

At this point in time (1973), nobody seriously claims to know exactly “why” a muscle responds to exercise by growing stronger. But we do know how to produce this result.

Practical experience has clearly and repeatedly established the fact that proper exercise is capable of producing literally enormous increases in muscular strength.

And practical experience has also established the fact that no amount of low-intensity exercise will produce the results that come from an actually small amount of high-intensity training.

We can conjecture to our heart’s content about exactly “why” this is so...but in the meantime we can also make good practical application of the fact that it is so.

Nobody in their mind even pretends to understand gravity either...but a lack at understanding does not prevent us from making practical use of the known effects of gravity.

In the end, the ability to anticipate results is of far more importance than any amount of theory. Which is not meant to imply that an actual understanding is of no value...on the contrary, a clear understanding is sometimes of enormous value, since it may lead to even greater improvements in practical applications.

But don’t be afraid of using simple cause and effect relationships of demonstrated value in cases where you don’t understand just why a particular cause produces a certain effect...if you want the effect, then make use of the cause.

This book will attempt to make you aware of the “causes” involved in exercise...and equally aware of the “effects” to be expected. For any practical application of exercise, that is all of the knowledge that is required.

But we will also go rather deeply into the many theories that have been formulated in attempts to explain the undeniable and obvious results of exercise...if only because many readers may be among the ranks of those people who must constantly strive to understand just “why” something works as it does.

Many such points can be explained, in very simple terms, in an undeniable manner...but certain other points remain unclear, in theory at least.

So far as the athlete is concerned, it is usually good practice for the coach to avoid theory as much as possible. Tell your athletes exactly what to do, and how to do it...and inspire confidence that results will follow. And if the training is properly outlined and practiced...then results will follow, good results, and quickly.

But don’t expect your athletes to coach themselves. You must know what you are doing...and you must be there, on the spot, during all training periods.

Best results from exercise come only from constantly increasing workloads...the production of such results requires pushing from somebody, and few athletes can or will push themselves hard enough. As a coach, that may well be the most important part of your job...and if you reduce the level of pushing to the point that “everybody makes the team”, then you won’t have much of a team.

But don’t make the still common mistake of pushing your athletes to train more...instead, push them to train harder.