

THE ULTIMATE WEIGHT TRAINING FOR MEN

INTRODUCTION

The concept of sport first originated with a very clear intention and objective: to create optimal health and a strong and attractive physique. Athletes were always associated with a great looking and strong body, excellent health and enormous physical and mental achievement. History is full of examples of famous athletes who represented their countries throughout time and took the glory of their victories around the world.

Mythological and real historical heroes of the past were almost always, without exception, of impeccable physical appearance and abilities. Though we only know about them from the written work of historians (and accuracy sometimes maybe questionable), the intent to present the heroes as the best specimens representing the group or the nation in the best possible light has always been the same: they had to be strong and look good! And that fact tells us a lot about where the image of perfection lies when it comes to the human physique and its level of strength.

Our inherent anatomy *does* allow us to achieve that idealized image. Through optimized skeletal and muscular development, everyone can have a wonderful looking physique! But anatomical optimization that brings about superior physical appearance can only be achieved as a result of physiological training and development. That is going to be the subject of this book. I will explain to you what needs to happen in order to cause the hormonal response that will trigger your physical development and changing body systems to respond and adapt to your greatest physical potential. Once all the body systems start working in synergy and perfect balance, your body will be able to increase the strength of its skeletal, connective and muscle tissues, granting you with the physique you want and optimal health and vigour! Once it has been understood that it is possible to increase the quality of life by enhancing strength and lean muscle tissue, while at the same time getting rid of extra body fat, through physical activity, the search for the most effective type of physical engagement has begun.

The first steps to getting stronger and improving ones physical shape include basic biomechanical exercises for the major skeletal muscles, both in isolation and in groups.

Activities such as martial arts, boxing, wrestling, running, simple resistance exercises such as press ups, squatting, pull ups and others, are the first activities to be included in order to increase strength, stamina, agility and a more developed body.

As for muscle development, it's clear that as resistance is applied on one side of a muscle or muscle group to increase the intensity of the contraction, strength increases and the muscle tissue grows. Muscle tissue growth will automatically lead to loss of excess body fat.

When we talk about increasing muscle strength though, we usually face the problem of an increase in the strength of only one particular muscle or group of muscles that are being engaged in repetitive activities or sports. For example, in swimmers we find highly developed shoulder and upper back muscles; with wrestlers, arms, shoulders and back; and with footballers, calf and leg muscles, etc. But strength and size should not only be limited to certain muscles or groups of muscles. This leads to non-proportionate physical development and a non-proportionate distribution of strength within the body's muscle groups. The consequences of such lopsided development can include increased risk of injuries, back problems, skeletal problems such as bad posture - which leads to other medical problems, etc. Any increase in strength and muscular development has to be balanced and proportionate, giving equal attention to all muscle groups in order to provide for a balanced body.

So, the question that instantly arises is how do we achieve balanced muscular development? What kinds of sports will give us well-proportioned muscles and an equal increase in the strength of all the muscle groups? The only way of achieving this goal is to engage in weight training (also referred to as strength training or resistance training). Whether you call it a sport or not doesn't matter, but the fact is that only weight training is capable of delivering all of these benefits with a minimum risk of injury! Does this mean that all other sports are bad because they cannot optimize the entire body's muscles and increase strength equally in all the muscle groups? No, not at all. All other sports are beneficial and they can benefit us in many important different areas, whether its through enjoying the game, improving cardiovascular abilities, improving endurance and stamina, increasing the strength and size of individual muscle groups (to a certain point), socializing, helping us to become more competitive, burning extra calories, etc. But the truth is, no sport can stand next to weight training

when it comes to muscular strength development, muscle growth, fat loss and all of the benefits that come with it. Weight training is far superior to any other sport in creating the physiological changes that will result in an improved physique, and hence in a better quality of life.

One aspect that confuses many people about weight training is that it is not a game. It is a serious, structured, very well-thought out, complex physical and mental engagement that does not allow for unpredictable, sudden, passionate and uncontrolled movements that characterize almost every other sport or game.

The fun and satisfaction that people usually experience during the competition and practice of certain sports is also experienced in weight training after successes are achieved that come from an intense and structured training system. An increase in the level of strength and muscle size, as well as the loss of body fat, provides a great degree of achievement and satisfaction to anyone that experience it. The respect and appreciation that comes from the people around you, at the gym, the work place and all other areas of life are very well known to anyone who has managed to benefit from weight training. Meeting others with the same ambitions, exchanging knowledge and experience, and sharing the same struggle and effort in order to become better, usually culminates in getting more friends and improving your social life. Gyms are simply wonderful places where everyone can benefit physically and mentally, increasing their circle of friends and their social arena at the same time.

The beauty of other sports or games is all in the uncertainty, surprise, sudden changes, change of dynamics, pace, tactics, etc. The different games are full of sudden movements, unpredictable body twists and very often an uncontrolled explosion of slides, throws, pulls, in the flame of passion. This is the beauty of different sports, and so, be it. In weight training we deal with physiological changes. We know how to bring these changes about and we know how we will benefit from the physical adaptation that results from the increase of overall body strength, muscular development and permanent fat loss. In the health arena, we will benefit from increased immunity, greater cardio-vascular strength, increased insulin sensitivity, increased bone density and many other physiological improvements. The benefits that will come from properly implemented weight training will also allow us to perform with more success and less

risk of injury in our favourite sports, whether they be football, swimming, wrestling, running or any other.

It's no coincidence that almost all elite athletes involved in any professional sport spend 3 to 5 days per week in the gym, trying to optimize their physical potential to better contribute to the team in order to win. Many people aren't aware that weight training, also increases speed, benefiting athletes who are competing in the sports where speed is essential. But even more surprisingly, weight training also increases tendon and ligament strength, which is known to be one of the biggest problem areas in modern sports! Weight training is actually the only way to strengthen those critical connective tissues that are the ones that frequently get injured during many sports activities. The ability to jump higher, sprint faster, swim faster, jump longer, last longer, kick harder, punch harder, etc., can all be dramatically improved through properly implemented weight training.

Weight training, per se, won't achieve much though unless all of the other factors that need to be associated with weight training are also given attention. Weight training has to be recognized mainly as a stimulus, as a physiological "provocation" that will create the demand for an adaptation by the body. Once this adaptation phase has been completed, all of the health and physical benefits that result will become evident. With weight training as a highly demanding new living environment for the body, creating this necessity for adaptation, the other factors that come into play are nutrition, rest and a correct mental approach. With all these changes in a person's life, we are asking for nothing less than a lifestyle change! Only a shift in lifestyle, with a new attitude towards one's self, with weight training becoming an almost daily activity. These lifestyle changes include healthy eating, sufficient rest, greater motivation, better focus, improved consistency, increased self confidence, changed order of priorities etc.; these will all benefit the individual.

Partial commitments, striving for low goals, a temporary change in appearance, etc., are certainly not the kinds of attitudes that will allow you to reach the maximum benefits from weight training as a part of an improved lifestyle. An improved physique, good health and increased muscle strength with all the benefits that come along with it are not a seasonal or temporary thing; these changes are for life and they should stay with you forever.

