

Isometrics, Steroids, Alexander Zass And Charles Atlas's Dynamic Tension- Effect...

Did you know that you could build muscle and become stronger without weight training?

It's true.

It's called isometric training and it increases muscle mass, giving you that great-looking body you always wanted. And best of all, you can get fit without going to the gym or buying all that expensive home exercise equipment.

Isometric exercises involve muscular contractions performed against fixed resistance. The System gained scientific acceptance in 1953 when a couple of German researchers named Dr. Theodore Hettinger and Dr. Eric A. Muller published a study showing people who did isometric exercises obtained dramatic results by causing their muscles to tense for no more than 10 seconds at a time.

This muscle tension became popular in America when a young man from southern Italy, Angelo Sicilano, teamed up with marketing genius Harold Roman to produce an advertisement in comic books.

It showed how a 97-pound weakling became a "real he-man" and punched out the bully who had kicked sand in his face. This ad launched the mail order bodybuilding program called "Dynamic Tension." Young Angelo went on to win the title The World's Most Perfectly Developed Man.

He changed his name to Charles Atlas, put on a pair of leopard skin shorts, and the rest is history.

Probably the only man Atlas could not help was Mahatma Gandhi. When the great spiritual leader of India wrote a letter to Atlas asking for help, Atlas devised a diet and recommended a series of exercises to help restore Gandhi's weakened condition. "I felt mighty sorry for him," Atlas said. "He was nothing but a bag of bones."

A few years before Atlas started flexing his muscles, another strongman used isometrics to build and maintain his strength. Like Atlas, Alexander Zass—better known as The Amazing Samson—offered his training through a mail order course. Zass was born in Vilna, Poland in 1888, but lived most of his early years in Russia and after 1924 in Britain.

He developed a great belief in the application of isometrics and "maximum tension" for the development of strength. He believed such an approach was superior to the normal use of weights in developing strength.

"I aimed, first, to develop the underlying connective tissues rather than the superficial Muscles," he wrote in his instruction manual, Samson's System and Methods. "I developed tendon Strength." Without tendons, one would possess no control over the body, he continued. "They and their development are the secret to my strength. Muscles alone won't hold wild horses back. Tendons will, and do."

Samson, so-called The World's Strongest Living Man, said muscles were an illusion when it came to strength, but he did encourage his students to develop them because well-defined muscles "furnish Quite a respectable physical appearance." Sampson said beginners should practice tensing their muscles one at a time then grouping the muscles together, tensing as many as possible at one time.

He outlined three methods of isometric tension: freestyle, using no appliances; wall exercises for resistance training; and weight exercises in which the student held the weight in a rigid position instead of using curls or presses, the typical "pumping iron" method of weight training.

Most isometrics instructors agree not to exceed 10 seconds on each muscle contraction. That is perhaps the greatest appeal to isometrics—a person can enhance muscle mass and strength with only a few simple repetitions in a limited time without heavy exertion.

In the 1960s, gym rats not wanting to publicly admit their use of steroids attributed their sudden remarkable gains in strength and muscle mass to the use of isometrics. This association, however false, between the system and the abuse of steroids created a panic among the health conscious, resulting in the American public shunning the use of isometrics.

But the system flourished in Europe, especially in physical rehabilitation programs among the aged. Seeing such positive results in Europe's medical use of isometrics, patients in the United States also turned to the healing aspects of the system.

Scoliosis is just one of the afflictions being tackled by the medical use of isometrics. The Anti- Scoliosis Treatment Method is a Russian approach that consists of isometric and stretching exercises, vibration, spinal manipulation and electrical muscle stimulation.

Traveler's thrombosis is another ailment that isometric exercises can help prevent. Brought on by pressure on the upper thighs caused by prolonged sitting and low mobility in narrow seats on long airplane rides, this ailment is a greater problem than jet lag or airline cuisine.

The low air humidity onboard passenger aircraft can favor the formation of blood clots in cases where passengers may be lacking fluids. Studies by Medsafe, a business unit of New Zealand's Ministry of Health, indicate the use of isometric exercises helps relieve this condition.

Not only can isometrics help the weary worldwide wanderer, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration is out of this world when it comes to recognizing the benefits isometrics offer in the close confinements of a space capsule.

On long space journeys in prolonged weightlessness, astronauts suffer crippling muscle and bone loss. Future space trips will be longer, say three years for example, when astronauts eventually explore Mars. Longer durations in space mean increased muscle and bone losses.

Researchers at NASA's Johnson Space Center recommend a variety of preflight fitness plans, training space travelers for in-flight use of the exercise equipment onboard the International Space Station, and monitoring their health after their return to Earth.

"Muscle and bone loss in space create an entire realm of biological concerns for astronauts," said William J. Kraemer, director of the Human Performance Laboratory at Ball State in Muncie, Indiana. "Our challenge is to find countermeasure programs which allow the body to maintain proper structure and function."

Strength training for astronauts involves two types of resistance exercises: high-intensity isotonic, which shorten and lengthen muscles (for example, lifting and lowering a dumbbell), and isometrics, which fully contract muscles without movement (such as pushing against a doorway).

While both types of exercises could potentially reduce muscle atrophy in microgravity, research suggests isometrics may be more successful than isotonic in protecting slow-twitch fibers, according to a February 2004 report in NASA's Biological and Physical Research Enterprise newsletter.

For the homebody, massive muscle and bone loss may not be as much a problem as those extra calories packed on while watching football or soccer on the television. It might be good advice to roll yourself out of that easy chair and spend 10 seconds at a time doing isometric exercises at least during the commercial breaks.

The only drawback to "free hand" isometrics (without the use of any equipment) is that there is no way to measure your strength gains and you are limited in the number of exercises.

But, there is now a way to increase their effectiveness by up to 1000 .

With the advent of new "hybrid" exercise equipment such as the Bully Xtreme home gym you can now maximize your muscle building results while being able to do more exercises up to 82 different movements. While utilizing the powerful technique of isometrics.

For more information and a free report check out...

<http://www.BullyXtreme.net/>

Short note about the author

Frank Sherrill, is a former U.S. Army Ranger and Martial Arts expert. After surviving a horrific weight training accident, he spent years researching and finally discovering an exercise program and home gym that was as effective as free weights but, without all the RISK.

To learn more about the Bullworker and the Bully Xtreme go to <http://www.BullyXtreme.net>

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