



Dear IGH:

The cover story—"Another Big Man Gone"—in the April 1994 issue of *IGH* touched on a very sensitive concept of the Iron Game: use of steroids aside, exactly *when* does intensive training (heavy weights, forced reps, forced feeding, etc.) pass over the threshold of building one's self up and enter into the area of overloading the body to the point of permanent damage.

Many years ago as a seventeen year old ninety-eight pound weakling who had just been bitten by the Iron Bug, I had my father take me into the Huntington YMCA in Boston to observe an Olympic weightlifting meet. Bob and Gary Bednarski competed, so there were some commendable poundages being lifted. We sat in front of two older gentlemen, and I can vividly remember one of them commenting to the other about the effect of such heavy weights on the joints and the physical suffering that would come in later life. In spite of my neophyte status with weightlifting, observing the stress and straining occurring on the platform that day made what he said very plausible, and it left a lasting impression.

Over the years I have experienced and observed that the plausibility was in fact reality. Arthur Jones based his concept of "pre-exhausting" the thighs with leg extensions before jumping to the squat rack, specifically because he felt that the human body was simply not made to handle the heavy poundages that could be achieved in squatting alone. Chuck Sipes told me that after he turned fifty, he began to wake up very stiff and it would take him some time just to "get moving" in the morning. Two years ago, I met Joe Abben-da, one of my early idols, at the annual Oldtimers reunion in New York. I told Joe that I had been particularly impressed with his feat of doing forty reps with three hundred pounds in the squat. He was grateful for the compliment, but he jokingly commented that he wanted to run now but could not because of pain in his knees and said that it might have been that fortieth rep he was paying for today.

The motivation to lift heavier and heavier weights probably has some atavistic roots back to our heritage where the strong survived; the stronger you were, the more likely you were to survive. Today, while survivability is not an issue, recognition certainly is and the stronger you are, the more recognition you receive. There is also the individual reward of daily or periodic feelings of accomplishment and fulfillment as new barriers of poundage are passed; in fact there are few endeavors I can think of that can provide such satisfaction and reward so quickly, easily and by oneself as the progress achieved in lifting weights. The motivation and hype to push oneself to higher and higher limits is definitely there.

However, there *will* come a time when the law of diminishing returns eventually takes over and the passing of previous

barriers happens less and less and progress becomes more and more of an effort. As with many athletic endeavors, there are mental barriers to overcome as well as physical barriers (Weider's theory of "MOMISM"). Differentiating between the two goes back to my original question of how does one know when he is pushing himself beyond what his body can absorb and still recover.

The question is not unique to lifting weights. Running had its great following because it allowed almost anyone to become competitive by covering greater and greater mileage, even if at a slower and slower pace. Now everyone could "compete" by proudly responding to the question, "What's your weekly mileage?" with a higher and higher number. However, running also suffered from the "too much" syndrome with stress fractures and joint problems, and this has no doubt contributed to the current interest in cross training. In any case, the search for fulfillment and recognition *can* push athletes to a point at which they are injured, perhaps permanently.

Let me emphasize that my question here is *not* being raised to advocate light weights only. Some of the fondest memories in my entire life are of personal records broken, barriers passed (four hundred pound squat, etc.) and camaraderie at the weight room. What I'm asking is how can one tell when he is approaching that threshold of "too much" with its immediate chance of injury and subsequent chance of problems later in life. Does the current state of the art in coaching and training allow this distinction to be made? And if it does, it covers the athlete with a coach or trainer, but what about all those individuals training unsupervised with someone screaming "No Pain, No Gain!" in their face as they grunt out yet another rep or new record single. With the passing of the original *Iron Man*, who is left to speak to them about such things when such things do not make money: people typically do not spend to be told what they cannot do, only what they can.

As a final note, I just finished reading the book *Muscle* by Samuel Wilson Fussell (Avon Books, 1991, ISBN: 0-380-71763-8). It is a vivid description of the motivation to succeed in the body-building game as well as a chilling account of the role drugs are playing in the game today. It is very entertaining but also carries a powerful message of what is wrong with our sport today.

Norman Komich
Beverly Massachusetts

The questions raised above are difficult, perhaps impossible, to answer with accuracy. They have to do with personal choice, ego, fear of aging, cultural expectations and probably even barometric pressure. A broader, more basic question was once addressed by the eighteenth century poet William Blake, who wrote, "You never know what is enough, unless you know what is more than enough!"

On the matter of a training magazine with a conservative philosophy, try Stuart McRoberts, *The Hard Gainer*. A one year subscription costs US \$25.00, the address is: CS Publishing Ltd., P.O. Box 6365, Louisville, KY 40207 for new North

American subscribers; or CS Publishing Ltd., P.O. Box 8186, Nicosia, CYPRUS for other subscribers and renewals.



Dear IGH:

By pure coincidence I was given a copy of the January 1994 issue of *Iron Game History* here in Puerto Rico.

I was very impressed by the amount of information and nostalgia, especially since I haven't heard many of the names mentioned since *Iron Man* magazine changed hands.

But I was most impressed by the article in "The Iron Grapevine" by Dr. Ken Rosa. I felt I was there walking around the Heisman Room, listening to Terry Todd speak and rubbing shoulders with John Grimek. I even got excited at Laurie Fierstein's attractive strongwoman body. I could even see Al Thomas changing to Captain Marvel (through the years I read many of Al Thomas' fine articles in *Iron Man*).

I hope that you will keep up the good work and continue to have articles by Ken Rosa. I met Dr. Rosa back in the early sixties here in Puerto Rico. He played a dynamite piano.

**Serafin Santana
Santurce, Puerto Rico**

Dear IGH:

Enclosed is a check for a Patron subscription to *Iron Game History*. I learned about *IGH* from Alton Eliason, who brought me a copy.

I bought my first barbell set in 1930 from the Milo Barbell Company in Philadelphia, a two hundred pound set for twenty four dollars, but never achieved anything unusual, except good health, which at my age now (79) is of the ultimate importance.

I read the **Hard Gainer**, **Milo** and **Iron Master** and I think all seem to be carrying the same right message about weight training.

Sincerely, and hoping for an ever-increasing interest in proper weight training.

**John J. Roche
New Haven, Connecticut**

Dear IGH:

In response to your request for subscriptions, I have enclosed a bank draft for \$25.00 in U. S. funds. Having completed my second

statistics book last year, I was ready to return to academia, but there were no opportunities in the States. Consequently I am visiting the University of Newcastle in Australia for a few years. I have been here for about five months.

Bill Clark called me a couple months ago when he was in Australia for baseball scouting work. As you probably know, he had his right hip and knee replaced in January, and had a major bout with infection shortly thereafter. He is still full of vinegar as he approaches age sixty-two and speaks of making a thousand kilo harness lift. I see from his last newsletter that his deadlift is back up around 400—no small feat for a man with two artificial joints.

I was in decent shape last December, having reverse pressed 192 for three easy reps, and side pressed a 106 pound dumbbell for three reps.

About a year earlier I experimented with training three times a day about every two weeks but only doing one lift. I amazed myself by eventually being able to work up to six sets of three with 2055 on presses (two sets in each workout). I had never done any type of endurance training before, so I was surprised that I got that far.

I also tried that with squats, but squatting three times a day is a bit rough on an old man. It also took my legs quite a while to recover from a three-workout day.

Presumably my size and strength will soon be what they were in December. I would certainly be satisfied with that since my next birthday will be number 50.

I very much enjoyed Terry's remembrance of Bob Hoffman in *IGH* a few issues ago, and the similar article by Jim Murray was also entertaining.

Keep up the good work and try to stay healthy.

**Tom Ryan
Adamstown, New South Wales, Australia**



Dear IGH:

Sorry I have not been able to re-subscribe until now—I have been in Australia for two months. Hopefully you can begin my new subscription with Vol. 3 #2, but if not, I understand. I have a question that perhaps you can answer for me. In the most recent issue of *Iron Man*, Arthur Jones stated that a man named Gustav Zander built exercise machines that were precursors of the Nautilus concept (re: cams) back around 1850. Are there any old time publications (books, magazines, etc) in which Zander's devices were shown or described? Were his inventions patented here in the United States?

I have an interest in this subject because it is the first time Arthur Jones ever admitted someone was sharper than he is. . . and over a century before him to boot!

Herb April
Chicago, Illinois

Yes, Zander did produce machines similar to the Nautilus devices, but then so did several other physical culturists. Anyone who makes a careful study of the history of exercise equipment and training theory comes away amazed by the age of many supposedly "new" things.



Dear IGH:

Your last issue with the article on John Grimek by Jim Murray was excellent. Hope to see more of these in future issues.

Richard Kajiyama
Honolulu, Hawaii

Dear IGH:

Thank you for preserving all of the "classic" texts and records of real strength. I hope you are having great success with your collection.

Stephen Duncan
Mount Hermon, California

Dear IGH:

I received your flyer regarding *Iron Game History*. I am enclosing \$20.00 for a six issue subscription.

Currently I am a professor in the Department of Health and Physical Education at California State University, Sacramento. One of the courses that I teach is "Analysis of Weight Training." It is a teacher preparation course and I cover some history of the Iron Sports. I believe your journal would be beneficial to me. I also work with several athletic teams in the weight room and coach a competitive club that competes in USWF meets.

In 1977, I completed my doctoral dissertation on the History of Weightlifting in the United States. (Brigham Young University). My main source of information was *Strength & Health* magazine. I was able to secure all issues dating back to 1932. To be honest I had no way of knowing how accurate all of the records

were because it was very difficult to dig up past records. I talked to John Terpak and others associated with York Barbell Co./USWF but really did not get a lot of information. At any rate, I did record as well as possible all of the Senior Nationals, World Championships, and Olympic results from 1932 to 1976. I am very interested in being able to verify my records and will look with interest at what you have in your journal.

Bill Kutzer
Sacramento, California

By contacting the International Weightlifting Federation's Historical Committee accurate records can be obtained. However, *Strength & Health* should be basically accurate for the big meets, except for the occasional typographical error.

Dear IGH:

It was nice to see you at the National Weightlifting Championships. Congratulations on Mark Henry. Most people didn't expect him to do so well after leaving Colorado. Richard's [Ed. Note: Fred's son Richard has been several times the national weightlifting champion, just like his dad, making them, to our knowledge, the only father-son pair to have accomplished the feat.] last clean and jerk was something to talk about. I think he handled it well. Clyde Emrich called the other day. He seems very interested in lifting yet. I told him about the Olde Time Barbell and Strongman Association, etc. I really think he deserves to be honored by that group. Emrich was the first man under two hundred pounds body-weight to clean and jerk over four hundred pounds, and he held multiple national titles as well. He looks great—just remarried. Anyway, keep up the great work with *IGH*.

Fred Schutz
Mount Prospect, Illinois

Dear IGH:

Each issue that I receive is like a visit from old friends. I have known most of the old-timers personally or by reputation. I preached and taught the benefits of graduated weight training in the late thirties and early forties and ever since I pioneered the use of resistive exercises for medical rehabilitation and the application of weight training for certain sports.

I am enclosing a patron subscription for \$100.00.

Bruce Conner
Conner, Montana

Thanks, Bruce. One of our main reasons for beginning *IGH* was to celebrate and satisfy people like you, people who laid the foundation for our beloved game. Thanks for both your support and your pioneering work.