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- - - - Wednesday, March 16, 2005 - - - -

- 1 - Draper here... OUCH!
- 2 - Laree here, taking over with online news...

- 1 - Draper here... OUCH!

Moderation is the key: work in moderation, play in moderation, lounge in moderation; moderation in eating, drinking, celebrating, medicating, sun exposure, aspirin consumption, TV viewing and computer surfing. Moderates live forever; they don't make waves, they don't leave dents, they neither go up nor down, forward nor back. They just are. They are safe and boring. Should they dare to lift weights (the extreme moderates), they lift moderately.

Boring -- moderately boring, which is exceedingly boring.

Not me. I blast it. When I lay in bed at night unable to sleep due to pulsating elbows and swollen wrists, I say, "Draper, you're a bomber. Moderation is not an option. If it were, you'd be dreaming right now."

I can't help myself. I start by thinking, okay, let's just stimulate the muscles and give them a chance to play freely and enjoy themselves. Next thing you know, I'm pounding them mercilessly with hunks of metal from every angle and without compassion. It doesn't take as much metal as it once did, but I've become clever over the years and know how to exact the most out of the throbbing rascals while they're in my clutches: slumbusting supersets, stealthy forced reps, cunningly modified exercises and circuitous grooves practiced with the relentless pace of a patient, half-crazed stalker. There's no rush, but there's no stopping and there is no end.

Maybe I'm the wrong guy to be giving advice and encouragement, bombers. I should be putzing along... now is the time for putzing... these are my putzing years. I think I'll putz. One, two, three and putz.

Putzing is the pits. I'd rather throb and swell. And so I do, and so do we all. At least that's the indication I get from the email I regularly receive. It's the tendonitis, Bomber, and I can't go on. But, of course, we all go on as we share stories about the meanness and inevitability of the painful disabler, the devil's sadistic son -- inflammation of the tendons.

Tendonitis is a dirty rat. Tendonitis, the irritation and swelling of a tendon, is usually caused by overload and over-use. Inflammation of the tendon limits smooth action within its protective sheathing and produces irritation and pain. There might be other obstacles or impingements that similarly interfere with a tendon's true tracking and gliding, thus causing the harsh symptoms. As we age tendons become less elastic and don't move as freely as they once did. Swell. But wait, there's more! The blood vessels surrounding the tendons alter with age and the tendons don't receive the healing nutrients they used to.

This calls for precision bombing.

We talk about the insidious nature of the plight, how it sneaks up on us, hammers us and fades, only to appear somewhere else with renewed cruelty and revised expression. What is the prevention, what is the cure and what do we do when no answers suffice? Do we quit, lay off, press on, take drugs, apply ice, heat, pressure, ointments or granny's steaming poultice? How about acupuncture, massage therapy, chiropractic adjustments, surgery or cortisone injections? Wraps? Prayer?

I don't have the answer. I have many possible answers, but I don't have your specific answer, or the secret combination of answers that works for any of us individually. Furthermore, the fix might vary from workout to workout, day to day. As in all of bodybuilding -- all of life -- the wisdom is in trial and error.

Swell, Draper, that's what we like -- direct, clear and to-the-point solutions; no ambiguity, no guesswork, no room for doubt, no BS. Ha. You should write a book. Call it, "I Know Nothing."

Sheesh! What a grouch! And sarcastic.

Okay, here's what I do when the ravages of tendonitis claw at my writhing body.

I review my training and consider the source of the damage, the overload: Is it one exercise in particular or are a number of exercises contributing to the aggravation? I review the problem: Is the condition true tendonitis or something else with similar symptoms: pinched nerve, slight muscle tear, muscle spasm, joint hyperextension, sprain or whatever? When did the first signs of difficulty appear, what is the severity, has it occurred before, how often, how long did it last, what steps were taken?

As the data accumulates in split seconds I make my plan. Stopping training or laying off are not part of that plan. Such thoughts do not process. I continue to work out with care guided by the resident pain and dogged willpower. I trust and thrust as I must, or bust. If the exercise with which I'm engaged offers sufficient possibility, I start with a very light weight performed with slow and attentive warm-up reps. I advance in small weight increments set by set and increase my daring and range of motion, while modifying the exercise groove and adjusting to the level of pain. Think radar. Very often the pain diminishes as I come to know it and I'm able to train through and around the difficulty and complete a solid exercise workload. Just as often the apparent tendonitis is not heightened by the determined approach and it fades as the technique is regularly applied day by day.

I know quickly if a certain exercise is wrong for the moment. The pain is abrupt, unbearable and indicates damage. That exercise is put on hold till further notice. This could be weeks, months or years; usually a month if the movement is valuable. Then I do it again -- slowly, meticulously -- and get what I can.

Years of experience with chronic tendon irritation, inflammation and pain has me resorting to respectable wraps. They do not lighten the load on the muscles. These elastic wraps afford simple support -- hold the joint structure in place, maintain a tendon's correct position or distribute the resistance evenly throughout involved mechanisms, thus avoiding tendon overload or malfunction. I regularly use wrist, elbow and knee wraps. On and off they go as needed throughout my training session.

Having crash-landed on numerous occasions over the years and endured various injuries, I'm no longer stunned and stymied by unexpected daily blasts of pain. I either recognize them and know their profile, or have some intuitive understanding of them. I abhor them, but I refrain from

freaking out and submitting to them. I deal with them and make the best of them. Injuries, tendonitis and pain are amazing instructors. Pay attention; look and listen. Be confident, yet wisely note what you're doing. Aha! I remember. I'm intelligently and deliberately lifting weights with finesse and focus to build a strong, shapely and healthy body. I'm not a machine in an assembly line performing thoughtless automatic movements for forgotten reasons. Work the muscle guided by the pain. The pain will show you the way. Invent, create, improvise and move on.

I can and shall modify my actions.

I'm always amazed how much I learn and relearn when forced to squeeze out aching reps in the unremitting search of an effective and abuse-free training path. My focus and intentions are reborn, though not at a small price. Still, worth every penny of pain.

A sudden hurt or jabbing sting amid a set of reps is frightening and gets anyone's attention, but it need not be the exclamation point at the end of a string of expletives. Take a closer look, know the trouble you face. Warming up, employing a lighter weight, switching from a bar to a pair of dumbbells or altering the tracking of the exercise or its range of motion often resolves the problem, or, at least, limits its scope or intensity and threat of increase.

Reminder: These fixes are discoveries and require intention, resolve, courage and scrutiny. They require time. Look to the groove, a turn of the hands, the location of the grip -- explosiveness and suddenness of action giving way to meticulous, prudent motion; full ROM substituted by abbreviated extension and contraction; loose form replaced by tight form following one track and one track only. We are attempting to relieve the repetitious overload to the irritated tendon with whatever it takes -- finesse or major change.

The limitations defined by tendonitis and other injuries are a lock on our exercise freedom, but they're a key to rediscovering our training. We think we're focusing during our workout 'cuz we're not looking out the window, at the TV or at the cute thing standing by the water fountain. I believe we are too often floating in a zone somewhere in the vicinity of our training, a place not close enough. The less we concentrate and focus on our movements and our muscle engagement, the more we limit our progress.

More: Besides striving on like a champion athlete or sputtering like an old jalopy, what else do I do? We all have our favorite movements and I work them for all they're worth (too long, sometimes). I reluctantly but wisely rotate them out (every 2-4 weeks) to allow the engaged tendons, muscles and joints to rest and recuperate from their redundant pounding. Performing effective yet hard-hitting exercises every other training session often provides sufficient time to prevent inflammation flare-up while enjoying muscle-building benefits. I'm always prepared to adjust my course of training to accommodate an outstanding signal from the central nervous system. (Scream!!) Substitutions are commonplace in my training sessions and 25 percent of my workout, like big-city streets, bridges and tunnels, is under regular reconstruction.

Hard Hat Area. Under Construction. Man at Work.

Read the signs, bombers.

Winding Road Ahead. Be Alert. Here's something I learned the hard way, a personally appointed fact that's neither common nor uncommon; it's simply a part of my training understanding and training mechanics. And recognizing and appreciating the phenomenon enables me to accept my emerging limitations and carry on with gusto and high hopes. Muscle building is not dependent

upon how much weight one lifts, but upon how much muscle exertion one achieves and endures throughout the lift. Seek maximum muscle contraction. Due to pain, often tendonitis, I can press a fraction of the weight I could years ago, but the healthy muscle contraction and exertion I undergo exceeds that which I experienced when younger. The lad next to me is using 45s on his bar and I'm using 10s, yet I'm expending greater intensity in muscle activity than he. Call it determination. I overcome a lighter resistance with more muscle exertion. Frustrating if your ego is counting; rewarding when you appreciate the muscle-building overload. Overload determines growth.

You've gotta bomb it.

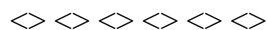
I can't leave the bell unrung: There's nutrition, basic and simple. What and how we eat, as well as exercise, largely determines our body's composition, health and resistance to injury and tissue degradation. This is a subject to fill a small library, a study for another day. Eat right, stay tight, fight the plight with all your might. Tons of how-to info on the website or in Brother Iron, Sister Steel and Your Body Revival. Read and grow.

I rest and ice to reduce damaging inflammation when I can and as much as I can. I avoid digging ditches, swinging pickaxes, operating jack hammers and hanging sheet rock. I eat right always and hold an extra five pounds for extra strength, system resistance and muscle-building ingredients; for energy, endurance and a tight fit around the shoulders and arms; for healing, problem prevention and good luck. I add lots of vitamins and minerals, essential fatty acids and Body Ammo (Chondroitin, glucosamine, MSM) to my diet. They help.

Deep muscle massage and active release therapy (ART) work well to relieve or fix certain tendon and muscle pain and problems, and can often be self-applied or applied by a partner. Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medications such as Motrin or Advil are worth trying... Be wise. I've yet to undergo acupuncture treatment for associated inflammation and irritation, though I hear good reports regularly. It's on my list. Cortisone injections -- I have no personal experience -- are another possible solution.

That white light in the tunnel is the heat of pain. I slug along, press on, wince, limp, frown and am grateful. I'll get there... with you.

The sky is yours. Bombs away... DD



I fly to Indiana tomorrow, Thursday the 17th, for the final touches to the Godzilla of home gyms, The Dungeon. Odis and the Torque Athletic boys will be ready with torches, drills and grinders for any last minute modifications to the handsome brute. We want this all-in-one muscle-and-power-building pile of metal smoothed, knurled, rigged, painted and ready to go ASAP. Time is muscle; time is measured in pounds lifted. No time to waste.

(Maybe I'll take a bus.)

Next update, next week. Stay tuned.

2 - Laree here, taking over with online news...

Dave's written about training through injuries before, but I think most of us skim and forget that type of thing unless we're in the midst of the problem. If the timing's right (or wrong might be a

better word, I guess), these links will take you to some of his earlier writings about injuries in general and shoulder repair in particular. The injury article discusses basics and the mindset needed to work through injuries; the rotator cuff material starts mid-way down the page, covers prevention aspects, and continues to a second article covering his shoulder surgery rehab.

<http://www.davedraper.com/go4x.mvc?ID=Injuries>

<http://www.davedraper.com/go4x.mvc?ID=RotatorCuff>

Dave often talks about his use of wraps, but I don't think I've ever given you links to where he gets them. Actually, that might be because it's a little difficult -- none of the suppliers' wraps fit his elbow or wrist quite right, so Dave's are usually altered with extended Velcro and removed thumb tabs. His knee wraps come from Harbinger, and we sell those in our online store; the two places his wrist and elbow gear come from are Rickey Dale Crain's (wrist) and APT (elbow). Actually, we haven't found a suitable elbow wrap, so we use the long APT wrist wrap and cut and sew. The wraps a little stiffer than you'd want for elbows if you had a choice, but multiple uses means a lot of pulling and stretching and eventually these work pretty well -- Well enough, I guess, because we turned around and came home for them after he realized he'd forgotten his wraps about 15 minutes down the road toward the gym the other day.

<http://www.davedraper.com/go4x.mvc?ID=Crains>

<http://www.davedraper.com/go4x.mvc?ID=APTwraps>

The Joint Connection Dave uses is the effervescent formula by Body Ammo -- comes in an orange/vanilla flavoring with sugar, and in sugar-free orange or berry that's less tasty, but not too bad considering it's covering glucosamine, chondroitin and the excessively bitter MSM. The price has come down quite a bit the past year, and I've also found that when it works for people, it works quickly in taking the inflammation down. So if it's going to work, you'll know fairly soon. Another tip: once you've gotten the inflammation down, you can back off to every other day with the packets and it seems to work just as well, thereby cutting your monthly cost in half. Here's the stuff:

<http://www.davedraper.com/go4x.mvc?ID=BodyAmmo>

A little different from knee wraps, Tommy Kono has recently come out with a commercial neoprene knee band that he developed for his use after injuries in the late '50s. He and Bednarski, Suggs and Starr were hooked on the things, and shared Tommy's one pair during their training. Tommy sent Dave a pair recently; I think Dave likes to wrap his knees a little tighter than the bands fit, but for prevention purposes or less damaged knees you might give these a look. The bands are sold at bodybuilding.com, at the bottom of this link where Tommy tells of their development.

<http://www.davedraper.com/go4x.mvc?ID=KonoKnee>

Some of the folks in the forum have life-changing memories of Charles Atlas, and you can enjoy these stories at the link below. When you get to the post by Wicked Willie, click on the link over to the Sandow Plus site where you'll find an amazing collection of Charles Atlas material, including original brochures and ads that you can print at home. And if you have any Atlas history of your own to share, we'd appreciate your contribution.

<http://www.davedraper.com/go4x.mvc?ID=Atlas>

Dave's off to Odis' at Torque in Indiana to make the final tweaks of the Draper Dungeon (yes, I, too hope he comes back with new pictures, pricing and dimensions that I can post next week). That means I'm off to the matinee and a small, unbuttered popcorn. He's gone until Saturday; I might even get to make two theater trips if there's anything good playing here locally.

Laree

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Dave's Bomber Blend whey protein powder

<http://www.davedraper.com/go4x.mv?ID=Bomber>

IronOnline bookstore

<http://www.davedraper.com/go4x.mv?ID=Books>

Super Spectrim, Anabol Naturals, NSP, NOW Foods, Ageless Growth, Udo's, Body Ammo

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