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1 - Draper here... What Bodybuilding Means to Me -- A Love Story by Dave Drapeless

I'm standing in the crowded downtown mall plotting my course when someone from behind taps my shoulder and asks, "Are you a bodybuilder?" Instinctively, I drop to my knees, seize the attacker by the ankles and apply a life-threatening Brazilian submission hold. I demand the reason for the stealthy maneuver and incriminating question and in an agonizing moment the half-crazed person admits it's something in the way I look. I release my stranglehold and as she retrieves her walker, which skidded across the refreshment area, she expresses regret for her aggressiveness (more like ferocity), and her damning and insensitive inquiry. I charitably accept and we go our separate ways. I hate those embarrassing episodes, audible suggestions in public that I'm a bodybuilder.

A 63-year-old bodybuilder -- how goofy. And what do you do for a living, Mister? I construct deeply striated pectorals. I add sensual curves to the three heads of the triceps. While seeking width to the back, I attend its thickness and rolling musculature. And do not think for one moment, Madam, I neglect the sweep of the thigh.

Who coined the loopy and feeble term "bodybuilder" years ago, anyway? Curses. It contains within its four syllables every deplorable ingredient of vanity and self-centeredness one could possess. Hi, I'm a bodybuilder... wanna feel my big, strong, adorable muscles?

I never heard the word till I tripped over a glossy Weider magazine at 17. At five foot ten, 175 pounds with 16-inch arms the word sounded weak, insufficient and objectionable. "See that mess on the floor. It's iron -- cold, rusty iron. I lift the unforgiving heap to be big, strong and bad. I ain't no stinkin' bodybuilder."

Right about now I've lost half the neighborhood. There are more than a few readers who love to identify with bodybuilding and bodybuilders. Dorian Yates is a bodybuilder -- Lee Haney, Jay Cutler and Larry Scott. What about Pumping Iron, Draper? And, lest we forget, Brother Iron Sister Steel -- A Bodybuilder's Book, was cited this month by Muscle and Fitness as the best book on training. Hmm... Bodybuilders graced the sands of Muscle Beach in the '50s and studded the wall charts hanging in YMCA weight rooms across the nation.

Yeah, yeah. They were called physical culturists and physique stars, which isn't a whole lot better than bodybuilders. And I think musclehead, as low as you could go, was the reference preferred by hip lifters ages ahead of the demeaning spectators who created and applied the rude term. "Yes, we are authentic muscleheads. Now get lost before we tweak your nose."

Muscles were, for many of us starting out years ago, the ticket to strength, ability and respect. You had muscles, or regularly sought them, you were regarded as hard, and becoming harder.

Few people hoofed the same road; you were private, curious and out of the ordinary -- non-conforming. How cool is that?

Muscles looked formidable and convincing, and for good reason: they were. They were protective and functional; they indicated serious hard work, sacrifice and personal and private dedication and self-reliance. Possessing and seeking strong muscles displayed inner- and outer-strength, provoked wonder and respect from onlookers, and, cuz nobody had them, they looked good, real good.

Nothing's changed for a lot of us, though the flocks, herds and mobs have disguised the originality and original purpose of muscles and muscle building. Imitations of the real thing are called bodybuilders and their muscles are for show at any cost. Seldom are they used for real work.

Give me a pile of weights, a heap of Bomber Blend and I'll join you on the floor for this week's standing barbell curls... and other expanded muscle- and power-making movements. Let's go, let's grow.

Standing barbell curl --

Straight bar or bent bar, your choice. They both work, if you do. I like to choose the bar minutes before I plunge into the workout. You never know what urge might overcome you, what longing or premonition or what twinge in the wrist or forearm. I do know this: Choose a thick bar, bombers, and the sparks will fly! The difference is night and day.

How many times -- too many to count -- I see a guy or gal pick up a bar and perform 6 or 8 repetitions of the curl like they just read the Sears pamphlet. The bar goes up and down robotically; they wince and pout and they put the bar back in its starting place. What was that all about? Another guy will grab the bar like it was a venomous snake, toss the reps with robust cheating motions and drop it where he found it. Hiss! Oh, my back, but I didn't get bit.

A curl is a curl is a curl. Not exactly!

Throughout five sets of the standing barbell curl I suggest you start with a comfortable, moderate weight and work your way up to a decent and controllable meaningful heavy weight. You get my drift? Bodybuilders use different lingo than powerlifters when describing weights used, like girls who refer to things under the hood of a car as thingamajigs.

Now the first set can approach 12 to 15 reps, depending on zeal and freshness, and these reps are managed to engage different areas and ranges of involved muscle. I take a close-footed stance, which provides a small footprint and thus requires a more vigorous struggle for balance and control. This apparent exercise disadvantage is a system builder in disguise -- more energy and muscle at work while tuning the body's ability to stabilize.

I pull the first 3 or 4 reps high to the forehead with flat wrists, accentuating the ball of the biceps (whatever you call it), and I wear out fast. Next, I mimic the Sears bodybuilding student by tilting forward slightly at the waist and bringing the bar upward in a most isolated fashion. Feels good all over, clean and correct. A+. Finally, as pink cheeks turn to crimson, deep breathing to gasping, I resort to mild body thrusts, which nudge the bar to a most gratifying position and allow me to edge the bar upward to completion one dynamic inch at a time. The negative of the last rep, as the negative of the first rep, is fought for dearly. The bar is replaced with honor and

it's time for the next set, a triceps exercise -- make that a "movement" -- part two of a bi-tri superset.

A well-designed and executed barbell curl builds big biceps better than any other movement. It also works the whole system of muscles from head to toe, especially when you realize this fact and apply it with intentional gusto. Flex those integrated muscles with appreciation -- more output for the input.

Seated Lat Row --

Speaking in highly technical terminology, which I readily resist, the seated lat row is a compact dandy, offering a lot of development for the buck. Additionally, it is a darn perfect movement for the female lifter looking for overall strength and the striking accentuation of female bodyparts. Graceful and lengthy taper of the back, delicate muscularity extending from the shoulders to the lower lumbar, midsection tightening, full form to biceps and forearm, gripping power and breast augmentation from pec-minor engagement. Why, even the thighs are regularly flexed throughout the movement.

When mounting the pulley apparatus to execute the seated lat row, think of a thoroughbred at full gallop crossing an open field. He's at one moment totally stretched out and flying through the air, at the next fully contracted and ready to unload. The bursting motion is rhythmic and explosive. There's both power and ease within the performance, exhilaration and spirit.

Knowing the value of the exercise, contribute no less effort and engagement than the wild beast. The benefits begin with the joy of the action; it feels good all over. Again, I vary the reps from high to low (15 to 8) and the weight from low to high cooperatively.

The first half of the repetitions are done with an all-out full range of motion. Virtually the whole body is pumping, blasting and connecting: The lower back on the lean forward is mightily recruited before its big and relentless return tug; the grip and forearms never let go, never give in; the biceps work like mountain mules forward and back; and the midsection is contracted repeatedly to enhance vital core strength. The full length of the lats -- top to bottom -- is saturated with muscle- and power-producing labor, and the quadriceps and hamstrings join the harmonious struggle -- the good fight -- with muscle-conditioning force.

The heart and lungs play a healthy role in this brilliant concert of muscle exertion. Swell. More rewards. Just when they're ready to burst from the body's volumous activity, pause the motion and hold the handle -- the thickbar handle for maximum handling, of course -- at arms length while in a seated upright position. Now, with an explosive tug pull the handle into the waist and arch your resistant back with all your might, contract hard and return to the midway upright position again and repeat for the remaining reps. If your lats fall off, carefully place them in ice water for 30 seconds before reattaching and continuing your workout.

Get the picture, bombers? An exercise isn't just an exercise to be done and you move on. It's a set by set, rep by rep experience where every particle of mind, muscle and might, like gold dust, are panned, sifted and gathered, calculated and invested. Only then does one grow rich day by day.

There you go again, Draper. You talk too much when you should be pushing air beneath your wings.

Let's reach for the sky while the sun's warm and bright and overhead. You go first, I'm not far behind. Count on it.

Dave Draper

We'll continue our remaining movements next week: wide-grip pulldowns, one-arm dumbbell row and machine dips.

2 - Laree here, taking over with online news

Once you get over your daydreaming about Dave's musclebuilding movements, I've got a little download for you; it's a collection of Dave's thoughts that would be useful to those getting started or re-started on a workout plan. After a brief introduction, it's Dave's 6 Keys to Bodybuilding, his 12 Nutrition Rules, his menu, a reference guide of books, websites and journals, plus a couple sample training log pages. Feel free to forward this link or download the pdf and print it for your non-internet savvy friends.

Here's the link:

<http://www.davedraper.com/go4x.mvc?ID=Getting-started>

Now that you've brushed up on the basics, maybe you want to spend a little time this weekend fine-tuning your nutrition plan. Are you getting enough of the vital ingredients? Too many calories hidden in your favorite food? Not sure what fatty acids are or why you'd want to know? It's all here, including the all-important calculators. Hint: The easiest way to nutrient insurance is a good quality, time-released vitamin/mineral. The one we trust is Super Spectrim.

<http://www.davedraper.com/go4x.mvc?ID=Nutrition-data>

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

Most of the powerlifting techniques used today were invented and perfected in Bill "Peanuts" West's Westside Gym, and popularized beginning in articles written by Bill in Joe Weider's Muscle Builder magazine, 1965-1971. When Peanuts -- real name William Weiss, bet you didn't know that -- died in 1984, there was no memorial marker placed on his gravesite, and eventually no one remembered where he was buried.

Bill Ennis (from Weightlifter's Warehouse) tracked down the burial site and organized donations to pay for a memorial marker. The ceremony commemorating the placement of the marker is scheduled for Saturday, February 4 in Culver City, and all are welcome to attend. More information about the commemoration, Peanuts' history and a few photos are at the link below.

<http://www.davedraper.com/go4x.mvc?ID=Peanuts-West>

All set to fire up the video editing software for a marathon work weekend, and plan to have a good report for you next week...

Laree

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<http://davedraper.com>

IronOnline Forum:

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

IronOnline Health and Fitness Database:

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Dave's Top Squat:

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

Dave's new EZ curl thick bar:

<http://www.davedraper.com/go4x.mvc?ID=Thick-EZ-Curl>

Dave's thick bar handles:

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

Dave's Bomber Blend whey protein powder:

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IronOnline bookstore:

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