

A printable pdf version of this newsletter is here:
<http://davedraper.com/pdfs/irononline341.pdf>

You'll also find Dave's column online at the link below.
<http://www.davedraper.com/go4x.mvc?ID=Current>

- - - - Wednesday, March 8, 2006 - - - -

- 1 - Draper here... Can't Get My Eyes Off Of You
- 2 - Laree here, taking over with online news

- 1 - Draper here... Can't Get My Eyes Off Of You

The time I spend in the gym is devoted to getting the job done to the best of my ability. That means determining the path I should travel, commencing the workout without wasting time, warming up and getting up to speed proficiently, seeking muscle overload within the majority of dedicated sets, always assessing risk and injury, and maintaining form, focus and pace. Nothing amazing, just forward motion.

This is how one builds muscle and might, assuming, of course, smart eating and rest are concurrent. Within the tight parameters of this training system, there is efficiency, discipline, attention, care, assurance, patience and order. And none of these would fly without a clear goal in mind, and a strong commitment to it. More essential requirements.

Being a mature musclebuilder, I can chew gum and lift weights at the same time (I admittedly must be ever vigilant, however, lest I chip a tooth on a five-pound plate). This heady advantage allows me to observe my surroundings, the people and equipment hard at work (or not) to my left and right. I observe and I wonder, neither of which is a mindless daydream or a glazed gaze. They're unusually stimulating acts of the mind and soul, which no doubt raise one's metabolism much the same as mild aerobics. I wonder intensely.

I can't help my curious nature and see no need to abort the harmless practices. Observing is compatible with my training, and wondering offers hunky material for my enthralling and insightful weekly newsletter. You're saying, "What enthralling newsletter?" But I... the very newsletter that appears on your compu... you are, in fact, reading it as we... Ha! I know your type. You're jealous and insecure, petty and belligerent. Curses! I'll ignore you -- a severe punishment -- and get on with my training.

Big backs are built by widegrip bentover rows. I tighten my belt, ventilate, focus, bend over and grasp the bar securely, precisely. I pull hard, with form and locate the muscle I intend to develop. The reps pile up like logs.

The guy in the baggy shorts tapping his forehead repeatedly against the squat rack claims his training is boring and he needs a different workout. "The same old thing over and over again," he groans to a trainer, "and I don't see any progress." Poor baby.

I slam another set, inspired by the feel of the iron and the advancing pump in my entire back.

First of all, the guy hasn't been coming to the gym regularly enough or long enough -- six months -- to be bored or make gains. Humble thyself before the iron, Bub. It's not here to fill your life with excitement or your baggy shorts with muscles. You lift the steel in its various shapes and sizes again and again and you grow when it's time to grow, and you bow low in

extraordinary gratitude; that's how it works. (He probably doesn't receive my inspiring newsletter.)

I load more weight on the bar and dig deep down for density, mass and sheer enjoyment. Exhilarating!

Another thing, Baggy Pants, don't groan. Not unless an Olympic bar with at least three plates are on each side is lying stubbornly across your chest, or a 75-pound dumbbell is lodged on your big toe after dropping from the rack. Groaning, like complaining and worrying, is negative energy. It's exhausting and worthless. Replace worry, an act of retreating, with wonder, an act of seeking. You think "Seek and ye shall find" is one of those old precepts reserved for the elite? It is not, trust me.

I'm hot and breathing heavily. I'm on fire. Deadly serious, I approach the bar. I prepare, position and pull the mute object with uncontained power. Things happen. Sparks fly.

Exercises, sets and reps, again and again, are dull to the dull and uninspiring to the uninspired. It's not in the exercise or the set or the rep; it's in the heart of the doer, the lifter, the athlete. Hefting weights may not be skydiving or tracking grizzly bear, but it is the strong means to ends more rewarding -- health, muscle and might.

The last of five sets takes me to the edge. The bar is packed, my hands are chalked and my belt is snug. The edge is the high place, the precipice, from which bombers soar. The view is breathtaking.

I'm impressed with anyone making it to a purposeful gym these days. They stepped out of the world where aspiration is not encouraged, achievement is not properly rewarded, and turmoil flows like a river after a storm. They're trying and trying in itself is noteworthy.

Many shiny faces at gyms try for reasons less than solid and sincere: profit, vanity, domination, attention, fear, companionship, distraction. They bravely chose a rough and productive road of travel, but will they endure? That is the question. Enduring is the test of the best. There's a very good chance -- cross your fingers -- they'll be duly challenged and disciplined, respond favorably to the demands and grow strong in many responsible ways. A real gym does that to a person.

Bentover rows are demanding. I love them, but they knock me out. Stiffarm pullovers give me the opportunity to lie down, stretch out and breathe deeply. That doesn't mean I won't strain, burn and feel pain. Not even. Leave it to me. I'll start with 65 pounds and go up to 85 or 100, depending on my elbows and wrists. Dopey me, 75 is probably plenty of weight to do the trick -- effect the lats, serratus and tris -- and is safer. I'm like a broken scale with my ego in the left hand and my brain in the right hand. Ego, brain... Ego, brain...Ego, brain. Which will it be? A no-brainer.

The gal doing the incline dumbbell presses has perfect form. She's consistent, methodical and precise; probably a secretary or administrator, trim and doing fine. Convinced I'm not judging the young lady, I silently agree with myself that five-pound dumbbells are not enough. She needs to add resistance to her meticulous form. Feel that iron, move that steel, make those muscles work, Missy. Doesn't she get bored, drowsy even?

Pullovers are made for you and me: the rhythm, the breathing, the reaching and straining. What relief! On the move, I grasp the 90-pounder on my third set, assume a seated position on the end

of a bench and will the meticulous and dapper lady trainee to hoist some decent weight as well. I drop back on the bench and heave the dumbbell overhead. The dormant weight in the palms of my outstretched hands feels good -- a silent, cool, neutral mass, solid and still. Energy about to happen.

I know. She's afraid she'll grow large and muscular. Tell that to the guy in the baggy shorts. He'd kill to get large and muscular. I return the dumbbell with a respectable thud. There's no way anyone could return a five-pound dumbbell with a respectable thud. I wanna tell her, but she'd tell me to get lost. Certainly her boyfriend warned her about characters like me, maniacs prowling gym floors in the middle of the day.

I stand before the hundred-pound dumbbell and pass an imaginary wand over my body to evaluate its present capability. Like the gadget at airport security, a warning beeper goes off and I grab an 85-pounder for some very fluid reps. Hope she's not looking and sees me surrender to the lighter weight. What would her bozo boyfriend think? The lighter weight feels remarkably good, controllable and painfree, more reps and better pump, non-threatening and risk-free.

"Next week," I vow, "it's the 110." And, next week, I tell Lucy Lightweights the benefits of pushing the iron.

Something's missing around the chest. The stiffarm pullovers awakened the minor pectorals, and now the entire region craves direct engagement. Presses are out -- they're scheduled for Monday, but cable-crossovers neatly fit my random Friday workout. And nobody's using the pulley system. Yes!

One guy makes me feel like I'm not working hard enough, and here he comes now. He's large, but not massive; he's strong and ripped, but not on the stuff. He's just a mean training machine who eats right and never misses a workout... or the last rep. He's also a quarter of a century younger than me and about as secure. He wears a tank top.

Conforming to my favorite method of operation, I execute five sets of cable-crossovers. The reps range from 10 to 15, depending on fatigue, pace, weight and the goal I set as I proceed. I grasp the handles, center myself and take a step forward, leaning into the resistance of the cables. I perform the exercise with straight-arm correctness and reach before me as if trying to touch the distant wall. Moderate weight accomplishes the deed, enabling control and specific muscle recruitment.

Intense and terse, Tanktop, the hard-working bodybuilder, walks swiftly and keeps his head down. I get the feeling he would like it if we all left the building till he was done. I refuse. Draper has not left the building. The loquacious one is doing one-arm dumbbell rows. I think he's gonna burst.

Within the 10 to 15 reps, I vary the crossover action and, thus, the muscle-recruitment in three separate ways: I reach forward and high to hit the upper pec; I reach downward at a 45-degree angle to hit the mid-pec region; I reposition my body to allow me to reach straight down and engage the lowest portion of the chest muscles. I squeeze out the last reps.

Hastily, without a moment to lose, Tanktop lines up his dumbbells like cannonballs. He's over the first dumbbell and tugging furiously, left, then right. It's back in the rack. He's over the second one, heavier, of course, and he's grasping, gasping and bright red. Good reps. Not the kind that exemplify perfect lifting form, but good, like an ostrich crossing the finish line in The

Annual Ostrich 100-Yard Dash. Two more sets. I'm transfixed. He's gonna vaporize. Speed's no longer the thing; it's the straining. There's no end to the straining.

I have chosen to superset the cable-crossover with a machine version of the rear-delt lateral raise -- picture a reverse cable-crossover, the resistance backward rather than forward. Tanktop is in my periphery vision and I must temper my action. Form over frenzy. Devotion above demolition. Perseverance instead of persecution. Still, I put the pedal to the metal, grinding my teeth, but not my gears. Swoooosh...

Everyone's gone and I'm still here. What I lack in ferocious intensity I make up in time invested. You know what they say, "He who leaves last gets the most," or is it, "The last worm gets the early bird?" Maybe it's, "We're closed, Bomber. Go home... Puleeeeeze."

See ya! Off to the sky where there's no beginning and no end. God's house...

Fly forever... DD

2 - Laree here, taking over with online news

It's not because I train at the same gym that Dave's images fit in my head so well. Wasn't he pretty much saying what you thought during your time in the gym yesterday? Oh, yes, no doubt about it. Lucy and Baggie Pants and the rest of the motley crew frequent all the gyms around the world, and you and I, I'll bet, have the same conversations bouncing around our brains. You thought you were the only one, maybe?

Of interest in reference to Dave's article this week, you'll find the following exercise descriptions top shelf.

<http://www.davedraper.com/go4x.mvc?ID=Bentover-Barbell-Row>

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

<http://www.davedraper.com/go4x.mvc?ID=Dumbbell-Row>

<http://www.davedraper.com/go4x.mvc?ID=Exercise-Descriptions>

Several years ago I used the free online version of fitday.com for tracking my daily calories, but waiting for the entries and searching via the internet was frustrating and I bagged it after a week or two. Last week I sprung loose the \$29 for the PC version of the Fitday software download, and I'm here to tell you, wow! What a difference it's made in my food choices! There's nothing I haven't done before, but it's notable to see the macronutrient percentages graphed automatically, making it simple -- really simple -- to see where I've gone wrong during the day. Diet analysis software has come a long way these past few years; it's now a terrific tool for those of us with fat-loss goals. Let's use the following forum thread to find out if it's useful for weight gain, and if any of my pals in the forum have other software ideas to offer.

<http://www.davedraper.com/go4x.mvc?ID=Diet-Analysis-Software>

Here's a question I've been asked a few dozen times, with no answer at hand: How many calories will a pound of muscle burn? If I gain muscle, how much more can I eat? Says Fred Hatfield, "On the average, during a normal course of a day, one pound of muscle will burn somewhere between 30-40 calories, give or take." There's a lot more where that came from: a Lee Haney/Fred Hatfield nutrition seminar transcribed by Dennis Weis. You probably won't have any time left, once you finish a thorough read of the report, so when you get done, bookmark Dennis' site and go back to it next time you have some research time to spare. It's packed with unusual reading treats, from educational to old-time musclebuilding personalities, a real treasure.

<http://www.davedraper.com/go4x.mvc?ID=Haney-and-Hatfield>

Had enough diet and nutrition input? I'll say! Let's go to Alwyn Cosgrove to shove us in the right direction: back to work. I can always find something interesting to read over at Alwyn's; this time we delve into athletic conditioning. For instance, here's a little goodie most people don't know, balanced training: "If you can't handle the same loads for two opposing movements, increase the volume of the weaker movement." You'll find the reason behind this important key, plus more, at the link below.

<http://www.davedraper.com/go4x.mvc?ID=Athletic-Conditioning>

Alwyn's got an outstanding new book out, by the way. Check out The New Rules of Lifting during your cruise of his site.

Laree

ldraper@davedraper.com

<http://davedraper.com>

IronOnline Forum:

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

IronOnline Health and Fitness Database:

<http://www.healthandfitnesswiki.com>

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:

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

IronOnline bookstore:

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

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

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

If you know people who might want to receive this weekly newsletter, forward them this copy and have them send a blank email to the address below:

join-davedraper@dd.lyrishosting.com

(c) 2006 Dave Draper