

EFFECTS OF WEIGHT TRAINING ON MOTOR ABILITY AND
PHYSICAL FITNESS FOR FRESHMAN AT KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY

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INTRODUCTION

Prior to World War II the practice of weight training was confined largely to competitive weight lifters and to professional or amateur "strong men." Athletes in general carefully avoided the weights, as their coaches and trainers solemnly warned them that their use would make a man muscle-bound, or "strain his heart," whatever this might mean. The fact that the situation is now so different resulted largely from the pioneering efforts of an Army surgeon, Thomas L. DeLorme, M. D., during World War II. Himself a weight lifter, DeLorme was instrumental in introducing the equipment and techniques of this method of training into the Army's orthopedic treatment procedures. The publication of his Progressive Resistance Exercise in 1951 marked the beginning of a whole new era in this form of exercise.

Once the use of weights was made respectable by the medical profession, the opposition of coaches and physical educators quickly evaporated. As a result, this method of training experienced a tremendous growth of public interest.¹

As a result of this growth, the medical profession has made considerable use of weight training in the rehabilitation of weakened muscles. The majority of muscle rehabilitation centers today use weight training as the basis for most of their muscle strengthening programs.²

If weight training will strengthen the weakened muscle to normalcy it made sense to physical educators and coaches that a well planned

¹Philip J. Rasch, Weight Training, (Dubuque, Iowa: William C. Brown Company Publishers, 1966), p. 1.

²Alfred Steinberg, "How to Build a Better Body," Readers Digest, 86:102-105, March, 1965.

program should make the normal muscle stronger thus contributing to a more physically capable individual.

Body strength must always be of primary concern to the physical educator, as upon it depends the individual's ability to learn physical skills, to maintain body vigor, and to resist fatigue. Moreover, endurance is based upon strength. No one can maintain prolonged muscular effort if he is physically weak and puny.

Strength is a prerequisite to the development of endurance and speed. Along with strength comes the cosmetic value of weight training.

It has been observed that the main reason many students enroll in a body building or weight lifting class is the cosmetic or esthetic value which is derived from increased size of the muscular tissue.³

Weight training properly supervised can attract many boys who would like to participate in athletics but lack the physical size, strength, and stamina needed. A youngster does not need to have athletic prowess to train with weights, but should have a desire for physical self-improvement. Increased strength and better muscle tone can usually be observed in an individual after five or six weeks of training, thus serving as an additional incentive to the boy to continue the program.⁴

There is a tendency for the quiet, shy types of young men to gravitate to this activity. As these withdrawn individuals continue their training, they may be observed picking up self-confidence.

³E. C. Davis and G. A. Logan, Muscular Activity, (Dubuque, Iowa: William C. Brown Company Publishers, 1961), p. 62-64.

⁴John Lambrosa, "Weight Training for Teenagers," Recreation, 57:516, December, 1964.