



* When it comes to weight training, nothing succeeds like failure
by ART COOPER

Total Fitness in Thirty Minutes a Week

I WAS AT A PARTY A WHILE BACK, sipping a cranberry juice and avoiding the hors d'oeuvres, when I spotted my friend Aimée Bell, a *Vanity Fair* senior editor, across the room, flexing her biceps and flashing a firm thigh and muscular calf. She looked fit and fabulous and told me she owed this pulchritude to an exercise program called slow motion, which requires only a half-hour workout once a week. I was a couple of months into a diet that would eventually result in a sixty-pound weight loss, and I realized that dieting without exercising was a surefire prescription for failure. Intrigued but extremely skeptical, I went over to see Adam Zickerman, who runs the InForm Fitness Studios in midtown Manhattan, where Ms. Bell found her muscles. A handsome, muscular former college swimmer, Zickerman, 37, explained the program and the assortment of weight-training machines—the Leg Press, the Hip Adduction, the Leg Extension, the Lat Pulldown, the Chest Press, the Biceps Curl and the Shoulder Press, among others. Sizing me up, he smiled the smile of a proprietor of a medieval torture chamber. Yielding to the masochist within, I signed up on the spot. I've been at it for eight months now. Having recently completed a book, *Power-of-10: The Once-a-Week Slow Motion Fitness Revolution*, to be published this month by HarperCollins, Zickerman talked with me about his groundbreaking program.



Muscle Man Adam Zickerman believes that building muscle is the key to achieving overall fitness.

What is the philosophy behind Power-of-10?

It is based on the repetition of lifting moderate weight slowly, lifting it in ten seconds and lowering it in ten seconds. This eliminates explosive momentum from the movement. By slowing down the movement, you achieve greater intensity. The idea is to take muscles to failure through repetition. As you become stronger, more weight is added so you will always achieve muscle failure. It is also safer. Now anybody of any age, at any fitness level, can engage in high-intensity training and not worry about getting hurt. Form and proper breathing are critical. It must be one smooth, continuous movement. No locked joints. No resting at the bottom. Going to that threshold of failure where you can't lift the weight anymore but you push the weight ten seconds beyond that point.

Exercise is the first of what I call "the Three Pillars" of the Power-of-10. The second is nutrition, and the third is rest and recovery, which is something most programs completely neglect. After an intense,

rigorous workout, your body needs five to seven days to nurture and build itself.

What should be the goal of exercise?

The goal should be to build muscle. Any other goal you have will come from that. Name it: slimming down, losing body fat, toning up. More muscle means higher metabolism, which also increases bone density. And there are so many studies that point to the fact that strength training is as beneficial to the heart as conventional cardiovascular activities, if not more so.

You've been training me for eight months and the results are spectacular. I can leg press 500 pounds, and I'm more fit than I've been since I was in my twenties. How do you respond to critics who say you can't really be fit if you work out only a half hour a week and don't do serious aerobic exercise? Well, if I may generalize, most critics believe you can't possibly burn enough calories working out once a week. But exercise is not about burning calories. The activity is about building muscle mass, and you need muscle mass to burn

calories for you. Critics also believe that muscles atrophy within twenty-four to forty-eight hours. That is not true, and you are a perfect example of the fallacy. If, in fact, atrophy does occur within twenty-four to forty-eight hours after exercising, how do you explain the fact that you come to me once a week and you get stronger and stronger each week?

Over the past eight months, I've dropped sixty pounds by dieting and exercising regularly. Give our readers some advice about diet and nutrition. What foods should be avoided? Is there anything we can eat that really tastes good?

The most important thing is portion control. Your body can digest and metabolize a certain amount of food per unit of time, and if you eat more than it needs it will automatically store that food as fat. I recommend small, frequent meals and snacks, perhaps six a day. I want to say there is no such thing as bad food. You can pretty much have anything you want as long as your portions are controlled. But having said that, there are certainly refined sugars and starches the body loves to store as fat. I suggest you avoid what I call the white foods, specifically pasta, white bread, processed bread, white rice and, of course, candy of all sorts. I think whole-grain breads, whole-grain rice, fruits and vegetables are fine.

Do I have to give up martinis, wine and beer?

A lot of studies show that a glass of wine a day is healthy for your heart and circulation. But you have to drink in moderation. Alcohol contains a lot of calories and converts to fat very quickly. I drink, but if I'm looking to reduce body fat and reduce quickly, I watch what I drink very carefully. I advocate a free day: If you eat very nutritionally six days a week and eat and drink what you'd like on Sunday, you'll still maintain your weight, or even lose weight.

Why is your stomach growling?

I haven't had lunch yet.

What do you have for lunch?

I go to this little place where you get a bowl of lettuce and the guy behind the counter puts in whatever you want, good foods like avocado, cherry tomatoes, chickpeas, tofu for protein, and I put a very light dab of dressing on it.

There is nothing I could possibly say after that. ●

Art Cooper is GQ's editor-in-chief.