EXERCISE...but don't move

You and your family can attain this "new secret of strength" in less than a minute a day

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What is isometrics?

"Something that can take two inches off your waistline in one month, if you give it a mere 50 seconds a day."

Vic Obeck, onetime professional football player and now Director of Athletics at New York University, is launching a crusade to convert Americans from flab to firmness. The reason he thinks he can succeed where others have failed is a new theory of exercise, called "isometrics." He became interested in isometrics, or "IC," during the 1960 Olympics in Rome. Several papers were read on it at the Institute of Human Anatomy. Most impressive were four years of experiments conducted by Dr. Hans Mueller in Germany. "A number of us became convinced," Obeck says, "that here was a new secret of strength." He became so convinced that he has just produced a $3.98 LP with Riverside Records, presenting a comprehensive "IC" program.

How does isometrics differ from other exercise?

"Isometrics exercises muscles by contraction. Isotonic—the other form of exercise—running, swimming, pushups—exercises by expansion. Isometrics builds up strength. Isotonic builds up stamina."

How does it work?

"You simply pit your muscles against an immovable object for a few seconds without moving. You can do it anywhere: at home, in the office, waiting on a corner. Placing your hands against a wall or door jamb and pushing as hard as possible for 10 seconds is a more powerful tonic for slack arms and shoulders than 50 pushups."

How do you trim the waistline?

"Simply suck your belly back toward your spine and hold it there for ten seconds, five times a day. This does not take off weight. But it does remove sag, by tightening the muscles of the stomach wall into an invisible natural girdle."

Does it increase strength dramatically?

"At NYU's physiotherapy department, a boy with a 'polio leg' tried isometrics. When he started, he could raise a three-pound weight ten times with his bad leg, and a ten-pound weight with his good leg. After a month of IC, his polio leg was able to raise a 15-pound weight ten times, while his good leg, which had been confined to routine exercise, had only gone up to 11 pounds."

Can youngsters do it too?

"The earlier the better. A teacher on Long Island was appalled by a class of seventh grade boys, who could not do a single pushup. In three weeks of IC, they were doing an average of six pushups each."

Are athletes using it?

"Notre Dame and Louisiana State used it this year. Dr. Jay Bender taught IC to the Pittsburgh Pirates the year they won the pennant. Bob Hoffman, Olympic weight lifting coach, calls IC the greatest form of exercise he has ever seen."

Would IC make a woman muscle-bound?

"Not at all, nor does it make muscles bulge. If anything, it makes muscles less bulgy, more firm."

What are the basic IC exercises?

"The three basic exercises are: 1. Lift. Stand in front of an immovable object, reach down, grasp and try to lift for ten seconds. You can do it each morning when you go out to your car. 2. Curling. While either standing or sitting, put your hands under some immovable object, and try to curl your hands up to your chest. 3. Overhead pressing. Put your hands on a door jamb, and try to shove it through the ceiling. There are variations on these basic exercises for other parts of the body. The entire isometric routine only takes 5 minutes a day."

Is there any danger of strain?

"None. When a muscle is in a static condition, it can't be injured, no matter what the load. Sudden motion, like a halfback reversing his field, is what causes the injuries."

Is IC the whole answer to physical fitness?

"No. We still need to do isotonic exercise to keep our bodies in overall good health. Isometrics does not help the body's circulatory system as does golf, bike riding, bowling, tennis or other traditional forms of exercise. Isometrics improves only the body's muscles. But if your muscles are in the best possible condition, you will be much more inclined—and able—to take other forms of exercise."