

skill →



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NOVEMBER 1966



foto *Stamm*

THE GILBERTOS

Editor/Proprietor:
K. WOODWARD

SKILL PUBLICATIONS

"SKILL" Magazine:
and Publications
appertaining to
athletics, health
and physical fitness

6 COCKER SQUARE · BLACKPOOL

Dear Reader,

This is the third issue of "SKILL" that we have produced on our office offset machine, and as it will be the last issue this year, regular readers will recall that I usually look back over the year and write of the progress that has been made.

Because "SKILL" has always been a personal link between fellow-enthusiasts throughout the world, I feel that I can now tell you what "went wrong" earlier this year.

For ten years, the mag had been available by direct subscription only, - but, considering many request, I was anxious to know what response it would meet with on general bookstall sale, and in late 1965 we arranged with a leading distribution firm to handle SKILL through retailers in selected areas, - and the Nos. 59, 60, and 61 were put on general sale and, I feel, met with encouraging response.

In July we were informed that the distributors were insolvent and unable to meet their debts, and they owed us a considerable amount of money. (We have since been offered 1/- in the £.). Thus it became imperative for us to trim our costs drastically if SKILL magazine was to survive.

By sheer determination to do so, we have got on our feet again, the above blow is history (and experience!), and we are not quite as far back as square one. 1966 has, without a doubt, been the most turbulent year we have ever had, but, even so, I feel that some progress has been made.

Our next issue will be on January 1st., and monthly from then on. Thanks for your support.

Sincerely,
K. Woodward

TRAINING CHAT

with Tom Woodward

KEEPING IN TRIM

Probably some of you will be looking for an explanation of my remarks about not doing physical exercise and that there should be a certain desire to obtain some benefit as a result of the time and effort spent in doing the exercises. The very word itself creates a feeling of a painful atmosphere when, on the other hand, it should be a pleasureable duty to perform, and this I hope to prove to the most sceptical.

Let me quell any illusion that exercise of any kind will be of a beneficial nature. Like food and medicine, what suits one (or, in fact, what one needs), does not necessary suit another. I have always been an advocate that exercise is an essential part of life itself.

For the time being, let us take a broadside look at my last "Chat." There is much suggested which could be the turning point in the lives of those who have a tendency to let the waistline get out of its natural state. What an inconvenience this can be to the aspiring golf enthusiasts. They very quickly notice that an otherwise than supple mid-section can be a drawback to progress. What thoughts they must conjure up in the mind as to the best method of getting into satisfactory shape. This should be much more easy to do than is imagined, so, as in my last "Chat," let us go back to the golf course for a check over, although, whether or not you play golf, our Chat this month could be of interest to you.

You have already learned how to get the proper stance with your feet, and how to hold the clubs. Now take a check on the raising of the club for that swing

which you hope will take the ball where you want it to be. To do this you swing the club downward and continue the movement until you are in a similar position with your arms on the opposite side of your head. You then relax as you walk towards your ball. If you are past the preliminary stage and have your thoughts fixed on competitive play, you will naturally be keen to improve that first drive because so much could depend upon it. The only way to do this is by practice and then more practice. So when trying to improve your drive by increasing the power behind it and the accuracy with which you hit that ball, you are unconsciously giving your waistline a good workout. It is a pleasure to repeat those swings if you feel that you are improving your drive.

Now, if you will only do a few of these swinging movements at home, you would be getting your waistline into shape and, at the same time, improving your golf play. All I ask you to do when practising at home is to focus your mind on improving or developing those waist and driving muscles instead of hitting the ball. You are already trying to increase the power in your drive by putting a little more effort into each swing, so do try to put a similar extra effort into the swing when doing it as a bodily exercise.

I have been amazed at how many have not realised how the practice to improve the play could also improve the shape and condition of the waistline. This is my idea of what bodily exercise should

be. It should be a pleasure at all times and, what is more, it should be of such a nature that very few movements are needed (or, should I say, possible to do).

Having sorted things out for the beginner, we can now move on to what I consider is the real testing ground for all players and athletes, that stage known as the intermediate period. This very often decides whether players show the ability to make sufficient progress to reach the top ranks or just remain ordinary players. Almost daily we read in the papers that so-and-so is a likely contender for championship honours. Our hopes are built up with the idea that we have some local athletes who are at last making outstanding performances. How we delight in showing our appreciation of this and giving them the encouragement they need and deserve. If we are past the middle age we are fully aware that so many promising players have just faded away. We know quite well that only a very few can reach the championship class and some of those can only remain in that class for a short period. So let us take a look at the reason for this with the idea of finding yet one more ingredient of that quality called "IT". One reason could be that a certain part of their training routine has been neglected, not purposely probably, but because of the lack of proper tuition at a time when it is needed most.

I have far too often noticed that advice which has been offered by many who know very little about the subject in mind has been accepted and sound advice has been scoffed at simply because it was not given in a glamorous dressing. Many so-called good wishers have ruined many promising careers. I have witnessed too much of this and have seen promising talent wasted. One reason is that what may appear to be trivial to those who do not know the game could be some-

thing which is vital.

Those of my readers who have done some coaching will bear me out on my last remarks. They have also heard the remark that if he had only taken notice of "so-and-so" it would have been different, but in many cases it is too late.

I well remember this happening some years ago when I had the pleasure of training and introducing handbalancing and acrobatic pupils to a professional career. How delighted I was to read of their successes and how disappointed I was when some had their feet on the top rung of the ladder and could not stay there. I remember one case in particular. I hope I do not bore you by relating these things, but there is much to learn from the failure of others, usually much more than from the stars themselves, because if mistakes were not made there would be very little pleasure in trying anything new. It is by the mistakes of others that ideas of improvement are considered. This applies to all games.

My course of training for Handbalancing and Acrobatics was built up on the true reports of my pupils. Without a true report of a pupil's progress, I could not arrange his next lesson to enable him to make satisfactory progress. In my own view, if I was satisfied, I knew they would be delighted. Occasionally I was misled by these reports and I will explain what really happened with one team.

They had taken several lessons from me, and had received the offer of a local acrobatic engagement. I arranged a schedule from the routines they had been taught. Imagine my surprise when they sent a report on the arranged programme ... "We cannot do Stunt 2, and we cannot do Stunt 5." The show routine consisted of five different stunts. After making them understand that I had been misled by their earlier reports, I had their

promise to start again at Lesson 1 and not to omit any move which seemed unimportant to them or which otherwise seemed too hard. (Two very good reasons for allowing more time for favourite stunts!). These boys had made a serious mistake, the first one I had met with in a number of successful pupils. I learned much from their mistakes, and checked up twice on other reports!

This is one reason why I ask all aspirants to be fair to themselves. Innocence led these boys to make fools of themselves at a time when their future depended upon their conscientious training.

Perhaps in all this there is much we can all learn. Be thorough in our training. Be fair to ourselves. And be fair to those who make it their job to guide us to success.

Recommended Health Salons, Studios and Gymnasia

BLACKPOOL: Northern Institute of Massage (Steam Baths, Massage, Sunray, etc.) Tel. 20450.

BRISTOL: Health & Beauty Salon, 24 Park Street, Bristol 1. Tel. 25813. (Steam baths, massage, chiropody, etc.)

CARDIFF: Alboss Studio. Principal—Alban H. Jones, 119 Lisvane Street, Cathays.

EDINBURGH: Olympic Health Studios 91 Lothian Road. Tel. FOU 5269

GLASGOW: Olympic Health Studios, 40 Queen Street, C.1. Tel. CENTRAL 8570.

PRESTON: Flamingo Health Studio, Great Shaw Street. Tel. 51928

TEDDINGTON: Teddington P.C. Club. Secretary—R. N. C. Smith, 30 Mays Road, Teddington. Tel. 51928

Principals and Secretaries:—
Your establishment listed free. Write for details.



Lovely ROBERTA BUCHAN is a trainee instructress at the Scottish Health Studio, Aberdeen. She is the winner of many titles, and is the current Miss North Scotland, and she competed in the "Miss Britain" Finals.

THE MIGHTY MEN OF YORE

THE FASCINATING SAGA OF THE OLD-TIME STRONG MEN

By
WILFRID
DIAMOND

Sigmund Breitbart, one of the greatest showmen that ever lived, used to perform exceptional feats of strength. He was six feet tall and weighed about 200 lbs. He was not a weightlifter but specialized in feats of strength.

One of his main feats was one I always wanted to try but could never summon up sufficient courage. Breitbart went further than I did with the anvil trick. He would lean back on a bed of nails while the huskies pounded the anvil with hammers. I believe it is a simple feat provided there are sufficient nails, and a little mental effort or

Sigmund Breitbart & Samson

self-hypnotism is used. If there were only one or two nails they would penetrate the back, but with a bed of nails this does not happen — so they say — as the weight of the body is distributed over the nails, and none of them press very hard against it. Anyway, Breitbart would lie on a bed of nails and allow a horse — sometimes two — to walk over him.

He used to support enormous weights on his chest — even supported a motor-drome in which two motor-cyclists raced around. Other Breitbart feats were similar to those performed by Martin Breedis — bending and twisting flat, iron bars, and driving nails through two inch planks of wood with his hand. Sometimes to make the feat more difficult, he would have a thin sheet of metal placed inside the wood. Unfortunately, at one performance, the nail missed the wood and hit his knee. Infection set in and caused the

death of this wonderful showman in 1924. He will be remembered for his great feat of tearing in two a sheet of iron about an inch thick and six inches square with his hands. No one ever duplicated this feat.

ALEXANDER ZASS, professionally known as "Samson," not to be confused with Charles A. Sampson whom Sandow defeated at the Royal Aquarium, also reclined on a bed of nails, but instead of having the anvil on his chest he supported a solid block of granite that weighed about half a ton, and allowed two men to pound away at it with sledge-

hammers.

It was really through Breitbart that Samson developed into the type of strong man he was. Breitbart was booked to appear at a circus in Buda Pesth, and was billed to perform what appeared to be superhuman — even miraculous feats of strength. Posters showing him breaking iron chains, knocking nails into wood with his hand, lying on a bed of nails while a heavy stone was placed on his chest and pounded with hammers, and most startling of all — resisting the power of two horses pulling in opposite directions.

This was good publicity for the Circus at which Breitbart was booked to perform, but it wasn't so good for the rival circus run by Mr. Schmidt.

Schmidt's Circus just had to have a counter attraction — to have someone who could do everything that Breitbart

claimed to be able to do. As Alexander Zass was the only man they could find who had any chance of equalling or outshining Breitbart, Samson was booked by Mr. Schmidt to be ready to open in a month's time.

It was then that Alexander Zass laid the foundation for his later career as "The Amazing Samson." He started with thin chains and gradually worked up to heavier chains, developing the muscles required to their correct pitch. For driving nails into wood he used at first a thin plank, then one a little thicker, and so on. Breaking nails didn't give him any trouble as he was used to it. To resist horses he started by resisting men and gradually increased the number of men until the pull equalled the power of two horses.

After a month's intensive training we had a new world's strongest man, Samson all ready to outshine the great Breitbart, but for some reason or other Breitbart failed to show up, and the field was left to "The Amazing Samson."

Samson developed into another Breitbart, but lacked the showmanship of his rival. And it was, perhaps, a little unfortunate for Samson that, on his tour, he followed Martin Breedis, who was giving a very similar exhibition of strength.

Samson failed to move with the times. Although his type of show had been relegated into the limbo of the past he did nothing to bring it up to date, and he continued to appear in the old-fashioned stage costume. Although his feats looked really amazing he lacked the showmanship to 'put them over' that Sandow had.

It was while Samson was in Paris that his fame wafted across the English Channel, and W. A. Pullum 'discovered' him. Pullum wrote to me telling about this great newcomer into the realms of strength. But W.A.P. was not the only

one interested in Samson. An agent of Sir Oswald Stoll, of Empire Theatres fame, saw Samson's show and reported favourably to his superior. It was then that Samson reached the zenith of his career — a star performer on the leading British music halls.

Although comparisons are odious, we must make them in estimating the strength of a man. Samson was a natural strong man, probably much stronger than Sandow, but he had neither the superb physical development nor the exquisite showmanship of Eugen; and Samson's act lacked the feminine appeal that Sandow's muscular posing had. Samson never reached anything like the popularity of Sandow, and the British public did not take him to their hearts as they did the handsome, blonde Eugen Sandow. The name of Eugen Sandow will live in the annals of strong men long after the 'amazing' Samson has been forgotten.

We cannot compare Samson to Arthur Saxon, Edward Aston, Thomas Inch, or most of the other old-timers, because Saxon did not go in for weightlifting — only supporting weights, which really isn't much of a test of strength, and even in that it is doubtful if he equalled Saxon, or the little "Wizard of the Weightlifting World," the late W. A. Pullum. Samson's specialities were entirely different, although many of them were similar to those performed by the average strong man. While Saxon's act was one of pure strength and speed it had 'class,' and there was sustained interest from beginning to end. Samson's act was slow, and devoid of anything artistic.

Samson was practically a replica of Breitbart, whose feats he copied, and whom he trained to defeat. Samson had not the bulk of Breitbart. And so, in the final analysis, although many of his feats were the stock-in-trade of the ordinary



CHARLES A. SAMPSON
not to be confused with
SAMSON of this article.

knock the point of the nail back until the head was protruding from the plank, and yank the nail out without bending it.

Even Samson's great 'iron scroll feat' was not exactly original. Martin Breedis did a similar feat, but he did not develop it to the extent that Samson did. Breedis started with the iron bar on the ground, with his foot on it, but Samson started with the bar between his teeth, and began by bending it to an angle of about forty-five degrees, both right and left. Then he would wrap the end of the bar around his forearm as Breedis did. But this was as far as Breedis went. He wrapped the bar twice around his forearm and let it go at that, but this was only the beginning of Samson's feat.

Samson then placed the bar on his thigh and made the centre coil, and forcing the bar inwards completed the third coil, and finished with the complete scroll. Truly an amazing feat!

Samson thought nothing of taking an iron bar half-an-inch in diameter, start bending it across his knees, then finish by bending it into the shape of a horse-shoe. He accomplished this feat when he was only a youth.

He would allow an automobile loaded with anything between six and a dozen men to run over him — **without platform or bridge!** He would support a huge block of granite weighing half-a-ton on his chest, and allow it to be pounded with sledge-hammers. This feat always 'brought down the house', but, as we know, there was nothing to it, as the big stone absorbed the shock.

continued on p.30



A welcome to our new American representative. Mr. Alban Sindler, of P.O. Box 4065, Washington D.C., 20015, U.S.A., now takes over the promotion of SKILL magazine in the U.S.A. American readers can contact Alban, and perhaps other U.S. supporters will give some help to Alban with his plans to achieve a widespread distribution of our magazine in the States.

COVER PHOTO — THE EAGLES, now touring the Scandinavia Tivoli Parks.



SKILL BEHIND THE IRON CURTAIN. This Bulgarian remedial gymnast, Dora Veleva, is one of our readers from behind the Iron Curtain. We have other subscribers in Moscow, Yugoslavia, and almost every European country.

strong man, some were peculiarly his own and required exceptional strength, we can place Samson in a class by himself — the "Amazing Samson."

Knocking nails into a plank of wood was a feat performed by both Breitbart and Martin Breedis, but Samson went a step further — he withdrew the nails with his fingers.

Samson's modus operandi was as follows: he would grip a six inch wire nail in his hand, then bring it down into a three inch plank. Thus he would force the nail into the wood, then, with the uncovered heel of his hand he would drive the nail in up to the head. Both Breitbart and Breedis did this. Samson would then

Are You a Slow Gainer?

By TONY HOLLAND
The Television 'Musical Muscle Man'

POWER TRAINING

(Earlier articles in this series have appeared in SKILLS 61 - 63).

Very often a change of schedule may bring not only more rewarding bodyweight gains, but also gains in strength, and be quite short and easy to follow even when you "don't feel at your best for training."

POWER TRAINING is one of the best methods of training for the hard gainer, because, done properly, it would consist of a short schedule, moderate to heavy poundages, low reps., and maximum rest between sets.

The men who brought power training into the limelight were Reg Park, Clancy Ross, Jack Delinger, Henry Downs, and Len Sell. Though power training was used long before these men were heard of, it was used more as a means of assistance work for competitive lifting.

When you are ready for a change in training, try some POWER WORK.

If you are interested in Strength Set Lifting, then you will find the system in this article very interesting.

Just as a matter of interest, the system described in this article was the basis of the training used by the Strength Set team of the Regent P.C. Club of Salford. This team consisted mainly of:— ALEX YOUD (11st. 7 lbs.). Squat 430; Benchpress 330; Deadlift 500; Curl 150. MYSELF (9st. 12 lbs.). Squat 380;

Benchpress 240; Deadlift 430; Curl 125. EDGAR RAMSBOTTOM (10st.) Squat 380; Benchpress 250; Deadlift 400; Curl 135.

(The above poundages were all used over four years ago).

This team twice won the Lancashire Strength Set Championships. All the above lifters have increased their bodyweights and strength since their competition days.

If you are a lifter you may want to keep your weight down, if you want more BULK, then read the No. 61 issue of SKILL and follow this system.



'CHUNKY'—the character created and drawn by TONY to illustrate his series for SKILL.



SPRINKLINGS OF SAWDUST

By JACK GOUGH



Now that the final weeks of the tenting season are here, many circuses in this country will be making plans for the winter and next summer. Already the marked effect of the credit squeeze and higher taxation is being felt, and now that the Selective Employment Tax is in force, there is bound to be further effect on the business in every sphere of the entertainment world.

It is probably with this very definite problem in mind that the directors of the Bertram Mills Circus are only taking over Olympia, in London for a four-week period during the Christmas Circus Season.

Mr. Maxwell Joseph, who is now the head of this show, is to date without a suitable venue for the winter season in December, 1967, and the circus as an attraction of the Festive Season is now in doubt in London after this year.

Robert Bros. Circus were engaged this summer to take part in the film "Doctor Doolittle," which stars Rex Harrison. This unit were on location at Castle Cary during August. Several photos of the show appeared in the national press.

Towards the end of August, the show played Southsea Common, with excellent business. I believe this is the first time they have played this ground.

On release in London is the film "The Bible," which includes scenes shot in the Holy Land. The circus of Franz Althoff contributed in a large way towards this picture, as the show travels a very large zoo, and the animals in the film are from the collection which travels as part of the circus.

The new "Hippodrome" series commenced on television on September 26th, and this was the first programme of the new production telefilmed earlier this year.

"National Clown Week," sponsored by the Clown Club of America was held during the week of August 1st to 7th. This event pays tribute to clowns and to the art of clowning. A retired clown, Frank Kelly, of Fort Wayne, Indiana, was National Chairman, and Miss Bonnie Clark, of York, Pennsylvania, was named as "Queen" of the week. Several State Governors issued proclamations designating the period as "Clown Week" in their States.

The first day covers of the American Circus Stamp, issued on May 2nd, totalled 754,076. They were processed at Delavan, Wisconsin, the issuing site. According to postal authorities, this issue proved very popular, as orders are in hand for over a quarter of a million above the national average for a commemorative issue.

Books on Judo and Unarmed Combat

MY STUDY OF JUDO

G. KOIZUMI (7th Dan)
40s net

THE COMPLETE 7 KATAS OF JUDO

18s net

M. KAWAISHI (7th Dan)

Translated and Edited by
E. J. HARRISON (4th Dan)

KODOKAN JUDO

18s net

HIKOICHI AIDA (8th Dan)

Translated and Edited by
E. J. HARRISON (4th Dan)

MY METHOD OF JUDO

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ERIC DOMINY (2nd Dan)

12s 6d net

SKILL PUBLICATIONS
6 Cocker Square, BLACKPOOL, Lancs.

With the departure to South Africa of the Chipperfield family, many circus fans doubted that they would stay there. However, since becoming one of the three large circuses now travelling that country, they have established themselves so well that they have now closed all their connections they retained in Britain when they emigrated. Jimmy Chipperfield, who has his own zoo in Southampton, and another in Plymouth, has a completely separate business in the animal dealing field, to that of the Circus now operated by his family.

The Chipperfields have already achieved really good foundations, and are now playing to excellent business wherever they tour. Joining the show towards the end of this summer will be the Bradfords, the Flying Lunasz, and Don Saunders, who were all at the Great Yarmouth Hippodrome this summer.

During the London season which has now become part of the touring schedule of the Billy Smart's Circus, they will be making a new venture this time. For the many charity shows in which the circus has taken part, they have always used their own big top. This time the venue will be the Royal Albert Hall, when a dinner and gala ball will include a cabaret of acts from the shows. The Greater London Council does not allow animal acts to perform in the Royal Albert Hall, so these performers will be absent, and the human acts take over.

Already the International Circus Clowns Club is making plans for 1967. Following the office of President being taken by a lady circus director, the same policy is being adopted again. Mrs. Emily Thompson, of the Chessington Zoo Circus, will be the new President. This is a very welcome contribution, as Mrs. Thompson is from the well-known Paulo family, who are among the finest eques-



trian acts in the business. Her son, Williams, besides being a fine horseman, is also a clown, and along with Emily Thompson's brother, Frank Paulo, and nephew, Carlos MacManus, they are a brilliant trio of musical clowns.

It is now almost certain that there will be another circus touring in Germany in 1967. From the United States of America the Rudy Brothers' Circus is now with Erik Hagenbeck. The directors of the Rudy Brothers' Circus are related by marriage to the Carl Althoff family, who already have a large tenting show.

Israel, despite being a small country in population, still patronises the circus in a big way. So much so, the impresario, Aaron Berman, has again imported a circus for a tour, this time from Bulgaria. From March until the end of November, the State Circus is touring with good business.

In France, the circuses play many one-day stands, but the business is not as good as that of recent seasons. The Radio Circus, under the direction of Philippe Gruse, is now touring Spain as the *Ciro Ben Hur*, under a collaborated management with the well-known Spanish directors, Feijoo and Castilla. The well-known car-washing entree of Spider Austin and Co. is among the acts in this show.

The present tenting shows in France are now travelled by the families of Rancy, Amar, and Pinder. The latter is now under the control of the Speissert direction, who, in the earlier days of the show, were the people who had the travelling menagerie of the show.

The BIASANI TROUPE featured at the Blackpool Tower Circus during this summer's season.

SKILL STRENGTH CONTEST

November 1966

More claims appear in this issue, as some of the earlier ones now take a beating. However, there are still blank spaces waiting for claimants, in addition to the present claims waiting to be beaten.

CLAIMS COUPON

(Claims not accepted unless on this coupon cut from SKILL)

Name

Age Bodyweight

Address

I Claim a Record for the following Lift(s) with the poundage(s) as stated:—

1. Front Squat Poundage

2. Seated Press Behind Neck Poundage

3. Cheat Curl Poundage

4. Alternate Press—Dumbbells Poundage

5. Down-and-Up Test Poundage

6. Chinning the Bar Reps.

Performed on (Date)

Witness

Witness's Address

The Rules and Conditions are simplicity itself. The contest is open to ANYONE and EVERYONE anywhere in the world. All you have to do is to perform your selected lift IN STRICT STYLE (as detailed) and in front of a witness. If your lift is higher than the standing claim for your weight-group, your name will appear on the Claims Sheet in the next issue of SKILL. (Full Rules appeared in SKILL No. 59).

If your lift is unbeaten for THREE MONTHS, you will be awarded the "SKILL" CERTIFICATE OF STRENGTH, but first you may be asked to perform your lift in front of a witness nominated by SKILL.

Where no name appears alongside the figure on the claims-sheet — this indicates that a Certificate has been won on that lift, but it is now again open for any claimant (including the original certificate winner) to beat the listed claim.

The only other condition is that your entry MUST be made on the special coupon alongside. You can claim for one lift only, or any number of lifts, on the one coupon, BUT YOUR ENTRY MUST BE ON A "SKILL" COUPON, and will be rejected otherwise. So Order Your Copy of SKILL now, and make sure that you follow the contest throughout, and also that you have a coupon ready for your claims.

Readers praise our Contest

From John McNiven, Glasgow.

"I wish to thank you for the six trophies that I won in your SKILL Strength Contest.

I would like to congratulate you upon the design and style of the trophies, and I assure you that they will be given a prominent place among my weight-lifting trophies.

Sorry I have taken so long to write to you, but the trophies arrived whilst I was at the Commonwealth Games in Jamaica, and I've been kept busy since I arrived home.

Once again, I must thank you for the up-to-date news in your magazine, and I find a lot of your articles of great value to me.

Wishing you continued success."

From Ian E. Dickson, Glasgow.

"I thank you for the Strength Trophy which you sent recently. I hope you will be able to overcome your present difficulties with the magazine, as it fills a gap in present-day physical culture, and I hope that you will be able to feature more weightlifting items in the magazine in the future."

From Robert Clayton, Hull.

"May I add a few words about the latest SKILL. It may be different in quality, but the articles inside are certainly first-class. I enjoy Tony Holland's feature very much, and find the "Mighty Men of Yore" articles very interesting and informative."

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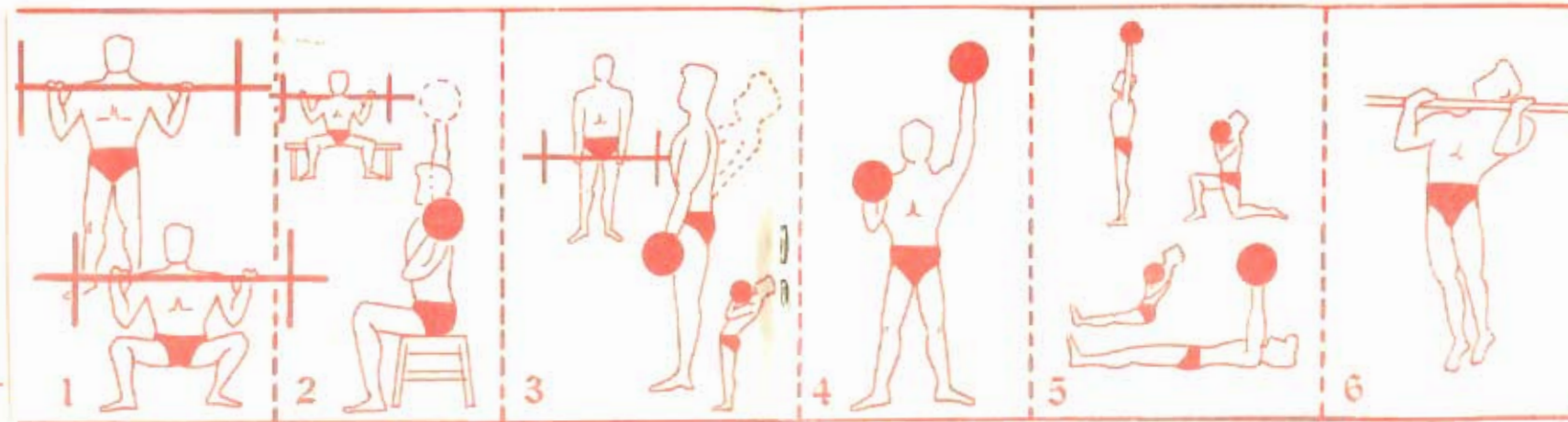
Finest Practical Manual of its kind in the World today! Step by Step through this Superb

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Highly practical methods of dealing with sudden attacks of every kind—the basic tactics and techniques of self-defence as laid down by U.S. Commando Authorities. Includes every stage of combat against armed and unarmed assailants, from the basic principles to the most advanced techniques in use today! Fantastic Value—Super-Course concentrated into one great Manual of 228 pages, with over 570 actual demonstration photographs for only 32.6 post paid. Send cash/cheque/P.O. with order immediately. Money back guaranteed if not delighted.



SKILL PUBLICATIONS
6 Cocker Square, BLACKPOOL, Lancs.



1. FRONT SQUAT

Stand upright with bar resting at the front of the shoulders and gripped by both hands throughout. Squat—thighs to be lowered until tops are horizontal, or lower. Then stand erect, without moving the feet.

2. SEATED PRESS BEHIND NECK
Seated on bench, approx. 20ins. high. Barbell across shoulders behind the neck. Press the bar evenly overhead without passing, and without the buttocks leaving the bench.

3. CHEAT CURL

Stand upright with bar across front of thighs, with elbows locked. During the curl, the bar must not drop lower than the starting position. Curl the bar upwards. Trunk may be leaned forward or backward to any extent, but the knees must remain flat on the floor throughout.

4. ALTERNATE PRESS DUMBBELLS

Stand upright with dumbbells at the shoulders, rods to be no higher than the collar-bones. Without bending the knees, press one bell overhead. Pause. Then, as this bell is lowered, press the other bell overhead to arm's length. Total combined weight of BOTH dumbbells to be entered for the contest.

5. DOWN-AND-UP TEST
Stand upright, barbell across front of chest. PRESS bar to arm's length overhead. Lower bar to chest. Kneel, sit, then lie down to horizontal position with bar across chest. PRESS bar to arms' length above chest. Lower to chest. Then sit and raise to standing position with bar across chest. To complete the test, the bar must then be PRESSED or JERKED to arms' length overhead again in the standing position.

6. CHINNING THE BAR
Not how much weight, but how many times. Commence with arms straight, in the hanging position, and with feet clear of the floor throughout. The chin must appear ABOVE the bar. Lower body until arms are straight, then repeat again. Position of hands is optional, but must not be changed during the repetitions.

BODYWEIGHT CLASS	1	2	3	4	5	6
Under 8½ stones			80 IAN STORTON MORECAMBE 28. SEPT. 1966	76 IAN STORTON MORECAMBE 28. SEPT. 1966	62 IAN STORTON MORECAMBE 28. SEPT. 1966	7 IAN STORTON MORECAMBE 28. SEPT. 1966
8½-9 stones	270 OPEN	150 OPEN	170 OPEN	127 OPEN	140 OPEN	18 OPEN
9-9½ stones						
9½-10 stones	220 OPEN		130¼ OPEN			J. McCONNELL 14 RATHFRILAND, N.I. 6. JULY. 1966
10-10½ stones	180 A. BOYD NEWCASTLE, O.T. 19. SEPT. 1966	125 A. BOYD NEWCASTLE, O.T. 19. SEPT. 1966	140 R.N.C. SMITH TEDDINGTON 27 JULY 1966	150 R.N.C. SMITH TEDDINGTON 27 JULY 1966	140 R.N.C. SMITH TEDDINGTON 27 JULY 1966	15 R.N.C. SMITH TEDDINGTON 27 JULY 1966
10½-11 stones		115 A. PUGH KINGSTON 5. OCT. 1966	163 OPEN		135 A. PUGH KINGSTON 5. OCT. 1966	
11-11½ stones	240 OPEN	140 OPEN	180 OPEN	155 OPEN	160 OPEN	20 OPEN
11½-12 stones	355 OPEN	175 OPEN	205 OPEN	165 OPEN	160 OPEN	H. SAWYER 12 ASHFORD COMMON 19 SEPT. 1966
12-12½ stones	310 J. CAMPBELL DUNDEE 17 SEPT. 1966	140 OPEN	205 J. CAMPBELL DUNDEE 17 SEPT. 1966	160 OPEN	160 OPEN	17 W. REDHEAD HULL 8 OCT. 1966
Over 12½ stone	350 OPEN	210 P. McDERMOTT BOLTON 26. SEPT. 1966	220 OPEN	226 OPEN		15 OPEN
Senior Lifters Aged 45 and over	200 OPEN	135 OPEN	166 OPEN	150 H. SAWYER ASHFORD COMMON 19 SEPT. 1966	150 OPEN	16 OPEN
Veteran Lifters Aged 55 and over	180 W.E. ST. JOHN TURNER SURBITON 26. SEPT. 1966		120 W.E. ST. JOHN TURNER SURBITON 26 SEPT. 1966	130 OPEN		11 E. REDHEAD HULL 8. OCT. 1966

INTERNATIONAL STEEL STRANDPULLING ASSOCIATION . . .

At the Annual General Meeting in August held at the Glasgow Sports Centre, many very interesting proposals were discussed, and several new incentives were approved for the members. The formation of a British Steel Strandpullers Association was given the go-ahead, it is now up to the Executive Committee to draw up the necessary rules etc. A comprehensive list of records was approved for the over 50's, thus our older pullers can now aim for British records in their own right. We have a long list of such members — to memory we have our President, 62 year old Ron Histed, 66 year old Major W. E. St. John Turner, ISSA Vice-President, 63 year old Geoff Morris of Liverpool, 64 year old Ted Redhead of Hull, Ernie Squirrell of Erith who is still breaking senior British Records, Jack Jackson of Dartford, H. Oakley of London, all will be very keen to be the first to break an over 50 British Record, the scheme starts as from October 1st.

A new referee status was approved — International. A trophy was donated by North England Organiser John Storton for the Best Junior Record of the Year. Replica awards were approved for all top awards winners. The title of best built strandpuller will be awarded to the best senior, junior and veteran (over 40) in the Terry Photographic Competitions. The formation of the ISSA's own magazine "The Strandpuller" was approved, cost of which will be subsidised by the ISSA, price to be 6d plus postage. Inter-county and inter-area contests were approved, provided that there are 5 pullers a side, who will be eligible to wear their county badge. A championship Organiser was appointed — Harry Sawyer — his job will be to stimulate

more activity among the top members by giving final dates for totals for titles when they fall vacant.

Hon. Secretary Bob Smith, age 45, has achieved his aim of becoming the first veteran to pull 400 lbs. on two of the 20 official pulls, he also became the first 11 st. class senior to do this. His Left Arm Push of 402 lbs. broke Harry Sawyer's record by 1 lb. Harry, who is the British Middleweight Champion, has been breaking his own Dislocation Record with 279 lbs., 281 lbs. and 283 lbs. His ambition is a 300 lbs. Dis. Anyway, only one man has ever achieved this, Brian Doig of Ashford and the Teddington P.C. Club. Harry's protege Roger Cox age 19 is now back in training after a spell at the Birmingham University, he has quickly hit form by retaining his British Junior 11 st. Championship.

Derek Jones of Oldham has won the English Bantamweight Championship and has been selected to pull in the British 9 st. Championships. His Right Arm Press of 255 lbs. and Back Press anyhow being new British 9 st. Records. Jim Bartlett the Oldham S/P Club leader pulls soon against Ken Heath of Kew for the English Olympic Heavyweight Championship. His son Michael Bartlett is still breaking British 6 st. records and has been selected to pull in the British 6 st. Championships with John Cameron (holder), Campbell Kennedy both of the Glasgow Olympic Club, Bruce Kuhnert of Bournemouth (English 6 st. Champion) and Ken Smith of Teddington.

ISSA Hon. Secretary — 30 Mays Road, Teddington, Middlesex, Handbook 2/-.

IMPROVING YOUR TRACK & FIELD ATHLETICS

By

JOHN SIMPSON, Senior Honorary Coach, Victorian Amateur Athletics Association of Australia.

2. SPRINTING

Having followed the general training programme already published in SKILL 63, your muscles should be ready for "specialist education," that is, learning the specific tasks required by the sprinting technique.

From about mid-winter onwards running and practice of running skills should be introduced into the training schedule, and the time allowed for this gradually increased until, by the start of the track and field season, the weight-work has been reduced to one twenty-minute session per week.

It is essential, however, that this twenty minutes' session continues during the competitive season. You may wonder why this is so, probably feeling that the main purpose of weight-resistance work is to prepare the athlete for the coming season.

In actual practice, however, as skill increases, so the muscle effort required decreases. This causes a fall-off in actual muscle strength. Continued weight-training, as prescribed, will counter this fall-off and can even further increase muscle strength and, of course, further improve performance.

A Suggested Programme

Commence mid-winter by introducing 20 minutes to half-hour cross-country running, to replace one session of the preliminary programme.

After one month, introduce two sessions per week (Day 1, then Day 2) on, say, Monday and Wednesday, replacing two of the sessions in the earlier schedule.

After a further month, work on a fortnightly routine, alternating outdoor and indoor work so that you do a total of six outdoor (three of Day 1, three of Day 2), and four indoor sessions, per two weeks.

When the season commences, reduce weight-sessions, as recommended, to one per week, and do two each of Day 1 and Day 2, of the outdoor training work.

Day 1: Warm-up, two to six laps jogging.

Do suppling and stretching exercises D1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9.

Do six sprint starts to 30 yds., starting relaxed and gradually increasing speed to fast, by number six. Concentrate on getting the best foot and hand positions and on keeping low for at least 15 yards.

Rest, until "pulse plateau" is reached. (This is explained later). Run, three times, 220 yards (80% effort striding). Concentrate on good arm action. Wait for pulse plateau between each 220 yards.

Rest five minutes.

Join the javelin throwers for some relaxed javelin throwing for ten minutes.

Do three run-throughs of 120 yards, as follows:— Fast 20 yards, coast (75% effort) 80 yards; fast sprint 20 yards (Wait for pulse plateau between each run).

Warm down with gentle jog for two laps.

Day 2: Warm up two to six laps, light jogging.

Do suppling and stretching exercises D1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9.

Six sprint starts, as for Day 1, or if you have a suitable hill (1 in 8 to 1 in 10 gradient is best), do six uphill runs, 40–50 yards, letting pulse reach plateau between runs.

Rest five minutes.

Do three laps as follows: Walk 110 yards; jog 55 yards; sprint 55 yards; repeating sequence for three laps without a rest.

Rest until pulse plateau.

Join long jumpers for relaxed jumping, ten minutes.

Do three 100 yards run-throughs, as follows:—

No. 1. — Concentrate on arm action.

No. 2. — Concentrate on leg action.

No. 3. — Concentrate both.

Warm down with two laps jogging.

HINTS ON TECHNIQUES

1. Sprint (Crouch) Start

To obtain your feet and handplacings, first kneel down on one knee, so that your leading foot's big toes joint is just behind a line level with it, (opposite knee), and the back foot toe is curled under. Keeping your back straight, bend from the hips and swing your hands forward so that they rest, shoulder width apart, on the ground below your shoulders, (keep your arms straight). Place

your hands, forefingers outwards, thumbs inwards, fingertips only on the ground, so that reading from left to right, forefinger, thumb, thumb, forefinger, make a straight line.

Draw, or scratch, this line on the ground and note (and remember) distances of your knee and feet from it for future reference.

"On Your Marks"

At this command, move up to the starting line, place your hands beyond the line, and "back" into the positions which you found in the first paragraph of this instruction. Place your leading foot first, then your back foot, then your hands, in position. Your back, neck and head should form a straight line.

"Set"

Now steadily raise your hips until your back is horizontal or slightly tilted, hips high. Take a deep breath. (Head and neck and back still form a straight line).

"Gun"

Breathe out hard, move back leg through knee high and opposite arm vigorously, (as though delivering an uppercut), at the same time swing the other arm vigorously backward, elbow leading, and extend the leading leg. Keep low as you move forward, forcing yourself to run fast to maintain balance for at least 15 yards.

2. Sprint Arm Action

Bend your arms to form right angles at the elbows and lightly clench the fists. Swing the arms fore and aft, keep shoulders low and supple and maintaining 90° angle at elbows. Fists should rise to eyebrow level and elbows almost to shoulder level.

3. Sprint Leg Action

Starting with foot at rear, this action is as follows:— Leg extends vigorously, then whips foot up towards buttocks.

Our Congratulations

Congratulations to TONY HOLLAND, on the occasion of his marriage to Miss Margot Clarke, at Southport, on October 15th. We feel sure that all SKILL readers wish Tony and Margot every happiness for the future, and your Editor, Ken Woodward, was happy to be a guest at the wedding.



Size need not be a handicap. A. Phillips of Barbados, is less than 4 ft. 10 ins., but has a great physique, and he can press OVER 220 lbs., although weighing only 8 st. 8 lbs.

This photograph is rather like that of the "Mighty Atom" which appeared in an earlier issue of SKILL.

Mighty Men of Yore . . . cont.

Alexander Marx, the German strong man who 'discovered' John Gruhn Marx more than seventy years ago, used to have a piece of rock placed on his head and pounded with a hammer until it was broken. An ordinary man can lay on his back, have a slab of stone weighing about 400 lbs. laid on his chest and abdomen, and support it. And he can go further than that — he can have a stone weighing about 50 lbs. placed on top, and allow someone to break it by pounding it with a hammer. Provided the piece of rock is heavy enough to absorb the shock, the performer will suffer little, if any inconvenience. I once saw a coloured man support a heavy rock on his head, have a small piece of rock placed on top of it, and have it broken with a sledge-hammer.

Samson claimed to be able to lift an iron girder weighing 700 lbs. with his teeth! Also with his fingers! He used to drink from a tankard that other men could not even lift from the table; and he would carry a stocky young horse on his shoulders.

Edward Aston was usually dubious about feats of strength, and he liked to get 'the lowdown' on what strong men were doing — particularly men about his own weight, and possible opponents. When Samson was showing at Penge, who should come into his dressing room but Aston. If Samson was not a genuine performer, Aston would have certainly denounced him, as he did Bertish and Atlas. This is weighty evidence!

Another night, in London, W. A. Pullum dropped in on Samson and made a thorough examination of his 'props'. No one could pull the wool over the eyes of

Pullum — he was too experienced for that. He, too, came away convinced and became one of Samson's staunchest supporters.

We cannot judge Samson solely by the few feats he performed on the stage. Some of his greatest feats were done off stage, for example, when he used himself as a 'human harness'. Samson stood in the front of a brewery cart, loaded with men, and allowed two horses to pull it, attached to the cart only by a grip he held between his teeth! That is amazing enough for anybody!

Next Issue:

Apollon & Travis



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Raising the Hat

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PUSH THE BENT OUT OF AN OLD FELT HAT AND PLACE HAT ON YOUR HEAD. HOLD STEADY HANDSTAND AND BEND LEGS AS SHOWN.

NOW RAISE YOUR HEAD TO TAKE YOUR SHOULDERS FORWARD TO CONTROL BALANCE OF LOWERED FEET. WHEN YOU FEEL TOES TOUCHING HAT, RETURN TO BALANCE AND REPEAT A COUPLE OF TIMES.

PRACTISE UNTIL YOU CAN GRIP HAT, RETURN TO BALANCE, — PAUSE — THEN REPLACE HAT ON YOUR HEAD!





18

CONTORTION SKILL

by
Walter Sangree

PART FOUR of the Limbering-up Routine commenced in the No. 61 issue of SKILL.

6. **OVERSPLITS** (time 2-4 minutes)
See Section 4, part 3 (Illustration 9a).

7. **BACKBENDS: RESTING ON THIGHS**
(Time 6-12 minutes)

1. Begin by lying prone on the mat, stomach down, legs extended and together, with toes pointed. Place the hands on the mat besides and slightly below the shoulders. Slowly lift the head up and back as far as possible. Continue by pushing on the mat with the hands,

thus using the arms to lift the shoulders and chest gradually up from the mat. Keep lifting the chest ever higher and further backwards towards the buttocks and thighs, always endeavouring to get the shoulders and head further back.

The secret of all backbending is to keep the chest lifted.

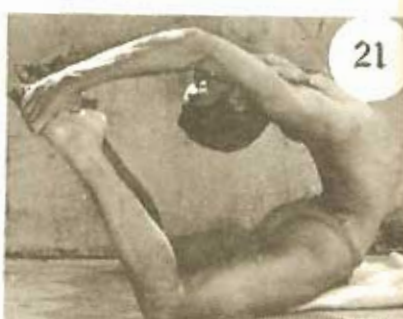
This is greatly facilitated by three things:—



19



20



21



22



23



24

(a) by working always to keep the head and shoulders as far back as possible.

(b) by controlled breathing. Prior to bending backward or increasing the degree of backbend, take a deep breath; holding the breath, raise the diaphragm to stretch the rib-cage. Then exhale, again raise the diaphragm and, holding it raised, increase the degree of backward arch. While holding the arch, release the diaphragm, make a full breath and again raise the diaphragm to stretch the rib-cage further and facilitate the "setting" of the new degree of arch. Take several full breaths and repeat the sequence. Use this controlled breathing technique a number of times in conjunction with backbend limbering.

(c) by contracting the muscles of the buttocks, thus using them both to keep the legs from spreading, and to support the lower back as it is increasingly extended and arched backwards.

Continue to bend backwards, using the three aids outlined above, until it is possible to bring the feet to the head by flexing the knees. Very likely you will find it necessary to spread the legs slightly to attain and hold this degree of backward arch. It is important, however, to strive to keep the knees as close together as possible in this exercise and in the rest of this sequence.

Hold the feet to the head (ill. 18) for 5 breaths. Then straighten the legs again and relax the muscles of the neck, back and buttocks, retaining most of the arch of the torso by bearing its full weight on the outstretched arms pressing against the mat.

2. After thus resting for a minute or two, again lift the head and shoulders as far back as possible and flex the knees to bring the soles of the feet firmly

against the top of the head (ill. 18). Next reach over the right shoulder with the right hand to grasp the right foot, keeping the body from rolling forward by pressing the mat with the left hand. Then, after being sure you are arched backward enough to keep the body from rolling forward, reach over the left shoulder with the left hand, and hold this position for 5 & 5. (ill. 19).

3. Without releasing the grasp on the feet, draw the soles of the feet down onto the shoulders (ill. 20) and hold for 5 & 5.

4. Holding the feet and keeping the head back, straighten the legs and arms as much as possible and hold for 5 & 5 (ill. 21).

5. Shift the grip from the feet to the ankles, endeavour to straighten both the knees and the elbows even further, and hold for 5 & 5. (ill. 22).

6. Release the hold on the feet, place the hands on the floor besides the hips and press up with the arms to retain the backward arch of the torso as in section 1. Then, continuing to hold the arch, reach quickly back to grasp the feet and draw them under the armpits (you will probably find it easier to do this first on one side and then the other, though it is possible to do it on both sides at once in one smooth motion). Shift the arms and shoulders to lock the feet in this position and interlock the fingers in front of the waist (ill. 23). Hold this position for a number of breaths, letting the pull exerted on the shoulders by the flexed feet maintain the arch of the back. Then, keeping the feet locked under the armpits, release the fingers from their interlocked position in front of the abdomen and push hard from the floor with both arms while simultaneously continuing the pull on the shoulders with the feet. Hold 5 & 5. (ill. 24).

7. Release the feet from under the armpits and extend the legs. Then arch back as far as possible by simultaneously pressing the shoulders back with the arms and following the chest-lifting technique outline in part 1 of this section. Hold 5 & 5. (ill. 25).

8. Holding the arch, extend both arms overhead (ill. 26) and hold for 5 & 5. Then slowly straighten the torso, keeping the arms extended overhead as long as possible, then dropping them to waist height, and finally to the mat if necessary for balance or because of weakness in the back. Begin by unbending in the lower back, then higher, and finally the shoulders and neck, so that first the lower abdomen, then the chest and finally the shoulders and head reach the prone position on the mat.

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From Mr. W. Robertson, Dundee.

"Congratulations on the new-look issue of SKILL 62. Glad to see the experiments which have been carried out with the magazine. It shows there is no stagnation at headquarters.

Experimentation is a sign of progress, of improvement, and, after all, that is the biggest room in the world, isn't it? — room for improvement! I am pleased to read that SKILL will have a more frequent issue than heretofore.

I agree with the Editorial Staff to cut out all judo and kindred subjects from the pages of SKILL, if the adherents of these sports are not going to subscribe to the magazine. If they wish to continue with the study of these subjects, let them buy one of the many books and courses advertised. There is a magazine called "Judo" on the bookstalls. Many pages of SKILL formerly devoted to judo can now be used for other varied subjects.

Keep up the good work. Continue to experiment and to improve. I feel certain that the success of SKILL is assured."



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This Christmas my thoughts will go to my readers in all parts of the world,—for I now have readers in almost every English-speaking country,—plus the countries of Europe, and even behind the "Iron Curtain". Now it becomes impossible to thank you all personally with Greetings Cards,—but my sentiments are no less sincere when I take this opportunity, through OUR JOURNAL "SKILL", to wish every one of the thousands of readers.....

**A Very Happy Christmas
and every Success, Happiness
and Good Health in 1967**

Goodman.

