

Numerous books, articles and news segments on network television have reported the benefits of this revolutionary exercise regimen. Read the following pages for a few excerpts from *GQ*, *Newsweek* and *BusinessWeek* to find out what has been said about this slow-motion exercise regimen.

NEWSWEEK

*Lifting weights at a snail's pace can work wonders.
Is it the whole key to fitness?*

By: Geoffrey Cowley

For three decades we've heard endlessly about the virtues of aerobic exercise. Medical authorities have touted running and jumping as the key to good health, and millions of Americans have taken the treadmill (however sporadically) to reap the rewards. But the story is changing. Everyone from the American Heart Association to the surgeon general's office has recently embraced strength training as a complement to aerobics. And as weight lifting has gone mainstream, so has the once obscure practice known as "Super Slow" training. Enthusiasts claim that by pumping iron at a snail's pace—making each "rep" last 14 seconds instead of the usual seven—you can safely place extraordinary demands on your muscles, and elicit an extraordinary response. Slow lifting may not be the only exercise you need, as some proponents believe, but the benefits are often dramatic.

Almost anyone can handle this routine. The only requirements are Zenlike focus and a tolerance for deep muscular burn. But as you draw out each rep, depriving yourself of momentum, the weight soon feels unbearable. Defying the impulse to stop, you keep going until you can't complete a rep. Then you sustain your futile effort for 10 more seconds while the weight sinks gradually toward its cradle. Intense? Uncomfortable? Totally. But once you embrace muscle failure as the goal of the workout, it can become almost pleasurable. "When you do this right," says Dr. M. Doug McGuff, an emergency-room physician who runs an exercise studio in Seneca, S.C., "a brief workout is all you can stand."

The goal is not to burn calories while you're exercising but to make your body burn them all the time. Strength training doesn't burn many calories, either. But when you push a muscle to failure, you set off a cascade of physiological changes. As the muscle recovers over several days, it will thicken—and the new muscle tissue will demand sustenance. By the time you add three pounds of muscle, your body requires an extra 9,000 calories a month just to break even. Hold your diet steady and, presto you're vaporizing body fat.

Slow lifting isn't just for the infirm or the soft of stomach. A number of professional sports teams have adopted the drill, and body-builders are discovering that they too can gain by slowing down.

It may turn out that 20 minutes of slow torture is the ultimate prescription for fitness. But until all the evidence is in, moderation is surely the best policy. ■

