



Serious Strength's Response to Dr. William Kraemer's critique of Super Slow Training in Allure magazine

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Allure Magazine
360 Madison Avenue
NY, NY 10017

Dear Editor,

I sincerely hope you will print the following letter in your next issue of Allure. I feel it is extremely important for women who are seeking improved physical fitness in the safest and most effective possible manner to be aware of the following information. It could save a lot of people from injuring themselves, possibly permanently.

In the Body News section (page 122) of your May issue there was an article titled "Pick up the Pace." It quoted Penn State researcher Dr. William Kraemer as saying that, with regard to superslow movements, "There is simply no data to suggest that superslow movements build a muscle better than weight training at normal speed." Enclosed you will find the data that Dr. Kraemer claims does not exist, researched by two of the most widely respected and prolific exercise physiologists in the country. And this is not the only data. There are several thousand other fitness professionals including physicians and medical physiologists who agree that slower movement speeds when weight training are safer and more productive. Contrary to what Dr. Kraemer states, the data exists.

The women who read Allure magazine have the right to know the truth about how to get the best results from their weight training in the safest and most efficient manner possible. It is wrong for them to be influenced by someone with an "axe to grind." Allure's readers should be made aware that Dr. Kraemer is a staunch advocate of very explosive lifting techniques; techniques which are extremely dangerous to the joints and connective tissues. These types of movements, commonly referred to as "power lifts" should only be practiced by people who wish to become power lifters. "Plyometrics," another type of explosive exercise technique, should be practiced by no one. Plyometrics and all other forms of ballistic, high-impact exercises are potentially very, very dangerous.

Proper strength training is about developing muscular strength in the safest and most effective manner possible, not demonstrating power as dangerously as one can. It is true that a person must develop a certain level of strength in order to successfully participate in sports that require demonstrations of power, like power lifting. Power lifting training may be fine for power lifters, but not for the typical person's exercise program. These participants in high-force sports are constantly battling injury. Exercise for the rest of us should always help and never hurt or hinder. I strongly urge the readers of Allure to disregard Doctor Kraemer's advice -- it is terribly misleading. Here the Hippocratic oath speaks loudly -- "Do no harm."

The following are several glaring mistakes and inconsistencies within the "Pick up the Pace" article:



Dr. Kraemer suggests that superslow movements do not create enough pressure on the bones to stimulate increased bone-mineral density. He has no evidence of this whatever. The fact is that superslow was specifically designed for osteoporotic women to increase the safety and efficiency of muscular loading (this is supported by the materials I've enclosed) during the Nautilus Osteoporosis Project sponsored by Nautilus Sports Medical in the early 1980's. We now know that if you make your muscles stronger (regardless of how you do it) the bones will strengthen as well. Clearly, either Dr. Kraemer has been misinformed or is attempting to misinform.

Dr. Kraemer makes mention of a "normal" speed of lifting weights when making a comparison to superslow, but fails to mention what this "normal" speed is.

Dr. Kraemer mentions that superslow is an old, resurrected technique. Superslow is not that old. As stated above, it was developed in the early 1980's. And besides, just because something is old does not invalidate it. The principle of buoyancy was discovered several thousand years ago but is just as valid today as it was when the Roman Empire was still standing.

Dr. Kraemer admits in the very first sentence of the article that superslow builds strength but several sentences later states that it doesn't produce "...the molecular changes that improves the body to generate power." In order to improve one's muscular power one must become muscularly stronger. A stronger muscle is a better "force producing engine." That is what muscles basically are: force producing engines. So if superslow improves strength, as Dr. Kraemer admits it does, it also improves power.

Dr. Kraemer claims that superslow movements increase blood pressure and he is correct. However, all forms of exercise increase blood pressure. That is why proper breathing and keeping the hands as relaxed as possible, whenever possible, is so important when weight training. Here Dr. Kraemer proves he doesn't completely understand some of the response mechanisms of exercise.

Dr. Kraemer mentions that superslow causes cardiac stress. Yes, it certainly does. And this is why if one's strength training program is performed in a superslow fashion, aerobic exercise becomes completely unnecessary in one's exercise program. Cardiac stress, properly applied, is a necessary component of increasing the efficiency of the vascular system. If a person engaged in an exercise program has known vascular disease, superslow along with all other exercise techniques, should require a physician's OK.

Lastly, Dr. Kraemer's final question is an odd one, "So why make workouts harder than they already are?" I'll take a stab at answering: to make the exercise more productive thereby making it more efficient. And if by doing so we also make the exercise safer, well, how bad could that be?

Sincerely,
Fredrick Hahn

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