

**I**F YOU lunch at a drive-through, instant-message instead of e-mail, and “read” books on tape, you’ll relish the timesaving possibilities of slow-speed strength training. The pitch: total fitness in just one or two 20-minute workouts a week, with no warming up, stretching, or cardio required. But is this approach a gimmick or a godsend?

In truth, it’s a little of both—and it’s nothing new. Extolled in such recent books as *The Slow Burn Fitness Revolution* and *Power of 10: The Once-a-Week Slow Motion Fitness Revolution*, the technique, which involves lifting heavy weights at about one-third of the usual speed for a single set, actually dates from 1927. The logic goes like this: The key to overall fitness is building muscle mass, and strength training is a far better way to do that than aerobic exercise. Lifting weights in slow motion is the most efficient strength-training technique, because it’s the fastest path to muscle fatigue (the point at which you can’t move another inch).