

Pump Iron and Speed Up Your Metabolism

Weightlifting is one of the oldest and most popular sports and physical conditioning routines known to man. It is a test of pure strength, determination, and desire to attain almost superhuman physical form and abilities. As a competitive sport, weightlifting can be traced back to the routines performed by professional "strong men" of the early 19th century. However, ancient records from the Chou Dynasty which ruled China from 1050 B.C. to 256 B.C. indicated that weightlifting was already practiced during that time. During that time, military recruits were also required to pass tests of strength before being allowed to join the army.

In ancient Egypt, heavy bags of sand were lifted with one hand as a form of training. While there are no records of weightlifting competitions in Egypt, it is very likely that such contests took place. Although weightlifting was not included in the ancient Olympics, it seems to have been a popular sport in Athens and other Greek city-states. Many stories of weightlifting feats, most of them probably exaggerated, have survived from ancient Greece.

Today, the world's strongest men and women regularly lift more than three times their body weight. They need to combine power, speed, technique, concentration, and timing. One and two-arm lifting contests formed part of the athletics program at the first modern Olympic Games in Athens that was held in 1896. Weightlifting was introduced as an individual sport in 1924 during the Paris Games, after which, it was already featured as part of the Olympics. The first women's event in weightlifting was held at Sydney 2000.

In the early 20th century, America was the dominant power in the sport, producing both the World and Olympic Champions from 1930 through to the 1950's. In fact, in 1958, there were over 10,000 spectators that came to the Madison Square Garden to watch the World Championships. By 1960, more countries have joined and assumed dominating positions in the sport of Olympic Weightlifting. Currently, China is the world leader in the sport, with other powerhouses such as Bulgaria and Russia constantly producing top athletes.

However, weightlifting is not for competition purposes only. It is also used as a means to supplement a weight loss program. Research has shown that weightlifting can boost a man's metabolism. For a lot of people trying to speed up their metabolism, the first thing they think is to engage in an aerobic or cardio-exercise program. However, by merely focusing on cardiovascular activities, many actually miss another piece of the fitness puzzle. Few people realize that when it comes to speeding up metabolism, good old-fashioned weight lifting is one of the effective methods, if not the best way to boost metabolism.

A number of studies have shown that athletes exhibit higher RMR (Resting Metabolic Rate) than non-athletes. RMR is the number of calories we burn to maintain our vital body processes in a resting state. It is usually determined by measuring a body's oxygen utilization (which is closely tied to calorie burning) while one is lying down or sitting quietly in the early morning before breakfast or after a full night's sleep. RMR typically accounts for about 65 to 75 percent of the total daily calorie expenditure.

Moreover, it appears likely that the combination of high exercise energy expenditure and high energy intake in these athletes can temporarily, but not permanently, elevate their RMR when measured the next morning after exercise. However, there is little evidence that the amount of physical activity performed by recreational exercisers for the purpose of weight control and health promotion will produce any increase in RMR, with the possible exception of exercise done by older individuals.

Some fitness enthusiasts have promoted the idea that because regular weight lifting can increase skeletal muscle mass, such exercise will dramatically increase RMR. However, it is estimated that each pound of muscle burns about five-10 calories per day while at rest, so you would have to bulk up quite a bit to increase your RMR. Most people who lift weights for health rather than for body building will not increase their muscle mass enough to have a major effect on RMR.

When a man or a woman lifts weights, he or she is not actually building muscle, they are breaking it down. The physical exertion involved in weightlifting causes the metabolism to speed up. After the muscle is broken down, the body compensates by building more muscle to try and keep the muscle from breaking down again. It takes a large amount of energy from calories to rebuild new and bigger muscles. So lifting weights burns calories and speeds up metabolism not only during the weight lifting workout but also while the body builds bigger and stronger muscles.

A weight lifting routine must be done correctly and at regular intervals if one is to get the maximum effect. Going to the gym once a week will not bring the kind of results talked about. It will take some time and dedication to build new muscle mass but the end result will be worth it with a better body and a speed up in metabolism.

So those who have problems with extra pounds like the overweight and obese, you might want to start lifting some iron... this might be the one miracle

that you've been waiting for!

About the Author

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