

THE ARTHUR JONES INFLUENCE: A MEMOIR

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I first was introduced to Arthur Jones in the fall of 1970, by a faculty colleague at the University of Wisconsin. My colleague had met Jones when he attended the AAU Mr. America contest in Los Angeles that summer, and was incredibly impressed by Jones' prototype exercise machines that he had brought to the contest, and which he called *Nautilus*, in reference to the seashell that served as the inspiration for the cam-shaped pulleys his machines employed.

I had heard of Arthur Jones earlier that year, when I started reading a series of articles he was writing for *IronMan* Magazine. I had been training with weights since I was 15, and had read countless bodybuilding publications like Bob Hoffman's *Strength & Health*, as well as the Joe Weider publications *Mr. America* and *Muscle Builder*. Those magazines were filled with illustrated stories about the training routines of various famous bodybuilders, but the Arthur Jones articles were totally different. Practically diatribes, they were mostly about *what was wrong with all the accepted training philosophies and routines, especially those of the famous champions detailed in the popular bodybuilding magazines.* Moreover, wrote Jones, only he had discovered the proper way to train. His new and strange machines were designed to enable trainees to implement correct training methods. Jones was adamant in the articles: only he was right; everyone else was absolutely wrong. *Everyone else trained too long and too often, but never hard enough!*



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I got Arthur Jones' phone number and called him, or at least attempted to. After several unsuccessful attempts to get through to him, I was able to talk to Ed Farnham, one of his employees, who arranged for me to talk with Jones himself.

The ensuing phone conversations, actually extended lectures by Jones, took place over the next few months. He told me I would have to forget everything I knew about training if I was to learn the right way; *his* way. It certainly wasn't much of a discussion; rather he talked and I listened. He did say that he was happy to hear that my degrees were not in exercise science or physical education, so my "unlearning" process should be fairly easy.

Despite his manner, I was immediately and thoroughly impressed by Arthur Jones' ideas. They were intelligent, obviously well thought out, and easy to understand. He gave me a detailed training routine, based on the equipment I was training with at home. I asked him about his new machines, and he said that they would do a better job in most cases than conventional barbells etc., but that actually his machines were the limiting factors upon his training theories. His first machine, the pullover was nearing production, but there were several prepaid orders already in place, and the earliest delivery he could promise was about 15 months! The machine was also quite expensive as I recall. What he did agree to send me, for I believe \$95.00, was the pullover in very basic "kit" form. Indeed it was. What I got were engineering drawings, some extremely strong aircraft wire cable, and two very large [about 40" x 24"] Nautilus cam-shaped pulleys. The drawings were for metal fabrication, but I built my pullover from wood, using 4"x4"s lag bolted into the joists in my basement! Actually the machine worked quite well, and I followed the rest of his exercise routine with no more than some homemade squat racks, a chinning bar, and barbells.

In the fall of 1972 my family and I moved to Los Angeles, which was, at the time, the absolute Mecca of bodybuilding. I first joined Bill Pearl's original gym in South Central LA, where I trained with Bill's brother, Harry, who, although somewhat skeptical about Arthur Jones' theories, basically let me use them at the gym. The next year we moved to the San Fernando Valley area of Los Angeles, and so training at Pearl's was no longer convenient. I next trained at the famous Vince's Gym in Studio City. The owner, the late Vince Gironda, was, ironically, a good deal like Arthur Jones. He had built a number of special machines, benches and racks, and if you trained at his gym, you had to do it his way! His way was training 6 days per week, with a different workout each day, usually training 2 or 3 body parts in a given workout. Although there were a lot of very impressive bodybuilders training at Vince's, I didn't do very well: I didn't gain much size or strength, and was tired most of the time, often dreading the day's workout.

Frustrated, I called Arthur Jones. He was out of town, but Ed Farnham told me he might have the solution to my problem. He said there was a new training program in nearby Orange County, which was being opened by a pair of well-known orthopedic surgeons as a rehab facility for their patients, many of whom were professional athletes. The operation was known as SCAR, for Sports Conditioning & And Rehabilitation, and was the first facility on the West Coast to have the entire line of Nautilus machines. They were not accepting non-patients for training, but Ed said he would have Arthur see what he could do.

Sure enough, a week later I got a call from Ed, saying that SCAR would be willing to train me. I was so excited I arranged for a job transfer to my employer's offices in Anaheim, just a short drive from SCAR.

And my goodness, SCAR was a far cry from Vince's Gym! Most of the building was taken up by the physical therapy department, where post-operative patients went every day for treatment. The remaining area of the facility was set aside for training, with an array of blue Nautilus machines situated around the perimeter of the room. I remember those machines, every one, to this very day: Leg Extension, Leg Curl, Hip & Back, Lateral Raise/Shoulder Press, Pullover, Torso Arm, Behind-the-Neck, Rowing Torso, Arm Cross/Decline Chest, and Biceps/Triceps. Otherwise, the place was fairly empty. There were no benches, and no one was allowed in the area unless they were being trained. A trainer monitored each set, noted the number of repetitions completed, as well as the elapsed time it took for the entire workout. One of each exercise, when you completed the required number of reps, additional weight was added for the next workout. Also, you tried to complete the workout as fast as possible. The other main difference was that you were only allowed to train twice a week!

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And to say the least, what a workout! You did one machine after another without stopping, literally rushing from one machine to the next. On the leg machines, the target rep number was 20, on the upper body exercises 15. And, when you completed the last two exercises, Biceps and triceps, you finished with a set of 15 pushups. I'll never forget my very first workout: I really killed the leg exercises, pumping out 20 perfect reps on the first three machines. I started to feel a little lightheaded on the first shoulder exercise, and before I could get into the next machine, I had fainted! I was extremely embarrassed, since Arthur Jones himself had recommended me. And most frustrated, because the trainer made me stop, and said that I was done for the day. Fortunately, I was able to come back the next day, and in that workout I paced myself a bit initially, so I was able to complete the entire workout. Not without a struggle, however. I think I managed about 12 pushups, and then simply collapsed on the floor where I was, and stayed down for at least five minutes.

Because of a job change, and other family commitments, I was only able to stay at SCAR for about 60 days. But I made greater gains from my 17 workouts during that period than at any other time before or since. I had read about the *Nautilus Colorado Experiment*, where Casey Viator had gained 63 pounds of muscle, and lost 18 pounds of fat in just 28 days, which sounded totally unbelievable, in spite of the before and after pictures of Casey, but having done a similar series of workouts I understood how it could have happened. As a result of my two weekly workouts for 8 ½ weeks, I went from 187 to 178 pounds of bodyweight, but I gained 11 pounds of muscle, including adding 1 ¼ inch to my arms and 3 inches to my chest, all while losing 20 pounds of fat! My percentage of body fat, as measured through hydrostatic testing, dropped to 10.8%, the lowest it's ever been!

I now was totally committed to the Arthur Jones method of training, and remain so to this day. By this time his Nautilus machines could be found in most good gyms, and I continued to train as closely to the SCAR protocol as possible, though I was never able to find another facility that had all the machines and where I could do a non-stop workout. I was particularly enamored by some of the newer Nautilus machines, too, like the *OMNI* series [which enabled negative only sets] and especially the *Duo Squat* machine, perhaps my favorite of all the Nautilus pieces. I was finally able to buy a Nautilus Pullover [plate loaded] when I set up a good home gym in the late 1970s, and there, training alone, I could indeed train non-stop.

Since then, the connection I've had to Arthur Jones has been peripheral at best, but an interesting journey nonetheless. In 1987 I moved to the San Francisco Bay Area, and started to do personal training on a part-time basis. Then, in 1990, I attended a fitness expo in San Francisco where I was introduced to Lenda Murray, the reigning Ms. Olympia, who was also a spokesperson for an unusual line of equipment called Hammer Strength, which was founded by Gary Jones, Arthur's son. I was most impressed with the machines, which were beautifully designed, bio-mechanically accurate, and, being plate-loaded, virtually friction-free. They were dramatically different from the Nautilus machines in that they used a leverage system rather than the cam-shaped pulleys, and most were "*Iso-Lateral*" so that the trainee's left and right limbs could be trained independently. Gary, who had worked for his father's company in the past, had been involved in the design of some leverage-type machines in the early 1980s, but those machines, like several others in the Nautilus line over the years, had just about disappeared from the marketplace.

I understood from Gary that Arthur had sold his interest in Nautilus some years earlier, and had started a new company, MedX, most of whose products were medical rehabilitation machines. MedX did have a line of exercise equipment as well, were exhibiting at the same fitness show, and I believe that was the very last time I saw Arthur Jones in person. His MedX machines were radically different from those of Hammer Strength, as might be expected, but they were quite different from the Nautilus machines as well. There were few cams, and they used weight stacks exclusively, but which were not pulled up by the traditional cable and pulley method, but rather were *pushed up* by means of a multiple-bar linkage system, wherein the force exerted by the trainee was directed to underneath the weight stack. This new approach removed most of the friction and drag found in most weight stack equipment, which certainly was a significant improvement. The machines as a group were rather non-distinctive in appearance: tall, rectangular, and almost monolithic. Each machine looked a good deal like all of the others, and, in the Arthur Jones tradition, was available in only one color, in this case a light gray.

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I remember trying both the Hammer Strength and MedX equipment at that show. The Hammer Strength were perhaps a little smoother in operation, were often [especially the Iso-Lateral pieces] more versatile, and were incredibly more unusual visually. Gary Jones was probably the first to use CAD [Computer Aided Designing] to produce exercise equipment, and the finished products, with their long leverage arms, often looked a bit like medieval catapults and other ancient weapons of war.

A few years later, at the beginning of 1995, I decided to start doing personal training full time. I chose a new Powerhouse Gym in Redwood City, California, primarily because they had ordered many new Hammer Strength machines as well as other popular equipment [Cybex, et.al.]. Initially things went quite well. Although there were several other personal trainers on site, my Arthur Jones-inspired high intensity training was unlike anyone else's, and I developed quite a nice client base. My workouts were much shorter and much, much more intense, and I only saw my clients twice a week, which was economically appealing to them. It soon became obvious to me, however, that trying to train people in a commercial gym was not going to work for me. The inability to have access to enough machines for the workouts [someone else was *always* on the next machine you needed to use], and, even worse, the extremely high distraction factor [loud, bad music, televisions, and other gym members] made it virtually impossible to conduct productive workouts. I was reminded constantly of why I preferred to train in a quiet, private environment, and knew that I'd have to have my own exercise studio for my business to be successful.

The next major event in my story occurred a few months later, when I was shopping for equipment for my new exercise studio. Although I planned to get mostly Hammer Strength machines, there were a few rotary movement pieces, like Leg Extension and Biceps Curl, when I decided to look at other brands. I decided on Nautilus, interestingly enough, because they had a series of plate loaded pieces they called *Power Plus*, which were at least semi-leverage design [they had cams as well], and which I believe were the descendants of the leverage pieces Gary Jones had been involved with a decade earlier. I chose the Leg Extension, Seated Leg Curl, Biceps Curl, and

Triceps Extension from this group, and placed an order with the local Nautilus sales rep, John Shaffer. I explained to John that I would be using the machines to train clients in an Arthur Jones' high intensity protocol, and that I would be purchasing the rest of my equipment from Hammer Strength.

John said he certainly understood, and said he knew the local Hammer distributor, Tom Grace quite well. He also asked me if I'd be using, or had even heard about, the new *Superslow* training protocol, which he said was a kind of logical extension of Arthur Jones' theories. I said I hadn't, so he said he'd give me the name of someone to call for more information. Actually, he said, Tom Grace could help me with that as well, since he was a member of the *Superslow Exercise Guild*, as was John. I wanted to know all about it, of course, so he had me do a set of rowing on a Power Plus machine. He put on a good deal less weight than I was used to, and told me to perform the motion in perfect form, taking 10 seconds for the positive portion, and 5 seconds for the negative, and to continue until I reached momentary muscular failure.

Well, that was the most incredible single set of exercise I'd ever done. I could tell by the second rep that it was going to be very hard, because muscles in my mid-back and Biceps were already beginning to quiver. There was a wonderful sense of control, however, and I knew that there was absolutely no risk of injury using this technique. I believe I failed on rep 5, and when I could no longer move the weight, John told to keep trying for another 10 seconds, and then to slowly release the weight back to the starting position. That was it. I not only had gotten a total back workout in about 90 seconds, but I was hooked after just the one set!

Within a week I had joined the Superslow Exercise Guild. I also found out about how Superslow got started: there was a research project jointly sponsored by the University of Florida and Nautilus, and the test subjects were elderly females who suffered from osteoporosis, and who had little if any measurable strength. Knowing that weight-bearing exercise was the only real way to reverse the bone density loss of osteoporosis, the researchers eventually came up with a protocol involving the lightest of weights in extremely slow fashion. The results were certainly impressive: some of the women gained 700% to 800% in strength over the length of the project. And Ken Hutchins, one of the Nautilus employees involved in the project, realized that the protocol could be used by healthy trainees as well, and immediately

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started working on a technical operations manual, and registered the name *Superslow*. Within a year or so he had left Nautilus, completed the manual, and started the Guild.

John Shaffer also recommended I contact Greg Anderson in Seattle, who was one of the Superslow masters. I did, and arranged to meet him the weekend before Christmas in 1995. My wife was scheduled to attend a banquet there that weekend as well, so we went up together, and I was able to spend a good part of Saturday with Greg. He was an exceptional individual, who, like Arthur Jones, was totally committed to the exercise concept he believed in. He talked to me about exercise protocol, went through the *Superslow Technical Manual* with me, let me watch he and his assistants train some clients, and then offered to train me. His operation was little short of amazing: he had taken over a failing Nautilus gym called *Northend Nautilus*, and started giving Superslow lessons, initially in a small back room. He had been in business for about a year, had clients coming to train with him from all over Western Washington, and he and his staff were giving about 200 lessons a week! Most of the equipment he used were older Nautilus machines, which had been retrofitted with new bearings, and often had their cams reversed to change the strength curve of the exercise being performed.

The workout Greg Anderson gave me that Saturday was the most amazing and difficult of my life, harder even than any I had gotten at SCAR 20 years earlier. Incredibly, it was comprised of just *three* exercises, and was completed in a little over *10 minutes!* I performed, in strict fashion, every repetition in the 10 seconds positive, 5 seconds negative, and went to complete failure on each one.

I started with a Smith Machine squat, with my feet placed about 18" in front of me, and I went all the way down until my butt touched the floor. The weight I used was a laughably light 25 pounds or so, but that was more than enough. By the time I finished [9 or 10 repetitions, if I remember correctly], my glutes, quads, and spinal erectors were literally screaming for mercy!

I then did a bench press on a Hammer Strength *Iso-Lateral Horizontal Bench Press*, 4 or 5 reps with about 180 pounds, and finished with a parallel-grip chin on a Nautilus *Assisted Chin-Dip* machine, again for 4 or 5 reps with about 30 pounds of assistance against my bodyweight.

Those were easily the longest 10 minutes of my life! I not only reached complete failure on my legs, back & Biceps, and chest & triceps, but was deeply into oxygen debt and approached systemic failure as well. I had to lie down for about 20 minutes, and it was another 30 minutes before I felt well enough to drive back to the hotel where we were staying in downtown Seattle. My wife wanted to go shopping, but I could only stay with her for about half an hour, and then I had to go back to the hotel for a nap. She barely managed to get me up and dressed for the banquet, but once there I fell asleep at the table, and barely made it back to the hotel room, where she found me fully clothed and dead-to-the-world several hours later when she returned. Nor could she get me up the next morning, and had to change to a later flight back to San Francisco. She had to drive to the airport, I slept as soon as I sat down in the plane until we had landed, and was soundly asleep as we arrived home [her driving, of course], which was at about 7:30 PM. I slept straight through until noon the next day, Monday, and she had to cancel all my scheduled personal training lessons for the day. I know it's hard to believe, but in the 48 hours after my *10-minute workout*, I was asleep for 36 of them!

I was able to open my private personal training studio in May of 1996. As mentioned above, most of the equipment I purchased was by Hammer Strength, which I got from Tom Grace of Hammer Strength Northwest. Tom is a great guy, and has become a good friend over the years. Even more interesting, he was a cadet at the United States Military Academy and on the football team, and took part in the 6-week *Nautilus West Point Study* that Arthur Jones conducted in early 1975. Jones had wanted to replicate the *Colorado Experiment* of 1973, where Casey Viator had made such remarkable gains, but this time with a much larger number of participants.

At West Point, sixteen football players weight trained in the traditional free weight manner, while nineteen players trained using the Arthur Jones high intensity method. After 6 weeks, the Nautilus trained group had increased their strength an average of 59%, while the free weight group had no measurable gains. The Nautilus group also scored significantly higher in heart rate, blood pressure, and joint flexibility testing. Tom was from Cincinnati, which was where the Hammer Strength offices were located, and he had known Gary Jones since his participation in the West

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Point Study. After retiring from a 20-year career in the military, Tom had become one of the six regional distributors for Hammer Strength.

I have been using Superslow, and later my own variation of same, ever since. Ken Hutchins, the founder of the Superslow Exercise Guild and I never did see eye-to-eye. His immense dislike of Hammer Strength equipment [he wants to dictate which equipment must be used for all Super Slow training] and his insistence on things like a dress code [shirt & tie at all times!] for Superslow trainers, as well as his later franchising activities, convinced me that the Guild was not the place for me. I appreciated the system, but had little use for Mr. Hutchins' organization, so I left the Guild a couple of years after joining. Also, I have successfully incorporated several of Arthur Jones other high intensity concepts, like pre-exhaust sets, negative-accentuated and negative only sets, and even slower protocols [30 and even 60 second sets] into my training routines.

When I first opened my One-on-One Fitness private training studio in Redwood City in 1996, literally no one I had met [except for Superslow Exercise Guild members] had ever heard of Superslow. My training studio was located in a kids' gymnastic facility [I rented one, then later a second converted racketball court], where there was no street visibility, no signage, and I have never advertised. Yet amazingly, and almost exclusively through word-of-mouth [current clients referring new clients], my business has prospered. I train my clients no more than twice a week in 20-minute high intensity sessions. Many of my clients train less often, 3 times each 2 weeks, or even once per week. When I decided to relocate to Washington State and sell my California facility, I had 78 active clients and was [along with an assistant] giving 105 lessons per week. Most of my clients had been with me for at least two years, some for much longer.

One woman was with me throughout my 8+ years in California, training with me 742 times. I was also able to train clients effectively with severe physical challenges, including several who had joint replacement surgeries. I received many referrals from orthopedic surgeons and physical therapists, and was able to successfully complete the client's rehabilitation.

I feel particularly privileged to have worked with these individuals, whose continued progress have provided some of the most rewarding moments of my career as a trainer. Two such clients deserve special mention: a married couple, she seriously injured her back in a fall at work, he had a severely damaged shoulder. Both trained with me once a week for the last 2-½ years, and are now stronger than ever, and totally pain-free. He, by the way is 82 years old, she 81. She has returned to her job, too, as a full-time bedside nurse at a local hospital. Although I have a lot of experience, and relate to people well, I am convinced it was the Arthur Jones- inspired routines and equipment that have been most responsible for my success as a personal trainer.

A last footnote or two to my story: A few years ago, Hammer Strength was sold to Life Fitness Corporation, so Hammer Strength is no longer sold through regional distributors like Tom Grace. Since then, Tom, not surprisingly, now sells MedX [Arthur Jones' second company]. When I relocated to Washington State last summer, Tom was able to supply me with the complete line of the MedX Avenger Series of machines [similar to Hammer Strength, plate-loaded, but using 4-bar linkage drive systems], which are the very best for high intensity training that I have ever used. And remember the *Colorado Experiment*? Along with Casey Viator, four NFL football players took part in the study. One of them was Hall of Fame linebacker Dick Butkus. Another was Larry Kaminski, who at the time played center for the nearby Denver Broncos. Today, Larry lives in Port Ludlow, Washington, and is one of my clients.

A lot has happened since I first read his training articles in 1970, but the knowledge I've gained from Arthur Jones throughout all the years since then have had a profound impact on my life and career. I will always be in his debt.

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