

DEVELOP YOUR GRIP

by **Thomas Inch**

From the Manual of
Physical Training

Have you ever paused to think what an important part grip plays in sports — no matter whether rowing, boxing, fencing, cricket, shot-putting, wrestling, particularly weight-lifting — you are tremendously handicapped if your grip is weak, if the forearm muscles are poorly developed.

It is a subject which the author has studied all his life and, in spite of a small hand and wrist, he has been able to develop such a large forearm (once 15 inches, measured with the arm perfectly straight) that he has made many world's and British records in such grip testers as one hand dead lift, rectangular fix, etc., whilst the thick-handled Inch challenge dumb-bell has never been raised one inch from the ground, the offer being £200 to anyone who could lift it single-handed overhead.

Another Inch challenge feat is the Inch challenge grip machine — only one man ever gripped together the

first machine; the second one, still stronger, has yet to be mastered.

The reader, now interested, will immediately wish to know how to set to work to improve his grip.

It comes into play not only in sports and feats of strength but in most of the things one does during a day's work. The typist and piano player need finger and wrist strength, so do many factory workers, engineers, garage employees, everyone who has work to do. It plays an important part when wielding the cricket bat, tennis racket or golf club, is particularly useful to the fencer and boxer, the rowing man.

First of all, no matter what kind of apparatus you use in your daily exercises, make up your mind to develop a special, rather exaggerated, kind of wrist movement which you will find you can easily adapt to light dumb-bell work, expander exercises, wall exerciser, or miniature weight-lifting movements. This is performed as follows:

At the commencement of the movement the wrist is turned over as far towards you, as far inwards, as possible, then twisted away from you, against the resistance of the

dumb-bell, expander handle, wall exerciser handle, or bar of dumb-bell or bar bell, as possible. When the apparatus, no matter what it is, returns to its original position you turn the wrist over and relax all the muscles as much as you can, then when the next repetition is started, as you turn the wrist in the opposite direction you deliberately contract the forearm muscles. Nothing could be simpler.

As time goes on and the repetitions of this wrist movement run into thousands and tens of thousands, it stands to reason that there must be a marked improvement in forearm development, in your *grip*. The old style stiff wrist action will seem foolish to you once you master the new style; what is more, it gives power to the lift, better leverage when using a strong expander; it is a distinct help in feats of strength. You will find, when trying yourself out with the expander, either pulling down from above, or doing the front chest pull, or single-handed pull across the chest, that the wrist flick makes a deal of difference to the poundage you can use.

In a dumb-bell swing the wrist action, turning; the bell

over at the start and flicking it overhead, is a great help, as it is in a single-handed or double-handed snatch or the clean turn to the shoulders of a bar bell. It assists the boxer to put pep into his punch, especially when hitting at close quarters.

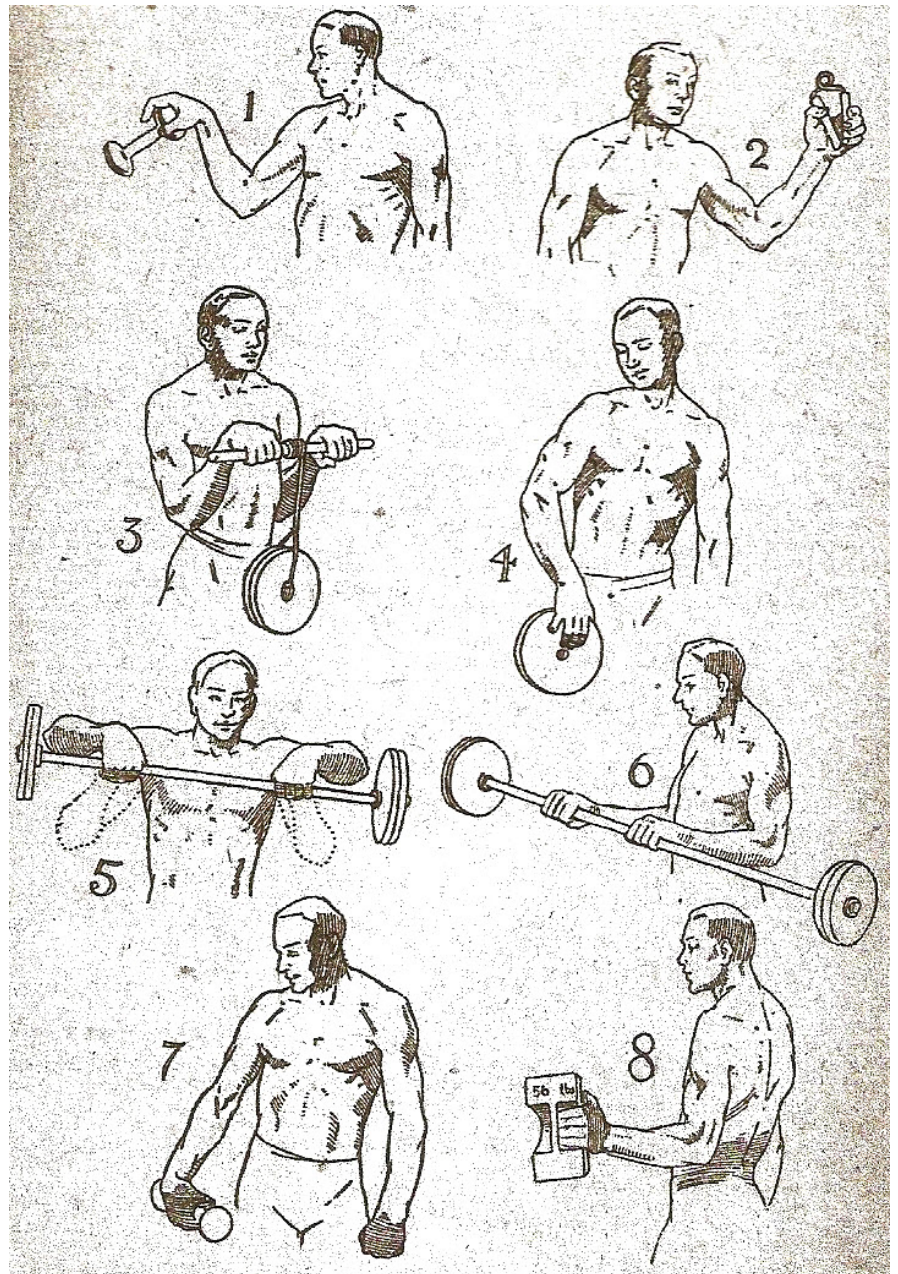
The various exercises are clearly illustrated.

You are shown a specimen wrist movement with apparatus, how to use a grip machine, the use of a wooden bar and weights, picking up a handful of discs, twisting dumb-bells held by the ends, practice with the old-fashioned 56lb. square weight.

Even the gripping of a small rubber ball, which you can carry about in your pocket and use any old time, is a distinct aid.

The forearm muscles should be well massaged after the exercises — they will certainly ache considerably; if they don't, then you are not performing the movements properly.

One simple aid to grip strength is to obtain a short piece of tubing from any plumber or ironmongers, 4- to 5 inches long, about 2 - inches outside diameter. Fix this outside your usual dumb-bell handle — you will have to use a little electrician's tape as packing to prevent the handle slipping about, and the inside inch bar must be dead central or you will get a dead point which will defeat your object — then, commencing at about 56 lbs. or so, work up in swings and



one-hand clean and jerk, using both right and left hands, to 70 lbs., even 80 or 90 lbs.

You will like this work — when you can clean and jerk the 90 you will find your friends fail; they won't like the thick handle, they won't have your power of grip; you will have an interesting feat to set lifters who come round to try their strength in friendly contest.

Do not be disappointed if after a few months work your

forearm has only gone up half an inch. Half an inch on the forearm is equal to about four inches on the chest. If your forearm is already well developed you must rest content with the extra half inch, remember that size is not everything ; you will so tune the grip that it will not let you down and you will be capable of interesting feats of strength such as tearing a pack of playing cards in half, or a thick roll of newspaper.

You will not mind if you come across thick-handled dumb-bells and bar bells, you will welcome them as grip tests where other lifters complain of the size. It is pretty certain that you will note improvement at your pet sport, whatever it may be.

For men of moderate body weight a 12 inch forearm is distinctly good. Middle-weights may go to 12½ inches. If a heavy-weight can show a 13 inch forearm he is doing very well indeed.

Some measurements of famous strong men may be interesting to give you an idea of what forearm development may reach, correctly measured, with the arm perfectly straight, not bent, and the tape placed near the elbow as often obtains in American gymnasiums:

Sandow, 13½ inches.

Hackenschmidt, 13½ inches.

Arthur Saxon, 14½ inches.

Carnera, 265 lbs., 15 inches.

T. Inch, 205 lbs., 15 inches.

HOW TO DEVELOP A STRONG GRIP.

1. Take hold of an iron dumb-bell from 3 to 10lbs. weight. Hold it by the end, with the arm bent, and then rotate it so that the other end of the bell forms the letter S as it revolves in the air. When the right forearm is tired, repeat with the left.

2. Obtain a pair of "Terry" grip machines, either nut-cracker pattern or handles with springs attached. The

simplest way to use them is to hold one in each hand and continue to grip them until the forearm muscles are completely tired, first working with the arms bent, then straight.

3. The "Wind-up." This was a great favourite with my friend Georges Hackenschmidt, the World's Champion wrestler. Obtain a fairly thick piece of round stick, similar to the handle of a broom, but about 1½ inches thick if possible. Attach a strong piece of rope — it may be necessary to pin it with a nail, otherwise there is a tendency to unwind. Commence with a weight suspended as shown, about 15 or 20 lbs. to start with, gradually work up to 30 lbs. or even 35. First wind up, elbows near the hips, arms bent, and palms down, the right hand turning upwards to gather some rope in, then the left, until the weight mounts up to the stick. Return it to the ground and repeat several times, then recommence, this time with the palms up instead of down.

4. If you possess a disc bar bell, using one large 25 or 30lb. disc or several tens or two fifteens to start with, hold them in the right hand and turn them in several times from the "hang" (as shown) to the shoulder, then back again. After tiring the right hand, repeat with the left. Use a little resin.

5. Using a light bar bell only about 50 or 60lbs. weight at first, hold the bell as shown, shoulder high, elbows raised, then turn the bell, allowing

the elbows to go underneath, doing this with wrist strength rather than a jerky movement. Repeat till tired and gradually increase the weight.

6. Using the same light bar bell as in No. 5 exercise, stand with the arms hanging down straight, bell about the middle of your thighs. Now, with the elbows firmly held near hips and not allowed to move, bring the bell up to position shown, hold it there two seconds, then return it to position one and repeat about 5 or 6 times. Gradually increase the weight.

7. Holding a dumb-bell about 40 or 50lbs. weight in the right hand, held at the side of the body, turn the wrist over as far inwards, then as far outwards, as possible. Till tired. You may vary this by tilting the ends of the bell up and down by sheer wrist strength. After tiring the right hand, repeat with the left hand.

8. Obtain an ordinary 56lb. square weight. Stand it on its side and pick it up edge on, the fingers of the hand inside beneath the handle of the weight, the thumb on the bottom of the weight. Always try to pick the weight a little higher, until eventually you can get it to the shoulder. Use a little resin on the hands. Be careful you don't drop the weight upon your foot. After using the right hand, always use the left hand as above.