

THE ART OF EXPANDER PULLING

By **THOMAS INCH**
part one

FOREWORD

It would be a somewhat difficult matter to trace the history of the expander right back to Expander No. 1.

The writer can remember a peculiar looking single strand machine used in ladies' schools and wherever "callisthenics" were practiced nearly forty years ago.

The point which would interest the physical culture public would probably be: "Who made the expander popular?" and possibly the first expert to stock them in quantities and advertise them boldly was the late Professor Szalay, who supplied for some years a pure rubber cord machine, hand wrapped, and he firmly believed in the chest expander both as a curative agent and also as a means of training for weight lifting, at which he was personally adept. He became well known as a trainer of some excellent weight-lifting champions, including the famous Launceston Elliot, Tom Pevier, the Spencer Brothers, etc. When the late Eugen Sandow decided to market the Sandow Developer he carefully arranged his machine so that it could be easily turned into a chest ex-

pander, which I consider proved to the hilt that he recognised the value of same. Sandow had a very strong machine for his personal use, which he was wont to pull out in his show after several strong men had failed to pull it, all pulling together, and it was a proud moment for the writer of this brochure when, thirty-two years ago, he was able to repeat Sandow's feat in front of a large audience at a Leeds music hall.

Advertisements in physical culture journals, with public demonstrations and the formation of an Expander Association, have tended to make the chest expander universally popular.

It is considerably over thirty years since the writer himself took up the sale of the expander, and he can claim to have some thirty-four years' manufacturing and selling experience, at one time this branch of his business growing to such an extent that the special machines were installed and expanders actually manufactured on the premises and large stores as well as the general public supplied.

It is not possible to give actual figures, but tens of thousands of machines and charts must have gone out, and as the writer has never given up the personal use of the expander as a means of

becoming fit, and has personally made world records with the expander, and trained pupils who have made big names in the expander world, sufficient has been said, in all probability, to satisfy the reader that he is fully qualified to deal with the subject as an authority. In the following pages he will endeavour to show that it is a mistake to regard this wonderful aid to fitness as merely a "chest expander" It is possible to use same for the eradication of many ailments and defects, and further to obtain assistance from this handy little machine in connection with most sports and games.

But the truth is that very few culturists know how to use the expander properly. There is a right and a wrong way, and it is to put forward, in simple and easily understood language, information which will prove to be of the utmost value that this booklet has been written.

Remember, there is considerably over thirty years' thought and experience behind all you read, then put the writer's method into practice.

If you do not immediately make better progress in the future than in the past, and note improved development in a short space of time, and if you do not come to realise that you have had at hand

the means of keeping fit and improving out of all knowledge without realising the proper use of same [assuming you have been an expander *user* before obtaining this booklet], then the writer's name was not: THOMAS INCH. York House, Putney, S. W. 15.

Thomas Inch's record feat with the chest expanders and two men

**The Art of Expander Pulling
Or
How to Use an Expander**
GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

The first thing to do is to make sure that your expander is of the detachable kind. The secret of great strength is *gradual progression*, and as there is no doubt whatever that a large majority of physical culturists only use expanders so that they may become stronger than their fellows, it behoves them to place themselves in a position to practice on right lines, and this means using handles which will take several strands.

It is also important that the strands are not too strong. If so, you are compelled to take too big a jump at times; you may work up to, say, two Hercules strands, but it would be too much to pass to three of such heavy poundage.

But of course, if your machine has one or more hercules strands [the strongest made], there is nothing



whatever to prevent your obtaining weaker strands to add from time to time, or for strength testing purposes. Handles are supplied with one hole, three holes, or five holes, and there are also the special strength testing handles sometimes called "Continental Handles," which take practically any number of strands, and I am not such if it is not the best plan to purchase these right at the start. Then, although the handles cost you a little more, you are in a position to add any number of strands you may desire, and it certainly adds to the interest of expander pulling if make an occasional test in one or more well-known positions, such as:

- THE FRONT CHEST PULL - 2
- OVERHEAD DOWNWARD PULL [without leg bend] - 9
- MILITARY PRESS - 12
- SINGLE ARM PULL ACROSS CHEST - 6

The numbers appearing against the above terms indicate the position or number of these well-known pulls and strength tests on the Inch large wall chart for purposes of identification. Many of my pupils make a point of entering their capabilities in their diaries, and then from time to time they make fresh tests and so are able to estimate their progress. It is also interesting and helpful to work to a schedule, obtaining a sufficient number of strands at the start and

selecting your set of special exercises, say twelve in number, to be performed ten times each hand once or twice a day.

Enter the number of strands you find it comfortable and easy to exercise with, going right through your movements without a pause if possible, thus developing endurance as well as mere muscle.

Start with, say, only five or six repetitions each hand of each exercise, and gradually work up to ten each hand. Keep at ten for a week or two, then return to five or six repetitions, and *add another strand*.

Besides adopting this method of gradual repetition, you are strongly advised not only to exercise in front of a mirror, watching the play of the muscles, but also endeavour to obtain at least a smattering of anatomical knowledge, so that you come to know the names of the muscles exercised by any given movement.

If a day arrives when you do not feel "up to the mark," either take of a strand [all up-to-date expanders have spring couplings, so that you may do this in a moment], or cut down on repetitions; staleness must be kept at bay, and the exercise must always be pleasant and interesting, and never a bore or too fatiguing.

Don't exercise too near meal times or too near bed time—one error leads to indigestion, the other to insomnia. After your exercise, always

practice a little self massage, and it will certainly assist development and keep the muscles supple if you use a little embrocation, the best the writer knows being Eiliman's which is also handy for ridding one of slight sprains, etc. If a machine has been purchased and it appears that the strands stop short just before the arms straighten, then a simple of increasing their length and adding to the life of them is to add metal rings to lengthen the reach.

That is one of the advantages of the Continental handles - rings can be easily fitted of any size, and any number of strands can be added.

A further warning is against the dangerous practice of placing the handle beneath the foot - it may slip out and cause an accident. Still further, If from this position the attempt be made to press the other handle right overhead, you are CERTAIN to overstretch the cord (or cords) and damage them irretrievably. The expander puller aiming at increased development should study diet just as much as the health seeker, who finds in this simple but effective little machine a means of improving fitness. Space will not permit the subject to be dealt with at length. One simple piece of advice is to immediately substitute Hovis for any other kind of bread you may be using.

There is a scientific reason why Hovis nourishes the

body more than any other bread can do, and it is that there is 25 per cent. of added germ of wheat in each Hovis loaf. The physical culturist has only to make the change suggested and note results to quickly satisfy himself that it is well worth while. For quickly replacing broken-down tissue or for making a wonderful "health sandwich," nothing can equal Bovril, the writer's stand-by for nearly forty years.

Bovril has made its name as a 'flu fighter, the invalid's restorative, and the athlete's food par excellence. It replaces broken-down muscular tissue more quickly than anything else the writer knows, and cannot be too strongly recommended. By arrangement with the author of this small booklet, a special diet to suit the needs of any enquirer can be drawn up.

RIGHT AND WRONG METHODS OF USING THE EXPANDER.

If I were asked "What is the most common mistake made by expander users?" I think I would reply: "Using a machine which is too strong." To benefit properly a machine must pull smoothly without jerk or jar; the user must be able to run through his exercises ten times each hand with hardly a pause for rest. When I see a pupil going red in the face and obviously straining to use a machine which is just one strand too strong for him, I know that, unless he listens



showing good form

to advice, he will come to fear rather than enjoy his exercises, and there will probably be a puller lost to the expander game.

One has to consider health benefits before mere muscular development.

It is far better to use a machine which can be pulled with comfort and enjoyment and set apart a special time

for testing strength, when as many strands as you can handle can be added for just one or two pulls in any given position.

Another very common fault is wrong breathing. Most pullers breathe just anyhow; they never seem to breathe twice alike - they are not on any special breathing system - but I shall try to prove that it will pay handsomely to immediately adopt one, and, further, that this is a subject not properly understood even by so-called experts. I have proved hundreds of times that with a proper breathing system:

- 1 Constipation can be cured.
- 2 Obesity is quickly reduced.
- 3 Deportment is improved.
4. Chest measure and expansion are quickly and substantially increased.
5. Tone of abdominal muscles is improved.

All you have to do is to adopt a special position by leaning slightly forwards at the waist, and then slightly hollow the back. Having practiced this until it become mechanical, adopt a system of inhaling deeply,

BUT NOT HURRIEDLY OR JERKILY, AND NEVER HOLD THE BREATH.

All inhalations to be performed as the strands are pressed out, and all exhalations to be performed as the strands return to their normal length. What could possibly be more simple? And results are really surprising. This is one of the most valuable pieces of advice I can possi-

bly give any reader after all these long years of study of this particular method of exercising.

Having dealt with the important matter of correct breathing, we come to another common error- wrist work. It is customary to work with a stiff unbending wrist, just letting the arm do the work. But in cricket, golf, billiards, rowing, fencing and weight lifting, what an important part wrist work plays, what "follow through" it gives, what excellent timing to a stroke additional power! With a little practice, irksome and strange at first, it will be found that an exaggerated wrist movement can be adopted with every advantage, certainly to wrist and forearm development, and the puller will find that he can even stretch out more strands and "go up one" immediately he has mastered this method, which works in very well with the deep breathing referred to.

You commence with the wrist turned in towards you; then, immediately you take the strain of the strand, twist the wrist over away from you *in the direction the handle is going.*

Even when the strand is fully stretched, the wrist work does not come to an end. You try to press the wrist over in the direction it was going just a little further, thus "setting" the forearm muscles to the fullest extent and ensuring a full contraction not only of the extensors of the forearm, but also driving the

strand another inch or so out, and ensuring full contraction of the triceps muscle and lateral deltoid, and possibly, according to position, several important back muscles, such as latisimus dorsi, etc. You can readily understand that, just as continual dropping wears away a stone, this method, running as it does in to tens of thousands of repetitions as time goes on, **MUST**, and certainly does, have a wonderful effect on the system generally.

You will have the satisfaction of knowing that you are at long last using the expander in a scientific manner, and that there are some thirty-four or thirty-five years' thought behind all that you are now practicing.

I will now deal with *speed*. It is, perhaps, difficult to explain what the best speed of each movement should be on paper.

But, as happens in so many cases, **MODERATION** - the middle course is the best. This means, of course, that it is a mistake to practice the exercises either too quickly or too slowly. If you aim at great speed, you make correct breathing difficult, if not impossible. If you go too slowly, you develop the wrong type of muscle, and you handicap yourself in the pulling out of your machine.

... to be continued ...

THE PERILS OF OUTDOOR TRAINING

