

Arnold Lifts Twice a Day: Why Does He Bother?

By Ken Lizotte CMC

The passing of Jack Lalanne, who inspired so many of us in an earlier era to make physical fitness a priority throughout our lives, offers a chance to step back and evaluate. Has running, walking, weightlifting, biking, aerobics really helped us? If yes, how so?

Surely, one can bet that Jack, after 96 years, was correct in his assessment that eating right and actively moving every day was the path to health and longevity. But is that all there is? Has our dedication to muscle tone benefited us in other ways as well?

Consider a recent comment by Katherine Schwarzenegger, author of the new book *Rock What You've Got: Secrets to Loving Your Inner and Outer Beauty*, who revealed that her dad, the ex-"governator" of California, until January chief executive for seven years of the 8th largest economy on the planet, typically rose daily at 5:30 AM during his nearly two terms to work out with weights... then went back for a second workout later in the day!

As a longtime weekend weightlifter myself, who currently presides over a modest consulting firm in Concord, Massachusetts, I wondered how Arnold used to manage this. I often find it hard to make the time within any given workweek to squeeze in

even one or two workouts, despite my love of them (like Arnold, I actually enjoy working out).

Yet with tons of political items on his plate every day, Arnold still found a way to make time for working out, not just once a day but twice. And this so many years past his prime as Mr. Universe, Mr. Olympia and Conan the Barbarian.

Why did he bother? Was it merely what one would assume, i.e., that weightlifting, fitness and bodybuilding are "in his blood," as Doug, a colleague of mine at my local Gold's Gym, put it? Or did he do it for his political image, to fight off legislative "girly-men," or maybe to keep himself fit for the day when he likely returned to movies and their 20 million-dollar payoffs?

Arnold's daughter Katherine didn't say but I'm thinking there may have been another motivation, one that only we workout buffs, especially the weightlifters, know all too well: working out in general, and weightlifting in particular, can boost the skills and traits that contribute to overall life success. Arnold may have been pumping iron twice a day to keep his goal-setting success rate as buff as his triceps.



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Consider these four workout benefits:

1. Perseverance: A novice in the gym will at first typically be capable of lifting only very light weights. But over time even the weakest

newcomer makes significant gains in strength and ability. Life lesson: Keeping at something pays off.

2. Heightened self-confidence:

Progress in a gym positively affects one's self-esteem and self-confidence. We are proud at what we can achieve. Life lesson: We come to understand we can achieve great things.

3. Expanded self-image: As we get stronger and stronger, we begin pushing far beyond our initially-imposed limits especially those in our heads as opposed to our

sinews. Life lesson: We're all far more powerful than we tend to give ourselves credit for.

4. Failure becomes desirable. The aim of weightlifting in particular is to raise the maximum amount of weight possible for a maximum number of repetitions, until targeted muscles are exhausted and can't go on any more. Those muscle tissues then break down, then slowly build themselves up again over the next 48 hours. By then, we are literally stronger than before, in effect, succeeding by aiming for, and attaining, failure. Life lesson: Failure is not to be

avoided in life but in fact helps us achieve our goals.

Often when I enter a gym, some business or personal challenge is heavy on my mind, a vexation I need to face later that day. But as I go through my workout and push myself to my limits, I think, "I can do this, I can conquer these 15 reps. I can add this extra 20-pounds. I can do this."

So lifting weights empowers me to take on the day. Arnold (and Jack) I know would agree.