

Could this be the exercise method
we've all been waiting for?

SuperSlow

Or is it too good to be true?

By Kathie Strauss

How many times have you heard this lately? “I just love exercising! I look forward to getting on that treadmill everyday!” Yes, chances are, unless you’re a marathon runner or a bodybuilder, you’re not looking forward to going to the gym. Or maybe you’re feeling frustrated because you just aren’t seeing any results. When it comes to baby boomers, exercise has become something that looms over us as the panacea for staying young—the best way to keep things like osteoporosis and the other ogres of aging at bay.

Well, what if you could get into super shape by adding a once-a-week, 30-minute workout to your exercise routine, without even breaking a sweat? Ah, the ears perked right up! Enter the world of SuperSlow®. The new full-body, weight-based program promising maximum results in minimum time, with little or no chance of injury. Now, other than someone feeding us bonbons while we actually do it, that sounds pretty attractive.

That’s why the SuperSlow® method has famous devotees such as Lesley Stahl and Barbara Walters. Not only do they like the valuable time they save, but, like so many others, they delight in the fact that there is no cardio involved. This is a non-dance, non-kick, non-step, non-time-consuming workout that you can almost look forward to doing once a week. You could not take more; you do not need more. The concept is simple: the more muscle you have, the higher your metabolism is, and thus the more calories you’re able to burn. And that means all the things on our wish list for fitness are right within our grasp—weight loss, strength, more energy, being able to greet each day *ready to go*, with little or no aches and pains. The universal goals of a generation might not seem so far off after all.

PERFORM™ asked a SuperSlow® trainer and a master-level SuperSlow® instructor to take us through what this phenomenon is and why it can deliver such spectacular results.



Q: “What is the SuperSlow® method and why are the benefits potentially so profound?”

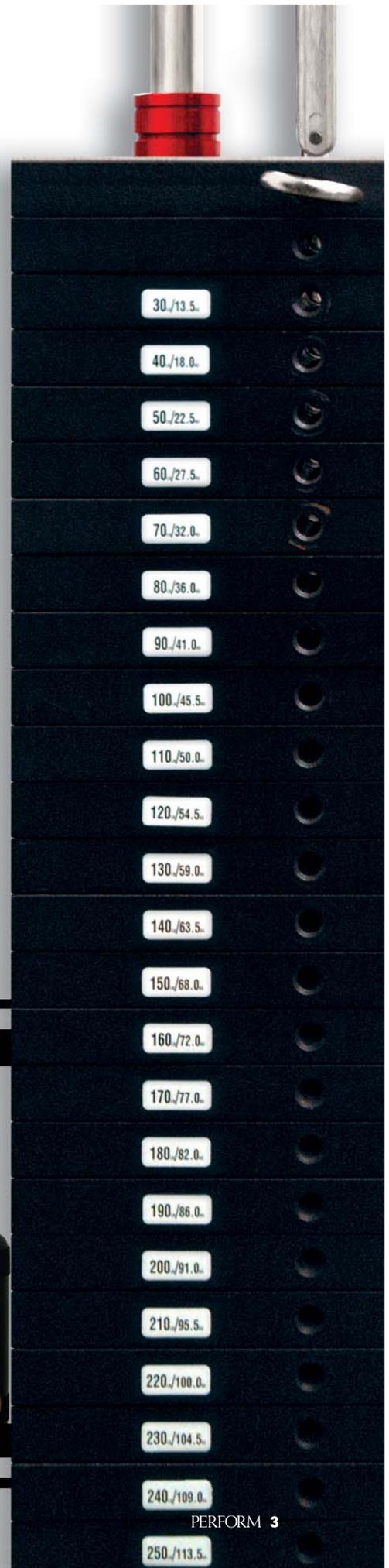
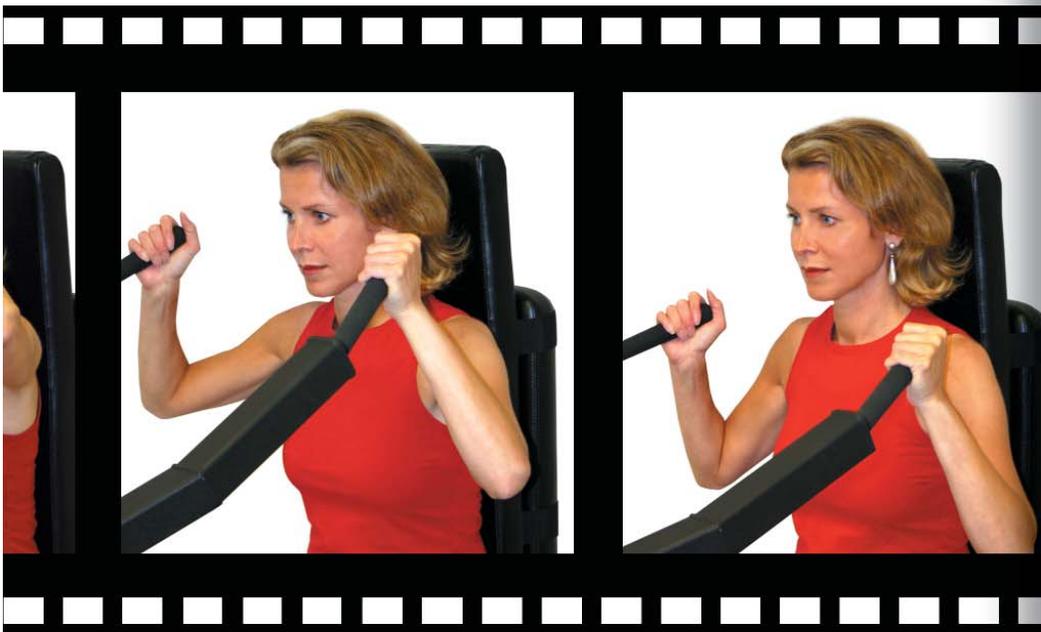
A: “SuperSlow® is a form of calculated weight lifting and resistance training done just once a week for 20 to 30 minutes total. It is done with slow, fluid, deliberate movements with no stopping between repetitions. By slowing down this process, you achieve greater intensity, allowing you to reach the point we call muscle ‘failure’—the place where you can lift no further, but push on another few seconds. That is in fact where the real benefit occurs. As you become stronger, more weight is added to this circuit. I realize it sounds funny to say that ‘failure’ is a goal, but that’s the way it is. The nurturing and rebuilding of the muscles occurs in the following week, before your next session.”

Q: “What actual effect does ‘slow’ have on your muscles and why does it tone better and produce better results than three or more days a week of lifting free weights?”

A: “The only advantage that free weights have over machines is that they’re cheap, adjustable, and lack friction. Aside from that, they are basically an adjustable brick. Yes, they provide resistance, but different body parts have their own unique requirements. This is why we need to figure out what the body does, and then build the equipment to accommodate that. The ‘slow’ effort minimizes momentum, which keeps the muscle more efficiently loaded, which makes the exercise more efficient. ‘Slow’ also minimizes acceleration and force, both of which in excess can cause injury. If you can’t lift it slowly, then don’t try to lift it at all. Explosive movements accomplish nothing.”

Q: “Would you recommend this type of training to people of all ages?”

A: “First, anyone with a medical condition or injury should consult their doctor before looking to begin an exercise program. We have found SuperSlow® to be appropriate for any age or fitness level. In fact, the majority of my clients are in their late 40s and 50s. I even have a few 70-plus clients who come back week after week. Low-force lifting, for a minimum of time, has an incredibly low potential for injury, making SuperSlow® a very safe method of training—not to mention highly effective. It never ceases to surprise people what they are capable of doing. Many who’ve been scared to do anything find they’re actually quite strong. It’s quite a confidence builder.”



SuperSlow

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Q: “We’ve always been told that sweating is good, that it cleanses the body of unwanted toxins, and that it’s an integral part of exercise. It emotionally tells you you’ve worked out well. Why is this not as important with this method?”

A: “Whether sweat accumulates or not doesn’t tell us how hard we’re working. You expend the same amount of calories lifting 100 pounds 10 times whether you sweat or not. Sweating doesn’t rid the body of toxins. That’s what the liver and kidneys are for. Sweating is the body’s cooling system. However, if you get so hot that you begin to sweat a lot, it may be a sign that other deleterious things could happen. The potential for heat exhaustion exists, where concentration and thinking capacity can become fuzzy and deteriorate. It is much better to remain as cool as possible when you train. If the subject starts in a chilled condition, and the room is kept cool, well-ventilated, and low in humidity, then, even if the subject does sweat, that sweat will cool the subject.”

Q: “At the start of each session, do you pick up where you left off? Or immediately jump up to more weight?”

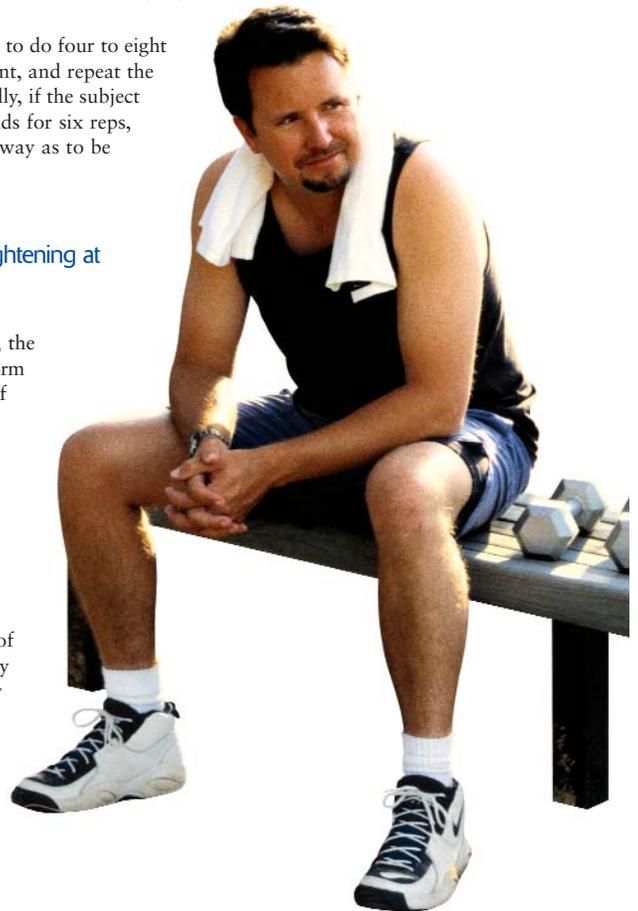
A: “It depends. The usual guidelines call for moving up in weight after being able to do four to eight repetitions at a given weight. We increase the weight approximately five percent, and repeat the cycle, sticking with the new weight until eight reps can be performed. Eventually, if the subject started at 100 pounds for six reps, he can progress, for example, to 200 pounds for six reps, having doubled his strength. And because the progression occurred in such a way as to be within the body’s capacity for improvement, safety was never compromised.”

Q: “As you push your clients to achieve higher weight, does it produce a tightening at the neck or shoulders or in other sensitive muscle groups or joints?”

A: “SuperSlow® emphasizes minimizing tension in the neck and joints. Therefore, the potential for injury is reduced as well. This is achieved by maintaining good form and relaxation of uninvolved body parts. Because we train through a full range of motion, the muscles never get the opportunity to tighten up throughout each repetition.”

Q: “We often hear that it is necessary to do some form of exercise everyday. What is your opinion on this?”

A: “It all boils down to how much *should* we do? With SuperSlow®, it is as much as necessary, and not as much as you can tolerate. If we can get everything out of one 20-minute session per week, why do more? You don’t get proportionally greater results from doing more. However, this doesn’t mean you can’t enjoy other forms of exercise, such as taking a long walk or a relaxing yoga class, to round out your fitness goals.”



The SuperSlow® method was created by Ken Hutchins at Nautilus Industries in Florida as part of an osteoporosis study. More research is still being done, but many years of experience have demonstrated that the SuperSlow® method provides a pleasant and rewarding experience. Most importantly, it should give us all pause to rethink our method of keeping the ogres of aging at bay.

For more information or to get in touch with a SuperSlow® trainer, please call

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Working with a trainer familiar with SuperSlow® will ensure you’re performing your workouts as safely, correctly, and slowly as you should.