

**It's Friday
And
I Don't Want To Train**

**by
Alan Palmieri**

Okay all you old timers - remember the song that went, "Well it's Saturday night and I ain't got nobody!" Well; "It's Friday and I don't want to train." Rare and unusual but the feeling sometimes hits me and hits me hard. I just didn't want to workout today. Oh the excuses I came up with. I even asked my bride if she needed me to take her shopping. Think I was kidding when I said I didn't want to train! It's really bad when I ask to go shopping! Sometimes feelings like these result from over training, it's the body suggesting a rest. Sometimes it's because an illness is coming on and you need to rest to allow the immune system to work. It may also be due to mental fatigue when you have too many problems and projects floating around in your head. More often than not however, it's a result of just being lazy and that's what I was this Friday and I knew it.

I had changed my routine around about five weeks ago and I guess I was getting stale and needed a complete overhaul in my workout schedule. Friday was the day set aside to work calves, abs, delts, and forearms. I also do a little walking and running. It was the morning and you could really feel fall in the air. After the long hot summer it felt great. I stepped outside around 4:30 am and took a couple of deep breaths. Boy did it feel good. That time of the morning is so quite and peaceful, I can begin the day with a clear head. I took a couple of sips of coffee and retreated downstairs to begin thinking about the day I had ahead of me. I began by checking emails and working on correspondence. All of a sudden it hit me; I don't want to workout today. Skip it! One day what will that hurt! Oh those little temptations that run unchecked in a persons mind!

Most Fridays I was hitting it fairly early about 6:00 am. Since I wasn't using extremely heavy weights the early morning was fine even though I prefer mid morning or very early afternoon, mainly due to age creeping up on me I guess. Early mornings seem more difficult as it takes me longer today to loosen up then it did a few years back. Getting my workout done early I could finish and still have a full day to work and do what needed to be done. Today I just did not have the desire to do anything... especially workout and because I had so much work to do there would be no way I could start my workout before mid-morning anyway.

I fought the urge to skip today's normally enjoyable workout and around 10 o'clock started with a brisk walk. Almost every step I kept telling myself I didn't need to workout today. I didn't have the desire or energy. Oh how I fought the urge to skip today's session. Around 10:30 I went into my garage where I house my equipment. I looked around and sat on a bench thinking of times past and how I use to train, days long gone past. Well, let's get to it I thought. I loaded up a homemade rack and proceeded to do standing calf raises, my mind still not into the workout. I stopped the first set short and stood back from the bar. I added some plates and proceeded with the next set of calf raises, again stopping short of my usual number of reps. Once again I did the same for the third, fourth, fifth, and sixth set. I couldn't get into it at all. This time I walked outside and tried to clear my head.

I thought to myself, "You're going to workout no matter what you say or do so why don't you just go back and start all over and this time put your mind and body into it." I returned and decided to change my routine around a little concerning sets and reps. I loaded the bar for Standing Calf Raises and hammered out six sets of ten reps with great rhythm – full contraction on each rep and full extension. The calves were on fire and fully pumped. Combined with the first six sets of half hearted calf raises these six sets really did the trick. The feel made me more inclined to finish my workout with focused concentration and determination. About forty-five minutes later I had just completed one of the best workouts I ever had.

The poundage I used was moderate today, not overly heavy and not extremely light either. Something that allowed good form yet kept me from going to failure on any rep. Because of some problems I have not been able to perform any direct abdominal work. I have been focusing on the lower abs trying to come up with some movements that felt comfortable and I was able to do.

I was thinking of the great Dave Draper and his constant praise for supersets. I too enjoy supersets for a number of reasons and not the least of which is the results they produce. Years ago I would superset almost everything. Dave is right in his praise and recommendation of the method. Being older today I find supersets best suited when I am using moderate poundage, today was just such a day.

After completing my calf raises I did supersets on all movements combining them in such a way as to produce a nice workout rhythm. I found a new burst of energy after hitting my calves and found my mind had accepted the fact I was going to train no matter what it told me or how I felt. I felt my mind and body coming together and we moved in unison throughout the workout. No more negative thoughts, I was in the middle of a battle and I was winning. That's how I often visualize my workouts, as a war between the iron and me. When the iron wins out I think, "Well, you won that battle but the war isn't over yet." Today the mind was winning out over matter.

Days like this do come up from time to time. I think it's a test of will and mental desire. Beginners often succumb to the temptations laid before them whereas the seasoned bodybuilder has gone through the process and they know the pitfalls of following the simpler path of skipping a workout. I recall in my younger days training not only in all kinds of weather as I wrote in one of my articles titled "The Carport," but also while having colds and being sick. Things I wouldn't do today and to be honest I couldn't do today. Ah, once again a reflection of youth and its inexperience of knowing what to do and how to do it!

Experience has taught me many lessons. I try not to make the same mistake more than once. Occasionally, for any number of reasons, I do mess up and make the same mistake more than once. Why, I don't know. When it comes to training I often make the same mistake a lot more than just one time. One thing I have learned is that when I train, it does not need to be an all out effort every workout. I've stated repeatedly how I train more instinctively today than ever before and that is true. I also do things differently than before in that if for some reason I am unable to hit the weights, I'll walk, perform calisthenics, Dynamic Tension movements, martial arts movements, yoga, mediation, or some other form of activity. My intensity level is adjusted based on any number of considerations. I also do take layoffs from time to time but never due to laziness or to appease my mind when it is trying to convenience me that I need to slack off.

"It's Friday and I don't want to train," but I did and I'm glad of it. Now I can enjoy taking it easy Saturday and Sunday with no regrets, whereas if I had skipped my workout I would have been miserable. I also know the next time my mind tries to play it's little – "don't train" game I'll be better prepared... after all, I've gone down this road many, many times in the past and recognize it will surface again sometime. You control the mind; never let the mind control you! Happy Training!

By the way, it was a dumb mistake on my part to ask my wife about going shopping, Friday night I had to do just that. I controlled my mind this Friday but I wish I had also controlled my tongue. Oh well, another Palmieri flub!

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