

# **Times They Are Changing**

by

**Alan Palmieri**

When was the last time you picked up a bodybuilding magazine and were able to read through it and understand what the writer(s) was trying to say? Heck, for that matter when was the last time you were able to read through a bodybuilding magazine and even pronounce the words printed in the articles or ads? For me the answer is... “It’s been a very l-o-n-g time.” Maybe you’re not like me but if you are, it’s been a long time since you could actually sit down and read a bodybuilding magazine with any real sense of enjoyment and understanding without having Webster next to you. Instead of reading for enjoyment, it has become more like preparing for a test. Instead of reading for information, I’m seeing words I don’t understand and can’t even find in a dictionary.

I can no longer tell my grandkids “don’t just look at the pictures, *read!*” Because the last few bodybuilding magazines I’ve picked up that’s all I did – looked at the pictures. The paper and photo quality has improved greatly but the content has become so technical I find it boring. Some material is so extreme in scientific mumbo jumbo and words that resemble nothing more than babble it does nothing but frustrate me.

Now some might say that my inability to understand comes from the fact my mind is lacking in one way or another, perhaps a chemical imbalance. I won’t take offense at that since I consider myself a realist and perhaps that position might just contain a great amount of truth to it. Some may say I’m just not a very bright person in the first place. Again, no offense is taken as I know my elevator goes to the top but even I admit it sometimes makes stops along the way. I read for two reasons; to learn and for enjoyment. I find it great when a publication allows me to do both in the same sitting.

One day after reading through a leading bodybuilding magazine I had purchased off the newsstand, I became frustrated reading and trying to figure out what the authors were attempting to say. “Am I losing it”? “Have my mental abilities left me”? “Am I still on planet earth”? I couldn’t understand, let alone pronounce, the vast majority of material, and that included the ads in the magazine, in fact they were worse than the articles. This really started me thinking. How many others out there are feeling the same frustration I am! Sales of bodybuilding magazines are dropping not climbing... could this be one of the contributing factors?

I decided I would talk with others I’ve known who are and have been around for sometime to get their take on things. To my pleasant surprise they felt the same way I do. In fact the majority I spoke with said they didn’t understand most of what is in today’s magazines but they were embarrassed to admit it, and they didn’t have the time it took to research what was written or advertised. Precisely my position! Boy was I happy to find I was not alone in my confusion and frustration of today’s bodybuilding publications.

Sure bodybuilding is a science, up to a point that is. For the most part it has always been and most likely always will be partially scientific, but that doesn’t mean you need to be a rocket scientist to be a bodybuilder. The advancement in nutrition and supplementation has progressed forward in leaps and bounds, but beneath it all... it boils down to common sense. A sensible diet and nutrition consisting of the right amounts of proteins – carbohydrates – fats and calories, add in vitamins and minerals with a good exercise routine and some steel to throw around and there you have it.

Chuck Sipes did most of his training in his garage where he had some iron, along with odds and ends to workout with. Few were as strong as he was. In fact he was perhaps one of the strongest bodybuilders ever. Not many were developed as well and even fewer could claim the titles he captured; Mr. America – Mr. Universe – Mr. World.



Chuck Sipes

Chuck ate wholesome foods - trained heavy and hard, he pushed himself to the limits. He would rather hike in the mountains than lay around watching T.V. He knew how to take his God given genetics and make the most of them. No fancy workout equipment or hi-tech nutritional support with words unpronounceable, just down to earth diets and training. If you ever read any of Chuck's courses or material, if you were privileged enough to talk with him, you know how he provided details of his training and diet without using words to confuse. Chuck presented in plain English, training, diet, and nutrition information anyone could easily understand. He wasn't out to impress anyone.

For some reason there seems to be a rush to complicate things. A sense exists that seems to suggest the bigger the words and more complex the meanings the better. I simply just do not buy it. Sure science is complex but give me a break. How much is all the hoopla really valid and helpful for a bodybuilder anyway?

Manufactures, sales and promotional representatives of supplement companies have caused the industry a lot of trouble, not to mention the possibility of some very strict and severe government intervention that is being considered. All which could have been avoided had they just been honest in the first place. Now those of us who believe in

supplements may soon have to suffer due to the greed and fallacies perpetrated by some supplement manufactures. One bad apple can spoil the bunch and often does.

False or misleading claims are not new to bodybuilding. If you go back and research bodybuilding history you will find fabrications, misleading statements, exaggerated claims, hoaxes, and outright lies from the very beginning. Don't rush to condemn me yet, I'm not saying all companies are guilty of such actions but I'd also not be truthful if I didn't say some are guilty. And you would have to be naïve as a new born baby to not admit it yourself.

I believe, no... I know, bodybuilding has some of the most honest, sincere, and decent people in the world involved in it. I also recognize that no matter what it is there will be those who will do what they want for their own gain without respect or concern of others. That's life and that's just the way it is. I guess I just regret that we, the bodybuilding community, do such a lousy job of policing ourselves. In our quest for more size, strength, mass combined with cuts, we fall prey to so much garbage. We allow hucksters to make trash something to be desired. Along with steroids, we now have to contend with articles and ads promoting things and words the vast majority of us can't even pronounce or find the meaning of.

I don't think it's necessary to use words only a few scholars can pronounce. What is needed is honest information in easy to understand language. If one desires to dig deeper into a subject then by all means sure, give references or additional material as complex and detailed as required, but for the vast majority of us it's too much.

The old saying less is more seems to be appropriate today more so than in years past, at least for me that is. In closing I just want to make one last point... to drive it all home you might say. I just finished reading two articles in a leading bodybuilding magazine. The articles were about training for size. Each article listed the sets and reps scheme followed by a current top contender. I read each article four times. That's right four times and still can't explain what the heck the workout scheme was. The authors did

a horrible job of defining what he was trying to say and complicated it to the point of garble.

I took the magazine to some people I respect and asked them to read the two articles. Not one was able to interrupt what they had just read let alone comprehend it. I hate I spent money on the magazine and can assure you it won't happen again anytime in the near future.

I would just like to see a bodybuilding publication that provided information in an understandable way. Something without all the unpronounceable words or super new methods of training that get so complex you need a degree to figure it all out. No false ads glorifying supplements and products that are useless. The truth presented without all the flashy girly images. I respect and appreciate beauty as much as anyone else but when half the magazine is nothing but "T&A" I'm not interested. I'm looking for information on bodybuilding, not a "girly" magazine.

Bodybuilding magazines of the 60's may have not been much more than an advertisement for the publishers products and the majority of the articles may have been written by ghost writers, but they could be understood, enjoyed, and provided some useful information and they definitely were not X-Rated due to all the "T&A". Ah, bring back the good old days. The honest straight forward information provided by Perry Rader's Ironman magazine. Muscular Development and Strength and Health backed by York Barbell, Bob Hoffman and the AAU. Joe Weider and his legion of magazines, Mr. America, Young Mr. America, All American Athlete, Muscle Builder and of course the IFBB. Dan Luire's Muscle Training Illustrated, the WBBG and Dan's ongoing challenges to Grimek, Hoffman, Weider. Now those were the days. A lot of circus atmosphere sure... but also enjoyment and solid understandable information.

Were the magazines of those days full of false information... you bet they were but not to the extent they are today. They were also full of ads promoting the publishers goods. In fact, in those days most of the prime bodybuilding publications contained more

ads than anything else. Like I said, that's the way bodybuilding has always been... but you could at least understand what the articles were saying and you could also understand the ads. Was it a better time? That all depends on who you talk with but one thing is certain, it was a far less complicated time. Sometimes I'll read through one of the vintage magazines I have and discover an article on a subject covered in a current magazine. Surprisingly, the subject matter is the same and so is the point being made, thirty years later, amazing how much things change but stay the same. The difference is, I understood what the vintage magazine article said and it said it without using words only a scientist could comprehend.

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