

Is SuperSlow H.I.T....?

Is SuperStatics H.I.T... ?

by Ken Hutchins

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A good friend of mine texted me over this past weekend:
“Is SuperSlow H.I.T.?”

The quick answer: Yes.

In general, I don't like H.I.T. I don't want to be associated with H.I.T. I'm embarrassed by H.I.T.

The cult of H.I.T. is 99% inane and ignorant and stupid and dangerous and largely corrupt and profane.

[Please understand that I am *not* using “cult” in the pejorative. Please read my *Cult Bashing 2.0* on the Non-Exercise page at seriousexercise.com.]

I do not want to be associated with narcissistic bodybuilding, tattoos, drugs, people yelling and screaming, homosexual or heterosexual display, child porn, illicit drugs and drug abuse, religious or political extremism, testosterone or estrogen chauvinism, hate speech, racism, loud music, tobacco use, sports bragging, athletics mentality, slamming barbells and weight machines, nasty and sweaty/ dank and smelling and dark gyms, and many other things associated with H.I.T.

When I hear someone mention, “H.I.T.” I automatically envision a videotape shown to me in 1984 by Ted Lambrinedes, (before he was awarded his PhD), of a crazed football player in a dark basement gym violently throwing the weights of Nautilus machines being *supposedly supervised* by an equally bezerko chiropractor who was clad neck-to-ankles in tattoos. Ted was

proud of the video until I told him that he should be ashamed to display it as an example of a properly conducted high-intensity Nautilus workout.

I am an extremely tolerant person. I do not judge people for participation in some of the foregoing activities. I'm only saying that I do not want it around me or my exercise subjects.

I want to be allowed to focus on the purity of the application of raw exercise. And I want to be able to deliver it to my clients in a way that I, as well as my subjects, are insulated from the foregoing. I want peace, serenity, and a place to focus so that I can inroad into my muscular strength as deeply and as safely as possible. And I want to be able to offer this—distraction-free and safely—to others who seek its techniques and benefits.

My friend seemed to strongly agree with my sentiments, but then he protested that "...isn't H.I.T. just the cult originated by Arthur Jones and Nautilus?" "Isn't it just Arthurism?," he seemed to ask.

First, I reminded him of my article on *cults* and that *cult* should not be used to disparage. The SuperStatics Exercise Guild is a cult. So is the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) and the United States Marine Corp (USMC). And on and on...It's just that I prefer these cults over the seedy H.I.T. cult.

No. H.I.T. is not just (merely) Arthurism... or Jonesism.

It is true that H.I.T. is strongly associated with Nautilus and Arthur Jones, although it has been extended to apply to an almost-infinite variety of activities that are not true qualifiers of high-intensity exercise. Kettlebell training and Mentzer's *rest-pause* are two such examples.

[Note that kettlebells can be used—albeit inconveniently—for high-intensity exercise if the purveyors of kettlebell training dispensed with all of their swinging nonsense. Also note that Mike

Mentzer perverted the purpose of Nautilus machines—specifically designed by Arthur Jones for high-intensity exercise—to subvert high intensity with the application of his rest-pause.]

Arthur used the phrases *intensity of effort* and *high intensity* in his early writings and speeches, but it was Ellington Darden, PhD, who first coined the phrase *high-intensity training* in a speech at Duke University in 1975. Over the years many others abbreviated the phrase to *H.I.T.*

The big problem with H.I.T. as a moniker is the word, *intensity*. It is appropriate and accurate. It is also not understood or misunderstood by almost everybody.

There are two useful definitions of *intensity* that reside within the context of exercise. Both definitions are from Arthur Jones.

The first definition is the general definition stating *intensity* as a degree or percentage of momentary effort. Among other uses, we might apply this definition to the overall effort level of an entire workout.

The second definition states *intensity* as the momentary percentage or depth of inroad in an individual exercise.

My friend then asked why I would want SuperSlow and SuperStatics to be associated with H.I.T.

I answered that my association with H.I.T. is not my choice. It is a fact. Technically and definitionally speaking, high-intensity training is the only meaningful exercise. Although it vexes me, many of us must use it in marketing material to attract people so interested in our work. Drew uses it. Ellington Darden uses it—as apparently he likes it as it is of his invention.

In a real sense, and in practice, you may note that I almost never mentioned H.I.T. What's more, I almost never mention or write

high-intensity training. I commonly reduce the entire notion to *exercise*, because *exercise* completely fills the bill and is exclusionary—if a person has correctly trained his mind to follow the definition of exercise (check the Suggested Reading page of seriousexercise.com)—to all the myriad of nondescript activity that does not focus on muscular strengthening.

As discussed elsewhere, I also dislike the word, *training*, because it smacks too much of working with animals in circuses and preparation done in the military, OJT, etc.

Although technically accurate in the context of exercise, *intensity* throws off people. Often, it requires study and a patient effort to grasp the contextual distinction of *high-intensity* from *high-force*—the antithesis of proper exercise. Unfortunately, *intensity* and *force* are found to be synonymous in contexts outside of exercise. And *intensity* and *activity volume* are confused within the context of exercise by the exercise physiology community.

Case in Point: Recently, June 11, 2021, Gus Diamantopoulos sent me an article from *The Times of London* with the headline: *Intense Exercise Raises the Risk of Motor Neurone Disease*. The picture used to set off the article was of a rugby team. Ya think?

In an apparent effort to ease the superficial confusion of *intensity* and, thus, *high-intensity*, many have advanced (actually retrogressed) from the technical accuracy and conjoined the difficult public relevance of *intensity* to the easier and more-natural relevance of the technically non-distinctive word *resistance exercise*.

Resistance exercise is an extremely bad phrase for several reasons. First, it is, as already mentioned, non-distinctive. Every human activity—including activity in a *weightless* environment—involves resistance. *Resistance* does not distinguish. It does not set apart a special kind of exercise that is different from any other kind of activity. It's the typical techno-blather that comes from the exercise

physiologists to promote their lofty, vacuous, highfalutiness.

Second, *resistance exercise* usage speaks volumes to the wholesale ignorance of those who use this term. It confirms to me that they have not considered the qualities, the values, the implication, the essence, the effects, or the applications of resistance. And it smacks of the politically correct trendiness of words push on us to dilute *sex* with *gender* or to dilute the reality of our carnivorous ancestry with *hunter gatherer*. Did you know that many species of carnivorous bears exist much of the year on berries and roots (and human's garbage)? Does this make the American Black Bear a *hunter gatherer*? This does not help understanding or communication... likewise with *resistance exercise*.

Resistance exercise usage exposes a dearth of understanding about intrinsic muscular function. Since *resistance* is merely another term for *force*, and muscles are "force producing engines," *a la* Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519), exercise physiology is still trapped in a virtual time capsule dated circa 1850. And this follows for all those ancillary fields of supposed exercise study and application: physical therapy, athletic training, physical education, strength coaching, and others.

Third, if we in the exercise field have the need and/or desire to teach others about exercise, then *resistance exercise* usage is a certain way to ensure that that education can never occur. It is babble. It is mouth confetti. It is head trash. It is gibberish. And the only thing that can be transmitted to a fertile mind with it is scrambled messaging.

We have several confusing terms (hardly deserving this descriptor) bandied about:

- Resistance Exercise
- High-Intensity Training
- High-Intensity Exercise
- Strength Training
- “Weight Training”
- “Weight Lifting”

I don’t like any of them, although strength training is the least offending. And exercise, although perfect within the context of our definition, doesn’t go far enough with the typical audience. Drew and I and Gus have considered phrases around the term, *inroad*, (another Ellington Darden application), but it does not communicate well until it is first arduously explained.

My favorites thus far are:

- strengthening activity
- strength program

I feel that it’s critical that *strength* needs to be included in the phrase for an audience to relate, although it was a bad word to use with women of earlier generations.

If you have forgotten them or missed them in my other writings, here are some helpful principles from the late Richard Mitchell, the celebrated *Underground Grammarian*:

“... every word isolates the thing named from everything else that there is, whether it be the name of some object in the world of experience or some idea of relationships in the world of language. In effect, everything that gets a name gets it because we can perceive that everything else is not that thing.”

“Again, a word that means almost anything means almost nothing.”

“Contrariwise, crafts that make only small demands on the technical skills of their practitioners require only a small list of technical words and might even get by with none at all.”

“Jargon is a handout of material designed to prevent the need for thought. Consider the infamous “input.” For certain technicians this word has a concrete meaning and points to something that can be pointed to with no other word. For sales managers, deans, politicians, and most of the rest of us, “input” provides an ornamental cover for a hole in the brain.”

“Every craft has its technical lexicon, and the terms often make useful and necessary distinction between one thing and all other things, sometimes exceedingly fine distinctions. The more technically demanding the craft, the more it needs an extensive and precise, technical lexicon.”

“...To make finer and still finer distinction is a proper goal of thought.”

“The propensity for borrowed jargon is always a mark of limited ability in the technique of discursive thought...

... It is, furthermore, through the ability to make such distinctions that we devise the world after having evoked its possibilities in language. The man who cannot make such distinctions is not merely a fool, he is a dangerous fool.”

“The language of [inappropriate and unnecessary] jargon arises from ignorance, but, once constituted establishes itself not as knowledge, of course, since that would invite verification but as wisdom, a matter presumably of the heart and not the reason.”

“People who cannot get their thoughts straight through the control of language live baffled and frustrated lives. They must accept stock answers to their most vexing questions; they are easily persuaded by flawed logic, they cannot solve their problems because they cannot express them accurately.”

The Ultimate Case in Point

As many of you know, I am very ill and not likely to live much longer. Without going much into this unfortunate issue as I have in some of my recent writings, this story highly pertinent story does within the context of many doctor visits for my condition.

Between my second and third hospitalizations in April 2020 and as I was sitting in my primary care’s reception room, I failed to ignore the closed-circuit television program slanted to promote the doctor’s practice. As is expected, the programs were part technical information and hopium. The hopium part was a video exercise.

As I was gearing up to brace myself to hear the typical tripe, I was shocked to hear the presenter mention that stair climbing was *non-exercise activity*. Although it aggravated me to hear anything said about stair climbing, I was amazed at the insight. Not only was the presenter informed, she was permitted by whoever produced the video and by those playing and airing the video to say ostensibly heretical information.

As this got my attention, I watch and listened attentively to more or her presentation. Subsequently, she encouraged that “... if stair climbing was not intense enough, some subjects might consider *High Intensity Training* or *H.I.T.* or as it was known.”

“Wow! This is really good,” I thought.

Then came the clincher: She demonstrated plyometrics as an example H.I.T.