

Beyond the Hack Squat: George Hackenschmidt's Forgotten Legacy as a Strength Training Pioneer

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But, as will be seen, it has not been my design to confine myself to laying down a series of rules for strong men and athletes only: my object in writing this book has been rather to lay before my readers such data as may enable them to secure health as well as strength. Health can never be divorced from strength. The second is an inevitable sequel to the first. A man can only fortify himself against disease by strengthening his body in such manner as will enable it to defy the attacks of any malady.¹

—George Hackenschmidt in *The Way to Live*

Born in Dorpat, Estonia on 2 August 1878, George (originally Georg, sometimes spelled Georges) Karl Julius Hackenschmidt was one of the most admired and successful Greco-Roman and Catch-as-Catch-Can wrestlers at the beginning of the twentieth century. Gifted with extraordinary physical capabilities that seemed to far exceed those of the average man, he rose to stardom in the early 1900s through a captivating mixture of overwhelming ring presence, explosive power, sheer strength, and admirable humility. However, the “Russian Lion” was decidedly more than one of the greatest wrestlers who ever set foot on a mat. From his earliest days as a professional, Hackenschmidt displayed an indefatigable desire to inspire others to follow him on his quest to physical strength, health, and long life. Throughout his ring career and in the years that followed, he used his popularity and public celebrity to advocate strength training, exercise, and proper diet as means to attain health and well-being.

Like heavyweight boxing champion John L. Sullivan, professional strongman Eugen Sandow, wrestler William Muldoon, and dozens of other athletes at that time, Hackenschmidt capitalized on his celebrity status by appearing in vaudeville and variety theaters, challenging other performers, and publishing books during his years as an active athlete that reportedly detailed

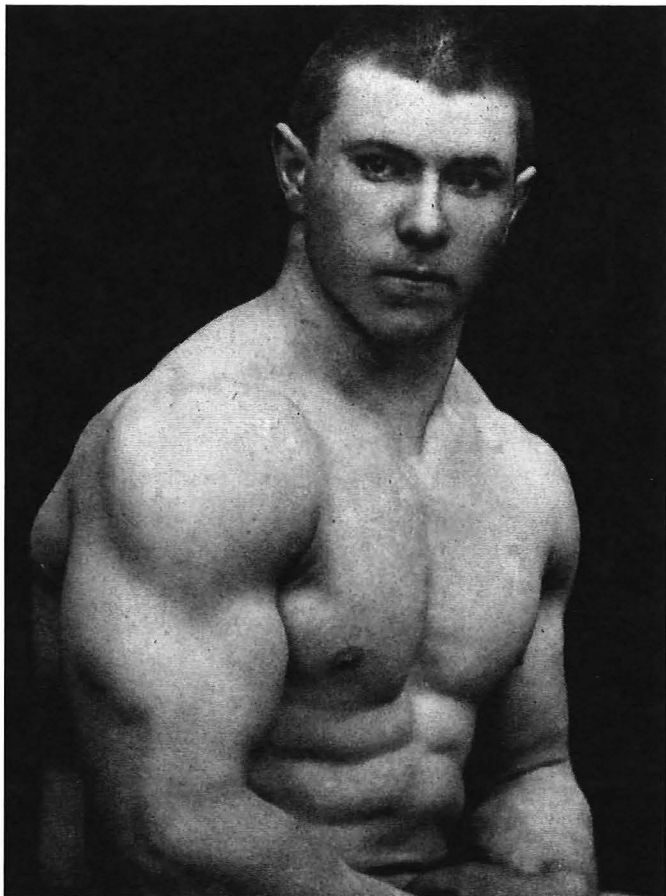
his unique training philosophy and “system.”² In fact, Hackenschmidt became a revered authority in the field of physical culture and fitness, yet maintained a markedly different perspective from that of the two most famous fitness entrepreneurs of the early twentieth century—Eugen Sandow (1867-1925) and Bernarr Macfadden (1868-1955).³ The fact that Hackenschmidt’s ideas on exercise were so different than those of Sandow and Macfadden—both of whom established magazines, opened physical culture institutes, and employed other marketing techniques to promote their training methods—may explain why, although the Estonian is well remembered for his wrestling accolades, little scholarly attention has been paid to his holistic approach to training, dieting, exercising, and the betterment of one’s body.⁴

This article attempts to fill that void through an examination of George Hackenschmidt’s published works and personal papers on the subject of strength training.⁵ The authors outline his contributions to early twentieth century fitness, describe the ways that his training philosophy evolved over the course of his life, and follow the path of a strength training pioneer whose perspective on the “way to live” stood in marked contrast to that of other physical culture pioneers of his era.

The Early Years

As a young child, Hackenschmidt enjoyed playing sports and being physically active, displaying what

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At only 5'8 1/2" in height, Hackenschmidt would never have been considered a "large man" during his era, except for the unusual thickness of his muscles. Like Sandow, he had exceptionally well-defined abdominals, large deltoids, and impressive symmetry.

he later described as "an overmastering urge for quick and sustained movement."⁶ Much of his childhood was spent in the open air, where he "never seemed to be able to get too much of the river and forests, where we fished, skated, rowed and swam or rambled and sledged."⁷ In 1890, during one of the annual sport outings in his hometown of Dorpat, the twelve-year-old Hack delivered the best performance at his age across all the participating schools. He set records in disciplines like running and throwing, and the incident gave him an early taste of athletic success, which he would remember fondly: "I'm sure my chest measurement had expanded an inch or two as I walked back in formation with all the other boys, a galaxy of medals pinned on in front and a wreath over my head."⁸

That same year Hack discovered a love for wrestling when attending an exhibition match put on by a touring circus. He had begged his mother to let him go and, much to his surprise, she gave him the money for a

ticket, even though only the older boys in his school were supposed to be excused from classes to attend (and Hack was not one of them). Hack then borrowed a suit of clothes from a friend, snuck into the event and found a spot where he could hide from the teachers and older boys, and watched the local baker take on a traveling professional. Thoroughly fascinated by what he saw that day, Hackenschmidt recounted later:

When the wrestlers came on, my heart 'went plop with a wiggle between' and I could hardly breathe for fear I should miss any of the action. I was so entranced I couldn't even applaud. In fact I got so worked up over it that I determined I'd never rest until I had become every bit as strong as they appeared to be. This resolution was all-absorbing, so much so that for months afterwards, whenever I could manage to slip away from home, I'd run down to the baker's shop and feast my eyes on the rosy faced Mr. Miehl who, for want of experience, I thought must be one of the world's strongest men.⁹

Over the ensuing years the teenage Hackenschmidt continued to be active, growing increasingly stronger and more muscular. After moving to Reval in 1895 he joined the local athletic club and took up gymnastics and cycling.¹⁰ However, he did not really pursue wrestling until Georg Lurich, whom Hackenschmidt later described as "probably one of the most remarkable personalities developed by weightlifting and wrestling," visited Reval along with fellow wrestlers Wladislaw Pytlasinsky and Fritz Konietzko.¹¹ Hackenschmidt, already somewhat known in Reval for his strength, was invited to take on Lurich in an exhibition bout, even though he had no previous wrestling experience. According to Hackenschmidt, although he knew "half of nothing" about wrestling, he was able to hold his own against Lurich for two matches, one of them lasting over an hour without either of the opponents being able to pin the other.¹² Despite losing the exhibition matches on points, as well as two other bouts against Pytlasinsky and Konietzko, Hackenschmidt felt that he was "altogether stronger than [his] rival and ought to have come out on top."¹³

The matches against Lurich, Pytlasinsky, and Konietzko reinforced Hack's belief in his own strength and in the ensuing years he continued to make progress "by what may well be described as leaps and bounds."¹⁴ He further began to participate in occasional wrestling bouts and strongman exhibitions, earning local recognition across the Baltic region and setting a number of weightlifting records.¹⁵

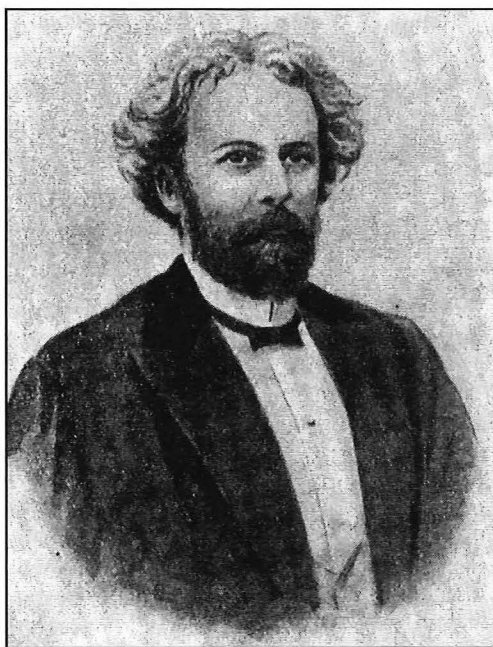
In 1897, Hack traveled to Leningrad, bent on either making it as an athlete or working in an engineering office. In the Russian metropolis, Hackenschmidt sought out the advice of the city's leading athletic trainer and physician, Dr. Vladislav von Krajewski, founder of the St. Petersburg Athletic and Cycling club and physician to the Czar of Russia.¹⁶ Krajewski had previously met Hackenschmidt when he visited Estonia and had invited Hackenschmidt to come to Moscow and train with him. Krajewski was so impressed with the young Estonian's strength and physical development that he invited Hack to stay in his home so that he could oversee his training. He promised to help turn Hack into the strongest man in the world, an offer Hack gladly accepted, later reminiscing that the physician's offer "was better than anything [he] had ever dared to dream."¹⁷

Dr. Krajewski viewed physical exercise as a means to preserve health, enhance overall fitness, and prevent and treat illnesses. His teachings influenced not only Hackenschmidt but many other athletes and strongmen as well. A true scholar of the history of *Tyazhelyaya Atletika*, or heavy athletics—Krajewski was also well-known for his expertise in medicine, psychology, and gymnastics. Many of his teachings regarding injury prevention, psychological management, and nutrition still hold true today, and much of his philosophy on physical training and exercise can be found in Hackenschmidt's later publications on strength and health.¹⁸

Although Hackenschmidt later claimed that Dr. Krajewski did not directly train him, he acknowledged that the Russian

physician profoundly influenced his ideas on nutrition, rest, and the right way to exercise. During his time with Krajewski, Hackenschmidt grew immensely strong and added to his knowledge of weightlifting, physical exercise, and the organization of training.¹⁹ But Hack wanted more than simply becoming the strongest man in the world. He was determined to succeed in the sport that had so captivated him as a young boy and to become the world's greatest wrestler. And so, in St. Petersburg, as he continued to set records in weight-lifting, he began a new career. Hackenschmidt began training in earnest, taking every opportunity to get into the ring with the many wrestlers visiting Dr. Krajewski's home.²⁰ After winning a number of local amateur bouts and having success in several other European matches, Krajewski convinced Hackenschmidt to compete in the world championships held in Vienna in 1898. Hack, still relying more on his physical power than wrestling technique, beat all his opponents in overwhelming fashion and became amateur world champion at the age of twenty.²¹

After this victory, Hackenschmidt served for five months in the army before taking up the life of a travelling professional wrestler. In 1901 he returned to



Dr. Vladislav von Krajewski had a profound influence on Hackenschmidt's ideas about health and exercise. Hackenschmidt moved from Estonia to train under Krajewski's supervision and to avail himself of the doctor's many contacts in the vibrant sporting life of *fin de siècle* St. Petersburg.

Vienna and captured the professional world championship crown in a bout against Halil Adali.²² As Hack traveled he came into contact with dozens of trainers, athletes, doctors, and other kinds of physical culture experts. These encounters and his own close attention to how his body responded to exercise and diet allowed Hackenschmidt to develop and promulgate a system of beliefs on the right way to eat, train, and live.²³ For Hack, it was not enough to simply have large muscles or lift weights solely for the sake of being big and strong. From the very onset, influenced by Dr. Krajewski's ideas on exercise and health, Hack was fascinated with functional strength—strength that allowed him to win at wrestling, to jump and run with ease, and to feel healthy and vigorous. Especially

during the early 1900s, his ideas on physical culture were marked by the goal to form a holistic symbiosis of body and mind, with a strong emphasis on balance and overall development.²⁴ Invoking Juvenal's maxim of the sound mind in the sound body Hackenschmidt believed that, "just as the man of sedentary habits and weak body possesses a correspondingly sluggish mind and lack of energy, so he who assiduously pursues physical development gains not only that desired government of his organs, but in marked degree obtains a thorough mastery of his will and, consequently, an easy and contented mind."²⁵

Hackenschmidt's focus on overall development of body and mind, along with his imposing physique and wrestling accolades, struck a chord with large parts of the population in the early 1900s with Great Britain and the United States proving to be especially receptive to his ideas.

Physical Activity and Exercise in Great Britain and the U.S. in the Late 1800s

By the end of the nineteenth century, organized sport and physical culture had undergone a rapid and truly international revolution. In England, physical activity had changed from aristocratic outdoor leisure activities such as hunting, fishing, and horse-racing, to team sports and other games that formed the early foundation of modern sports.²⁶ In the United States, football, baseball, rowing, boxing, cycling, and a variety of other activities had become the new "safety valve" of American society, providing distraction, respite, and an outlet for societal pressures and boredom after the fall of the new frontier.²⁷ In addition, various systems of exercise—or physical culture—had also come into vogue.²⁸ Across the European continent, sport and physical training were included in school curricula and most members of society had some appreciation of the benefits to be had from both recreative and rational exercise. And so, by the time Hackenschmidt truly began to promote his own ideas on health and exercise, physical culture was an "international phenomenon."²⁹

While gaining in acceptance, sport and exercise had become charged with moral implications, and heralded for their virtuous, character-building influence. In Great Britain, followers of utilitarianism and Evangelism were beginning to view physical culture and competitive play as "tools to help further their goals of establishing a rational, orderly, productive, and sinless socie-

ty." Sport had in fact become an "activity of duty."³⁰ The public schools, especially, helped evolve "an ethos that had replaced the old feudal ideals or suffused them with new concepts of civic virtue."³¹ What had once been considered a sinful waste of energy and time became a tool to promote health, to strengthen the military, to "maintain purity and moral rectitude in adults," and to offset what was seen as the looming effeminizing of the country's future, masculine, elite.³² Not surprisingly, during this period systematic training, physical fitness, and muscular development also became a major component of military life in Great Britain.³³

Across the Atlantic, sport also became "a moral force," especially when it supported virtues like self-discipline, physical development, progress, and control.³⁴ During the 1880s, taking care of one's physique through sport and physical activity became a prerequisite of living a life worth living, and the body – the resting place of the soul and the mind – was increasingly appreciated as a temple that the righteous were "obliged to maintain [...] as a worthy sanctuary."³⁵ Support for the new ideal of "Muscular Christianity" was ubiquitous, and outspoken supporters like President Theodore Roosevelt "hoped to energize the churches and to counteract the supposedly enervating effects of urban living."³⁶ Drawing on distinct images of masculinity, self-assertion, and control over one's environment, the contemporary proponents of Muscular Christianity openly promoted fitness and physical development. Just as in Great Britain, sport was promoted as a means to teach manly qualities that would enable men to weather the looming threat of commercialism, feminization, and domestication, and to face a world where as historian Elliott Gorn put it, "soft living threatened to overwhelm masculine virtues in a sea of goods."³⁷

After the end of the Civil War people from all classes, encouraged by gymnastic societies and traveling strongmen, increasingly sought to model their bodies according to the Greek ideals of old, or, at the very least, become a little healthier.³⁸ Reemerging ideals of masculinity and the purported link between character and muscularity drove young American men to pay closer attention to their bodies, following the "gospel of health through rugged exercise [that] spread literally by leaps and bounds."³⁹

Along with sport and physical culture, wrestling had grown to popularity both in Europe and the USA, albeit with distinct differences in history, style, and

social acceptance.⁴⁰ In Great Britain, a multitude of different wrestling styles had developed during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, mainly due to limited travel opportunities and restricted interaction of the peasant communities, where wrestling was most popular.⁴¹ During the early nineteenth century, wrestling was a regular feature of local fairs, and in cities like London bouts were organized on pub bowling greens and cricket grounds.⁴² Like many other sports, wrestling in the 1870s gained in popularity in large part due to the increasingly influential leisure class whose members embraced growth in living standards and greater leisure time by engaging in various physical activities, both as participants and spectators.⁴³ By the turn of the century, wrestling in Great Britain had become a mass spectacle, popularized by extensive media coverage and driven by commercial interests and professionalization.⁴⁴ Bouts were a regular staple of music hall entertainment and traveling grapplers challenged local men to face them in the ring.⁴⁵

In the United States, wrestling had experienced profound changes. Originally brought to the colonies by German, Irish, Scottish, and English immigrants, wrestling had been practiced in a variety of ways, from the “rough-and-tumble fighting of the southern back-country,” to the more gentlemanly pastime of collar-and-elbow wrestling.⁴⁶ By the mid-nineteenth century, wrestling was a mainstay of carnivals, sideshows, and traveling circuses, bringing entertainment to all parts of the nation.⁴⁷ The ensuing Civil War, while effectively ending wrestling as carnival entertainment for a time, greatly enhanced the dispersion of sports throughout the U.S. and “spread knowledge of new styles of play to individuals from every corner of the country [as] soldiers organized their own games for entertainment and to alleviate boredom.”⁴⁸ Officers encouraged physical fitness and sports like wrestling and boxing as both a break from warfare as well as conditioning for the soldiers whose “excitement of the war’s early days quickly soured when the bloody realities of combat were realized.”⁴⁹

When the soldiers returned home after the war, they brought with them their experiences, training, and concept of wrestling as a serious physical activity. Post-bellum society experienced a tremendous growth in leisure activities that “touched all social classes,” and spectator sports such as rowing, baseball, and boxing became increasingly popular, while athletic clubs proliferated.⁵⁰

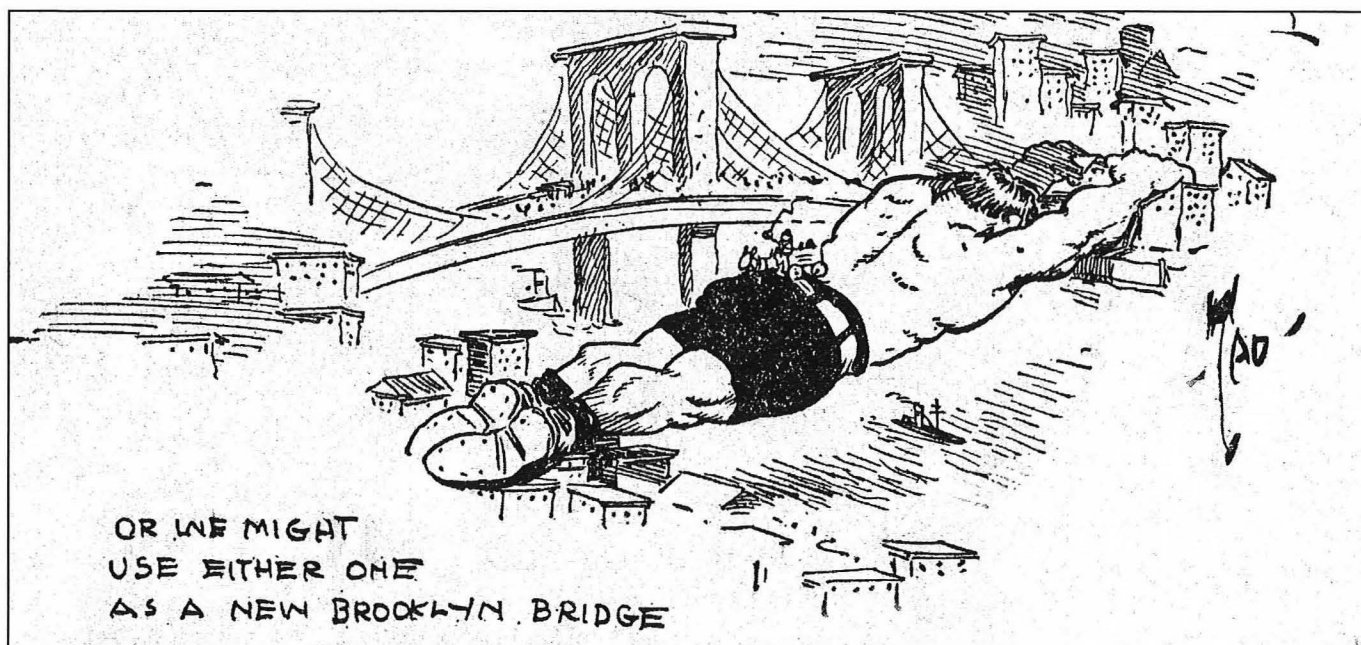
The stage was set for wrestling to move into the blossoming urban cities like New York or Boston, where the sport became an essential part of the local saloon and tavern culture, steadily growing in acceptance, media coverage, and commercial appeal.⁵¹ By the turn of the century, newspaper coverage was extensive and wrestlers such as Frank Gotch profited from the writers’ romanticizing of the fighters as embodiments of the new American masculinity.⁵² Wrestlers like Hackenschmidt received much attention in newspapers and magazines and the Russian Lion quickly rose to stardom and international fame, enabling him to reach vast audiences.

Hack, Public Admiration and the Media

On the front cover his beautifully developed figure is shown up fully, whilst on the opposite page his massive chest is brought into full prominence. ‘The ‘Russian Lion’ he is called and it seems a most appropriate name. Swift in his movements, with tremendous staying power, a fatal hug, unlimited strength, a fearless heart—these seem to be the chief characteristics of the man, and truly no insult is offered to the king of the forest by comparison.⁵³

Admired not only for his accomplishments in the sport of wrestling but also for his strength and physical development, Hackenschmidt became one of the world’s most revered athletes in the early twentieth century. Newspapers and magazines appreciated him for his good-natured temperament, publishing interviews and profiles of the great champion full of admiration, awe, and respect. One described Hack as “one of the most truly-balanced and beautifully-knit athletes the world has ever seen.”⁵⁴ Another writer saw him as “. . . the sort of typical figure that we imagine as having been brought from the barbarian north long ago to glad the eyes of spectators in the Roman Coliseum. A true gladiator, if there ever was one.”⁵⁵ Superlatives were, in fact, wide-ranging, and writers went to great lengths to describe Hack as favorably and formidably as possible.⁵⁶

Although popular because of his sheer strength and physical dominance, Hackenschmidt was also revered for his humility, praised for his respectful demeanor, and appreciated for his intellect: “there is no trickery or chicanery about Hackenschmidt. He is a



Hackenschmidt's physique played a major role in the newspaper coverage of his career. Artists frequently exaggerated his strength and size while at the same time conveying a positive impression of the Russian Lion. This cartoon, drawn by "Tad" for the *New York Evening Journal* is a classic example. It appeared on 13 April 1905 as part of an article entitled, "Stars of Ring and Mat Take Town by Storm," on Hackenschmidt's appearances in New York with heavyweight boxing champion James J. Jeffries. Hack was in New York to prepare for his catch-as-catch-can world title match with wrestling champion Tom Jenkins on 4 May 1905. Hack easily won the bout.

fighter all the way but a gentleman at the same time. He is content to remain in the background until the time for action arrives, but when he strips for the fray he means very serious business."⁵⁷ While Hackenschmidt, like other famous strongmen in this era, also gave public exhibitions of his strength and muscular development in theaters, he drew the line at overly extravagant feats of physical prowess, usually sticking to posing and wrestling.⁵⁸ He didn't try to reproduce the standard fare of most professional strongmen with their colorful routines of chain-breaking, ripping decks of cards, balancing entire groups of people sitting or standing on wooden beams on their backs, or lifting—and in the case of Sandow even fighting—wild animals. Hackenschmidt's exhibitions were largely demonstrations of wrestling—in various styles—as he believed that muscles that didn't enable a man to do something were not really useful.⁵⁹ Unlike others in the Iron Game who frequently claimed more than they should in regard to the strength they possessed, Hackenschmidt believed that "the really strong man, the man who can do wonderful feats, never brags about it. He sits quietly in an assemblage of men and does not open his mouth about the things he can do. The man of less strength is always boasting."⁶⁰

Inevitably, given their proximity in England and

the fact that the two showmen were competing at times for the same audience, the media frequently compared Hackenschmidt with strongman Eugen Sandow and often favored the Russian.⁶¹ Hack, for example, was hailed as "the man who out-Sandowed Sandow at his own game."⁶² Others described his physical development as "marvelous and greater than those of Sandow."⁶³ Other journalists picked up on the disconnect between showmanship and actual athletic ability, crediting Hack with muscular development that not only eclipsed that of Sandow but with possessing muscles that were actually "useful."⁶⁴ In an unpublished profile that he wrote about his meetings with Sandow, Hackenschmidt himself acknowledged Sandow's knack for posing and showmanship but said he found his movements to be "rather effeminate."⁶⁵ He also criticized the Prussian for advertising what he thought to be dangerous and harmful exercises, and further claimed that "where acrobatics, weightlifting, or wrestling is discussed seriously, Sandow is not prominently considered."⁶⁶

While the public had grown accustomed to muscular showmen, a wrestler with the physical development of a bodybuilder and the strength of a weight-lifter, who so easily dispatched competitors well versed in the various grips, grapples, and throwing techniques akin to

the sport, was an entirely foreign concept to spectators and exercise enthusiasts alike. As Hackenschmidt's physical power was credited with much of that success, especially during the early stages of his wrestling career, many ring observers argued that he outmuscled rather than outwrestled his opponents. As one writer put it: "in one word, Hackenschmidt's strength and speed are so great that he can defy all the skill and strategy of the most eminent man in the wrestling game."⁶⁷ Others, with considerable justification, claimed that, "had it not been for weight-lifting, Hackenschmidt would never have attained to the position in the wrestling world he now enjoys."⁶⁸ Hack himself admitted later that he never truly learned how to wrestle before he started competing in bouts. Instead, he "left it entirely to [his] instinct" in determining what to do and how to react to his opponent's actions.⁶⁹

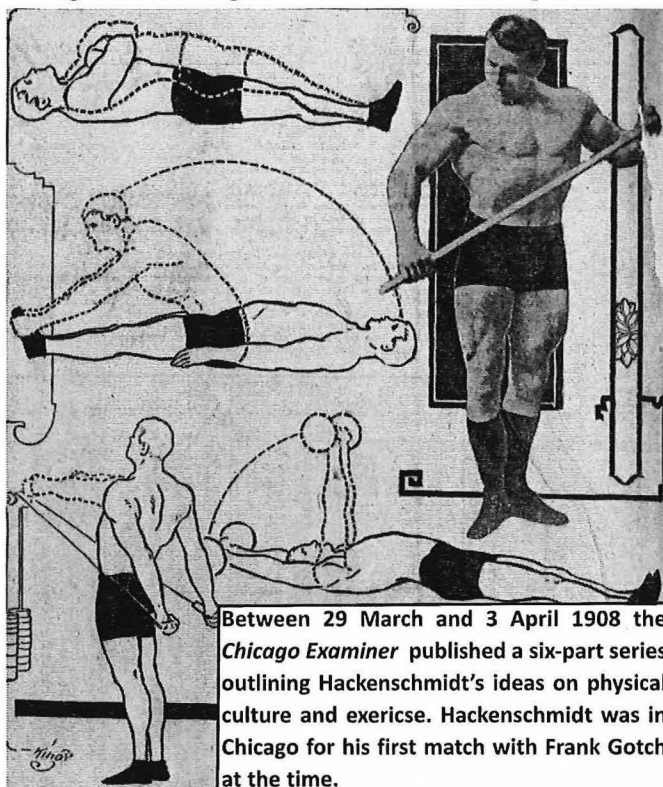
That Hack's remarkable physique and explosive strength played a major role in his wrestling career cannot be disputed. The Russian Lion also attributed much of his wrestling success to his rigorous strength-training regimen, never failing to stress to interviewers the importance of lifting weights. During a public training session for his match against Tom Jenkins, Hack reputedly asked for a pair of 150-pound dumbbells. When asked by the incredulous bystanders whether he always trained that heavy, he replied: "Always! How can a man get strong unless he does a strong man's work?"⁷⁰ Hack lived by the idea that a well-balanced exercise regimen would be most beneficial to any type of athlete and he himself engaged in a variety of physical activities besides wrestling and weight-lifting. He was an avid swimmer, acrobat, and gymnast, and was also a great high-jumper, a feat that astonished many because of his size.⁷¹ His diverse regimen also helped him retain his agility and strength far beyond his wrestling years.⁷²

Hack on Physical Exercise

There is a universal urban immigration, a vast increase in the numbers of those who are engaged in indoor and sedentary occupation, and only here and there is the attempt made to combat the consequent unhealthy conditions of life with the only satisfactory weapon, Rational Physical Exercise. Unfortunately, the majority of people seem to associate the words Physical Culture

with huge muscular development. Men who do not entertain any ambition of figuring as professional athletes consequently omit to pay any attention to the care of their bodies.⁷³

As Hackenschmidt promulgated the health benefits of weight training and consistent exercise, the print media proved to be a very useful and willing channel through which to spread his ideas on the importance of



Between 29 March and 3 April 1908 the *Chicago Examiner* published a six-part series outlining Hackenschmidt's ideas on physical culture and exercise. Hackenschmidt was in Chicago for his first match with Frank Gotch at the time.

the careful development of one's muscles and strength. Numerous magazines and newspapers eagerly conveyed the Russian Lion's thoughts on correct exercise routines and some even featured him in multi-issue spreads that outlined in great detail what it took to attain a great physique, to become strong, and ultimately to stay healthy.⁷⁴ In his approach to exercise and weight training, Hack relied on a simple, holistic system that favored the use of free weights, open-air activities, steady progression, and careful deliberation. Great physiques, superior conditioning and extraordinary strength, according to Hack were, after all, "not built up in a day, but [have] only been obtained by careful and systematic training."⁷⁵

To the young and aspiring athlete, as well as to

the ordinary man who simply wished to attain better health, Hack offered the following principle: "assuming you are [free of heart or lung problems], you must first train for uniform development of all of your muscles. Go in to make one part of the body as strong as the next, and do this by taking all sorts of exercises in turn."⁷⁶ Hackenschmidt advocated that the young athlete and regular man try himself on all kinds of exercises throughout the day, without unduly focusing on one particular kind. He believed that "continual changes relieve the monotony which of course must be very great to an athlete who has to train year in and year out."⁷⁷ A balanced approach to physical exercise was the key to success and, just like a well-maintained machine, all parts of the body needed to be serviced properly in order to be able to perform to their maximum potential. Consequently, Hack favored compound exercises that required the greatest neuromuscular response, believing they were the best way to promote strength, general well-being, and overall health.⁷⁸ Hack argued that "all the parts of a machine must be kept in good order if high-class mechanical service is aimed at. So also with the human body. But the body, like the machine, will become impaired if it is abused. Balance is power. [...] Like the axle or bearings that give balance to a machine, the human machine has its bearings. These are in the body."⁷⁹

Ultimately, aspiring athletes should "indulge in every good sport you can to bring out your strength" and aim for the conscious development of all body parts rather than favoring some areas over others.⁸⁰ While he often spoke of the benefits of weight training for young athletes, Hackenschmidt believed that physical exercise would not only benefit athletes but also "give the average business man, who may feel that he is physically weak, a reasonable assurance that he will be able to meet the demands made upon him daily by his long hours of work."⁸¹

Balanced training was but one pillar of Hack's system. He also contended that no form of physical activity was ever to be done in haste and without conscious deliberation. He believed that those who truly desired to gain in strength, improve their physiques and enhance their overall fitness would naturally gravitate towards those activities that would help them in their quest. Furthermore, he greatly emphasized the connection between the mind and the body, a concept that would become central to his later philosophical exploits. During his active days he offered the following advice:

"if you think of your muscles whenever you move them you do much more work and develop them much more. [...] If you are only half determined, there is no strength; but you must be very determined."⁸²

Once settled on a routine, continuously increasing the weights, today known as progressive overload, was of utmost importance:

The best physical exercise is lifting weights, and in that one should follow the following rule: lift from the floor to a height at arms' length a weight you can lift easily. Do this for one week. Then add a pound – only a pound – to the weight. Lift this weight until it is as easy for you as the other. [...] Increase the weight you lift very gradually or else you will injure instead of benefit yourself.⁸³

As evidenced in the above quote, Hack also preached slow progression, patience, and caution when engaging in weight training. Just as "Hercules himself never acquired his strength in a hurry," Hackenschmidt stressed that the true virtue of physical exercise lay in working the body without putting too much stress on the muscles and the nervous system.⁸⁴ In his eyes, it was more important to make good use of the time one spent exercising, doing "just enough to satisfy the muscle," rather than to work until exhaustion.⁸⁵

On a similar note, Hackenschmidt argued that "it is quite a mistaken idea to suppose that it is necessary to devote hours of precious time to the task of keeping fit and well by taking beneficial exercises for, as a matter of fact, I am strongly of the opinion that any man or woman who will devote say, half an hour a day to really useful exercises, will certainly achieve the desired result."⁸⁶ In trying to dispel the myth that it took long, arduous hours at the gym to achieve even a baseline standard of fitness and health, Hack sought to encourage the general public to at least engage in some form of physical activity every day so they would improve their health. Doing more than just the right amount of weight lifting or other athletic activities, Hack further argued, would not only hamper the progress one intended to make regarding muscular development, symmetrical proportions of the body, or strength, but it would ultimately lead to the deterioration of one's health. He went as far as warning

his followers that “very often the life of a man is shortened ten or twenty years because of overexertion in the simplest athletic exercises.”⁸⁷

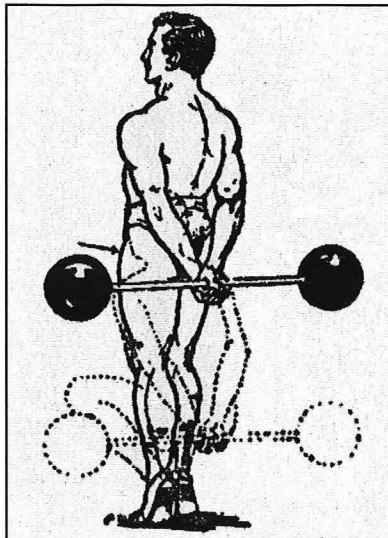
If done correctly, however, physical exercise and weight training would not only improve one’s physique but help “immensely increase the efficiency of the heart, stomach, lungs, intestines, liver and other organs upon whose activity not only the sustenance of the muscles but of the life processes themselves are dependent.”⁸⁸ Hackenschmidt argued that time spent on the necessary everyday physical exercises was time that could not be better spent. Being active was the key to a long and healthy life and, to Hack, anybody who chose not to engage in some form of regular exercise would not be able to prevent his/her muscular and nervous system from experiencing “the form of self-poisoning known as atrophy.”⁸⁹ Here again, we see the duality of muscular fitness and great overall health so avidly advocated by Hackenschmidt throughout his teachings, as well as his opposition to the widespread belief that rigorous exercising and weightlifting could in fact weaken the heart. He addressed those who doubted the benefits of lifting weights by proclaiming “progressive weight-lifting or dumb-bell exercise never weakened any man’s heart. If a man has a weak heart, he has to be careful, but I believe judicious dumb-bell exercise would rather strengthen a weak heart.”⁹⁰

In order to maintain agility, strengthen the heart, and enhance the respiratory system’s capabilities, Hackenschmidt advised people to supplement weight training with bag punching and other activities. Running and jumping, he contended, would greatly benefit the overall development of the legs in a way that no other form of exercise could achieve.⁹¹ Running, especially, was supposed to greatly support the development of all body parts while increasing stamina.⁹² All exercises should further be boosted by frequently taking cold baths, “the colder it is the better.”⁹³

The Estonian had very concrete ideas about how certain exercises could benefit the body and overall health. Addressing common ailments such as headaches,

dizziness, or dullness, he proposed, for example, that developing the abdominal muscles would provide relief since such exercises were known to “aid the circulation of the blood, revitalize and strengthen the digestive organs and tone up the whole system.”⁹⁴ Crunches, sit-ups, and leg raises were to be complemented by dumbbell exercises to strengthen the midriff as well as the back muscles to “be the better able to stand the wear and tear resulting from the hurry, worry and hustle of the modern business life.”⁹⁵

Hackenschmidt further argued that “it is hardly possible to exaggerate the importance of the role played by the human hands and arms in transacting the business of the world.” One of Hack’s favorite exercises for arm development was the traditional push-up (he called it the “dip”), “an admirable exercise” to strengthen the upper body as well as to aid in the development of the lungs.⁹⁶



In modern gyms, the exercise known as the Hack Squat is generally done on an exercise machine that works somewhat like an upside down leg press machine. However, Hackenschmidt did his with barbells held behind his back, as shown here in his book, *The Way to Live*.

Finally, Hack vehemently argued that physical exercise, preferably wrestling combined with the lifting of barbells or dumbbells, would not only strengthen the individual but would ultimately work towards the betterment of entire nations. In an interview with a British newspaper he reported: “I have great hopes for the future of the English race in consequence of the great interest they take in every branch of sport and in the general culture of the body.”⁹⁷

Despite consistently preaching the benefits of weight training on overall health, Hackenschmidt held opinions which seem dated today. For example, he did not think that strenuous exercise was for everybody. Women, according to the Russian Lion, “should never strive for strength at the expense of womanliness or grace. They must be womanly above all things. ...They are not physically able to stand the strain and it destroys some of the womanliness they have.”⁹⁸

Hackenschmidt on Nutrition

Hackenschmidt was a firm believer in the importance of sound nutrition but he did not put too much faith in overly specific eating regimens or diet fads. He argued that

as long as people, and especially athletes, selected what he called “good foods” there was no need to adhere to any special nutritional habits:

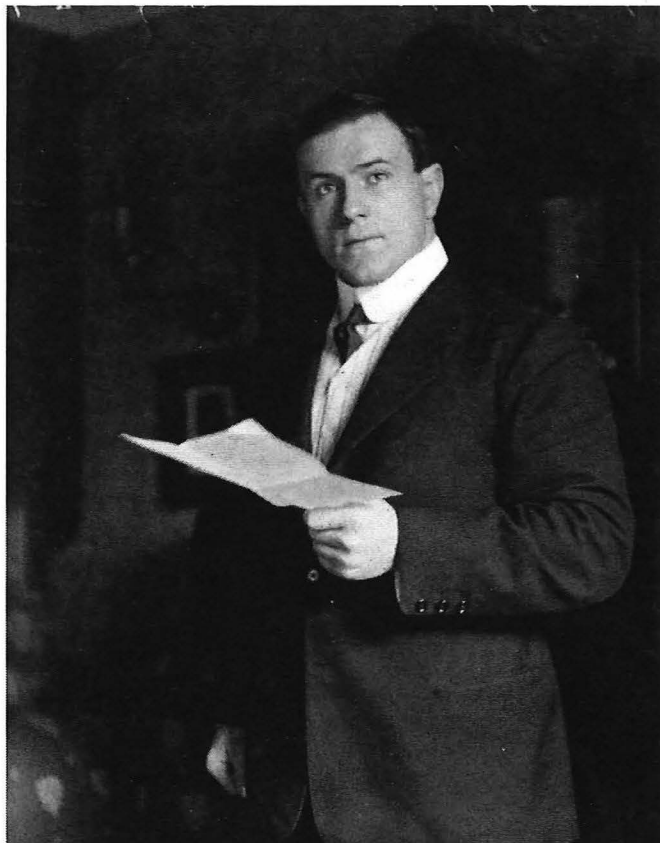
Athletes, and particularly those in constant training, require a considerable amount of food to maintain their strength, and that is why it should always be wholesome and agreeable to their constitutions. Of course I need hardly say that to eat too much food is worse than eating too little, so that an athlete’s meals, and anybody’s for the matter of that, should be generous and plentiful, but never excessive.⁹⁹

In his endearing frankness, the Russian Lion thought it “foolish to lay out a strict diet.” However, overeating would make one “heavy and stupid and slow.”¹⁰⁰ His early ideas of eating the right foods extended far beyond what one might expect from a man of his physical development. He openly endorsed the consumption of varied sweet foods, believing that “good sweets are actually muscle builders, which [...] will really develop strength as well as beef or oatmeal.”¹⁰¹ The Russian Lion in fact bragged about being able to eat copious amounts of sweets himself and encouraged others to do the same: “I can eat a pound of chocolate candy in half an hour and enjoy it. [...] Pie, cake and puddings will do you no harm.”¹⁰² He still cautioned aspiring athletes, weightlifters and health enthusiasts to “always get the best you can. Cheap sweets are bad for the digestion.”¹⁰³

To fully appreciate Hackenschmidt’s perspective on nutrition, consider the eating habits of Bernarr Macfadden, the self-proclaimed “father of physical culture” and health guru who, in his prime, commanded the attention of many thousands of devoted followers. Macfadden advocated fasting, condemned white bread, favored vegetarianism, and frequently introduced “faddish” diets and considered nutritional asceticism a virtue in the attainment of a better body.¹⁰⁴ Needless to say, such dietary limitations had no place in Hack’s philosophy on how to gain strength and become healthy. On the contrary, he believed that “it is well to eat what tempts the appetite, for a meal which is distasteful rarely has a beneficial effect.”¹⁰⁵

Although Hackenschmidt himself preferred an unrestricted diet that allowed for moderate indulgence,

he did not necessarily condemn the elimination of meats from the menu of regular people. He even acknowledged that eating a plant-based diet might have benefits for the ordinary person. Ultimately, however, the Russian Lion argued that he had “never come across any very powerful athlete who adopted these [vegetarianism] rules; good athletes enough, but never heavy-weight champions.”¹⁰⁶



Following his retirement from wrestling, Hackenschmidt began making plans to open a training facility in England. However, the more he thought about physical training the less comfortable he was with the idea of making the kind of claims other physical culture entrepreneurs made in this era. Instead, he turned to philosophy and devoted the rest of his life to refining his ideas about exercise, the body, and the nature of man.

Hack further advised those who sought to get strong and healthy to abstain from alcohol, proclaiming it was “the germ of death.”¹⁰⁷ Hack further cautioned aspiring athletes that “exercise will go for naught if the body is abused.”¹⁰⁸ One should note, though, that Hackenschmidt during his active days as a wrestler did not see any “crime in an occasional indulgence in a glass of wine or a cigar,” as long as one made sure to retain control over one’s mind and body.¹⁰⁹

India Rubber Exercisers, Grip Dumbbells, and Chest Expanders

Despite the increasing commercialization of sports and physical activity during the early twentieth century, Hackenschmidt forcefully rejected anything that made exercising too complicated. In a newspaper article published in 1906 the Russian Lion claimed that “if the present system of physical culture by the use of such things as India rubber exercises and grip dumbbells is persevered with it will end in the decadence of the athleticism it is supposed to cultivate.”¹¹⁰ In the same article, Hackenschmidt relays how he tried an India rubber exerciser but abandoned it when he saw his muscles become “cramped and knotty.” Hack immediately returned to his patented regimen of free weights and open-air exercises and henceforth considered anything else “rubbish” as far as his idea of real physical culture was concerned.¹¹¹ In his opinion, most commercial exercise devices were “useless” for anybody to sought to acquire any serious level of functionality or conditioning.¹¹² While the Russian Lion admitted that machines and appliances may “make a fine-looking, muscular man,” he contended that the hard muscles acquired through chest expanders and other rubber exercisers would be of little actual use.¹¹³

Hackenschmidt was outspoken in his contempt for the commercialization of sport and weightlifting and the methods endorsed by the likes of Eugen Sandow. Showing little respect for showmen and bodybuilders, he argued that “these people who win prizes for best developments, with their hard, dry muscles” were “freaks.”¹¹⁴ Stressing that physical improvement takes time and consistent effort, he advised the public to “take no notice of the advertisements of appliances for training. There is no short cut to condition.”¹¹⁵ Despite his critical stance, clever businessmen tried to capitalize on Hack’s fame and reputation as a knowledgeable weight lifter and offered him money to promote various training appliances. However, he felt that endorsing rubber exercisers and the like would be nothing less than “defrauding the public.”¹¹⁶ He ultimately offered “only one advice for any boy who is following that sort of training—Stop!”¹¹⁷ Sandow, especially, became a target of Hack’s criticism and the showman eventually asked the Russian Lion to stop publicly attacking his training methods, for they “interfered with his business.”¹¹⁸ Hack also did not see much good in breathing exercises for he believed that “the artificial expansion of the lungs, not under stress of exercise, is calculated to do more harm than good.”¹¹⁹

The wrestler’s adamant condemnation of potentially profitable exercise machines and training services revolving around rubber band exercisers and grip dumbbells likely constitute another reason why his ideas are only vaguely remembered today and why hardly anything has been written about his views on training. Entrepreneurs like Eugen Sandow and Bernarr Macfadden created vast empires of successful magazines and books, mail order training courses, several institutions for the betterment of the body, and commercial products such as dumbbells, exercise machines and even cocoa, leaving behind ample tangible evidence of their influence. Hack, on the other hand, never truly capitalized on his popularity in later years beyond publishing a small handful of books in the 1930s that were met with varying degrees of enthusiasm.¹²⁰

The Way to Live and a Change of Heart

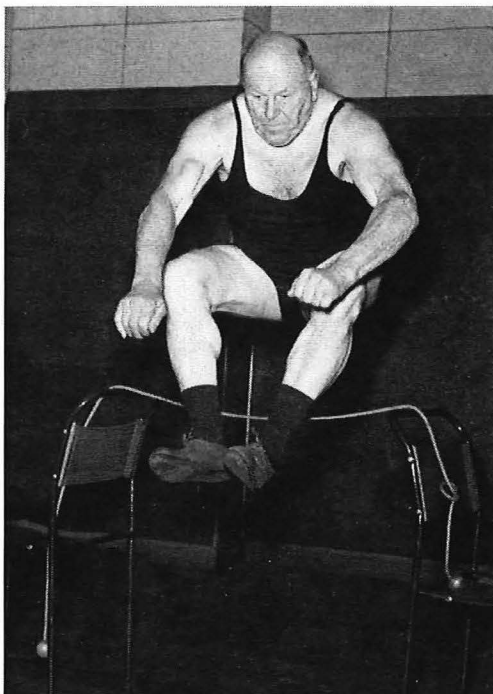
In 1908, *Health & Strength*, Ltd. published Hackenschmidt’s *The Way to Live*. Though bearing his name and written from the wrestler’s perspective, it is not quite clear whether he in fact authored the work himself or if he simply provided his name as a form of creative patronage.¹²¹ Regardless, *The Way to Live* constituted an inclusive manual on how to attain muscularity, improve stamina, and enhance overall quality of life. It outlined, in minute detail, how to train, what to eat, and how long to sleep, providing elaborate exercise sketches and timetables. With *The Way to Live* Hack offered the public an exercise manual that could be easily comprehended by everybody, “avoiding as far as possible all unnecessary technical details.”¹²² In its comprehensiveness, *The Way to Live* distilled the wrestler’s training philosophies as promoted in countless interviews and magazine features into an accessible manual and further helped promote his beliefs.

However, after retiring from wrestling, Hack’s ideas on physicality underwent a dramatic transformation. While *The Way to Live* constituted an informative set of guidelines on how to become strong and healthy, Hack’s later publications were anything but easily digestible. After the end of World War I he became increasingly interested in the broader relationships between the mind, the body, and the soul, dabbling in socio-political theory, economics, biology, physiology, and psychology. His ideas grew to be more and more abstract, which greatly limited his readership and decreased his accessibility, which had once been one of

his greatest assets.¹²³ Titles such as *Dethronement of the Brain* or *The Three Memories and Forgetfulness* strongly allude to the philosophical character of Hackenschmidt's treatises. In these later works he significantly reevaluated his stance on the importance of weight training and physical exercise and what had once been of pivotal importance to the attainment of health and a long life. In his personal papers, an unpublished note questions his earlier beliefs as detrimental and wasteful:

I had realized during my own exercising that I always trained against an opposition from my bodily system, that some power within me was constantly destroying all the benefits I obtained from that training. The effects were subject to physical forgetfulness, necessitating efforts to combat the loss of condition. Of what value, then, was the training that I proposed to offer to the public?¹²⁴

In 1919 Hack abandoned his long-held plans to open an institute of physical development, although he "had repeatedly been urged to establish [such an institution]."¹²⁵ While he thought that people considered him to be "one of the highest authorities upon matters appertaining to physical development," he did not believe that providing regular training and exercise instruction would give the public anything of true value.¹²⁶ He was hesitant to subject "less fortunate human beings" to the same training he went through or even offer training suggestions at all.¹²⁷ After all, he considered himself to be a uniquely gifted individual, whose bodily attributes, "as natural and individual as the capacities of Raphael, Michelangelo, Beethoven, Chopin or Caruso," had enabled him to achieve feats decidedly out of reach for the ordinary man.¹²⁸ Many physical culture schools and



Hackenschmidt remained vigorous in his later years and followed his own principles to the end of his life in 1968 at age eighty-nine. He continued to practice jumping in the belief that it was one of the best of all leg exercises and is shown here at age seventy-five clearing a rope over the back of two chairs. Remarkable!

training institutions in Hack's mind promoted an artificial path to imagined fulfillment while in truth only reaffirming deception and false truths about one's appearance. He came to believe that no one would ever be able to do what he had done and that convincing people to even try would mean putting them in harm's way by "interfering with the natural unfoldment processes that are initiated from within the bodily systems."¹²⁹

The concept of guided exercise, drill, and pre-determined movements, especially, did not have a place in Hackenschmidt's philosophies any more. He argued that "every movement of every human being should be unique to him," and that each person derived its own harmonious physical balance from idiosyncratic factors exclusive to that individual. Following another person's bodily patterns and commands would then surely

result in the suppression of one's uniqueness and ability to follow the inherent qualities Hack believed to exist in everybody.¹³⁰ An instructor in a class, for example, Hack argued, could only address the class as a whole, without ever being able to truly consider what each individual's body required or yearned for.¹³¹ Exercise, after all, should be undertaken as a response to the body's needs and not in order to follow some form of outside instruction.¹³² Ultimately, Hackenschmidt condemned all movements carried out under command as "wholly bad" and as "insults to whatever individuality and personality we retain."¹³³

Hack also expanded on his idea of the balanced symbiosis of body and mind.¹³⁴ He emphasized the virtue of activities such as running, walking, or swimming, arguing that movements that freely follow the human being's natural impetus for activity always result in a greater, overall healthier, and more balanced development of the body than the utilization of "external factors such tools, weapons, machinery, gymnastic apparatus and so forth."¹³⁵ Conversely, the Russian Lion postu-

lated, those seeking to build “disproportionate muscle-bunches” were not attaining any real improvement but rather burdening their bodies with additional liabilities that exceed those imperfections they desired to alleviate through training in the first place.¹³⁶

Hackenschmidt also reconsidered his earlier views on nutrition and he began to consider a person’s eating habits as “the most important issue that can affect human beings.”¹³⁷ He advocated the consumption of fruits, vegetables, grains, and nuts, while vehemently arguing against the “unsuitability of flesh diets.”¹³⁸ According to his theory, the right nutrition would help cleanse the body, reduce waste matter in the organism, and help restore and maintain cosmic balance of the individual.

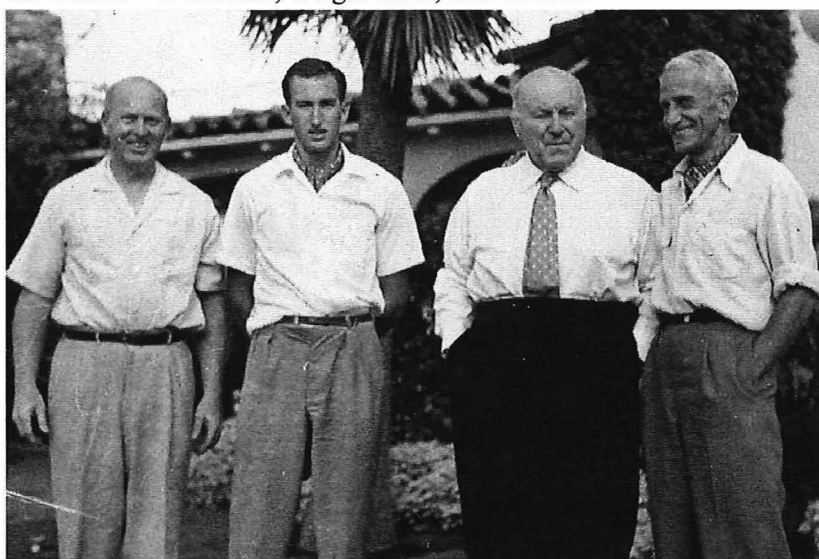
The examples given here can only serve to illustrate a part of Hackenschmidt’s later philosophical exploits. However, they allude to the transformation the wrestler underwent after the end of his competitive days. Though very outspoken as an athlete, Hackenschmidt became even more adamant as a social philosopher. Convinced of the truth of his own ideas, he doggedly pursued every opportunity to reach out to the public. He gave lectures at Trinity College in Cambridge and the German Sport University in Cologne, visited the Uxbridge Royal Air Force Depot, traveled to the United States, and penned several letters to politicians, offering his thoughts and advice on man’s health, vigor, social relations, and state of mind.¹³⁹

Forgotten Legacy

Despite significant media exposure, admiration from men and women alike, and ideas that strongly appealed to a public influenced by a newly emerging sport and physical culture ideology, Hackenschmidt unlike other strength, exercise, and health proponents of his time was not able to translate his beliefs into a lasting exercise legacy. Most of the Estonian wrestler’s contributions to strength training have been forgotten and what remains is the name of an exercise few bodybuilders or weightlifters even do: the Hack Squat.¹⁴⁰ It would be a mistake to attribute this process entirely to Hack’s own hesitance and changes in his ideology without considering the greater socio-politi-

cal events of the first half of the twentieth century, but it should still be noted that Hackenschmidt’s approach to strength training and health throughout remained markedly different from that of his contemporaries such as Sandow and Macfadden. In addition, his lack of a magazine of his own and his decision against opening an institute for physical culture quite possibly precluded him from building the audience he undoubtedly deserved.

While an argument can certainly be made that Hack was very gifted and possessed a unique gift of power and muscular development, the question remains as to why he underwent such a profound change of heart regarding exercise, training, and health. Hackenschmidt in his private notes provides little or no explanation as to why he suddenly abandoned many of the ideas he had tried to advance during his wrestling career, but it seems reasonable to propose that his experience in Europe during the two World Wars at least served as a catalyst to his philosophical development. Hackenschmidt’s dislike for anything that resembled drill, coercion, and external determination may very well stem from being caught in the turmoil of the two great wars, subsequently giving impetus to the creation of a theoretical framework that merged his philosophical interest with his experience as a wrestler, weight-lifter, and athlete.



One of Hackenschmidt’s most devoted disciples was Australian track coach Percy Cerutty, who trained gold medalist Herb Elliott for the 1960 Olympics. Cerutty was converted to weight training because of Hackenschmidt’s books and the Australian then used Hack’s ideas about strength training on Elliott and other runners in the 1950s and 1960s. On a trip to California during the height of Elliott’s career, Ray Van Cleef (left), Herb Elliot, George Hackenschmidt, and Percy Cerutty met and posed for the camera.

Regardless of his reasons, considering the respect he enjoyed in his prime Hack would surely have had tremendous commercial success had he not chosen another road. Moreover, many of his teachings still ring true today and future work will perhaps further untangle a life so fascinating and yet so little known to the community of strength athletes and physical exercise enthusiasts today.

NOTES:

1. George Hackenschmidt, *The Way to Live: Health & Physical Fitness* (London, England: Health & Strength Limited, 1908), 9.

2. For information on strongmen performers see Joshua M. Buck, "The Development of the Performances of Strongmen in American Vaudeville in between 1881 and 1932" (master's thesis, University of Maryland, 1999).

3. For more information on Sullivan, Sandow, Muldoon, and Macfadden see: Michael T. Isenberg, *John L. Sullivan and his America* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994); David L. Chapman, *Sandow the Magnificent: Eugen Sandow and the Beginnings of Bodybuilding* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006); Edward Van Every, *Muldoon: The Solid Man of Sport* (New York City: Frederick A. Stokes, 1929); Robert Ernst, *The Life of Bernarr Macfadden* (London, England: Syracuse University Press, 1991).

4. The only published scholarly treatment of Hackenschmidt's ideas on exercise is in Terry Todd & Spencer Maxcy, "Muscles, Memory: and George Hackenschmidt," *Iron Game History* 2, no. 3 (1992): 10-15.

5. The Hackenschmidt Collection is housed at the H.J. Lutchter Stark Center for Physical Culture and Sports at The University of Texas at Austin and will be subsequently referenced simply as "Hackenschmidt Collection."

6. George Hackenschmidt, *The Russian Lion* (unpublished), 2, Hackenschmidt Collection.

7. *Ibid.*, 1.

8. *Ibid.*, 8.

9. *Ibid.*, 9.

10. *Ibid.*, 12-13.

11. George Hackenschmidt, "On George Lurich," *Iron Game History* 1, no. 6 (1991): 4.

12. Hackenschmidt, *The Russian Lion*, 16.

13. *Ibid.*

14. *Ibid.*, 17.

15. *Ibid.*, 17-20. In 1897, the nineteen-year old Hackenschmidt made the following lifts:

Jerk	216 pounds	12 times with both hands
Jerk	187 pounds	7 times with right hand
Bent Pressed	218 pounds	once with right arm
Snatched	152 pounds	once with right arm

At this time, the 5'8" Hackenschmidt weighed 176 pounds. His strongman feats included placing a 250-pound barbell on his back and then inviting three men to sit astride his neck and hang on to the globes on either side of the bar. With the combined weight of over 700 pounds he would walk around the stage, wowing those in attendance.

16. Polish born Krajewski (or Krayevsky) was a highly sought after physical trainer at that time and a true strength training pioneer. He founded the St. Petersburg Amateur Weightlifting Society in 1895,

presided over the World Weightlifting Championships in Vienna in 1898, and published one of the fundamental works on strength training, *The Development of Physical Strength with Kettlebells and Without Kettlebells*, in 1901.

17. Hackenschmidt, *The Russian Lion*, 23.

18. Hackenschmidt explicitly addresses the role Dr. Krajewski played in the development of his own training philosophy in Hackenschmidt, *The Way to Live*, 98-101. For additional information on the Russian physician's ideas on weight-lifting and exercise also see: Mel C. Siff, *Supertraining* (Denver: Supertraining Institute, 2003), 4-5.

19. Hackenschmidt, *The Russian Lion*, 25.

20. Hackenschmidt, *The Way to Live*, 109.

21. *Ibid.*, 114.

22. *Ibid.*, 128.

23. Hackenschmidt, *The Russian Lion*. This work also offers an incredibly detailed account of every fight until 1908.

24. Hackenschmidt, *The Way to Live*, 11.

25. *Ibid.*, 17. The Roman satirist Juvenal is credited with first using the phrase "*mens sana in corpore sano*," but it was essayist John Locke who reintroduced it as a rationale for physical training. Locke wrote, "A sound mind in a sound body is a short, but full description of a happy state in this world," and it can be found in: Richard Aldrich, "John Locke (1632-1704)," *Prospects: Quarterly Review of Education* 24, (1994): 61-76.

26. J. A. Mangan, "Introduction: Complicated Matters," in *A Sport-Loving Society: Victorian and Edwardian Middle-Class England at Play*, ed. J. A. Mangan (New York: Routledge, 2006), 2.

27. Frederic L. Paxson, "The Rise of Sport," *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 4, no. 2 (1917): 145, accessed December 2, 2012, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1886984>.

28. For an overview of physical culture in the nineteenth century see Harvey Green, *Fit for America: Health, Fitness, Sport and American Society* (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 1988); and Bruce Hailey, *Healthy Body in Victorian Culture* (Cambridge, MA: 1978).

29. Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Managing the Body: Beauty, Health, and Fitness in Britain, 1880-1939* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press), 27.

30. Nancy Fix Anderson, *The Sporting Life: Victorian Sports and Games* (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2010), 67.

31. Derek Birley, *Land of Sport and Glory: Sport and British Society 1887-1910* (Manchester, England: Manchester University Press, 1995), 31.

32. Anderson, *The Sporting Life*, 73.

33. James D. Campbell, *The Army Isn't All Work: Physical Culture and the Evolution of the British Army, 1860-1920* (Farnham, UK: Ashgate Publishing, 2012), 47-64.

34. Elliot J. Gorn & Warren Goldstein, *A Brief History of American Sports* (New York, NY: Hill and Wang, 1993), 84.

35. *Ibid.*, 85.

36. Clifford Putney, *Muscular Christianity: Manhood and Sports in Protestant America, 1880-1920* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 1.

37. Elliot J. Gorn, "Sports through the Nineteenth Century," in *The New American Sport History: Recent Approaches and Perspectives*, ed. S.W. Pope (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997), 35.

38. Green, *Fit for America*, 98-99, 186-192.

39. John Higham, "The Reorientation of American Culture in the 1890s," in John Weiss, ed., *The Origins of Modern Consciousness* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1965), 28.

40. For a detailed history of wrestling in Great Britain and the U.S. see Lori M. Hildebrandt, "Mat Game: The Rise of American Wrestling" (master's thesis, The University of Maine, 2009).
41. *Ibid.*, 41.
42. Tony Collins, John Martin, and Wray Vamplew, "Wrestling," in *Encyclopedia of Traditional British Rural Sports* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2005), 283.
43. Mangan, "Introduction: Complicated Matters," 2.
44. Collins, Martin, and Vamplew, "Wrestling," 284.
45. *Ibid.*, 223.
46. Hildebrandt, "Mat Game," 72.
47. *Ibid.*, 78.
48. Elliot J. Gorn, *The Manly Art: Bare-Knuckle Prize Fighting in America* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2010), 161.
49. Scott M. Beekman, *Ringside: A History of Professional Wrestling in America* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2006), 11.
50. Gorn, *The Manly Art*, 161.
51. Hildebrandt, "Mat Game," 124.
52. *Ibid.*, 201.
53. "Georges Hackenschmidt," *Vitality and Health Culture: A Magazine Devoted to Mental and Physical Vigor*, March 1904, 72. *Vitality and Health Culture* was one of many physical culture magazines that routinely chronicled Hackenschmidt's exploits on the wrestling mat and which credited the Russian champion's wrestling success to his superior physical development.
54. "The Man of the Moment: Georges Hackenschmidt. Champion Wrestler of the World," *The W. G. Athletic Weekly*, July 9, 1904.
55. "When Greek Joined Russian: Tug of War at the Oxford," Collection of Hackenschmidt press clippings, page 10, Hackenschmidt Collection.
56. Other examples of superlatives used to describe Hackenschmidt: "A piano without keys," in "Lion's Roaring for the Fray," *New York World Globe*, May 3, 1905; "built like a 'battleship,' with muscles 'encompass[ing] his body as if he had been dipped in some case hardening sea,'" in "'Hack' Downed Jenkins: 'Russian Lion' Made Quick Work of the American Wrestler Last Night," *Baltimore, MD Herald*, May 5, 1905.
57. Richard Morton, quoted in "Visit of Hackenschmidt – the Hero of Olympia – Champion of the World: Special and Exclusive Interview," *Blackburn Standard & Express* (Blackburn, England), May 14, 1904.
58. "Orpheum, Always a Good Show," undated newspaper advertisement from Hackenschmidt Scrapbook, page 61, reports that Hackenschmidt will give an exhibition of "posing and the scientific illustration of the different methods of wrestling." In "Hackenschmidt at the Palace Theater," also undated, (p. 75) in the scrapbook, Hackenschmidt reportedly gave exhibitions in Lancashire style wrestling on one evening and Greco-Roman wrestling in another. In another undated article, titled "Tit-Bits: 'Russian Lion' who Challenges British Wrestlers," (p. 60) Hackenschmidt stated, "I am one of those whose ambition is to restore wrestling to the high plane as a sport which it once occupied. It should be a gentleman's sport. It should become a sport which a lady may watch with delight—not with a look of horror as if she were watching a bullfight."
59. The Hackenschmidt scrapbook, which can be seen at www.starkcenger.org, includes numerous first-hand accounts and programs of Hackenschmidt's routines.
60. George Hackenschmidt, quoted in "'Muscle Without Brains – Nothing!' Says Strongest Man in the World," *Chicago Evening American*, April 3, 1905.
61. For a painstakingly researched and well-written biographical account of Eugen Sandow's life see Chapman, *Sandow the Magnificent*.
62. George Hackenschmidt, quoted in "'Muscle Without Brains'."
63. "Hackenschmidt, Noted Strong Man, in Chicago," *The Chicago Sunday Tribune*, April 2, 1905.
64. "Hackenschmidt a Poser as Well as Fine Athlete: Unlike Sandow, the Russian Lion Can Put His Great Muscles to Practical Use," *The Morning Telegraph*, April 11, 1905.
65. George Hackenschmidt, "Sandow, Eugen," Hackenschmidt Collection, box 2, folder 15, 3.
66. *Ibid.*, 5.
67. "Sporting Comment," *The Montreal Daily Herald*, May 9, 1905.
68. Thomas Inch, "A Quick Route to Strength," Hackenschmidt scrapbook.
69. Hackenschmidt, *The Russian Lion*, 30.
70. George Hackenschmidt, quoted in Robert Edgren, "Hackenschmidt's Great Strength Due To Work," (untitled newspaper clipping), Hackenschmidt scrapbook, April 1905.
71. "Hackenschmidt, Noted Strong Man, in Chicago."
72. Even in his eighties Hackenschmidt still exercised regularly, running frequently and occasionally incorporating weight-lifting exercises into his training: Ray van Cleef, "A Champion Among Champions," *Strength and Health* (December 1958): 16.
73. Hackenschmidt, *The Way to Live*, 10.
74. The *Chicago Examiner* published a six-part mini-series of articles on strength and exercise as a promotional feature for the first bout between Hackenschmidt and Gotch on April 3, 1908, at Dexter Park Pavilion in Chicago. Every day of the week leading up to the fight Hackenschmidt told "the secret of his wonderful strength and also the way to become like him" ("Hackenschmidt Gives First Lesson in Strength Culture: Moderation and Regularity First Principles of Exercise," *Chicago Sunday Examiner*, March 29, 1908). The articles cover general training principles, present Hack's thoughts on nutrition, breathing and sleep, illustrate specific exercises for arms, legs, abdominal muscles, and outline the importance of simplicity and moderation in training.
75. "Georges Hackenschmidt," *Vitality and Health Culture*, 73.
76. George Hackenschmidt, "'Russian Lion's' Advice: Hackenschmidt, Matched to Wrestle Jenkins, Gives Good Counsel to Young Wrestlers and Those Who Seek Strength," *Pittsburgh Press*, May 3, 1905.
77. "The Man of the Moment."
78. "Hackenschmidt Tells how to Develop Muscles of the Legs," *Chicago Examiner*, March 31, 1908.
79. "Develop Propulsive Power of the body, Advises Hackenschmidt," *Chicago Examiner*, March 30, 1908.
80. Hackenschmidt, "'Russian Lion's' Advice."
81. "Hackenschmidt Tells How to Develop Muscles of the Legs."
82. George Hackenschmidt, "You'll be Strong if you want to, says big 'Hack,'" *The Evening World*, 1908.
83. George Hackenschmidt, quoted in "'Muscle Without Brains'."
84. George Hackenschmidt, "Wrestling for Health's Sake," *Daily Mail*, April 27, 1906.
85. "Hackenschmidt Gives Points on the Game," *Salt Lake City Telegraph*, May 1, 1905.
86. George Hackenschmidt, "How to Keep Strong and Healthy all the Year Around," *The Red Letter*, October 6, 1906, 7.
87. "Hackenschmidt Gives First Lesson in Strength Culture."
88. "Too Little Attention is Paid to Hands and Arms, Says Hacken-

schmidt," *Chicago Examiner*, April 2, 1908.

89. "Simple Life is the Best, Declares Hackenschmidt," *Chicago Sunday Examiner*, April 3, 1908.

90. "Georg Hackenschmidt on and off the Stage: Interview with the 'Russian Lion,'" *Evening Express*, April 16, 1907.

91. "Hackenschmidt Tells how to Develop Muscles of the Legs."

92. "Hustling Wrestler: Hackenschmidt in Training for his Match," *Manchester Dispatch*, January 29, 1908.

93. George Hackenschmidt, "Hack Believes in Sweets for Athletes," *The Boston Herald*, March 17, 1908.

94. "Development of Stomach Muscles Saves Much Suffering, Says Hack," *Chicago Examiner*, April 1, 1908.

95. *Ibid.*

96. "Too Little Attention is Paid to Hands and Arms."

97. George Hackenschmidt, quoted in "Visit of Hackenschmidt."

98. George Hackenschmidt, quoted in "'Muscle Without Brains'."

99. George Hackenschmidt, quoted in "Visit of Hackenschmidt," see also "'Muscle Without Brains'."

100. George Hackenschmidt, "Russian Explores Theories Attributed to his 'System,'" *The Washington Times*, March 21, 1908.

101. "Hack Builds up Muscles with Chocolate Creams," 1908.

102. Hackenschmidt, "'Russian Lion's' Advice."

103. Hackenschmidt, "Hack Believes in Sweets for Athletes."

104. Robert Ernst, *The Life of Bernarr Macfadden* (London, England: Syracuse University Press, 1991), 27-30, 38, 111-117.

105. Hackenschmidt, "Wrestling for Health's Sake."

106. George Hackenschmidt, "Hackenschmidt and Aspiring Athletes: Health and Strength for Everybody," *The People's Journal*, April 13, 1907.

107. Hackenschmidt, "Wrestling for Health's Sake."

108. Hackenschmidt, "'Russian Lion's' Advice."

109. Hackenschmidt, *The Way to Live*, 32.

110. George Hackenschmidt, "How to be Strong: A Plea for Simplicity of Exercise," *Daily Dispatch*, November 29, 1906. (Invented, produced and marketed by Eugen Sandow, grip dumbbells, or spring-grip dumbbells, were dumbbells composed of two halves between which steel springs were placed. The number of steel springs could be adjusted to either increase or decrease the force it took to close the bell. India rubber exercisers were exercise devices similar to modern spring or cable expanders.)

111. Hackenschmidt, "Hackenschmidt and Aspiring Athletes."

112. "Wrestler to Retire: Hackenschmidt Weary of 'Show' Life," *Daily Chronicle*, February 8, 1907.

113. "The 'Russian Lion' in Aberdeen: Interview with George Hackenschmidt," *The Evening Gazette*, April 16, 1907.

114. "Wrestling and Health. Hackenschmidt Interviews," *The Manchester Courier*, November 30, 1906.

115. "Muscle and Brawn: Hackenschmidt and his Company," *The New Zealand Times*, February 7, 1910.

116. "The 'Russian Lion' in Aberdeen."

117. "Muscle and Brawn."

118. George Hackenschmidt, "Sandow, Eugen," 4.

119. "Hack on Health: A Simple Gospel," *Sunday Times* (Johannesburg, Transvaal), October 10, 1909. Breathing exercises were highly touted by some physical culture experts, most notably Bernarr Macfadden, who published an entire book on the subject: Bernarr Macfadden, *Building of Vital Power: Deep Breathing and a Complete System for Strengthening the Heart, Lungs, Stomach and All the Great Vital Organs* (New York, NY: Physical Culture Publishing, 1904).

120. A list of Hackenschmidt's publications: *The Way to Live*;

The Complete Science of Wrestling (London, England: Health & Strength, Ltd., 1909); *Entthronung des Hirns: Grundlagen für die Wiederherstellung der Einigkeit und des Friedens im Menschen und in der Menschheit* (Leipzig, Germany: 1932); *It is From Within: The Way To Health, Peace, Beauty, and Vigor* (Peverleys Ltd., 1934); *Man and Cosmic Antagonism to Mind and Spirit* (London, England: Hazell, Watson & Viney, Ltd., 1935); *Attitudes and Their Relation to Human Manifestations: Instinctive; Intellectual; Dictated* (London, England: Billings and Sons Ltd., 1937); *Consciousness and Character: True Definitions of Entity, Individuality, Personality, Nonentity* (1937); *Self-Improvement* (1937); *The Three Memories and Forgetfulness: Acquisitions and Impositions from Without; Life's Opposition from Within* (London, England: Billing and Sons Ltd., 1937).

121. Health & Strength, Ltd. in fact offered a wide selection of books offering advice on health, physical culture, and sports, including *The Complete Science of Wrestling by George Hackenschmidt* (1909). The books would always bear the name of a well-known "authority" in the field, offering practical advice on topics such as tennis, cricket sailing, diving, camping, and exercise.

122. Hackenschmidt, *The Way to Live*, 11.

123. It should also be noted that, unlike *The Way to Live* and *The Complete Science of Wrestling*, Health & Strength, Ltd. did not publish any of his later works.

124. George Hackenschmidt, biographic fragment notes, Hackenschmidt Collection, box 1, 3.

125. *Ibid.*

126. Hackenschmidt, *It is From Within*, 6.

127. *Ibid.*

128. *Ibid.*, 2.

129. *Ibid.*, 4.

130. Hackenschmidt, *Consciousness and Character*, 170-171.

131. Hackenschmidt, *Self-Improvement*, 13.

132. *Ibid.*, 22.

133. *Ibid.*, 36.

134. An in-depth analysis of all his theoretical paradigms shall be reserved for a different time. For the purpose of this paper, the authors focused on Hack's ideas as they pertained to physical exercise and training. Note, however, that one of the main tenets of Hackenschmidt's theoretical framework is the interconnectedness of cosmic energy, mind power, strength, health, and social relatedness.

135. George Hackenschmidt, "The Fallacy of Training: Artificiality of Athletes," Hackenschmidt Collection, box 2, folder 16, 9.

136. Hackenschmidt, *Self-Improvement*, 50.

137. Hackenschmidt, "Nourishment," Hackenschmidt Collection, box 2, folder 13, 1.

138. *Ibid.*, 3.

139. *Ibid.*, 72-74. "Hackenschmidt's Visit to Uxbridge Royal Air Force Depot," Hackenschmidt Collection, box 2, folder 14. "Lecture Given At Cambridge in 1934," Hackenschmidt Collection, box 2, folder 12. "Lecture Given at German Sport University in Cologne," Hackenschmidt Collection, box 2, folder 11.

140. The Hack Squat, popularized by Hackenschmidt, is a version of the traditional barbell squat. Instead of placing the bar across the shoulder, the lifter places the barbell behind the legs and then squats down, grabs the bar with an overhead grip, and lifts the bar by extending hips and knees to full extension. For a detailed exercise description see: <http://www.exrx.net/WeightExercises/Quadriceps/BBHackSquat.html>.