

Grip No. 5

One-hand Dead Lift, in rapid Half Snatching motion, using overhand hook grip. In this style, the bar was lifted in succession as quickly as possible, taking the following poundages :—396·75, 418·75, 441 lb. In this manner Hermann has handled 499·36 lb. on a straight Domke bar, which is not a revolving type.

Grip No. 6

One-hand Dead Lift using overhand hook grip and heavy poundages. Hermann here would take the following poundages in his training :—529, 551·25, 617·25, 661·25 lb. His maximum lift in this style being 727·5 lb. as listed in his Records.

(ii) TRAINING FOR TWO-HAND DEAD LIFTING

Görner usually took one lift with each poundage and would take his lifts in four of the under-listed styles at each training session—or to put it another way—it would take him three work-outs to go through the 12 variations of gripping listed below, taking at each work-out 4 of these variations. Particularly noted should be the great attention Hermann gave to strengthening his fingers and gripping-powers by working out in this thorough fashion. Now I will list his methods of training for his enormous Two-handed Dead Lifts.

Grip No. 1

Two-finger Dead Lift using only the index fingers with an overhand grip. In this manner Hermann merely used the index finger of each hand. The barbell would weigh :—132·25 lb., 157·25 lb.,

176·25 lb. or similar. One attempt with each poundage. He has lifted 187·5 lb. in this manner, but it did not represent his limit.

Grip No. 2

Two-finger Dead Lift using index fingers and reverse grip. One-finger lifting in overhand and one finger in underhand grip in other words. In this manner, weights of 176·25 lb., 220·5 lb. and 264·5 lb. or similar were used. He has lifted 286·5 lb. in this style—nowhere near his maximum.

Grip No. 3

Two-finger Dead Lift using only the middle fingers of each hand—normal overhand grip. He would take the following poundages :—154·25 lb., 176·25 lb., 198·5 lb. He has lifted 220·5 lb. in this manner—again well under his maximum.

Grip No. 4

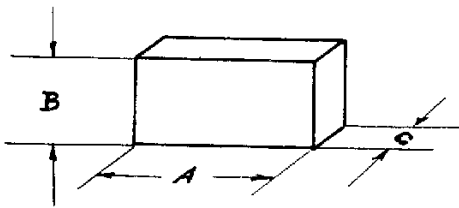
Two-finger Dead Lift using only middle fingers and a reverse grip—similar to Grip No. 2—lifting 198·5 lb., 242·5 lb. and 286·5 lb. or similar. He has lifted 308·75 lb. in this manner.

Grip No. 5

Four-finger Dead Lift using only the index and middle fingers and an overhand grip. Lifting 286·5 lb., 308·75 lb., and 330·75 lb. Görner has lifted 385·75 lb. in this style—again not his limit.

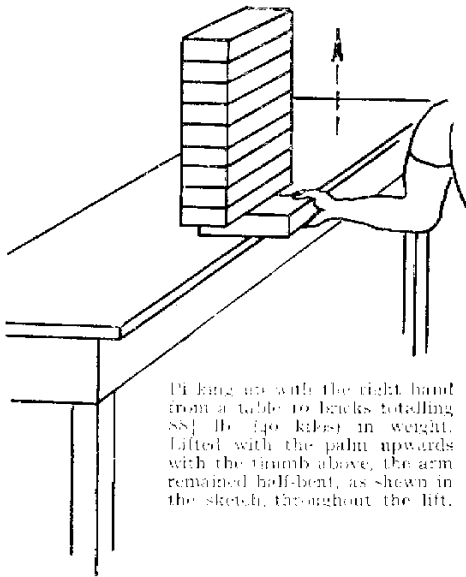
Grip No. 6

Four-finger Dead Lift using only index and

Measurements of a Brick:

- A — Length, 10 1/2 in. or 26 cm.
 B — Height, 5 1/2 in. or 14 cm.
 C — Width, 7 1/2 in. or 19 cm.

Average Weight — 3 kilos or 8.82 lb.



Picking up with the right hand from a table 10 bricks totalling 88 1/2 lb. (40 kilos) in weight. Lifted with the palm upwards with the thumb above, the arm remained half-bent, as shown in the sketch, throughout the lift.

middle fingers with reverse grip. Poundages of 463, 507, 551.25 lb. for no more than one attempt with each. He has lifted 595.75 lb. in this manner but not his limit by any means.

Grip No. 7

Two-hands Dead Lift using normal overhand grip without hooking:—595.25 lb., 628.25 lb., and 661.25 lb., one attempt with each poundage. Maximum lift here was 727.5 lb.

Grip No. 8

Two-hands Stiff-legged Dead Lift using normal overhand grip without hooking. Poundages of 551.25, 573.25, and 595.25, each lifted once. Has lifted 661.25 lb. in this manner.

Grip No. 9

Two-hands Rapid Dead Lift using overhand hook grip. Taking one attempt for each poundage, Hermann would handle 441 lb., 474 lb., and 507 lb. He has lifted 554.48 lb. in this fashion—the weight being lifted to waist-level! He started this lift with straight arms and then bent his arms as his terrific "pull" took the bar to waist-height.

Grip No. 10

Two-hands Bent-arm Dead Lift using overhand hook grip. In this style, the arms remained bent half-way through the entire lift. The weight was lifted to waist-level. Poundages:—330.75 lb., 363.75 lb., 396.75 lb. In this manner Hermann has lifted 441 lb., but he could have done more.

Grip No. 11

Two-hands Dead Lift with heavy weights, using either overhand hook grip or reverse grip, taking the following poundages with one lift on each:—639.25 lb., 683.5 lb. and 727.5 lb. His maximum lifts using overhand hook grip were 793.75 lb. (barbell only) and, with reverse grip, 830 lb. (barbell plus two men standing on it).

Grip No. 12

Two-barbells Dead Lift. Using two barbells and standing between them using overhand grip with hook. Weight of both bells (combined) would be: 529 lb., 551.25 lb. and 573.25 lb. Hermann has lifted in this manner 617.25 lb. officially and 663.5 lb. unofficially (right arm 332.75 lb. and left arm 330.75 lb.), which he lifted and walked with for 23 feet across the training-hall in Leipzig on 10th September, 1920.

That describes Hermann Görner's methods of training for his enormous Dead Lifts. In addition to the training described above, Hermann would also practise the following lifts, doing in the "Bend-over" one lift with each poundage and in the "Shrugging" 4 to 6 repetitions in succession.

Bendover with Barbell across shoulders

Also known as the "Good Morning" exercise. Keeping the legs straight and bending until the body was parallel to the floor, he would take the following poundages:—220.5 lb., 242.5 lb., 264.5 lb. He has performed this lift with a barbell of 335.87 lb., which was done in Leipzig in 1932.

Shoulder-shrugging with barbell

Holding the barbell in front of his thighs, Hermann would take 683.5 lb., 716.5 lb., 749.5 lbs. His maximum lift in this manner was 2 repetitions with 852 lb.—using a reverse grip and lifting the bar plus two men, Hermann took it in the "hang" position and from there "shrugged" it twice!

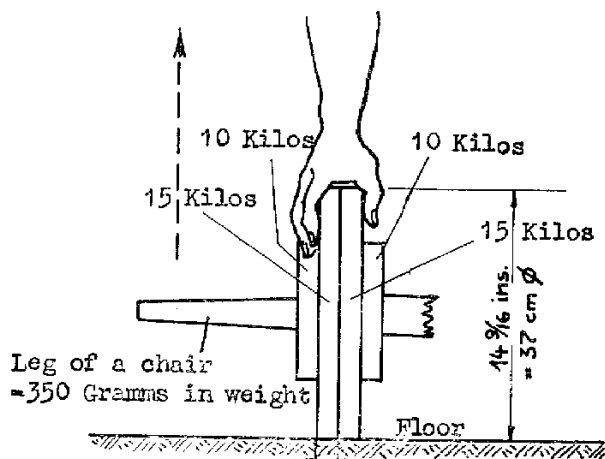
Shoulder-shrugging combined with Arm-shrugging

The title of this may sound a little strange, but I cannot think of how to describe it differently! In this feat the shoulders were shrugged in the usual manner and the arms were also bent or "shrugged" about 3 to 4 in. at the same time—I hope my readers can follow my description. In this fashion, Hermann used 573.25 lb., 595.25 lb. and 617.25 lb. As a maximum lift, he has done three repetitions with 719.8 lb. using a reverse grip with hook. The barbell was handed to him at the "hang" position, from where Hermann "shrugged" it! Bending the arms also at the same time.

Arm-shrugging without shoulder shrugging

Holding the barbell in the finishing position of the Two-hands Dead Lift, Hermann would then lift it about 4 in. by bending his arms slightly at the elbows—"shrugging" his arms in other words. His shoulders were, however, kept in normal position and not shrugged as well. In this manner he handled weights of 418.75 lb., 441 lb., and 463 lb. One of his best lifts in this

manner was 6 repetitions with 554.48 lb., which he did with thumbless overhand grip only on fingertips on a non-revolving bar—this was in 1931, in Leipzig.



Right-Hand Pinch-Grip Dead Lift from the outside of the foot of 111 lb. (50.35 kilos) on 2 3/8-in. (60 mm.) thick object correctly picked up to the dead-hang by Hermann GÖRNER on July 10th, 1934, at Leipzig.

(iii) TRAINING FOR SUPPORTING OR CARRYING FEATS

The equipment used by most of the members of the Leipzig Athletic Club for supporting or carrying feats consisted of two similar pieces of apparatus. The smaller one of these consisted of a bar 200 to 225 cm. in length (about 6 ft. 7 in. to 7 ft. 4 1/4 in.), 4.8 to 5.0 cm. (about 2 in.) in diameter. At each end of the bar was attached a short length of strong

chain, and a second short length of chain was also fastened about 24 inches distance from each end of the bar. To the ends of these two chains (four in all—two each end of the bar), a short length of rod or piping was fastened and thus a man could sit at each end of the bar, placing himself on the short length of rod attached by the chains to the long bar and balancing himself by holding the long bar with his hands. I think my readers will be able to follow my description. This piece of apparatus would hold two men—one at either end—and was usually used for handwork in supporting feats. The second piece of equipment was exactly similar to the first except that it was longer by about 10 inches and the shorter rods were also longer to permit of two men sitting side by side on the lower bar. This was generally used for legwork. Both pieces of apparatus were used for supporting and carrying work when the bars would be used across the shoulders of the performer.

For supporting on the feet several men, a large plank was used. This was from between 4 to 6 metres long (a metre is 39.37 in.) with a width of 20 to 25 cm. (about 8 to 10 in.) and 2 3/4 in. to 3 1/4 in. thick. The plank was placed on top of two trestles—one at either end—the height of these being about 100 to 115 cm. (39.37 in. to 45 in. approx.). To train with this plank, the lifter would take up his position on his back on the floor—using a specially constructed back-rest which was padded for comfort—then two men would sit upon the plank, which would then be pressed up off the trestles about 2 to 4 in. and supported for several seconds on the feet of the performer. After some practice at this, the load

would be pressed up by the feet and the two trestles would be quickly removed by assistants. Sometimes beneath the plank would be iron hand-grips screwed to it. These hand-grips would be gripped by the performer and used by him for balancing purposes only—they were not used for pressing or supporting the plank. Some planks had handles screwed underneath, something like the handles of kettlebells—these were used in similar manner for balancing purposes only. The modern "Leg-Press" machines were not known in Germany and most Leg Presses were done with the "Sitting-Bars" or with barbells.

When Hermann Görner started in his youth to train for supporting loads upon his feet he began by pressing, whilst lying on his back, the empty two-man or 4-man sitting bars; after getting the hang of this, he started with Leg Presses with the same apparatus, doing only low repetitions. After perfecting this, he then trained supporting 2 to 5 men upon his feet—using the sitting-bar apparatus I have described. Then he would bend his knees slightly and press the whole load up again. When perfect in this style, he started supporting weights at the same time in his hands—at first with a barbell which he would press overhead whilst holding the weight of 2 to 5 men on his feet—he would press the bar out, then lower it slightly and press up again. Later, when he had perfected his performance in this style, Hermann practised the so-called "Tomb of Hercules". That is, whilst lying on his back he would support a load upon his feet and hands simultaneously. In Germany this feat was known as "The Pyramid", and in this fashion Hermann has supported 2 barbells and no fewer than 8 men!

"The Plank" feat was practised in a similar fashion. At first the empty plank, then 2 men, and then as his strength increased with practice so would the number of men on the plank be increased until he would be holding up 16 or more men. He has, in fact, held up as many as 24 men, as is described in another chapter of this book.

For strengthening his legs and back, Hermann would take a barbell plus 4 men sitting on it, across his shoulders—sometimes a fifth man would sit astride his shoulders—and with this load he would make some half-squats or knee-bends: no wonder he developed strong legs!

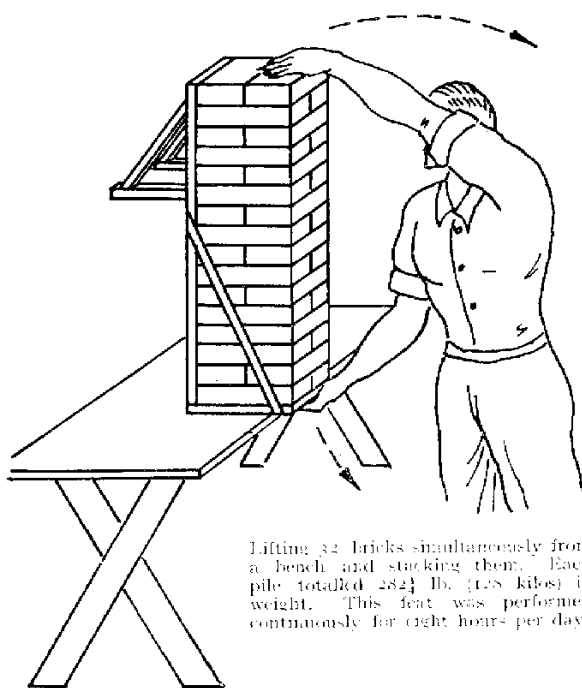
The so-called "Caroussel" or "Merry-Go-Round", or turning around on his own axis with a barbell and men hanging on it supported across his shoulders, Görner would practise with a barbell and 5 or 6 men, sometimes 7 men, quickly turning round 5, 6 or 7 times, or he would sometimes vary this by walking several steps with the load. This feat is particularly good training for carrying heavy loads. Another similar feat was the supporting of very heavy weights across the shoulders. This was performed by Hermann with a barbell and eleven men! Five men would hang on each end of the bar and the eleventh would sit astride his shoulders. Usually, however, he would train upon this feat with 8 or 9 men—4 at each end of the bar and the ninth man upon his shoulders. Through the practice of this feat, Görner developed an enormous vertebral bone in the neck region which reached the dimensions of a boy's fist—this enormous bone can be felt by anyone meeting Görner to-day—I have never come across its like in any other strong man. When my friend Alfred Schrader and myself felt this bone

formation we wondered how any man could possess such enormous bone structure. Hermann would smile on these occasions and say that his bone was built to that size and form by jerking a barbell from behind his neck and then allowing the bar to drop back onto his neck! On 21st December, 1931, we saw him take a barbell of 330.75 lb., Clean and Jerk it and then allow it to drop from arms' length to the back of his neck—the bar which was $1\frac{3}{16}$ in. in diameter immediately became a "cambered" bar!

(iv) TRAINING FOR A MATCH

When Görner was an amateur he would train for a match for 3 or 4 weeks before the match took place, usually 3 training sessions per week, each one consisting of 2 hours' work-out. In Görner's youth the matches were usually made upon 5 lifts—One-hand Snatch, One-hand Clean and Jerk (performed sometimes with the opposite hand), and the Three Olympics—Two-hands Press, Snatch and Clean and Jerk.

For each lift, he would do 3 or sometimes 4 repetitions and then increase the weight, usually going up in stages of 5 kilos (10 lb.). Beginning with the Right-hand he would go on to the Left-hand with his Snatches and Jerks before proceeding to the double-handed lifts. For both One-handed and Two-handed Snatching, Hermann would train by snatching the barbell from the "hang" and also by taking the barbell off two chairs. It should be stressed that Hermann favoured low repetitions—usually 3 and very rarely 4—with the weight being increased by 5 kilos (10 lb.) after each set. He trained for quality of muscle as opposed to quantity—that he also got quantity in the process was,



Lifting 32 bricks simultaneously from a bench and stacking them. Each pile totalled 282½ lb. (128 kilos) in weight. This feat was performed continuously for eight hours per day!

as far as he was concerned, purely coincidental ! He was interested in training for strength ; first and foremost in his mind was the ability to do things with his muscles, not just to have large muscles which were pretty to look upon, but when put to the test fell down. The training that Hermann did saw to it that, his muscles, whilst being developed, were also developed with the highest-quality tissue—they were not blown up by endless repetitions with light weights. In that fashion, Hermann avers a man can never become strong—really strong—he *must* lift heavy weights, and the weights *must* be increased as his strength grows : this is the *only* way to become a strong man.

ADDITIONAL TRAINING INFORMATION

Under this heading, I propose to list briefly Görner's views on other important aspects of training. To begin with what is one of the most important :—

(i) *Diet*

Görner is firmly convinced that a mixed diet is the best for a strong man, with emphasis laid on eating good meals with the accent on meat ! He is particularly partial to pork and beef and also wurst—German sausagemeat. Vegetables also, together with potatoes, but not overdoing the latter. He is very fond of nuts—particularly walnuts—and all fruits : apples especially, which he thinks every

strong man should eat, as well as oranges and other citrous fruits. Cheese and eggs also figure in his diet, but he does not care for rich pastries nor does he drink milk in any quantity. As regards drinking, he drinks beer, but only moderately—seldom touches spirits—and was a non-smoker until his twenties and afterwards only a moderate smoker.

(ii) *Massage*

Görner holds the opinion that massage is not so very important for weight lifters. He has used massage only on rare occasions—to ease a strain or undue stiffness, but in general it is his opinion that massage is most useful when a man suffers from poor circulation, and most weight lifters have excellent circulation. So his advice is to take massage sparingly—find out for yourself if it is of benefit and decide accordingly.

(iii) *Roadwork*

Görner has always performed a certain amount of roadwork in his training. Usually a thirty-minute jog-trot and walk combined, twice weekly—mostly before doing his open-air training in the summer months in the Germania Bath, as I have described.

(iv) *Sunbathing*

It is the opinion of Hermann Görner that excessive sunbathing or getting a heavy tan can be overdone. He would train in the open air and in the process get a light tan, but he is of the opinion that excessive sunbathing is detrimental and not necessary for super-health. Again, it is largely a

matter of personal choice, but it is Hermann's opinion that sunbathing is greatly over-rated as being necessary for a strong man.

(v) *Swimming*

This, he considers, every man should indulge in—and mix with open-air weight training. I have referred to his methods already, so will not repeat myself.

(vi) *Sleep*

Here Hermann considers a strong man should always obtain sufficient sleep to repair the demands he has made upon his system. He advocates eight to nine hours' regular sleep, and in his own case would usually take a nap of about an hour after lunch each day when engagements permitted.

(vii) *Sex*

Moderation should be the keynote in the sexual habits of strongmen. One cannot develop into an outstanding strongman and continually indulge in sexual excesses. Görner has always been an abstemious man in this respect and he considers it essential to the successful development of outstanding strength, that one observes moderation in sexual indulgence.

In this chapter I have outlined the methods which were used so successfully in developing Hermann Görner's enormous strength, and it is hoped that his methods and training habits may prove of help in assisting would-be strongmen to reach their goal—that of becoming strong with a capital "S"! If

carefully studied and assiduously put into practice, I am quite sure these methods will help the serious strength student as much as they have helped many hundreds of other men in Germany and elsewhere in the past.