

PHILOSOPHY, SCIENCE AND PRACTICE OF  
MAXALDING 6 – ABDOMINAL MUSCLE  
CONTROL, NUTRITION AND DIET

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### 1. The importance of abdominal controls

The Maxalding abdominal controls are probably the most difficult, spectacular, awesome and important.

The progression in these exercises can be amazing, from the relatively easy abdominal depression to the extreme voluntary isolation

of single sections of the *rectus abdominis* or the isolation of abdominal tendons.

The beneficial effects on health that provides the performance of abdominal controls are countless. Among them are the improvement of digestion, breathing and excretion, muscular core reinforcement, mobilization of internal fluids, better resistance to diseases and deep relax. The reason is that abdominal controls are the most natural and effective form of massage of the internal organs.

But, the abdominal isolations demand a lot of practice and patience. It is very sad to see how many beginners try to perform the *rectus abdominis* isolations at first and, after some fruitless efforts, give up Maxalding. The key exercise is the abdominal depression or “vacuum”, never forget it. You should master completely this before attempting any other abdominal exercise. Read carefully all the instructions, because it is not as easy as it seems and many instructors perform it in wrong and even dangerous ways.

### 2. Preliminary exercises

#### 2.1. Breathing exercises for the abdominals

**Important note:** Avoid always any kind of “abdominal breathing” because it is harmful and detrimental. Please, read carefully the last sections of **Part 5**, before attempting the abdominal controls. Breathe always through the nose.

*Exercise 1.* Practice slow controlled breathing (SMCB, see the last section of **Part 5**). You should observe that the abdomen depresses slightly with each exhalation. You must concentrate on this effect in order to increase the depression gradually without straining the breaths at all. This is perhaps the most important preliminary exercise and it is very beneficial in itself.

*Exercise 2.* When you have mastered the Exercise 1, try to exert an explosive (but careful and controlled) exhalation of the air through the nose. The very important point

here is to be able to exhale the maximal amount of air of the lungs *by diaphragmatic means only*.

The two main errors that inhibit the performance of abdominal controls in most cases are:

- The involuntary contraction or forcing of the abdominal muscles (*rectus abdominis* and *external obliques* generally). The abdominal muscles must be absolutely relaxed. But, the question is, how can I learn to relax the abdominal wall properly? The best method to achieve this relaxing state is the mastery of Exercise 1. Some people find very useful to practise this exercise lying comfortably in a bed or similar surface. The bed should be enough solid to not allow any back bending. Some residual tension can be due to an excessive erect state of the spine. Practice the Exercises 1 and 2 bending the lower back (keep the upper back straight) slightly forward, but keeping the back muscles relaxed (avoid any antagonistic action). Experiment with different angles in little increments as far as you find the optimal position that allows the maximal relaxation of the abdominal wall. Keep always your hips and legs comfortably relaxed, don't force them instinctively. Generally it is advised to practice muscle control in front of a mirror, but Maxick prevented against an improper use of the mirror and, in this case, I think that the use of a mirror should be discouraged until you master the vacuums. The reason are manifold, but the main two are: the raising of the head in order to see your image can produce an involuntary thorax displacement and a

subsequent contraction of the abdominal wall, and the seeing of your own image can be frustrating in first attempts and can inhibit your necessary concentration on proper breathing.

- The involuntary relaxation of the *serratus magnus* during the explosive exhalation. You should not allow to relax the *serratus*, because a true abdominal and relaxed vacuum is only possible if you exhale by the exclusive effort of your diaphragm muscle.

The difficulties of the abdominal isolations are logical, because the anatomy of the process is very complex. If we analyse in detail this, we can observe that in breathing are involved several muscle groups. Some muscles help to the performance of the vacuum and some tend to inhibit it.

- The *serratus* must be contracted to some extent in order to keep the rib box expanded. This is necessary in order to allow the pure action of the diaphragm, a complete air expulsion and to provide enough volume to depress the relaxed abdominal wall.
- The *intercostals* play a troubled play in the abdominal controls. First, you could instinctively contract the *intercostals* in order to sustain the thorax expanded. The problem here is the almost sure induced co-contraction of the upper sections of the *rectus abdominis*. It is extremely difficult to isolate the lower *intercostals* from the upper abdominals (perhaps impossible to a 100%), so any contraction of the *intercostals* surely defeats the relaxation of the abdominal wall.

Second, you must learn to keep the thorax in an expanded state with the *intercostals* relaxed. This implies the isolation of the *serratus* and the *intercostals*. Fortunately, this isolation is generally easy and can be done almost automatically if you care only about your *diaphragm*.

- **Back muscles.** They are involved in the shoulder blade expansion. The *latissimus dorsi* and, specially, the *erector spinae* in a lower back bended position, tend to produce an antagonistic action on the abdominal muscles. You must relax them, allowing simultaneously a free motion of the shoulder blades.
- **Pectorals.** They have a minor influence in abdominal relaxation, but it is advised to keep them relaxed, because a powerful contraction of the pectorals can interfere with the necessary concentration on the diaphragmatic and abdominal muscles.
- **Diaphragm.** It is an internal semi-voluntary muscle that assists breathing, acting as a bellows under the lungs. It is one of the most important muscles in the body. Maxalding excels at the development of this muscle by natural means, because muscle control is the most perfect form of internal massage and direct exertion of the internal organs. It has the principal role in abdominal controls, so be patient with training it.

## **2.2. Factors that have influence on abdominal controls**

Some other factors can have influence on the performance of the abdominal

controls.

- **Wind.** If all positions and breathing are correct, the presence of wind inside the intestines can defeat completely the performance of vacuums. I suggest you a natural method that can be very helpful in many cases. Lie comfortably prone and relaxed, with body straight, and then turn yourself slowly, keeping the body straight, as far as you rest all your body weight over the left side, relax and wait until the wind is naturally expelled. Don't force the expulsion. If you note that the wind has not been sufficiently removed, repeat the same slow movement several times. Sometimes, turning also to the right side or crossing the straight legs in the left position can help.
- **Presence of no digested food in the stomach or intestines.** The most obvious thing is not to exercise until digestion is completed (about 2 hours after a meal, except for extreme abdominal isolations, that demand much more time). Sometimes, the presence of no digested food is related to constipation. Precisely, abdominal controls are one of the most effective natural means to relief constipation. In such case you must use vacuums preliminary with a therapeutic, no training, purpose. Drink a little (about 100 cm<sup>3</sup>) of warm water (no hot) and try to perform 5 slow vacuums in a row. Rest, breathing slowly, for about another 30 breaths relaxing the abdomen. Repeat the same process 2-3 times and relax comfortably. This technique help to mobilize the internal fluids and cleanse the internal

organs. It is very advisable to perform this therapeutic exercise just after getting up in the morning.

- *Body fat levels.* Many times it is impossible to reproduce the excellent pics of some Maxalding champions because the body fat levels of our own bodies are higher. Remember that it is impossible to reduce fat only in specific areas. The fat reducing process must be directed to the whole body system. The safe reduction of body fat can only be achieved by a perfect combination of proper diet and exercise. But, you should not be confused by the huge amount of contradictory information that invade the media. There are not miraculous diets or training systems. Only a rational and complete diet (a very important point in Maxalding that we shall analyse later), careful performed exercises and rest can help you to achieve your goals.

### 2.3. *ISR exercises*

Try to relax your abdominals in the most favourable position (found by means of the performance of Exercises 1, 2) and press with the palms of your hand very progressively against the upper section of your legs, almost touching the hips. Concentrate the effort on your abdominals and not on your arms. Don't strain the least. Try to feel the effect of the tension over the relaxed abdominal wall.

Keep the tension during 5 complete controlled breathings in the way of Exercises 1 and 2 and relax. Repeat 1-5 times. Never hold your breath.

### 2.4. *AMR exercises*

Contract powerfully and slowly without strain all muscles of the abdominal wall. Try to keep the tension 5 breathings without forcing it. Relax and repeat 1-5 times.

You can perform this exercise dynamically in all possible directions of back motion. In such case, do the half of the movement during inspiration and the other half during expiration.

1. Bending the spine forward (no more than 90°).
2. Bending the spine slightly backwards.
3. Bending the spine laterally (no more than 45°). You can combine this with a simultaneous expansion of the shoulder blades.
4. Turning the trunk to both sides with arms stretched in front of you.

### 2.5. *BL exercises*

**Important note:** This exercises range from advanced to very advanced, so don't try them until you have a very good muscular foundation by means of MC and previous exercises.

*Straight leg sit up.* Many things have been said about the safety of the straight leg sit-up. Actually, this exercise is absolutely safe if you do it Maxalding way with slow controlled motion and 1-5 reps per workout (it is not necessary to do lots of sit-ups, such high number of repetitions destroy the muscle quality and defeats the purpose and safety of the exercise).

Performed this way, raising slowly without any jerking impulse, with straight arms extended backwards or crossed over your chest, contracting the

abdominal wall along the motion and straight legs, this exercise can be very difficult at first. The key to progress is raising only a few cm in first stages and to increase the height as far as you can complete the whole movement without strain.

This exercise must be at the end of the training session with a good previous warm up.

Apply to rest of the exercises the same recommendations of the previous one.

*Raising legs at 90° lying prone.*

Once you have mastered legs raising you can alternate the motion of both legs alternatively in a sort of cycling exercise.

A more advanced version brings the legs straight as far as the feet touch the floor backwards in front of the face. It is a beneficial exercise for the spine also, but can be stressing for many people and it is advisable to practice it with some sort of hand assistance and over a soft surface.

On the contrary, a very easy and beginner's alternative is the alternating raising of knees with the other leg straight, trying to touch the chest with each knee in its top position. Keep the tension in the top position for about 5 breaths. In this way you do not need many repetitions.

*Front bridge with palms and feet on floor (superman push-up).* This is, without doubt, one of the toughest and most complete exercises you can do. It is the basis of some of the most advanced and productive exercises you can do without apparatus. It was the last and most demanding exercise of the original Maxalding book and it really constitutes

an excellent test of overall strength and control.

The performance of this exercise in Maxalding is extremely progressive and very safe, because you can press firmly with your palms and feet every moment in order to keep balance. In this way you can stop at any desired angle and keep the tension in the lower position, increasing the control and the benefits. The Maxalding method reduces the risk of spraining the back to a minimum. Besides, this exercise avoids any kind of dangerous jerking movements or impulses in order to regain the upper position. I personally discourage the use of any wheel or rolling device for performing the front bridge.

This is a very demanding exercise on almost every area of the body, both dynamically and statically.

*Progression:*

1. Press firmly your palms and feet on the floor forming a comfortable "V" shape with the body facing down. It is advisable to practise this exercise with the palms and feet over a smooth and regular surface that avoids any possibility of sliding. Open the angle of the "V" as far as as you can without forcing you the least. Keep the tension in the lower position during 1-5 breaths and return slowly and surely to the initial position. Relax and repeat 1-5 times. Never allow that your muscles begin to shake, this would indicate that you are forcing your performance too much. Remember that muscle trembling is just the opposite to Muscle Control.
2. When you are able to sustain the

lowest position, almost parallel to the floor, you must do a conscious effort to contract the involved muscles in this position, trying to relax the unnecessary muscles (really a few) in this position. Keep the contraction 5 breaths, return to the initial position and repeat 1-5 times (1 perfect performance is enough for most purposes). Sometimes, you could feel that you are unable to lift your body from the lowest position due to a sudden lack of strength. Don't be disappointed, relief the tension slowly and rest over the floor. Never try to lift yourself in a crazy fashion with a jerking action of the lower back, it is very dangerous and such practices do not add any valuable strength to you.

3. *One arm front bridge*. This exercise should only be practised seldom for testing purposes, because it is extremely demanding on the whole body and very stressing for the arm and shoulder joints if you do not know how to control completely your muscles in this very difficult stretched position. The progression must be very slow. There are two ways to train this feat.
  - a) Follow the same "V" opening method described in (1), but with only one arm. Don't force the position and keep the body and the arm straight all the time. Stop immediately if you feel some sort of discomfort or excessive stress.
  - b) Try to tilt your body very slightly to one side in the lowest position resting more weight in the corresponding arm. When you are reasonably sure of your ability to support the weight, raise a few cm the no supporting arm,

keeping perfect position. Return to the initial position and relax.

Don't perform this feat more than 1-2 times a week in general.

These exercises help to tone and strengthen your abdominal muscles to a high degree, but they can be counter-productive if they are done in excess. The undesired effect of too much mechanical abdominal exercise on MC can be due mainly to:

- Fatigue of the abdominal muscles. You need that your abdominal muscles are plenty of energy in order to contract them in an isolating form.
- Excessive tone and lack of suppleness. The performance of a high number of reps of any mechanical exercise can produce some residual rigidity in the muscles that can make very difficult a complete relax of the abdominal wall. Besides, an excess of exercise in the abdominal area can generate some painful cramping during a voluntary contraction and undesired instinctive tensions in the *rectus abdominis*.

*Lateral back bending with scapulae expansion*. This exercise has been described in other parts of these articles. It is very valuable in developing the lateral obliques if you concentrate on them while you are in the lowest position.

### **3. Isolation of the abdominal muscles**

#### **3.1. Abdominal depression ("vacuum")**

This is the key exercise of the whole

Maxalding system. Many people fail to do more advanced controls due to an incomplete mastering of the vacuum.

The most important thing is correct breathing. Remember the advices in Exercises 1 and 2 of the Section 2.1. If you practice correctly the Exercise 2, you should not have any problem in performing a perfect vacuum.

Stand erect with body relaxed, especially the abdominal wall, the legs and the back. Concentrate in you breathing and in the action of the *serratus*, but don't force the inhalation at all. Keep your legs comfortably straight, but relaxed. It is advisable to keep them apart a few cm in order to avoid some involuntary pressing among the thighs during exhalation, but in general this is not an important factor.

Inhale with the effort of your *serratus* mainly, keeping the thorax expanded forward, but don't raise your chest. Sometimes a very slight downward bending of the lower back and the head can help to relax the abdominal muscles.

When you feel that your lungs are filled without any strain, concentrate in your diaphragm and exhale the air from the lungs explosively, but without any effort, keeping the thorax expanded by the action of the *serratus*.

The external air pressure and the inertia of the diaphragm motion must be enough to complete a perfect vacuum.

Don't hold your breath more than 5 seconds in any case.

When you master a single vacuum, you can try to repeat it 5 times in a row with correct breath coordination.

### **3.2. Abdominal vacuum with breathing**

This is an extremely important exercise that does not appear described in any Maxalding or MC writing as far as I know. Its importance comes from the possibility to sustain more advanced abdominal controls without the dangers involved in holding the breath. This multiplies a lot the benefits and performance of the exercises.

The learning of this technique enables you also to increase your protection and safety in sudden efforts or against blows with a natural breathing.

A complete mastering of the previous vacuum exercise is absolutely necessary. If you try to do the vacuum while your are breathing at first, you would probably tense your intercostal and abdominal muscles, defeating your purpose.

Do a perfect vacuum and concentrate on how your exhalation affects the performance of the exercise. Relax a few moments and repeat, but now try to inhale again keeping the diaphragm in that position. You could find difficult to breathe in this position. The key to success is to breathe slowly (remember the comments about slow MC breathing, SMCB, in the last section of **Part 5**) and with the action of the *serratus* only. This is the reason why is so important to practice correct breathing and thorax MC before attempting abdominal controls.

When you are able to do 1 inhalation during a vacuum, you can try to keep the breathing vacuum for 1-5 complete breaths. Relax completely after this.

If you feel some breathing discomfort or difficulty, be patient and practice the previous exercises far more. Don't force

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yourself. Many controls are attained some day, almost by chance, after weeks of patient, and apparently fruitless, practice.

#### **3.3. Central abdominal (rectus abdominis) isolation with hand pressure**

You can try this exercise immediately after you have mastered the vacuum, but I suggest that it is better to practice the breathing vacuum before. This would allow you to keep longer vacuum times without strain, which could be very important in order to achieve good results with the hand pressure technique.

Place the palms of your hands (sometimes it could be helpful to keep the fingers slightly open) over the upper section of your legs, or the lower part of your hips. You should experiment the best posture. Bend your lower back a little as far as you note that the abdominal muscles are perfectly relaxed. Don't bend too much, because the gravity would exert a negative effect on the internal organs, trying to drop them downwards.

Now, perform a correct vacuum and press firmly, but softly, with the palms over your legs or hips. If the abdominal muscles are relaxed you should observe a protruding of the central *rectus abdominis*.

Don't press too much, because you could tense another muscles that interfere with the central ones. Remember that the less the pressure, the better the control.

Some people could find useful to apply the tension before the actual performance of the vacuum or while they

are exhaling to produce the depression. If you apply SMCB (slow controlled breathing), these little details are not very important.

#### **3.4. One side lateral abdominal isolation with hand pressure**

The next step in abdominal control is to be able to isolate only one side of the *rectus abdominis*. This exercise should be fairly easy if you have mastered previously the central isolation.

Adopt the same position as 3.3, with both hands relaxed over the legs. Perform the vacuum (you can do it with breathing or not, but I find better to do it with breathing) and press slowly with only one palm, keeping the other relaxed.

This would suffice to accomplish the one side lateral isolation. Sometimes it is hard to perform this exercise directly. Another alternative method is to do first a central isolation with both hands pressing and then to relax slowly one of the palms.

Both methods are good, but in some cases a direct lateral pressure is not enough to protrude only one side, this is the reason by which you should try both techniques and decide the best for you.

Depending upon your body structure, hip placement and lower back position you can achieve different degrees of lateral isolation, from the protruding of the whole muscle leaflet to a narrow cord. Generally, you have to turn slightly your hips towards the same side that you want to isolate in order to produce a "cord-like" visualization.

### **3.5. True voluntary abdominal isolations (without hand pressure)**

The hand assistance of many controls should be only a preliminary stage in the learning of Maxalding and, although the exercises so performed are very beneficial themselves, should not be the final aim of a sincere Maxaldist. You must try to teach your body true MC and this only can be achieved by means of pure mental concentration alone.

However, the neural processes involved in this learning are very complex and unpredictable. You may be practising day after day some control without any improvement, even you despair and stop to try it any more, and suddenly, some weeks later, during a training session you try it again only for fun and you have success. So be patient and always believe in your abilities.

The way to achieve a pure voluntary abdominal isolation is to reduce very progressively and slowly the hand pressure. The easiest pure abdominal MC is the central isolation. Generally it is better to try a ballistic approach first.

Perform a perfect vacuum and do a hand assisted central isolation. Concentrate on what you feel just while the muscle is protruding. Visualize this unique sensation continuously during your relax.

Then, perform a new vacuum and place your palms exactly as if you were going to press with them, but don't press this time! Only feel the contact of the palms. In this very moment, exert a mental contraction on the *rectus abdominis*, visualizing and feeling the same sensation you had when you

pressed with your hands over the legs. Do this contraction explosively, but with SMCB (slow breathing), without forcing the exhalation.

When you master the first quick contraction, you should try to intensify it by mental concentration and to keep it for 1-10 breathings.

A person who is able to perform a correct mental central isolation, can be considered a Maxalding advanced student. This exercise represents the "test" to progress from the *advanced* to the *expert* level in MC.

Relax completely after each attempt and don't overdo the exercises, because these muscles, at first, tend to exhaust themselves quickly in this position.

As a guide, the mastering of a true abdominal MC can last several weeks (even months) until the mind develops a durable link with these muscles.

Another important point is the following. As you are progressing through Maxalding, you may observe that some of your muscles, or perhaps, the muscles of one body side, are more responsive to voluntary contraction than others. This is a natural thing, so if you find that you are able to isolate much more clearly one abdominal side than the other, for example, don't discourage yourself. The bone structure and another body factors can have also a great influence in the performance and visualization of the exercises.

#### **3.5.1. One side lateral abdominal isolation**

Adopt the position most favourable to do a lateral isolation of the *rectus*

### 3. Isolation of the abdominal muscles

*abdominis*, perform it correctly and then try to decrease very carefully, in little amounts, the palm tension. Concentrate intensely in the contraction feeling of the muscles and replace the hand action by mental contraction as far as you can.

Be very patient with these exercise, because it takes generally a long time to eliminate completely the hand assistance. You will observe that some days are better (and some hours throughout the day) than others to perform correctly the voluntary isolations.

A little advice. Don't be discouraged by a curious effect that take place almost every occasion you try the pure voluntary isolation of each side of the *rectus abdominis*, because you could be despaired if you don't know that it is a common thing.

Usually you will observe that, although you feel an intense isolated contraction of the desired side, and that such muscle effectively protrude, the other side is almost invariably drawn also, even if you previously have been able to master the hand assisted variant without problem. Besides, the more effort and tension you put on the isolation, the more contraction is transferred to the other side.

It is advisable to apply the fine tuning method (FTMCR) to this control, because there is an optimal point in which the desired side protrude enough, while the other is still relaxed. If you surpass this point, the relaxed side is contracted invariably. This apply also to the manual control, don't press too much or both sides will be involved despite you are using only one palm.

To minimize this effect it is very

important to test several different hip and back positions, but it would be impossible to eliminate completely it. This does not mean strictly a lack of proper control, but a too powerful mental and anatomical link between the two sides.

#### 3.5.2. Horizontal abdominal isolations

Amazingly, the horizontal isolations of the different sections of the *rectus abdominis* took me longer than the lateral ones. The reason was an almost natural tendency to contract powerfully all sections in a row.

After trying countless times the abdominal roll, I discovered that in my attempts for sucking only one part of the abdomen I always tensed the whole abdominal wall. So I decided to test another different method.

The extreme difficulty of these controls comes from the obvious fact that all sections form an unique muscle, so it is anatomically impossible to isolate them completely, and from the need to learn the technique with mental contraction only, because there is no definite hand pressure that can accomplish such isolations.

Some help can be achieved by means of a careful study of the effect of the bending of the lower spine over the more or less strong contraction of each section. However, the best technique to progress in the horizontal controls is to apply the analytical muscle control (AMC) method, based on the fine tune of the contraction as a feedback of the intensity of the contraction you feel in a muscle.

If you try to contract powerfully and very slowly (without strain) your whole

abdominal wall, you can feel (in general) that your upper section, including the *intercostals*, is the first you can tense. After this, the other sections are contracted almost successively in descending order in a row. The lower section is the most difficult to tense. You should observe a clear difference in the amount of tension that you can put in the upper *rectus abdominis* (almost cramping) compared with the lower section, near the hips, very mildly contracted at first.

This different response to voluntary action is the key to learn the analytical control of the horizontal sections of the abdominal wall.

Relax completely and adopt the best posture to perform a correct vacuum, but now, instead of a vacuum, perform a very slowly (but firmly) contraction of the whole abdominal wall. Don't force yourself, because some parts of the abdominal muscles are prone to a sudden and painful cramping in such situation on intense contraction<sup>1</sup>.

Note how some parts contract before or, alternatively, more powerfully than others. Repeat this exercise 2-3 times and, after this, try to intensify the contraction of the different areas, from

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<sup>1</sup> If you feel some sort of cramping, stretch very carefully and slowly the affected muscle as far as you can and try to relax it, giving it a firm massage raising its temperature. When the pain is out, return slowly to the most flexed position with the muscle completely relaxed and warm. Do this operation several times. After this a very mild MC on the affected muscle (sustaining the tension about 10 breathings under the 50% of the contracting power and relaxing with slow controlled breathing) can contribute to a deep relax and relief of the area.

upper to lower if this is easier for you (most of cases), and relax the others to some extent. Repeat 1-5 times.

Try to relax the *erector spinae* group while you are performing abdominal controls, because its contraction can have influence over certain sections of the *rectus abdominis*.

Some areas of the abdominal wall are more prone to tremble than others. Generally the most affected by vibration in isolation are the two central bands.

The *rectus abdominis* has four horizontal muscle bands each side, so you should be able to perform four different horizontal isolations. The lowest section, is, by far (except rare cases), the most difficult to isolate to the point that it is almost impossible to avoid some residual contraction of the other abdominal layers. Sometimes a wide open of the angle formed by the feet with the legs stretched, but relaxed, can help a lot to feel this difficult area much more intensely. Be free to experiment with this, opening and closing the feet angle for various performances.

The upper section is easily contracted, but usually its contraction produces a raising of the whole abdominal wall, so it is impossible a complete relaxation of the other areas and of the *intercostals*. Don't be discouraged by this natural effect. However, demand yourself the maximum possible perfection in each performance, don't use this natural limitations as an excuse to do a poor and ineffective exercise.

The abdominal roll is achieved when you are able to successively contract and

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relax quickly the different muscle bands from upper to lower and vice versa. It is a pretty control to show, but not very effective from the point of view of relax and muscle development; it is very good for internal massage instead. I, personally, prefer to perform concentrated isolations in the same way I do with the other muscles of the body.

It is very important to achieve a symmetrical and equilibrated muscle development of the whole body. Although, of course, you can concentrate on some parts if you desire.

#### 3.5.3. External obliques isolation

There are also two ways to learn the external obliques isolation.

The first one is directed mainly towards the control of one side. Stand erect (don't bend your back, but keep relaxed) and turn slightly your hips towards the side you can control. You should feel a very soft contraction of the lateral oblique. To intensify this action raise a little the corresponding hip and lower very slightly the thorax over the same side (but, don't contract the *intercostals*). Sometimes it could be helpful to vary the speed of the turning movement in order to achieve a better feeling of the contraction. When you are able to distinguish the external oblique contraction, try to intensify it by means of mental concentration.

The second technique involves both external obliques, so it is very difficult to isolate one of them without turning the hips. Besides, the central sections of the *rectus abdominis* are tensed also to some extent.

However, this control is very nice,

because it changes completely the visualization of the abdominal wall, and it allows you a very powerful contraction of these muscles (which can be important to improve athletic performance in the midsection or to a better defence from lateral blows).

Adopt the most favourable position to perform a central horizontal abdominal isolation and contract very slowly, but powerfully, the second section counting from above. If you study this contraction very carefully, you can observe that is some transference of tension from this section to the *external obliques* when you try to contract the second section outwards, expanding the voluntary action. Thus, concentrate on this lateral effect and try to intensify it mentally, while you ignore the simultaneous tension of the central *rectus abdominis*. This residual tension is almost impossible to eliminate, but this is not essential. The goal is to be able to work effectively the *external obliques* in this difficult position irrespectively of the other abdominal muscles.

A much more comfortable and intense contraction, almost instinctive, can be achieved bending your trunk laterally to the desired side with your upper back as straight as you can. You should feel the tension on the corresponding lateral oblique very easily. Intensify this feeling by mental action. Don't force your bending angle too much, because in such case you will crush your external oblique, defeating the possibility of an added voluntary contraction.

If you are able to perform correctly all exercises of this Section (3.5), you can be considered a Maxalding *expert*.

### **3.6. Extreme abdominal controls**

If you want to achieve MC excellence, try to do all abdominal isolations with breathing. Besides, it is much safer this way.

These exercises are real challenges for every maxaldist and can be considered the first step of the *master* degree in MC. From here you have an endless way to progress towards more difficult and complex isolations or combined controls. Remember that the learning of complete mental and physical control is an everlasting aim.

#### **3.6.1. Analytical muscle control (AMC) of the *rectus abdominis***

In these exercises you try to isolate, as far as is possible, each individual section of the *rectus abdominis*. It implies eight different controls.

As far as I know these extreme controls have never been documented or illustrated, but I guess that Maxick was perfectly able to do them (and, perhaps, some of such controls could have been in his best pics, lost during WWII).

The analytical control of the *rectus abdominis* was always a highly motivational goal for me, although I thought anatomically almost impossible to do it at first.

The practice and possibility of this kind of MC was very important for me, because it proved that MC could be improved to higher levels of perfection, so that Maxalding was a living and endless science.

The individual isolations of the sections of the *rectus abdominis* are extremely difficult to learn (not

impossible) and to explain, because there is not any hand assistance that can help you. They are pure mental actions from the beginning.

You must master the pure voluntary lateral and horizontal isolations first.

*Progression:*

1. Perform a mental central isolation.
2. Study carefully the effect that the increasing or decreasing of the voluntary tension has on the *rectus abdominis*. Generally some sections are more prone to contract before the others depending on the amount of contraction you generate.
3. Practice, until you master it, the mental central isolation with breathing.
4. Perform a perfect mental central isolation with breathing and try to do a simultaneous horizontal isolation. Usually the most visible and easy to control section is the central one (the third from above, just over the navel). A ballistic performance with SMCB could be easier at first.
5. When you are able to fix the control, try to intensify it, visualize the isolated muscles in your mind clearly (don't use the mirror at the beginning) and keep this position during 1-10 breathings, increasing time very progressively.
6. The next step is to isolate the other sections. Use the same method, but vary the application of the tension fixing the corresponding horizontal contractions.
7. After this, try to relax only one side while you are performing a central

### 3. Isolation of the abdominal muscles

isolation in order to achieve a mental one side horizontal isolation. The ballistic action could be counter-productive here, because the main problem is the proper relaxation of the surrounding sections. In this case a slow approach seems more adequate.

#### 3.6.2. Abdominal tendon isolation

This exercise can be considered more a “visualization feat”, than a real MC, but it is undoubtedly very spectacular and challenging.

However, this feat should not be practised frequently because it involves extremely low body fat levels (depending on your body type, structure and genetics, such low fat levels could be even unhealthy) and, usually, the few muscle controllers who were able to clearly visualize the abdominal tendons advised about the need of a strict 24 (or more) hours fasting. Besides, this exercise has not as a direct massage effect over the abdominal organs or muscles as the lateral and horizontal isolations, so its practice is somewhat irrelevant.

So, don't be discouraged at all if you cannot perform this feat. Generally, you will be able to “feel” the action of these tendons, but you cannot see them in front of the mirror. This is enough for most purposes.

Remember always that the main aim of Maxalding is perfect health. Never sacrifice your long term health for a momentary instant of irrelevant glory. Reserve your energies for real important things. It is worth doing extreme sacrifices only in extreme situations, like saving someone's life. Usually, the great

things of life are in those little details that nobody notice until they, unfortunately, are missing.

Obviously, a seldom done 24 hours fast should not harm you, so if you want to try the abdominal tendon isolation, here are some advices.

- This feat depends a lot on a correct relative position of the lower ribs with respect to the hips line. Generally this exercise is easier in a more erect back position (without lower back bending), because this stretched position prevents the simultaneous contraction of the *rectus abdominis*, avoiding in this way a mixed and confusing tension feeling. The key to the tendon visualization is a perfect abdominal wall relaxation (a perfect vacuum). The deepest vacuum performances can be achieved only in the erected position. But, don't raise your thorax, expand it frontally from the lower ribs to the upper ones firmly without forcing the breath.
- Try to relax as far as you can the *rectus abdominis* during the vacuum performance. Concentrate on the inner layer of both sides of your abdominal cavity and try to tense them up and down beginning just under the ribs.
- Concentrate and visualize the triangular tension feeling you generate with the abdominal tendons from your inner pelvis to the diaphragm.
- Drink a lot of water during your fasting period, if you think to perform this exercise. This is very beneficial for eliminating waste matter and toxins.
- When absolute mastery of the double

tendon control has been achieved, you can try the one side tendon isolation or some combination of *rectus abdominis* isolations and tendon isolations. But I insist on not to be obsessed with this feat, because it cannot be visualized on a regular basis.

The most important thing about the tendon isolation is that it proves conclusively that MC can work tendons as well as muscles. So the important conclusion here is that you can apply the tendon isolation technique to any muscle group with increased training benefits.

Remember the comments about transversal and longitudinal analytical MC in **Part 3**. This tendon isolation technique will be used regularly in the study of arm and leg MC, because it is extremely good both for strengthening connective tissue and teaching the body how to achieve extreme degrees of mixed contraction and relaxation.

These are the Court Saldo's comments about this elusive control.

*The isolation of the abdominal tendon as demonstrated by Prof. J. Chandrashekar indicates an extremely high degree of muscle control.*

*The aponeurosis of the obliquus abdominis group is normally obscured by surface muscle. Most of the fibrous tissue of the abdominal wall is concealed or appear in the form of grooves between the muscle groups.*

*The ability to relax the abdomen so completely that a tendon can be brought into bold relief in this way must come as a result of much practice and a very sensitive balanced "muscle sense".*

*Naturally there must be muscular contraction to bring sufficient tension to the tendon to produce this result, for the tendon has no contractile power of its own. It will be seen that the external oblique muscle (which here appears as a thickening at the top of the tendon), is in contraction and so keeping the tendon taut.*

*In controls such as the Central Isolation and the Single Sided Isolation of the Rectus Abdominis, the external oblique muscles are relaxed. Here the process is reversed, with relaxation of the former and contraction of the latter.*

*But the performance is not quite as simple as that and demands several supporting factors, including extreme refinement of the abdominal tissue and complete freedom of any adipose tissue, and, at the time of performance, an empty stomach and intestine.*

### **3.7. Pelvic muscles MC**

The exercise of the pelvic muscles is very important, because they constitute the floor of many internal organs, so their strengthening and relax have many health benefits.

Usually the pelvic controls have been advised for women, but they are necessary for men as well, because the reinforcement of this area has a profound effect over the general tone of the abdominal organs.

The most favourable position to practise at first these controls is seated with legs open and relaxed buttocks.

Beginners could mix the contraction of the anal muscles with the produced by the front muscles of the pubis. This can

### *3. Isolation of the abdominal muscles*

be isolated by means of AMC, observing the effect of increasing tension on this area. If you progressively contract the anal muscles more powerfully, you should be able to feel some tension transference towards the pubis. With some practice you can isolate both contractions.

In some medical publications about pelvic floor (Kegel's) exercises you can read an unusually high number of prescribed repetitions (about 300). In general, such high performance is not necessary and can be counter-productive except in a very few cases. Remember that the pelvic muscles are very small, so they do not demand a lot of nervous energy, but they exhaust themselves also very quickly.

A really isolated and concentrated contraction of 5-10 breathings performed 1-5 times should be enough for most purposes. Besides, the pelvic muscles are involved in a lot of compound exercises (like walking), so it is exaggerated to focus your daily training in these muscles, except if your doctor has prescribed so.

## **4. Nutrition and diet**

Proper diet and nutrition are cornerstones of the Maxalding system. Both Maxick and Monte Saldo were very clever nutritionists, experts in the art of reducing bodyweight without decreasing the strength and endurance levels.

There are not "miraculous" diets. Actually, the correct diet follows always a very definite pattern. Unfortunately, nowadays the confusion is worse than ever and people change desperately from one extreme to the other with harmful consequences for their health (and for

their money, too).

Maxick and Saldo advocate a rich and varied diet in little quantities. The ingested foods, being important, are not the only factor. A complete and healthy digestion is as important. In this way, Maxalding constitutes a complex system in which nutrition, breathing and exercise are inseparably connected.

Maxick consumed far less food than most of people and Monte Saldo advised to not eat more than two meals a day if possible.

Recent research seems to confirm the Maxalding theories, proving that "equilibrium diets" (diets with a caloric intake equal of slightly under the daily caloric consumption) are in general the most beneficial ones in terms of health and longevity.

The modern crazy bodybuilding obsession for unnatural muscle masses has produced a very risky and unjustified tendency to consume huge amounts of refined protein and has generated a multimillion euro industry based on all sort of absurd supplements.

If you follow a balanced and varied diet, like the Mediterranean diet, you do not need any supplement.

The real problem is that people want to be like other guys, neglecting obvious factors like genetics or chemical enhancements, instead of trying hard to achieve his or her best own body.

Aesthetic standards are not absolute. Who had a better body, Maxick, Tony Sansone, Alan Mead or John Grimek, to mention only a few? All and none. The important thing was that all these great athletes achieved their best possible

bodies by natural means.

If your body type is of a classical type, like Sansone, try hard to achieve this kind of perfection, I can assure that you will be deeply admired. But, if you persist in violating your own nature and in being like Alan Mead or Grimek (to not mention modern unnatural bodybuilders), your result will be surely unsatisfactory and unpleasant.

Don't be obsessed with any preconceived image of yourself. The old natural bodybuilders said *train for shape and the strength will come*. I would add, *train for health and your best body will come*.

We shall comment every Maxalding point regarding dietetics.

- *Whether a man be training for a fifty yards sprint, a high or long jump, a test calling for a more sustained effort, or only in the desire to regain lost health; apart from judiciously arranged exercises, calculated to give him control of the particular muscles used, there must be close attention given to diet* (HOW TO BECOME A GREAT ATHLETE, Maxick). Rational exercise is not enough to achieve maximal results from training. It is necessary to follow a proper diet with respect to the individual needs.
- *Probably the fallacy most accepted ... is, that the more food one takes, the more strength one gains. A more harmful doctrine could not be propagated, for if the stomach be overcrowded there is, instead of an increase in strength, a distinct loss [...] All have at one time or another noticed that a heavy meal is followed*

*by a period of sleepiness, and a temporary loss of full mental power. This fact in itself should indicate ..., the danger of over eating* (HOW TO BECOME A GREAT ATHLETE, Maxick). A correct diet does not depend only on the quantity and quality of food, but as much as these on digestion. An efficient digestion avoids the dangers related with the ingestion of high amounts of food, conserving also energy. The Maxalding abdominal and respiratory exercises are the best ones for improving digestion and they are unbeatable to help the internal organs to extract the last piece of energy from the ingested food, even in difficult situations.

- *It is undeniable that a man possessed of superfluous tissue is unhealthy [...] There is little question that the cause of a very large proportion of the ills rampant to day, is this "eating for eating's sake".*(HOW TO BECOME A GREAT ATHLETE, Maxick). The effects over health of a severe excess of body fat are terrible: difficulty of breathing and motion, joint pain, deformities in some bones, blood and circulatory problems, high risk of heart attacks, etc.
- *The rule which I follow, and advise, is not to take more food than is just sufficient to carry on the work of the body* (HOW TO BECOME A GREAT ATHLETE, Maxick). Maxick ate far less food than the average man. His theories about keeping the food intake at an equilibrium with the body consumption have been confirmed by recent investigations with animals and human longevity statistics. A diet which is just or slightly below the

estimated caloric expenses is the best for general health, improve all internal functions and keep them at an optimum level. But, there is no need to calculate the caloric intake of every piece of food you take. There is a simple rule to eat correctly, stop in the very moment in which you feel the first signs of satisfaction.

- *The greatest authorities have agreed that, according to the formation of our stomachs and teeth, we are carnivorous animals, and therefore we require meat for our proper sustenance* (HOW TO BECOME A GREAT ATHLETE, Maxick). Modern scientific research has proven conclusively that humans need animal protein, because our bodies are unable to produce and synthesize some essential amino acids, necessary to build our own proteins. So, strict vegetarian diets are unhealthy and detrimental. Besides, the iron required for our blood can be only obtained from meat, because the vegetable iron is inorganic and cannot be assimilated.
- *Here arises another very important point, that observing regularity in eating. One should never wait until faint with hunger before eating. A happy medium should be struck, and the hour arranged for with a due observance of the fact that the appetite should be good enough for one to be able to eat well, but no ravenously* (HOW TO BECOME A GREAT ATHLETE, Maxick). Today, it is very difficult, due to our quick lifestyle and stress, to have regular schedules and meals. This contributes to an inadequate digestion and additional internal body stress. You should try to devote fixed hours to the important meals.
- *Allow yourself time to eat slowly, and by masticating the food well, lighten the labours of the stomach* (HOW TO BECOME A GREAT ATHLETE, Maxick). Meal time is a time for both physical and mental relax. You must enjoy your meal.
- *Breakfast should not be a heavy meal, but composed of something both light and nourishing. Milk should be its most important constituent, and whole-meal bread is in all cases superior to white* (HOW TO BECOME A GREAT ATHLETE, Maxick). When you get up, your body is not ready to assimilate large amounts of food. It needs some time to work properly. Milk is one of the most important foods in a healthy diet, except if you are intolerant of some of its constituents. But, you should not take too much (0.5-1 litre/day is enough for most purposes), because it increases the body fat levels quickly and some people can develop some intolerance. An excess of calcium could also be risky.
- *Tea, coffee, alcohol and tobacco, are all poisons, and their immoderate use cannot be too forcibly condemned* (HOW TO BECOME A GREAT ATHLETE, Maxick). This statement is self-evident.
- *There may be some difficulty at first to discover what amount of food to take at a meal, but after a few experiments your own discrimination will put you on the right track. It is a good general principle that you should feel, after a meal, as though you could still go on eating* (HOW TO BECOME A GREAT ATHLETE, Maxick).

There is no need to a crazy measure of all quantities and caloric value of the foods you eat. This simple suggestions are enough for most purposes. Remember the “equilibrium principle”. To eat much less food than you need may be as dangerous as an excess of eating. It is better to keep your food intake near equilibrium and to increase the body energy expenditure by means of rational exercise. The recent anorexia plague is a proof of how harmful are most non professional dieting advices and proves that you should never try unrealistic goals based on today fashion. Keep in mind that most of the models have had several operations and their pics are computer retouched. This is just the opposite to the Maxalding philosophy and lifestyle. Never forget to reinforce your will power as much as your body.

- *For increasing weight: A glass of hot water taken on raising flushes the system. Drink little or nothing with meals, but make a habit of taking plenty of good water midway between meals. Reduce all solid foods to a liquid before swallowing, by thorough mastication. The best flesh creating foods are: All kinds of soup, from which all grease has been carefully removed; mutton, beef, chicken and turkey; eggs, boiled, scrambled or poached, or in form of an omelet; potatoes, mashed, boiled or roasted; asparagus, beans, peas, rice, corn, cauliflower, onions, and all salads in season, with which use plenty of oil<sup>2</sup>; prunes, apples, dates,*

*figs, peaches, grapes, apricots; all kinds of milk puddings, cheese, cereals and whole-meal bread. All foods should carefully and cleanly prepared. Cocoa and chocolate are good beverages (HOW TO BECOME A GREAT ATHLETE, Maxick). The Maxalding diets are simple and straightforward. Monte Saldo will detail much more these advices later.*

- *For the reduction of weight: Copious perspiration should be induced by exercising in warm woollen clothing; the body must be frequently massaged, specially where any fatty tissue is deposited. Avoid all starchy foods, and do not drink with meals on any account. White bread, potatoes and cereals must not be taken. Eat lean meat, chicken and game, ham and tongue, white fish, green vegetables, fruit and toast. Most important of all, avoid constipation. The consumption of plenty of fruit and the observation of regularity in emptying the bowels, added to proper abdominal exercise, should go far to prevent the occurrence of this disorder (HOW TO BECOME A GREAT ATHLETE, Maxick). Perspiration must be induced by natural means and never by an excess of temperature or the use of plastic clothes. You must drink plenty of water in order to compensate the loss of water. Massages can be very helpful in order to mobilize that exceeding fat tissue and for improving circulation to these areas. MC is a very effective from of natural massage in itself. Observe that Maxick suggested the elimination of starches (carbs), but this cannot be*

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<sup>2</sup> I encourage the use of pure olive oil (extra

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virgin olive oil) for this purpose.

considered a kind of low-carb diet, because, he advises to eat plenty of vegetables and fruits, so the needed beneficial carb intake is perfectly attainable.

In later writings, some more detailed points are prescribed by Monte and Court Saldo, completing the dietetic Maxalding system.

#### OBESITY

*It is a generally accepted theory that obesity from whatever cause is a disorder of metabolism, having for its chief characteristic a disposition for fat to deposit in and on the body to an excessive degree. To infer that all obese persons are unhealthy is to misunderstand the difference between constitutional and acquired obesity. Certain family histories have shown obesity to have affected every member for generations, without inferiority in mental or physical health having been recorded, and with no reduction in average age. It is better that such people should remain obese within reasonable limits rather than make themselves ill and miserable through drastic exercise and severe dietetic restrictions. But the great majority of cases of obesity are acquired, and affect the middle aged, or those past the prime of life. Obesity then becomes a dangerous disorder chiefly because there are invariably fatty accumulations in the heart itself, which restrict and impair the cardiac movements. Added to this handicap, the hearth is called upon to do more work than at any time previously. And of course the blood vessels are correspondingly overworked. There are numerous cases of acquired obesity of obscure pathology, but simple obesity is*

*being dealt with in the present article, of the nature usually associated with middle-age and general unfitness. When the seriousness of the conditions is aggravated by raised blood-pressure and the consequent risk of arterial degeneration, exercise of a strenuous nature becomes dangerous, and the cure of relief is then sought by a total abstention of fat creating foods. At first glance this may appear to be reasonable and safe, but when it is realized that reduction of weight by this means, whether sudden or otherwise, will leave the heart, abdominal and other organs in a flabby condition, with the abdominal viscera inefficiently supported, it will be seen that a very precarious condition will supervene unless coincidentally with the reduction of weight, light general exercise is gradually incorporated to a degree sufficient to tone the organs and muscular system generally. Consequently those person whose condition is so bad that very little exercise can at first be taken, are earnestly advised not to make sudden and drastic changes of diet. Graduation is as important in dietetic matters as it is in exercise. Instead of reducing at the dangerous rate of two or three pounds weekly at first, be satisfied with any reduction, however slight. This can be accomplished by a partial elimination from the diet of fat creating foods and the indulgence in light control exercises, specially those for the abdomen. When these exercises become easy to perform and the muscles are gaining tone, a further diminution in the fat creating foods will then be safe. Progressively more exercise can be indulged in and the treatment continued upon those lines,*

*until a good condition of general health and well-being has been established. This degree of health and physical fitness will be reached long before it has been found necessary to completely eliminate all fat creating foods from the diet. Better oxidation through an increased intake of oxygen accounts for this. That is why a really fit person can thrive on a mixed diet. Ladies can remove all undesired fat from the body, coincidentally with an improvement in health and vitality. It is quite unnecessary to starve. It is possible to starve the fatty tissue and feed the muscular tissue (NATURE'S WAY TO HEALTH, Monte Saldo).*

Very wise advices that prove the deep medical knowledge of Monte Saldo.

We must remember here the very important Maxalding principle of individuality.

*The establishment and maintenance of health depend on the employment of a sufficiency of natural exercise and natural food for the particular individual.*

*No cut-and-dried system however excellent, can bring identical results to two persons.*

This is a key point, because it will be absurd to prescribe a diet based on European foods to an individual who lives in another continent and has hardly any possibility to obtain them. So, proper digestion is as important as the concrete foods taken. Proper digestion depends on:

- Genetics.
- Food.

- Mastication.
- Exercise.
- Breathing.

Obviously, genetics cannot be changed (for now) and the available foods are (unfortunately) restricted in many countries, so Maxalding insists in correct mastication, extremely efficient abdominal exercises and full-tidal breathing.

Maxalding dietetic advices were used successfully in very adverse circumstances, like both World Wars. Most of the food recommendations are referred to easily available foods in Europe and North America<sup>3</sup>.

*Maxalding diets are arranged with the object of getting full benefit from easily obtainable foods. Sometimes only very small alterations in existing diets are recommended.*

*During the war and post-war periods it has become obvious that many people can keep perfectly healthy on what would have previously been considered a very restricted dietary. Maxaldists who are serving in the Services are able to get maximum benefit from the food provided, by following certain rules of eating which are not actually connected with the forms of food taken.*

These rules will be explained now.

- *Observe regularity in the time you take your meals, do your exercise, get your bowel actions and take your rest. Regularity means longevity*

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<sup>3</sup> If you have not access to these foods or similar ones, do not hesitate to ask in the Maxalding Forum. We would try to help you to find the best alternatives.

*because the functions become accustomed to the performance of duties at certain times, and if these times are respected within reason, little or no strain is brought to bear upon the organs. Thus the person who is methodical, without the necessity becoming an automaton, is a person on the highway to fitness and efficiency (THE MAXALDING BOOK, Monte Saldo).*

- *The amount of food that will keep an average person in perfect health and strength is amazingly small, but for its full value and benefit to be gained it is necessary to reduce it to a liquid in the mouth by thorough mastication. Taste every morsel of food, and continue to masticate as long as any taste or flavour remains. By the time that the flavour has gone, the food will have disappeared likewise, and the appetite will be speedily appeased (THE MAXALDING BOOK, Monte Saldo).*
- *Unfired vegetables and fruits are far richer in vitamins than cooked vegetables and fruits (THE MAXALDING BOOK, Monte Saldo).*
- *Egg-yolk, butter, cream, milk, the fat of the beef, and fish oils are notably rich in vitamins, and as a sufficiency of these food elements is essential to health, growth and favourable metabolism, the above should be borne in mind when purchasing or ordering food, particularly for children (THE MAXALDING BOOK, Monte Saldo).*
- *The system should be flushed by the ingestion of considerable quantities of liquid. Such liquid should be taken in small draughts, and not in*

*quantities large enough to unduly distend the stomach. Liquid should not be taken with meals, but about midway between meals. The value of pure water and barley-water in all cases of kidney weakness or disease can never be over-estimated (THE MAXALDING BOOK, Monte Saldo).*

- *Garlic, by the way, is the most wonderful food in the vegetable kingdom, not for its nourishing properties as much as for its blood purifying properties (THE MAXALDING BOOK, Monte Saldo). Take this advice seriously, because it is plenty of reason. The addition of garlic to as many dishes as you reasonably can has a lot of advantages, both for health and food taste. For example, the combination of garlic and lemon juice in preparing some meats can reduce the use of salt (and another spices) to a minimum.*
- *Concentrated foods are not advised, as they do not leave sufficient residue in the intestines. From three-quarters to four-fifths of the solids taken should consist in cereal foods, fresh fruits and vegetables. The balance of the solids should be made up collectively from meat, fish, cheese, eggs and poultry (THE MAXALDING BOOK, Monte Saldo). The three-quarter rule is very easy to follow: 1/4 cereals, 1/4 fresh fruits, 1/4 vegetables (preferably uncooked) and 1/4 other foods. Fish is better than meat in general due to the presence of unnatural hormones and other substances in meat. Dairy products are very important, especially yoghurt. Remember that a slice of cheese has in general more proteins than the same weight of meat. But, do*

not take too much fatty dairy products in general.

- *Avoid white bread, cocoa and chocolate, if you suffer from constipation* (THE MAXALDING BOOK, Monte Saldo).
- *To keep the intestinal residue mobile, perform abdominal controls* (particularly the one side lateral, central and horizontal isolations in the form of internal massage), *several times daily, preferably after taking liquid. As these exercises bring blood to the stomach, and therefore assist rather than retard digestion, they are safe for performance anywhere and at any time. All breathing and abdominal exercises that are within your power, are beneficial, and skipping also if the heart is strong enough for strenuous exercise* (THE MAXALDING BOOK, Monte Saldo). The abdominal controls are very beneficial to digestion if you do not eat in excess and do not hold your breath at all.
- *The most useful vegetables* (fibre contents) *are: Cauliflower, lettuce, spinach, garlic, endive, celery, onions, Brussels sprouts and carrots. A liberal use of oil* (olive oil) *in the salads will be valuable as an internal lubricant. The most useful fruits are: Apples, figs, prunes, pears, grapes, dates, currants, plums and oranges* (THE MAXALDING BOOK, Monte Saldo).
- *For the sufferer from indigestion. The simplest and plainest foods only should be taken, and on no account should liquids be taken with meals. Foods to avoid are mainly the following: Nuts, dried and tinned foods, condiments, sauces, highly*

*seasoned and spiced dishes, rich and fatty sweets, sweets, chocolate, cakes and pastries, fatty fish (such as eels and salmon), pig in any form, lobster, cucumber, onions, tough meat, strong tea, coffee and alcohol. The main diet should consist of easily digested cereal foods, particularly those containing the whole of the wheat, fresh fruit, vegetables, lean tender meat, poultry, white fish (such as plaice, sole and haddock), eggs and little cheese. Crackers, wholemeal and charcoal biscuits are also of the greatest value* (THE MAXALDING BOOK, Monte Saldo). Note the importance that Monte Saldo gives to dietetic fibre, many years before the present vogue.

- *Great importance must be attached to the fact that the digestive process almost ceases during sleep. Consequently the last meal must be of a light nature, and should be taken an appreciable time before retiring. The time that elapses between your last meal one day and your first meal the following day should be at least twelve hours, thus allowing the stomach a long rest* (THE MAXALDING BOOK, Monte Saldo).
- *Not a crumb should be taken between meals, but water and barley-water in small but reasonable draughts. Milk may be taken if easily digested, but this must be sipped, and malted milk is preferable to ordinary milk<sup>4</sup>. It*

<sup>4</sup> This is one of my favourite drinks. I use to drink about 1 litre of semi skimmed milk with chicory and no sugar throughout the day (plus plenty of orange juice and pure water). This is plenty of good taste, refreshing and very digestive. Chicory has a lot of good effects on the digestive organs and it is particularly

should be taken at blood-heat. Bullion or clear soup, from which all fat has been removed, is recommended. Buttermilk is invaluable (THE MAXALDING BOOK, Monte Saldo).

- For people who have acquired fat, it will be wise to begin by following out the dietetic advices first and to take up the exercises very gradually. Turkish baths have no permanent effect upon weight reduction, for they only remove water which is replaced as soon as liquid is taken again. At the same time, if perspiration is induced by exercise, a speedier result will be secured, because such exercises burns up the fat. A full knowledge of the heart's condition should be taken from the medical adviser before exercise strenuous enough to induce perspiration should be indulged in. For those who are reported medically to be in favourable condition for such measures, the advice upon perspiring may be taken with great benefit. Carbonaceous foods should be taken very sparingly. These include: All foods containing starch, sugar and fats. Eat sparingly but masticate thoroughly. White bread, biscuits, porridge, pastries, cakes, preserves, potatoes, and practically all cereal foods should be avoided. The amount of liquid taken does no affect obesity to any great extent if it is free from fat-building matter, and is taken in bulk, and not sipped. Plain water is the best drink for the obese. Foods in general favour are: Lean beef, mutton, veal, chicken, eggs, cheese -sparingly-, fresh green vegetables,

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recommended by doctors instead of coffee.

onions, tomatoes, toasted wholemeal bread -sparingly-, special biscuits free from starch or fat, raw fruits, fruits cooked without sugar, and white fish. When the weight has been reduced to a satisfactory degree, a plain mixed diet, very sparingly taken, is likely to be healthier than a restricted diet, if the weight can be kept down comfortably by the exercise. Decrease in weight should not be expected to appear very quickly, nor should the weight be removed too suddenly. It is wonderful that patience and quiet confidence will accomplish (THE MAXALDING BOOK, Monte Saldo). This diet can be adjusted very easily bearing in mind the 4/4 rule. Simply substitute the 1/4 of cereals by another 1/4 of green vegetables or fresh fruits. The reduction of weight is usually very fast in the first weeks and after this, it seems to reach a sticking point. This is the reason by which many people abandon diets and regain weight with negative effects. It is much more effective to reduce weight very progressively and not to despair.

Although the explained rules are enough for most purposes, Monte Saldo wrote and special treatise on sports performance. In this book are detailed a lot of very useful and deep insights about dietetics. Many of them are similar to the explained ones and some are new.

The first comment is almost a prophecy.

- Of recent years, the word "vitamins" has appeared in all matters relating to diet, and while more of the chemistry of food is now known than when I started my studies, very little

- more is known as to the effect of natural foods on definite types of persons and digestions than was known thirty years ago (HOW TO EXCEL AT GAMES AND ATHLETICS, Monte Saldo).*
- *Muscular tissue can only be built up by a right amount of of the right kind of exercise and a diet generous in tissue building elements (HOW TO EXCEL AT GAMES AND ATHLETICS, Monte Saldo).*
  - *The main tissue building foods are: Fresh, lean and tender beef, mutton and chicken; non fatty fish as sole and plaice, new-laid eggs (lightly boiled or poached) (HOW TO EXCEL AT GAMES AND ATHLETICS, Monte Saldo)*
  - *Foods that are both tissue-building and energizing (Foods in this class are also fattening if taken in excess of bodily needs): Whole-wheat foods, oatmeal, barley, all kinds of nuts, dried or fresh beans and peas, fresh milk, cream, pure (unsalted) butter, cheese and honey, fatty fish, such as salmon or herring, beetroot, potatoes, preserves made with pure fruit, raisins, sultanas, muscatels, dates, figs, prunes and sugar. Demerara sugar is of greater value than refined white sugar (HOW TO EXCEL AT GAMES AND ATHLETICS, Monte Saldo).*
  - *Blood cleansing and eliminative foods: Apples, pears, grapes, oranges, lemons, grape-fruit, peaches, blackberries, raspberries, tomatoes, watercress, land-cress, spinach, lettuce, endives, celery, kale, onions, garlic, Brussels sprouts and all brassicas (cabbage family) (HOW TO EXCEL AT GAMES AND ATHLETICS, Monte Saldo).*
  - *Wholemeal bread should be taken to exclusion of the white. If such breads causes any gastric discomfort to persons with sensitive stomachs, it will be wise for them to keep to one of the guaranteed wholemeal breads (HOW TO EXCEL AT GAMES AND ATHLETICS, Monte Saldo).*
  - *The list of foods that I have given is a very small one and while there are many other similar foods, doubtless of like use in their particular categories, those I have listed are the simple and natural foods that have maintained many thousands of my pupils, as well as my family and myself in perfect health over many years (HOW TO EXCEL AT GAMES AND ATHLETICS, Monte Saldo).*
  - *If the simple foods recommended are correctly prepared, thoroughly enjoyed and carefully masticated, gastronomic enjoyment will be experienced and maximum benefit to the health gained (HOW TO EXCEL AT GAMES AND ATHLETICS, Monte Saldo).*
  - *The most important foods for the individual should be taken at the beginning of the meal (HOW TO EXCEL AT GAMES AND ATHLETICS, Monte Saldo).*
  - *All foods that can be eaten and digested in the raw state should be given preference to those that require cooking (HOW TO EXCEL AT GAMES AND ATHLETICS, Monte Saldo).*
  - *In the vegetable kingdom there is nothing comparable, in my opinion, to watercress or land-cress for blood cleansing. But the eating of a few dropping stalks (a "bunch") is of little value. A good bulk of fresh cress*

is necessary, both for the sake of the valuable salts, the chlorophyll and other elements in the leaves, as well as for the "roughage" for intestinal cleansing in the stalks (HOW TO EXCEL AT GAMES AND ATHLETICS, Monte Saldo).

- *The wise person avoids all sauces, condiments and artificially preserved foods (HOW TO EXCEL AT GAMES AND ATHLETICS, Monte Saldo).*
- *To sum up, only simple foods in small variety and in as natural a condition as possible should be taken at one meal. From day to day proportions of the elements of the three forms of diet may be varied to suit existing conditions (HOW TO EXCEL AT GAMES AND ATHLETICS, Monte Saldo).*
- *If the weight is too low increase the intake of protein and energizing foods, but always take care to be moderate in the consumption of proteins and energizing foods (HOW TO EXCEL AT GAMES AND ATHLETICS, Monte Saldo).*
- *Generosity with blood-cleansing foods, specially ripe fruits and green vegetables, would be beneficial and one can hardly eat too much of this kind of food (HOW TO EXCEL AT GAMES AND ATHLETICS, Monte Saldo).*
- *The number of meals taken daily must to a certain extent depend on one's profession and convenience in these matters. From my own experience and observations the highest condition of health seems to be gained on two meals daily when one is able to arrange matters in that way. If, for example, the first meal can be taken about 11 a.m. and the second and final meal at 7 p.m., a*

*very good period of rest is given to the digestive machinery, assuming that the final meal were digested by the time one retired for the night, sat, 10 to 11 p.m. Given 8 to 9 hours of sleep (the latter would be necessary for the athlete in training) one would rise at from 7 to 8 a.m. This gives a clue of the two meals daily plan, when the hours of raising and retiring are later or earlier than those mentioned (HOW TO EXCEL AT GAMES AND ATHLETICS, Monte Saldo).*

- *The mind should be free of all problems when food is being taken and all meal-times should be periods of happy conversation, consideration and courtesy to the rest of the company<sup>5</sup> (HOW TO EXCEL AT GAMES AND ATHLETICS, Monte Saldo).*

#### **Specific suggestions on building muscular tissue.**

- *The diet should contain a higher percentage of protein than carbohydrates (sugars and starches). Thus, pure, lean meat would be a more suitable food for building muscular tissue than wheat. But wheat is the more desirable food from the health standpoint. Wheat would be better than meat for one wishing to build up tissue during strenuous exercise such as rowing. On the other hand, the man wishing to put on muscular tissue for the purpose of lifting heavy weights would naturally be better served with meat or poultry, eggs and milk, for his efforts have to be concentrated into a few powerful*

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<sup>5</sup> You should note again the extreme importance that Maxalding gives to psychology and well-being in every aspect of life.

ones and he will acquire adipose tissue if he takes and excess of energizing food. A diet containing a high percentage of energizing foods is useful to the distance runner or, in fact, any athlete who has to spread his efforts over a long period (HOW TO EXCEL AT GAMES AND ATHLETICS, Monte Saldo).

Both Maxick and Saldo were experts in the art of bodyweight reduction, i.e., to decrease bodyweight healthy and naturally without sapping strength.

#### **Specific suggestions on weight-reduction**

- *There is nothing difficult in removing 10 per cent of a healthy man's weight in a few weeks, but to do this and retain his strength and endurance is not so simple (HOW TO EXCEL AT GAMES AND ATHLETICS, Monte Saldo).*
- *A man whose weight has been reduced by drastic exercise, artificial sweating, purging or any other clumsy and unscientific method, must be weakened. Therefore, all weight-reduction of the muscular man must be accomplished by dietetics, and his strength be maintained by just the right amount of specialized exercise to meet the requirements of his sport (HOW TO EXCEL AT GAMES AND ATHLETICS, Monte Saldo).*
- *In the case of the athlete requiring endurance as well as strength, cereal foods can be taken, but for the man requiring concentrated strength at a reduced bodyweight, the main diet should be selected from lean meat, poultry and eggs, while fruits must be used to keep the bowels active and*

*green vegetables (in the raw state, if possible) to keep the blood cleansed and the vascular system supple (HOW TO EXCEL AT GAMES AND ATHLETICS, Monte Saldo).*

- *Tissue-building food must, of course, be taken in cases requiring body reduction, but such food should not be taken in excess of needs, or even in a quantity likely to maintain the tissue at its existing weight. The body weight must, of course, be carefully checked daily, so no drastic reduction in weight is permitted. A clever trainer does not keep his charge's weight reduced for a long period before a contest or record breaking effort, for to remain below one's normal weight for long may result in general weakness (HOW TO EXCEL AT GAMES AND ATHLETICS, Monte Saldo).*
- *Weight reducing in the athlete who is not carrying any adipose tissue must be carried out without physical strain and must involve a lower rate of building rather than an increased rate of breaking-down tissue, as well as the reduction of the water content of the blood for a definitely decided period before the weighting-in. But during the actual conditioning of the body by training, water should not be restricted for it is necessary to keep the organs of elimination (including the skin) completely and thoroughly active. It is recommended that the athlete should first discover how much weight he can reduce by the drying-out process, so that he does not reduce the muscular tissue by an ounce more than necessary. Water can be replaced in less than an hour, but muscle may take days to replace*

*and moreover, loss of muscular tissue, even though the vitality be at its best, must result in a corresponding loss of strength. In conclusion, I wish to say that "drying-out" is not a necessary part of training or conditioning the body but only a method of getting an athlete "past the scales". The athlete who does not have to compete in a special weight-class, or who has a natural weight for his class, should never have to resort to the "drying-out" process (HOW TO EXCEL AT GAMES AND ATHLETICS, Monte Saldo).*

- *Some athletes who perspire freely during training find that when not training they get a better clearance of the bowels. This is because the perspiration decreases the water content of the blood and also washes out the salts from the blood. But the athlete who finds that elimination is inclined to slow up during the period of rest can combat this difficulty by adopting a more eliminative diet. It is not necessary to make any change in the usual diet, but only in the proportions of the diet. Assuming that there is no difficulty in regard to the body weight, then it will be only necessary to increase the eliminative foods. If the muscular weight is too great, then there can be a decrease in the consumption of the proteins and so on (HOW TO EXCEL AT GAMES AND ATHLETICS, Monte Saldo).*