

LE Magazine April 2001

PROFILE

It's all about being healthy

On resilience, healing and vitality

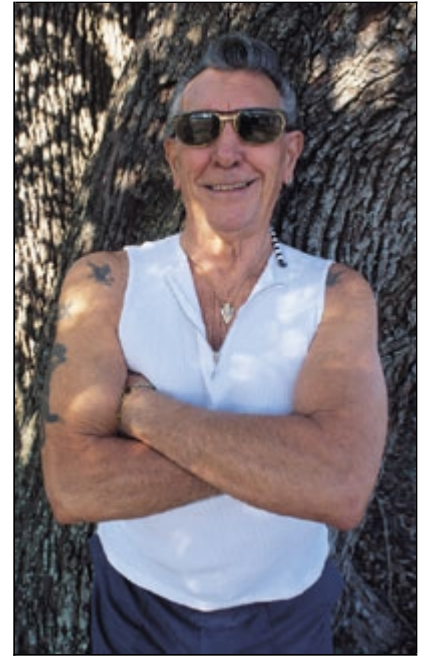
Some jobs can take an enormous physical toil on those who perform them—to the point of being downright dangerous. Think of mining, moving furniture, lifting patients in a hospital or building skyscrapers. Back related injuries and broken bones are common and all of these tend to linger, often becoming real impediments to our ability to enjoy an active lifestyle. Robert Adams has had his share of these high-risk, high-stress careers: he retired with 16 years as a prison sergeant keeping order in Central Florida's Correctional Institute, where run-ins with inmates left him with injuries that required operations on a knee, both shoulders and one wrist. (Before law enforcement, he worked with structural steel, often finding himself on a 16" beam dangling from a high-rise in progress some 300 feet above the street.) But Robert, who'll turn 73 in November, shrugs off the lasting effects of these demanding jobs and the injuries he's sustained while performing them. He credits 57 years of weight lifting for his resilience in the face of physical damage and years of vitamins and supplements for providing valuable healing properties, vitality and general good health.

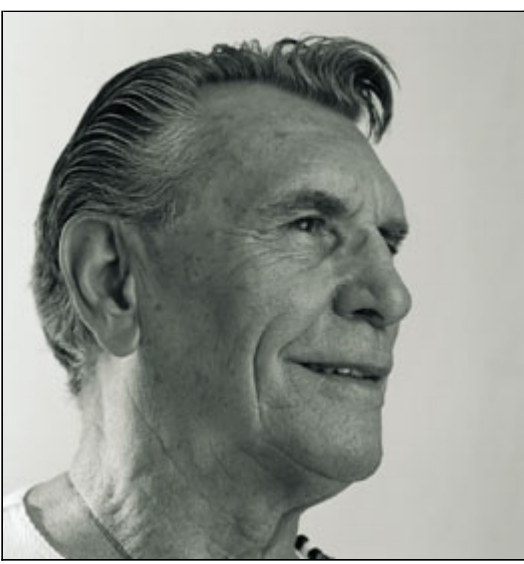
"I started weight lifting when I was 16 years old and your typical 97-pound weakling," he remembers. "But it was hard back then, no one else was doing it, and it was really frowned upon even though I was the only kid on the beach who could do a one-arm bench press with 110 pounds."

Robert hasn't lost his knack for impressive physical feats. His semi-weekly weight-lifting regime would tire most people half his age. It's one he's developed through avid reading and experimentation. "I went to several gyms and talked to lots of people who body build and tried this and that before picking out what I thought was best for me," he says. He finally settled on a training regime popular in Bulgaria, home to some of the world's most powerful weight lifters, that focuses on bench pressing. He begins with five sets of five repetitions using a medium-sized weight, such as 45 pounds, then rests and stretches for a couple of minutes before continuing with five more sets of five repetitions, this time increasing the weight by five or six pounds. On his third set of five repetitions, he works himself almost to exhaustion with the heaviest weight he can manage.

"This routine eliminates the need for curls," he says. "And it works your whole upper body from your shoulder biceps to the upper and lower central part of the chest."

Robert continues by doing shrugs with 125 pounds, then moves on to three sets of bent-over rows using 110-pound weights. Finally come three sets of 50 sit-ups, which he does "the hard way," with his hands crossed across his chest and his knees elevated for maximum strain on the abdomen. "A lot of guys a lot younger than me don't do this much exercise," he says.





For aerobic conditioning he'll take a dip in a nearby heated pool or ride the stationary bike that he keeps in his home gym. In fact, a few years ago Robert and a friend 12 years his junior rode bikes from Melbourne, Florida to Vero Beach and back-a distance of some 110 miles-in less than seven hours. That was the same year that Robert entered a two-day, 150-mile bikathon in Orlando, raising \$640 for research into muscular dystrophy. (Robert arrived in the sunshine state some 30 years ago by way of Ohio and Texas. Today he lives about 15 miles from Cocoa Beach in the town of Rockledge.)

When Robert is going full-out with his physical training, he'll put himself on a serious supplement and vitamin regime for about three or four months, then take a couple of months off, as he eases back on his work-out schedule. Protein powder is a supplement mainstay and Robert takes three scoops first thing in the morning. "I take the equivalent of three, eight-ounce steaks every day," he says. "And it's the best way to get the protein you need, because I eat very little meat."

Robert uses CoQ10 as an antioxidant and phosphatidylserine capsules for brain enhancement and memory. He also ensures general good health with daily amino acids and a couple of strong multivitamins and extra vitamin E. On the advice of his physician, Robert uses 800 mcgs of folic acid to help keep his arteries clean. He was taking garlic tablets for a while to help with digestion, but recently switched to the real thing to get the total nourishment value. "I sprinkle garlic on everything I can think of-sandwiches, soups, potatoes. . . everything," he reports.

The regime appears to be working. In his most recent annual physical exam, Robert's blood work and urine analysis showed that everything from his cholesterol count to his blood sugar levels were within the acceptable parameters. He takes no medications, has never felt so much as a twinge of arthritis, and can't remember the last time he was sick. "Let's see, I had a double hernia operation several years ago and my appendix ruptured in 1967," he says, adding that he overcame severe spinal meningitis as a child. "But, that's been about it. I feel great. A lot of people think I'm 53 instead of 73."

Diet likely contributes to these good results. Robert, who lives alone, does all his own cooking. He favors lean protein, like broiled chicken breasts and scrupulously avoids anything with hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated fats, such as margarine. "It's pure fat," he says. "I never use it. When I cook I make sure to use olive oil whether I'm frying eggs or baking." He also favors whole grain breads and though he admits that he doesn't eat as many vegetables as he probably should, he likes to snack on a bunch of raw cauliflower or a bag of baby carrots with plenty of garlic dip.

Water is a key component. Robert drinks two, 16-ounce glasses when he works out, noting the importance of replenishing the needs of muscle mass, which is 88% water. Still, he isn't a total purist. Though he doesn't drink much alcohol, he's fond of a couple of light beers every week and will treat himself to a black russian (Kahlua and Vodka on ice) on evenings when his girlfriend visits. He even makes his own kahlua from a recipe he knows by heart. "I'm the sweetest and the meanest dude," he jokes of the way his domestic side complements the tough veneer he needed to get through life "inside the walls."

Robert, a self-proclaimed "tender-hearted guy" learned to divorce himself from the unsettling parts of his job in order to be able to perform it. He's seen a lot of despair and destruction inside the Central Florida Correctional Institution, which, during his tenure, was home first to youthful offenders, then to adults. Still, Robert relished the diversity of his work. "Once you walk through the gates, you're in a whole different civilization," he says. "So it never gets boring. I never knew what to expect and that made it interesting. I still miss it." He retired in 1993, but realized that he liked security so much that he accepted a part-time job-albeit one with a bit less excitement than his previous position-working the evening watch at a time-share on Cocoa Beach. He took the position in June of 2000 and works three shifts a week.

Semi retirement certainly allows him more time to put his good health to use. With his two sons and six grandchildren living in Maine and California, and his 90-year-old mother living in Ohio, he socializes mostly with his many old friends in the Cocoa Beach-Rockledge area. He especially likes to spend time catching up with his former bartending colleagues-he once mixed drinks for the Mousetrap, one of Cocoa Beach's best-known watering holes. He continues to read voraciously-adventure stories and philosophy are particular favorites-and loves to watch science fiction movies. And there's always people watching. He's apt to grab a ringside seat for the afternoon at Castaways, one of the cabana bar and patios where he can sip bottled water and check out who's doing what.

"To me, it's all about being healthy," he says of his view on enjoying life. "If you're healthy you aren't going to be hindered by anything. You can do whatever you want. And I am." -Twig Mowat



All Contents Copyright © 1995-2009 Life Extension Foundation All rights reserved.

LifeExtension®

These statements have not been evaluated by the FDA. These products are not intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any disease. The information provided on this site is for informational purposes only and is not intended as a substitute for advice from your physician or other health care professional or any information contained on or in any product label or packaging. You should not use the information on this site for diagnosis or treatment of any health problem or for prescription of any medication or other treatment. You should consult with a healthcare professional before starting any diet, exercise or supplementation program, before taking any medication, or if you have or suspect you might have a health problem. You should not stop taking any medication without first consulting your physician.