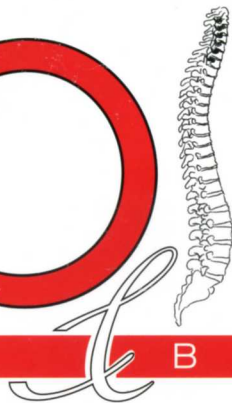


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Winter 2009

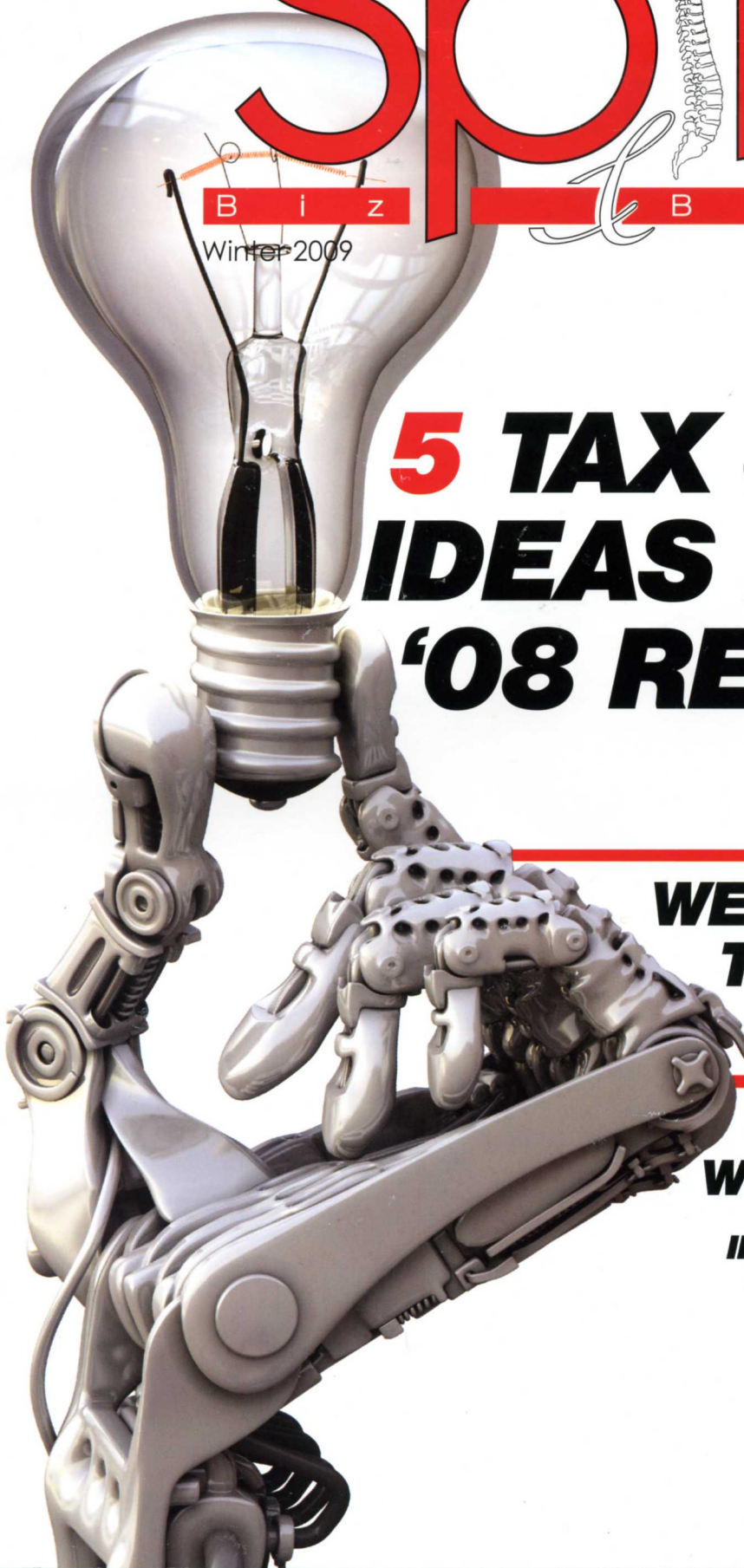
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Do You Have 7 Seconds: Your Prescription for a Perfect Physique

Editorial by: Paul J.O'Brien

*I*t begins with that first delicious stretch of the morning - after that, work, stress, more work, moments with the family and maybe some sleep. Getting some healthy exercise squeezed in seems nearly impossible. And, vicarious participation in a sport on television doesn't count - unless you are a very enthusiastic fan of some team.

Conventionally we are told that in order to stay fit and healthy, to keep lean muscle tissue and lose fat, we have to spend around 5 hours a week training hard - an hour of aerobics, 3 times a week, with a few weight training sessions to build muscle and help prevent osteoporosis and arthritis, and shed those extra pounds of fat that seem to accumulate as we age. When time is of the essence, the good doctor thinks about his patients and often ignores his own good health. So what is one to do?

You can get in great shape with less than 5 minutes of exercise a day.

Luckily, the conventional advice is neither accurate nor beneficial. In truth, you can get in great shape with less than 5 minutes of exercise a day without the gym. In fact, you probably won't need to get out of your chair for most of it.

Isometrics. Isometrics involve the contraction or tensing up of a muscle without moving the angle of a joint. This can be achieved with or without weights. This article will focus on an isometric contraction on its own without a weight.

Lifting weights causes the fibers of the muscles to contract and tense up. This stress and stimulus causes the muscles to break down and rebuild themselves tighter, firmer, and - after excess stimulus - bigger and stronger.

The answer to developing tighter, firmer muscles is in the tension and intensity, a contraction that produces new muscles growth. Weight lifting is an artificial means of causing muscles to tense. An object is perceived as heavy by your body, and, as such, the body recruits more muscle fiber than a light weight, like a pencil. This recruitment of more muscle fiber causes extra tension - hence extra stimulation, hence tighter firmer muscles.

An Isometric Contraction is the voluntary tensing of a particular muscle. This tension needs only to be held for about 7 seconds. If you are tensing the muscle properly you should be quite fatigued by this stage because all the fibers in the muscle are stimulated. In 1953 by two German scientists named Hettinger and Muller discovered that with a single contraction lasting only 7-12 seconds once a week, enough stimulus could be produced to increase strength by 6% PER WEEK (Isometrics-The Regulation Of Muscular Strength, 1953, Muller, Erich. A). There was no additional benefit in performing more than one contraction a day. But it gets even better.



