

# Dave Draper Tribute

by

Alan Palmieri



Not much can be said about the “Blonde Bomber” Dave Draper that hasn’t already been said or printed. He stands as one who has faced life’s challenges and rose from the valleys to the mountain tops. Hard knocks and punches delivered, Dave learned to roll with the punches and fight back to survive all life had to dish out. For more than forty years I have viewed Dave as the epitome of what a bodybuilder should be and how bodybuilding should be represented.

Before I go on let me make a couple of points very clear. First, I met Dave Draper one time back in the 60’s in New Jersey. After he moved to California to work for Joe Weider he was kind enough to reply to my letters; no personal computers or email back then my young friends, it was all pen and paper and it took time to write in longhand. More recently Dave has been gracious enough to respond to my request for information on his relationship with Vince Gironda which is included in my CD-ROM “*Vince Gironda Legend And Myth*” - as well as a couple of other emails. His lovely wife Laree

and I have corresponded back and forth several times but I have never had the pleasure of meeting her in person and look forward to the day when I can do so.

Second, nothing contained in this article is new. In fact just about every bit of it can be found on Dave's website [www.davedraper.com](http://www.davedraper.com) I might just as easily have written this introduction and said go to Dave's site for all the information on Dave, bodybuilding, exercise and nutrition you could ever ask for but I didn't. I didn't because I wanted to have a hand in a special tribute to Dave. I take no credit for the work of others who provided not only the material but also permission to use their material in this project.

So there you have it, I am not a close personal friend but I have followed Dave when he was an up and coming bodybuilder - when he was in the bodybuilding limelight and when he disappeared for a time into obscurity. During the period Dave left the limelight of bodybuilding it was almost impossible to find out anything about what he was doing until he once again surfaced. Living in East Tennessee is not exactly the best geographic location for mainstream bodybuilding information so I was only able to get bits and pieces here and there. Occasionally I would speak with this one or that one who would tell me a little something about Dave and his woodworking or about how he was just more or less doing his own thing. For me it was a sad time in bodybuilding history. Without a doubt it had an impact on me as I felt a loss, something missing. You can admire and read about someone and follow them long enough it can get to a point where you almost feel like you are a close and personal friend. I have always had not only admiration but respect for the "Blond Bomber" and consider him the very best individual I can think of to be the Ambassador of Bodybuilding's Golden Era.

There was just something about his appearance and demeanor that signified someone special. A quite humbleness perched on top of the most massive shoulders, chest, and arms I had ever seen. Today I still read and re-read the magazines I have from the 60's with articles about Dave and articles written by Dick Tyler, who has always been one of my favorite writers. Put Dave and Dick together and what a combo... none better

except and unless it would be Dave and Laree that is... sorry Dick, but I'm sure you understand.

I am not a whiz with computers. I do have my own website and I do manage to get along but far from being able to talk the lingo or maneuver as one should and needs to in this day and time. For me I would prefer the old 8.5" x 11" lined paper and No. 2 pencil. Ahhh to have the good old days back, as I've said many times; "gone forever and never to return." Once getting a computer and having someone connect me to the internet, the first entry I made was Dave Draper. To my happy surprise [www.davedraper.com](http://www.davedraper.com) Irononline came up. What a thrill. I spent days reading and getting caught up on the real bodybuilding living legend and the man who really moved the sport forward and was an inspiration to not only me but countless young men who wanted to develop a "He-Man" body.

I admit I am not objective when it comes to Dave Draper. He provided inspiration and guidance via magazines and letters when I was struggling to gain size. His magazine images, on the beach with surfboards and girls hanging over him may not have been accurate but they provided a picture in my mind I still retain to this day. The massive arms, shoulders, and chest... that's what a bodybuilder should look like! Watching the movie "Don't Make Waves" presented the humble, meek personality of Dave not expected to come from such a massively developed individual. I believe that movie more closely depicts the personality of Dave than the magazines did.

Although this article includes a great amount of work by others, I have given credit to the originators who were gracious enough to grant permission to include their work. Unfortunately most of the pictures do not provide credit to the photographer. This is not an oversight but rather no credit acknowledgement due to not knowing who took the picture(s).

Hopefully this tribute to Dave will be viewed for his not only being a champion bodybuilder but for being a champion human being. With respect and admiration for

Dave and Laree I hope this work will provide some enjoyment for those who take the time to read it.

With permission granted by Laree, the following are some articles and pictures from Dave Draper's Irononline website [www.davedraper.com](http://www.davedraper.com) there you can find tons of information on the "Blonde Bomber".



Laree Draper; friendly, helpful, and a true asset for and to all who have admired Dave throughout his career. Laree is truly "Wonder Woman" and appreciated for all she does and has done.

## **DAVE DRAPER**

Professional Athlete, Actor, Author

## **CHAMPIONSHIP TITLES**

Mr. America, Mr. World. Mr. Universe

## **AUTHOR**

Your Body Revival: Weight Loss Straight Talk & Brother Iron, Sister Steel: A Bodybuilder's Book: Iron On My Mind

## **WRITER, MAGAZINE ARTICLES**

Santa Cruz Sentinel, Muscle & Fitness, Flex, Muscle Mag Int'l, Muscular Development, Ironman

## **COLUMNIST**

IronOnline, Santa Cruz Sentinel "Mind and Muscle," OnTarget with Dave Draper, Muscle & Fitness, Good Times Entertainment Weekly

## **MOVIE ACTOR**

Don't Make Waves, Lord Love a Duck, Three On A Couch, Walk Don't Run

## **TELEVISION CREDITS**

Host of David The Gladiator, Johnny Carson, Merv Griffin, Beverly Hillbillies, The Monkees, Karen, Hercules, ESPN Feature Story, Red Skelton

Featured subject: E! TV "True Hollywood Story" biography, currently in broadcast

## **MAGAZINE COVER SUBJECT**

19 United States, 4 European Cover Shots

## **MAGAZINE ARTICLE SUBJECT**

50+ articles including recent 8-page feature article in *GQ Magazine* and forthcoming article in *Men's Journal*

## **WORLDWIDE EXHIBITIONS**

South Africa, Australia, Belgium, France, Holland, New Zealand, England, Spain, Germany, Italy, Trinidad, Mexico, Canada, USA

## **TOURED WITH**

Arnold Schwarzenegger, Sharon Tate (Film Publicity Tour), Elvis Presley, Frank Zane

## **AWARDS**

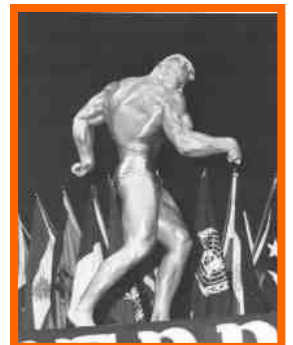
Bodybuilder's Hall of Fame Member, San Francisco Film Commission Honoree, American Bodybuilding Award Star of the Decade, World Gym Lifetime Achievement Award, others

## **SEMINAR SPEAKER& PUBLIC SERVICE APPEARANCES**

100+ Appearances, DARE Program speaker, prisons, churches, fire & police departments, youth group homes, schools, senior programs

## **Draper Bodybuilding History**

Bodybuilding as we know it today began some sixty years ago when men like John Grimek and Steve Reeves lifted weights in preparation for the first Mr. America title in the late 30's. The famed Muscle Beach emerged in



Santa Monica, California in the 40's. And, as I recollect, it was in the mellow mid-50's when I lifted my first set of barbells. Little did I know the reps and sets, moans and groans that lay before me.

I was just a kid and virtually nobody was doing that sort of thing. Weightlifting and muscle building didn't have wide public appeal or approval and 99 out of 100 athletic coaches gave it the thumbs down. There wasn't a whole bunch of encouragement or inspiration from a society which considered you either stupid or egotistical and probably a sissy. The two guys who inspired me to lift in those days were Anthony Petrowski and Tony Nepeerski, local dock workers with powerful arms from hard work, meat and potatoes and some knarly weightlifting.

I arranged a makeshift set of weights and within a month I was fully hooked on lifting. By the age of twelve, barbells and dumbbells had become very important to me. They were my solid steel friends that I could trust. When the going got tough, when I kept missing the baseball, and when girls were far too cute to talk to, the weights were there and they spoke my language. I loved the resistance they offered and without coaching, gymnasiums or teams of players, I could enjoy a basic oneness of the activity where you were in control of being controlled.

I wrestled with those little monsters for hours on end, pushing and pulling randomly to exhaustion until patterns of exercises formed. Slowly and surely my body took shape and muscle power and size became evident. It's interesting to note here that these things took place almost by accident. I knew of no muscle magazines, looked toward no competitive rewards, idols or flimsy self-gratification. Simply, the play and pleasure of painfully pressing on was my stimulus. And, too, I admit that the exclusiveness and lonesomeness of the adventure had and still has a quality that reaches to the marrow of my bones.

In high school I wrestled a bit, worked on the high bar and swam competitively, but it was the weights that buoyed me up. A job with Weider Barbell Company lured me to Santa Monica, California after winning the Mr. New Jersey title in 1962. There at Muscle Beach, as it faded off into the beautiful California sunset, I met and shared with the last

of the true erectors of the bodybuilding foundations - the cornerstones such as Joe Gold, Zabo, George Eifferman, Bill Pearl, Armand Tanny, Clancy Ross and Steve Reeves. A handful of mighty men - heroes - that formed the nucleus of bodybuilding and lived those golden, carefree days gone by.

These men with instincts intact felt their way around the weights and equipment, lifting more and intellectualizing less. And to them I attribute a certain quality of creativity in my training and an appreciation of the fundamentals. The late 60's have been referred to as the "Golden Years of Bodybuilding", when big men pressed on methodically and with great concentration. During those years the various training principles were set down and stand distinctly today - sound, tried and true.

I went on to win the Mr. America title in 1965 and the Mr. Universe in '66. In 1970, after winning the Mr. World in Columbus, Ohio, I sensed a sifting of the gears in bodybuilding and stepped out of competition. The sport took off like a rocket to the moon, soaring into the 80's with ever increasing momentum.



Today bodybuilding has gained amazing popularity worldwide, both as a participant sport and as a spectator sport. At last the image associated with muscles has been appropriately lifted and the respect and appreciation a bodybuilder deserves is clear. Furthermore, big muscles have become big business.

We live in a crowded and intense world where computers spit out information faster that we can use it and the media has us confused as to who we are and what to expect of ourselves. We've arranged a hi-tech world and often find ourselves trailing far behind, frantically trying to keep the pace. And the world of bodybuilding has not escaped this dilemma. We want results and we want them now - lean hard bodies from QuickStop bodybuilding and fast food appetites. And from this hurried attitude the only sure results are stress, injury and frustration.

We are researchers and scientists, a people hungry for information, details and data. And in our quest we have made things far too complicated. In publishing this website, I hope to pass on some thoughts that are basic and simple; thoughts that have occurred to me before, during and after my 40+ years of training sessions.

As Jeff Everson once said to me, "There are no secrets. You simply have basic God-given genetics, body chemistry and bone structure. And provided the attributes of discipline and determination, you apply yourself full bore, and your body potential emerges - slow but sure."

## **Learn From My Mistakes**



Howdy, Bomberoos.

The folks behind the popular website, Learn From My Mistakes, asked me to contribute material to their pages in the form of seven answers to seven questions; they'd supply the questions. "Good," I said and here it is.

Probably not what the good folks were expecting. It's a bit long-winded. They didn't say, "smaller than a breadbox" or "briefly" or "in plain English." You might consider printing it out to be deciphered, read, memorized, sung or set ablaze later...

Glide... dave draper

*1. What do you feel is the single greatest trait (genetics, discipline, intensity, etc.) that led to your success in bodybuilding and why?*

Nothing I possessed in the way of structure or body chemistry was outstanding. A six-foot frame with a large bone structure is certainly an advantage for which I am thankful, but they didn't separate me from the crowd. Further, I didn't have a burning ambition or dream to become a champion, a nuclear scientist or the President. I did have in my growing years, however, a simplistic approach on all projects undertaken... still do. What do I want? Is it sensible and worthwhile and how do I -- with common sense -- accomplish it? Once the questions are answered (guesses count), do it. Here you have a goal, focus and commitment.

It is during the simple process of achieving that one develops those grand habits and character qualities more valuable than blue chips or chocolate chips. Determination is one competent ally in gaining anything we have positioned before us. And determination spawns discipline, the thick leather reins that prompt and lead the untamable animal. The sum of determination and discipline is perseverance, the impenetrable armor of warriors.

So, keep your eye on that worthy goal; choose the logical (simple, most basic) way to go, and go. Go hard. It's a struggle, yet without intensity, I have discovered, I don't go far. Make room in your heart and mind to gather and store the determination, discipline and perseverance found in thick clumps along the way. Patience follows like a tired old mare; get used to her.

*2. When training with weights, beginners often struggle to find the exercises and techniques that work best for their body types. What exercises and routines seemed to work best for you when you were just starting out? And what exercises did you try to avoid?*

When I was starting out, I was very young and made up some dumb rules as I went along. Once I got my hands on some battered wall charts demonstrating the variety of exercises one could do, I chose the simplest (coincidentally like my own favorite inventions) and continued to train, grow in understanding and gain in muscle development. I was 12, what else could I do? What more could I expect?

Those biggies that kept me going, growing and interested were standing barbell curls, wrist curls, lying and standing triceps extensions or presses, bench presses, bentover barbell rows and stiffarm pullovers. I, like most kids, ignored the legs, as if they were miles away, below the beltline and out of sight.

Note: When I refer to “barbell,” I speak of a 16-inch bar with my limited selection of weights in the center and my tightfisted mitts squeezing what little was left of the bar’s short ends. The volume varied from 1 to 20 sets and reps, as I intuitively sorted things out and eventually added to my equipment list. Any routine worked as long as I stuck to it with regularity for 30 minutes. The word “technique” is not applicable to whatever it was I did during those grimacing, premature workouts. Wrestling, free-for-all and slugfest more appropriately describe the action taking place... a brawl or a battle-royale.

What I tried to avoid was dropping that congested bar on my head. Though I had no supervision early on, I was reasonably safe because I didn’t have very much poundage. The meanest wrong one can do when one is new to weight training is to use too much iron with too little know-how and too little physical conditioning.

Common disaster: “This is fun. I wonder, how much weight can I bench press?”

Tendons and muscle insertions that are unprepared for heavy resistance might tear or otherwise be damaged when subject to exuberant and heavy lifting: painful, frightening, disappointing and perhaps chronic.

Later, though, as I stepped into the VMCA and Vic Tanny’s of the late ‘50s, I zipped forward to dumbbells of assorted sizes, benches, racks and cables. Supersetting with the basic movements became my thing then and is to this day. Added to the list of original exercises I practiced as a kid are squats and deadlifts and shrugs and pulldowns and dumbbell presses... nothing fancy, just solid.

*3. Many people who begin weight training are looking to build mass in their arms and chest. Can you talk about the importance of symmetry to a healthy looking body?*

It's important to understand the necessity of seeking balance in developing the body's muscle structure. The body works as a system, mutually supporting and interdependent, and performs more healthfully and efficiently when developed as a functioning whole. Muscles grow faster, overall conditioning is achieved and no part of the body lags behind in formation as a result of neglect.

Imbalance in strength and structural development can cause chronic pain and degrees of disability as the years go by, i.e., a predominantly strong arm and chest development can lead to shoulder-rotation troubles; an abdominals muscles deficiency can lead to lower back troubles; weak hamstrings can present knee problems, etc. Does one want pain and limitations?

Getting huge at all cost is not unheard of among budding bodybuilders of all ages. Why not? They are promised extraordinary gains in short periods of time, if they use this formulation or that stack while following this champ's routine. Stop and think. It's smart to consider from the onset the eventual appearance of the body -- body esthetics, beauty, balance and appeal -- when enthusiastically embracing the bodybuilding field. A lopsided body can be a problem to correct, reflects your thinking and follows you wherever you go.

Simultaneously, however, I believe anyone who begins to train with weights should do whatever he or she feels like doing for whatever purpose. You can usually get away with a few months of floundering and butting your head against the wall without knocking your brains out or building 19-inch arms on a 150-pound frame. Gives the would-be champ time and space to search, invent, express, improvise and make a bunch of instructive mistakes of his very own. Freedom before margins.

*4. Are there any nutritional secrets that beginners need to know to develop a powerful, healthy physique?*

There are no secrets. Train hard, eat right and be happy!

Nutrition counts -- big time. What you eat is what you get. Eat regularly to fuel and restore the muscles throughout the day -- once every three to four hours. Up your intake of muscle-building protein (red meat, fish, poultry, dairy products, some nuts); exclude or greatly minimize simple sugars in your menu; eat lots of fresh vegetables and a fair share of fresh fruit (watch the sugar); get your fiber and eat whole-grain breads and grains that have not been overly processed. Don't eat junk food, fast food and don't overeat. Without drowning yourself, drink jugs of water. Add an excellent vitamin and mineral with antioxidants, along with a dose of essential fatty acids (EFAs) daily, and a protein powder to supplement meal planning if eating consistently is a problem -- or to help gain weight, or as a most important pre-workout and post-workout fortifier.

Simple, basic, honest. Takes devotion and habit building. It works, that's all. It works.

*5. Unfortunately, injuries are common in weight lifting. What mistakes can lead to injuries in the weight room? And how can beginners avoid them?*

Injuries will visit without being invited. They come from eagerness, lack of body conditioning or preparedness, overload, not being warmed up, poor execution of an exercise, lack of concentration, undernourishment, inadequate pre-workout fueling, excessive overload, collective muscle tears over a period of time and/or lack of recuperation. There's more I'm sure; the list goes on. The question requires a volume to answer even briefly.

I'll highlight a few of the common mistakes in broken English:

~Too eager, too soon. Pushing, for example, a heavy bench press before the muscles and tendons have had a chance to adapt, thicken, lengthen and whatever else they need to do before squirming under the stress of an impossible weight. Imagine a new biceps and a young lower back under the enthusiastic swing of a cumbersome bar littered with cold iron. Snap, crackle, pop...

The sport is wonderful, tough, takes time and requires wisdom. Injuries impart wisdom. Slow down, think, be smart and save time... and a whole lot of misery.

~Similarly, it's cold; you're in a hurry, you press the dumbbells and the deltoid gurgles as a spike of pain is loudly hammered home.

Never hurry. Raise the body's core temperature with sufficient aerobic work or, better yet, a vigorous ab workout, and hit the muscles and joints about to be blasted with a few light sets in preparation.

~You're in the sport a long time and the bench lures you on and on. The bench press does that. I'll bet you eventually get a chronic shoulder problem that threatens your sleep and the rest of your training if you persist to try to conquer the impenetrable steel fortress. The exercise is decent, though not the most efficacious muscle builder and shaper. It certainly is replaceable with safer dumbbell movements.

Beware. As a power lift it will lead to troubles. The shoulder mechanics do not provide for the extreme overload demanded by power training on the bench press. There is a protective bone-like tab within the joint to prevent overload and this becomes aggravated, and in time enlarged and inflamed causing real pain and limitation. Who among long-time weight trainers does not have a shoulder complaint?

~Improved nutrition invariably accompanies a solid interest in weight training. The basics of sound eating combined with sensible physical conditioning cause the system to more fully cooperate (as designed) and will add vitality, improve the health and flexibility of joints, increase bone density and improve resistance to injury. The muscles become an attractive armor against the perils of the hard work.

Feeding yourself healthfully is a primary factor in preventing injury on the gym floor.

*6. When you are in the gym, what are some of the most common mistakes you see weight lifters making, and what can they do to correct the mistakes?*

The answers to the question in regard to mistakes made that might cause injury would be poor form, too little focus and too much weight. The corrections I think are obvious.

Learn and practice good form, concentrate totally on your training from start to finish (more practice) and lower the working weight. Be smart.

To answer the question broadly and assuming the goals are the development of body strength and health and not entertainment (which is certainly okay), the mistakes or shortcomings include lack of training involvement and too little intensity in exercise performance. Amplitude is missing. Desire and direction are major requirements if time spent on the gym floor is to be productive and fulfilling. They wane rapidly. This muscle-building and strength-building stuff works best when you work hard, want it bad, refer to your internal compass and have an honest sense of confidence in your pursuit and performance. You've got to blast it when you're amid the metal, cable and racks.

Another thing: There's more time and effort and wonder in seeking faster and easier ways to achieve muscle building goals than there is in the act of muscle building. Don't waste your resources. Face it, muscle and power building is tough work, not magic.

*7. Finally, what is the single biggest mistake you made in your bodybuilding career and what did you learn from it?*

Aside from drinking too much alcohol 25 years ago and learning I'd have been better off not to drink at all, I reckon the mistakes I've made have only been incidents which contributed to the person I happen to be today, good or not so good.

I'll spare you the philosophical baloney, but I prefer to think of muscle building as something I do as I go about my life, not who or what I've become -- not the career thing referred to as "bodybuilding." I have always trained -- building muscle and might -- for function, focus, good fun and a hundred other valuable reasons.

That which others might call mistakes were just days of my life: No outstanding overload that cost me my lower back, knees or biceps, no crazy concoctions or dietary schemes that deteriorated my innards. I stepped on a few toes and acted like a jerk and hurt some folks along the way and would gladly for the good folks involved edit out those occasions. Yet, somehow, the world has continued to turn, for which I thank God. Draper

## Dave Draper's Actual Workouts of the 1960s



By Henrik "The House" Nielsen  
Member of the Draper research team

There have been a lot of stories and speculation about how Dave Draper actually trained in the 60s. An example of this can be found in Canadian strength coach Charles Poliquin book *"The Poliquin Principles"*: "Old-timers will remember articles about Dave Draper's workouts in Muscle Builder/Power. The Blond Bomber worked out practically every day and often performed 20 sets or more per bodypart. Draper's training methods were extreme and indisputably constituted a protocol that enabled him to become one of the best bodybuilders in his era."

The above description is not far from the truth, but the key words here are "articles in Muscle Builder/Power." We now know that the articles about Dave's workouts magazines such as Muscle Builder/Power and Mr. America were the fabrications of staff writers and editors and they did not represent Dave's actual workouts. So how DID Dave train in the 60s?

In 1999 I went on a Bodybuilding Pilgrimage to California. As a part of that I trained for 2 weeks in Dave's World Gym in Santa Cruz. I asked Dave a lot of questions about his training methods and on top of that something happened that I hadn't even dreamt of.

Dave showed me his actual training journals from 1964-65 when he was training in the Muscle Beach Gym in Santa Monica, also known as The Dungeon, preparing for his Mr. America win in 1965. This was the real deal - I could hardly believe it! I managed to get a zerox copy with me home. What a treasure!

The following is based on my talks with Dave and his training journals. I hope you find the information as interesting as I did. One word of caution though. Dave did some pretty severe workouts back then.

As Jeff Everson wrote: "Despite the plethora of energy enhancers and drugs available today, I'd venture to guess that most modern-day bodybuilders would overtrain on Draper's plan. Bodybuilders today don't eat enough fat for long-term energy, their calories are too low and they don't get enough rest and relaxation. By and large they lack patience too. Besides, the guys in the Dungeon would never have put up with someone who claimed to be overtrained. There was no such thing back then."

So these workouts should probably not be copied and they do not necessarily represent the training advice that Dave would give today. Read <http://davedraper.com/article-63-ultimate-workout.html> to learn more about that.

Dave Draper's actual workouts 1964-65: There's no doubt about it. Dave trained with a very high volume of sets and he rotated his bodyparts so that he trained everything 3 times per week. Training on a 2 day split, this meant that he trained at least 6 days per week. According to the journals he would sometimes train for 2-3 weeks with no rest days!

Dave had 3 different training partners during his years in the Dungeon (1963-67). His first training partner, Dick Sweet, was the one who introduced Dave to the "California" style of bodybuilding.

Before I describe the actual workouts (I've chosen 2 - one from 1964 and one from 1965) I'd like to present in bullet-points some facts about Dave's workouts:

*He trained in the morning usually 6-9am. Each workout would last 2½ - 3 hours.*

*A typical pre-workout meal would be a cup of coffee maybe a can of tuna and a protein shake that tasted like dirt - yummy.*

*He would change his workouts every 4-6 weeks. Sometimes doing different exercises or sometimes changing the amount of sets and reps or training method.*

*He trained in a progressive manner, either increasing reps or weight every workout.in*

*At this point he used mainly straight sets and compound supersets. Antagonistic supersets were added later (1966).*

*The last 6 weeks before competition he trained twice a day 4 days out of the week and once a day 2 days out of the week. One of the workouts on double split days could be just deadlifts.*

The first group of workouts is from November 1964. At this point in time Dave had started using higher paced workouts, which means that the weights you see does not represent Dave's maximum weights in some of those exercises. For instance Dave's maximum bench press was around 450 lbs. Pretty amazing considering that Dave was only 22 years old at the time.

By December 4th 1964 Dave's chest-back-legs workout looked like this:

**Chest (14 sets):**

Benchpress: 6x305, 6x315, 6x325, 6x335

Incline benchpress: 6x225, 6x235, 6x245, 6x255, 6x270

Flat fly: 5 sets of 8x75

**Back (15 sets):**

Long pulley row: 6x160, 6x170, 6x180, 6x190, 6x200

One arm dumbbell rows: 5 sets of 6x90

Wide-grip pulldown: 5 sets of 6x225

**Thighs (10 sets):**

Hack squat: 5 sets of 15 reps (no weight specified)

Thigh curl: 5 sets of 12x60

**Calves (10 sets):**

Donkeys: 10 sets of 15 reps

One day after, December 5th 1964, Dave's delts-biceps-triceps-forearms workout looked like this:

**Delts (18 sets):**

Seated military press: 6x135, 6x145, 6x155, 6x165, 6x175

Press behind neck: 6x135, 6x145, 6x155, 6x165, 6x175

Superset:

Incline lateral raise to the front (face down): 4 sets of 6x25

Incline lateral raise to the rear (face down): 4 sets 6x25

**Triceps (15 sets):**

Seated French press:

8x115, 8x125, 8x135, 8x145, 8x135

One arm dumbbell extension: 8x40, 8x40, 7x40, 7x40, 7x40

Pulley pushdown: 5 sets of 12x75

**Biceps (15 sets):**

Standing dumbbell curl: 6x50, 6x55, 6x60, 6x65, 6x65

Flat bench curl: 5 sets of 6x45

Incline inners: 5 sets of 6x40

**Forearms:**

Reverse curl: 5 sets of 10x90

Wrist curl: 5 sets of 15x165

The second group of workouts is from February 1965. At this point the weights Dave used was also affected by the fact that he had seriously started to diet down to the Mr. America 1965 competition. By the night of the Mr. America September 18, 1965 that took place in The Brooklyn Academy of music, he weighed in at 230 lbs (his goal had been 228 lbs).

By February 14th 1965 Dave's chest-back-legs workout looked like this:

**Chest (20 sets):**

Superset:

Incline benchpress: 4 sets of 8x210

Incline fly: 4 sets of 8x55

Superset:

Benchpress: 4 sets of 8x245

Flat fly: 4 sets of 8x60

Straight sets:

Decline fly: 4 sets of 8x65

**Back (20 sets):**

Wide-grip pulldown: 5 sets of 8x225

Close-grip pulldown: 5 sets of 8x185

Long-pulley rows: 5 sets of 8x160

Barbell rows: 5 sets of 10x135

**Thighs (15 sets):**

Front squats: 10x205, 8x225, 7x245, 10x225, 12x205

Superset:

Sissy squat: 5 sets of (no reps or weight specified)

Thigh curl: 5 sets of 12x50

**Calves (10 sets):**

Donkeys: 10 sets of 15 reps

One day after, February 15th 1965, Dave's delts-biceps-triceps-forearms workout looked like this:

**Delts (25 sets):**

Sitting military press: 5 sets of 6x175

Press behind neck: 5 sets of 6x165

Superset:

Seated lateral raise: 5 sets of 8x30

Front lateral raise: 5 sets of 8x20

Incline lateral raise (face down): 5 sets of 8x20

**Biceps (15 sets):**

Sitting incline curl: 5 sets of 8x60

Flat bench curl: 5 sets of 8x45

Machine curl: 5 sets of 8x95

**Triceps (15 sets):**

Close-grip benchpress (reverse grip): 5 sets of 8x240

Seated French press, barbell: 5 sets of 8x115

Incline French press, 2 dumbbells: 5 sets of 8x45

Forearms (10 sets):

Zottmann curl: 5 sets of 8x45

Wrist curl: 5 sets of 12x155

So ends Henrik's workout report.

*...December 5th 1964, Dave's forearms workout looked like this: Forearms: Reverse curl: 5 sets of 10x90 Wrist curl: 5 sets of 15x165*

The rep progression Dave used was very systematic in some exercises (but not all exercises). A typical progression could be like this in an exercise of 5 sets:

(#1 = Workout number 1 and so forth)

- #1. 6, 6, 6, 6, 6
- #2. 7, 6, 6, 6, 6
- #3. 7, 7, 6, 6, 6
- #4. 7, 7, 7, 6, 6
- #5. 7, 7, 7, 7, 6
- #6. 7, 7, 7, 7, 7
- #7. 8, 7, 7, 7, 7
- #8. 8, 8, 7, 7, 7
- #9. 8, 8, 8, 7, 7
- #10. 8, 8, 8, 8, 7
- #11. 8, 8, 8, 8, 8

At this point the weight would then be increased and the reps went back to 6. But as I said, not all exercises would progress this systematically. In some exercises the weight was increased faster than this.

By the way, if anyone is wondering where the chins for back are, this is what Dave's back workout looked like in all of November 1964:

Wide grip chins: 5 sets of 6-8 reps, 10 lbs added

Close grip chins: 5 sets of 8-10 reps, 10 lbs added

Dumbbell pullover: 5 sets of 12x95



These two pictures taken 25 years apart are a testimony to what dedication to bodybuilding can do.

## **Dave Draper Interviews**

Several different interviews of Dave have been conducted and published in magazines and on the internet. I believe I have seen and read them all but you never know. Due to space, I am unable to print all the interviews in their original form, for this reason I have listed the best ones with their link locations below. I am including the one by Rod Labbe in its entirety.

**Bobby and Val Barker's Midwest Christian Bodybuilding Website Home Address:**

<http://www.midwestchristianbodybuilding.com/>

**Midwest Christian Bodybuilding Dave Draper Interview:**

<http://www.midwestchristianbodybuilding.com/davedraper.htm>

**Paul Becker's Truly Huge Website Home Address:**

<http://www.trulyhuge.com/>

**Truly Huge Dave Draper Interview:**

[http://www.trulyhuge.com/dave\\_draper.htm](http://www.trulyhuge.com/dave_draper.htm)

**The following is the Dave Draper interview conducted by Rod Labbe. Rod has conducted some of the best interview pieces on legends in bodybuilding ever compiled. This interview is one of the most complete and informative ones out there.**

**RL: How does it feel to be a legend?**

DD: I must confess, I have a problem with the legend concept. This morning I was housecleaning and accidentally whacked myself on the head with the broom. I've got a monstrous black eye and no legendary story to support it.

**RL: Hey, a black eye can't hurt a legend. It only adds to his mystique.**

DD: Most appreciated. Fire away with the questions. Just don't nod off while I'm talking.

**RL: Give us some background on your life.**

DD: I was born in Secaucus, New Jersey, spring 1942, the youngest of three brothers. I weighed 12 pounds at birth—a decent start. We were the sons of a good ex-merchant marine father and a bright, loving mother. My fondest memories are of running and climbing trees along the Hackensack River outside New York City or swimming, fishing and rowing on Lake Gerard in northern Jersey. I was a happy little boy, with the usual hang-ups that haunt kids then and now. My share of insecurity and need for significance kept me hard at work. I never felt poor, but I always felt broke. Must've been the hand-me-downs.

**RL: Were you a good student?**

DD: The last place I ever wanted to be was in school. I played basketball and football in the neighborhood but had a tough time up at bat. Eventually, I swapped my mitt for a used 110-pound barbell-and-dumbbell set.

Weights fascinated me—the gravity, the immovableness, the pushing and pulling, the clang. Those became my game and contest. I thought it was very cool—private, solitary, almost secret. The hidden activity at once cast a subtle spotlight on me. No one else was

lifting weights. No one told me what to do, or when or how. Very cool. I lifted over the years, right through high school.

**RL: Did you know what you were doing—the technique and dedication?**

DD: Heck, no. I didn't even read a bodybuilding magazine till I was 20. In my early years two guys stood out as inspiration for me: Anthony Napierski and Tony Petrowski, local kids who were three years my senior. They had gnarly arms and demanded lots of respect.

**RL: How'd you and Joe Weider first connect?**

DD: I used to visit Weider Barbell Company in Union City, New Jersey, where Joe had his early offices and a warehouse. Leroy Colbert would come into the reception area and assist me with my retail purchase—a bar, a plate, whatever. Well, I never saw anything or anyone like Leroy. Arms, chest, back and shoulders all over the place, carried with Leroy's grace, electric grin and charm. He and I became friends and had some good workouts. I'd volunteer on weekends for warehouse toil. Joe would observe our activities, throw in a set and talk of his plans to open an outlet in California. Shortly after winning my first contest—Mr. New Jersey—it was decided that I would move to Santa Monica. That was in the summer of '63, and compared to Jersey, Santa Monica seemed like a paradise.

**RL: That was before you'd made much of a splash in the mags.**

DD: Right. I may have been only 21, but I appreciated the value of working and training hard. It won me Mr. America in 1965 at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. What prepared me for such a leap was the saturation of training in the Dungeon, the reorganized Muscle Beach Gym. Menu, diet, exercises, reps, sets, improvising, combinations, techniques, alterations, angles, grips, handles, injury repair, remedies—I learned everything there. The knowledge and understanding, the simmering atmosphere, the honesty were penetrating.

**RL: From obscurity to almost instantaneous fame. Seeing your face and form in print for the first time has gotta be an indescribable rush.**

DD: I was beside myself. A minor paragraph in the middle of an article by Jon Twitchell mentioned an up-and-coming guy from New Jersey. I set that date [in '63] as my start in professional bodybuilding. The first cover and story on me appeared after my California migration and new perceptions. They didn't make a big impact. Among the pages in my Web site [[www.davedraper.com](http://www.davedraper.com)] there's a magazine-cover-archive link. Laree, my wife and Webmaster, says of the covers that "some are less embarrassing than others." Cute. My first cover is on a '63 Muscle Builder, and I look like Mr. Dough Boy.

**RL: Any anecdotes from the Jersey contest?**

DD: The Mr. New Jersey was scary and fun and a great lesson for everyone concerned. There were 35 guys competing, all around 18 to 22. We were half-shaved, and oil was spilled and smeared over our white and black bodies. Bizarre. It was an early IFBB attempt. Confusion reigned, but eventually giant trophies were given out to the right guys. The transfixed audience applauded dutifully. Onstage and backstage the excitement was genuine and overflowing. Freddie Ortiz carried the show with his amazing cartoon body and cartoon personality. We all felt like heroes for going through with it.

**RL: Was that around the time you began being known as the Blond Bomber?**

DD: Right before. Joe Weider gave me that nickname. We were still in New Jersey, and I can remember him coming in the back room where Lee [Colbert] and I were training. He said, "You guys are always bombing it. When do you ever work? Leroy, I'm going to call Draper the Blond Bomber. What do you think, eh?" A month later it was on the cover.

**RL: Who were your heroes in the sport—the men who inspired you to go for it?**

DD: I see a picture of Steve Reeves and still get a chill—no one has a more beautifully rugged physique. No one fills the role of bodybuilder more completely and has more to say than Mr. Bill Pearl. No one has taken bodybuilding to the dizzying heights of Arnold

Schwarzenegger. Among the champs today, the high-tech bodybuilders, I find little distinction. There are so many greats with so much greatness, who can separate them? Champions rise from every era and for different reasons: size, charisma, symmetry, power, definition. Simply put, however, no other muscleman stirs my spirit like Steve Reeves. The pure, effortless beauty, the mass and absolute symmetry of the man was matchless.

**RL: You know Dave Draper better than most. Describe him for us.**

DD: I'm one of those absolute, born-again Christians who seeks righteousness and Jesus Christ. My stern and loving dad brought this to my attention 50 years ago. Works for me. Of course, I'm as selfish, proud and guilty as anyone else. I have high hopes and strongly encourage respect and responsibility and order. I'm blessed, rich and thankful, but don't look to my bank account or my toy collection for evidence.

**RL: You're a survivor of the '60s—do you look back on that time with fondness?**

DD: The experience of the '60s was matchless and is palpable today. Sunshine, blue sky, ocean air, Muscle Beach simplicity, Mr. America innocence. Hollywood and Hollyweird. Zabo, Joe Gold, Gironda, Scott and Howorth, the originals and their protégés. There was no line in the sand. Bodybuilding was like a child sitting at the water's edge, delighted and splashing. No one took it seriously. It'll just go away, they said. The '60s rolled on.

Vietnam, dope, politics, journalism, drugs, greed, power and evil emerged. The world got smaller. Then, as the decade faded to gray, the child got up and walked away.

**RL: What one moment epitomized the bodybuilding experience for you?**

DD: The occasion that stands out—the moment in time that connected and cannot be reproduced—was at the Brooklyn Academy of Music in New York City, a Saturday night in mid-September, 1965. I stood backstage among a cluster of tanned contenders, peering at a wild audience of East Coast bodybuilding fans. As the show neared its completion, excitement built. Larry Scott was about to go under the lights midstage to give his posing

routine. It was very dark. Larry approached his mark, hesitating, and the crowd grew silent. Everyone, charged with uncontrollable enthusiasm only moments before, seemingly held their collective breath. Larry, a silhouette barely visible, began to flex his mighty arms and move to the dramatic overhead light, center stage. The response of the fans began—a rumble with the substance of stampeding buffalo, growing to an almost frightening roar. The power, the energy and volume shook the building. Emotions multiplied with Larry's exhibition, and the crescendoes became a seductive chanting. They were tearing the house down. I was the next to pose. Larry won the Mr. Universe. I won Mr. America. Life's never been the same.

**RL: How do you see bodybuilding today—is it a positive or negative endeavor?**

DD: There are tens of thousands of bodybuilders today hidden in garages and neighborhood gyms who are amazing and may never be appreciated by the rest of the world. It's grown exponentially. In the '60s there was a space for mutual interest and support. Muscle building was original, young. You lift weights? No kidding? Me, too. You got biceps? Wow. Me, too. The guys and girls traveled the dusty back roads. Today it's the highway, and traffic is heavy. Unless we're talking about high-tech chemistry for advanced monster bodybuilding, it hasn't changed. There's more opinion, theory and a few extravagant training principles being lauded, a catalogue of fancy new secret—and probably worthless—ingredients for muscle growth and fat loss. You can run on a \$10,000 treadmill, but nothing earthshaking. It's the basics, always will be. Frank, Arnold and I had it down, as did [John] Grimek and Pearl before us—improvised equipment and invention often worked better than today's \$5,000 rigs.

**RL: I've interviewed many legendary bodybuilders, and their opinions vary when it comes to today's crop of muscleheads. Let's hear yours.**

DD: The current champions I've met are—with few exceptions—first-class people working extremely hard, dedicated and devoted. They respect one another. True rapport exists. The wired pace and crowded world, media glory, commerce and the resonance of fans and spectators tend to distill the world of champs today. It all gives the stars an

appearance of being isolated. They're warriors fighting for peace, only their battle's gotten bigger. The lineup of the most recent Olympia competitors is colossal—beyond the sketch of my pen. Who can separate them? If I knew each man individually, it would no doubt affect how I'd judge them. As it is, I'm thankful I don't have that mind-boggling task. I can just admire them all, close the magazine pages and go about my own reality. Phew.

**RL: You've experienced so much in your relatively short time on this planet. Pretend you're sitting down with a group of bodybuilders and they're looking to you for advice. What would you say?**

DD: Young bodybuilders, new and returning muscle builders, your attention, please. Stick to it. Never quit. Make training your lifestyle. You'll grow every day in ways and dimensions you never considered. It's not the stairway to heaven; it's the rugged switchback away from hell. When you stumble and fall, pick your humble self up and move on. Keep your eyes on the path, not on yourself. Don't look back and don't be mesmerized or transfixed by the hype that says you can do it quickly. Lies, all lies. Don't take stuff, Bucko—you'll be sorry. Think for yourself. And don't forget your protein and volume training. It simply takes guts and heart.

**RL: There was a unique camaraderie when you started out—dare I call it legendary? Whatever the case, I doubt we'll ever see the likes of it again.**

DD: There's synergy between bodybuilders, an understanding only they share that unconsciously unites you. It's like when hydrogen and oxygen become water. If your pride fights the union, its love is lost to envy and conceit. I have friends in the bodybuilding world on whom I can count, though we've never met. Presumption has gotten me in trouble before, but I don't mind issuing that statement.

**RL: In the development of David Draper, individual and human being, have you forged a philosophy?**

DD: I'm one of those Christians, apparently hypocritical, who love the Lord and try to be good. I bob and weave regularly, being fair, giving, encouraging, respecting. At the same time I stumble badly over every commandment of the good book. Money doesn't rule my life—no way—but I lose my sense of humor when someone takes advantage of me. Respect and responsibility, love and affection are the treasures of life I seek. Whatever, I thank God for it all. That's my personal philosophy.

**RL: Your career veered off in an interesting direction with the film “Don't Make Waves.”**

DD: “Don't Make Waves” was cast in early 1966. Word that they were looking for bodybuilders traveled fast. Members of Vince's Gym, Gironda's North Hollywood mecca, and the Muscle Beach Gym, my alma mater, all haphazardly converged at the MGM studios in Culver City. The studio people sorted through the 75 disheveled, unemployed men, separating the possible from the impossible. Six of us were given outdoor screen tests. I was chosen. Two years earlier I'd been a welder in Secaucus, New Jersey. And there I was, Mr. America and featured in a film starring Tony [Curtis], Sharon [Tate] and Claudia [Cardinale]. Go figure.

An enormous experience unfolded day after day during the weeks and months of shooting the film—on cool locations and the grand old MGM lot. My senses were heightened by curiosity and spontaneity—lights, camera, action. What privilege. What honor. Filming went on throughout the glorious sunny Southern California summer. At the same time I was training intensely for the 1966 Mr. Universe in September. I won. MGM awarded me a 20-by-30-inch gilded-frame painting of a golden muscular Oscar. The inscription read, “Super Oscar for Mr. Universe Dave Draper. We're proud of you.” It was signed by the entire cast and crew.

**RL: Didn't FilmWays offer you a contract?**

DD: Yes. FilmWays was a subsidiary of MGM. While there I appeared on “The Monkees” and called Davey Jones a twerp. Big mistake! I did “The Beverly Hillbillies,” “Merv Griffin” a couple of times, was interviewed by Dom DeLuise and spent 20

minutes with Johnny Carson, talking about muscles and Hollywood and doing pushups while he sat on my back wearing a silly grin.

**RL: I just caught your “Beverly Hillbillies” episode. What a hoot! You had the barbell bloat!**

DD: Shooting the “Beverly Hillbillies” took five days at Paramount studios. Working with the family of actors—Buddy [Ebsen], Max [Baer], Donna [Douglas] and Irene [Ryan] was like hanging with family. I felt like kin visiting from Tennessee. We sat huddled amiably between takes, rehearsing, reading scripts, drinking coffee and telling stories. The theme of the show had permeated their lives, and by the week’s end, I had a drawl and aw-shucks mannerisms. More privilege to carefully store.

**RL: Am I imagining things, or didn’t you also host some kind of movie show dressed like a gladiator?**

DD: Oh, man, you remember that? I didn’t think anyone remembered “David the Gladiator.” For a year in ’64, I stood before all of L.A. every Saturday night, clad in Roman gladiator gear and comically introduced he-man B-films. Very popular. Everything I did in Hollywood was a marvelous experience, though often frightening. It was exciting, hard work—sometimes boring, sometimes cold, always very cool.

**RL: You worked with some of the greatest physique photographers. Your reflections?**

DD: Artie Zeller and Russ Warner were the originals. Those two men did more to document bodybuilding from its days of sunshine at Muscle Beach through its sensational stages of growth until today. They were both bodybuilders who absolutely loved the stuff of bodybuilding. Great guys. Fun and easy to work with—knew their camera, outdoor lighting, composition and how to pose their subject to accentuate the positive and eliminate the negative. Artie’s candid photography brought you into the frame so you could participate in the action. Russ built statues and gods with his camera. Jimmy

Caruso and Mike Neveux, though I've spent less time with them, are artists extraordinaire and major contributors—to be photographed by them is a privilege.

**RL: You seem very content, Dave. Almost mellow. How is it you've attained such peace?**

DD: I'm happy. I love my wife, my job, my God. I'm immensely grateful for my home, trees and truck. Unless you count the gyms, I don't have or need any toys. For that, too, I'm grateful.

**RL: And you create gorgeous furniture! I've seen some of your stuff.**

DD: What was once a means of support—before constructing my two World Gyms 10 years ago—is now my diversion: working with wood for purposes of making furniture, from rugged feasting tables to oversize beds and hutches. The appeal is more artistic than fine, detailed woodworking. I love hand tools and power tools and the solitary process of building a piece each month.

**RL: I like your optimism. It's contagious.**

DD: Every day's an adventure. As I wake up each morning, I wonder what God has in store for me, my companion and the rest of the world. We're flying, and who can keep up? Where we're goin', nobody knows. Life today is increasingly less predictable than yesterday. Another good reason to plug into the iron, the gym, the fitness and health thing. Prepare, be prepared to endure it all as you tenderly, joyfully, wisely care for your last refuge; the body, mind and soul.

**RL: Here's a philosophical question—no, make that theological. Is there such a thing as essential evil?**

DD: I'm no expert, but I'll give it a toss. Any evil that exists in the world today is essential. Right or wrong, good or bad, yin and yang, cause, effect, polarity: people of different religions and sciences and cultures strain in any agreement of the universal evil. The Bible tells us there exists fallen angels, Satan and his powers of darkness that tempt

mankind in an effort to destroy him. Evil is evident in our selfish pride, our unhealthy worship of self. The love of money and power, envy and covetousness corrupt us. Nasty stuff. Only in God is there hope. One day evil will no longer exist. Keeps us hanging in there.

Looking back at the 1900s, I conclude we've become an entirely distracted mankind poised for destruction while desperately seeking life extension, expanded population and a more select progeny through, ah, science. The same science that produces bombs, I might add. At the cost of losing some relatives, friends and fans, let me say that without faith—hope—trust in God, our creator, it's all meaningless. Ecclesiastes. IM: Aside from your muscle-building exploits, you've also established an impressive career as a businessman. You mentioned the gyms.

DD: I own and maintain two gyms. I must confess, they are, to me, like a Harley-Davidson or restored muscle car. I put big miles on them yet keep each one polished and purring. I love to work out hard and share the purpose and experience with the curious mixture of people who care. You might say my hopes and dreams are fulfilled. But, then again, you might not. If only I could figure out a way to pay off my mortgage and the loan sharks.

**RL: And you've stepped into cyberspace with davedraper.com.**

DD: My recent engagement in the Web site with davedraper.com has kept Laree and me busy, entertained and fulfilled. We have an eager and growing audience with whom we communicate regularly—to encourage and be encouraged by, to teach and be taught by. Since it was not built with business in mind, the Web site is, I hope, a wholesome expression instead of the hawkings of a self-serving salesman.

**RL: The site is way cool, like a trip down memory lane, but with a nice contemporary feel—a lot like this interview.**

DD: And look at that, you're still awake!

Articles, training and dietary advice, pictures, message boards, training tools, books, products, merchandise and tons of information can be found on Dave and Laree's site [www.davedraper.com](http://www.davedraper.com) check it out.



Laree and Dave Draper... What more need be said!!

**Thanks** Dave and Laree!

2005 Alan Palmieri

[www.PalmieriBodybuilding.com](http://www.PalmieriBodybuilding.com)