

## Exercise Essentials:



# Ding, ding, dong!

Most of us try to lift hand weights 2 to 3 times per week. If someone asked you, "Hey, what did you do today?" You might reply, "I lifted dumbbells to increase my strength." They then might go on to say, "Dumbbells, huh? Maybe you should get some smartbells instead!" Then they'd probably guffaw at their little joke. But did you ever think about why those hand weights are called dumbbells? Probably not. A recent article in *Muscle & Fitness* tackled that very subject, so I thought I'd share the info.

Way back in the 1500s, just about every church had a bell and every bell had bell ringers. There were specific rules about when the bells would ring. This was important because the people had no other way of telling time and so relied on the bells. Now I'm sure if you've ever seen the movie *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* you've seen a bell ringer in action. And if you were really paying attention you probably noticed that it took a lot of power to make that bell ring. Not just one person could ring a bell because it was so heavy; it took several ringers. It also took a certain amount of skill. One doesn't get strong, nor skillful without practice. So practice the ringers did and you can just imagine the cacophony it caused!

The solution? Take out the clapper. The clapper is the doohickey that hangs down the middle and when it hits against the side of the bell makes it ring. No clapper, no sound. No sound and the bell is quiet, or in the parlance of the day, the bell was made dumb. Now the ringers could practice without bothering the neighbors using their "dumb bells."

When men started working out for fitness they made their own equipment. Their weights looked different than the bells of old, but they kept the name and in fact still referred to lifting the equipment as ringing. In 1711, the first print reference to dumbbells is used by Joseph Addison in the magazine *The Spectator*: "...I exercise myself an Hour every Morning upon a dumb Bell that is placed in a Corner of my room... My Landlady and her Daughters are so well acquainted with my Hours of Exercise, that they never come into my Room to disturb me whilst I am ringing."

It is not clear when "ringing" was replaced with "lifting", but it is good that it did. Just imagine how that conversation with your friend would have been different when they asked you what you did today. You would have replied, "I rang dumbbells to increase my strength." And that just doesn't have quite the same ring to it.



# Thought you might like to know...

The Palm Springs Cultural Center has just added another city to its certified Farmers' Market. Wednesdays from 9 am to 1:30 pm, Palm Desert residents will have a chance to buy organic produce as well as artisan bread & dried fruit. It happens at the new Visitor Center next door to Cuistot's restaurant.

Don't forget to check out the other Farmers' Markets as well. In Palm Springs it is on Saturdays from 8 am to 12:30pm next to the Camelot Theatres. La Quinta gets the Market every Sunday (same hours as P.S.) in Old Town.

Valentine's day is just around the corner, but that's not the only time when you might want to take a romantic vacation. The editors of *Men's Health* have put together a list of the most romantic hotel suites in the world. The top 5 are:

1. Taj Rambagh Palace, Jaipur, India
2. The Palmetto Bluff Resort, South Carolina
3. The Wakaya Club, Fiji Islands
4. The Four Seasons, Budapest
5. Hotel Victor, Miami Beach

Studies have repeatedly linked long-term use of postmenopausal hormones to an increased risk of breast cancer. But new research published in *The New England Journal of Medicine* suggests that the risk falls markedly within two years of quitting treatment. "It looks like after a couple of years a woman is pretty much back to normal," says Rowan Chlebowski, lead author of the study. "That's very encouraging."