

# WEIGHTED HANDS®

RAPID WEIGHT LOSS SYSTEM

## **Heavyweight Walking From Hercules**

Bodybuilder Steve Reeves Forged the Way for a Generation of Strongman Stars and aerobic walking enthusiast.

Throughout his life, Steve Reeves—who died May 1 at age 74 in Escondido, Calif., of complications from lymphoma—demonstrated a fierce devotion to his craft, such as it was.

Steve was best known for playing Hercules in Italian-made, poorly dubbed sword-and-sandal epics in the 1950s, he inspired such latter-day action stars as Arnold Schwarzenegger, Sylvester Stallone and Kevin Sorbo.

"Steve will go down in history as the most handsome and one of the greatest bodybuilders ever," says fitness guru and longtime friend Jack LaLanne, 85.

Raised in Oakland, Reeves began lifting weights at 16. The 6'1", 215-lb. muscleman was named Mr. America in 1947, Mr. World and Mr. Universe in '48 and Mr. Universe again in '50.

He made nearly 20 films over the next two decades, reportedly becoming one of the highest-paid actors in Europe.

Reeves retired in 1969 at age 43, moving with wife Aline (who died in 1989) to a ranch near Escondido, where he raised and rode Morgan horses.

Until the end, Reeves remained obsessively fit. "It was very common to see him 45 miles from home on a bicycle," says neighbor Bruce Given.

Steve was also the inventor of Power Walking and introduced the world into walking with Hand Weights. His book, Power Walking was published the same years of the best seller Heavyhands, The Ultimate Exercise.

Controversy exist as to who was first in developing aerobic hand weight walking. Steve claims that he was first, before Schwartz and he claimed to have the proof.

Listen to this interview with Bob, a close friend of Steve share his stories.

Michael: Hi. It's Michael Senoff here, and I'm the founder and developer of [www.weightedhands.com](http://www.weightedhands.com). I'm a busy professional, a husband, and a father of two young boys. I started making and using Weighted Hands, because I wanted a way to burn a ton of calories in as little time as possible, but I didn't want to get injured doing it. I wanted to eat whatever I wanted without feeling hungry or deprived, and I wanted to be able to maintain my weight. I wanted a low-impact workout so I could save my knees for later, a workout that required no gym memberships, no stair climbers, no treadmills, no ellipticals. I wanted something that feels easy but to get my heart rate high enough for ongoing conditioning.

Well, you're in luck, because many of my buying customers have been using Heavy Hands for over 20 years, and they've been generous enough to share their personal stories with you. You'll hear me interview them on how they got started walking with Heavy Hands hand weights, what it did for their bodies, both in terms of musculature and weight reduction. You'll also learn about their favorite workouts, tips and tricks to burn the most amount of calories in the fastest time possible. Enjoy the interview. Now let's get going.

Michael: You are the first person who ever mentioned that they knew who Bob Reeves was. He was Hercules. He was kind of like the predecessor to Arnold in *Conan the Barbarian*.

Bob: Yeah, he paved the way. He won Mr. America in '47. He won Mr. World in '48. In '49, there was no Mr. Universe contest. He won the Universe in 1950. Hercules was made in Italy in '57 and premiered in this country, I believe, in '59. I do know this. He was the role model for not only myself and many people, but also for Sylvester Stallone. He changed his whole life.

There's a quote by Sylvester Stallone. It's something like, "When I was 13 years old, I went into the movie theater to see the movie,

*Hercules*. When I left, I had this unremitting voice that said, ‘Sly, do you want to be a bum, or do you want to be like Steve Reeves?’” He said, “From that point on, something clicked and the rest is history.”

Michael: I knew who Steve Reeves was, because I was doing the research on Heavy Hands, and I was trying to determine who originated this Heavy Hands? Was it Steve Reeves, or was it Dr. Leonard Schwartz. Then in comparing both of their first edition books, they were copyrighted and published in the exact same year, so I always wondered. When you told me you had a personal relationship with him, that was really interesting. I wanted to ask you, where did this all start? How did you meet Steve Reeves originally? What’s your name, and where are you from?

Bob: First of all, my name is Bob Panarello, and I live in Rhode Island, just about an hour away from Boston. When I was a teenager and got into bodybuilding, I would always look at the greats. I always liked the physique of Frank Zane, Arnold Schwarzenegger and those type guys.

When I was about 19-20 years old, I was at a friend’s house, and he had a copy of *MuscleMag International* by Robert Kennedy, who’s passed away. In it were photos of Steve. I had seen photos of Steve here and there in different magazines, but this was the first time I actually had a chance to really take a good look and study his physique.

Right then and there, I said, this is what I want to look like. In my opinion, the man had a perfect physique. I started to find anything I could on the way he trained. I believe it was spring of 1978. I just took a shot. I might have been 21 or 22 years old at the time. I called Gold’s Gym in California.

Whoever I spoke to, he told me unfortunately there’s not a lot on Steve, and he does not have his own book out, because he retired a millionaire from the movies and didn’t really need to do that. However, he did tell me that there is a guy in Canada, and it turned out to be Robert Kennedy, the editor and publisher of *MuscleMag International*.

He told me to call him, which I did. He knew probably more about how Steve trained than anyone at the time. We sort of built a rapport, and he was giving me coaching over the phone. Anyway, my plan was to move out to California and pursue fitness. I contacted Ed Yarik. That was Steve Reeves trainer. He was living

in Modesto, California, I believe, and he had agreed to train me. I thought, "How great to have Steve Reeves trainer training me." I was hoping that down the road, if I had proved myself, that he would pick up the phone, make a call to Steve, and hopefully I would meet Steve Reeves, and we would take the ball from there.

For personal reasons, I ended up staying in Rhode Island, and I never made the trek cross-country. I was living in Miami in the 90s, and lo and behold, Steve Reeves was in Miami with his ten girlfriend at the time, Debra ... I forget her last name. We met. We hit it off. He was doing a show. He was signing autographs, and he was selling his new book, *Building the Classic Physique*.

He invited me to sit with him in his booth, and we chatted back and forth. We ended up, myself, Steve, and his girlfriend, more or less spent the weekend touring Miami, and we went to different restaurants there. I ended up driving him to the airport when he was leaving to go back home to California. He signed my book, *Power Walking* and he gave me his telephone number.

Michael: So you had already had the book, *Power Walking*.

Bob: I bought the book when it first became advertised.

Michael: Where do you remember that being advertised?

Bob: It was a small ad in *Muscle & Fitness*. This was in the early 80s.

Michael: Had you started power walking when the book came out?

Bob: I did. I tried it. Steve was not selling the weights at the time. I believe in 1983, he got together with Joe Weider, and Joe did a whole layout and article on Steve Reeves. Steve had invented and he had manufactured his own brand. He called them Hand-E-Weights. He was selling them in 1983. I had planned to purchase a pair, but I never did.

When Steve was toward the end of his life, him and I kept in contact, and we would have numerous conversations about training from bodybuilding to power walking to nutrition. He was a reservoir of knowledge, so I would really pick his brain. I had asked him if he had any Hand-E-Weights. I wanted to purchase a pair. He was such a gentleman, and he was nice enough to say, "Bob, I don't have any for sale. However, I will give you a pair of my own personal weights."

Michael: And so he gave you a set of Hand-E-Weights?

Bob: Well, unfortunately he had gotten sick right about that time, and things more or less got put on hold. I had spoken with him two nights before he went into the hospital. He said, "When I get back, call me in about a week, and we will make arrangements," because him and I had talked about me coming and living at the ranch with him, and I just thought that would have been an incredible experience.

Michael: That would have been. With all these conversations with him on fitness, what would you say was the most important thing you learned from him about bodybuilding and fitness that most people have no clue about, even so-called bodybuilders?

Bob: The thing that I think was pretty amazing about Steve, he was probably the very first cross-trainer. He truly did all aspects of fitness from power walking to weightlifting, stretching, bicycling, pool exercises. He really was very well-rounded in all types of exercise, and he was extremely knowledgeable in nutrition.

When it came to the bodybuilding aspect, Steve really liked working the whole body three times a week. His philosophy was not only do you train your muscles, but you're training your nervous system and you get the next day to recuperate and rest. That's, I think, what really separates him from the guys today.

Michael: He was a natural. He didn't do any forms of anabolic steroids.

Bob: None whatsoever. At his time when he was winning his contests, they weren't even around. He had told me that some of the advanced guys like the late Vince Gironda, they were on the cutting edge, doing things like desiccated liver.

Michael: *You're listening to an interview on Michael Senoff's [weightedhands.com](http://weightedhands.com).*

What's more important according to your conversations with Steve as far as building a physique? Your nutrition and your diet or exercise, itself?

Bob: They definitely go hand-in-hand. Nutrition was number one. That was definitely the key. A very, very close second was smart training. Steve was always about taking the scientific approach to his training, even the way he trained the whole body. He did it in a

different way than guys of his time were doing that. Steve believed in the trickled-down effect of the blood.

He would start at the top with his shoulders, then work his chest, then work his back, then his arms, then his thighs, then his calves. You can see how the blood is trickling right down the body, where many guys, even today, they'll do a split routine. They may do legs, and then they jump to chest, so now the blood has to move from the legs and pump all the way to the chest. Steve figured, "Let's let the body use its own natural course, and we'll let the blood flow right down each body part.

Michael: What are some other things that really blew you away from something you learned from Steve?

Bob: Well, I'll tell you one thing that definitely blew me away. After he had passed away, I was invited to the ranch for the funeral. When I was at his home, I saw his weightlifting belt. Let me just say, I tried it on. I would have to be in tip-top shape in order to wear it where he wore it. His waist was that small. That definitely blew me away, because I'm only 5'7". He was 6'1", 6'1" and 215 pounds, and the weight belt was so small, it was just incredible.

Michael: A lot of it, you got to admit, is genetics. Some people are just genetically gifted to put on muscle. Some people can put on muscle much easier than other people. Did he talk about genetics at all?

Bob: He touched on it, but Steve believed that when it came to genetics, you needed a certain foundation. He also believed that go after someone who has proven themselves, some champion that has a physique or a body type similar to your own, and follow their methods. For himself and his type body, which happened to be my type, he believed if you had wide shoulders, a small waist, and well-developed calves, that was the foundation. Just starting there, you will automatically look good from any angle. Now you could build upon that.

Michael: So you've maintained some pretty good fitness following the advice of Steve Reeves?

Bob: Yes. If I don't say so myself, I'm in decent shape for 60 years old. Unfortunately, I was a late-comer in the enrolling, but I got involved with a body transformation that was being done by Sylvester Stallone. Within a very short time, I was able to whip myself up into pretty good shape using Steve's methodology. I decided to see what I could do.

Everything I knew about how Steve trained, his nutrition, I followed it to the letter. I was able to get my waist down to a 27-1/2. That's pretty small. Steve was 6'1". He had a 29 waist, so at 5'7", 27-1/2 waist was pretty comparable. I was also able to achieve ... this was a very important thing Steve believed in ... Your neck, your arms, and your calves should all measure the same when it came to symmetry.

Michael: How do you get down to that weight without feeling hungry? Are you able to do it, or are you starving all the time?

Bob: No. You're not starving all the time. I had mentioned earlier that Steve was way ahead of his time. I would have one of his shakes, from different recipes he had given me, in the morning. For lunch, I'd have something like a bed of romaine lettuce, some cottage cheese, and I put some fresh pineapple, maybe some tomatoes, a few raisins, have that for lunch, a handful of raw nuts, and for dinner, some type of lean protein, lots of greens, and a big salad, and it holds you.

In the interim, let's say if your blood sugar starts to drop, you can always have a protein shake. I always prefer to make my own.

Michael: But no fruit or sugar or bread.

Bob: It's low on the starches, but fruit is okay, not to overdo it, because it does have sugar. Some fruit is fine. His thing was mostly lots of lean protein, lots of vegetables, big salads, and he would have fruit here and there. He also ate eggs.

Michael: Did he discuss with you how he discovered walking with hand weights and why he was such a proponent about it?

Bob: Yes. Well, what he said was as he was getting older, he was having some issues running. I believe he was riding one of his horses, and he had gotten off the horse to give it a break. The horse was walking rather quickly, so to keep up, Steve started walking faster, started swinging his arms, and he discovered that it was a great form of exercise.

Then I think at a later time he said that he picked up some rocks and he started to actually power walk with the rocks in his hands. That was when he got the idea. He said so you don't get out of breath, he would use the yoga style of breathing, where every three steps you breathe in, and every three steps, you breathe out.

Michael: Do you walk like that?

Bob: Exactly. Anthony Robbins made a great comment once. He said, "If you want to be successful, find someone who has achieved success in what you're looking for, and just do exactly what they do." You cut through a lot of trial and error that way.

Michael: Tell me about your experience with power walking. How long have you been doing it? How much have you kept it up over the years? What have you noticed it's done for you?

Bob: I've done it on and off since the early 80s. Sometimes I've gone back to running, but nowadays if I do run in between power walking, it's more of a fast one mile, because at 60 years old, the impact, you do tend to feel it more than when you're in your 20s. I've been power walking quite frequently lately, and I do a 45-minute hike.

I'm fortunate enough that the gym that I joined, they just received all brand-new treadmills, and they have virtual reality, so I can program it so I am hiking through the mountains of California, and it takes into consideration the slopes, so sometimes I'll be almost level. Other times, I'll be at level three or level six, and you have a screen right in front of you of the mountains, the trails, so it's quite interesting.

Michael: Tell me how much weight is on your ankles, how much weight is on your wrists, and are you wearing a weight belt as well?

Bob: Yes. What I'm doing right now is I only have 1-pound wrist weights, so I have to make do with what I have. My ankle weights, they are adjustable. They go from 1-5 pounds. I'm trying to keep everything even, because that's what Steve told me. He said if you're using 5-pound hand weights, you should use 5-pound ankle weights.

What I do to keep my posture correct, I'm using my weightlifting belt, and I fasten it as tight as possible, so my stomach is in. I'm standing very, very erect, shoulders back, chest out. I get a move on. Eventually, I'm going to be getting some Weighted Hands, so I'll be able to go up in my weight for my arms, go up on the ankle weights, and I'm also going to buy a 10-pound weighted belt.

Michael: This has been a great story, and then for all the listeners who are learning about Heavy Hands, I want them to know that Steve Reeves, Hercules, the real Hercules, was the first guy. I believe he



was before Leonard Schwartz. I think Leonard Schwartz of Heavy Hands maybe had a little bit better marketing and maybe a publisher with a little more power, because he did have a best seller and he was able to get it in all the major bookstore. In some cases, it's not the guy who's first. It's the guy who does the best marketing. Steve Reeves, Hercules, was on to Heavy Hands even before Heavy Hands was on to Heavy Hands.

Bob: Steve believed in that himself.

Michael: Did you ever have a conversation about that specific thing?

Bob: Yes.

Michael: Tell me. What do you remember?

Bob: Steve just told me that he wrote his book prior to the good doctor, and he said he had documentation to prove it.

Michael: That's fantastic, so Schwartz must have gotten a hold of the book. He says he got engine running and just took it and ran with it and maybe did a little bit of twists on it.

Bob: I suppose so, and he had AMF behind him.

Michael: Well, Schwartz's first book came out when it was a best seller. When AMF came out, then it became a best seller, but the first run of his book, there were not Heavy Hands on the cover. He was just using regular ol' weights. They weren't specialized hand weights. Then he did a deal with AMF, and then they changed the cover. They made it look very similar, but then you see the models holding the AMF Heavy Hands. It did very well. Sold millions of sets of those Heavy Hands.

Bob: I hope this conversation helps.

Michael: I think it sets the record of who was first. That's all. The bottom line is everyone's a winner who's walking with weight in their hands, whether they're Hand-E-Weights, Heavy Hands, or Weighted Hands. It's a fantastic form of aerobic conditioning and strength conditioning all at the same time. There's really nothing else out there like it. It's simple. It's an incredible low-impact workout that can keep the muscle on your body and really challenge yourself. There's so much you can do with it.

Bob: Absolutely.

Michael: Thank you so much for sharing. This is a great story, and I want to set the record straight that Reeves was first. I think that's important. You're a first-hand testimonial to that.

Bob: Okay. Thank you.

Michael: *That's the end of our interview. I hope you've enjoyed it. For more great interviews and stories like this, go to Michael Senoff's [www.weightedhands.com](http://www.weightedhands.com).*