

# below the belt

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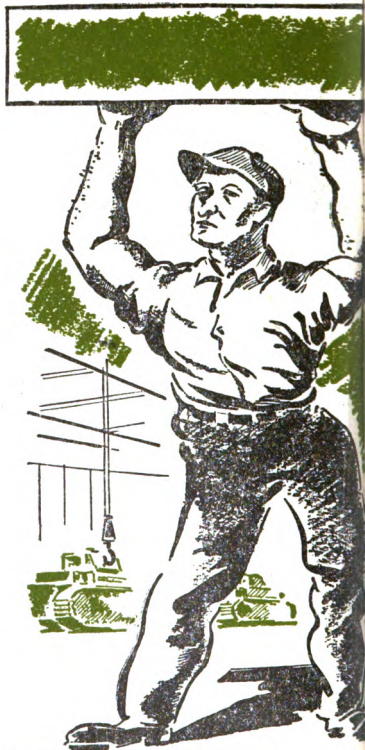
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## "PUG" PULLMAN

used to be a middleweight champ. He never hesitated lifting the heaviest job in the shop, never let anyone give him a hand. The other day Pug lifted one 300-pound slab too many. In a jiffy he turned green, then white, and slumped in his tracks. Someone gave him a drink of water and he vomited. They took him off the floor on a stretcher. That was Pug's last day in the shop.

You guessed it. The trouble was "rupture" or as the doctors call it, "hernia." It was a foul blow, a blow which disables at least a million and a quarter people in this country besides Pug.

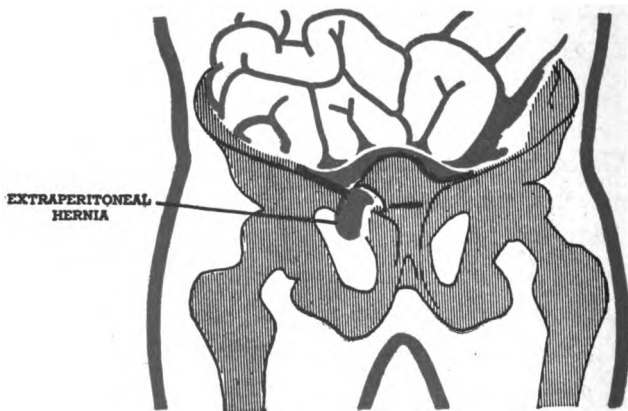


**There are some 57 varieties of hernia. The "inguinal" type—in the groin—is the most common among men. Women often develop rupture just below the groin on the front of the thigh. This type is less frequent among men. Other sites of male hernia are in the scrotum, or sometimes over the navel—though the latter occurs mostly among children. Sometimes an operation scar will open up and cause hernia. Ruptures brought on by direct blows breaking the skin and the tissues are rare.**

Hernia seems to run in families. Some doctors believe that hernia is a "hang-over" from birth.

One of the body's weakest spots is the "inguinal canal," the subway in the unborn child by which the genital organs descend to their proper position. While in most adults this canal is closed in by muscles, tendons, and special tissues, in others the "subway" has never shut tightly enough. Thus, any heavy strain may force open the canal and shove through the intestines pressing down from above. The abdomen lining gradually stretches and forms a "hernial sac" or pocket extending between the layers of muscle. It is in this sac that the intestines are caught.

**A rupture is not really a tear.** It means a loosening of the band of tissue at the subway "door," allowing the abdominal organs to slip through the opening. When a loop of the intestine is doubled up and caught in the ring at the canal's end, the blood supply is shut off. The loop, strangled in a knot, is called a "strangulated hernia." This is a dangerous condition and may be compared to a serious attack of appendicitis. It may result in gangrene and often ends in death.



**Continued strain brings on rupture.** Few hernias develop overnight. It is hard to tell when a rupture really begins or what starts it. It may be caused by constant lifting and pushing as in Pug Pullman's case, or it may be brought on by the strain of an already weakened abdomen on the muscles and tendons around the groin. Violent sneezing and coughing, a misstep causing wrenched internal muscles, prostatic trouble, or constipation may develop hernia.

A doctor can easily detect a hernia or even its beginnings when you are examined for a job or on the job. If you get ruptured, you will know something is wrong. There are two signs—a soft swelling that you can easily see, and pain. These usually disappear on lying down. Swelling and pain are your signals to go to your doctor.

It takes a doctor to tell you how serious your condition is. He will know whether you need an operation. Most men who are strong enough to work can "take" an operation. This is usually more advisable than wearing a truss. A truss is inconvenient and may cause added injury. It may look all right but not hold the hernia in place. Result? Strangulated hernia.

**To prevent complications, see your doctor.**

If he thinks you need a truss he will recommend the right type and tell you where you can be properly fitted. Then he will ask you to come back so that he can check on the fitting. There are no ready-made devices that will fit everyone. Nor are trusses chosen for their "comfort." Treatment by injections is sometimes suggested. Only your surgeon can help you decide. The important thing is to be examined.

If you have a rupture, your doctor will decide what kind of work is safe for you to do.

#### POINTERS FOR LIFTING:

- 1** In lifting heavy weights, face the object, keep your feet close to it, and space them 8 to 12 inches apart.



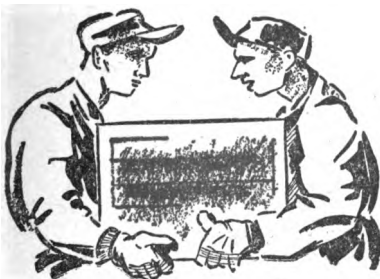
- 2** Carry loads on the shoulders where possible rather than on the hips.



**3** ■ Don't reach too high for heavy packages.



**4** ■ Lift from the floor with knees bent, using leg rather than back muscles.



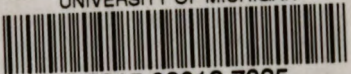
**5** ■ Get someone to help if you need it.



**6** ■ Use mechanical devices where you can—conveyor belts, elevators, hoists.

Get used to heavy work gradually. That's the way they toughen up in the Army.

**Remember, Safety First "BELOW THE BELT."**



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