PROGRAMS THAT WORK
OVER 30 PR BREAKING TRAINING PROGRAMS

COMPILED BY TEAM ELITEFTS™
Programs that Work

Over 30 PR Breaking Training Programs

Complied by Team elitefts™
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Thank you for supporting elitefts and the Make-A-Wish Foundation. Your donation will help to grant many wishes. In these hard economic times it’s nice to stop and help others do good things and make things we are making a difference and thank you.

Best of luck with your training and all you do in 2012.

Thank you.

[Signature]
Bring Alive Your Deadlift

—By Josh Bryant MS, Adam benShea MA

What if someone offered you a way to build overall body strength, really work the posterior chain, aid in muscle gain or fat loss, work the forceful extension of the hips and knees, build grip strength, build mental toughness and overall speed, and was a functional movement to boot? Search no further because it’s time to deadlift!

In ancient times, deadlifts were performed with rocks, or other heavy objects, and many iron game historians believe that the deadlift may be the oldest strength training exercise. However, as early as the 19th century, people began to use the deadlift specifically as an exercise to build strength, muscle and power. While the deadlift is one of three contested lifts in competitive powerlifting (the bench press and squat being the other two lifts), until recently, the deadlift was sort of the bastard child of the strength and muscle building communities. But, lately, there has been a dramatic shift among strength coaches, trainers and serious lifters toward the inclusion of deadlift in their programs and it could have a significant place in your muscle building, or fat loss program.

Newer and more exotic is not necessarily better! Make sure you give a close look at an old school blood and guts staple! While variable potpourri of exercises could have their place in your workout routine, the deadlift remains the most effective exercise for building your posterior chain (the glutes, hamstrings, adductor magnus and lumbar erectors), or back side of the body, which is crucial not only for a well balanced physique, but for most activities in life and sports.

Moreover, the fundamental action of the deadlift is picking a weight off the ground. This action forces the posterior chain to lift a load that is in front of the body and mimics the movement necessary to complete everything from situations found in sports (like MMA, wrestling, and football) to everyday activities (like picking up a child or emptying the trash). While some trainers ignorantly dismiss the deadlift as solely a powerlifting movement, picking up something heavy off the ground is the epitome of functionality.

However, “functional training” is a buzzword that seems to have become more relevant to exercise fashion than exercise science. It should be remembered that functional exercises are those that serve a specific process by preparing an athlete for specific movements in their sport. Be it MMA or modern dance, the idea is the same. Functional exercises train movement patterns, not individual muscles in an isolated fashion.

Think about it. Do you want each of your muscles to work alone or in concert with your body? Certainly you want the orchestra of muscles to play in concert!

The National Association of Speed and Explosion (NASE) stated in their certification course that the deadlift is the most effective predictor of an athlete’s ability to produce force through the ground (a necessary component for any athletic movement). However, many coaches in the past have felt the deadlift was not worth the risk-to-benefit ratio. But when done correctly and programmed properly, the deadlift wil build strength and power because it works virtually every muscle in your body.

In addition, because so many motor units are recruited, deadlifting is a catalyst for muscle growth and/or fat loss depending on dietary consumption. That is, heavy deadlifts produce a favorable spike in the natural production of growth hormone and testosterone production, that greatly expedites your fat loss and muscle building goals. If your goal is fat loss, another positive point of deadlifting is the improvement in your post-oxygen debt caused by of all of the muscle mass recruited (meaning your metabolic rate is greatly increased).

Strengthening the posterior chain with the deadlift may even reduce the chance of injury. Strength coach and competitive deadlifter, Eric Cressey, states that weak hamstrings can greatly exacerbate the chance of an ACL injury, patellofemoral pain, and many other problems in the hip, lower back, knee and ankle. Machines, like leg curls, will not suffice to strengthen the posterior chain because they do not require co-contraction of the glutes and hamstrings like the deadlift. Moreover, leg curls neglect stabilizer muscles because the movements are performed in fixed plane of motion. So, they can help as a deadlift supplement, but not a substitute!
When thinking of all the wonderful benefits that you can derive from the deadlift, remember that you can piss them all away in a New York minute if your technique is lacking.

The first step in correct deadlift technique is your stance. The distance between your feet when you perform a stand still vertical jump is a good starting point for the width of your deadlift stance. Of course, you can play around a little to find out what works best for you.

Once your stance is set, point your toes out slightly (this helps activate your glutes, which in turn helps you lift more weight)! Keep your back flat at all times throughout the lift and do not round the spine at any point during the movement. Moreover, do not start with the hips too high because this will take the legs out of the movement. The ideal starting position is approximately a half squat. The reason why you should start in a half squat is because you can half squat more than you can full squat. When you start, the shins should be touching the bar and the bar should be over the center of the foot. Your arms should remain in full extension as you commence the lift and throughout its entirety. As you start the lift, push your heels through the ground and do not allow your hips to rise faster than the shoulders. A helpful mnemonic device for this stance comes from the old Russian strongman, Yuri Morozov. In the early 1990’s, he would scream at high school kids lifting at the Santa Barbara YMCA, “Tits up, hips down!” If you do not heed Yuri’s advice, your legs will lockout prior to your hips and your torso won’t efficiently get in the upright and locked position. Additionally, your knee and hip angles should be consistent as you lift the weight off the floor and as you set it back down. To insure that you are engaged in an upright position, concentrate on squeezing your glutes as you lock the weight out.

The provided routine gives you the framework to greatly exceed your previous deadlift personal record. But, this is useless if you do not have the correct mental approach! In regard to this, Bill “Kaz” Kazmaier, arguably the strongest man of all-time, had some very prophetic words. The great Kaz said, “Commit to the pull.”

Committing to the pull means walking up to the bar and knowing that the lift is complete. You have made a decision that you will not drop the weight come hell or high water. Heavy deadlifts hurt, but that is okay! As you pick up the weight and you get to that point where something feels like it’s about to break, you pull through. You do this because you have made a commitment to the barbell!

Temporary discomfort will never match the pain of permanent cowardice in the deadlift. Remember, half the battle is committing to the pull.

In the deadlift routine for strength listed below, you will train twice a week. One day a week you will deadlift, and on the second day, you will do accessory squat variations that offer a direct carry over to your deadlift. If performed correctly, this routine can increase your deadlift by 10 percent when you retest at week eight and, of course, produce a more powerfully symmetrical physique.

Week four is a deload week. This means that we have systematically cycled in a decrease in volume and intensity to give your body and central nervous system a break. So, to achieve maximum results, do not exceed the weights listed! For week seven, repeat week four. Week eight will test your new deadlift max.

While doing this routine, perform all deadlifts as explosively as possible. This is called compensatory acceleration training (CAT). Popularized by Dr. Fred Hatfield in the 1980’s, in layman’s terms, compensatory acceleration training means to lift submaximal weights using maximum force. Or, once the movement is mastered, you perform the lift as fast as possible. This allows you to develop maximum force production, which in turn, enables you to lift more weight without having to use maximum weights. This is a large part of the reason why the heavy set is followed by so many down sets.
Moreover, this deadlift routine includes movements that strengthen the specific muscles necessary for a broad back and a big deadlift. One such movement is the deficit deadlift, which develops deadly power off the floor and crushing strength in your grip. In fact, many people do not realize the benefits of increased grip power that are derived from deficit deadlifts.

In life and sports, having a great grip is a noteworthy asset. To build the crushing grip that is respected in all of life’s arenas, deadlifts should not be performed with straps. Gripping these heavy weights strapless, will take forearm hypertrophy to new heights.

This deadlift routine is augmented through auxiliary lifts. Specifically, shrugs, bent-over rows and weighted chin-ups are three of the best exercises to add size to the upper back and a stronger pull to lockout the heavy weight. In consideration of balance training, we are doing accessory pulling movement in the vertical plane (chin-ups) and the horizontal pane (bent-over rows.)

Glute ham raises, which build the glutes and hamstrings, are also included. Glute ham raises help build a strong lockout that requires a powerful co-contraction of the glutes, as the prime mover (agonist), and the hamstrings, as the synergists (assisting muscle).
# Strength Routine Day 1

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Weight</th>
<th>Reps</th>
<th>Sets</th>
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<tbody>
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<tr>
<td>Deadlift</td>
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<td>60%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>3-inch Deficit Deadlifts</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bent-Over Rows</td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shrugs</td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chin-ups</td>
<td>Max</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glute Ham Raises</td>
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<td>8</td>
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<td><strong>Week 2</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Deadlift</td>
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<td>Deadlift (60 second rest interval between sets)</td>
<td>60%</td>
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<td>3-inch Deficit Deadlifts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chin-ups</td>
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<td>Glute Ham Raises</td>
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## Strength Routine Day 1

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<td>Shrugs</td>
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<td>Chin-ups</td>
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<td>80%</td>
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<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One-Armed Row</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shrugs</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chin-ups</td>
<td>Max</td>
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### Strength Routine Day 1

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<th>Sets</th>
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<td><strong>Week 6</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Deadlift</td>
<td>95%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deadlift (120 second rest interval between sets)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deficit Deadlifts</td>
<td>82.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>One-Armed Row</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shrugs</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chin-ups</td>
<td>Max</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Glute Ham Raises</td>
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*Week 7 repeat Week 4, Week 8 test your new max!!!*

### Strength Routine Day 2

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<td>Below Parallel Box Squats</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dead Squats (hip/knee angle same stance as deadlift)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Front Squats</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leg Curls</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Calf Raises</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planks (hold one minute)</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bar On Back Side Bends</td>
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## Strength Routine Day 2

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<td>Dead Squats (hip/knee angle same stance as deadlift)</td>
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<td>Front Squats</td>
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<td>Leg Curls</td>
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<tr>
<td>Calf Raises</td>
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<td>Planks (hold one minute)</td>
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<td>Bar On Back Side Bends</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 3</strong></td>
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<td>Dead Squats (hip/knee angle same stance as deadlift)</td>
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<td>Leg Curls</td>
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<td>Planks (hold one minute)</td>
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<td>Bar On Back Side Bends</td>
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<td><strong>Week 4</strong></td>
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<td>Light Front Squats</td>
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<td>Planks (hold one minute)</td>
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## Strength Routine Day 2

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<th>Exercise</th>
<th>Reps</th>
<th>Sets</th>
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<tr>
<td>Dead Squats (hip/knee angle same stance as deadlift)</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Front Squats</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leg Curls</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Calf Raises</td>
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<td><strong>Week 6</strong></td>
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<td>Below Parallel Box Squats</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dead Squats (hip/knee angle same stance as deadlift)</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Front Squats</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bar On Back Side Bends</td>
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<td>3</td>
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If your goal is to put on size, follow the routine below. While you will get stronger using the routine, it is aimed at muscle hypertrophy (adding muscular size). The rep ranges are more in-line with traditional, scientifically supported, hypertrophy recommendations of 6-15 repetitions. New research shows the importance of the time in which muscles are under tension as a way to elicit the greatest hypertrophic response from weight training. Generally, sets with 30-60 seconds of rests best accomplish this. With the increased rep ranges, many of these exercises will fall within that time range.

Research published by the National Strength and Conditioning Association, in The Essentials of Strength and Conditioning, recommends that individuals should generally take rests of 60-90 seconds, or sometimes as much as two minutes between sets, to get the best hypertrophic response. In this program, we recommend that you take two minutes between deadlift sets and 60-90 seconds between all other exercises. Shorter rest periods within the hypertrophic rep ranges provide for the greatest growth hormone response, which is essential for muscle building and fat loss.

Notice that all of the lifts below are some form of a compound lift. Even though we are training for physique purposes, compound lifts accomplish your physique goals much more efficiently than strict isolation exercises. Large lifts build large amounts of muscle, which help the body lose large amounts of fat and aid the body in releasing large amounts of anabolic hormones! Lose the isolationist mentality because big movements produce big results.

A debate has raged on as to whether the squat or deadlift is the most effective exercise for building size, strength and exacerbating fat loss. In other words, if we had to choose one exercise would it be the deadlift or squat? A case could be made for either! Fortunately, we do not have to make that decision. The squatting variations we selected will work in concert with the deadlift routine for building muscle.

The front squats and Olympic squats offer direct transference to the deadlift and are great movements for packing on slabs of muscle. Take two minutes of rest between movements on the front squats and the Olympic squats and take 60-90 seconds of rest between the exercises throughout the workout.
# Powerbuilding Routine Day 1

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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stiff-Leg 3-inch Deficit Deadlift</td>
<td>30%,35%,40%,45%,35%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shrugs</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Bent-Over Rows</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wide Grip Pullups</td>
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<td>Abs</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Wide Grip Pullups</td>
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# Powerbuilding Routine Day 1

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<tr>
<td>Shrugs</td>
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<td>15</td>
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<td>Narrow Grip Pullups</td>
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<td><strong>Week 5</strong></td>
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<td>Shrugs</td>
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<td>Narrow Grip Pullups</td>
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<td><strong>Week 6</strong></td>
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<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shrugs</td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
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<td>Bent-Over Rows</td>
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<td>Wide Grip Pullups</td>
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<tr>
<td>Narrow Grip Pullups</td>
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## Powerbuilding Routine Day 2

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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Front Squats</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olympic Pause Squats</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lunges</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leg Presses</td>
<td>50,40,30,20</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leg Curls</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abs</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 2</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Front Squats</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
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<td>Olympic Pause Squats</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lunges</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leg Presses</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
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<td>Leg Curls</td>
<td>12</td>
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<td>Abs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Front Squats</td>
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<tr>
<td>Olympic Pause Squats</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lunges</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leg Presses</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leg Curls</td>
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### Powerbuilding Routine Day 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exercise</th>
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<th>Sets</th>
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<tr>
<td>Front Squats Light</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Olympic Pause Squats Light</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leg Curls</td>
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<td>Abs</td>
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<td><strong>Week 5</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Front Squats</td>
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<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olympic Pause Squats</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Split Squats</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leg Presses</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leg Curls</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abs</td>
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<td><strong>Week 6</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Front Squats</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Olympic Pause Squats</td>
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<td>Split Squats</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leg Presses</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leg Curls</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abs</td>
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<td>6</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
It's time to make some gains and remember technique is most important! Here are some technical points to refine your deadlift:

- Push through your heels
- Middle of the foot should be directly under the bar, the shins must be touching the bar
- The back is in extension, don't round
- The shoulder blades should be directly over the bar, the shoulders are actually in front
- The elbows must remain in full extension throughout the entirety of the movement
- Lower the bar in the opposite way the bar was lifted in terms of hip and knee angles.
5 Things of Great Importance I Learned During My First Decade of Powerlifting

—By Brian Carroll

1. Prehab/stretching and mobility work. This is something that I really never understood the importance of...until it became an issue. It’s so important to get a good warm-up, stretch and stay on top of your mobility. Most of the time it’s too late when you actually realize that you should’ve been doing it for a long time and now you’re injured and have plenty of time to kick yourself. Ask anyone who was lifting at a high level for a long period of time – they’ll tell you how important it is and how many injuries starting a good program early in their career could have really helped their lifts and prevented many setbacks. Also learn to listen to your body and take planned and unplanned “deload” or “off” days. If things don’t feel right, sometimes it’s your body warning you that you just don’t have it this day. This is not an excuse to be a pussy. There’s a difference between lazy and smart – know it!

2. Listen to veterans. Although I never really had an issue with listening to guys who knew more than me, I would often think, “That would never happened to me,” or something of that nature. I think if I paid more attention to great and free advice that was graciously given to me over the years, I could’ve made some better choices and possibly avoided some juvenile mistakes. To this day, I still hold myself accountable and listen to guys who had similar “great” ideas, but talked me out of them because the risk isn’t worth the reward, or because they made the same mistakes and are looking out for me.

3. Patience! What’s the rush? So many guys wanted a big total yesterday, and I was that guy at one time. I couldn’t wait for the next meet to come around so I could hit XXXX number, and then I would just simply set the chosen number...and get crushed. Have small, realistic goals and achieve them one at a time. Put your time in! Being a great lifter or athlete doesn’t simply happen overnight and it takes time to tap into your given potential and accomplish big goals.

4. Form is everything. Most people who start out powerlifting need to have their form totally revamped. It’s sad, but even guys who’ve been lifting for years still tend to have horrific form. I suggest getting with a good group of guys early on - who are real powerlifters - not internet wanna-be’s or gym-rat lifters, who can really break your form down on each movement and help you start off, or start over, and get you going in the right direction. Watch YouTube videos of successful top lifters, who are actually crushing big numbers and ask questions. Get answers from veterans who’ve been there and then, practice! I’m still working hard to have the best form possible and I ask people for help and suggestions everyday. You’re never too good to say, “Nope, I can’t improve my form any more. It’s perfect!” That’s B.S.!

5. You have to surround yourself with like-minded individuals with similar goals. That’s the only way you’ll be able to achieve the highest level that’s possible for you. I’m not just talking about a positive atmosphere, you can have that at your Grandma’s breakfast table as she’s praising your biceps muscle. I’m talking about people to train with who are hungry, motivated and wanting similar results. You want to be around people who will be real with you and keep hold you accountable to bring out your fullest potential. If you’re training to be an Olympic lifter, then train with other Olympic lifters that are better than you. Want to be a top powerlifter? Train with top powerlifters who’re going to kick your ass all day, every training session. Don’t train with wishy-washy people who don’t know what the hell they want out of lifting, or aren’t focused and committed. These people will set you back and hold you down – avoid them like the plague!
Improve Your Bench
— By Brian Schwab

Through the years the bench press has been one of my best, most consistent, and most improved lift. Even though I’ve stuck with an old METAL denim shirt that almost all powerlifters have abandoned, it continues to work for me. My raw bench also continues to make gradual improvements. My method of gradually increasing range of motion with less reps and higher percentages for both raw and shirted, allows for strength increases with less chance of overtraining and injury.

The program begins with week 12 and counts down to week 0 of the meet. You’ll notice that each range of reps is based off of only two working sets. After strength training for 20 years and competitively powerlifting for the last 15, I’ve found that performing two sets to failure is optimal to stimulate increases in strength while preventing overtraining, minimize time spent in the gym, and optimize work capacity and performance.

I recommend performing an exercise for the mid-range, lockout, and lower portion of the bench during every max workout. I opt for board presses as the primary, followed by lockouts/pin-presses, and either decline or floor presses last - in that order. I alternate between dumbbells and the bar on floor press to maintain balance between each side. The corresponding raw day focuses on increasing raw strength, while reducing shoulder stress, with a speed day only being performed once every three weeks.

The raw workout focuses on a ME workout off of the boards to increase overall strength and stimulate the CNS. The corresponding raw repetition day allows for hypertrophy and strength increases through a full range of motion. Below is a breakdown for the 12 weeks.

**Raw Board/DE Bench for Shirted Template**

- **Week 12** - 3-board triples
- **Week 11** - 2-board triples
- **Week 10** - speed with 45% including chains
- **Week 9** - 3-board doubles
- **Week 8** - 2-board doubles
- **Week 7** - speed with 47.5% including chains
- **Week 6** - 3-board triples
- **Week 5** - 2-board triples
- **Week 4** - speed with 50% including chains
- **Week 3** - 3-board doubles
- **Week 2** - 2-board doubles
- **Week 1** - deload, speed with 40% including chains
- **Week 0** - meet
Shirted ME Day

Week 12: 4-board triples
Week 11: 3-board triples
Week 10: 2-board triples
Week 9: 4-board doubles
Week 8: 3-board doubles
Week 7: 2-board doubles
Week 6: 4-board singles
Week 5: 3-board singles
Week 4: 2-board singles
Week 3: touch opener, 2nd attempt off of 1-board, third off of 2
Week 2: 1-board opener, 2nd attempt off of 2-board, third off of 3
Week 1: 3-board deload (opener and second attempt for a single)
Week 0: meet

Raw Bench Routine Recommendations

Raw Repetition Day

Week 12: 8,7
Week 11: 7,6
Week 10: 6,5
Week 9: 5,4
Week 8: 4,3
Week 7: 5,4
Week 6: 4,3
Week 5: 3,2
Week 4: 4,3
Week 3: 3,2
Week 2: 2,1
Week 1: Deload - 5, 4
Week 0: Meet

Repeat with new projected max.
ME Board Work

Week 12: 2-board singles  
Week 11: 1-board singles  
Week 10: 3-board triples  
Week 9: 2-board triples  
Week 8: 1-board triples  
Week 7: 3-board doubles  
Week 6: 2-board doubles  
Week 5: 1-board doubles  
Week 4: 3-board singles  
Week 3: 2-board singles  
Week 2: 1-board singles  
Week 1: 3-board triples  
Week 0: Meet  

Repeat with new projected max.

I hope this program helps take your bench to new levels. If you’re interested, I go into detail regarding the specific percentages and accessory exercises I recommend in my DVD.
Off-Season Basketball Training
—By Charlie Cates, CSCS

Basketball is very long season, so it is of the upmost importance to make sure your athletes are physically and mentally prepared for the five-and-a-half-month grind. After a college season ends, usually in mid- to late-March, the athletes have spring break. During this period, I let them be college kids and enjoy that time of their lives. Once they get back on campus, though, it’s back to business.

The first two weeks of their return are dedicated to body weight circuits consisting of exercises that reinforce gross movement patterns that are not so much specific to basketball, but specific to being an athlete in general. The exercises will be paired and the athletes will try to get as many sets in as possible during a 10-minute time span. After the 10 minutes are up, they move on to the next pair. There are two 10-minute pairs and two five-minute pairs, allowing the entire training session to last around 45 minutes once warm-up time is included and the time it takes to get water in-between pairs. After those two weeks, it is back to the weights.

I’ve devised a training scheme called SMS, which I based off, among other programs, Jim Wendler’s 5/3/1. This is where the guys start after their initial prep phase and what they will follow throughout the summer and fall. One of the biggest differences between SMS and 5/3/1 is the rep ranges that are used throughout the phases. SMS is on a 4/6/4, 3/1/3 breakdown, where during week one month one, you hit your core lifts for four reps at 80% of your working max. Week two is six reps at 70%, and week three is four reps at 85%. Then, you deload for a week, followed by month two, where the percentages are three reps at 85%, one rep at 95%, and three reps at 90%. Remember, just like 5/3/1, these percentages are based off of your working max, which for the first month is set at 90% of your actual one-rep max, which we test before the start of the first month. We use a three-rep max test and then convert it to a one-rep max.

Once the summer comes along, the players are on their own to follow the lifts. In addition to lifting four days a week, the players are given a plyometrics program that is two days a week. The plyos program is less about big jumps and bounding drills, and more about moving as fast as possible with perfect accuracy in a smaller space. This is to influence the nervous system to fire faster. Essentially, this is comprised of different line drills and box jumps. These plyo sessions are not meant for conditioning, although conditioning often improves because of these sessions due to the way the energy systems are targeted in a basketball-specific manner. Instead, conditioning is mainly improved during the summer through playing pick-up games. In the fall, hills start.

As the summer comes to a close and the guys arrive back on campus, conditioning begins to pick up. The lifts drop to three days a week, eliminating the military press day, as pre-season pick-up games are played up to four times per week. Plyometric sessions also decrease and become eliminated altogether heading into the final week of fall training. Depending on the status of the player’s body, guys may or may not participate in a given plyo session or at all during the fall. Hill sprints are added in once a week, which consist of sprinting up a hill for upwards of 20 seconds and then jogging or walking back down for a total of twenty minutes, trying to improve the number of sprints done each week. Although players sprint up and jog down at their own pace, each sprint is started as one unit.

The final week of fall training is dedicated to recovery and skill work.

Get big or die tryin’.

Charlie Cates
Self Made®, Owner

Charlie Cates is a strength and conditioning specialist and the owner of Self Made® (http://selfmadefitness.com/) in Chicago, IL. He has worked with competitive and everyday athletes of all ages and ability levels, from 9-year-old kids to NFL MVP’s. He can be reached via e-mail at charlie@selfmadefitness.com.
Hurt happens, and it happens a lot to lifters. The following is how I designed and executed a lifting plan that was part of a six-month recovery cycle. The cycle was designed to undo all the damage I did to myself by bulking and maxing too much, and by ignoring my chronic problems with subluxating joints and articular problems. While I know this is usually ignored as legal CYA, check with your doctor before starting this program. You can’t recover from a problem you don’t understand, and no one is better suited to doing so than a medical practitioner.

**Exercise Selection**

Time for a moment of honesty; get a pen and paper, and start three columns. In the first column, write down all the lifts that make your body feel good and never give you problems. In the second, write down all the lifts that don’t jack you up, but don’t necessarily make you feel any better. In the third, write down the exercises that jacked you up (in a bad way) at some point. A partial version of mine would look like this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Jacked</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bulgarian Squats</td>
<td>Conventional Deadlifts</td>
<td>Squats (box and free)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blast Strap Pushups</td>
<td>Romanian Deadlifts</td>
<td>Bench Press (high arch)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral Grip Pullups</td>
<td>Floor Press</td>
<td>Pronated Pullups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral Grip Pull-downs</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Face Pulls</td>
<td>Leg Press</td>
<td>Cleans</td>
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<tr>
<td>External Rotations</td>
<td>Good Mornings</td>
<td>Snatches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leg Extension</td>
<td>Speed Deadlifts</td>
<td>Jump Squats</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After you get your list together, take a look at column one. If you’re moderately jacked-up, they should comprise most of your exercises for the first month or two, with your neutral exercises making up the rest. If you’re really beat-up, use only exercises from column one. Whatever you do, avoid the column three exercises for at least the first months, or longer if you can. If your good column looks a little puny, closed-chain (exercises where you move your body around a fixed point) and moderately unstable exercises are usually good ones: push-ups (regular and unstable), lunges, one-legged squats/deadlifts, pullups, fat boy pullups, and bird dogs meet both criteria. For more help, Nick Tumminello has done tons of work with finding injury-friendly exercises, and has multiple articles, blog posts, and a DVD set covering the topic.

I’m sure plenty of you are thinking, “Hey, benching kills my shoulders, but there’s no way in hell I’m giving it up.” Fair enough. You have some leeway with an aggravating exercise if you have a way of doing it in a way—partials,
loose gear, boards, etc.—that keeps your joints happy. I've got “Bench Press (high arch)” on my list because of back issues, but it also can cause wrist and elbow problems for me. Throwing Fat Gripz on the bar alleviates this to a large part, so I relied greatly on them during my recovery phase. Stabilizer fatigue causes my shoulder joint to shift, so I keep my sets well short of failure, and the load light enough to prevent unwanted articular approximation.

Generally speaking, people who build their training around powerlifting techniques are going to have predictable instances of chronic pain and inflammation. Just as an example, wide squats and deadlifts can cause tight hip flexors, adductors, and abductors, and inhibit quads and glutes; a good response would be to stretch, roll, and mobilize the tight groups; work the inhibited groups in isolation or in a way that doesn’t aggravate sore spots; and avoid lifts that target the sore spots with hypertrophy-level (or heavier) loads. One big thing to remember is that maintaining good form is essential. Even a great recovery lift like the suspended pushup will mess up your shoulders if you dive-bomb your reps. Always use a controlled tempo and pain-free technique. This will also require managing fatigue by ending sets before they become too hard (even on “Wendler” max-rep sets in 5/3/1) and have enough rest between sets to stay collected and focused for every following rep. Put your ego aside and get your body better.

To get more specific, use perfect technique when you’re grooving movements or doing prehab/rehab work. Stuart McGill recommends that when doing work like this, decrease reps with each set while keeping the same load. The instant you begin to feel like the next rep might not be as good as what you’ve done earlier, kill the set. This works because every bad rep undoes a good rep that came before it—ending the sets sooner prevents you from what amounts to spinning your wheels.

Programming

Every lifting day should start with an intense mobility warm-up. Given the contributions of guys like Cressey, Robertson, Verstagen, Cook, King, Cosgrove, Weingroff, Gentilcore, Boyle, etc., there are plenty of good resources available online and in print. For those of you who are less battered, Jim Wendler’s 5/3/1 warm-up hits all the highlights—just extend the sets into a full workout. Don’t be afraid of static stretching or foam rolling during your mobility work. Also, don’t be afraid of movement-based drills like hurdles, walking lunges, bear crawls, spider-mans, etc. Your warm-up should actually be a little more fatiguing than your work sets, so finish your warm-up session sweaty. Every day should end with some stretching and mobility work for the areas targeted by your lifting.

One big difference with how you lift during the recovery phase will be your reduction in training volume. The goal with this is to maintain your strength and muscle mass with as little lifting as possible. This is critical to getting your joints happy. A certain amount of lifting got you into your current state of broken: the best way to fix yourself is to reduce that lifting volume. For the length of the recovery phase, you can reduce your volume by about 2/3. Your problem areas don’t need to get any strength training at all in the beginning, or they can get about 1/2 their usual volume from start to finish.

Now let’s look at a rough scheme of how broken your body can be and assign an appropriate strength program. My set-up here is more anal than anywhere else, mostly because this is where people are likely to push themselves, and in doing so cause more problems. I’m Exhibit A of causing more problems, so trust me on this.
Damage Levels and Suggested Programs

Level 0: Something is actually torn or broken, or you’re at high risk of dropping dead. Go to a doctor you trust, discuss your problems while making sure he/she has your complete attention, see a physical therapist or orthopedist if needed, get cleared to participate in daily life, then come back to this.

Level 1: Basic movements suck. Getting out of bed is hard and/or hurts. Tying your shoes is hard and/or hurts. Climbing a single flight of stairs is hard and/or hurts. Sitting in a chair is hard and/or hurts.

Program: This level can also put you in the “go see a doctor or PT” range. If you don’t think you’re at that point, then I suggest dropping traditional strength training completely, and instead work on mobility and stability drills three or four times a week for at least 30 minutes at a time (a beginner’s yoga class could work, too). Essentially, instead of lifting weights, your main workout sessions will look like long mobility sessions.

Your two primary concerns will probably be restoring hip and shoulder function. The hip problems can come from lots of repetitive, powerlift-style squatting and deadlifting, and usually requires a host of stretches and foam rolling for every aspect of the leg and hip, followed by drills built around hurdles, lunges, leg swings, rocking drills, and glute activation work. Shoulder problems are more related to a heavy focus on the powerlift-style bench press, where a short arc and tight tuck “lock up” cause the delts and pecs to tighten and shorten, and inhibits muscles involved in moving the scapulae. Programs addressing this problem often involve a lot of lat and rotator activation drills, thoracic spine extension work, and mobility/stability drills from various push-up positions.

Whatever your program, get to where you can touch your toes; squat to parallel with shoulder-width feet, an arched back, and without an external load or other assistance; squat ass-to-grass with a slightly-rounded back; do a slow eccentric push-up without pain; do some fatboy pull-ups/inverted rows without a problem; and to where your aches and pains have stopped as much as reasonably possible before moving to some unstable lifts like Bulgarian squats, bottom-up kettlebell presses, and prone hand taps. If you don’t progress on a good generic plan (as you’d find from the guys mentioned earlier), get some professional help.

Level 2: Lots of constant joint pain, but nothing traumatic. You have a very limited number of lifts you can perform without making things worse. Lifts have stalled or are regressing.

Program: This was my low-point situation. To get around it, I used a three-days-a-week, MWF routine that mostly incorporated my “good” exercises. A given day will start with mobility work, then move to a compound exercise for two or three easy sets of five, move to another compound lift for a few easy sets of seven or so, and then do a target lift for a body part you might be worried about for a few sets of 10 (this isn’t essential). Finish with a high-rep prehab style lift. Break your days down into lats/bis/rotators/retractors, legs/low back/traps/abs, and chest/tris/anterior delts. If you hit each group once a week, you’ll reduce general strain.

Put your healthiest group first in the week and your worst group on Friday. This will help ensure that if you do go overboard with early-week energy, your problem areas won’t be getting the extra volume; your bad muscle group will also have the full weekend to recover before your next workout. If you don’t have a healthiest group, start with lats, then move to the legs so that posture-helping exercises are emphasized. Do lots of paused and isometric reps for your inhibited areas that need to be brought up. I know MWF won’t be possible for everyone, but try to schedule your days so that your non-lifting days coincide with your days off from work; this way you can maximize your sleep and recovery.

When you’re selecting exercises for the week, avoid cross-over strain between the days. Think about your lower back using this MWF split: if you do barbell rows on Monday, deadlifts on Wednesday, and military presses and/or arched bench presses on Friday, you’ve put your spine and lower back muscles under three consecutive days of loaded compression, extension, and flexion. A healthy back would be fine, but anything less means you’re sabotaging your program.
Like everything else that I advise here, the above is a rough guideline. Here’s an actual sample week for me:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neutral Grip Lat Pull-down: 3 x 5</td>
<td>Leg Press: 3 x 5</td>
<td>Floor Press: 5 x 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T-bar with Pause at Top: 3 x 5</td>
<td>Back Extension: 3x10</td>
<td>Blast Strap Pushup: 3 x 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hammer Curls: 2 x 7</td>
<td>Leg Extension: 3x5</td>
<td>T-Pushups: 2x15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Face Pull with Rotation: 2 x 15</td>
<td>Bulgarian Squats: 2x15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

None of the sets were to failure (or even high exertion), though I’d suggest throwing in a tougher set of 10-12 reps occasionally, just to keep your feeling of the rep range. The sets of five used weights that I’d normally use in sets of seven, and the sets of seven were more like ten-rep sets. Wide and pronated grips on pulling exercises make my shoulders come out of their sockets, so I go with neutral grips. For legs, I needed to give my back a break from compression, so I did the leg press for loading (making sure my butt was glued to the seat), and the back extension with dumbbells for a little traction and active recovery. My quads weren’t working well and my hips sucked from all the box squatting and deadlifting I’d done prior, so leg extensions (with an isometric pause) and Bulgarian squats were no-brainers. On Friday, I kept my back in mind by dropping overhead presses and making sure my horizontal presses didn’t require an arch, had a limited range of motion, and/or had a moderately unstable element.

**Level 3:** You need help, but you’re comfortable still using major lifts. Poor mobility is a factor.

**Program:** If you’ve got a good grip on a lower-load program that works for you, then go with it. Make sure you use some kind of split, whether body part like above or upper/lower. Keep your loads and fatigue light, and focus on good/neutral lifts. For somebody interested in aesthetics, you can use your isolation lifts as long as they don’t aggravate anything. After avoiding ballistic work for at least a few weeks, someone interested in athletic performance could do some speed work or plyos on the lower-body days if it doesn’t aggravate a problem. This would be the only kind of instance where I’d recommend an explosive lift (single-leg jumps and bounding work well here).

During my Level 3 work, I used Jim Wendler’s 5/3/1, three-days-a-week variation, with bodyweight assistance exercises, and started out with two deload weeks before going into the program. If you use this, make sure you pick a primary lift that won’t hurt you, and that the assistance exercises are pain-free ones you can do for lots of reps. You’ll defeat the entire purpose if you pick dips as an accessory exercise, even though you can only do three at a time, and they make your shoulders and elbows feel like they’re going to pop. A step-up would be 5/3/1, three-days-a-week with safe primary lifts and reduced accessory sets; three-days-a-week, traditional programming with reduced accessory sets would be the toughest program I’d advise for this stage. Wrapping up any of these with prehab work wouldn’t hurt a thing.

Practitioners of strongman work have an interesting challenge that I suggest you tackle based on what’s hurting. If you have busted knees and feet, for example, only train your stationary activities or stable mobile activities
until they feel better, and then move to walks and carries. Remember to train to maintain.

**Author's Bio:** Brandon Patterson is a writer, recreational lifter, and sports science junkie. His work focuses on laboratory research, training/adaptation theory, injury prevention and rehab, physique and strength improvement, and American football training, tactics, and strategy. To find more of Brandon’s work online, check out his articles at elitefts.com and oneresult.com; you can also follow Brandon on Twitter @BPSportScience for news and commentary on sports and sport science. “Recovery Training” is an excerpt from *The Recovery Cycle*, a comprehensive in-progress guide to the hows and whys of programming a full recovery cycle for restoring health and quality of life in beat-up lifters and other athletes.
My Pre-contest Diet for the 2011 NPC Junior Nationals

—By Shelby Starnes

This is the exact meal plan I used in preparation for the 2011 NPC Junior Nationals. I started this about 16 weeks out from the show, and followed it through the show. The only changes I made were to gradually reduce carbs (they were cut in half at around 10 weeks out) and towards the end of the prep I had a handful of days where I pulled out all the carbs completely.

Meal 1:

2 slices Ezekiel bread toast  
5 whole eggs  
½ scoop of whey mixed in water

Meal 2:

Blender shake made with ½ cup dry oats  
2 scoops whey protein  
1.5 tablespoons almond butter

Meal 3:

¾ cup cooked brown rice  
7oz. lean ground turkey  
1/3 cup cashews

Meal 4:

Same as Meal 2

Meal 5:

2 slices Ezekiel bread toast  
7oz. salmon or lean ground beef  
1 cup broccoli or asparagus  
1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil

Meal 6:

5 whole eggs

This totals approximately 150 grams of carbohydrate, 90 grams of fat, and 275 grams of protein. I started the diet at about 220 pounds, and ended up onstage around 198 pounds. You can use a similar diet to lean out, but adjusted for your own bodyweight.
Everyone wants to know what the best method is for improving athletic performance. Many coaches and athletes try to look at what the best college and pro athletes are doing, but the truth is that youth athletes need to just focus on a program with more general qualities. Improving strength, stability, and movement quality should be the main focus of a youth program. Most young athletes don't have a lot of relative strength or coordination because they are still developing. The other problem is that youth athletes may not have access to a lot of equipment, if any, during their season.

I put together this 12-week program for youth athletes and coaches as a resource on how they can train the entire body with absolutely no equipment besides body weight and a partner. This program would be perfect for any coach to do with a youth team or a young athlete to do with their friend. The program includes three main components: isometric training, body weight training and partner training.

Isometric training is a great tool for youth athletes. The main problem with performing explosive and dynamic movements with a youth athlete, is that it’s extremely hard to coach an athlete while they are performing a movement that may last for only a few seconds. When performing isometric exercise with a group of athlete it gives the coach more time to observe how the athletes are performing the exercise, so the coach has time to correct what it going on.

Isometric exercises are great because almost every athlete, no matter how de-conditioned or weak they are, they can perform many variations with little to no risk of injury. Isometric exercises will also build a lot of strength and relative stability in the hips, core and shoulder region, which is typically very unstable in most athletes. This will make the transitions to more dynamic movements easier since the athletes will learn how to stabilize their body.
and understand the position for all of the basic movement patterns.

Isometric exercise can also be used as a regression for any exercise in the program if you have an athlete who isn’t strong enough to perform the actual exercise. If they can’t perform a split squat or a pushup, have them just perform a static variation and slowly build up the time. Once they are comfortable with that, have them perform eccentric-only variations where they just lower themselves to the ground and then re-start every rep from the starting position. Eventually, even the weakest kids will be able to perform concentric reps when given enough time to develop. This is a great way to train young kids to do pullups, if you have a chin bar available.
Relative strength is extremely important for all athletes. This is a quality that should be developed at an early age. All types of squats, lunges, hip bridges, planks, inverted rows, pullups and pushups should be utilized with youth athletes. Again, if they aren't strong enough to perform the concentric version, have them perform isometric or eccentric-only variations to build strength.

The big problem with body weight training with no equipment is that it is very hard to train the muscles of the upper back and lats. In order to get some quality pulling variations in this program, you can utilize a partner to perform inverted rows. The athlete can assume a bent leg or straight leg glute bridge position on their back while the other athlete stands over their partner and interlocks their hands together. These partner rows can be performed in a static fashion or in a dynamic one. The bent leg version is easier than then straight leg version since more of your body weight is off of the ground with straight legs. Other partner training exercises that we incorporate in the program are wheelbarrow walks for core and shoulder stability, as well as partner deadlifts to work the core and posterior chain.

Partner training is great for team building and it allows for many more options and variations in training. It is important to not only coach the athlete who is doing the movement, but also the athlete who is anchoring the movement. Try to match up kids that are around the same weight so they can perform the movements safely. The coaches can always spot the bigger kids if this is an issue.

Here's a 12-week program that can be used with all youth athletes. Remember youth athletes just need a general program to work on strength and stability, so don't worry about what sport the kids play. Every athlete should work on gaining strength in their legs, upper body and core. Of course, this is assuming the athlete has no prior injuries or orthopedic issues. The program can be performed two to three times a week as part of a practice schedule run by a coach. It can also be performed at home with the supervision of a qualified adult.

If the exercises are too easy, by all means make them more challenging by having them perform the exercises with a slow lowering (eccentric emphasis) or with pauses at the bottom (isometric emphasis). If the exercises are too hard, only perform a static variation (isometric) or only perform the lowering phases (eccentric only). If you have access to a pullup bar, the only other exercise I would include are flexed arm hangs, eccentric only pullups and pullups. A stopwatch or clock would be good to use for the isometric exercise.
Here is the four-week strength and performance program for youth athletes. Remember, it only requires body weight and a partner, so any athlete can do these moves. If you have any questions about the exercises or the program, feel free to e-mail me at gaglionestrength@gmail.com.

PHASE 1 Weeks 1-3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exercise</th>
<th>Week 1</th>
<th>Week 2</th>
<th>Week 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A1) Prayer Squat</td>
<td>4x15s</td>
<td>3x20s</td>
<td>2x30s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2) PUPP</td>
<td>4x15s</td>
<td>3x20s</td>
<td>2x30s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A3) Short Lever Side Plank</td>
<td>4x15s</td>
<td>3x20s</td>
<td>2x30s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1) Glute Bridge ISO</td>
<td>4x15s</td>
<td>3x20s</td>
<td>2x30s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2) Prone Shoulder Surfer</td>
<td>4x15s</td>
<td>3x20s</td>
<td>2x30s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B3) Plank</td>
<td>4x15s</td>
<td>3x20s</td>
<td>2x30s</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Glute Bridge ISO

Short Lever Side Plank

Prone Shoulder Surfer (ISO Row Hold)

Plank
## PHASE 2 Weeks 4-6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exercise</th>
<th>Week 4</th>
<th>Week 5</th>
<th>Week 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A1) Prisoner Split Squat</td>
<td>4x6</td>
<td>3x8</td>
<td>2x12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2) Partner Wheel Barrow</td>
<td>4x6</td>
<td>3x8</td>
<td>2x12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A3) Side Plank</td>
<td>4x15s</td>
<td>3x20s</td>
<td>2x30s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1) Glute Bridge March</td>
<td>4x6</td>
<td>3x8</td>
<td>2x12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2) Partner Bat Wings</td>
<td>4x15s</td>
<td>3x20s</td>
<td>2x30s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B3) Low PUPP</td>
<td>4x6</td>
<td>3x8</td>
<td>2x12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Glute Bridge March (ISO hold, but alternate legs every rep)

Partner Bat Wings (hold static position ISO hold)

Plank to PUPP (build from plank to pushup position)
## PHASE 3 Weeks 7-9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exercise</th>
<th>Week 7</th>
<th>Week 8</th>
<th>Week 9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A1) Reverse Lunge</td>
<td>4x6</td>
<td>3x8</td>
<td>2x12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2) Bottom Up Push Up</td>
<td>4x6</td>
<td>3x8</td>
<td>2x12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A3) Deadbugs</td>
<td>4x6</td>
<td>3x8</td>
<td>2x12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1) Single Leg Glute Bridge</td>
<td>4x6</td>
<td>3x8</td>
<td>2x12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2) Partner Bent Leg Row</td>
<td>4x6</td>
<td>3x8</td>
<td>2x12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B3) Plank marching</td>
<td>4x6</td>
<td>3x8</td>
<td>2x12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Prisoner Reverse Lunge (mid-point)](image1.jpg)  
![Bottom Up Push Up](image2.jpg)
Deadbugs (alternate opposite arm/opposite leg without moving lower back)

Single Leg Glute Bridge

Partner Inverted Rows (bent leg version)

Plank Marching (alternate feet every rep)
## PHASE 4 Weeks 10-12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exercise</th>
<th>Week 10</th>
<th>Week 11</th>
<th>Week 12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A1) Forward Lunge</td>
<td>4x6</td>
<td>3x8</td>
<td>2x12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2) Eccentric Push Up</td>
<td>4x6</td>
<td>3x8</td>
<td>2x12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A3) Leg Lowering</td>
<td>4x6</td>
<td>3x8</td>
<td>2x12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1) Partner Deadlifts</td>
<td>4x6</td>
<td>3x8</td>
<td>2x12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2) Partner Inverted Rows</td>
<td>4x6</td>
<td>3x8</td>
<td>2x12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B3) Plank Salutes</td>
<td>4x6</td>
<td>3x8</td>
<td>2x12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Forward Lunge Midpoint**

**Eccentric Emphasis Pushup (slow lowering phase)**
Leg Lowering (start with hip fully flexed and lower slow)

Partner Inverted Rows (straight legs)

Partner Deadlifts

Plank Salutes (alternate arms every rep)
American Record Squat Cycle
—By Chad Wesley Smith

Week 1
1. Squat: with knee wraps up to 675 x 3
2. Speed Squat: 545 x 5 x 3 with one minute rest
3. Dead Squat: SSB from one-inch above parallel at 495 x 8 x 1 with one minute rest
4. Single Leg Squats Standing on Box: 3 x 12 with body weight
5. Single Leg DB RDLs: 3 x 5 with 80 pounds
6. Hanging Leg Raises: 5 x 15

Week 2
1. Squat: with knee wraps up to 705 x 3
2. Speed Squat: 545 x 6 x 3 with one minute rest
3. Dead Squat: SSB 525 x 8 x 1 with one minute rest
4. Single Leg RDLs: 3 x 3 with 90 pounds
5. Hanging Leg Raises: 5 x 15

Week 3
1. Squat: with knee wraps up to 735 x 3
2. Speed Squat: 545 x 7 x 3 with one minute rest
3. Dead Squat: SSB 535 x 8 x 1 with one minute rest
4. Single Leg RDLs: 3 x 5 with 90 pounds
5. Hanging Leg Raises: 5 x 15

Week 4 (Deload)
1. Squat: up to 585 x 3
2. Hanging Leg Raises: 3 x 15

Week 5
1. Squat: with knee wraps up to 765 x 2
2. Speed Squat: 600 x 5 x 3 with 90 seconds rest
3. Dead Squat: SSB 585 x 5 x 1 with 90 seconds rest
4. Single Leg RDLs: 3 x 5 with 100 pounds
5. Hanging Leg Raises: 4 x 15

Week 6
1. Squat: with knee wraps up to 785 x 2
2. Walkout and 10 Second Hold: 860 for 1 x 10 seconds
3. Speed Squat: 615 x 4 x 3 with 90 seconds rest
4. Dead Squat: SSB 545, 575, 605 x 1 with 90 seconds rest
5. Single Leg RDLs: 3 x 4 with 100 pounds
6. Hanging Leg Raises: 4 x 15

Week 7
1. Squat: with knee wraps up to 805 - missed planned to do 2 reps
2. Speed Squats: 635 x 3 x 3 with 90 seconds rest
3. SSB Dead Squat: 555, 585, 615 x 1 with 90 seconds rest
4. Single Leg RDLs: 3 x 5 with 100 pounds
5. Hanging Leg Raises: 4 x 15
Week 8 (Deoad)
1. Squat: up to 615 x 1
2. Hanging Leg Raises: 3 x 15

Week 9
1. Squat: with knee wraps up to 825 x 1
2. Squat: 675 x 3 x 2
3. Dead Squat: SSB 565, 605, 635 x 1
4. Hanging Leg Raises: 3 x 15

Week 10
1. Squat: with knee wraps up to 845 x 1
2. Squat: 695 x 2 x 2
3. Hanging Leg Raises: 3 x 15

Week 11
1. Squat: with knee wraps up to 865 x 1
2. Hanging Leg Raises: 3 x 15

Week 12
1. Squat: with knee wraps up to 585 x 1

Week 13
Off: rest for meet on Saturday

This is my exact training I used in preparation for the SPF Powerstation Pro/AM, where I squatted 905 pounds in a belt and knee wraps for the American Record. As you can see, this training is very basic. The Dead Squats were critical in addressing, what Josh Bryant and I viewed as my only weak point. This weak point is two-three inches above parallel. You will also notice that during the final weeks, my training is very minimalistic and focuses only on the competition lift and reduces assistance work to virtually nothing in the final week.
A big bench is just friggin’ cool…and if there’s anything cooler than seeing a huge bench get put up, it’s seeing it put up by a lifter who doesn’t even look like they should be squatting it.

On top of the coolness factor, the bench is an increasingly significant part of your total. While it used to be common to see huge squatters or pullers, with so-so benches at the national/world level, those days are long gone. If you plan to compete at the highest levels of the sport, a bench three times your bodyweight is just the starting point for anyone under 242 pounds.

One of the proudest moments in my modest lifting career was when I accomplished my long-term goal of hitting a bench three times my bodyweight at the 2008 AAPF Nationals in Lake George, NY. The lift was a 545-pound bench in the 181-pound class. I am not a bench specialist and already posted a 771-pound PR squat.

Although I also made PRs in the squat and total, it’s that bench that still stands out as my fondest memory of the meet.

Here’s how I did it:

**Overview**

There are several critical factors to maximizing your coefficient (the relationship between your lifts and your bodyweight). The key to a triple body weight bench (or a big coefficient in general) is to find the perfect balance of strength, gear mastery and bodyweight management.

**Strength**

The most obvious factor, and the reason we all started lifting weights in the first place is strength. Unless you are strong to begin with, it really doesn’t matter where your bodyweight is. This training template is designed to address strength, both in and out of gear.

**Mastering Your Bench Shirt**

Equipment plays a critical role in modern powerlifting. No single lift has benefited more from equipment than the bench press. Even the single-ply shirts of today can out-perform the multi-ply shirts of a few years ago. Throughout this program, you will be in your shirt multiple sessions per month to build both top-end strength and technique.

For this program, I recommend using a shirt that is already broken in. The reason being that you will be touching a weight every month. The break-in process can often make training unpredictable and screw up your progression. If you’ve never broken in a shirt before, most lifters do it by bringing weights down to progressively lower boards.

If you are new to shirt benching, you will probably want to use a shirt that is either single-ply, or if multi-ply, a little loose.

If you are planning on dropping bodyweight in order to improve your coefficient, be aware that your gear may not fit the same, and will probably need to be taken in or replaced. That’s one of the reasons I recommend losing weight well in advance of when you plan to compete. It will give you more time to practice in your new stuff.
Bodyweight Management

Although a little beyond the scope of this article, your ability to manage your bodyweight can often be the make-or-break factor when training for a big coefficient, but it’s not always as simple as you think.

Most lifters assume that you must be as light as possible to achieve a high coefficient. While it’s true that lighter guys generally have the advantage here, there is a point where losing weight (even if it’s mostly fat or water) will compromise your strength to the point that you would have been better off staying bigger and stronger.

Early in my career, I would kill myself trying to weigh-in at 165 pounds, because that’s where I thought I had the best chance at hitting my first elite total. Time and time again, I would miss because I just wasn’t strong enough at that weight. It wasn’t until I let my body fill out to 181 pounds that I finally hit my elite, even though the necessary total was higher at the new bodyweight.

Now later in my career, I’m starting to notice the same point of diminishing returns in trying to cut for the 181-pound class. To be a better lifter, even pound for pound, I may be better off gaining weight, then cutting to make 181.

In short, don’t be a fat ass, but don’t fall into the trap of competing with the scale. If you are genuinely overweight, read everything John Meadows and Shelby Starnes wrote and get to work. Realize that you will lose some strength in the process, and allow your body a few months to normalize at the new bodyweight.

Cutting Weight

Almost all lifters who boast high coefficients use some sort of process to cut bodyweight. When I went 545 at 181, I started the week weighing 196, made 181 the day before the meet, than bloated up to 200 pounds by the time I hit the platform.

Keep in mind that this is not a stunt I’d recommend for beginners. It’s a process that took me years to be able to pull it off. It can be hit-or-miss even for experienced lifters.

Here’s a basic outline of what I did:

2 weeks out from weigh-ins
- Increased salt intake. Basically just made sure to salt all my food. Also drank lots of water.

7 days out
- Increased water to two gallons of water per day. Kept salt intake high.

3 days out
- Cut salt and carbs, kept water at two gallons.

1 day out Thursday for a Friday weigh-in
- Cut food in the morning and water in the afternoon.

I do not use heat to cut unless I absolutely need to, because it just beats me up too much.

I also do not take any prescription drugs, either to cut weight, or bloat back up.
On the ride up to Lake George, I sucked on sour candies and spit into a bottle. This was probably disgusting for my training partners to witness, but I would estimate that I cut over half a pound by doing it.

Friday – weighed in, than immediately started drinking 50/50 mixture of water and Pedialyte. I try to average about two liters per hour for the first few hours. I will also sip pickle brine for the sodium. It’s exactly as nasty as it sounds.

I will usually take a dose of Imodium at this time because rapid rehydrating can give me the runs.

After taking in at least a gallon of Pedialyte/water I snacked all day on salty/sugary snacks and continued with the Pedialyte/water.

The next day, I woke up feeling every ounce of 200 pounds, and strong as a bull. I also looked like a bloated mess, and the fattest lightweight to ever grace the platform.

Like I said earlier. It’s not what I would recommend to everyone, especially novices, but it’s what worked for me, so I would feel disingenuous leaving it out.

The Program

This program will use three, 4-week cycles, totaling 12 weeks. The days are as follows:

**Week 1**

Day 1
- Shirted Board Press
Day 2
- Speed Bench

The shirted board press accomplishes two functions. The first is to get your body used to heavy weights. The second is to allow time to experiment with your shirt, and learn to get the most support out of it. I used shirted boards as the first movement so that you can get back into your shirt and not have to worry about touching if it has been a while.

Day two is a speed bench with between 45 and 55 percent plus accommodating resistance.

**Week 2**

Day 1
- Special Exercise
Day 2
- Speed Bench

The special exercises are programmed in to keep your raw strength up and give you a break from the super heavy loads on shirt days.
Week 3

Day 1
• Full-range Shirted Bench
Day 2
• Speed Bench

The full range shirt day is all about technique. Most of these days, in fact, won’t even be to a true max. The point is to get you touching consistently.

Week 4

Day 1
• Raw Special Exercise
Day 2
• Speed Bench

Assistance Exercises

What you do for assistance work is up to you and should be based on your own weaknesses. Due to the intense loads shirt benching places on your nervous system and joints, I like to pair lighter assistance movements (tricep extensions, pull-downs, dumbbell flys) with shirt benching. Heavier movements, like pin presses, high board presses, bent-over rows and overhead presses fit well with special exercise days. I would also stay on the lighter side on speed days.

The Program

Week 1

Day 1
• Shirted 1-Board Press

Day one is a 1-board for a couple of reasons. The first is to get you into the near-touching range right off the bat. The second is to save the super-overload weights until later in the program. If you need to, you can work the lighter weights down on higher boards, dropping the boards as the weight gets heavier.

Day 2
• Speed Bench

Work up to 9 sets of 3 speed reps with 45 percent of your raw max, plus light band tension For most beginners, I would use no more than an elitefts™ short mini band, even if you’re strong. Alternate grips every three sets.

Week 2

Day 1
• Special Exercise – Floor Presses
Floor presses work well on this program because they build your ability to strain from a dead stop and give your back a rest from all the arching you do on your shirt days. Work up to a one rep max.

Day 2
· Speed Bench

Work up to 9 sets of 3 speed reps with 50 percent of your raw max and the same band tension as week one. Alternate grips every three sets.

Week 3

Day 1
· Full-range Shirted Bench

Work up to your projected last warm-up in the shirt. Because a last warm-up is often more difficult to touch than an opener, you may use a half-board for added safety if you absolutely need it (but nothing higher).

Day 2
· Speed Bench

Work up to 9 sets of 3 speed reps with 55% of your raw max and the same band tension as week one. Alternate grips every three sets.

Week 4

Day 1
· Special exercise – Board Presses

Work up to a three-rep max on the board of your choice. If you’re strong off the chest but lack lockout power, higher board (3-4). If you are weak off the chest, stick with a low board (1-2).

Day 2
· Speed Bench

Drop back down to 45 percent for 9 sets of 3 speed reps, this time with chains as opposed to band tension. If your raw bench is between 250 and 300 pounds, use two chains. If over 300, use three chains.

Week 5

Day 1
· Shirted 2-board Press

The higher board will allow you to adapt to holding more weight, as well as experiment with the shirt to get more support out of it. Work up to a one rep max.
Day 2
• Speed Bench

Do 50 percent for 9 sets of 3 reps. Use the same chain weight as week four. Alternate grips every three sets.

Week 6

Day 1
• Special Exercise – Floor Presses

Try to beat your three-rep max from last month, or change the movement by adding accommodating resistance in the form of chain.

Day 2
• Speed Bench

Do 55 percent for 9 sets of 3 reps. Use the same chain weight as week four. Alternate grips every three sets.

Week 7

Day 1
• Full-range Shirted Bench

Work up to your projected first attempt in the shirt. You can work the weight down on boards, but you must touch your goal weight.

Day 2
• Speed Bench

Drop back down to 45 percent and go back to band tension for accommodating resistance. If you can maintain your speed, beef up the band tension by using an elitefts™ short monster mini band.

Week 8

Day 1
• Special Exercise – Board Presses

Work up to a one-rep max on the board of your choice. You can either try to beat your PR from the previous month or set a PR on another board.

Day 2
• Speed Bench

Do 50 percent for 9 sets of 3 reps. Use the same band tension as week seven. Alternate grips every three sets.
Week 9

Day 1
• Shirted 3-board press

This is the highest board you will use for the entire cycle. Use today to really push your top-end strength. Work up to a one-rep max.

Day 2
• Speed Bench

Do 55 percent for 9 sets of 3 reps. Use the same band tension as week seven. Alternate grips every three sets.

Week 10

Day 1
• Special Exercise – Floor Presses

Try to beat your three-rep max from last month, or change the movement by adding accommodating resistance in the form of chain.

Day 2
• Speed Bench

Drop back down to 45 percent and go back to chain weight. If you can maintain your speed, add a chain. Do 9 sets of 3 reps and alternate grips every three sets.

Week 11

Day 1
• Full-range Shirted Bench

Work up to your projected second attempt in the shirt. You can work the weight down on boards but you must touch your first and second attempts.

Day 2
• Speed Bench

Raise the weight to 50 percent and go back to the same chain weight as week 10. Do 9 sets of 3 reps and alternate grips every three sets.
Week 12

Day 1
- Special Exercise – Board Presses

Work up to a one-rep max on the board of your choice. You can either try to beat your PR from the previous month or set a PR on another board.

Day 2
- Speed bench

Do 55 percent for 9 sets of 3 reps. Use the same chain weight as week 10. Alternate grips every three sets.

Week 13

Deload both days.

Week 17

Meet
10 Weeks of Tuggin
—By Zane Geeting

This is a sample of a 10-week deadlift cycle for a sumo deadlifter, assuming the meet is week 11. I believe in pulling conventional for most of the training cycle, working in form days every few weeks. This cycle is taken from things that I found to work for me, and things that I have taken from Brian Carroll’s programming for me. So, you are getting the thoughts of two current “Top 5 Deadlifters” in their respective weight classes. This cycle is done mostly unequipped, with the exception of the formwork, so I feel it would also work for a raw lifter. I will first break down the main work, then go deeper into the accessory work.

**Week 1:**

Work up to a three rep max in a conventional stance, then put the weights up on 6-inch blocks and work up to a max triple there as well. You’ll wear no gear aside from a belt to do this. I like to strip the weight back down to 60-65 percent to start the block pulls. Do not miss any reps and do all sets conventional.

**Week 2:**

Work up to a two-rep max in the same conventional stance you used the previous week. After this, you’ll put the weights up on 4-inch blocks and pull up to a two-rep max there. Again, the only gear will be a belt, and you will drop the weight to start the block pulls. If you work up to a very heavy double and are thinking about taking another set, make sure that you know you will get both reps. If there is any doubt that you will, save it for the next time.

**Week 3:**

Formwork in full gear for six singles around 65 percent of your max. Treat it as though the weight is heavy and pull it just as you would at the meet. Follow these up with light stiff-leg deadlifts for three sets of five reps.

**Week 4:**

Work up to a heavy triple from the floor with a doubled monster mini band. You can use whichever stance you prefer here. If you choose the sumo stance, wear your suit bottom or loose briefs. After this, you will go into the rack and work up to a near max triple from just below the knee. This will be conventional and belt only.

**Week 5:**

Work up to a heavy double against the doubled monster mini bands, same rules as last week. For the rack pulls, you will do triples again - conventional. Try to beat last week’s number, even if it’s only by five pounds. Again, do not miss any reps, this rule applies every week.

**Week 6:**

Formwork in full gear. You will do this in the same 60-65 percent range and treat it just like you are taking max attempts at a meet. Do six singles and make sure that your form is exactly how you want it. Follow these with stiff-leg deadlifts again, for three sets of five reps.

**Week 7:**

This week you are going to pull a PR double in a conventional stance, this will beat the double you did earlier in the training cycle. You will follow this up with a PR double with the weights on 4-inch blocks. Go by feel on these, do not shoot for a huge PR and miss. Make sure you get the reps even if it’s only a five or 10-pound PR. If you are
really feeling it, push it, but get your reps.

**Week 8:**

Here is where you are really going to make sure your form is dialed in and that you are ready to pull heavy in your gear. You will go to your competition stance and full gear to pull your opener for a double from the floor. You will then put the weights up on 6-inch blocks and pull your projected third attempt for a double.

**Week 9:**

You'll start to taper off now. This week will be full gear, competition stance, and you'll go up to your opener for the meet. This is your last chance to make any form or technique tweaks that you need. The opener is to be done just as you will do it at the meet.

**Week 10:**

This is your deload before the meet. You will do some accessory work, which I will cover shortly.

As I covered in the introduction to the article, week 11 is the meet. Pick your attempts wisely. You’ll know what your opener is and should be very confident with it at this point. I usually pick a small PR for a second attempt (5-10 pounds). Then, I go for my big goal number on my third attempt. You may need to adjust these attempts depending on how the meet is going. If your squats take a lot out of you and leave your hips or lower back tired, you may not be ready to take a PR on your second and will instead, take a weight that will assure you a PR total, and then go for a PR pull on your third attempt. It’s all about being smart when choosing your attempts. This is where I messed up in my last meet and cost myself a 10-time bodyweight total by being dumb. Learn from my mistakes here.

Next, I’m going to cover the accessory work part of this cycle. I cannot stress enough that people need to pick the proper accessory work to suit their needs as a lifter. You need to be able to take an objective look at where you are weak, and where you need to be strong to make the lift work for you. This can be the hardest thing to do in powerlifting. But remember, a chain is only as strong as its weakest link. Once your form breaks down from a weakness, the lift is as good as over.

If your hamstrings are weak, do GHRs, and do them two to three times a week. There are many variations of these and they all have one thing in common; they work. If your hips are weak, you need to do wide stance box squats for sets of five to eight reps, preferably with the safety squat bar. This will work your arch while also strengthening your weak hips. If your back has a tendency to round over up top, do bent-over rows for sets of 8-10 reps. If your grip fails, do plate pinches and/or dumbbell holds with the heads of hex dumbbells, I do both of these for time. If you get rounded over, or thrown forward off the floor, your abs are probably weak. Do sit-ups on the GHR and standing abs from a high pulley. These should be done heavy for 8-10 reps several times per week. If your lower back is weak or beat up, you should be doing reverse hypers at least two times per week. I do these in the 10-12 rep range with 50 percent of my best squat weight. Again, there are several variations, and they all work well.

The key to any of this is being honest with yourself and doing the things you need, not the things you want to do. These are rarely the same thing. That’s actually the core of this cycle. Most sumo deadlifters will skim right past this cycle because they will see that it’s full of conventional deadlifting for reps. It’s hard to do and a lot of people hate that, especially those of us who pull sumo because we suck at conventional. Well, let me just keep it real with you. My best raw conventional pull in the gym is 605; my best geared sumo pull in the gym is 745. I HATE pulling conventional, it’s awkward, it’s hard, and it’s uncomfortable as hell. But it will make you a stronger sumo
deadlifter, so do it and hit some friggin’ PR’s.

Below is a sample of a training session for someone who needs to bring up their hip and upper back strength.

**Week 4:**

**Warm up and stretching**

**Triples Against Doubled Micro Mini Bands**
- 135 x 3
- 225 x 3
- 315 x 3
- 365 x 3
- 405 x 3
- 425 x 3

**Conventional Rack Pull, upper shin**
- 225 x 3
- 405 x 3
- 495 x 3
- 585 x 3
- 615 x 3

**Wide Stance SS Bar Box Squats**
- 155 x 8
- 245 x 8
- 335 x 8

**Bent-over Rows**
- 135 x 10
- 225 x 10
- 255 x 10

**Reverse Hyper**
- 180 x 12
- 270 x 12
- 360 x 12
- 450 x 12

**GHR Situps**
- Bodyweight x 10
- 25 lb. plate behind the head x 10 x 2 sets.

The amount of volume you do here will be dependent on your level of conditioning. Personally I do more than this, but I have slowly increased my workload over time. Some people will do better with less, and some will require even more. You will figure this out about yourself over time. You can see that I used the SS bar box squats to address the hip weakness and the bent-over rows to address the upper back weakness. There are obviously a million variables here, like what works for the individual lifter, and where exactly they are weak. This was just an example of what a training session would look like. The key was addressing the weak points.

So, in closing, be honest with yourself, do the things you suck at, and you will get stronger. If you do this cycle and don’t hit a PR on the platform, feel free to write me some hate mail in the Q&A. I’m confident I won’t get any.
Moving a Ton of Weight

*How to determine your training intensity level*

—By Dr. David Ryan and David Sandler PhD

It is common for most people to think that they train intense. If you think your training is hardcore, there are several ways to compare it, but the most intense way is total weight moved, divided by total exercise time. The truth is, most training doesn’t even come close to the level of training intensity that elite power athletes can do. It’s a simple concept of moving a total of one ton of weight in less than one minute. The training has some obvious drawbacks and isn’t geared for the beginner.

Depending on the body part, the training is tough and obviously speed is of the essence. If you are lifting less weight, then you have to move it quicker and with less rest just to reach the tonnage level. It requires some calculation after you’re done, cause there is no time while you are lifting. Stop, and you better be throwing 45 pound plates on the bar, or you’re falling behind.

Doing legs makes reaching the 1:1 ratio simple. It only takes four sets of 500 pounds, in less than a minute. Doesn’t sound that tough right? Now let’s train for an hour, surviving that cut takes some guts, power and endurance. The hour requires an intense training that most NFL athletes can’t reach. When you look at the best teams and the best players, they move the most amount of weight in the shortest distance and can continue to do that over a period of time.

To improve your intensity takes organization, effective training partners and strong lifting. Think ahead to determine the type of lifting you’re going to do. Gains or improvement can be done by increasing weight or doing more reps/set, but they must take less time. Some simple calculations can help you understand your level. This principle is offered by great programs like Westside Barbell. Lou Simmons concluded that if the bar is loaded, you should be lifting it, not looking at it.

Take a second and take a look at the programs below and see how they calculate the total weight moved verses the total time. This is my typical leg routine to offer as an example.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exercise</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Set(s)</th>
<th>Rep(s)</th>
<th>Total Weight Displaced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Straight leg Dead lifts</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1350</td>
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<td></td>
<td>225</td>
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<td>2250</td>
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<td></td>
<td>315</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3150</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>405</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4050</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leg Extension*</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2250</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Total weight moved verses total time

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exercise</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Set(s)</th>
<th>Rep(s)</th>
<th>Total Weight Displaced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leg Extension*</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(*superset)</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leg Curl*</td>
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<td>15</td>
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<td>250</td>
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<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Squats</td>
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<td>2250</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>1200</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>420</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TWD= 89885
Now take that total weight displaced (TWD) 89,885 and divide it by the time needed to finish the workout. Example: 89,885 pounds divided by 2000 (one ton) pounds. The total time needed was 60 minutes: 89,885/2000 = 44.9525 tons. Now take the total tons divided by total training time, in this case 45 minutes. Example 44.95 averages to 45 tons divided by 45 minutes, which equals one. 45/45 = 1

For you geeks like us out there, the equation is simple.

W/2000/t = your training intensity score

TWD=W

2000 is the ton conversion factor (2000 lbs = 1 ton)
t = the total training time from start to finish

Training intensity scale:

| Unbelievable, Superman, Hulk-like creature | > 1.1 |
| Amazing, STRONGMAN training level          | ~ 1   |
| Most athletes who are playing in the NFL “very well” | < .99-.88 |
| Most college football players              | < .87-.67 |
| Most high school football players          | < .66-.48 |
| Most high school band players              | < .47-.33 |
| Most scrabble players                      | < .33  |

We are obviously having fun with you on the scale, but this is honestly how we determine professional training programs for some of the fittest athletes in the world. Training the elite is a relative issue for some, but at StrengthPro.com, we have to back-up everything to science and that includes math (the science of measurement).

So, for those of you who time your rest breaks between sets using a calendar, consider this high intensity format of training to improve your fitness level. Work at moving all of the current weight you are doing, but cut off 15 minutes of total training time, instead of just adding more weight or doing more sets and reps. This will add intensity and certainly result in massive power gains to your workout. Remember, you have to eat right, get more rest, and say more prayers, just to recover from this type of workout.

This article is not meant as a scientific basis or true measurement of power, it is only directed as a guide to help inspire you to train harder. For more information on testing measures, contact Dr. David Sandler and attend the Arnold Strength Summit held every year at the Arnold Sports Festival. To attend an educational seminar or to become certified by the NSCA (http://www.nsca-lift.org/) email david@strengthpro.com today.
I am often questioned on the various methods of “awesome.” Since I have a Ph.D. on the subject from none other than Oxford University, I feel very versed in the subject.

We have available to us, like no other time before, mass amounts of information and recipes for success. We can easily go to the internet and “Google” the subject and come up with thousands of pages on the subject. We can go to the library and read “volumes” on the same material. We can go to Amazon, or Barnes and Noble and invest magnificent amounts of money on literature explaining the intricacies of obtaining success, wealth, health, abundance, happy relationships, peace, prosperity of any sort, or generally speaking, awesomeness?

After we have absorbed, more information, we are often left with the inability to move in a direction of the very subject. This is what has become known as the “paralysis of analysis.” We are bogged down to the point of inactivity. We have no clear direction, or maybe, the motivation to move at all.

Many of us, call them “ah-ha” moments. Others may call them epiphanies, or visions. If I may add, mine was more like a thunderbolt that plainly kicked me in my butt. My revelation on the subject of “Simplify, Focus and Conquer” came to me while laying face down after being smashed on the beach of Maui, by a fairly gnarly wave.

While the water and sand swirled and swirled around me, my only thought was, “Which way is up?” and, “How long can I hold my breath?” When my only objective was to breath oxygen after what seemed like hours of spinning in the turbulent water, my life became very simple and I was extremely motivated for that breath.

That was the simplest of activities, yet so important to existence. I was void of all other thoughts, like the bills that needed paid when I got back to the mainland, the weight loss of certain athletes that needed “jump starting” when I got back to the gym, the missed attempts of many personal lifting records were ALL forgotten in those brief, but seemingly long minutes when my only thought was, “Which way is up, and how long can I hold my breath?”

When the sea finally dumped me on the shoreline, my kick became CLEAR! Crystal CLEAR! To once again breathe, I needed to know which way was up, so I needed to follow the bubbles as they ascended. When that was determined, I could put my feet in the opposite direction in order to stand at the ocean’s earliest convenience. Once I was close enough to the sand, I would then be able to breathe.

What I had to do, was remove all distractions, or get rid of all things that weren’t pertaining to my goal of breathing. Essentially, get rid of everything that wasn’t awesome, to become awesome, because when you are contemplating drowning, air is awesome.

What does this have to do with anything? Well, nothing and everything. We all have goals we are trying to obtain. But it’s the trying that gets in the way. We keep adding things to the mixture when the most relevant is to reduce the amount of things that you don’t need.

You don’t need a pre-training beverage, then a during-training beverage to be followed by a post-training recovery beverage in order to squat a heavier weight. You need to get stronger and squat a heavier weight. You may need one or two supplemental lifts, but you won’t need to do 30 sets of 30 reps with an alternative to a reverse hyper, because you don’t have a reverse hyper available. You’ll need to rest that lift to acclimate to the new stresses being place on it. Then you’ll need to feed it in order to produce the proper “environment” for strength gains.

I’ve heard too many times, “I can’t do that diet,” or, “I want to eat healthier.” Ok, ready for this? Get rid of the excuses as to why you can’t, and come up with three reasons why you should. To eat healthier, simply don’t buy unhealthy food! Remove the excess to simplify.
What if the awesomeness is not training, but about a “lifestyle?” Say you want to be a better partner in a relationship… just look at some of the greatest relations in the world, whether it’s between people or countries. Focus on what has worked and to simplify, get rid of the nonsense that isn’t working for you.

Conquering will become the by-product of the Simplify by getting rid of, and then Focusing on the doing more of what is working. Success is easy.

My Daily Recommendation of S+F=C.

Upon waking:
- Acknowledge three things to be thankful for
- List three MGD’s (Must Get Done) that day
- Offload three NE (Non-Essentials)
- Get busy on the important and forget about the urgent.

Go!
My 8-Week Training Prep for My First Bodybuilding Show
—By Josh McMillan

The first 10 weeks weren’t too bad and I still trained as a powerlifter (which I am) with a four-day training split. However, I was getting carbs at the time, and a good amount. Below is the split prior to my contest prep training.

Sunday: Bench
Monday: Off
Tuesday: Deadlift
Wednesday: Bench Accessory
Thursday: Off
Friday: Squat
Saturday: Off

Now, the next eight weeks changed quite a bit with diet, training and cardio. The harder the diet got, the more my training changed and other factors played in. Once the carbs started to cut away and the cardio started to increase, I had to figure out the best way to still get my weight training in (which is my favorite part, of course) and still have energy to have a good workout. So here’s how my training was pretty much set up for the last eight weeks. I will show if I was taking in carbs or no carbs, and also my duration of cardio per day. My training basically went from a four day split to a five to six day split because of my energy level each day. Below is what it looked like:

8 weeks out up until Sept. 28th:

6 day split
Sunday: Chest and Triceps
Monday: Biceps
Tuesday: Hamstrings and Back
Wednesday: rest/off
Thursday: Delts and Triceps
Friday: Quads and Calves
Saturday: off or make-up day

Here is what my cardio looked like 8 weeks out:

8 weeks out: 60 minutes of moderate cardio per day
7.5 weeks out: 90 minutes of moderate cardio per day
6.5 weeks out: 90 minutes of moderate cardio per day
6 weeks out: 60 minutes of cardio per day (backed it down to slow down)
5 weeks out: 75 minutes of cardio per day
4.5 weeks out: 90 minutes of cardio per day
4 weeks out: 105 minutes of cardio per day
3 weeks out: 120 minutes of cardio per day
2 weeks out: 120 minutes of cardio per day
Below is what I looked like during my contest prep for my first bodybuilding show. I’m two weeks out now and
the rest will be left up to Shelby on what he tweaks, adds, or takes away. I just wanted to show what my set-up
looked like and how much time goes into it. Of course there is a lot more with the diet and stuff like that, but this
gives an overview of what my training looked like for the show.
Off Season Figure/Bikini Workout Routine (8-12 week routine)
—By Kelly Booth-Hater

**Legs and Calves – 90 sec rest between all sets and exercises**

Leg Extension
• 3 sets (15, 12, 10 reps) negatives

Leg Press
• 4 sets (15, 12, 10, 15 reps)

Sumo Squat with DB Between Legs
• 3 sets (15, 12, 10 reps)

Walking Lunges with DB
• 3 sets (20 reps each side)

Seated Leg Curl
• 4 sets (15, 12, 10, 15 reps) negatives

Seated Calf Raises
• 5 sets (15, 12, 10, 8, 8 reps)

Standing Calf Raises
• 5 sets (25, 20, 18, 15, 12 reps)

**Chest, Triceps, and Abs – 90 sec rest between all sets and exercises**

Incline Chest Press BB
• 4 sets (12, 10, 8, 12 reps) negatives

10-degree Incline Bench Chest Press DB
• 3 sets (12, 10, 8 reps)

Incline Chest DB Fly
• 3 sets (15, 12, 10 reps)

Dips or Dip Machine
• 4 sets (15, 12, 10, 8 reps)

Skull Crusher with DB
• 3 sets (12, 10, 8 reps)

Abdominal Crunch Machine
• 4 sets (30, 25, 20, 15 reps) negatives

Bicycle on Mat
• 3 sets (20 reps each side)
Back, Biceps, and Calves- 90 sec rest between all sets and exercises

Lat Pull-down Wide
• 4 sets (15, 12, 10, 8 reps) negatives

Machine Row (single arm)
• 4 sets (12, 12, 12, 12 reps) squeeze shoulder blades back before rowing

Pullups (assisted)
• 3 sets (12, 10, 8 reps) negatives

Cable Row (V-bar)
• 3 sets (12, 10, 8 reps) negatives

DB Pull-over
• 3 sets (15, 15, 15 reps)

BB Curl
• 4 sets (12, 10, 8, 12 reps) negatives

Hammer Curls (alternating)
• 3 sets (12, 12, 10 reps)

Straight Leg Press Calf Raises
• 5 sets (30, 25, 20, 15, 10 reps)

Standing Calf Machine
• 3 sets (12, 10, 8 reps)

Shoulders, Rear Deltoids, and Abs- 90 sec rest between all sets and exercises

Standing BB Shoulder Press
• 5 sets (15, 12, 10, 8, 15 reps) negatives

Seated DB Shoulder Press
• 4 sets (12, 10, 8, 8 reps)

BB Upright Row
• 4 sets (12, 10, 8, 12 reps)

Cable Lateral Raises
• 4 sets (15, 12, 10, 15 reps) negatives

Rear Deltoid Machine
• 5 sets (18, 15, 12, 10, 8 reps) negatives

Rear Deltoid Fly on Incline Bench
• 3 sets (15, 12, 10 reps)
Stability Ball Crunch with Weight
· 3 sets (25, 25, 25 reps)

Full Body Crunch
· 3 sets (50, 50, 50 reps)

Abdominal Twist (feet off ground)
· 3 sets (30, 30, 30 reps each side)

This routine is only four days. Depending on what you need to work on to perfect your body, adding another day of the same body part already trained that you are lacking would be ideal. Example: if you need more development in your back, then lift back twice a week, yet space it out as far away from each other as possible (Wednesday/Saturday). This routine is a basic 4-day split, depending on your body type and level of fitness, you may have to tweak the routine to fit you. Go to failure on ALL sets. The last 2-3 reps should be almost impossible to achieve, but still keep good to perfect form. Remember in Figure/Bikini it is all about the way you look, not how strong you are.

During off-season I still stick with at least 50 minutes of cardio six times a week, while consuming around 1600-1800 calories.

I highly recommend staying lean during the off-season, so contest prep will be much easier and enjoyable. I prefer to eat clean 99.99% of the time.

If you would like further information/coaching for figure/bikini or basic health/weight loss, contact Kelly Booth-Hater at booth.kelly@ymail.com or visit her website at www.kellysfitlifestyle.com
Adapting
—By Adam Driggers

If you train long enough, you’ll have to adapt to any number of situations. These include family, schedules, careers, injuries and we could go on and on. However, for the sake of this article I want to focus on adapting to injuries (pain), specifically chronic pain. This is the kind of pain that sets in and doesn’t go away. You might get a break from the pain from time-to-time when your injury is given enough rest, but when heavy training resumes, so does the pain. When this is the case, we have to learn to adapt our training to work around the pain and continue to make progress.

In my case, the constant pain is in my elbows. For years, I tried everything I could think of to get rid of the pain that was causing me to limp through every single bench session. Medications, stretching, massage, injections, and time off were all given a fair shake. Nothing worked long enough to get me back on track. My bench suffered and I have been without a PR bench for three years. I tried ignoring the problem because in the back of my mind I knew this would be the end of my competitive lifting. I just knew that my elbows would be the reason I would fall absent from the platform. Not giving up easily, I sat down and assessed the issue, which I never did before. I looked at everything, tracing out several possible solutions. The following was my conclusion and has put me back on the road to a PR.

The root of my problem was not the bench, but the extreme extension of the wrist under heavy squats. Every heavy squat session was taking a heavy toll on the muscles of my forearms causing extreme pain in my elbows on the following bench training session. My training is setup for squats on Saturday morning, with bench sessions on Monday afternoon. This was not enough time to allow my elbows to recover from damage done on Saturday before pounding them again with heavy benching. I was limping through every bench session and wondering why my numbers were going south. The fix was simply adapting my training schedule to allow more time between heavy sessions. This is what I do now:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Shirted bench</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>Deadlift</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>Accessory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>Suited Squat (five days after a shirted bench)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>Light to Moderate bench – no shirt (possibly dynamic work)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>Deadlift</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>Accessory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>Light to Moderate Squat – no suit (possibly dynamic work)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>Shirted Bench (nine days after a heavy squat)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Remembering that I suffer the most under a heavy squat, not the bench, this schedule gives me five days to rest my arms between a heavy bench and a heavy squat, and nine days to rest my arms following a heavy squat. Remember to gauge what light means in regards to your injury. For my light-to-moderate means, I stay under 60 percent. Any more than that and I experience more stress than I am capable of recovering from.

I generally start from the date of the meet and back up 10 weeks, to figure out how I need to prepare. I will use the Monday before the meet as my last shirted bench. That gives me five to six days to rest before the meet, and goes exactly how my training flows. Nothing really changes for the meet except the pull and accessory sessions are removed. My meet training is only different from my off-season training schedule by making sure the dates line up. Everything else is kept the same year-round by increasing or decreasing the weight around strength cycles.

If you are suffering from chronic pain that seems to be affecting your training, take a look at your schedule and see what you can do to allow more time to rest. Beating up an injury week after week is not a good idea, and really pretty stupid, and STUPID IS FAST!
Strength-Focused Olympic Weightlifting Program

—By Dr. Michael Hartman

Evidence from decades of research and observations of high-level Olympic weightlifting indicates that maximum strength is strongly related to performance.

Although explaining performance in the sport of Olympic weightlifting is a multi-factorial problem, there is little doubt that maximum strength is a key component. Greater levels of strength may increase speed, power and technique. Therefore, the strength component of Olympic weightlifting should be the foundation of any program. That being said, strength in the absence of technique is worthless on the platform. In Olympic weightlifting, maximal strength is very important, but an athlete who is unable to apply that strength in specific movements and positions will not succeed in competition. The transfer of maximal strength to proficient weightlifting technique is a complicated process. Transfer of strength to technique, and ultimately the development of technique, does not occur through mindless repetitions of a PVC pipe or an empty bar. Positive transfer only occurs when the athlete uses exercises that are similar, in terms of load, performance, tempo, and structure, to the competition movements.

The program presented here is intended to increase strength, but in the specific movements necessary to compete in weightlifting, considerable emphasis is placed on comprehensive improvements on muscle and structural strength. This process is important for two reasons.

First, although it can be argued that some muscles are not directly involved in a weightlifting movement or are involved only to a minor extent, no one has perfect technique, and rarely can anyone produce exactly the same technique for every lift. When a lift (snatch or clean and jerk) is not technically perfect, it is possible that many of the normally less-involved muscles become more involved, thus a stronger assist of the musculature can enhance the potential of success even though technique is not exact. Second, many muscles act to stabilize the body during a lift, and one could argue that stronger stabilization might reduce injury.

This program is broken down into two, four-week cycles. The exercises used in each four-week cycle remain constant, but the volume (sets-reps) and intensity (%max) changes on a weekly basis.

Athletes beginning this program should have a recent competition total (snatch and clean and jerk) and know their max back squat and front squat. These exercises are programmed based on the percentage of a max in every program. Only the top sets (work sets) are listed in this program. Prior to training with top sets, perform the necessary warm-up to attempt these weights. Not all exercises have a training percentage; on these exercises you should use a weight that allows you to complete all sets and reps.

Rest as needed between sets. Missed attempts are normal with Olympic weightlifting. However, multiple misses with the same weight can be detrimental to progress. No more than three misses at a given weight are permitted. If you can’t complete a lift after three attempts, it’s time to move on to the next exercise.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strength/Cycle I</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Day 1</strong></td>
<td><strong>Week 1</strong></td>
<td><strong>Week 2</strong></td>
<td><strong>Week 3</strong></td>
<td><strong>Week 4</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Back Squat</td>
<td>5 x 5 @ 80%</td>
<td>3 x 5 @ 85%</td>
<td>3 x 3 @ 90%</td>
<td>3 x 2 @ 95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Front Squat</td>
<td>5 x 3 @ 85%</td>
<td>3 x 3 @ 90%</td>
<td>3 x 2 @ 92%</td>
<td>3 x 1 @ 95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power Jerk</td>
<td>5 x 2 @ 85%</td>
<td>5 x 2 @ 87%</td>
<td>5 x 1 @ 90%</td>
<td>3 x 1 @ 95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Day 2</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hang Snatch</td>
<td>5 x 2 @ 75%</td>
<td>5 x 2 @ 77%</td>
<td>3 x 1 @ 80%</td>
<td>3 x 1 @ 82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hang Clean</td>
<td>5 x 2 @ 75%</td>
<td>5 x 2 @ 77%</td>
<td>3 x 1 @ 80%</td>
<td>3 x 1 @ 82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RDL</td>
<td>3 x 5</td>
<td>3 x 5</td>
<td>3 x 5</td>
<td>3 x 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Day 3</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Back Squat</td>
<td>3 x 5 @ 80%</td>
<td>3 x 5 @ 80%</td>
<td>3 x 5 @ 80%</td>
<td>3 x 5 @ 80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Front Squat</td>
<td>3 x 3 @ 80%</td>
<td>3 x 3 @ 80%</td>
<td>3 x 3 @ 80%</td>
<td>3 x 3 @ 80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heavy Abdominals</td>
<td>5 sets</td>
<td>5 sets</td>
<td>5 sets</td>
<td>5 sets</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Day 4</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snatch</td>
<td>3 x 1 @ 75,80,85%</td>
<td>3 x 1 @ 75,80,85%</td>
<td>2 x 1 @ 75,80,85,90%</td>
<td>1 x 1 @ 75,80,85,90,95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clean &amp; Jerk</td>
<td>5 x 1+1 @ 75,80,85%</td>
<td>3 x 1+1 @ 75,80,85%</td>
<td>2 x 1+1 @ 75,80,85,90%</td>
<td>1 x 1+1 @ 75,80,85,90,95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clean Grip Deadlift</td>
<td>1 x 5 @ 100%</td>
<td>1 x 3 @ 110%</td>
<td>1 x 1 @ 120%</td>
<td>1 x 1 @ Max</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strength/Cycle II</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Day 1</strong></td>
<td><strong>Week 5</strong></td>
<td><strong>Week 6</strong></td>
<td><strong>Week 7</strong></td>
<td><strong>Week 8</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Back Squat</td>
<td>3 x 5 @ 90%</td>
<td>3 x 3 @ 92%</td>
<td>3 x 2 @ 95%</td>
<td>2 x 2 @ 100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SGIP + OHS</td>
<td>3 x 3 x 3 x 3</td>
<td>5 x 2+2</td>
<td>5 x 2+2</td>
<td>3 x 1+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power Clean</td>
<td>3 x 3 @ 80%, 3 x 2 @ 85%</td>
<td>3 x 2 @ 85%, 3 x 1 @ 87%</td>
<td>3 x 1 @ 87%, 2 x 1 @ 90%</td>
<td>2 x 1 @ 90%, 2 x 1 @ 95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Day 2</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power Snatch</td>
<td>5 x 2 @ 70%</td>
<td>5 x 2 @ 70%</td>
<td>5 x 2 @ 70%</td>
<td>5 x 2 @ 70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pair Clean + Pair Jerk</td>
<td>5 x 1+1 @ 70%</td>
<td>5 x 1+1 @ 70%</td>
<td>5 x 1+1 @ 70%</td>
<td>5 x 1+1 @ 70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Front Squat</td>
<td>5 x 3 @ 85%</td>
<td>5 x 2 @ 87%</td>
<td>3 x 2 @ 90%</td>
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<td>5 x 1+1 @ 80%</td>
<td>3 x 1+1 @ 85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snatch Grip Deadlift</td>
<td>1 x 5 @ 100%</td>
<td>1 x 3 @ 110%</td>
<td>1 x 1 @ 120%</td>
<td>1 x 1 @ Max</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Meet Preparation for the Clean and Jerk
—By Doug Berninger

This article will focus on how I prepare myself for a meet, starting eight weeks out. We will be looking specifically at the clean and jerk, although my preparation for the snatch is very similar. The only difference is that the volume for the snatch is generally greater than the clean and jerk but, again, this is just how I prepare. Many coaches/lifters program differently.

Overcoming Adversity

In strength sports, you won’t see many competitors that are 100 percent healthy. If they are, they’re either lying or new to the sport and have not trained very long. It’s not that these sports have great danger associated with them (weightlifting is one of the safest sports for risk of injury when it comes to injuries per hour trained), but the amount of wear and tear over years of training will even get to the most talented, genetically gifted athlete.

Personally, I had knee issues on-and-off over the last three years, which has changed the way I train. I can no longer front squat more than one session a month without my knees becoming extremely painful. Because of this, recovering from cleans is the main focus. I’ve switched to performing a few more warm-up sets of doubles or triples to get the extra volume of recovering.

I know what you’re thinking and, yes, I know, it doesn’t make any sense that my knees would hurt from front squats and not-so-much from squat cleans. Believe me, it drives me crazy, but it must be something different in the mechanics of each. That’s for a different article, though.

Baseline?

Many times you will see a program built off of percentages of one-repetition maximums. This is just the way it was done since the time of the dinosaurs. It makes sense to take your best effort and use that as your baseline, but what happens if you program a six to eight week cycle and you are better, or Alexeyev forbid, worse than that baseline weight? Well, then you’re actually above or below that percentage you think you’re working at. This isn’t a huge deal if you’re continuously lifting from cycle to cycle and just hit a new PR recently. If you have not hit a PR since that last big meet a year ago and you’re using that to base your training weights off of, you’re going to have problems. So, within the last couple years, I’ve been using my intended results of the upcoming meet as my baseline.

This method will work well as long as the lifter uses a mark that is within reach. If they have never cleaned more than 120kg and they set their mark at 135kg for a six-week cycle, this may not work well for them. So, with this new knowledge, how would you program using percentages for daily training? Because you’re going to be basing your weights off of your targeted weight that you want to hit at that next meet, you would simply leave a little room for error so-to-speak. What I mean is that if you wanted to go up to 85 percent on any given day, you would use two to five percent below that weight. Below is an example.

Intended Clean and Jerk = 130kg x .85 = 110kg
Clean and Jerk @ “85%” = 107kg (I used 82% for my actual working weight)

Remember, and I cannot stress this enough, we use percentages to hit certain ranges for rate of force development (RFD) purposes, not just to simply hit a certain weight on a given day because we want. Sure, you could train that way, but you would be missing a BIG point. Namely, that point is that sometimes you need to work on one end of the force curve, and other times you need to work the other end. It’s all about RFD!
Starting off the Program

Now that we have our baseline to set our percentages off of, what is the next step? I like to start by deciding how many days I will be training on a weekly basis, starting backwards. So I’ll take the week of the meet and work backwards. Not only does this give you an idea of how many weeks you are actually out from the meet, but it also gives you an idea of how many sessions you can get in before the meet. For our example, which I will include at the end, we’ll say we have eight weeks until the meet.

Lifts to Perform

We have our baseline and how many sessions we have until the meet. Next up, what lifts will we be doing? Some lifters like to do a lot of assistance lifts, like powerlifters, to bring up their competition lifts. I was once like this, but in the last year I have taken a minimalist approach to my training. This is especially true within four weeks of a meet, where I am usually performing both the snatch, as well as the clean and jerk every session I train. Practice makes perfect, right? For the sake of a shorter article, and to save your sanity, I will not lay out every lift I do within an eight-week cycle, but suffice it to say that there are not many more than the actual competition lifts. I’ll usually do two main lifts per session, one or two accessory lifts and some abdominal work.

Periodization

I’ve used many different formats over the years and have found that a block-type periodization has worked well for me. Once you’ve found what works for you, stick to it and progress. Within this block periodization, I may program differing waves of intensity from session-to-session, or week-to-week. This really depends on how close I am to the meet and how I’m feeling going into the cycle. I’ll give the overall feel of this in the example below.

Intensity

For the most part, I don’t usually go below 80 percent very often. However, going back to my comment on RFD, it is pertinent to use lower percentages at certain points in training cycles. I just don’t go to that low end as the meet approaches. As my mentor, Todd Baden, often says, “You have to practice heavy weight to make heavy weight!” The main factor, in my opinion, that drives a cycle’s intensity will be the higher percentage clean and jerk, and squat attempts. The more attempts you take at these, the more recovery you will need between the heavy sessions.

(Side note: I used John Broz’ method of going up to a daily max every session and it prepared me well, but my body was crushed after the meet. Personally this approach just isn’t for me and my problematic knees, but it could be just the right thing for you.)

Volume

I like to track volume by total repetitions on a weekly basis, setting a weekly total and breaking that down between sessions. So, if you wanted an even training load for the week and were training seven sessions, you would distribute your total weekly volume into those seven sessions. However, you don’t have to be equal every session. I like to have most of my volume done in the first half of the week to allow for recovery entering into the following week. I generally stick to no more than 20 repetitions per training session for the clean and jerk, since it takes more of a toll on the body than the snatch. I should note that warm-up reps are counted in that total of 20. You’re doing the work, so why not count it? I never go above doubles (two reps/set) for my working sets and, as the meet gets closer, I usually drop to strictly singles for work sets.
Week-to-Week Approach

I will generally program 2-3 weeks of progression, with the third or fourth week as a rest week and that would be one cycle. So, in eight weeks, I can get in two cycles of training. When I use this rest week will ultimately depend on how I’m feeling after those initial two to three weeks. If I hit it hard, or I’m not adapting the way I thought I would when I originally programmed the cycle, I will take the rest week early. Again, it just depends on how I’m feeling.

I like to have an approximate idea of the average intensity of each week. Either I’ll make an exact number (85 percent), or a range (80-90 percent), for this average intensity. I’ve used both methods, and I like the way it has worked. From there, I will break each session down to follow that general pattern. So, if I wanted one week to reflect 85 percent, I would probably be performing sets within ± 5 percent of that percentage. That way I would be close to that average intensity.

Session-to-Session Approach

I like to follow what I’ve programmed for the most part. However, I will not hesitate to go heavier if I’m feeling great that day. The same goes for if I’m feeling tired, or not feeling the lifts on a given day. If you’re a weightlifter, you know what I’m talking about. Most of the time you can “feel” the lift, but there are those rare days where it feels like you’re a beginner. It is fine to go with how your body feels, but don’t get into the habit of going off of the plan. If you do this too much, there really isn’t a reason for the program in the first place, right?

On the flip side, if you’re one of those people that hate going off of your program and stick to it no matter how you feel, get a clue! Your program can’t ever take into account all the extraneous variables that put stress on your body (sleep patterns, work, family, financial issues, etc). You have to be instinctive with your training, while sticking to the plan as close as possible. It’s a give-and-take approach. Try it out and see if it helps your numbers.

Week of the Meet

I usually decrease my volume down to around 70 percent of what I’m used to for the week of a meet. I believe this helps with recovery and getting ready for the meet. I still like to train relatively heavy at least one day during the week of the meet. Usually, this is on a Wednesday if the meet is on a Saturday (which most are). However, I have trained heavier on a Thursday and then lighter on a Friday before a Saturday meet. It just depends on how my body is feeling that week. Remember, instinctive training!

Putting it Together: The Scenario

We’re eight weeks out and we’ve decided to start with seven sessions per week, progressing to eight, and finally regressing to six (for recovery/peaking purposes). Because we’ve decided on using number of sessions per week, not days, we can be more flexible if some kind of nonsense gets in the way of our training/life. If you planned on sessions one and two being on Monday, but had to work overtime that day, you can just push it back to Tuesday, and so on.

Everything below only pertains to the clean and jerk. The weeks may show six to eight sessions, but that does not necessarily mean that I am performing the clean and jerk every day. As I said above, as the meet draws closer, I will increase the frequency of the clean and jerk.
Week 1: Average Intensity of 80% / 85 Total C&J Reps
- Sessions 1, 4, 7 = 77%
- Sessions 2, 5 = 80%
- Sessions 3, 6 = 85%

Week 2: Average Intensity of 90% / 115 Total C&J Reps
- Sessions 1, 4, 7 = 90%
- Sessions 2, 5 = 93%
- Sessions 3, 6 = 85%

Week 3: Average intensity of 85% / 130 Total C&J Reps
- Sessions 1, 4, 7 = 85%
- Sessions 2, 5, 8 = 80%
- Sessions 3, 6 = 88%

Week 4 (Rest): Average Intensity of 80% / 100 Total C&J Reps
- Sessions 1, 4 = 80%
- Sessions 2, 5 = 82%
- Sessions 3, 6 = 85% (less volume in these sessions)

Week 5: Average intensity of 95% / 125 Total C&J Reps
- Sessions 1, 4, 7 = 93%
- Sessions 2, 5, 8 = 88%
- Sessions 3, 6 = 98%

Week 6: Average intensity of 85% / 140 Total C&J Reps
- Sessions 1, 4, 7 = 85%
- Sessions 2, 5, 8 = 80%
- Sessions 3, 6 = 90%

Week 7: Average intensity of 95% / 115 Total C&J Reps
- Sessions 1, 4, 7 = 98%
- Sessions 2, 5, 8 = 90%
- Sessions 3, 6 = 85%

Week 8 (Meet Week): Average intensity of 85% / 80 Total C&J Reps
- Sessions 1, 4 = 90%
- Sessions 2, 5 = 85%
- Sessions 3 = 80%

Hindsight is 20/20

Once the meet is finished, make sure you reflect on your performance. Not only on how you performed on the competition platform, but also on how your training cycle went. Was it an effective meet cycle? Has there been a cycle that worked better in the past? You might find that the current cycle you used was the best, or worst, cycle you’ve ever used. However, you won’t know until you compare it to past cycles and their coinciding meet performances. I’ve found this process to be extremely helpful. I’ll never say that my approach is the best approach to meet preparation because it is continually adapting as I learn new information from more knowledgeable lifters and coaches. Do your homework and continue to improve yourself!
Lower Body Agility/Power/Strength Training for a Collegiate Field Hockey Goalie
—By Jason Mensinger

The sport of field hockey is an activity that requires a high degree of physical preparation due to the interaction of all three energy systems (ATP-PC, anaerobic glycolysis, and aerobic glycolysis). Speed, muscular power and agility are other characteristics that determine success in female field hockey players. When designing a training program for a field hockey athlete, one needs to consider these variables, along with the position that the individual plays as physical characteristics typically vary by position. In addition, injury prevention should be a high priority in any program, and should take into consideration sport demands, along with the needs of the individual athlete.

The purpose of this article is to outline a lower body agility, power, and strength program developed for a collegiate field hockey goalie. There currently is not a great deal of research that focuses on the demands specific to goalies. Although specific qualities have been identified as being important for field hockey in general, it is important to realize that goalies focus on demands unique to their position. Individual athletes needs in regards to items such as past injury history, gender, and training experience should also be accounted for when designing a training program for any athlete. Gender differences in occurrence of both acute and chronic injuries demands that muscle imbalances and neuromuscular deficiencies be addressed to aid in injury prevention with female athletes.

Athlete Background

At the time of the development of this plan, the athlete finished her second year of participation and her first as a starter (Division III NCAA). She did see playing time in her first season; however, she also missed a measurable amount of time secondary to injury (strained quadriceps). As a full-time starter her second season, she sustained another quadriceps strain, however it was mild and she did not miss any practices or competitions due to the injury. In between her first and second seasons of play, the athlete participated in an off-season physical preparation program designed by the author, which was the first time the athlete performed a structured program. The athlete experienced marked gains in strength in her core strength training exercises (bench press and box squat) over the course of that first off-season, which was believed to have helped her performance and decreased her injury occurrence in her first full season as a starter.

Going into her third season, the head coach discussed with the author some other performance goals for this athlete. It was believed by both the author and the coach, that the athlete needed to improve on movement skills and power to further her skills and improve performance. A schedule was designed to meet both her general physical needs, and her specific skill needs during the non-traditional spring hockey season. A general outline of the athlete’s schedule is illustrated in table one. This portion of her off-season training was going to be taking place during the non-traditional spring season. In communication with the head coach, it was agreed upon that she would have one day of skills work factored into her training week. The skills portion of her routine would be carried out with her position coach, who communicated with the author throughout the training period on the athlete’s progress.

Program Development

As stated previously, both general physical traits needed for the sport and position, along with individual needs of the athlete need to be taken into account when designing this program. A six-week training block with two three-week “sub-blocks” is designed to organize the athlete’s training at this time. As shown in table one, both upper-body strength training and general conditioning (low intensity cardiac efficiency work to assist with recovery) takes place during this time as well, but it is beyond the scope of this article to address this portion of the athlete’s training regimen. The athlete is encouraged to utilize recovery means (i.e. self-myofascial release with a foam roller) to assist with recovery between training sessions. Although field players require demands of all three energy systems coupled with a unique postural stress, goalies have different demands in these areas. Through observation, it is apparent that the field hockey goalie needs to carry out short bursts of intense activity...
(ATP-PC system) with varying amounts of recovery, along with the ability to move quickly in any direction to stop shots on goal (agility). Movement demands unique to the position includes getting up off the ground as quickly as possible after making saves. Although postural demands to the goalie are evident, they are different than what a field player experiences. To add to these demands, the goalie must do all of this while wearing the necessary protective equipment, which one could safely assume would add to the physical stress of the position.

Although the athlete did not miss any practices or games due to injury in her second season, the fact that she did sustain the same injury that caused her to miss time is something to be addressed. Researchers have examined acute and chronic injuries as they relate to females and knee injuries. The concept that women have a tendency to be quadriceps dominant, meaning there is a significant imbalance in the strength between the quadriceps and hamstring muscle groups. Although there does not seem to be a connection found between quadriceps dominance and quadriceps strains, it would seem intuitive that there could be the potential that quadriceps dominance and the movement demands of the goalie position could place added strain on the musculature.

To improve her movement abilities and power, both agility training along with plyometrics need to be included in the development of the training plan. Chimera et al. stated that plyometric training can enhance neuromuscular control for injury prevention, along with assisting to correct faulty jumping and cutting mechanics. The exercise selection for this aspect of her training was based upon the demands of her position. Straight ahead sprinting was also included in this portion of the athlete's training. Distances for sprint training were kept short (i.e. 10-15yds), since sprinting for speed purposes for longer distances is not significant for a goalie. It is important to realize that training of this sort places a high neuromuscular demand on the athlete, which means that the volume of this along with other types of training (i.e. strength training and skill work) needs to be closely monitored to prevent overtraining. Rest intervals in between sets and exercises must also allow for complete recovery when performing these activities (work:rest of 1:10-20).

Lower Body Agility/Power/Strength Training

The general lower body training was performed with the author on day four of the athlete's training schedule (table one). Table two lists a sample workout performed by the athlete on this training day, along with how certain drills progressed over the course of the training period. The athlete began every session with the complete dynamic warm-up listed in table three. The warm-up consisted of stationary movements, ground-based mobility, static stretching, and movement-based exercises. The athlete would then perform her agility/movement training, which primarily consisted of a modified pro-agility (figure one) and the goalie “turn-step” drill (figure two). The pro-agility drill was modified by having the athlete begin in the bottom portion of a pushup, which was done to have the athlete work on getting off the ground quicker. The progressions for these drills are listed in table two. Progression would take place based on the observations of the author, along with subjective feedback from the athlete. The sprinting (added during second three-week block) and plyometric activities then followed. The athlete utilized a kneeling jump progression to assist with power development through her hips. It also was used to help encourage quick movement from the ground, which was something both of her coaches wanted her to work on for the following season. Figure three illustrates the basic kneeling jump exercise. This movement was chosen as a base plyometric movement for improving lower body power in this athlete and was combined with other movements (i.e. kneeling jump to medicine ball toss) based on how the athlete adapted.

A sample strength-training day is illustrated in table four. Due to the demands placed on the athlete in the other areas of training, her lower body strength training was low volume. Due to common muscle imbalanced previously described in female athletes, a main focus for this athlete was development of her posterior chain musculature (hamstrings, glutes, low back). As described previously, this athlete had a history of quadriceps strains. The prevalence of quadriceps dominance in females, along with the prevalence of injuries associated with this
common imbalance, influenced the exercise selection in this area. Although the literature examined does not appear to directly connect quadriceps dominance to the occurrence of quad strains, it was concluded by the author that over reliance on this muscle group during activities associated with her position caused fatigue in this muscle group, predisposing her to strains. This was concluded based upon the decrease in occurrence and minimal time required for treatment in her second year of play after an off-season of strengthening the posterior chain.

The main exercise associated with her lower body strength (and used for testing) was the box squat. Using the box squat assists in helping the athlete “sit back” more when they squat, which further recruits the muscles of the posterior chain. The percentages and volumes used were to help focus on strength development, while at the same time keeping volume moderate due to the other training variables. This particular percentage rotation was used in the past by the author with other athletes with positive outcomes. Accessory exercises included exercises to target both the posterior chain and the abdomen. The abdominal exercises focused on stabilization through plank variations; these were chosen to facilitate muscle endurance through the abdomen/low back, which can help to maintain postural alignment and optimal length-tension relationships in the hip musculature.

**Conclusion**

The athlete continued performing a similar schedule to the one presented until the end of the school year. It should be noted that due to the nature of the training schedule, it was crucial to have good communication with all individuals involved (the athlete and coaches) to make sure that the athlete did not over train. Progressions for exercises during the training session took place based on how the athlete felt and how well she performed. Both observations from the author along with the athlete’s feedback dictated this progress.

Although this program did address performance variables for this particular athlete, it should be noted that carryover from this and other programs to other athletes may be limited. Individuals developing physical preparation programs for athletes are encouraged to design training programs based on the principles and variables described in the beginning of the article. Certainly exercises and concepts like the progressions outlined may be applied to other individuals playing this position. This article represents only a six-week block of training. Training modes and intensities change based on the athlete’s progression after this six-week block.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day 1</th>
<th>Day 2</th>
<th>Day 3</th>
<th>Day 4</th>
<th>Day 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dynamic Warm-Up</td>
<td>Dynamic Warm-Up</td>
<td>Dynamic Warm-up</td>
<td>Dynamic Warm-Up</td>
<td>Dynamic Warm-Up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strength Training - Upper Body (*Main Lift + Accessories)</td>
<td>Goalie Skills with position coach</td>
<td>Strength Training (Upper Body Accessories)</td>
<td>Speed/Agility/Plyometric Training</td>
<td>Low intensity cardiac work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low intensity cardiac + abdominal work</td>
<td></td>
<td>Strength Training - Lower Body (**Main Lift + Accessories)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Main lift upper body - flat bench press.

**Main lift lower body - box squat
### Table 2. Sample workout (Agility/Power)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dynamic Warm-Up</td>
<td>See table 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-10-5 Pro-Agility from Push-Up X5</td>
<td>Progression- ¾ speed, full speed, full speed with visual directions (author would point left or right) when athlete would rise from push-up position.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turn-Step Drill X5</td>
<td>Progression- Half speed, ¾ speed, full speed (all of these with predetermined pivot direction). Speed progression was then restarted with directions of pivots given during drill by author.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kneeling Jumps 5X3</td>
<td>Progression- Kneeling Jump, Kneeling Jump to Medicine Ball throw, Kneeling Jump to Broad Jump, Kneeling Jump to Broad Jump to Medicine Ball throw. Progression based on ease of movement during training sessions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 3. Dynamic Warm-Up

- Jumping Jacks X10
- Seal Jumps X10
- Flings X10
- Prisoner Squats X10
- Reverse Lunge & Twist X10
- Low Pogo Hogs X20
- High Pogo Hops X10
- Straight Leg Kicks X10
- Hip Crossovers X10
- Single Leg Iron Cross X10
- Prone Scorpion X10
- Rollover to V-Sit X10
- 3 way groin stretch 15 sec each
- 90/90 Piriformis X20 sec
- Hip Circles X20
- Static Hip Flexor X20 seconds
- *Perform the following for a distance of 15-20 yds X2
  - 50% Run
  - Power Skips
  - Side Shuffle
  - High Knee Butt Kick (X5) to 75% sprint
  - Backwards Cycle
1. Begin in the middle cone/marker in the bottom portion of a push-up
2. Push-up off the ground and run to one side and touch the cone/marker with the same side hand.
3. Run to the other cone/marker and touch with same side hand.
4. Run through the middle cone/marker to finish

1. Begin at cone one and sprint to cone two.
2. Upon reaching cone two decelerate and square your feet, then pivot on one foot* (either right or left) 90 degrees (face laterally away from cones) before sprinting back to the first cone.
3. Upon returning to cone one, square your feet and pivot as in step 2. Run back to cone 2
4. Stop and pivot before returning and sprinting through cone one

*Foot position and direction one is facing depends on direction of pivot.
Table 4. Sample Strength Training Workout

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exercise</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Box Squat 75/5, 80/5, 85/5+</td>
<td>Numbers represent percentage of 1RM** and number of repetitions performed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 week rotation based on the following percentages and repetitions:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Week 1 - 75/5, 80/5, *85/5+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Week 2 - 80/3, 85/3, *90/3+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Week 3 - 85/5, 90/3, *95/1+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Week 4 - Same as week 1 - recalculate RM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>based upon how many reps of previous weeks 95% were performed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Stability Ball Hip Lift/</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3X12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Front Plank 3X45 seconds</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* + sign denotes that the athlete can perform more repetitions than prescribed if possible
**RM refers to repetition maximum. Athlete used 90% of most recent test max as her reference number for weights utilized.

Percentage and repetition scheme taken from Wendler®

Author Bio
Jason Mensinger is a certified athletic trainer with additional certifications in performance enhancement and corrective exercise through the National Academy of Sports Medicine. He is an instructor in the Athletic Training Education Program at Neumann University (Aston, PA) and also teaches courses in the Strength and Conditioning Minor. Jason conducts private consulting and training through Mensinger Performance & Fitness Systems (www.mensingerpandfystems.com).

References
My “Wussy” Bench Cycle

—By Vincent Dizenzo

I have been competing approximately four times a year for the last couple of years. I had very good success, but I’ve also beaten myself up while doing so. For me, I train to compete. I find it hard to be motivated unless I have a competition in mind. That being said, I developed the following program as kind of an easier cycle than I am used to.

Originally, I called it my “wussy” cycle. then, Brian, my training partner, aptly renamed it to a peaking cycle. For many years now my training cycles have consisted of four days a week (two upper and two lower), with around six or more exercises. That’s 24 exercises a week. For this cycle, I chose to train only three days a week (two upper and one lower) implementing only three to four movements. That averages out to be around twelve exercises a week. Doing this, I dropped my workload by more than half.

For my lower work, I use 5/3/1. As a bencher, and as an older guy with multiple injuries, I made a few adjustments to that portion on my programming. I use a trap bar for deadlifts and a safety squat bar for squatting. Coupled with that, I throw in a couple of exercises for my abs and low back. Lastly, I drag the sled one day a week. This serves two purposes; it’s lower-body work and a conditioning tool.

Now before you go considering just taking this as a lazy couple of months, use the additional time in your week to work on rehab/prehab, recovery and conditioning. Make sure to get your little bumps and bruises under control. How to do that is another article all of it’s own.

If your old, beat up, or just in need of a little break, give this cycle a try. I don’t really recommend it for a newbie. You newer guys need a ton more volume to build up a solid foundation. I hope this helps a few competitors out there. Good lifting and good luck to all.

Friday ME Bench Week 1:

- 2-board press with shirt x 1, then 80% x 3
- One arm dumbbell overhead press 3 x 10
- Rolling dumbbell tricep extension 3 x 10

Friday ME Bench Week 2:

- Incline press, pinkies on ring x 1, then 85% x 3
- Reverse band flyes 3 x 10
- Spud strap pushdowns 3 x 10

Friday ME Bench Week 3:

- 1-board press with shirt x 1, then 80% x 3
- Side raises 3 x 10
- Tate presses 3 x 10

Friday ME Week 4:

- Deload - no ME exercise
- Standing overhead press in rack 3 x 10
- Swiss bar extension 3 x 10, 1 x 3-5
**Friday ME Bench Week 5:**
- Shirt press with bands x 1, 80% to 2-board x 3
- Floor press, put hands a thumb’s length from smooth part of bar 3 x 10, 1 x 3-5
- Log press 3 x 10

**Friday ME Bench Week 6:**
- Floor press x 1, 85% x 3
- JM press 3 x 10, 1 x 3-5
- Seated dumbbell cleans 3 x 10

**Friday ME Bench Week 7:**
- Shirt press with chains to manpon x 1, 80% x 3
- Close grip to 4-board 3 x 10, 1 x 3-5
- Swiss bar shoulder press 3x10

**Friday ME Bench Week 8:**
- Deload - no ME exercise
- Floor press with chains pinkies on ring 3 x 10, 1 x 3-5
- Plate raise with stone trainer 3 x 10

**Friday ME Bench Week 9:**
- 3-board press x 1, then 80% x 3
- Rack lockout with bands, put hands a thumb’s length from smooth part of bar 3 x 10, 1 x 3-5
- Seated dumbbell overhead press 3 x 10

**Friday ME Bench Week 10:**
- Test week – shirted max work
- Floor press with chains 3 x 10, 1 x 3-5
- Upright rows 3 x 10

**Friday ME Bench Week 11:**
- Opener to chest for two singles
- Fat bar floor extensions 3 x 10
- Standing band overhead press 3 x 10

**Friday ME Bench Week 12:**
- Reverse band press 80% of perceived max, x 3
- 3-board press with bands 3 x 10
- Seated Arnold press 3 x 10
Week 13 – Meet

*Squat/Deadlift with abs and low back on Sundays
**Sled dragging on Wednesdays

Tuesday DE/RE Bench Week 1:

- Speed bench 225+4 chains 9 x 3
- Bench to manpon, put hands a thumb’s length from smooth part of bar 3 x 10
- Inverted barbell pullups 3 x 10
- EZ bar curls 3 x 10

Tuesday DE/RE Bench Week 2:

- Speed bench 225+4 chains 9 x 3
- Chain suspension press with band 3 x 10
- Bent-over row 3 x 10
- Blast strap cable curls 3 x 10

Tuesday Upper Assistance Week 3:

- Reverse shrug pulldowns 3 x 10
- Rope pushdowns 3 x 10
- Dumbbell curls 3 x 10

Tuesday Upper Assistance Week 4:

- Band face pulls 3 x 10
- Fat bar pulldowns to belly 3 x 10
- Dumbbell kickbacks 3 x 10
- Reverse barbell curls 3 x 10

Tuesday Upper Assistance Week 5:

- Incline rear delt raises 3 x 10
- Reverse band pulldowns 3 x 10
- Spud strap cable pushdowns 3 x 10
- Incline dumbbell curls 3 x 10

Tuesday Upper Assistance Week 6:

- Spud strap facepulls 3 x 10
- T-bar row 3 x 10
- Key press 3 x 10
- Dumbbell concentrated curls 3 x 10
Tuesday Upper Assistance Week 7:

- Band pull-a-parts 3 x 10
- Close grip pull-ups band assisted 3 x 10
- Underhand pushdowns 3 x 10
- Hammer bar curls 3 x 10

Tuesday Upper Assistance Week 8:

- Reverse band flies 3 x 10
- Blast strap inverted rows, feet up 3 x 10
- Fat bar cable curls 3 x 10
- Incline Tate presses 3 x 10

Tuesday Upper Assistance Week 9:

- H-rolls 3 x 10
- Dumbbell rows 3 x 10
- Lying chain extensions 3 x 10
- Gaspari curls 3 x 10

Tuesday Upper Assistance Week 10:

- Blast strap scarecrows 3 x 10
- Pullups neutral grip band assisted 3 x 10
- Overhead spud strap extension 3 x 10
- Dumbbell hammer curls 3 x 12

Tuesday Upper Assistance Week 11:

- Shrugs 3 x 10
- Inverted barbell rows 3 x 10
- Fat bar pushdowns 3 x 10
- Spud strap cable curls 3 x 10

Tuesday Upper Assistance Week 12:

- Broomstick swings 3 x 20
- Pulldowns to belly 3 x 20
- Band pushdowns 3 x 20
- Dumbbell concentration curls 2 x 20

Week 13 - Meet
Peaking for a Meet as a 5/3/1 User
—By Scott Yard

This is specifically for someone who has been doing 5/3/1 for three to four months and decided to do a meet short-notice. I won’t go into 5/3/1. If you’re curious, check out Jim Wendler’s book on elitefts™. I will, however, go into the last five weeks heading into a meet.

5 Weeks Out: Deload

4 Weeks Out: Single at 90%

3 Weeks Out: Single at 80%

2 Weeks Out: Single at 70%

1 Week Out: Deload

Meet

As you can see, it is very stripped down with low volume and lighter weights as you near the meet. The goal is to get in the mind frame of doing singles again and remembering how to be fast. Repetitions can slow you down over time and a peaking phase of all singles in descending weights can help you get that speed back for meet day. When working up to your singles, be sure to make 5-10 percent weight jumps up to your last single. The main goal here is also to let yourself recover and to stay away from big weights. Save the big weights for the platform.

Assistance work should be treated in this manner as well. Four weeks out is the time to start lowering the assistance work. Each week cut an exercise out, so that on your last week you are only hitting your 70 percent single.

Mobility/soft tissue work is crucial during this phase, so be sure to roll daily and hit specific mobility movements to tighten up any joints that have been previously injured or took a beating during your 5/3/1 training cycles.

The one thing that only remains constant is core work. Be sure to hit your abs two to three times weekly, all the way up to the last week. Drop out all cardio or conditioning work the last three weeks to increase recovery.

Again, this is specifically for someone who has been doing 5/3/1 for a while and decided to take the plunge and do a meet. Base your percents off of your best training max.
Deadlift

—By Jo Jordan

This eight week program is something I used when I was having a lot of difficulty getting my deadlift to progress even a couple of pounds. I stepped back and looked at what I was doing and determined that I really needed to address my week points and hit them hard. Those week points were pretty much my entire posterior chain. What I did was more of an instinctive approach rather than a scientific method or use of percentages. I based the amount of weight I was doing off of how I felt that day and made the most of it. So when I say “heavy” it means whatever felt heavy that day. It may have been more or less than the week before, but I’d always try to hit a PR if possible. The last couple of weeks before a meet, things change to the point that I pull from the floor in my deadlift suit. Week six would be around 85-90% of my 1RM for a single, and week seven would be my opener.

The exercises I decided to use were...

• Suspended good mornings with the SS bar – I’d set the SS bar at bellybutton height in the chains and work up to a heavy triple and then a heavy single if I felt good that particular day.

• Conventional pulls from the floor – these were done primarily against average bands for heavy doubles or triples, but sometimes I substitute chains for the bands if my joints weren’t happy with me.

• GHR – done using bands, holding plates or medicine balls or elevating the end of the GHR. Reps were between 10-15 for four sets.

• Rack pulls – done every other week after squatting while still wearing my briefs and I’d work my way up the rack from pin one to pin three and then start back at pin one. I’d never pull off pins above my knees because I wanted to work below my sticking point instead of at or above it.

I rotate through the exercises each week based on what I did on my first training day of the week, which was on Sunday. So the rotation would look like this:

**Week 1**

Sunday
- Sumo rack pull – pin 1 – ME single

Thursday
- Suspended goodmorning – three-rep “max”

**Week 2**

Sunday
- GHR vs. plate

Thursday
- Conventional pulls vs. average bands

**Week 3**

Sunday
- Sumo rack pull – pin 2 – ME single
Thursday
- Suspended goodmorning – three-rep “max”

Week 4

Sunday
- GHR vs. band

Thursday
- Conventional pulls vs. average bands

Week 5

Sunday
- Sumo rack pull – pin 3 – ME single

Thursday
- Suspended goodmorning – three-rep “max”

Week 6

Sunday
- Deadlift from floor – full gear 85-90% of 1RM

Thursday
- Conventional pulls vs. 80-120 pounds of chain for 5-8 reps

Week 7

Sunday
- Deadlift from floor in full gear – opener

Thursday
- Suspended goodmorning with light weight - 10 rep sets of 3

Week 8

MEET

Accessory lifts done on these days consisted of reverse hypers, rows, pull downs, shrugs and grip work. They were also done using the instinctive approach, so the reps and weight used was based off of how I felt after doing the primary exercise for the day.

Using this training cycle, my deadlift went from around a 600 pull, to 700 within a year and a half. So, I have to say I was very happy with the outcome since one of my primary goals when I started was to be consistent and take my training serious and to pull 700 at 242 pounds. Perhaps if you are stuck like I was, you will give this a try and do as well, if not better, than me.
Peaking for an Overhead Log Clean & Press Event

—By Amy Wattles

Training for any type of competition can present challenges and issues for an athlete. In strongman, those challenges are consistently changing due to the forever-changing nature of events for each competition. There’s no status quo for a training program and individual strongman competitors have different philosophies and approaches to training for the very same competition.

Some competitors and programs are successful and some are not. Those that are not, are typically the ones who come into a competition over trained and well past their peak for the events. Those are also the ones baffled when a competition is over that training went so well and they killed events in training. The justification I often hear is that he/she didn’t train hard enough. Often the intensity of their training IS the issue, but for different reasons than originally thought.

This year I was faced with new challenges with training for America’s Strongest Woman. This competition has six events, rather than the typical five taking place over a two-day period. There are a few heavier events, so the trick is to peak for each event at the same time and put it all together over two days. This makes program design a bit of a challenge. In consideration of all of these factors, training for events has to be broken out individually.

In my scenario for nationals, the events are:

1. **170 pound 12-inch Log Clean and Press for Reps** - in this event, the contestant must clean and press each rep within 60 seconds.

2. **550 pound Yoke Walk** - in this event, the contestant must move a 550-pound Yoke 80 feet as fast as possible.

3. **200 pound Farmer’s Walk** - in this event, the contestant must move 200 pounds farmer handles (per hand) 80 feet as fast as possible.

4. **Car Frame Deadlift for Reps** - in this event, the contestant must deadlift a car as many reps as possible within 60 seconds.

5. **200-pound Keg Carry** - in this event, the contestant must carry a 200 pound keg in front of the body “Husafell style” for maximum distance.

6. **240-pound Atlas Stone Over-the-Bar for Reps** - in this event, the contestant must load a 240 pound bar over a 50-inch bar as many times as possible in 60 seconds.

Out of all the events, the biggest challenge is the 12-inch log clean and press for reps. That is an event that can suck the life right out of you and deplete you for the rest of the competition. Pressing events are generally first, so the stakes become even higher to come in well trained for this event and be able to recover enough to perform at your best for the other events. The trend for athletes is to continuously push their training to work the competition weight week-in and week-out. That approach can have detrimental outcomes on competition day.

In order to peak for the 170 pound log clean and press for reps, training is laid out to peak over a six-week period. To effectively meet the challenges of this event, a modified 5/3/1 approach is highly effective.

The program was established using my initial 190 pound max as my guide. From the max, I calculated 90 percent of my 190 max to ensure I didn’t over train. So, the number I will plug into my calculations to drive programming is
Since the event calls for a clean and press of the log for each rep, every set requires a full clean and press for each rep.

**Week 1**

Warm-ups
- 70 (40%) x 5 (I use a smaller 9-inch log for this set)
- 85 (50%) x 5 (I move up to the 12-inch log for this set and all other sets)
- 105 (60%) x 5
- 110 (65%) x 5
- 130 (75%) x 5
- 145 (85%) x 5

**Week 2**

Follow my same warm-up scheme as week 1
- 120 (70%) x 3
- 140 (80%) x 3
- 155 (90%) x 3

**Week 3**

Follow my same warm-up scheme as week 1
- 130 (75%) x 5
- 145 (85%) x 3
- 165 (95%) x 1*

*On my last set, I do an all out max effort set. The goal is to finish the one rep, but always go for a PR.*

On this set, I hit 165 pounds for seven reps, which would give me a calculated (estimated) one rep max of 198 pounds using an online calculator.

200 pounds is the new number to set up the next phase of the program. Using a 200 pound max as my guide I again take 90 percent of the 200 max to assure that I do not over train. So 90 percent of 200 is 180. That is the number that is plugged into my calculations.

**Week 4**

Week 4 is a deload week.

During this week I do my warm-up sets only and then move directly on to conditioning.
Week 5

Warm-ups
- 75 (40%) x 5 (I use a smaller 9-inch log for this set)
- 90 (50%) x 5 (I move up to the 12-inch log for this set and all other sets)
- 110 (60%) x 5
- 120 (65%) x 5
- 135 (75%) x 5
- 155 (85%) x 5

Week 6

Follow my same warm-up scheme as Week 5
- 125 (70%) x 3
- 145 (80%) x 3
- 160 (90%) x 3

Week 7

Follow my same warm-up scheme as Week 5
- 135 (75%) x 5
- 155 (85%) x 3
- 170 (95%) x 1*

* On my last set I do an all out max effort set. My goal is to finish the one rep, but I always go for a PR.

Simply based off programming numbers and how things worked out, the only time competition weight is attempted is the final week. The next week is a rest week in order to rest and recover for the competition. That week is used to do some light conditioning work, stretching and sleeping.

Accessory work throughout the program is selected based on event specific weaknesses and to support improvement of those weaknesses.
**Prowler Progress**

—By The Angry Coach

You’ll hear a lot of debate from various corners of the strength and conditioning community as to whether the Prowler has what we call “transfer” to specific skills in football.

Some coaches say it doesn’t because you’re not in the same biomechanical positions you’re in on the field – which is B.S., incidentally, because most coaches don’t know how to use it. The “hips too high” argument doesn’t hold water when you’re pushing from the low bar, because the sled was designed to be pushed across the length of the unit. Which means that you’ll push it from the high handles and the low handles in the same direction.

You’ll also hear arguments telling you that using the Prowler isn’t an effective use of a football player’s time because you’re putting your athletes in a lactic environment – at least this is what it looks like when you watch videos of how people use it – and that, according to most, is never a good idea for a football player.

I’m in agreement. It’s not. You don’t want to break your athletes down by constantly beating them into the ground with Prowler work. It’s counterproductive and fairly pointless, since football is an alactic sport where they won’t be in this condition – ever - unless they’re completely detrained.

Finally, you’ll hear enlightened coaches telling you that you need to have your athletes on heart-rate monitors, and that you need to find their anaerobic thresholds to figure out what kind of training they actually need. This is great advice, and in a perfect world, this is the way we’d all be able to do it, but if you’re a coach, or you train athletes in a group setting, you know perfectly well that you’re not going to be able to do this with every single kid.

The following progression is how we’ve solved the problem for our linemen using either the Prowler or a one-man blocking sled. The average length of a football play is six to eight seconds. Linemen will do this in a series anywhere from 3 to 15 reps in a row, with minimal rest periods between reps (generally around 30 seconds).

What we did was set a time (for college guys, we made it 20-30 minutes), and had them work their way, as weeks went on, down to pushes with only 30-35 seconds between trips, without letting them go over their anaerobic threshold. The way to do this is to start out ridiculously high in this regard with the rest periods, then taper them down every week. The progression looks like this (weight the Prowler so they can drive it forward at about the same speed as a blocking sled). All trips are six to eight seconds in duration, and these sessions are performed twice per week.
From here, you simply keep building it up until your kids can run through entire series at game intervals from a script.
Working the Sleeves to Dial-in a Bench Shirt
—By Clint Smith

When thinking about getting more support out of a bench shirt, the first thought of many might be to crank the neckline of the shirt lower. While this is definitely a good method, I find myself most often working with the sleeves in order to dial in the best performance out of the bench shirt. My experience has found that a lower neckline will tend to make it harder to keep a good arch. Tweaking the sleeves is equally effective for me, while not hindering arch or setup.

Here are the ways I tweak the shirtsleeves for more support:

**Lower the Shoulder Seam**
Lower the shoulder seam so that it sits somewhere on the upper portion of the tricep. Placing it further down your arm will cause the chest plate to lock in more immediately after the descent of the bar begins, which means that it will be forced to stretch a greater distance in comparison to the amount of stretch required when the shoulder seam is located higher on the arm near the rear delt. This definitely works, but I think it flattens my arch much like cranking the chest plate, so I haven’t experimented a lot with it.

**Cuff the Sleeves**
Simply folding a cuff in the sleeves noticeably increases the sleeve tightness. This will translate into more lockout strength. I think that it also helps keep the chest plate tight during the press. A looser sleeve will be more apt to slide against the arm and release tightness in the shirt as you are pressing the bar back upward. Fold multiple cuffs until the desired tightness is achieved.

If you have longer sleeves, cuffing them will also help by removing some fabric from around the elbow joint. Too much sleeve bunched at the elbow causes my arms to bind up and I dump the weight. A moderate amount of bunching at the elbow can be beneficial, so cuff the sleeves just enough to provide the right amount.

**Put the Sleeves on Inside-out**
Another way to tighten the sleeves is to put the sleeves on inside-out. To do this, flip your shirt inside out, have a partner put the shirt on sleeves-first until the sleeves are just past your elbow, and peel the shirt on. I would try cuffing the sleeves before this method, because you can increase the tightness incremental by adding cuffs as you progress, but putting the sleeves on inside out increases tightness all-at-once.

**Twist the sleeves**
Twisting the sleeves can significantly tighten up the chest plate. I slammed the lockout after twisting the sleeves with weight that I grinded to press with straight-up sleeves. In order to twist the sleeves, I have a training partner face me and rotate the sleeve in a counter-clockwise motion as I rotate my arm in a clockwise motion. This should move the sleeve seam towards the outside of your elbow so that it is sitting right on top of, or just above, your elbow. If that tightness is a little too much, twist less.

**Cuff and twist the sleeves**
Combining the twist with the cuff will tighten up the chest plate and lock it in place so that no support will slip out. I usually don’t resort to this unless I am going for a third attempt PR or re-taking a weight that I just missed. I definitely don’t wear the shirt like this when I am working on touching! Similarly, you could also place the sleeves on inside out, twist them, and then peel the shirt on. Both of these result in a ton of explosiveness.

**Summary**
I didn’t fully realize it until I wrote this article, but there are several methods I have used to get more support out of the sleeves. You have to experiment in the gym to find the best method or combination of methods for the shirt that you are wearing.
Dynamic Squat Cycles
—By Dave Tate

The Dynamic Effort (DE) method is used to train the squat, bench press and deadlift. The DE method is defined as lifting a non-maximal load with the greatest speed possible. This is often called compensatory acceleration. It means you must apply as much force as possible to the barbell. The best way to explain this is to lower the barbell quickly (but under control) and press with as much force as possible.

The weight used should be around 50 to 70 percent of your max. In the book Supertraining, Siff and Verkeshon-sky state the best range for developing explosive strength in the barbell squat is 2/3 of your best one rep max. For example, if you squat 700 pounds and are training with 400 pounds, then you should be able to apply 700 pounds of force to the barbell if you press as fast and as hard as possible. Because of the light load, the DE method is a great way to learn technique and practice form.

Progressive Band Cycle

Application: This cycle is very good for getting used to the bands. This would be a good band progression for the Intermediate lifter.

Training Cycle:

Week 1 - 47% for 8 sets 2 reps
Week 2 - 51% for 8 sets 2 reps
Week 3 - 53% for 8 sets 2 reps
Weeks 1-3, a light band should be used.

Week 4 - 47% for 8 sets 2 reps
Week 5 - 51% for 8 sets 2 reps
Week 6 - 53% for 8 sets 2 reps
Weeks 4-6, an average band should be used.

Week 7 - 47% for 8 sets 2 reps
Week 8 - 51% for 8 sets 2 reps
Week 9 - 53% for 8 sets 2 reps
Weeks 7-9, a strong band should be used.

Notes:
*Training percent is based on current free squat one rep max with equipment.
*These percents are used as guidelines. The more advanced the lifter, the lighter the percent needed. If you are a raw lifter or do not use powerlifting gear, then a minimum of 10 percent should be added to the listed percents.
*All sets should be performed on a parallel box.
*Rest should not exceed 60 seconds between sets.
*Bands should be set up so there is tension at the bottom of the lift.
**Rookie Cycle**

Application: This cycle is for the beginner who needs to work and perfect squat form and technique.

**Training Cycle:**

Week 1 – 25% for 15 sets 2 reps  
Week 2 – 30% for 18 sets 2 reps  
Week 3 – 35% for 20 sets 2 reps  

**Notes:**
- *Training percent is based on current free squat one rep max with equipment.*  
- *These percents are used as guidelines. The more advanced the lifter, the lighter the percent needed. If you are a raw lifter, or do not use powerlifting gear, then a minimum of 10 percent should be added to the listed percents.*  
- *All sets should be performed on a parallel box.*  
- *You should rest no more than 45 to 60 seconds between sets.*

**Novice Cycle**

Application: This cycle is for the beginner who has average squat form and needs to work on strength.

**Training Cycle:**

Week 1 – 50% for 12 sets 2 reps  
Week 2 – 55% for 10 sets 2 reps  
Week 3 – 60% for 8 sets 2 reps  

**Notes:**
- *Training percent is based on current free squat one rep max with equipment.*  
- *These percents are used as guidelines. The more advanced the lifter, the lighter the percent needed. If you are a raw lifter or do not use powerlifting gear, then a minimum of 10 percent should be added to the listed percents.*  
- *All sets should be performed on a parallel box.*  
- *You should rest no more than 45 to 60 seconds between sets.*

**Old School**

Application: This is a great cycle for those who are just getting into DE training and/or still need work on their squat form.

**Training Cycle:**

Week 1 – 50% for 12 sets 2 reps  
Week 2 – 52.5% for 12 sets 2 reps  
Week 3 – 55% for 12 sets 2 reps  
Week 4 – 57.5% for 10 sets 2 reps  
Week 5 – 60% for 10 sets 2 reps
Notes:
*Training percent is based on current free squat one rep max with equipment.
*These percents are used as guidelines. The more advanced the lifter, the lighter the percent needed. If you are a raw lifter or do not use powerlifting gear, then a minimum of 10 percent should be added to the listed percents.
*All sets should be performed on a parallel box.
*If you feel good after your sets, work up to a heavy double. This should not be done every week, but should be completed at least twice through the cycle.
*You should rest no more than 45 to 60 seconds between sets.

Circa - Maximal Band De-load cycle

Application: To be used before meet or test day.

Training Cycle (three-week version):
Week 1 - 53% 5 sets 2 reps
Week 2 - 47% 5 sets 2 reps

Suggested Band:
Squat Max: 300-500 Pounds – Light Band
Squat Max: 500-700 Pounds – Average Band
Squat Max: 700-1000 Pounds – Strong Band
Squat Max: 1000 -1200 Pounds – Strong and Light Band
Listed are bands per side.

Notes:
*Training percent is based on current free squat one rep max with equipment.
*These percents are used as guidelines. The more advanced the lifter, the lighter the percent needed. If you are a raw lifter or do not use powerlifting gear, then a minimum of 10 percent should be added to the listed percents.
*All sets should be performed on a parallel box.
*Bands should be set up so there is tension at the bottom of the lift.

De-load cycle

Application: Deload cycle if bands were not used for peaking.

Training Cycle:
Week 1 - 45% for 8 singles

Notes:
*Training percent is based on current free squat one rep max with equipment.
*These percents are used as guidelines. The more advanced the lifter, the lighter the percent needed. If you are a raw lifter or do not use powerlifting gear, then a minimum of 10 percent should be added to the listed percents.
*All sets should be performed on a parallel box.
**Drop Box Cycle**

Application: Used for those who have poor hip flexibility and strength.

**Training Cycle:**

Week 1 – 47% (16" box 4 sets 2 reps), 47% (15" box 4 sets 2 reps)
Week 2 – 51% (15" box 4 sets 2 reps), 51% (14" box 4 sets 2 reps)
Week 3 – 53% (14" box 4 sets 2 reps), 53% (13.5 box 4 sets 2 reps)

**Notes:**
* To help explain the cycle, we will assume the lifter has a 14-inch parallel box. Parallel is where the crease of the hip joint is even with the top of the knee, while sitting on the box with your squat stance and back arched.
The 600-pound Deadlift Program

—By Dave Tate

Here is one from the old days. This was back from when deload days were after you pulled something (well not really...we just wrapped it up and kept going). I do think we deloaded before the meet, but I can’t really remember for sure. However, I do know that afterward, I would take a three-week sofa accommodation phase.

**Week 1**

**Deadlifts**
- 135 x 8
- 225 x 8
- 315 x 5
- 405 x 5
- 455 x 3
- 485 x 5
- 500 x 5

Deadlifts standing on 100-pound plate
- 315 lbs for 3 x 5

**Barbell rows:**
- 3 x 5 working up heavy

**Weighted sit-ups**
- 3 x 20

**Back raises**
- 2 x 20

**Week 2**

**Deadlifts**
- 135 x 8
- 225 x 8
- 315 x 5
- 405 x 5
- 455 x 5
- 495 x 5
- 515 x 5

Deadlifts standing on 100-pound plate
- 315 for 3 x 5

**Rack pulls from knees**
- 565 x 5
- 595 x 5

**Barbell rows**
- 3 x 5 working up heavy
Weighted sit-ups
  3 x 20

Back raises
  2 x 20

Week 3

Deadlifts
  135 x 8
  225 x 8
  315 x 5
  405 x 5
  455 x 3
  495 x 3
  525 x 3

Deadlifts standing on 100-pound plate
  315 for 3 x 5

Rack pulls from knees
  575 x 5
  605 x 5

Barbell rows
  3 x 5 working up heavy

Weighted sit-ups
  3 x 20

Back raises
  2 x 20

Week 4

Deadlifts
  135 x 8
  225 x 8
  315 x 5
  405 x 5
  455 x 3
  495 x 3
  540 x 3

Deadlifts standing on 100-pound plate
  315 for 3 x 5
Rack pulls from knees
585 x 5
615 x 5

Barbell rows
3 x 5 working up heavy

Weighted sit-ups
3 x 20

Back raises
2 x 20

Week 5

Deadlifts
135 x 8
225 x 8
315 x 5
405 x 5
455 x 3
495 x 3
550 x 3

Weighted sit-ups
3 x 20

Back raises
2 x 20

Week 6

Deadlifts
135 x 8
225 x 8
315 x 5
405 x 5
455 x 3
495 x 3
545 x 3
565 x 3

Weighted sit-ups
3 x 20

Back raises
2 x 20
Week 7

Deadlifts
135 x 8
225 x 8
315 x 5
405 x 5
455 x 3
495 x 1
545 x 1
580 x 1

Weighted sit-ups
3 x 20

Back raises
2 x 20

Week 8

Deadlifts
135 x 8
225 x 8
315 x 5
405 x 5
455 x 3
485 x 3
500 x 1
545 x 1
605 x 1

Weighted sit-ups
3 x 20

Back raises
2 x 20

Week 9

Deadlifts
135 x 8
225 x 8
315 x 5
405 x 5
455 x 1
Weighted sit-ups
   3 x 20
Back raises
   2 x 20

**Week 10**

Meet attempts
   500
   550
   605
   645
Amazing Forearm Jack Program

—By Dave Tate

Okay, Joe, your program looks good, but I have to tell you, it’s a bit “old school.” We’re in a new age of forearm training now, and the “old stuff” won’t get you the jack that you’re looking for. There’s a better way!

Now, you need to understand that information like this is what people pay hundreds...no thousands for. Countless hours of research and testing have gone into this “new age” program.

This isn’t bull crap.
I’ve been around the block a few times, and I’ve been busting my butt in the gym since 1983. Yes, this was long before many “coaches” and “experts” were even born. When they were in diapers, I was doing wrist curls and hammer curls. Now, they’ll try to tell you how to do it, but I’m here to say that they’re wrong! Very wrong!

There’s a right way and a wrong way to get the forearm jack, and I know the right way. I know because I’ve been in search of the forearm jack (FJ) for most of my life. You see, the FJ and I go back a long way. I’ve tried everything to get it on, but nothing seemed to work. Let me say that again: I’ve tried everything.

After years of research, I’ve discovered the amazing forearm jack program (AFJP). I trust you with this information because I know that your time is short and you have to get the jack on. Normally, we’d sit down with our attorneys and iron out a confidentiality agreement to program the AFJP. So, Joe, I trust you.

I also trust you not to let me down because this program will work for everyone. Let me say that again: this program will work for everyone! Before we get into this, let’s define exactly what “work” means.

• Are you looking for that extra edge to land the hottest babes?
• Are you looking for mad veins?
• Do you want to look jacked but not do all the work?
• Do you want to look hard while holding that Bud?
• Do you want to get noticed when you hand your money through the drive-through window?
• Do you want to be regarded as one of the best “strength coaches” in the world?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, the AFJP is for you. Now listen to this...

“The AFJP program changed my life. I can’t believe the amount of ass I’m getting. Thank you, thank you, and thank you.” —Brian

“The AFJP program totally changed my career. Before, no one would listen to me, and I had a hard time getting clients. Now, I have instant credibility, and I’m in the process of starting my own AFJP affiliate program. I’ve also been a featured writer for many of the top online and published strength magazines. If it wasn’t for AFJP, I’d still be working in China” —Wo Jo

Don’t take it from me. Listen to them. If you’re ready to change your life, AFJP is for you. Let’s get started. Before your first session, you’ll need to get a few ingredients.

You’ll need to get the following**:

• 1 Big Mac
• 1 can motor oil
• 1 wife beater tank top
• 1 flannel shirt
• 1 can Skoal
These items will be available soon at AFJP.com.

This program has to be done every other day for six weeks. Hey! I never said that it’d be easy. You have to be willing to pay the price for the FJ. Are you willing to do what needs to be done? If so, read on.

At 8AM, toss the Big Mac in a blender and make it into a nice paste. While this is blending, rub the motor oil on your forearms. Why motor oil? Simple. Mechanics have jacked forearms, and it’s because of all the oil that they have on their arms all day. This is common sense, and something that everyone seems to miss. So, oil up, pour your shake paste into a shaker cup, and head to the gym.

At the gym, your first series will be forearm stretching. Really loosen those babies up. Stretch and bend every way that you can. There’s no right or wrong pattern—just get loose. Many on the AFJP program have found kneeling hand walks to be great for this. To do this, kneel in front of the treadmill and walk your hands on it at 5mph.

After you get warmed up, pop in a huge dip of Skoal. Why? Once again...simple. The nicotine increases circulation to your forearms. It isn’t proven, but I have it on good authority that Skoal works like Viagra for the forearms. Once again, have you ever seen a farmer’s forearms? Skoal baby!

Your first movement is the dynamic wrist curl. Because the forearms are used with every movement, the dynamic method needs to be utilized with higher repetitions and sets. Based on secret Soviet research, you’ll need to train a 57.25 percent load for eight sets of 12 reps using four different grip positions.

After these eight sets, ice down with a frozen Dixie cup. Make sure to work deep and toward the heart. After five minutes of ice, flip the grip (if you used a forward grip for the last sets, use a reverse grip). Alternate each session and perform eight more sets of 12 reps using four grips. After three weeks, add chains and bands. This is super secret stuff, so call me on this one. I can’t afford for this to leak out.

Once again, ice for five minutes and move onto the next group. For the second group, pick one of four movements and work up to a one rep max.

These include:

- partial reverse curl off pins
- suspended reverse curls from chains
- seated hammer box curls
- dumbbell hammer floor curls

For the dumbbell hammer floor curls, sit and curl the dumbbell from the floor up. This is extremely intense. As shown in 5-foot 2-inch, type A blood, blonde, female, Latin, Olympic squash players, it may take up to four weeks for the central nervous system to recover from this one. Just be careful. But I have to tell you. This one movement alone can add up to 17.345 percent to your forearm size.
The next few movements will include***:

- One arm cable reverse curls
- Behind the back wrist curls
- Super fish curls
- Batman spreads
- Humpty Dumpties
- Rockin' Harries

***Perform all for two sets of 15 reps.

When you're done, ice again for five minutes and then sit down! Yes! Sit your butt down! This session is intense, and you will need to let your heart rate get back in line. We've seen people rushed to the hospital because they didn't sit down. Plus, for the next step to be effective, you have to be relaxed and have a normal heart rate reading.

Your heart rate should drop back to normal. With this, we're being very specific. Wear a monitor and make sure that you apply this next method at the exact second. If you don't, you'll lose seven percent of its effectiveness per second!

Yes, seven percent per second!

When you rheart rate returns to normal, pull out the Big Mac paste and rub it on your forearms. Rub it in good! Real good. You see, cholesterol is a precursor to testosterone. This method is awesome for driving testosterone right where we need it. You'll need to leave this on for 45 minutes because testosterone levels have been proven to fall off after this time.

Now, this is important. When you wash off the Mac attack, use a dry towel. It's extremely important that the meter oil stays on for a full eight hours. Remember, the mechanic works eight-hour days. Oh, before I forget, it also helps to start half an hour late a couple times a week and call off one or two sessions per week (keeping with the tradition). That's it! But I'll leave you with a few bonus tips that will really make the difference.

1. Don't train anything else. The smaller everything else is, the bigger the forearms will look.
2. For a tease show, wear the flannel shirt, but only expose one quarter to one half of the meat mass. This is the same principle that Jessica Simpson uses when wearing short shorts. It just makes everyone wonder what the hamhock looks like up yonder...
3. When you're ready for "the show," bust out the wife beater, go to the pub, and get a Bud! Enjoy this...you earned it.
Beginner Program
—By Dave Tate

Week 1 – Beginner Program

Max Effort Day

Max Effort Movement
· Floor Press: work up using 5-10 percent jumps starting with the bar until you reach a five-rep max. Then, drop 20 percent and do one set of eight reps.

Supplemental Movement
· Dumbbell Extensions: 2 sets 8 reps (one rep shy of failure)

Accessory Movements
· Chest Supported Rows: 3 sets of 8 reps
· Face Pulls: 3 sets of 12 reps

Dynamic Effort Day

Dynamic Effort Movement
· Bench Press: 8 sets of three reps using 60 percent of raw bench press. *Use three different grips (two wide, three medium and three close).

Supplemental Movement
· 3-Board Press: 2 sets of 5 reps (one rep shy of failure)

Accessory Movements
· Chins: three sets to failure
· Chest Supported Rear Delt Raises: 3 sets of 10 reps

Week 2 – Beginner Program

Max Effort Day

Max Effort Movement
· Floor Press: work up using 5-10 percent jumps starting with the bar until you reach a three-rep max. Then, drop 20 percent and do one set of five reps.

Supplemental Movement
· Dumbbell Extensions: 3 sets of 8 reps (one rep shy of failure)
Accessory Movements
  - Chest Supported Rows: 4 sets of 8 reps
  - Face Pulls: 4 sets of 12 reps

Dynamic Effort Day

Dynamic Effort Movement
  - Bench Press: 8 sets of three reps using 60 percent of raw bench press. *Use three different grips (two wide, three medium and three close).

Supplemental Movement
  - 3-Board Press: 2 sets of 3 reps (one rep shy of failure)

Accessory Movements
  - Chins: three sets to failure
  - Chest Supported Rear Delt Raises: 3 sets of 10 reps

Week 3 – Beginner Program

Max Effort Day

Max Effort Movement
  - Floor Press: work up using 5-10 percent jumps starting with the bar until you reach a one-rep max. Then, drop 20 percent and do one set of three reps.

Supplemental Movement
  - Dumbbell Extensions: 4 sets of 5 reps (one rep shy of failure)

Accessory Movements
  - Chest Supported Rows: 4 sets of 8 reps
  - Face Pulls: 4 sets of 12 reps

Dynamic Effort Day

Dynamic Effort Movement
  - Bench Press: 8 sets of three reps using 60 percent of raw bench press. *Use three different grips (two wide, three medium and three close).
    - After your dynamic bench sets, work up to the heaviest set of five you can do using a close grip.

Supplemental Movement
  - N/A
Accessory Movements
- Chins: three sets to failure
- Chest Supported Rear Delt Raises: 3 sets of 10 reps

**Week 4 – Beginner Program**

**Max Effort Day**

Max Effort Movement
- 2-Board Press: work up using 5-10 percent jumps starting with the bar until you reach a five-rep max. Then, drop 20 percent and do one set of eight reps.

Supplemental Movement
- Close Grip Incline Press: 3 sets of 8 reps (one rep shy of failure)

Accessory Movements
- Barbell Rows: 2 sets of 15 reps
- Rear Delt Raises: 2 sets of 10 reps
- YTWL’s: one set of 12 reps

**Dynamic Effort Day**

Dynamic Effort Movement
- Bench Press: 8 sets of three reps using 60 percent of raw bench press. *Use three different grips (two wide, three medium and three close).
- After your dynamic bench sets, work up to the heaviest set of three you can do using a close grip.

Supplemental Movement
- N/A

Accessory Movements
- Chins: three sets to failure
- Chest Supported Rear Delt Raises: 3 sets of 10 reps

**Week 5 – Beginner Program**

**Max Effort Day**

Max Effort Movement
- 2-Board Press: work up using 5-10 percent jumps starting with the bar until you reach a three-rep max. The drop 20% and do one set of five reps.
Supplemental Movement
• Close Grip Incline Press: 3 sets of 5 reps (one rep shy of failure)

Accessory Movements
• Barbell Rows: 3 sets of 12 reps
• Rear Delt Raises: 3 sets of 8 reps
• YTWL’s: one set of 12 reps

Dynamic Effort Day

Dynamic Effort Movement
• Bench Press: 8 sets of three reps using 60 percent of raw bench press. *Use three different grips (two wide, three medium and three close).

Supplemental Movement
• Dumbbell Extensions on Floor: work up to two heavy sets of 8 reps

Accessory Movements
• Pull Downs: three sets to failure
• Dumbbell Cleans: 2 sets of 10 reps

Week 6 – Beginner Program

Max Effort Day

Max Effort Movement
• 2-Board Press: work up using 5-10 percent jumps starting with the bar until you reach a one-rep max. Then, drop 20 percent and do one set of three reps.

Supplemental Movement
• Close Grip Incline Press: 2 sets of 3 reps (one rep shy of failure)

Accessory Movements
• Barbell Rows: 4 sets of 10 reps
• Rear Delt Raises: 3 sets of 8 reps
• YTWL’s: one set of 12 reps

Dynamic Effort Day

Dynamic Effort Movement
• Bench Press: 8 sets of three reps using 60 percent of raw bench press. *Use three different grips (two wide, three medium and three close).
Supplemental Movement

- Dumbbell Extensions on Floor: work up to two heavy sets of 8 reps

Accessory Movements

- Pull Downs: three sets to failure
- Dumbbell Cleans: 2 sets of 10 reps

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**Week 7 – Beginner Program**

**Max Effort Day**

Max Effort Movement

- Pin Press with Five-inch Lockout: work up using 5-10 percent jumps starting with the bar, until you reach a five-rep max. Then, drop 20 percent and do one set of eight reps.

Supplemental Movement

- Barbell Extensions on Floor: 3 sets of 8 reps (one rep shy of failure)

Accessory Movements

- Dumbbell Rows: 2 sets of 10 reps
- Front Plate Raises: 2 sets of 10
- Face Pulls: 3 sets of 10 reps

**Dynamic Effort Day**

Dynamic Effort Movement

- Bench Press for 8 sets of three reps using 60 percent of raw bench press. *Use three different grips (two wide, three medium and three close).
  - After your dynamic bench sets, work up to the heaviest set of three you can do using a close grip.

Supplemental Movement

- N/A

Accessory Movements

- Pull Downs: three sets to failure
- Dumbbell Cleans: 2 sets of 10 reps
Week 8 – Beginner Program

Max Effort Day

Max Effort Movement
• Pin Press with Five-inch Lockout: work up using 5-10 percent jumps starting with the bar until you reach a three-rep max. Then, drop 20 percent and do one set of five reps.

Supplemental Movement
• Barbell Extensions on Floor: 3 sets of 5 reps (one rep shy of failure)

Accessory Movements
• Dumbbell Rows: 3 sets of 10 reps
• Front Plate Raises: 3 sets of 10
• Face Pulls: 3 sets of 10 reps

Dynamic Effort Day

Dynamic Effort Movement
• Bench Press: 8 sets of three reps using 60 percent of raw bench press. *Use three different grips (two wide, three medium and three close).
• After your dynamic bench sets, work up to the heaviest set of one you can do using a close grip.

Supplemental Movement
• N/A

Accessory Movements
• Pull Downs: three sets to failure
• Dumbbell Cleans: 2 sets of 10 reps

Week 9 – Beginner Program

Max Effort Day

Max Effort Movement
• Pin Press with Five-inch Lockout: work up using 5-10 percent jumps starting with the bar, until you reach a one-rep max.

Supplemental Movement
• Barbell Extensions on Floor: 2 sets of 3 reps (one rep shy of failure)
Accessory Movements
- Dumbbell Rows: 3 sets of 12 reps
- Front Plate Raises: 3 sets of 10
- Face Pulls: 4 sets of 10 reps

Dynamic Effort Day

Dynamic Effort Movement
- Bench Press: three sets of three reps using 60 percent of raw bench press using your strongest grip, then work up and test your bench record.
- Take the rest of the day off.
Program for Bench-Only Athlete

—By Al Caslow

This would be an ideal program for a bench-only athlete, because it needs to be someone who has the recovery to punish one lift for major increases in strength during a nine-week peaking cycle. The purpose with a one-lift competitor is obviously to master that one lift, given the time and energy being promoted to a single movement.

Two things are in the bag:
1. Recovery
2. Effort Distribution

For starters, the muscles thoroughly involved in the lift are the pecs, triceps, delts, lats, legs and biceps, and they are probably in that same order for importance, as well.

In order to maximize peaking strength, we would need to improve the major muscles involved, while continuing to progress the minors. The fine line is doing too much on the primary muscles and not enough on the secondary, leaving way too much room for injuries or a big gap in deficiencies.

Here is an example of how I would organize the week:

**Sunday:** Bench (competitive movement)
**Monday:** Intrinsic
**Tuesday:** Indirect and Recovery
**Wednesday:** Bench Accessory
**Thursday:** Legs
**Friday:** Speed bench or RE

The important days are obviously Sunday, Wednesday and Friday. Sunday is a competitive day given to the movement, and it provides the biggest bang for the buck. So, this would typically be working on weaknesses, or areas within the movement that are weaker, for example, off the chest, middle range or lockout. On Wednesday, this would fall under technique work while influencing recovery, for example, lesser loads, higher rep volume and ancillary muscle recruitment. Friday would be a speed bench, solely working on velocity. This would be a 15 minute kind of day: speed bench and done.

Here is what a nine-week training cycle would look like for say a multi-ply bencher with off the chest weakness:

*In a shirt, off-the-chest isn’t necessarily the issue, it’s usually transition mechanics.*

**Week 9 *priority is transition**

**Sunday**
- Raw extra wide grip - *work up to a heavy six reps (not max)
- Shirt on - work up to 100 percent of competition chest max to a 3-board (singles as fast as possible to get there)
- Drop down to 70 percent - perform 2 sets of 4 reps *no boards, just go as low as the shirt will allow

**Wednesday – raw**
- 75% 2 x 4
- 80% 3 x 3
Friday – speed
  • 40% x 9 x 3 reps

**Week 8**

Sunday – raw
  • Extra wide grip - heavy set of four reps (again not max) 10 percent more than last week
  • Shirted 2-board - up to 100 percent of competition chest max (use five-pound higher increments than last week, except final set)
  • Drop down to 75 percent - perform 3 sets x 3 reps *no boards

Wednesday – raw
  • 80% - 5 x 3 reps

Friday – speed
  • 42.5% x 9 x 3 reps

**Week 7**

Sunday – raw and gear
  • Extra wide grip - heavy set of two reps
  • Shirted 2-board up to 102.5 percent of contest max
  • Drop down to 80 percent - perform 2 sets x 3 reps *no boards

Wednesday – raw
  • 85% x 4 x 2 reps

Friday – speed
  • 45% x 9 x 3 reps

**Week 6**

Sunday – raw and gear
  • Competition grip - up to a raw heavy single
  • Shirted 3-board, 2-board, 1-board (touch the one boards with perceived opener)
  • Then, repeat again with 10 pounds more than what you previously used

Wednesday – raw
  • 86% x 2
  • 81% x 3 x 3

Friday – speed
  • 47.5% x 9 x 3 reps
**Week 5**

Sunday – raw and gear
- Competition raw grip - work up to heavy single
- Shirted 1-board – 90 percent of perceived opener x 2
- 85% x 2
- 80% x 2

Wednesday – raw
- 92.5 x 1
- 87% x 2
- 83% x 3
- 75% x 4

Friday – speed
- 50% x 9 x 3 reps

**Week 4**

Sunday – raw down week
- *work up to a heavy (80%ish this week) single raw
- Then, a few raw board sets for doubles

Wednesday – raw
- 70% x 4 x 2 reps

Friday – speed
- 52.5% x 9 x 3 reps

**Week 3**

Sunday – gear
- Max out in shirt off the 3-board
- Drop down 10% to 2-board
- Drop down another 10% to 1-board
- And up 10% to 1-board again

Wednesday – raw
- 90% x 1
- 85% x 3
- 80% x 4
Week 2

Sunday – gear
· Take opener to chest
· Second attempt to 1-board

Wednesday – raw
· 85% x 3 x 2 reps
· 80% 2 x 3 reps

Friday – speed
· 57.5% x 9 x 3 reps

Week 1

Sunday – gear
· Opener to 1-board

Wednesday – raw
· 70% for 3 x 2 reps

Friday – bloat up

Saturday – meet
The following plan was written for the 2011 North American Strongman National Championships.

It was designed for two athletes with a solid background in the sports. They regularly place in the top three at most events they enter. They are both training partners. The cycle was written with several factors in mind:

- They can both hit a few reps or go the distance with the weights listed for the contest.
- Strongman is becoming “fastman” or “really in shape man” so they need to be doing the events in no time. Gone are the days of a 55 second farmer’s walk. Now, we are looking at 14 seconds or less for 75 feet.
- The contest has a lot of events that hammer the upper back and this is a noticeable weakness in both athletes - it needs to be improved.
- Hitting a rep max on the events will raise limit strength, allowing them to handle the contest weights with ease. As Defranco says (I’m paraphrasing), the best way to bench 225 pounds, 20 times is to bench 500.
- Handling lighter weights (percentages) in the beginning of the cycle will allow them to build a solid base of conditioning/raise anaerobic threshold, allowing them to do more reps with the contest weights later.
- Doing a circuit of bodyweight exercises as part of the warm-up will build strength and GPP without causing them to become overtrained.

Notes on the program:

- GHR – Glute Ham Raise
- FG Pullups – Blast Strap or Fat Guy Pull-ups
- Where it says (G) or (S), that was the athlete’s first name. One was a male and one a female. The female was doing less pull-ups than the male as part of the warm-up.
- Where a percentage of weight is given on events, that is for the weight listed at the Nationals. For example, on the log clean and press, it says 5rm, then 60 percent of contest weight. This means to do a max effort set of 5 reps, then drop the weight to 60 percent of the listed weight at the Nationals and do max reps for 60 seconds with commands as if at a show.
- A substitute was listed for some events, such as the car deadlift. We don’t have one, so we used a rickshaw instead.
- Day four was an optional day for them. They insisted that they thrived on four days of training, so I added a day of low intensity training. If they felt like they needed more recovery, they skipped day four.
- At the time of the writing of this article, they were still a few weeks out from the event. Training is going VERY well and they are getting stronger and faster. I would love to tell you that this cycle was 100 percent effective, but we will not know until we get to Nationals. I can tell you that I’ve trained numerous athletes with similar cycles and they have at least hit PRs at the show. Many have won.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 1 Day 1</th>
<th>Week 1 Day 2</th>
<th>Week 1 Day 3</th>
<th>Week 1 Day 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25 GHR + 25 FG Pullups + 25 Pushups first + 5 pullups (G)/15 (S)</td>
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<td>25 GHR + 25 FG Pullups + 25 Pushups first + 5 pullups (G)/15 (S)</td>
<td>25 Pushups + 25 inverted rows + 25 back raises + 5 pullups (G)/15 (S)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Safety Bar Squat (5rm)</strong></td>
<td><strong>1. Log Clean and Press (5rm)</strong> + 2 sets 60 seconds max reps with 65% contest weight</td>
<td><strong>1. Swiss Bar Incline Bench (5rm)</strong></td>
<td><strong>1. Good Morning (4x6-8)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Farmers Walk-max weight-30 feet (no more than 3 attempts)-then</strong></td>
<td><strong>2. DB Row (5x8)</strong></td>
<td><strong>2. Stones - work to max triple on box-then stones over yoke-2 sets max reps 60 seconds-Gina 120 stone/Seth 180 stone</strong></td>
<td><strong>2. Incline DB Bench Press (4x8-12)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-4 sets of 75% x 100 feet no drops</td>
<td><strong>3. Keg Carry/Husafeld Stone</strong></td>
<td><strong>3. Yoke -100 feet FAST</strong></td>
<td><strong>3. RDL (3x8-12)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gina-115 per hand, Seth-180 per hand</td>
<td>Gina-120 keg Seth-300</td>
<td>Gina-270 Seth -390</td>
<td>Gina-295, Seth-75ish maybe 400ish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. Rickshaw Deadlift (100 pounds empty) at 20”</strong></td>
<td>3 sets turns at 50 feet/work turns most</td>
<td><strong>4. Reverse Hyper-loose (3x12-15)</strong></td>
<td><strong>5. Hammer Curls + Tate Press + Plate Raise (3x12 each)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-4 sets x 8 reps at 65%</td>
<td><strong>4. GHR Situps w/weight (5x5) + HFBR w/weight (5x8-12)</strong></td>
<td>6. Pikes (4xamap)</td>
<td><strong>5. optional</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gina-295, Seth-75ish maybe 400ish</td>
<td><strong>5. Prowler Sprints</strong></td>
<td><strong>5. Prowler Sprint 5x100 feet</strong></td>
<td><strong>5. optional</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 2 Day 1</td>
<td>Week 2 Day 2</td>
<td>Week 2 Day 3</td>
<td>Week 2 Day 4</td>
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<td>30 GHR + 30 FG Pullups + 30 Pushups first + 8 pullups (G)/20 (S)</td>
<td>30 GHR + 30 Inverted Row + 30 Pushups first + 8 pullups (G)/20 (S)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Safety Bar Squat (3rm)
2. Farmers Walk-max weight-40 feet (no more than 3 attempts)-then
   3-4 sets of 85% x 100 feet no drops
   Gina-130 per hand, Seth-200 per hand
3. Rickshaw Deadlift at 20°
   3-4 sets x 8 reps at 75%
   Gina-340, Seth-?maybe 440ish
4. Side Bends 4x 5 each side, heavy
5. Prowler Sprints 6x100 feet
6. Pikes (4xmap)

1. Log Clean and Press (3rm) +2 sets 60 seconds max reps with 75% contest weight
2. DB Row (5x8)
3. Keg Carry/Husafeld Stone
   Gina-150, keg Seth-300
   3 sets turns at 80 feet
4. GHR Situps w/weight (5x5) + HFBR w/weight (5x8-12)
5. optional
   Prowler Sprint 5x100 feet
6. optional
5. optional
   Prowler Sprint 5x100 feet
6. optional
5. optional
   Prowler Sprint 5x100 feet
6. optional

1. Swiss Bar Incline Bench (3rm)
2. Stones -work to max triple on box-then stones over yoke-2 sets max reps 60 seconds-Gina 160 stone/Seth 200 stone
3. Yoke -100 feet FAST
   70% contest weight x 5-6 trips
   Gina-315 Seth -455
4. Reverse Hyper-loose (3x12-15)
5. optional
   Plate Raise (3x12 each)
6. optional
5. optional
   Plate Raise (3x12 each)
6. optional
5. optional
   Plate Raise (3x12 each)
6. optional

1. Good Morning (4x6-8)
2. Incline DB Bench Press (5x8-12)
3. RDL (4x8-12)
4. Pulldown (5x8-12)
5. Hammer Curls + Tate Press + Plate Raise (3x12 each)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 3 Day 1</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>35 GHR + 35 FG Pullups+35 Pushups first +10 pullups (G)/25 (S)</strong></td>
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<td><strong>35 GHR + 35 FG Pullups+35 Pushups first +10 pullups (G)/25 (S)</strong></td>
<td><strong>35 GHR + 35 Inverted Row+35 Pushups first +10 pullups (G)/25 (S)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Safety Bar Squat (1rm + 1x12 @ 70% of 1 rm)</td>
<td>1. Log Clean and Press (1rm) +2 sets 60 seconds max reps with 85% contest weight</td>
<td>1. Swiss Bar Incline Bench (1rm)</td>
<td>1. Front Squat (5x5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Farmers Walk-max weight-30 feet (no more than 3 attempts)-then</td>
<td>2. DB Row (3xmap with 10 lbs/ less than heaviest set last week)</td>
<td>2. Stones -work to max single on box-then stones over yoke-3 sets max reps 60 seconds-Gina 180 stone/Seth 220 stone</td>
<td>2. 1 Arm DB Bench Press + Pulldowns (4x8-12)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3-4 sets of 95% x 100 feet no drops</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gina-145 per hand, Seth-230 per hand</td>
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<tr>
<td>3-4 sets x 8 reps at 85%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gina-385, Seth:-? maybe 500ish</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Side Bends 4x 5 each side, heavy</td>
<td>4. GHR Situps w/weight (5x5) + HFBR w/weight (5x8-12)</td>
<td>4. Reverse Hyper-loose (4x12-15)</td>
<td>4. Face Pulls (12-15) + Pushdowns (12-15) 3 sets</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Prowler Sprints 7x100 feet</td>
<td>5. optional Prowler Sprint 7x100 feet</td>
<td>5. Pikes (3xmap)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 4 Day 1</td>
<td>Week 4 Day 2</td>
<td>Week 4 Day 3</td>
<td>Week 4 Day 4</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 4 Day 1</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Safety Bar Squat (3 sets @ 60% of 1 rm x 6 reps)</strong></td>
<td><strong>1. Log Clean and Press (5x5 @ 60% of 1 rm)</strong></td>
<td><strong>1. Swiss Bar Incline Bench (5x5 @ 60% 1rm)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>2. Rickshaw Deadlift at 20”</strong>&lt;br&gt;3-4 sets x 8 reps at 85%&lt;br&gt;Gina-385, Seth-? maybe 500ish</td>
<td><strong>2. Hammer Strength Seated Row (3x12)</strong></td>
<td><strong>2. Stones - over yoke - 3 sets 8 reps - Gina 180 stone/Seth 220 stone</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>3. Farmers Walk - 3 sets of 80% x 100 feet no drops</strong>&lt;br&gt;Gina-120 per hand, Seth-195 per hand</td>
<td><strong>3. Blast Strap Pullups + Blast Strap Pullups + Fallout (3x amap)</strong></td>
<td><strong>3. Yoke - 80 feet FAST</strong>&lt;br&gt;70% contest weight x 5-6 trips&lt;br&gt;Gina-315 Seth -455</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4. 1 Arm FW Deadlift - 4x 5 each side</strong></td>
<td><strong>4. Med Ball Slams (8)+ Scoop Toss (8) 3x</strong></td>
<td><strong>4. Reverse Hyper-loose (4x12-15)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>5. Prowler Sprints 5x100 feet</strong></td>
<td><strong>5. optional</strong>&lt;br&gt;Prowler Sprint 7x100 feet</td>
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### Week 5 Day 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exercise</th>
<th>Sets</th>
<th>Reps</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>40 GHR + 40 FG Pullups  + 40 Pushups first +15 pullups (G)15/30(S)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

1. **Rickshaw Deadlift**
   - 5 rep max
   - then: 3 sets x 60 seconds
   - Gina-385, Seth-? maybe 500ish

2. **Cambered Bar Squat**
   - 3x12
   - 3-4 sets of 95% x 100 feet no drops

3. **Farmers Walk**
   - max weight: 30 feet
   - no more than 3 attempts
   - then: 3-4 sets of 95% x 100 feet no drops
   - Gina-145 per hand, Seth-230 per hand

4. **1 Arm FW Deadlift**
   - 4x 5 each side

5. **Alligators**
   - 3-5x as far as possible

6. **Prowler Sprint**
   - 6x 200 feet

### Week 5 Day 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exercise</th>
<th>Sets</th>
<th>Reps</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>40 GHR + 40 FG Pullups  + 40 Pushups first +15 pullups (G)15/30(S)</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. **Log Clean and Press**
   - (5rm)
   - 2 sets 60 seconds max reps with 85% contest weight

2. **Keg Carry/Husafeld Stone**
   - Gina-175 keg Seth-300
   - 4 sets turns at 80 feet

3. **CSR**
   - 5x8-12

4. **Pushups**
   - hands on stability ball (5xamap)

5. **optional Prowler Sprint**
   - 6x200

### Week 5 Day 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exercise</th>
<th>Sets</th>
<th>Reps</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>40 GHR + 40 FG Pullups  + 40 Pushups first +15 pullups (G)15/30(S)</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. **Axle Incline Bench**
   - (5rm)

2. **Stones - over yoke**
   - 3 sets 8 reps
   - Gina 180 stone/Seth 220 stone

3. **1 Arm DB Bench Press + Pulldowns**
   - (4x8-12)

### Week 5 Day 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exercise</th>
<th>Sets</th>
<th>Reps</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>40 GHR + 40 FG Pullups  + 40 Pushups first +15 pullups (G)15/30(S)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. **Front Squat**
   - (5x5)

2. **Keg Carry/Husafeld Stone**
   - Gina-175 keg Seth-300
   - 4 sets turns at 80 feet

3. **Stones - over yoke**
   - 3 sets 8 reps
   - Gina 180 stone/Seth 220 stone

4. **1 Arm DB Bench Press + Pulldowns**
   - (4x8-12)

5. **1 Arm FW Deadlift**
   - 4x 5 each side

6. **Face Pulls**
   - (12-15) + Pushdowns (12-15) 3 sets

7. **Face Pulls**
   - (12-15) + Pushdowns (12-15) 3 sets
### Week 6 Day 1
- 45 GHR + 45 FG Pul-ups + 45 Pushups first + 15 pullups (G)/20/30(S)

1. **Rickshaw Deadlift**-3 rep max then: 3 sets x 60 seconds at 85%
   Gina-385, Seth -? maybe 520ish

2. **Cambered Bar Squat** (3x15)

3. **Farmers Walk**- 3-4 sets of contest weight x 100 feet no drops

4. **1 Arm FW Deadlift**-4x 5 each side

5. **Alligators** 4-6x as far as possible

6. **Prowler Sprint** 8x 200 feet

### Week 6 Day 2
- 45 GHR + 45 FG Pul-ups + 45 Pushups first + 15 pullups (G)/30(S)

1. **Log Clean and Press** (3rm) +2 sets 60 seconds max reps with 95% contest weight

2. **Keg Carry/Husafeld Stone**
   Gina-175 keg Seth-300
   5 sets turns at 80 feet

3. **CSR** (5x8-12)

4. **Pushups-hands on stability ball** (5xamap)

5. **optional Prowler Sprint** 7x100 feet

### Week 6 Day 3
- 45 GHR + 45 FG Pul-ups + 45 Pushups first + 15 pullups (G)/30(S)

1. **Axle Incline Bench** (3rm)

2. **Stones - over yoke**- 3-4 sets 60 seconds
   Gina-160, 180, 200, 220 stone
   Seth 180, 200, 220, 240 stone

3. **Yoke -80 feet**
   100% contest weight x 5-6 trips

4. **Reverse Hyper-loose** (4x12-15)

5. **Tate Press + Lateral Raise** (3x8-12)

### Week 6 Day 4
- 45 GHR + 45 Inverted Rows + 45 Pushups first + 15 pullups (G)/30(S)

1. **Front Squat** (5x6-8)

2. **BB Row + Shrugs** (5x6-8)

3. **Pullthrough** (8-12) + 1 Arm DB OH (8-12) 4 sets

4. **Situps w/weight** (5x5-8)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 7 Day 1</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>50 GHR + 50 Inverted Row + 50 Pushups first + 15 pullups (G)20/30(S)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Rickshaw Deadlift-4 sets x 60 seconds at contest weight</td>
<td>1. Log Clean and Press 3-4 sets contest weight 60 seconds</td>
<td>1. Stones - over yoke-3-4 sets 60 seconds Gina-180, 200, 220, 240 stone Seth 220, 240 stone</td>
<td>1. Front Squat (3x8-12)</td>
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<td>2. Farmers Walk- 3-4 sets of contest weight x 80 feet no drops</td>
<td>2. Keg Carry/Husafeld Stone Gina-175 keg Seth-300 3-5 sets turns at 80 feet</td>
<td>2. Yoke - 80 feet 100% contest weight x 3-5 trips</td>
<td>2. BB Row (4x8-12)</td>
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<td>3. HLR (45)</td>
<td>3. CSR (3x8-12)</td>
<td>3. Reverse Hyper-loose (4x12-15)</td>
<td>3. Pullthrough (8-12) + 1 Arm DB OH (8-12) 3 sets</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Pushups-hands on stability ball (3xamap)</td>
<td>4. optional Prowler Sprint 8x100 feet</td>
<td>4. Tate Press + Lateral Raise (3x8-12)</td>
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<td>5. Alligators 4-6x as far as possible</td>
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<td>5. Situps w/weight (3x5-8)</td>
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<td>6. Prowler Sprint 8x 200 feet</td>
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<td>Week 8 Day 1</td>
<td>Week 8 Day 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Rickshaw Deadlift: 3 sets x 60 seconds at contest weight</td>
<td>1. Log Clean and Press 3 sets contest weight 60 seconds</td>
<td>1. Stones - over yoke-3 sets 60 seconds Gina-220, 220, 220 stone Seth 220, 240 , 240stone</td>
<td>OFF</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Farmers Walk- 3 sets of contest weight x 80 feet no drops</td>
<td>2. Keg Carry/Husafeld Stone Gina-175 keg Seth-300 3 sets turns at 80 feet</td>
<td>2. Yoke -80 feet 100% contest weight x 3 trips</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. HLR (55)</td>
<td>3. Decline Situps + Russian Twist (3x 12-15 each)</td>
<td>3. Reverse Hyper-loose (4x12-15)</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Prowler Sprint 5x 200 feet</td>
<td>4. Reverse Hyper-loose (4x12-15)</td>
<td>5. optional Prowler Sprint 5x100 feet</td>
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1. Rickshaw Deadlift: 3 sets x 60 seconds at contest weight
2. Farmers Walk- 3 sets of contest weight x 80 feet no drops
3. HLR (55)
4. Prowler Sprint 5x 200 feet
5. optional Prowler Sprint 5x100 feet
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 9 Day 1</th>
<th>Week 9 Day 2</th>
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<td>20 GHR + 20 FG Pullups + 20 Pushups first +15 pullups (G)10/15(S)</td>
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<td>1. Squat (5x5)</td>
<td>1. Drag Sled easy 20-25 minutes</td>
<td>OFF</td>
<td>Win!</td>
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<td>2. BB Row (4x6)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. DB Bench Press (4x6)</td>
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<td>4. 45 BR (4x12-15)</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Prowler Sprint 100 feet + 15 Burpees + 15 Sit-ups 4x</td>
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Joint-by-Joint Training for Powerlifters

—By Mike Robertson

Joint-by-Joint Basics

• The body is a system of alternating joints; some need more mobility-based training, others need more stability-based training.
• When you know the structure of each joint, you can better understand its function.
• This is a sure-fire way to not only get stronger, but to stay healthier as well. Just do it!

Great Toe - Mobility

• Lack of extension through your big toe shuts off your glutes. Weak glutes equals weak squats and deadlifts!
• Half-kneeling exercises can help here – dig the toes in!
• Calf raises pre-workout with bodyweight and a focus on full ROM through the big toe can help.

Foot – Stability

• Tripod foot is crucial! You want to maintain the arches in your foot, especially when demonstrating strength.
• Feet are rich with mechanoreceptors – they tell your body where it is in space, and provide feedback up through the kinetic chain (foot bone connected to the ankle bone, etc.)
• Best shoes to train in allow for a solid connection to the ground – flat soled like Chucks, Vibrams, wrestling shoes, etc.

Ankle – Mobility

• Ever sprained an ankle or played basketball, football, or volleyball where your ankles are taped/in high tops for a season? If so, chances are your ankle mobility sucks!
• You need basic dorsiflexion mobility (knees over toes), even if you don’t use it to squat competitively.
• Poor ankle mobility will lead to knee pain sooner or later. Get it fixed!

Knee – Stability

• Knee is a hinge joint – think open/close, or flexion and extension. Rotation and/or side-to-side motion is NOT a good thing.
• Goal should be to maintain optimal foot/knee/hip alignment when squatting/pulling.
• Vertical tibia (i.e. box squats, sumo deads, etc.) can help you work around knee pain.

Hip – Mobility/Stability

• The hip is a hybrid joint – you need a balance of both mobility and stability.
• Hip mobility is critical to ensure healthy knees and lower backs. If you don’t have hip mobility, you WILL have pain!
• Stability is also important. Do you train in gear a lot? Do you only perform exercises on two legs (squats, pulls, good mornings, etc.)? If so, you need to get stable outside of gear. More stability without gear equals more strength in gear.

Pelvis – Stability

• Nobody wants to talk about pelvis, but it’s critical! Pelvic alignment drives lumbar spine alignment, hip position, etc.
• Most of you will be in an anterior pelvic tilt – you need more work for the external obliques, glutes and hamstrings.
Pelvic stability is best trained with core isolation exercises early on – tall-kneeling, half-kneeling, etc.

Core/Lumbar Spine - Stability

- I will get ridiculed for saying this, but you don’t need crunches! A strong core isn’t just strong, it’s STABLE. A stable core can take the strength/power generated from your hips and thighs and effectively transfer it to the bar.
- How much movement is there through your core/lumbar spine in a squat and/or deadlift? There shouldn’t be much!
- In fact, too much motion can lead to pain, degeneration, and excessive wear and tear. Switch your core training to stability-focused exercises and you’ll be pleasantly surprised with the results!

T-Spine – Mobility

- THIS is where you need spinal motion! The lumbar spine has less than 15 degrees of rotation, while the thoracic spine has more than 70!
- If your thoracic spine is excessively kyphotic (hunched over), you’re more likely to suffer from shoulder pain, elbow pain and wrist pain.
- Start with a basic PVC/foam roller stretch pre-workout and at home during down times.

Neck – Stability

- Neck stability isn’t critical for powerlifting, but here’s one nugget – try and keep the neck in neutral when squatting/deadlifting.
- A neutral neck keeps the lumbar spine/pelvis in neutral, which will help engage the glutes/hamstrings.
- While the neck is neutral and chin is down, the eyes MUST stay up! Look through your eyebrows

Scapulae/Shoulder Blade – Mobility/Stability

- Another hybrid joint – you need both mobility and stability here for optimal function and health
- For mobility purposes, the upper trap, lower trap and serratus all need to be strong. Work on I’s, T’s, Y’s, push-up variations, etc.
- For stability, this is where your big upper back exercises come into play. Quite simply, you can’t do enough horizontal pulls (rowing variations) and vertical pulls (chin-ups/pull-ups).

Gleno-Humeral Joint – Mobility

- This is where mobility is really important – you don’t need to be Nolan Ryan, but you need a fair amount of shoulder rotation.
- Lack of shoulder external rotation leads to shoulder pain, elbow pain, wrist pain, etc.
- Foam roll and stretch your pecs/lats daily!
The Results Fitness Method to Preparing Beginners for Their 1st Meet
—By Alwyn Cosgrove and Craig Rasmussen

Background

Ah, the great sport of powerlifting! Results Fitness has long had a reputation for being one of the country’s best fat loss gyms and without a doubt the vast majority of people that walk through our doors come to us with this goal as their primary objective. In pursuit of this objective, squats and deadlifts are two of the primary tools that help us in pursuing this goal. Several years ago, one of our coaches (who has a powerlifting background) noticed that several of our females, in particular, were deadlifting some pretty decent numbers as part of their regular strength training regimes and we decided to talk several of them into trying out a meet since the USAPL holds two to three meets a year locally. The Results Fitness Powerlifting Team was thus born! What follows is an outline of the typical entry-level training cycle that we use with most of our first-time lifters.

Let’s Talk Training

The following is an entry-level training cycle that is very basic and effective. We have used a form of it with several of the beginning female and male powerlifters that we have worked with. It utilizes a more traditional linear periodization scheme (yes, you read that correctly, we just said “linear”), which we’ve found to work well for those that are transitioning over from more “metabolic-type” workouts. It also helps to prepare them to feel and lift heavy weights by allowing them to acclimate to “heavier” lifting gradually.

This cycle is designed to do over a 12-week period, so your first step is to find a meet with a reputable powerlifting organization and count backwards over the 12 weeks from the meet date to plan your cycle. For most people with busy lifestyles, a three-day per week split is to be done on either Monday, Wednesday and Friday or Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. Both of these work very well. You can utilize a four-day upper/lower split if you have the time to dedicate to this. You are going to do three phases, which are four-week blocks of training.

Here is a brief description of each phase:

**Weeks 1-4:** This is what I would call a foundational block. You will do three to four sets of eight reps on the big lifts (squat, bench press and deadlift), and 12 reps on the assistance/accessory exercises. The purpose of the higher reps is to build some connective tissue strength and to accumulate some volume at a moderate load relative to your 1RM (one rep max).

**Weeks 5-8:** This is an accumulation-type block. The reps shift to five reps (and thus heavier weights) on the big lifts and down to 10 reps on the assistance/accessory exercises. We typically do three sets of five reps for the squat, bench press and deadlift.

**Weeks 9-12:** This is an intensification-type block. The reps change to three reps (for two to three sets) on the big lifts for weeks 9 and 10. On week 11, you do two sets of one rep on the big lifts. There will be fairly low volume on the big lifts, as you will only be doing a total of three reps on these lifts. You will do eight reps on the assistance/accessory exercises for the entire phase. You are going to really get into heavier lifting relative to your 1RM here and start to peak your strength for the contest on week 12. For the squat, bench press and deadlift, on week 11, you want to work up to two sets of one rep that is fairly hard, but do-able.

**Week 12** is a very low volume and easy week to allow you to fully recover so that you can perform your best at the meet on Saturday. You should perform a couple easy sets of three reps on the squat and bench press (about 70 percent of an estimated 1RM on each of those lifts) on Tuesday of the meet week. There are NO MORE WORK-OUTS the rest of the week as you taper for the meet. Just do lots of mobility work and recovery work. You do not get any stronger in the week before the meet, so don’t be tempted to not follow what I tell you!
Other Stuff You Need To Know

• Load selection is very important on this cycle and on any program. Make sure that you do not start week one too hard. Phase one and two will build to a peak on weeks four and eight. This means that the final week of each of these phases will be the toughest. Week one of phase one should start with sub maximal weights relative to your rep target. For example, if you are starting with four sets of eight, you need to start with a weight that you can lift about 11 or 12 times for one set if you went to the limit (but stop at eight). You need to add load and be progressive each week. Generally, try to add about 5-10 pounds on the bench press and 10-20 pounds on the squat and deadlift.

• A special note about females and load selection: it can be hard to figure it out! Females tend to be less neurologically efficient than their male counterparts. In other words, females tend to be able to do more reps at higher percentage of their one rep max than men can. This is important to understand in estimating 1RM from something like a 5RM. The 1RM may not be too far away from your 5RM as it would be for a male. This necessitates making small weight jumps. Be very aware of this as you pick attempts in the meet.

• You will need to do two to three (or more if needed) progressive warm-up sets for the big lifts and maybe one for the assistance/accessory lifts. These warm-up sets should be fairly low rep affairs (five and under) and they should be about 60-80 percent of your work set loads.

What About Future Training Cycles?

Rarely, do we exceed the five-rep count on the squat, bench press and deadlift in future training cycles. We have found a lot of success in utilizing a variation of Jim Wendler’s 5/3/1 program for the main lifts in subsequent meet training cycles. I highly suggest getting a copy of this manual and his 5/3/1 for Powerlifting manual as well. These programs work very well at the intermediate level and progress can be made on them for a long, long time. Best of all, they work very well in semi-private training environments, such as the one that we have at Results Fitness.

Conclusion

That’s it! Best of luck at the meet and enjoy the experience! I am sure you will be back for more.
The Combatant In Training: The Aspects of Fight Preparation
—By Shaun Mirjavadi

Every athlete has to put in specialized work toward his/her sport. As the saying goes, there are a million ways to skin a cat, and training is no different. There are a bazillion methods and ideals for training in any particular sport. Mixed Martial Arts training is even somewhat more difficult, as there are many options and facets of the sport to train. It’s really like training for many sports at once, as there are so many forms of combat that are involved. A mixed martial artist’s training schedule for a fight prep situation should involve technical aspects of combat, strength and conditioning, proper nutrition, as well as mental preparation. In this article, I will give an explanation of all of the above, and how I like to prepare myself for battle. Each time through this process, I am constantly fine tuning and working to develop my programming better and better so that I can provide better performances with each fight and continue to grow and improve as a fighter.

Technical Training

A mixed martial artist may train pretty much any form of hand-to-hand combat, but it depends on the fighter’s style and background. The major components right now in MMA can be broken down into two categories, striking and grappling. The most popular forms of striking are boxing, Muay Thai or kickboxing, and various forms of karate and other martial arts. Grappling training consists of wrestling and submission grappling, in the form of Brazilian Jiu Jitsu, Judo or Sambo to name a few. I’d also include standing grappling and clinching in both categories in a sense, as Thai Boxing should teach you great clinching techniques as well as wrestling, namely Greco Roman wrestling, which emphasizes takedowns and control from standing clinching positions. These elements of the “clinch” can really bridge the gap between striking and the ground game. Being properly trained in this dimension is very important in the transitions of the fight, where fights are often won or lost. Without dominating and controlling the positions of a fight, one can really go for a ride in the transitions. To win there, you must control the positions. That is also true in striking, via footwork and angles to strike on, and in grappling, allowing the fighter to have control with dominant positioning in the fight. One must always be aware of their position at all times of the fight.

My particular areas of focus in my technical training include boxing, Thai boxing, wrestling and Brazilian Jiu Jitsu. A new fighter should really put time into these aspects of the game, and should develop a good base from which they can grow. In the beginning, I would focus on one or two elements of these forms at a time, so that I could build a good base and true understanding of each form of combat. It is very important to have a great base. Now, as a professional fighter with valuable experience and a good base in each aspect, I must train all of the above aspects of training. Priorities will be set and a certain amount of focus set on certain forms, depending on the fighter’s style themselves, as well as their opponent’s style and your best guess of what they will bring to the fight. You want to be able to defend anything that your opponent may will bring in their arsenal, and focus on your best elements to win the fight. Now, I will go through some details of the training focuses of each style of training and what I feel is important for a fight.
Boxing

Ahh...Pugilism! I love to Box. Boxing has been one of the most popular combat sports for over a hundred years. Most of us know something about boxing. Plain and simple, it is a form of combat where two people fight each other using their fists! There is a tremendous science to this though, there is a difference between a “boxer” and a “puncher.”

With proper coaching, a boxer will learn the various elements of boxing. They will work on proper footwork first, along with the basic punches, including the jab, cross, hook, uppercut, etc. Then, they will learn to put them into the form of combinations, incorporating their footwork into the techniques. The punches can be aimed at the head or the body, therefore proper defenses should be learned too. These might include blocks, catches, parries, slips, duck-unders, and the list goes on. From these defenses, counter punches and combos are also built on. A fighter must be able to protect themselves at all times. These elements of boxing are worked on individually, as well as in conjunction with one another.

Training tools, which enable this, are the following:

• **Bag work** – this includes various forms of heavy bag training, as well as work on the speed bag and double end bag. The heavy bag work will build conditioning, punching power, speed and pretty much anything can be the focus of heavy bag training. Most people do this wrong unless they were properly taught. You see, the bag hangs from above and swivels in an odd motion. It’s a motion that a person does not move in. We move from the ground up and can change directions with our feet. If you’re not hitting the bag properly, you can actually make yourself a worse fighter. You have to pay attention to the basics when you work the bag. This includes your footwork, angles, hand positioning (not letting them get low), combinations, head positioning and movement, etc. The idea is to combine speed and power. You want to hit the bag in a way that it barely moves. When it does, you stop it with a fast punch or combination. Your hands should come right back to your face, returning with the same speed with which you threw the punch or even quicker. With the speed bag and double end bag, hand speed and timing are worked, as well as your defenses and focus. Everybody has their own style of hitting these bags, and as long as you’re keeping a good rhythm and your hands are up, you can’t really go wrong.

• **Mitt work** – focus mitts will work on a number of things. It fine-tunes all of a fighter’s techniques. It’s a training tool which you can work your offenses as well as defenses in a fight situation. This may have a different focus depending on what you need to work on, or what your opponent may bring, but it should be trained almost like sparring, where you have to be both offensive as well as defensive. You have to react. You have to move your feet in the ring, throw punches, block, slip, catch and weave. It really helps the fighter adapt to what they will have to work in the fight. One of the greatest benefits is that the pace can be constant and controlled by a good trainer if they work the mitts right. These elements, combined with the low impact, make it a great training tool, whereas sparring cannot be done every day nor should it be.

• **Shadow Boxing** – this is one of the most effective training tools for a boxer or Mixed Martial Artist. It allows you to work all of your technique at whatever pace you want. It excludes any injury risk, as there is no impact like what you get with sparring or bag work, but it is a great way to practice your sparring. Shadow boxing is a great warm up, you can start slower and ramp up as you go. If you move your feet and throw constant punches, it can also be a great workout and conditioning tool. If you want to be able to keep your hands up and throw punches the whole fight without tiring, increase your shadow boxing rounds. You can literally throw thousands of punches a day. You can watch in the mirror to be sure that your technique is on par. Some people don’t work fast enough. You should work up to throwing fast, sharp punches and pulling them back to your face quickly. It’s almost like hitting mitts, without the mitts and trainer. You can do it anytime by your-
self and get a great workout. This should be trained daily. You should be sore and fatigued after some good shadow boxing rounds, because you are working hard to use speed and precision along with lots of movement. Throw punches non-stop! It's not so much fun to some people, but I really enjoy it. It has increased my technique greatly since I've incorporated a great deal of it in my training. Even if you have to take a light day, shadowboxing can still be your training tool all on its own.

- **Sparring** — this is the most fun aspect of training for many, and the least favorite for others. It should not be neglected, nor overused. While all of the above training tools will increase the fighter's technique, the old saying, “The bag doesn’t hit back,” is all truth. I’ve seen so many fighters light up the mitts or the bag, but in real time sparring or fighting they fall off. Sparring helps the fighter work out the nerves of real time fighting, as well as seeing punches coming and learning to defend and accommodate them. The nervous energy is important to overcome. No matter how great of shape you are in, nervousness in a fight can make you gas out. Fighters lose because of nerves and the loss of clarity of the mind that accompanies fatigue and panic. The fighter can work this out in training. Taking your licks and humiliation in the gym during sparring can save you from suffering it in the actual fight. It is also the best conditioning tool because there is nothing as tough as sparring in the boxing ring with boxers. With this being said, it should not be overused. Too much sparring can be too impacting and stunt a fighter’s growth. Once or twice a week is great, then take the time in between to work on any techniques that you lacked in your sparring matches and make them better for the next sparring session. This will help you progress much faster than just sparring every day. Sparring is a gage of how your training is progressing and you should look to build on it.

- **Conditioning** — this may involve weight training, roadwork, jump rope, etc. This will all be covered later in this article in its own section because I will be covering condition for MMA in general. I will say that jump rope is vital to a striker in order to increase footwork and speed, as well as conditioning. It's also a great warm-up and it works and warms up the rotator cuff and overall shoulder joints as a whole. This is important to reduce the risk of shoulder injuries for the fighter. A fighter should have healthy shoulders and rotator cuffs and this is a great tool to avoid the muscle imbalances from training.

- **Train the Eye** — this is the element of fighting that only my boxing coach, Bill Bustance, taught me. He is one of the greatest boxing coaches in existence. He’s absolutely huge on this and it paid off for me because I’ve caught guys looking away and their night didn’t end so well. You must never lose eye contact and focus on your opponent, so practice this in all of your training, whether shadow boxing, bag work or anything. If you look away, you will eat the punch that you didn’t see coming. A trained eye will give you a great edge as a fighter, even if you are slower than your opponent. I can’t stress this enough, nor can my boxing coach!

These elements make boxing invaluable for Mixed Martial Arts. There has been a boxing vs. MMA battle in the past, but there shouldn’t be. Both are great sports, but boxing has a great place in MMA. Look at any of the top fighters in the UFC, they all have worked greatly on their boxing. There is a feeling of safety knowing that you are going into a fight with great hands, footwork, defenses and a good eye. Most Mixed Martial Artists don’t work enough boxing because it’s not easy work.
Muay Thai

Originating in Thailand as their native form of combat, Muay Thai, is also known as the art of eight limbs because kicks, punches, knees and elbows are all allowed. They are also all allowed in professional MMA, so to not work them would be a great mistake. There’s also a great deal of clinch work, which is invaluable for controlling the distance and timing in a fight.

The training tools are pretty much the same for boxing, but Muay Thai also uses a longer “banana bag” for a heavy bag tool. This allows the fighter to work on low kicks to the leg and better work on knees. Although focus mitts are still used, Muay Thai also incorporates the larger Thai pads to allow for kicks and knee strikes to be trained at full intensity. This is important to the Thai boxer, as sparring generally doesn’t allow for such great impacting kicks, knees or elbows. Those methods are trained lightly during sparring. The Thai pads and banana bag will allow the fighter to condition their shins for kicks, as well as using their shins to block kicks. In Muay Thai, the kicks are delivered by the shin, not the foot, so shin conditioning is important. Muay Thai also conditions the legs for leg kicks. A straight-up boxer would get severely injured in a fight by a leg kick, whereas a Thai fighter can endure more, as they have felt it numerous times in training and their body is conditioned to be somewhat numb to it. However, checking or blocking the leg kicks with the shin is the safest route to take. Eventually, the leg kicks will wear down even the toughest fighters.

The stance and footwork is also different than boxing. The Thai Boxer stands more squared up and with the back foot moved up quite a bit, where in traditional Western style boxing, the shoulder is in front for protection and the back foot is further back for greater punch rotation and power in the back hand.
Combining boxing and Thai boxing is important for the MMA fighter. I like to work my overall striking with a few slight changes. I think that being squared up in MMA is a mistake. It leaves you too open to the body and vulnerable for attacks. Instead, I train myself and others to keep the lead shoulder on your opponent and protect your chin. Therefore, a good stance for me is to keep my right leg back, yet I keep my foot turned forward like the Thai fighter. My weight is still on my back leg, allowing me to check kicks to my lead leg and still not be vulnerable to the leg kicks. I use a greater bend in my knees, and keep a tight pocket at my hips, keeping my abs tight. This is a good stance for MMA as your chin is protected, and I am free to move on my feet well, and sprawl to defend the takedown if necessary. Everybody is different and has a different style, but this is generally a safe stance and technique for the striker to optimize their style in MMA. Practice what works best for you during your MMA sparring sessions.
Wrestling

Wrestling is invaluable for the Mixed Martial Artist. Wrestlers have outstanding conditioning, strength and work ethic, which can be tough to beat. There are different styles of wrestling, all involving takedowns of some form whether it is from a shot or from a standing clinch (catch wrestling or Greco Roman wrestling). Once on the ground, wrestlers can be very heavy and top dominant and with decent ground and pound, and Jiu Jitsu skills, they can be difficult to be underneath. That is the worse place to be against the wrestler.

The training tools for the wrestler are all practiced on the mat. They are notorious for drilling until the moves are automatic. Training for wrestling is very intense and it should be. Wrestling alone will improve strength, namely core strength, as well as build great cardio.

As MMA evolves, you see less and less typical wrestling shots. If a fighter does shoot in for a takedown, they can be vulnerable to knees to the face, and a failed shot can be exhausting and leave the wrestler in a bad position. Done over and over, the shot gets slower and more difficult to execute. Because of the factors of MMA, the wrestler should not shoot unless the shot is properly set up with strikes, or as a counter to an opponent’s move. For instance, throwing a jab-cross-shot combination. It’s important to work on your takedowns in sequence with each other, in case the shot is blocked or countered. For instance, the wrestler who fails the outside single leg attempt may change direction and turn it to a double leg in order to be successful with the takedown. If you ever watch one of the greatest wrestlers in MMA, Georges St. Pierre, gets his takedowns and they are often more of a tackle. This allows him to take an opponent backward with greater speed that is harder to defend. He also leaves himself at less risk by not putting his knee to the mat. If the shot is countered, he has much less to recover from. Remember, MMA differs from wrestling because somebody is trying to take your head off. This changes the game a bit and the wrestler should adapt.

There are other takedown options without shooting. They involve closing the distance and working from the clinch. This is the most advanced and usually safest method for today’s Mixed Martial Artist if trained properly. Again, set up with strikes or as a counter to strikes or takedown attempts, the clinch allows the fighter to control their opponent and use inside striking or takedowns from there. This might include throws, or dropping the hips down and grabbing the leg or legs for a takedown. A good standing clinch game is also vital to MMA because of the element of the cage wall. Fights are often won or lost on the wall. The better clincher will dominate here. It is important to work on takedowns, strikes, and overall control from clinching positions. Drills, such as pummeling, can be effective tools, but should also be worked live in wrestling practice, as well as with strikes in sparring or with their mitt work. In my opinion, wrestling from the clinch is the best route for today’s Mixed Martial Artist.
Brazilian Jiu Jitsu

BJJ is a deadly art on the ground. No fighter should enter the cage without it. Early on, BJJ proved to be one of the single most dangerous forms of fighting and fighters who didn’t understand it were easily submitted. In Jiu Jitsu, the smaller or weaker opponent can win a fight using leverage and their opponent’s strength and movements against them. It teaches great control and methods of attack on the ground from almost any position, with submissions and ground and pound soon to follow. It’s also the only form of combat where a fighter can end a fight off their back leading to victory. A good BJJ fighter is dangerous even off their back. A less experienced fighter should use caution on the ground against the BJJ artist, even on top in a more dominant position.

Submissions in Brazilian Jiu Jitsu are almost endless and constantly evolve. Somebody is always perfecting moves or creating new submissions. They can use their whole body to execute the submissions. There are various joint manipulations used, including various arm bars, shoulder locks, chokes, leg locks, knee bars and the list goes on. Even triangle chokes can be finished with the legs. The whole body acts as one to execute the moves and a great deal of hip movement and body positioning. A good BJJ fighter is constantly moving and attacking on the ground and they are difficult to control.

The main training tool is the use of their traditional gi. The gi is used as a tool to build technique because it slows the game down and utilizes grips to execute many moves. The gi is used as a weapon. Although it is a weapon that we cannot use in MMA, it is still a vital training tool to become an overall better grappler and build a base. Slowing the methods down is very important especially in the beginning. The fighter must be concerned with their whole body positioning before they can attempt or execute any type of submission.

No gi Jiu Jitsu is also important. The use of the gi will allow you to fine tune your technique so that when it comes off, the execution of the moves are much faster and tighter. Now, the grips are modified to grips that you can use in a fight without the gi. The technique has to be excellent, or else it can be difficult to execute these submissions against a quick, sweaty opponent.

Combining wrestling and Brazilian Jiu Jitsu makes a deadly fighter on the ground. Remember, Jiu Jitsu is only good on the ground, and a good wrestler can take it there at will. Now the wrestler can work their BJJ from more dominant positions, which is important for MMA. Also, against a better BJJ opponent, the wrestler can at least be aware and defend the submissions and use their greater wrestling skills to dominate the fight.

So as you can see, all elements of combat are detrimental for the Mixed Martial Artist to work on both individually, as well as in transition with one another. A great fighter can strike, clinch and grapple. Put the transitions together and train them all in conjunction.

Strength and Conditioning

As I said, there are many ways to train for a sport, and in regard to strength and conditioning, the possibilities are endless. Off-season or between fight camps, the fighter should work mostly on their weaknesses. However, come fight camp time, although emphasis may still be placed on the weaknesses, the overall package of the fighter should be trained. You need to think about what you need to carry into the cage as far as strength and conditioning goes...

A fighter should possess:

- **Skill** – the fighter will have to spend the majority of their training time working on their combat skills. This is true, whether it be a single discipline such as a boxer, or having to split time between training wrestling, jiu jitsu and muay thai, like a mixed martial artist will have to accomplish. The most important aspect of fight-
ing is technique, so don’t skimp on that, make it priority numero uno! We talked about these components above.

- **Strength** – with two equally talented fighters, the stronger one wins. A stronger fighter can even give the more technical fighter fits. Not all trainers are into weights for fighters, but either way you hack it, some type of resistance workload is great for a fighter. If the old school trainer wants to say weights are bad, but has you doing partner squats with a guy on your back, so be it. The resistance is there. However, I believe that the old theory that using weights will decrease conditioning and flexibility for a fighter has been disproved over and over again. It’s all about having a balanced program. If the stronger guy loses, it’s not because he was stronger, it’s because they lacked proper training in one or more of the other elements of training.

- **Speed** – the ability to move your body, or its parts quickly defines speed.

- **Power** – strength and speed get together and have a baby. It’s POWER! Power describes the rate, force or velocity that you can do work or perform a movement.

- **Agility and Coordination** – how well the body can move and change positions. This will be important to have for all movements with the implementation of speed, strength, power and so on.

- **Cardio** – this type of conditioning should be done at aerobic and anaerobic capacities, mostly anaerobic conditioning for fighters. Your technique and strength are both only as good as your cardio. When a fighter gasses, big trouble is on the way. Without good cardio, you won’t have the endurance to allow any skill, strength, speed, power, or agility to be optimally performed for the duration of a fight.

These should all be areas of concern for the combat athlete. The question is, what is the most effective way to train all of these parameters in preparation for a fight?
Strength and conditioning is highly debated in this sport. There are many experts out there doing good things with fighters and having a positive result, and that is the important thing, the result. One major question is whether or not to train these aspects of conditioning on their own, or concurrently, meaning two or more aspects worked together at the same time. There can be benefits and drawbacks to both, but in the respect to fight preparation, I’m in favor of a concurrent method.

Fighting, in any form, is a concurrent activity. Many things are happening at once. The fighter uses everything, technique, strength, power, speed, cardio and whatever else he has in his guts. A fighter throws a combination and misses, he then turns his forward motion into an outside single leg takedown and runs his opponent into the fence. Instantly he transitions into a high crotch and lifts the opponent over his head for a big slam. This will take about five seconds in the fight, but will involve a good use of skill, strength, speed, power, coordination and conditioning. Not only that, but the execution of the series need to be automatic. Transitioning from one to the next needs to be like a reflex with no hesitations.

I believe that a combat athlete should train the full spectrum of skills at all times. Think of training over a week like a pie chart. This is purely an example. The areas of emphasis and the percentage of necessary training time put into each will vary from one individual to the next. However, spending at least 80 percent of the time on technique or skill training is inevitable, probably with any sport. The other pieces of your pie need to fit in a way that you can still have optimal technique workouts. Technique training in the aspects that I mentioned above will give you a great deal of strength and conditioning anyway. You are best served to prepare for a sport by practicing that sport. You don’t get better at fighting by running, doing circuits, or lifting weights. However, it can help improve the rate and ability with which the fighter can do their work. For every individual, strengths and weaknesses should be addressed. The importance, or the amount of time and energy necessary to devote to possible weaknesses, should be properly dealt with. That is up to a good coach to monitor, or yourself, if you are lacking that coach. And you’re not alone, many fighters today in this new sport are lacking coaches.

Your time is limited, so you have to make the most of it. You may only have time to train once a day, or maybe you have the option for two-a-day workouts on some occasions. Much of it depends on the training schedule at your gym.

If you do everything in one workout, it can be hard to improve. You need to have a focus that you work to accomplish with each workout. I would go with a schedule that pairs or groups skills in this case. Your technique training will take up the bulk of your time, so you shouldn’t put more than 30-60 minutes of additional training with it. Working your boxing and Thai boxing will use a blend of strength, power, speed, cardio, etc. Most people can’t get through an hour of it.

Grouping your strength/speed/power work in one quick workout is beneficial to someone who is short on time. Time is a crucial element, as the preparing fighter should try to avoid overtraining, which will stunt progression. These elements go hand-in-hand and are great to work together. This can be done in a few ways, in the use of contrast training or Olympic lifts. Your strength and conditioning schedule should really depend on your weaknesses and strengths as well as your allotted time to squeeze it in effectively. It should often be fine tuned and tweaked from one preparation period to the next.

There are a number of training tools out there. To name a few, there is weight training, suspension training, kettlebell work, road work, sprint work, plyometrics, metabolic circuits, bodyweight exercises, and the list goes on. Although each may be beneficial, you can’t do it all with much benefit at all. Again, your technique training workouts should take up the bulk of your time and proper recovery will be needed. Here is an example of what I am doing for my upcoming fight in regard to strength and conditioning. Keep in mind that I have a great foundation for strength and power to work with, so I want to maintain that but as a heavyweight, my cardio and endurance in
regard to strength, speed and power is always a necessity to me.

I train strength and conditioning in some facet two to three times a week, aside from that I get in my technical training. Early on, I want to build good cardio to carry me through an effective camp, but I do not want to over tax my nervous system. If I feel that I am, I will forego a conditioning workout. I work the total body as a whole, but I will begin with a strength/power exercise in two of the days. For these two workouts, I will begin with deadlifts or squats for that purpose. Those are the two best exercises for overall strength. The strength I gain in my posterior chain, glutes, legs and core from these lifts is also beneficial to avoid injuries and continue to overcome my back injury. After that particular lift, the workout changes a bit each time and is never exactly the same, but I’ll give you the gist of it. These workouts are usually done a few hours after a technique training session. I always begin my strength and conditioning with core work. This is usually a circuit of various exercises such as ab wheel rollouts, physio ball jackknives, physio ball planks (rotating my forearms in circles or front to back on the ball to increase difficulty), and hyper extensions for the low back. This gets my core and low back warmed up, and increases core strength so that I can also focus on my core better throughout the remainder of my training.

**Monday:** Deadlift. Four to five sets progressing up in weight. I don’t max out with this lift. I try to increase strength on it between fights, but during fight camp, I mainly work to maintain it. After this exercise, I will move into a circuit type, whole body workout combining weights and explosive plyometric type exercises. I try not to stop working. Here is an example of what I did this week after deadlifts:

- Incline Dumbbell Bench Press
- Explosive Pushups
- Pull ups
- Iso Pull Holds (using TRX suspension trainer)
- One Leg Bosu Ball Squats (each leg)
- Box Jumps (trying to explode up with my hips and over the tallest box I can find)
- Man Makers

Man makers on their own are a total-body workout and a great conditioning tool. You start standing with a dumbbell in each hand, then drop down to a pushup position and complete a pushup. From there, you do a renegade row with each arm, explode back up to standing as in a burpee, then you curl the weights up and press them overhead and back down. That is one rep. I do eight or so per set. It takes a while!

After about three times through this type of circuit, I will do a hard jog on the treadmill to really open up the lungs. This might be anywhere from 10-20 minutes, depending on the intensity.

**Wednesday:** Power Yoga. This is new for me, but I like the strength, flexibility and relaxation that it provides. It’s great for recovery too, because the impact is very low. It’s hard as hell and I sweat my butt off doing it. It is definitely one of the hardest things that I’ve done, and I feel it really works on my core and my “grappling” muscles. Afterward, I’ll do about 15-20 minutes of interval sprints.

**Friday:** Squats. Four to five sets progressing up in weight as with deadlifts. Then I may do a similar circuit to the Monday workout, or I may go into some Prowler work. If I use the Prowler, I will vary my exercises with it to work the whole body. The Prowler is an amazing conditioning tool and is very difficult and demanding, therefore I will forego the running at the end of the workout. I will, however, add in isolation exercises for my knees and hips such as leg extensions and lying leg hamstring curls, as well as the hip abduction and adduction machines. With proper technique, this helps me feel stronger in these joints and prevent injuries. Other recovery or injury preventative work may be needed for different individuals.
At four weeks out from a fight, I will forego most strength training. I may squat or deadlift once a week, but my main focus is to take the strength and turn it into power in a way that effectively works my conditioning and decreases the total time spent on this training. I do this with sprint work as well as use of the prowler. So at the four-week point, my plan for this prep will be something similar to the following:

**Monday:** Track sprint work
- Active warm-up
- Acceleration drill – start at the goal line and jog to the 50 yard line, bursting into a sprint from there to the other end. Turn and repeat four to five times with maximal effort.
- 200 Meter sprint x 2 (about 30-60 seconds rest in between)
- 100 Meter sprint x 5 (15-30 seconds rest in between)
- 40 yard sprint x 8 (15 seconds rest)

This whole workout will take about 30 minutes to complete, including the warm-up. That’s a great use of time, which is very important at this point in training.

**Wednesday:** Power Yoga. I feel that I will be able to maintain this activity due to the lower impact. I will follow it with a timed mile, which I try to complete in seven minutes or less. The key is that I use this not only for conditioning, but as a measure of my progress. I try to run faster each week, usually sprinting the straight-aways as best as I can, and jogging the corners.

**Friday:** Prowler work. I push it from high and low bars, as well as pull the sled. If not the prowler, I will do a similar workout to Monday, or maybe run bleachers and do boundings combined with fewer sprints.

The sprint work maintains all of my strength without the use of weights. It’s a highly anaerobic and quick workout, and greatly increases speed, power and overall conditioning. It also gives great forward moving speed and power, which is very important for a MMA fighter. I won’t go through a fight-prep without it! It makes me lean out fast too, so it’s valuable when I’m dieting to cut weight, otherwise I need to increase calories accordingly.

As you can see, this is just one option to demonstrate how you can effectively utilize your time spent on your strength and conditioning on its own, outside of technique training. You can choose your own mix of exercises to address your own strengths and weaknesses, or just bring you in to the fight in the best possible conditioning you could posses at that time.
Nutrition

During my time spent as a nutritionist, fighter and trainer of Mixed Martial Arts, I have noticed that a vast majority of athletes and trainees lack real knowledge of nutrition. They put a lot of time into training technique and conditioning, but very little time into understanding proper nutrition. Some of them like to utilize “what works for them,” but usually have no real rhyme, reason or science behind their nutritional planning. I never understood why. It seems like a no-brainer these days that proper nutrition plays a vital role in improving one’s athletic performance. I always believed that going into a fight, I would have a better chance for success if my technique, conditioning and nutrition were better than my opponent’s. I think that all three of these components should be major concerns for the fighter “in training.”

Without proper nutrition, you cannot have optimal health throughout your training. Through proper nutrition, your recovery will be optimized and your energy levels will be maximal. A fighter must take into account all three basic macronutrients, protein, carbohydrates and healthy fats. You must take in good amounts of high quality foods to supply yourself with all the needed nutrients for recovery and energy. Frequent, light meals are best for the fighter. This way, you get a constant supply of nutrients and never feel over-fed, which can negatively impact your performance in the gym. I handle nutrition plans for all types, from bodybuilders and powerlifters, to the average Joe, as well as fighters. They all have different needs, so I address them individually. In this article, I will give you the basic ideals for a fighter’s nutrition. This will vary depending on if you are cutting weight, or just looking for optimal recovery and energy. Either way, whole, clean natural foods are your top priority.

A fighter should get most of their nutrients form fruits and vegetables, lean proteins, and healthy fats such as nuts, fish, omega 3 supplements, etc. Counting grams or calories is not as important, the focus should be on the nutrients that your foods are comprised of. Fighters already have a ton on their plate, so I try to focus on food choices. You should try to eat vegetables with every meal, especially greens. Dark leafy greens, like spinach, or foods like broccoli and cauliflower can be great. An array of fruit is good too. Most fruits are low glycemic, and these are the ones that should be chosen first. The amount of fruits that are eaten may depend on your personal weight issues. Lean protein should be included with each meal as well as healthy fats. A diet focusing on these elements will be beneficial for recovery, as well as highly anti-inflammatory for the training fighter. Eating this way has made a world of difference in recovery, energy and decreasing inflammation for myself, as well as many fighters with whom I have worked with as a nutritionist.

Complex, starchy carbs are inflammatory to the body. Replacing them with fruits and vegetables will fix this and provide a greater sense of well-being and overall health. Your immune system will also be stronger. With fewer calories, the added essential fats are used for energy as well as providing an anti-inflammatory effect on their own. Even if you are trying to lose weight, these fats are highly important.

That being said, it is also important for a fighter to fully replenish glycogen stores after intense training. For that reason, I incorporate post workout feedings of the complex carbohydrates. Although being higher on the glycemic index, being used after training is beneficial as at that time your body tissues are highly sensitive to their elicited insulin spike. At this time, they will not be stored as fat and you will get a nice metabolic boost. The amount of carbs at this time also depends on the factors of your size, age, intensity and duration of the workout, and whether or not you are in a weight-cutting phase of training. It won’t take long for your body to use the carbohydrates up as your metabolism is highly elevated. Almost any carbs are ok at this point in time, and immediately going back into your basic plan listed above will still ward off the inflammation or any possible fat gain.

As far as supplementation goes, there isn’t much more because you’re getting so many nutrients in these foods throughout the day. I am a huge advocate of good peri-workout nutrition and the use of BCAAs, as well as possible carbohydrates to stay energized through your workout. Electrolytes are also huge at this time. I typically lose any-
where from six to 10 pounds of water in one training session due to sweat. I was starting to feel really sluggish by the end of the workout and I was having a difficult time rehydrating in time for my next workout or even the next day. I started taking in an electrolyte drink, split up before, during and after training and it helped immensely. The BCAAs are very important to keep you from entering a catabolic state during training, and they are a tremendous boost to the athlete’s recovery. BCAAs are essential, and they are the only amino acids that your muscle can easily use as fuel during intense workouts. They should be used in high doses (again depending on your bodyweight) so buy it in bulk to get the best benefit!

Again, diets are highly individual, but here’s an example of what I follow for a fight:

**Meal 1** – vegetable and egg scramble: I use whatever veggies I want, usually green pepper, onion, mushrooms, and a heap of minced garlic. I add in a bunch of spinach, it cooks right down. Then, I add five omega 3 eggs, whole. On the side, I will have a bowl of fresh strawberries for dessert!

**Meal 2** – steamed broccoli/cauliflower, chicken breast, three fish oil tabs, and one apple.

**Meal 3** – large salad with dark greens and spinach, and whatever other fresh veggies I have in the fridge, some tomato, a cut up chicken breast, and 2 Tbsp of organic olive oil based salad dressing. Toss it up and chow! Training is soon to follow...

**Pre-workout** – 10g BCAAs, preferably Anatrop, maybe a pre-workout drink, although I try not to, and electrolytes.

**During Workout** – 15g BCAAs (Anatrop) and electrolytes, in a 32 oz jug of water, sipped on during and throughout training to keep hydrated and a constant flow of BCAAs in my bloodstream.

**Post-workout** – 15g BCAAs (Anatrop) the remainder of the electrolytes, 30 grams of carbs from waxy maize. I mix this again in a high volume of water to replenish lost fluid and begin to replenish muscle glycogen. I love waxy maize for this, but if not, any sports drink will do the trick. Then, I shower before going home to eat my true post-workout meal.

**Meal 4** – I usually have a faster digesting protein, such as a high-quality whey isolate, or egg protein. This is the only shake that I will have. Then, I’ll eat about 60-100 grams of carbohydrates per hour of training. That will be whatever I am craving, usually something sweet like a bowl of oatmeal with blueberries in it, topped with natural maple syrup, or I might have a huge bowl of healthy cereal, like one of the Kashi cereals. I make it with almond milk, as I avoid dairy as much as possible during training. If I want something different, I may eat whatever is for dinner, like pasta with meat sauce, potatoes and meat, etc. The main thing is to try to stay all natural or organic. To get all of my carbs in, I might combine foods, such as eating spaghetti, then a bowl of cereal or oats for dessert.

**Meal 5** – Back to the basics, usually at night I’ll have 6-8 oz of lean beef, steamed veggies and a grapefruit for dessert. Sometimes I will eat a scoop of all-natural peanut butter or almond butter.

In my last fight prep, which only lasted six weeks, I lost over 20 pounds with this diet. I guess you can call this diet a combination of Paleo eating with carb backloading. I can only get five meals in during training, because I can’t eat for two hours before training. I like to train with an empty stomach to ensure good performance and that I don’t feel bloated or heavy. I want to feel clean and light, yet energized. As you can see, you get plenty of complex carbs in the post workout meal and that will overload your glycogen stores and you will have plenty left over for the next day. If I work out twice in a day, I will simply do something similar after the other workout, although it
may not be quite so high. I will try to stay more toward the 60 grams of carbs mark.

Huge water intake is an absolute must. Training like this will leave you extremely dehydrated in a hurry! You really can’t have too much water – especially after training, drink until you can’t drink anymore. Drink until you are urinating regularly again, and it is almost clear. Dark pee is a sign of dehydration! Drink up until it’s clear again.

Again, dieting should be an individualized approach, but I find that this type of eating is highly beneficial for weight loss, optimal recovery and performance. The post workout feeding makes it easy to stay on. Try it for yourself, you won’t be disappointed.

To be the best fighter that you can, truly takes putting it all together. Why give 80 or 90 percent when you can give it 100? Your mental state will be better, and you will feel adequately prepared from your tremendous fight preparation. Be perfect and your outcome will lead to your hand being raised in the cage when the battle is through!
8-week Bench Cycle for Bench Shirts
—By Julia Ladewski

**WEEK 1**

**Day 1**
- Floor Press: max set of 3
- Pin Press: (6-8 inch lockout) 3 x 5
- Chin-ups: 24-30 total reps
- Face Pulls: 4 x 12
- Dumbbell Extensions: 3 x 8-12

**Day 2**
- Dynamic (Speed) Bench: 9 x 3 at 60%
- Dumbbell Floor Press: 3 x 8
- Wide Grip Pulldown: 4 x 8-10
- Lateral Raises: 3 x 15
- Band Tricep Pushdown: 3 x failure

**WEEK 2**

**Day 1**
- 3-Board: max set of 3
- Pin Press: (6-8 inch lockout) 3 x 5
- Chin-ups: 25-35 total reps
- Face Pulls: 4 x 12
- Dumbbell Extensions: 3 x 8-12

**Day 2**
- Dynamic (Speed) Bench: 9 x 3 at 65%
- Dumbbell Floor Press: 4 x 8
- Wide Grip Pulldown: 4 x 8-10
- Lateral Raises: 3 x 15
- Band Tricep Pushdown: 3 x failure

**WEEK 3**

**Day 1**
- Reverse Band Bench: max set of 3
- Floor Press with Chain: 3 x 5
- Low Cable Rows: 3 x 8-12
- Chest Supported Y's and T's: 3 x 10 each
- Kettlebell Extensions: 3 x 8-12

**Day 2**
- Dynamic (Speed) Bench: 9 x 3 at 70%
- 4-Board: 3 x 3-5
- Barbell Bent-over Rows: 4 x 8-10
- Shrugs: 3 x 12
- Dumbbell Tates: 4 x 12-15
WEEK 4

Day 1
- Deload Max Effort DB Bench Press: 4-5 sets of 8-10
- Low Cable Rows: 4 x 8-12
- Chest Supported Y's and T's: 4 x 10 each
- Kettlebell Extensions: 4 x 8-12

Day 2
- Deload Dynamic Bench Pushups: 3 sets of near failure
- Barbell Bent-over Rows: 4 x 8-10
- Shrugs: 3 x 12
- Dumbbell Tates: 4 x 12-15

WEEK 5

Day 1
- Floor Press: max single
- Overhead Press: 3 x 8
- Inverted Rows: 3 x failure
- Dumbbell Power Cleans: 4 x 12
- Dumbbell Extensions: 4 x 8-12

Day 2
- Dynamic (Speed) Bench: 5 x 5 at 60%
- 5-Board: 3 x 5
- One Arm Dumbbell Rows: 3 x failure (Kroc Rows)
- Plate Front Raise: 3 x 15
- Pushdowns: 3 x 12

WEEK 6

Day 1
- 3-Board: max single
- Overhead Press: 4 x 6
- Inverted Rows: 3 x failure
- Dumbbell Power Cleans: 4 x 12
- Dumbbell Extensions: 4 x 8-12

Day 2
- Dynamic (Speed) Bench: 5 x 5 at 65%
- 5-Board: 3 x 3-5
- One Arm Dumbbell Rows: 3 x failure (Kroc Rows)
- Plate Front Raise: 3 x 15
- Pushdowns: 3 x 12
WEEK 7

Day 1
- Reverse Band Bench: max single
- Floor Press with Chain: 3 x 5
- Chest Supported Rows: 4 x 8-10
- Cable High Pull: 4 x 15
- Dips: 3 x 10-15

Day 2
- Dynamic (Speed) Bench: 5 x 5 at 70%
- 4-Board: 3 x 3-5
- V-Bar Pulldowns: 4 x 8
- Barbell Extensions: 3 x 10
- Hammer Curls: 3 x 10-12

WEEK 8

Day 1
- Deload Max Effort Dumbbell Press for Reps: 3-4 sets of 8
- Chest Supported Rows: 5 x 8-10
- Cable High Pull: 4 x 15
- Dips: 3 x 10-15

Day 2
- Deload Dynamic Bench Pushups: 3 x near failure
- V-Bar Pulldowns: 4 x 10
- Barbell Extensions: 3 x 10
- Hammer Curls: 3 x 10-12
Eating For A PR
—By Clint Darden

I guess that some of my eating habits have become well-known, laughed at, and has become semi-legend on more than a few message boards over the years. More than a decade ago I was known for my famous Hamburger Helper recipes. Before that, it was my obsession for eating dozens of whole eggs and bags of pasta per day along with a gallon of whole milk. In recent years I’ve slowly getting known for “getting my bloat on,” for big training days and I’m constantly being asked questions about the importance of the bloat and how it can be properly obtained. But no matter what the decade or the goal has been, I’ve always had a cooler with me everywhere I go.

So, you have a big PR coming up (or a contest) and you want to be fully prepared. You need to get your bloat on. Common misconceptions are that it involves just adding salt to everything and a few Twinkies here and there. Completely wrong! A good bloat involves clean food in insane amounts. So what is an insane amount to shoot for? An insane amount is 1,000 grams of carbs a day in addition to your protein and fats...that is a good start. So, if you are looking at five meals in the day, you will need 200 grams of carbs per meal. Easy math!

Do I eat 1,000 grams of carbs the entire week leading up to a big PR and/or Training Day? No, but I will try to make two of the last four days leading up to it 1,000-gram carb days for sure.

Do I get all sticky and make sure that ALL of my carbs are from super clean sources? No way…but I make sure that as many of my meals are as clean-carb based as possible. At the minimum, I should have some way to know how many carbs are in the food that I am about to consume. Of course, thankfully the FDA put their neat little labels on everything AND there is more than one application for the iPhone that has nutritional value information for a lot of fast food places!

Let’s say that you are headed out on the prowl for some good old bloat and you’ve heard my praise of TacoDrol. Taco Bell is one of the greatest places to get TacoDrol, but Taco John’s also has some seriously good stuff too. The thing with Taco John’s is that their TacoDrol usually comes in a higher milligram dose and can for sure be worth it even though it is a slightly higher price. For us here across the pond (also called Europe) it can be impossible to find a Taco John’s unless we are willing to risk bringing it through customs...and nobody likes latex gloves at airports anymore. Anyway, TacoDrol comes in two main forms, hard shell and soft shell. The Soft Shell version is the one that you want for bloating. The hard shell version is clearly for dieting or during your “off cycle” of tacos. The soft shell taco has more calories, same fat, and double the carbohydrates (21 versus 12...its fuzzy math I’m using here). So if you know that you will need 200 grams of carbohydrates, then you will need 10 of them at one meal to get your requirements (nine will actually work) but that can end up giving you a little too much TacoDrol dose at one time. What I suggest is four tacos, one large order of fries (44 grams), and a large Sprite (60+ grams). This gives you roughly 188 grams of carbs and if you eat it in the restaurant, you can refill your Sprite for the waddle to your car giving you a new total of 248! See, you are already 48 calories OVER! If you manage this twice in one day then you have already gotten half of your Daily Bloat Requirements.

What if you prefer BurritoDrol to TacoDrol? Quite often I fall into this category, especially when their BurritoDrol is on sale and their TacoDrol is not. Ok, now let’s remember that I made C’s in both Basic Economics classes that I took in college, but I don’t need A’s to look deeper than just the basic carb facts when it comes to the BurritoDrol choices on the Taco Bell Pharmacy Shelf. The half-pound cheesy potato burrito has nacho cheese sauce, potato bites, and sour cream as extra “systems” to supposedly help shuttle those calories directly into your muscles, cheeks, and eye lids, but look at the carb-to-cost ratio! The half-pound cheesy potato burrito has 59 grams of carbs versus the bean burrito’s 56 grams of carbs and the bean burrito is most often one-third of the price of the half-pound cheesy potato burrito! That means you can buy THREE bean burritos for 168 grams of carbs compared to the half-pounder’s 59. Really, it’s a no brainer! Two bean burritos, one large fry, and a large Sprite AND refill gives you a total of 276 grams of carbohydrates!
So now you are at two TacoDrol meals and one BurritoDrol meal, which gives you a total of 772 grams of carbs! You’ve only eaten three small meals and with two meals to go, you only have 228 grams of carbs left! Now IF you do my dosage suggestions of TacoDrol and BurritoDrol on these days, then I HIGHLY SUGGEST that the rest of the meals that you eat are of very clean and healthy foods. The issue with clean and healthy foods is that it is often very difficult to get in a lot of carbs and protein and to not be extremely full in the process (or broke). I mean, heck, a pound of pasta is only about 300 grams of carbs. Cheap, clean, but a pound of pasta cooked is bigger than a large water melon...and you would need 3.3 pounds in a day to get your 1,000-gram need! Brown rice is a great source of good carbs, but again you are looking at more than a watermelon in size to get the carbs that you need. You need to have some type of tapeworm and eating disorder to get it all down.

A good way to choose your clean carbs is to make sure that they can be eaten with a spoon and this really doesn't leave you with many choices.

My favorite choices are:
1. Sweet Potatoes
2. Buckwheat
3. Bananas
4. Sliced Bread
5. Dry Oats

A great breakdown on how much to eat of what is the following:

100 Grams of Carbs =
- 2 ½ Coffee Cups of Sweet Potatoes
- 2 Cups Dry Oats
- 2 Cups Mashed Bananas
- 10 Slices of Bread
- 3 Cups Cooked Roasted Buckwheat

It is very important to know HOW TO EAT each of these for maximum carbohydrate consumption as well.

Sweet Potatoes are just awesome. Forget the taste! They are easy to cook, great for you, easy to make taste better (without filling you up), cheap in the U.S.A., and easy to eat loads of them without getting a bad case of nausea or going into a full on coma. If I’m doing a big day of cooking and I’m concerned about making them taste a little better, I will pop on to Google (why won’t Bing pay me like they do Steven Colbert?) and search how to cook them. I still end up turning on the oven and getting it warm and then popping a bunch of sweet potatoes into the microwave for 5-10 minutes to get the cooking started a little faster. As soon as the microwave “dings,” I grab the sweet potatoes, yell, throw them back down onto the plate, and put my newly burned hands under some cold water. As soon as I’ve kicked myself and yelled at the top of my lungs out the kitchen window, I carefully grab the sweet potatoes and dab a bit of salt on them (just shake the salt shaker over the plate full) and then begin wrapping each potato in aluminum foil and put them on a pan, then put that pan in the oven. I then re-search Google (Bing if they paid me) for how long they are supposed to be in there. But most of the time, I just keep them going in the microwave till they are done.

Long story short...when they are soft you can take them out, let them cool just a bit, slice them open, scoop them out with an ice cream scoop, spoon, knife, bare hands, or just shove your face in there and start consuming. If you like sweet potatoes natural...then you are set. It's like a simple puree that you can shovel into your mouth with a spoon. If you need a little more flavor, add some butter, black sugar, and salt if you need it. None of these things take up too much space and add a lot of flavor. Not that you will be tasting the food as you shovel it down.

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anyway.

**Dry Oats** are great and easy to do a few things with. I mostly use oats with breakfast and in all of my protein drinks throughout the day (mostly, only breakfast). It’s good to fix this one the night before and keep it in the fridge, but if you must fix it and drink it immediately, then a blender will work just fine. I will look to make a giant shake that I will have as soon as I wake up, you know, so I’m primed and prepared for the TacoDrol hunt and I don’t have to drive to the Taco Pharmacy on an empty stomach. You will have to find your own proper mixture of juice (I prefer apple and orange juice), yogurt (I like strawberry), a banana or three, protein powder, and as many oats as I can possibly get to semi-mix. If you are making this the night before, you don’t want to put in the banana (or three).

**Bananas** can be a great thing, but you need to be careful, chances are good that you are already so bloated that looking at the wrong kind of food means that you need someone to hand you a trash can. There is no way you can run to the bathroom or to the trash can in the kitchen at this point and you don’t want to puke down your belly into your crotch and onto your favorite La-Z-Boy. You also might need someone to help you if you are clumsy with knives since your hands will be so bloated that you can’t properly peel the banana. I’ve seen people cut the banana in half and then peel it, cut the top off and peel it, and I’ve heard rumors of people cutting a small hole in it and squeezing it till mashed banana came out and they could just basically drink it…but I’ve never seen such an amazing feat with my own eyes. Either way, I suggest that you get someone to peel or pre-cut them for you and stick them into the fridge. Eating them cold is very important since you are already semi-nauseas/comatose/sausage fingered and cold foods feel better on your stomach than warm ones. I also highly suggest mashing them if possible and mixing them with ice cream. Again…cool bananas and cold ice cream can be magic.

**Buckwheat** is a food that I just don’t hear much about anymore and it’s a shame! Here in Cyprus, it is mostly imported from Russia and from what I remember, it’s dirt cheap in the U.S.A. Last week, I paid 3.30 Euros ($4.75) for a 1kg (2.2 pounds) bag. The magic is that this bag produces 720 grams of carbs, it’s easy to cook, and it’s easy to eat lots of it! It doesn’t really have a taste (although the roasted buckwheat has a little more flavor), which is a good thing in my opinion because you can add flavor to it. Follow the directions, but I suggest adding a little salt, possibly some butter, and/or some soy sauce to the amount that you are about to eat. I have friends that will squirt some lemon juice, lime juice, and even salsa on top of it to add in a little flavor. Again it is cheap, easy to cook, easy to “spice up” or not, and it’s easy to shovel down lots of it.

**Sliced Bread** is a food that somehow has gotten a bad rap, especially by those looking to get into a pair of skinny jeans while drinking their non-fat latte. Seriously, I have no idea what either are, but I know that they are both anti-big lifts. Bread can be a magical thing when you need to find a way to stuff in some extra carbs, but the key is to smash the bread as much as possible so it won’t take up as much space in your stomach.

Remember, you don’t want to be full, you want to eat a lot of carbs. Smash up the bread and just swallow it down. Drink a little ice water if you need to (it can help) or ice apple juice can be grand! If you are down to the wire and you are in desperate need of getting in those last few grams to make your full bloat, I will let you in on a small secret move. Stand over the sink. Put a loaf of sliced white bread to the left of the sink and a jar of honey in the right side of the sink (I assume that everyone has a double sided sink…you know...for when your training partner comes over and you don’t want to dirty up the dishes). Now take a spoon (remember, all bulking foods can be eaten with either your bare hands or a spoon), and get a big gob of honey, slap it onto some bread, lean over the sink, and shove it into your mouth. A few things are very important here and they are things that I’ve learned from hard-nosed experience:
1. An apron should be worn across your chin to protect your beard. Honey isn't something that you want to get stuck in your beard at this point in your bloat. You can spend some time and make alterations to yours and it is well worth it. Have the chinstrap changed from string to elastic. You have to use pliers to hold the car key to clean out your ear, so we know you can't tie that thing behind your head. You can also have an extra section sewn onto the bottom so it can be extra long. This makes it great to cover your new hard-earned belly from all the carbs. Make sure that your apron is made of a thick cotton material because anything done around the sink is subject to getting wet. I've also heard of some select hardcore few going as far as covering their aprons with cling wrap, so that when they are done they can just tear away the cling wrap, throw it away, and not have to wash their apron after every feeding. This is similar to how NASCAR puts that stuff on the windshields of their cars that they just peel off during pit stops.

2. Always have a fan near the sink. At this point in your day, you're so bloated that you're sweating non-stop and you don't want to lose any fluids. A fan can go a very long way towards keeping those fluids inside.

3. Make sure that the cold water is turned on, as it serves two purposes. One: it keeps the sink clean as you spill breadcrumbs and honey all over it. Your wife will be so freaking impressed that you cleaned up after yourself that you have no idea what she might do just to say thanks! Two: once nausea sets in, you'll need to get your hands, wrists, and forearms completely under cold running water so that you don't get fully sick. It's important to have the proper bread eating bloat arch so that you can keep your head up high...so the food doesn't get an itching to come flying back up. Remember, this is WAR!

4. Keep a chair near the sink. At this point, your entire back will get pumped just walking from the La-Z-Boy to the sink and you don't want to think about how pumped and painful it would be if you have to stand there for more than “however many seconds it takes you to squat a max lift.” Make sure that the chair is padded and sits at least four inches above parallel.

Are you still having issues getting the carbs in? Are you forced to train on a day when you need to be bloating? I've been there, man, and I've tried lots of things. I won't leave you hanging either, so here are just a few more last minute tips and tricks to keep that appetite going and the bloat increasing:

Fluids: Don't forget to drink a lot of fluids. Too much TacoDrol can either be explosive to your interior design, or completely shut you down. Drinking liters of orange soda or Sprite isn't the best answer either, although I should note that every time I've sat and ate with top strongmen, they either drank water and/or regular soda with their meals. When I'm full, but I know that I need fluids, I will take a shaker and a 1-1.5 liter empty bottle. I'll fill it about half way with water and then freeze it. Once frozen, I'll add in a pre-mixed drink of one quarter apple juice, one quarter orange juice, and one half water. The ice in the bottle will keep it cold and the juices will keep it semi-isotonic, add flavor, and add carbs. It is healthier than drinking soda after soda.

Snacks: If you’re training or on the go, it’s important to always have snacks with you. Honey is great to take with you, but it can be difficult to find a sink when you are on the go (much less a proper apron, fan and chair). I’ve had luck with shoveling down sliced bread, juice and snickers bars while training. I will also “re-fuel” with a couple Cokes as soon as I finish training. Again, ice cold is the only way to go.

Avoiding Coma: My suggestion is not to avoid it. Wake up an hour early so that you can get in an extra early meal (your pre-made shake) and get your day going. The good thing about this is that you can take a two-hour nap between meals in the afternoon, then maybe another nap before bedtime.

Failed Bloat: It happens! Just try and learn from what you did. Keep track of how many carbs you conquered by certain times in your day, and try to do better next time. A couple of small adjustments can really go a long way,
especially if you find a food that is “better” for YOU.

**Adding Salt:** Feel free to add, salt but make sure to add fluids when you do. The salt will help you bloat and hold water, which does help to keep weight on you and help to prevent muscle tears. However, if you aren’t used to it, you could end up feeling like crap for a day or so…and amazingly thirsty!

**Now Let’s Get Serious**

Beyond all the humor (it’s mostly true though) in the things that I’ve written above, keep in mind the principles of it all. You have a big training day coming up, or several, and keeping your weight BIG is a major factor in lifting big, especially when it comes to doing it for several days in a row. You never need to be skimping on foods especially when performance is your goal. Carbs, fats, sugar, and salt are not horribly bad for you if you pay some attention to what you’re doing. Never avoid them completely if you’re looking to do well on the platform. If you have several big days coming up, buckle down and get serious about your eating and you will see the difference.

Even if I talk about TacoDrol, BurritoDrol, NachoVar, and Methyl-Chalupa like they are the answer to everything that you have been looking for, I hope you understand that they truly aren’t the best way to go about reaching your long-term goal(s). They also aren’t the solution to perform at your best level. Quality is always a key term when it comes to success, and I’m not talking about something that can be found in a bottle, can, tub, plastic bag or soft shell. Quality food is the BEST answer that you will find and in the case of proper bloating, you need a large quantity. Make the best choices that you can and look for foods that can be eaten super clean or ones you can spice up to add flavor or turn into more calories.

Remember that I’m not a doctor (I did sleep with one last night though) and never embark on a heavy TacoDrol Cycle or Bloating Excursion without making sure that you are healthy and prepared. Remember, no one can squat a grand from six feet under.
Strongman Contest Prep
—By Clint Darden

I was at my second and last Pro Strongman show in the U.S.A. and we were having an athlete meeting after the first day of competition. Jesse Marunde decided that an athlete meeting wasn’t worth his time, so he headed back to his room at the hotel immediately after the first day’s events were over. Other than Jesse, the people sitting around the area were like a “Who’s Who” in U.S.A. Strongman. Even though it was several years ago, bits and pieces are still in and out of my mind, but I do remember a couple of big points. Phil Pfister complained non-stop like it was a third grade argument over who got the sticker, the entire group magically became totally silent when Karl Gillingham spoke (it was like the Messiah had decided to share wisdom), I had the biggest feet in the group, and Magnus Ver Magnusson said something that would change my thoughts on training for the rest of my life.

“Americans are the biggest cry babies in the world when it comes to this sport. You complain and want to know exactly every detail about every event for every contest six months before it happens. You train ONLY for a specific contest and when you get there, you still suck. You have missed the point. Have you not noticed that every year you have an “America's Strongest Man” but when he competes in Europe, or at world’s, he takes near last place? Do you not understand why?” He went on to say that at the contests in Europe you would never know the events until you got to the contest and most of the time they’d compete in contests nearly every weekend, so you had to be prepared for everything. You had to squat, press, deadlift, and do the events. Everyone in the group (with the exception of Karl Gillingham) looked at him like he was an alien with three heads, and this really got the butter churning in my head.

Then, you get the guys that ask 400 questions about the events for the local Copper Level show at the West Harlan County Bullfrog County Fair, sponsored by the West Harlan Airport, Hair Care, Tire Change, and DVD Rental Center. How many millimeters thick are the handles on the farmer's walk? How high are the handles? Will a deadlift bar be used, or a standard Texas Power Bar? Can we use straps? What about suits? Can our suit be multi-ply? What are the exact weights, diameters, and who made the stones that we will be using? What are the heights for the stone platforms? Will there be a metal lip on the stone platform or wood? How many axles does the truck have that we will be harness pulling and what is the exact surface type and angle grade we will be pulling on? I’m not sure I'll make it because I haven’t really had time to go through my entire 36-week one-arm dumbbell press peaking program, so I’m not really ready to compete.

This kind of stuff drives me insane. The thought process behind it drives me bonkers and honestly, people have totally missed the point of whatever their goals are. Now, everyone should have goals and I can respect goals such as:

1) I just want to have fun in training.
2) I just want to have fun competing every once in a while.
3) I just want to compete in the West Harlan County Fair Strongman Show.

But if your goals are as such:
1) To turn Pro in the next three years.
2) To be a competitive athlete (AM or Pro).
3) To become a top-ranked strongman (AM or Pro).
4) To make it to World’s Strongest Man in five years.
5) Etc...

Then, you've missed the freaking point of what you’re doing. You’ve focused so much on ONE event that you are going to create so many weaknesses, as an athlete, that you will never reach any major goals without lots of dumb luck.
As the Internet and message boards start to play a larger and larger role in communication through strength sports, it becomes easier to follow major athletes in the world of Strongman. So, we’re all Facebook friends with Derek Poundstone, Brian Shaw, Travis Ortmeyer and Terry Hollands. We all followed the training log of Mike Jenkins that he was posting up to a few weeks out from World’s Strongest Man (WSM). We all follow them because we hope to learn something about their secret training program that will help us to get to their level, but it seems we always miss the point. They didn’t know the events for WSM until a few weeks before the contest and they didn’t know the specifics (weights, distances, implements) until they got to the contest. Did no one else realize this and think about how it fits into their long-term major goals?

So, I’ve hung around a couple of these guys and I’ve heard them talking on my phone to contest promoters (wherever they were headed to next weekend) and they were just learning what the events would be. It really didn’t matter since they were basically prepared for anything. And this is my mind-set, you can train to be extremely prepared for five specific events OR you can train to be very prepared for anything. I’m crazy, right? Nope. I’ve competed several times where the only thing that I knew before the day of the contest was that I was competing. And you know what? After the contest was over, the strongest guy still won the show.

So, it doesn’t matter how you train? You mean I can do anything and still perform the same on contest day? Yoga and Pilates only? Zumba? Heck no, this isn’t what I mean at all. The principles of training never change: squat, press, deadlift, mild cardio, and keep your hands on the implements. The part that really gets people is the fact that a contest doesn’t have to tell you what events they are having...they can have different events and any number of these events. You want to be somewhat prepared for it, so practice a little bit of everything. Really, it’s not that difficult.

Make a list of the implements that you have to train with:

- Log
- Axle
- Farmers
- Thick Farmers
- Yoke Stones
- Tire Flip
- Conan’s Wheel
- Viking Press
- Car Deadlift
- Harness Pull
- Arm-Over-Arm
- Sled Drag
- One-Arm Dumbbell Press
- Squat
- Deadlift

Well, I’m going to be doing squats and deadlifts no matter what since they help to tone my abs for that beautiful beach body I really desire...so that narrows a lot of things down right there.

As far as setting up your training program, there are so many options and it is actually FUN from here on out! My training is set up on three days a week, so below is a rough guide as to how I have set things up.
Sunday
- Deadlifts – my normal program
- Log Press – my normal program
- Pick two events and train them hard
- Pick two to three events and do them in an easy medley

Tuesday
- Bench Press – my normal program
- Incline Bench Press – my normal super light and easy and fast program (flexibility work)
- One-Arm Dumbbell Press for Reps or Axle Press – I’m not talking death sets here, just get some 80-90% intensity work in
  - Accessory – Lats, Biceps, Triceps, Rotators
  - Load one to five LIGHT stones to a tall platform – I use 160, 185, 190 lbs to 61-68 inches

Thursday
- Box Squats – my normal program
- Good Morning – my normal program
- Strict Log Press – my normal program. No death sets, just getting some decent work in
- GHR and Abs – my normal program
- Load one to five LIGHT stones to a tall platform
- Harness Pull Or Sled Drag, or back to back – one to two good sets is enough

Really, the only thing that you have to decide is how you should be doing your medley on Sunday and what events you should be going heavy and focusing on. Go HARD on the events that you have difficulty with. For instance, if you find that the Super Yoke is crushing you at every contest, do lots of work on the Super Yoke. If 800 pounds is crushing you, do a couple sets with 600, a couple of sets with 700, maybe a couple of pick ups (or whatever) with 800 pounds and either call it after that, or finish with a “success” set of 600-700 pounds for speed. Be careful that you don’t get caught up into thinking that you have to beat yourself to death on this by doing four to eight sets of 100 feet with your eyes bulging and your spine sticking out above your Rehband belt, you just need to get some good TRAINING in.

We’ll pretend that the Farmer’s Walk is killing you when you have to start making turns, you’re losing your grip, your upper back is rounding and you are dropping it much earlier than you should. If 300 pounds is the normal weight that you’re using in contests, then just put 150 pounds (or whatever) on the implements and make some short figure eights with them. Add some weight and do another set or two to focus on your weakness (the turns) while still getting in some good farmer’s walk training.

Now, how do you set up your medley?

Easy and Fun! Pick whatever other events you have laying around and get them out. You also need some work on the Conan’s wheel and tire flip because you probably haven’t done them in a month. Set up the wheel very light, take it for a turn, drop it, flip the tire one to two flips, and get back on the wheel. Do this for as long as you can.

If you also need to work on your atlas stones, odd stones, and one-arm dumbbell press, take the wheel for a half turn, load a stone and/or clean and press the dumbbell, take the wheel another half turn and flip the tire a time or two, continue or stop!

Wait, you say you have a group of people training and this will take too long to set up and too long to complete with five to eight people? Easy! Take the wheel a half turn and then set it down, grab the dumbbell and get a rep
with each arm, and then go to the stone and load it a time or two. Meanwhile, when you dropped the wheel, the
guy waiting at the stone picked it up and took it a half turn to the tire and flipped the tire...where the guy standing
at the tire picked up the wheel and brought it back to the atlas stone/dumbbell press station. Basically, you set
up all of your implements and everybody starts. When the Conan's wheel gets back to you, you pick it up and
take it another half turn and continue until someone dies. Bingo! Whamo! Slamo! In just a few minutes, you did
the Conan's wheel, tire, atlas stones, and the one-arm dumbbell. And these aren't THE events that you HAVE to
use...just pick and choose! Reps on the power stair implemented between tire flips can be, “Oh so much fun,”
too!

**What Have I Done?**

For one of my last contests I had an idea that there might be farmer's walk, super yoke, and atlas stones, since a
friend that knew the promoter also knew about some new equipment that the promoter “wanted.” How did I train?

**Week 1:** 230 Atlas Stone x 10M, 710 Super Yoke x 10M

**Week 2:** 245 Atlas Stone x 10M, 285 Farmers x 10M

**Week 3:** 245 Atlas Stone x 10M, 670 Super Yoke x 10M, 235 Farmers x 10M (ran out of plates)

**Week 4:** 265 Atlas Stone x 10M, 325 Farmers x 10M (I did the Yoke at 440 lbs on its own)

**Week 5 (Pre Contest):** 230 Atlas Stone x 10M, 285 Farmers x 10M (no yoke, it beats me up too much)

I got to the contest and the events were:

- Harness Pull
- Viking Press
- Frame Carry (660 lbs with a turn)
- Tire Flip (660 lbs with metal rim)
- Super Yoke Medley (840 lbs)
- Car Deadlift Hold for time
- Atlas Stones

I did very well, as I came in with as best preparation as I could have. I was in good shape, and I'd touched all the
implements at least once or twice in the last several weeks. I could have been better prepared for this contest?
How? I didn’t have the exact truck that they were going to be pulling with. I didn’t have their super high quality
awesome Viking Press. I never even saw a frame carry before. I never flipped a tire with the steel rim still inside of
it. I dislocated my finger on that son of a gun, too. Their super yoke was freaking well balanced unlike mine. And...
their stones were PERFECT with a platform much lower than mine, too. So what if I had prepared more specific to
this contest? What happens if I get to the show and they change something at the last minute? What if the tire
ends up being 900 pounds instead of 660? What if a sponsor decides that they want THEIR event to be changed
at the last minute from an 18-inch deadlift for reps to max deadlift from the floor, or with a car? If you spent the
last three months ONLY training for what you THOUGHT the contest events would be, you would’ve been totally
prepared for a totally different Copper Level Show somewhere else.

**What about peaking for an event?**

Don’t try and peak for anything. The height of your “peaking” for a show should include resting the last week,
taking the last event day SAFE, and eating 1,000 grams of carbs and TacoDrol the last several days. Don’t do
anything drastic because you aren’t going to build any major strength in the last 10-14 days, but you can do a lot
of things that will make you a lot weaker.
If your goal is BIG in the sport of Strongman, plan out your year for training and make sure that it is getting you closer to your goals. Be advised that the top guys in the sport are not training contest-specific, they are training SPORT SPECIFIC. Get your hands on the implements in some form or fashion, continue getting stronger on your core lifts (squat, press, deadlift), work on your weak events with intelligence, and never spend more than a couple weeks specifically preparing for a contest.

But honestly, the most important thing here that I want you to understand is that you can have fun with your training as long as you stick with just a little bit of intelligence. I’d rather poke my own eye out with a spoon, than to have to do the same events for the next six months. It’s counterproductive towards my larger goals and the most monotonous thing that I can dream of.
A Deadlift Peaking Cycle

—By Clint Darden

(with lots of time on your hands)

A lot of people ask me about my deadlift training. I guess because it’s one of the few things that I’m good at. Well, I’m a decent box squatter as well, and I’ve always been “decent” at anything that involved back and leg strength. A couple years ago, my deadlift was teetering back and forth between 720 and 750 pounds (my weekly training max anyway) and at times I would struggle to pull 700 and sometimes I’d get lucky and pull a raw (read no belt, no straps, no suit) 771 for one rep. But, I was never able to hold onto that strength for very long, as it seemed to be here today and gone tomorrow. I also wasn’t squatting heavy and hard every week…or even very often. Digging into the 5/3/1 program, using my belt, and a very loose METAL Pro Deadlifter suit got me to a point where I could pull over 800 (or reps that would calculate out to that) every single week of the year and I’ve maintained that for nearly two years now.

So now I’m an 800-plus deadlifter. What do I do now? Things get more complicated. Or do they just get more simple? I know what works and obviously I’ve done my homework. Nobody stumbles upon an 800-pound deadlift, they put some hard work, intensity, and intelligence into it. So, what do I know about my deadlift training?

1. Pulling for five reps is hard work, probably the toughest out of all the weeks through the 5/3/1 program. If I’m bad at them, I need to do more of them.
2. Bands are easy for me, and fun! I’ve always been a good lifter (not a presser, cough) when it comes to training with bands. This makes it FUN to set PRs with, because if I can BEAT the bands I can make the lift.
3. Chains have the most carry over to REAL WEIGHT for me. I can’t BEAT the chains with my speed; it just flat out gets heavier as I lift it.
4. My 110-pound set of chains doesn’t work well because they’re so big and thick that they do not load and unload properly. Also, 110 pounds seems to be too much chain for me to be training with. My 55-pound set of chains seems to be just the right amount of accommodating resistance for me.
5. Pulling for five reps makes me stronger, but does NOT let me know if my technique is off. Basically, the weight is so light that I can be off on my technique and still get the reps.
6. need to set PRs every week with GHRs, Abs, and straps bar goodmornings.

So what does all of this mean?

1. I need to pull with chains more often than bands.
2. If I want to PEAK my deadlifts, I need to be pulling three reps or less.
3. I need to do glute ham raises and abs two to three times per week with progressively heavier weight, reps and volume.
4. I do need some type of deload, often.

So, how did I set up my training so that I set a PR deadlift later this year? I spent a couple months pulling sub maximal five and three reps (then back to five reps) to strengthen my reps weakness. It made me stronger all over (at least more pissed off and meaner), but it changed my max weight technique. It was like I forgot how to pull a ONE-REP MAX, so…

Week 1: I missed a PR attempt of 776+55 lbs chain. No idea how I missed it…I was within an inch or two of lockout. In my mind, at the time, I was a mile away. Based my training off of 700 lbs + 55 chain as my 1 Rep Training Max and added 10 lbs to it every 2 weeks.

Week 2: 90% (630) + 55 lbs chains x 3 reps

Week 3: 100% (700) + 55 lbs chains x 1 (I pulled 3)

Week 4: 90% of 710 (640) + 55 lbs chains x 3
Week 5: 100% (710) + 55 lbs chains x 1 (I pulled 3 at 711.5)

Week 6: 90% of 720 (648) + 55 lbs chains x 3

...This is where I am right NOW (at the time of writing this)
From here my plan is:

Week 7: 100% (720) + 55 lbs chains x 1 (1-3 is acceptable, I expect 2 reps, 3 if I go insane)

Week 8: 90% of 730 (657) + 55 lbs chains x 3

Week 9: 100% of 730 x 1 (1-2 is expected, 1 is acceptable but 2 would be great)

Week 10: 90% of 740 (666) x 3

Week 11: 100% of 740 + 55 lbs chains x 1 (1 is acceptable, 2 would be great)

Week 12: 90% of 750 (675) + 55 lbs chains x 3

Week 13: 100% of 750 + 55 lbs chains x 1 (1 is acceptable but I NEED 2!)

Week 14: 90% of 760 (684) + 55 lbs chains x 3

Week 15: I will probably make a big run at 770 (350kg) + 55 lbs of chains x 1-2 Reps

At this point I have eight more weeks of training left in 2011 and decisions have to be made. I’m confident that if I can pull a solid single rep with 770 pounds plus 55 pounds of chain, that I can full pull 821 pounds (my next Deadlift goal). If I pull a double with the 770 pounds plus 55 pounds of chain, then I know that I am on target to smash the 821 full pull with a possibility of pulling 827-832 pounds. So I have four options:

Option 1 (Chains are working but I need more time to build the Deadlift itself)
I will just back down a bit and keep on pulling.

Week 16: 90% of 700 (630) + 55 lbs of chain x 3

Week 17: 100% of 700 + 55 lbs of chain x 1-3 (set a PR)

Week 18: 90% of 720 (648) + 55 lbs of chain x 3

Week 19: 100% of 720 + 55 lbs of chain x 1-3 (set a PR)

Option 2 (Chains are working but I need more time to build my accessories)
I will back down and stay down a bit and really push my accessories.

Week 16: 90% of 700 (630) + 55 lbs of chain x 3

Week 17: 100% of 700 + 55 lbs chain x 1-3 (Set a PR)

Week 18: 90% of 710 (640) + 55 lbs chain x 3
**Week 19:** 100% of 710 + 55 lbs chain x 1-3 (Set a PR)

I will also look to increase my GHR, abs, and straps bar goodmornings so that I set PRs every single training session (three times a week) on weight, reps and volume. I would normally set up my training for this as such:

**Sunday:** Deadlifts, Press, Events...
GHR: 2-4 sets with Bands added (light to heavy bands)
ABS: 2-4 sets with Bands added (light to heavy bands)

**Tuesday:** Bench Press, Overhead Press, etc...
GHR: Body Weight x 2-4 sets of 4-6 reps
ABS: Body Weight x 2-4 sets of 4-6 reps

**Thursday:** Box Squats, GM’s, Strict Log Press, etc...
Straps Bar Good Mornings: 2-4 sets of 3-5 reps
GHR: 3-5 sets with Bands, Chains, and/or Plates held
ABS: 3-5 sets with Bands, Chains, and/or Plates held

**Option 3:** I’m getting stronger at pulling with chains, but I don’t feel it is carrying over to my full pull. I’ll shift to some straight weight and set some PRs to be broken in the last four weeks.

**Week 16:** 85% of 800 lbs (680) x 5 reps
**Week 17:** 90% of 800 lbs (720) x 3 reps
**Week 18:** 95% of 800 lbs (760) x 1-3 reps
**Week 19:** 225, 315, 405, 500, 590 + 55 lbs chain x 1-3 reps, GHRs directly after every set

**Option 4:** I just need a break, other stuff came up, my mind is worn out. I will use Pro Short Bands and calculate to try and always pull a max so that the total tension is over 821 pounds at the top.

**Week 16:** Set some type of PR with Pro Short Heavy Bands (400+ tension at the top for me)
**Week 17:** Set some type of PR with Pro Short Strong Bands (300+ tension at the top for me)
**Week 18:** Set some type of PR with Pro Short Average Bands (220 tension at the top for me)
**Week 19:** Set some type of PR with Pro Short Light Bands (145 tension at the top for me)

**No matter what, my last few weeks leading up to a new PR would look like the following:**

**Week 20:** 85% of 800-805 lbs (680-685) x 5 reps (set a PR)
**Week 21:** 90% of 800-805 lbs (720-725) x 3 reps (set a PR)
**Week 22:** 821+ x 1 OR repeat Week 19 of Option 3
**Week 23:** 821+ x 1 OR sit around and watch everyone lift...because I did what I trained to do last week...

I will strive to set and break PRs in every lift and every main accessory exercise (GHR, straps bar goodmornings, and abs) every single session from Week 1 through Week “Whatever It Takes To Set A PR.” I cannot over-stress the importance of this!

Remember it is extremely important to recognize what you are not good at, what your weaknesses are, and what builds your deadlift. If you don’t know any of this...you can’t go wrong with sub maximal deadlifting, GHRs, abs, and goodmornings, but don’t forget to constantly set PRs when doing them. Ask yourself what you KNOW about your deadlift training and remember...it doesn’t get more complicated, it actually gets more simple.
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