

Training for the Busy Working Guy A couple of principles that I follow might help the "thinking process" of someone who works a normal job, has a social life, and still wants to train. First, embrace the concept of "**Pareto's Law.**" This Italian economist discovered the "80-20 Rule": that is, 80 percent of your results comes from 20 percent of what you do. In a football program, you will find that 20 percent of your athletes produce 80 percent of the yards, the tackles and the points. In training, 20 percent of your program will get you to that 80 percent mark. That other 80, of course, gets you ever closer to that elusive moment when you produce a "100 percent effort." That could mean one's lifetime best lift, throw, or physical condition. I have recommended for years that athletes attend to this 20 percent as early as they can in the athletic career. It can be summarized in a simple question: if, for some reason, you could only train 45 minutes a week (three sessions of fifteen minutes), what would you do? The answer to this question, if honestly addressed, is the key to a busy working guy's training. Would you warmup? Do yoga? Well, then, what? As a discus thrower, I answered this question with a couple sets of overhead or front squats, then half-turn drills with a powerball into a wall. I could easily hold "80 percent" on that schedule. So, what are your goals? If you are an O lifter, what would you do in those 45 minutes? I might alternate snatches and clean and jerks through those 15 minute workouts. What about this or that or this: yes, they are important...but I only have a few minutes! So, the working guy has to take the long-term goal and run it into the "Prison Riddle," the 45 minute question first. What ever answer arises...is the beginning point of the solution to the quandary of being a full-time person and a full-time athlete. Second, take a touch of insight from the book, *Dinosaur Training*. On page 113, Brooks notes an old IronMan "Roundtable" where John Wooten describes his training: "I started out on a strength routine, really piling on the poundage in the following exercises: 1. Two hands deadlift, favorite exercise of Goerner 2. Walk with weight, favorite exercise of Milo of Crotona 3. Carry bar in dead lift position, favorite exercise of Arthur Giroux 4. Bent Presses, favorite exercise of Saxon 5. Reverse Continental and jerk from behind neck, favorite exercise of Saxon." Well, there is a great insight here: what is the favorite lift of the

"heroes and heroines" of your sport? Westside guys should look at Box Squats, O lifters who like Bulgarian training, should think about Front Squats, fans of Russian training should look to squats, power cleans and heavy spinal erector work. I have been collecting "gems" of lifting and recording them in a little red notebook since 1975. Every time I hear a point that just "rings true," I add it to this book. I have found through the years that one exercise keeps showing up as a "favorite lift:" the power clean. John Terpak, George Woods, many Soviets, lots of American lifters and throwers have labeled the power clean as "key" to athletic success. Certainly, take a little bit of this advice, no matter how busy, and toss power cleans into your program. Read what the greats do, and follow their advice. Not blindly, of course, but when enough people argue for this or that as the key to success, listen. I'm a contrarian at heart, I like to go the opposite direction of the crowd at times, but, trust me, adding the O lifts, one hand lifts, overhead work or strongman moves is as contrarian as anyone can get in the last two decades. Finally, Andy's question dealt with an interesting idea*what lifts give the most bang for the buck? My short list: Clean and Press: if all you did was Clean and Press, you could be awesome Front Squat: flexible, solid and strong Power Snatch and Overhead Squat Combo: Tony Nielson, a young man I coached for a few years, was the smallest football player on the field, yet I watched him run for 200+ yards in several games. His reason: this combo. Easy to learn, difficult to master, excellent long term benefits. Dragging a sled, pushing a car or hill sprints:shoot me, but I believe these are superior to squats for most athletes. Power Clean:'nuff said Farmer Walk:a year ago, I would have laughed at these*now, I don't laugh One arm lift of some kind:they work, they are simple to learn, they work Total equipment needs: bar, weights; a revolving Olympic dumbbell is nice, a pair of Mike Rosenberg's thick dumbbells are nice; all you need is a bar and weights. Option One: Saturday and Sunday Superstar This kind of program is designed for the person who has some time on the weekends and not much the rest of the week: Saturday Lift Day Power Snatch Power Clean Front Squat One arm lifts (Clean and Press to max each hand) Whatever reps and sets you like; I like 3 x 3 or 2 x 5 or Singles (after warm ups, these are the "meat"

sets) Sunday Strongman or Highland Games or Whatever you like
Day Power Clean and Press (Singles up to a Max) Sled dragging, car
pushing, hill sprints Anything else you would like to do!!! Farmers Walk
(Death March Style) One other day a week (Wednesday???) One lift:
either Power Clean and Press, Power Snatch and Overhead Squat
(might be best of the lot), Front Squat, Power Clean Some kind of
carry: Farmers Walk, maybe that "Dead lift carry" idea,
sandbags. That's it. Now, O lifters would do the classic lifts on
perhaps Saturday, and the power moves and squats on Sunday, with
the "other" workout being an 80 percent (or less) total day. Highland
Gamers would add an event or two on the back end of each day,
although I would keep the walks and the dragging stuff. Option
Two: Abbreviated Training Clusters: Week One Day One Power
Snatch Front Squat One arm Clean and Press Farmer Walk Day
Two Power Clean Power Clean and Press Overhead Squat Sled
Dragging, Car Pushing or Hill Sprints Week Two Day One Power
Clean and Press Power Snatch and Overhead Squat Front Squat Day
Two One arm lifts (Presses, Snatches, Swings, deadlifts,
whatever*have fun!) Sled drag, car push, hill sprints Farmers Walk

Solutions for Stalled Cleans from Dan John Cleans top off quickly,
so consider dropping them (heresy!!!) for a couple of weeks and either
try doing snatches, in their place on the program you are using or maybe
something as esoteric as sled dragging. Or BOTH. Most guys I have
worked with have improved their clean usually by improving their
snatch. You may want to try adding clean grip snatches to your
program. From the knees, clean grip, snap the bar to the overhead
position in one move...light weights to start. Cleans, like Benches, are
nice at first because you add weight nearly every workout, then you
seem to hit a wall. I tried pounding my head against that wall for years,
but discovered, to my great relief, that walking around the wall is easier.
So, try some variations, add some more general work like sled
dragging, farmers walks, and even hill sprints, and back off on the
cleans. If it isn't a technique issue, then you just have to work around it.
Remember, cleans seem to have a serious "wall" that might take a while
to work around. My weight was 265. I got to that number about two or

three times, squat cleaning (after I met Dick) it, then clean and jerking it...finally, I breakthrough to 270. Dick goes to the Olympics, I go up to the Sports Palace and Clean and Jerk 303 with my Dad. Moral??? None, really, save that all the work suddenly seems to come together and you launch into a new series of Personal Records.

A "Can't Miss" Olympic Lift Program

from Dan John

"Dan,

I train in tight quarters. I want to learn the Olympic style lifts, but I can't afford to miss a lift, otherwise damage will be done. How should I train"

That is where my Transformation Program came from

I only had two 25 pound plates, two 35s, and a bar. I trained in my guest room a few feet from bookshelves, trophy cases and lots of porcelein dolls.

My transformation program is based on 3 sets of 8 with a minute rest:

Day One

Military Press

Power Curl

Day Two

Front Squat

Overhead Squat

Day Three

Whip Snatch (or High Hang Power Snatches)

Clean Grip Snatch from the Knee

I literally never missed, because I couldn't. I went to a meet on this program, never cleaning or squatting with more than 165 and Clean and Jerked 308. So, it is possible to do this. I have this in "better detail" on my website. See www.danjohn.org/coach.html for further details

Inseason Training for Football by Dan John I'm no expert, but I coached HS football a long time and I just have a few ideas: 1. The "heavy" day should be the day after a game...actually, right after a game works well, too, especially for underclassmen who play on the day before the Varsity, having them train on the Friday, for example, helps a lot. 2. The "other" day should be stuff that doesn't take a lot of nerve. Don't Snatch and Clean and Jerk, so to speak. Box Squats, Straight Leg Deadlifts, some dumbbell work and a few machines would work well, but don't have the athlete tax his nervous system. 3. Don't be surprised if he gets really stronger, maintains, or drops way down. Any reaction to the training program is normal. We used to find a lot of kids improved their cleans a lot in the football season. My idea then was that they were finally cleaning once a week with supervision. Now, I have another idea: sled work, driving the legs, sprints and the games were all training the system to clean better. Benching and squatting tend to drop, but that seems normal vis-a-vis the work load of football. 4. Don't be afraid to cut the volume, but strive to keep the intensity up. 5 x 5 just isn't going to work, but 2 x 5 would be fine. Pyramids would be 2-2-1, that kind of thing. 5. Watch the acne. If he starts breaking out, getting colds, that kind of thing...he is really overtraining. HS kids can handle a ton of volume, then seem to crash.

Tips on Improving a Weak Second Pull from Dan John When the second pull is weak, look to the first pull. The body positions of the second pull are so favorable, that you should always feel strong when the back starts to whip...so, look to the weight coming off the floor. A couple of hints/ideas: 1. Practice some snatch and clean deadlifts concentrating on just doing a "leg press" off the floor, don't change back angle...until the legs almost lock out. 2. Wiggle your toes when you do these deadlifts...see where the bar goes. 3. Touch your socks with the bar on these deadlifts...do you do that with snatches? 4. Do some

snatches from one inch below the knee, one inch above and then right in the crotch as starting positions (vary the weight). Often, patience, lack of patience, is the cause of missed snatches...people start "under" before they have finished the pull. Also, you need patience to get the bar just "a little" higher when you start the back whipping and shrugging and all the rest.

Try to understand the concept of "one piece." It is something I learned years and years ago and I call it the two rules: 1. *The body comes in one, flexible piece.* 2. *Specificity works-but at a price.* The one piece concept is the idea that nothing a bodybuilder believes, basically, is true. If you tell me that benches are an upper body exercise, I need merely stick a fork in your calf while you bench your max. If it only is upper body, the fork should have no affect on your lift. Yet, it does. Be careful who you do this experiment with, some people take it to extremes. Being "one piece" is the real gift of the Olympic lifts and why they carry over to Highland Games and the four Olympic throws; shot, disc, hammer, and javelin. I have a video somewhere of Soviet high jumpers doing set after set after set of power snatches to improve their jump. What the overhead squat and the O lifts, perhaps a few others too, including the front squat, do for the athlete is demand flexibility, balance, total muscular development, kinetic awareness and movement into one package. After a few months of serious overhead squat work, you might only notice larger spinal erectors. Yet, your vertical jump and other athletic moves will increase. At the Upper Limit gym, we used to measure VJ, standing long jump and both "three jumps." (Continuous three jumps, hop-hop-hop, or, three combined standing long jumps) Athletes would improve radically when they started doing the Overheads and/or O lifts. These athletes were also off the "learning curve" for the jumps, so any increase usually reflected training. Well, I like to think that, anyway. As a football player or a thrower, the "one piece" idea really carries over. I always talk about Paul's quote when he threw 182' as a sophomore, but it is true, he really did stay together in the throw and it went far for a 155 pounder. Dumbbell exercises would have been a great complement to his program, but, alas, I failed him. I would imagine that the king would

be Clean and Press/Jerk with two dumbbells followed by Clean and Press/Jerk with one dumbbell. One arm snatches would be in that top group, too. Basically, start thinking about the longest movement a bar or dumbbell can go, still held in the hands. That is why Reverse Grip Wrist Curls have little value for "one piece" training. (Note: don't mistake me here: grip strength has an enormous value and needs to be considered; however, small movements don't IN THIS STYLE OF TRAINING) If you can do swings, I would imagine these would have a place, too.

For an example, I offer you the world's simplest program: 1. **Two Dumbbell Clean and Press**: start light and go up to max. 2. **Overhead Squat**: Mix reps each workout. 3 sets of 8 with a minute rest OR 5x5 OR 5x3 OR Pyramids OR multiple Pyramids, aka "Waves". Go home. Repeat two days later. This is almost exactly the program I recommend during the peak season to throwers, although I would probably tell them now (November of 2000) to do one arm clean and press as it seems to strength the obliques. It is not a bad program, but it assumes a large base of general strength and an accumulation of specific skills, tests, and other training. The concept of "one piece" always needs to be tempered with "specificity works-but at a price." If all you did was snatch and clean and jerk, you would get very, very good in those lifts. If you did them for seven hours a day, six days a week, you would get even better. Or get crushed. Lynn Jones calls this "the Bulgarian Butcher System," if you survive, you thrive.

Doing just overhead squats and a little ab exercise at the peak of track season keeps the athlete together as they literally burn up before your eyes. Throwing the disc and assorted drills for nine months really starts to "pay the price." So, I think if you want to be good at overhead squats, do them three to five times a week KNOWING that everything else is going to suffer to some degree. That's "the price" of specificity. However, you will also master the movement and reap the benefits of training a full body lift.

Try this stance idea: Pulling stance: Jump a couple of times for height. Have someone note where you naturally seem to "take off" from. That is your pulling stance. **Squat stance:** Note how you land. Very often, for a lot of people, that is the "natural" squat stance. Generally,

we land toes out, "hip-ish" foot placement. Try it. It often works a lot easier than trying to explain "shoulder width" or whatever

HYPEREXTENSIONS When I was in junior college, Dick had me do lots of hyperextensions. You really never see people do them anymore but my spinal erectors looked like my butt went up my back.

Hypers are a real gem, but we found that the upper half was helpful for building the back and the lower half (if this makes any sense) was not so important. So, we focused on a full high position and control to about halfway down (actually more than half) then squeezing back up. The bottom part was all momentum and seemed to over stretch me sometimes. You can ignore this advice, if it doesn't make sense, but the concept helped me. As for sets and reps, I just do/did them until I feel my spinal erectors fill with blood. It is like a balloon filling up; each rep, they just seem to load up. 5-8 reps at most, I see no need for more.

One thing you need, however, is someone you can trust. I have done them by myself by doing an upside down lat pull, but it is much better to have someone raise the bar or plate to your head. Having a lower hyper bench is the best way to help your spotter. At the PBBC we used a hyper set-up that was about two feet off the ground. You can use the O bar with weights, but you will find that you need to stick to 5's, 10's and 25's with a lower hyper, otherwise the weights hit the floor. Higher than a few feet, wouldn't be a problem, I guess. We also had 102.5 pound "blue plates." These were great for workouts. Dick would lift them up and I would hold the top position than do reps. I see girls at spas doing a hyper like exercise, but they go fast and don't add weight. It would kill your lower back after a few weeks. I think weights make you stay under control and do a better hyper. I would recommend using weight probably from the first day, just to do the lift correct. So, get a buddy to load up the weights across your neck, just like squats, and start hypering. **OLYMPIC LIFTING VARIATIONS** Next, the snatch and the clean will help a ton, especially multiple reps where you control the bar down. The "Romanian" deadlift helps your lower back, too, but unless you do it right, forget it. J.V. Askem has a good explanation at his site.

www.olympus.net/personal/cablebar/RL.htm Doing reps of the snatch

and clean in a "Romanian" style would be awesome. We called a similar exercise "Barski Cleans", but the emphasis on pushing your butt back will really help your lower back. **ONE-ARM LIFTING** I would be remiss if I didn't mention one arm lifts. The snatch and clean are great, but try one armed deadlifts any style. You will discover places in your body that you didn't know you had. **OVERHEAD SQUATS** Overhead squats! Here I am, the self proclaimed ambassador of overhead squats, willing to go anywhere on the globe to preach the message, and I nearly forgot them! OS build lower back strength as well as anything. They really build your spinal erectors in an odd way: sort of like an isometric but a "movement isometric." Just do 'em. You will notice the difference. Also, I haven't encountered injuries with OS either. Your mileage may vary, but the physical needs of this lift tend to make the bar lighter and the athlete more aware of self, reducing injuries.

Learning and Incorporating the Overhead Squat from Dan John

I'm a big fan of overheads, but you need to be sure you know why you are going to add them. Seriously, they will help with any goal I can think of, but if you are going to start doing them, there is going to be a learning curve. Six months from now, they will pay off with better flexibility, better "support" structure (I know some people don't believe in support muscles, but I do), and great thigh, hip and lower back strength. If you are doing them for sports, I think you will find an immediate carryover.

So, how to add? One idea is based on what Pavel Tsatsouline recommends: do them EVERY day for two sets of five for two weeks. First set heavy, second set is a back off.

Another is to simply make one day a week "overhead squat" day. Or, take a couple of weeks out and just do overheads three days a week. The few weeks of specialization will not retard your overall progress. Some guys act like a week or two of specialized work will kill them. That is bodybuilder thinking, "Oh no, I'm a quarter inch off my left

bicep."

Another idea is just to toss them in and do them. It would be a great complement to your front squats. I often do overheads and front squats together. They really do seem to be a nice blend.

I usually teach athletes the overhead squat fairly early. Trust me, a kid who overheads with 95 pounds will find the back squat a fairly easy thing to learn. It is an odd thing about my coaching style: I don't teach discus throwers how to hold or release the discus. I use handled medicine balls and they do countless full turns and drills with throwing into walls or onto fields. So, they master advanced drills like "float-float-stings," three turns and a throw. One day, with nice weather, we go out to throw the disc. On the way down the hill, the new kid asks another, "how do you hold this thing?" Experienced kid takes two or three minutes to show how to hold and release the disc. Young kid goes to ring with a mastery of the big picture that will make the implement go far. Doing it the other way, like most coaches, the athlete spends the whole first year doing standing throws trying to make the discus fly right. No carryover at all to big throws.

If you teach a kid to overhead squat, the back squat and the front squat are a breeze. You don't even coach it, they pick it up by simply watching the kid before them. Teach an athlete to snatch, they usually pick up the clean. Show them the clean and jerk and they rarely need a great explanation of the bench.

I think we need to raise the bar high for new athletes and really demand a lot. I think the same about teaching, too.

So, dive in, so to speak, and just start doing them.

In response to an inquiry on "Rotational Strength" Let me ramble on for a few hours. First, I have tried as a coach and a thrower to do every thing possible to build this aspect of my throw. It is harder than you think. I would always argue a good base of ab work for any

thrower. We did a variety of crunches, situps, various ground based twists, and leg raises. I found that medicine ball throws were a very valuable addition, too. At times, I became lethal at those medicine ball situps where you try to bury your training partner after coming up.

Second, the coaches who really push rotational strength training often don't have good throwers. Or, it is an opinion. The best throws coaches train rotational strength on the field with overweight hammers, plates and "puds." Puds are weights with fixed handle. Throwing the 35 pound weight during the indoor season used to really prepare my muscles for the disc. My best was 58'11" with the old style of two turns and hit it. Bondarchuk, the great Russian coach, experimented with everything and he and Sedych ended up with a very simple program of clean grip snatches, half squats and a heavy over the shoulder throw to both sides. Bondarchuk later developed a wonderful program that developed over a year. You would change exercises every few weeks, but they built on each other. I mentioned that in a past post: Clean from box, clean from hang, clean from floor, snatch from box, snatch from hang, snatch from floor, clean grip snatch from box, clean grip snatch from hang, then clean grip snatch from floor. Well, the rotational work developed along the same lines with one arm throws to two and back varying weights. John Jesse offered a program for throwers in Track and Field Quarterly Review, June 1966. He made an important statement: "Though timing and correct body position on arrival at the front of the ring are essential to the maximum application of "body torque," once the athlete arrives at that position, application of "body torque" is entirely dependent upon the strength of the waist and abdominal region, primarily the spinal rotator and lateral flexor muscles of the trunk" That statement could be said about any sport. His recommended program: Exercise High School Reps and Sets College Sets and Reps Continuous Clean and Press 1 x 8 to 10 1 x 12 Parallel Squat with Toe Raise 2 x 8 to 10 3 x 7 Supine Dumbbell Lateral Raise 4 x 4 to 6 6 x 6 Bent Over Lateral Dumbbell Raise 4 x 4 to 6 6 x 6 Twisting Situp 1 x 20 1 x 20 Forward Bend (Good Morning) 2 x 4 to 8 3 x 6 Side Bends (Dumbbell) 1 x 20 1 x 20 High Pull 1 x 8 to 10 3 x 6 Wrist Extensions 4 x 8 4 x 8 Bouncing Split Squat 1 x 16 to 20 1 x 16 to 20 Bend over Twist 1 x 16 to 20 1 x 16 to 20 Dan was right that

Carol did a lot of twists, but John Powell did none. Brian Oldfield's breakthrough training was simply pyramids of power cleans and push jerks twice a week. At Utah State, we emphasized power cleans, push jerks, quarter squats and a power curl. Throwing muscles came from throwing. But, we also had everybody throwing over 180 in the disc. To make USU's top twenty, you have to throw 180 and change. (BTW, this list is almost 100% Americans, with one or two Canadians. Some schools simply buy older European throwers and claim to coach them; this is a real pisser in my life. I ended my Div 1 eligibility at age 21. I competed against a guy at another Utah school ((nameless)) that was a 26 year old freshman ((and major f---ing drugger))) I guess my point is to look at successful throwers rather than what someone says. I know that seems assbackwards, but when you talk with Anthony Washington and he tells you that he spends four months a year just doing circuit training on the universal gym in his girlfriend's apartment complex, then nails a 232 throw, you need to reaccess "science" and review the throws as art. American throwers especially seem to do better when they focus on their strengths or local resources rather than listening to some guy at a clinic. Fortunately, we seem to be getting people at these clinics in the past few years, but we still have a major drugger giving a lot of throws clinics. In my career, I tried everything, but I found that snatches and squats (front, back, overhead) gave me the biggest bang for my buck. I agree with Dan G that Pavel T's stuff is excellent and I would have used that in the fall and winter. No question rotational strength is important, but safely developing it is another question.

I came up with this "Rule of Ten" for me: Ten quality reps a workout is about all I can do. So, 3 by 3 is great for me, as is 2 sets of 5, or 6 singles. I only count the real sets though. I remember one guy who said at the Upper Limit Gym that he was doing 5 x 5s, with 4 sets at 135 and one at 225. Well..., I don't know about that, I look at that as a 1 x 5. High volume, lots of reps, lots of sets has its place. I had one of my throwers, Mike Slazac, do 8 by 8 in the squat one day a week, military press another, and a back movement another to put on some weight after football season. He grew like a weed on this...for a

few weeks. But, not one single set of 8 was with any serious weight!

The "Rule of Ten" seems to keep reminding me about the key element: intensity. Even if I do five sets of three, for example, I will still strive for three serious sets.

For the past month or so, I have been following some advice from MLL and Steve Shafley, with some help from Mike Rosenberg, and I have attempted to cycle my lifting...at the same time playing with various low carb/high protein diet cycles. Well, it is working. From very subjective evidence, my wife Tiff, I look better. I am also lifting rather well, too. Not using straps, I am snatch pulling 260 fairly easily and adding plates to all my lifts without really pushing it. There are some basic ideas here. Oh, for the whole program go here:

www.danjohn.org/lincoln.html First, I attempted to go "nerveless" in training. That means no mental effort above the bare minimum. So, if I am going to do something that is heavy, I just do it. I keep striving to make the reps with the same weight easier and smoother. If it is a full lift, like a squat snatch, I am trying to make each rep easier in the cluster of reps. Second, I tried to follow my "Big Ten" advice. I had discovered that I have about ten quality lifts per exercise...not including warmups, back off sets or speed related sets. So, I cycled up from 2 sets of five to three sets of three to six heavy singles over a three week period. It really seemed to work. Now, I certainly do more than just those ten reps, but those are the work sets. It seemed to work well.

Third, I tried hard to stay very clean some weeks with my MLB diet, danjohn.org/tiff.html and go meat and water on other weeks (the "off lifting" week...well, five days). In addition, I backed way off on supplements for the whole time. I am going back to Mg and Fish Oil Capsules for general health, but that is it. It is working. MLL's idea of gently prodding the lifts up seems to be working. You know, in the discus, John Powell believed the same thing. He told Tiff in Las Vegas that what I am doing in the weight room is exactly how he pushed his discus marks up. "How easy can I throw x?...If my goal is 200, if I can easily throw 180, then 181, then 182...what is happening with my best throws? It should be going up!" Like I say at the top of the program,

any variations to the program are fine, but I think the idea of cycling the reps, sets and diet has some merit.

Hooking

I used to have the theory that you "hook, hook, hook." After reading Kono's book and talking with guys here at this site and others, I am not so sure. Hooking really helps your snatch, probably helps your clean, too, but it isn't as obvious. That said, you have to ask yourself..."is the couple of weeks of thumb pain worth learning it?" If you compete, no question that the answer is "yes." Why give up those 22 pounds that hooking 'supposedly' gives you? If you are just training for other things, don't. Strap up for snatches and go hookless for cleans. I have been trying to go without the hook more often, after reading Kono's book. He is right...it has caused me to reexamine the feeling of acceleration. In fact, I am in the middle of an enlightenment about pulls because of this. I keep adding more and more plates lately to my snatch pulls do to the combination of better acceleration and improved grip from my farmers walks. Kono recommends a rep without the hook, then hook. It isn't a bad way to go.

While talking with John Powell, he reminded me that he learned the lifts from Richard Marks. I was cleaning up a mess in a desk and found the "San Jose" Program that Marks put together for the team. I should have followed this in college, it is really logical. Reps are 5 sets of 5 or 5 sets of 3. After you finish Week 2, go back to Week 1 and repeat. Marks was a great believer in backing off about 12 weeks (in the weightroom, for throwers) before your key competition: Week One Monday Power Clean Snatch Grip Pulls Squats Wednesday Military Press Light Bent Arm Pullovers Incline Press (Barbell or Dumbbells) Triceps Work of any kind Friday Snatch Shoulder Shrugs Front Squats Week Two Monday Incline Press (Barbells or Dumbbells) Light Bent Arm Pullovers Press Behind Neck Lateral Raises Wednesday Squat Snatch Upright Rowing Friday Power Cleans Bench Press Straight Arm Flies Tricep Work Fairly simple and to the point. John added pullups, situps and dips daily (about two sets) in his warm up, too.

There are good reasons your back rounds. The problem may be in picking which one. First, and perhaps the most common, is that it has to round because of where your knees are. Stand arms length from a door knob and with arms locked out like a hammer thrower, grasp the knob. Stand tall, chest "tall", lower back tight and squat down, leaning back the whole time from the door knob. Does your back round here? If not, check your knees. Are you sitting inside your knees as you go down? This is the right way to deep squats. DEEP, not powerlifting style competitive squats, but "ass to heel" olympic style squats. If this is not the position you normally squat in, the problem can be solved. You are keeping your knees straight ahead and squatting on top of them. They can't bend any more and your back rounds to get the bar deeper. Wider knees, deeper squat. Noticed I didn't say "wider feet" This will make things worse. Two, it could be a question of relative strength. Lower back strength should be the outstanding feature of every lifter, but sometimes, because of body length and insertion points of muscles and tendons, it is not. In addition, some lifters get very strong from years of doing machines or sports and just have to build lower back strength. The cure for this would not be direct lower back because the fatiguing will only make the rounding worse! I would recommend doing Front Squats as the need for you to stay "tight" will keep you from rounding. Front Squats, forgive me if you already know, are squats with the bar held in the clean position, bar on top of the chest across the collarbones, held with hands in a normal grip. Get the elbows high if you can. This exercise will cure both of the problems, actually faster than the time it took to write this answer. Don't sacrifice squat depth if you can fix the problem. Some other possible issues to consider would be ankle or hip flexibility, bar placement on the back, etc... If you have questions, ask someone. There are a lot of us willing to help.

Light Weeks

I like three hard and one easy week. I examined my journals (all the way back to 1971) and found that I naturally do it with illness, injury or crappy efforts. So, I decided to just learn to plan it. It is really a hard thing to teach young athletes, but the same holds true with everybody, I

think.

There is a book called "Consistent Winning" which I think really gives some good ideas about how to do it. You may disagree with the premise but it works.

When I use my "Body as One Piece" program with all the triple pyramids and overload lifts, you find that you come back stronger. Of course, you only squat twice a month on this program, so you are really fresh. Note: this program works for someone off the learning curve. It is fairly advanced. But, I would still recommend for someone who has a year or so under their belt to unload regularly. Joe Mills recommended going back to the York Courses when he noted a lack of progress. At the PBBC, we "bodybuilt" for a couple of weeks, usually just lots of arm work, inclines, hypers and assorted crap, along with bodyweight for reps contests in the squat and bench press. I can almost predict when a person is going to crash in a program by just looking at the structure of the month after month after month of expected training. Life is not linear.

I have never been convinced that improvement in lifting (or throwing or life) is linear. So, I like the idea of planning off weeks. But, what most people misunderstand is that I think you really need to load those weeks before the off-week. I guess I straddle two theories here:

1. You are going to end up taking time off sooner or later, or submit yourself to endless crappy workouts that you will soon convince you that you are genetically inferior.
2. When you train, you really have to train hard. I like Brooks' idea of picking twelve exercises and trying to attain Hoffman's Gold standards. Attempting a bunch of bodyweight snatches, cleans, and presses as well as a host of one arm lifts is hard work. In the "Body as One Piece" program that I have my throwers use (the fourth week is off), the squat workout is PR squats for 7 sets of 5 followed by jumps. We overload these lifts whereas the athlete stands and goes down under their own power then we help them come up. (Don't try this without talking to me more.) They can never grind these lifts nor slow down coming up. But,

that is 35 reps (on paper) with their max, once a month. In reality, the first two sets are done with PRs, but the last ones are just pathetic attempts. Paul Northway once had to do 135 on his last set. He could snatch 265 in high school, but on his seventh set could no longer lower himself.

This is hard work in my world. Supersetting triceps x and arm curls is not.

I think you are on the right track with your son, but get him going on floor to overhead lifts, the clean and press at least, as soon as you can. This is the lift that got a lot of us going in the right direction.

So, what does time off mean? For me, it might be a week of arm work and circuit training. Or, more rollerblading. It is active, but not killer. Joe Mills used to recommend the York courses when guys got stale in the weightroom. Whatever you choose to do, keep your eyes on four or ten year progress rather than week to week or even month to month.

Hope this helps.

Overhead Squats

I get the bar overhead for O.Squats by snatching it from the floor. I gave my racks away a couple of years ago, so I take everything from the floor. However, when I go out to Juan Diego Catholic High School, I use their racks and push jerk them up with the snatch grip. I find I can add a lot of weight with the racks, but, for me, the amount on the bar is no longer much of an issue. As to "how much," it is going to vary. I had a high school boy do close to 300 at a bodyweight of 215. I always used this wierd formula I got from Mike Weeks to do 15 reps with bodyweight as a goal. It doesn't mean you do this as a workout!!! It is a yearly or seasonal workout to test yourself. My best snatch in a meet is 314 and the most I have ever done for a single is 315. I think most guys would agree that going "top end maxs" on overheads would not have a ton of value. I like to keep the reps in the 3's, 5's, and 8's. Doing two sets of five with the overhead three times a week is not a bad plan of attack. Don't miss, by the way. Build up slowly and go deep.

I found that some variations of snatch deadlifts really have helped me: 1. Simple snatch deadlifts with a shrug at the end. Keep your back tight, push the floor away and finish with an "I don't know" shrug. 2. The "Explosive Snatch Deadlift" Think of it, for experienced guys, as Snatch Pulls with straight arms. You try to accelerate as fast as you can without doing any arm bend. A great exercise. 3. The Kono-style snatch pulls. Finally, get into your deep position with arms extended and mark that spot, or just use where your chin touches your chest. Have someone hold a broomstick at that high mark. The broomstick should be horizontal. Then, do whatever it takes to whack the broomstick with the loaded bar. This is how I learned snatch pulls; in a few reps, it all makes sense. I did 405 in the snatch deadlift and shrug when I was 20, but could only snatch 259. I'm sure that I have snatch pulled in the 300's, but the first variation, the snatch dl and shrug would be MILES above that. Pulls should be no more than 10 percent heavier than your top snatch or clean, I read some where. In my case, I actually like to pull lighter, but much higher, than my usual O lifts because I like the focus on "finishing" the pull. Some recommend bringing your chest down to meet the bar (some Romanians, the East Germans), but for my thinking, Tommy Kono got it right.

Like throwing events, the second pull does require some timing and position. I like this drill that I posted in my O lift article: For new lifters, I stress a drill that sounds crazy, but works well. I teach new lifters to take the bar from the floor to about two inches above the knee as SLOWLY as possible, one inch a second. Why? It teaches the core truth of lifting (and throwing): proper acceleration. When the bar gets to that spot two inches above the knee: jump! That's it. Snatch or clean, you have just learned the key principles. I taught this method to a group of junior discus throwers at the Olympic Training Center, very quality athletes, and several of them made personal record cleans within just a few minutes. Now, these were very good athletes, well trained throwers, adding ten to twenty pounds from a simple drill. But, they learned to use their legs and body to lift the bar rather than their "guns." What this seems to do is make your body get into the correct positions of "shoulders over the bar" and "bar sliding on the body." You

might find people who criticize the drill, but I have taught lots and lots of high school kids to clean over two hundred and this is the key drill that stops them from doing deadlifting reverse curls to a clean.

How many days per week?

Compared to things like football or wrestling or boot camp or war, three days a week full body is not too stressful. I think the human body can handle a ton of load and make progress, especially in strength gain. The secret is to find the least amount of work that will provide the most gain. I have trained clean on five days a week O lifting for two years and still made progress. Then, I slid back to three days a week and my lifts jumped by twenty and thirty pounds. But, I think you have to put the load in first. Like Earl Nightingale used to say about most people's careers: "They stand in front of an empty fireplace and say 'give me heat.' They don't realize that you have to put some logs and kindling in first." Depending on what you want, of course, but overall, I would argue that three days a week whole body would be "about" right for most people. The Bulgarians and Soviet lifters did three days a week until about 1972 for the bulk of their training and did marvelous. (I don't think, in fact, I know, they weren't clean) Three days a week was the standard for American lifters for generations. I have trained twice a week for long periods of time. I did this workout for a while: Day One: Squat Clean Day Two: Snatch Bench Press I threw 182 in the discus that season with only two additional throwig workouts a week. So, yes, less does work, but again, I think I had the background to back off, if that makes sense.

First, my discussions with Dick Smith should be reviewed -----

danjohn.org/ds.html Dick was the one who really understood the rack work, in fact, to quote Dick "Hoffman NEVER understood the rack work." For example, Dick emphasized that you simply clear the bottom pin in rack work, you don't slam it into another pin to increase the load. The perfect weight is one that ALL YOU CAN DO is clear the weight off the rack and hold it for all you got. Second, Dick was very clear that one quickly overtrains in the rack...but doesn't notice it at all. I

found the same thing in 1991. I went on a serious imitation of Bill March's program and got very strong, then pulled my right trap. In fact, Paul Northway commented on my training about a week ago..."God, you jerked 315 off the rack without ANY warmups." I got seriously strong and badly overtrained mixing programs. This stuff works!!! Now, this year, after talking with Dick, I went into my Deadstop Front Squat program to cure my sticking point. I noted a few things: 1. Six singles MAX! In fact, I think it might be less now...a couple of warm ups (Dick wouldn't agree with this, but I don't just clear the bottom position, I stand right up, so the weight would actually be less) 2. I like two sets of five with 50% of the estimated max in the full motion before I start doing the deadstops. You know, 165 x 5 x 5 in the front squat to get ready. I tried them cold and it works, but I also noticed that my hips (the psoas) killed me the next few days. Of course, I am a geezer, so you young bucks might not need it. 3. I would agree with Tom that one day a week is good and you could do three if only doing one move in the rack. This is going to be an experiment of one...what works for you and your weak points. I liked three days a week for about two weeks then fell right off. Two at the most would work for me, I think. 4. Be sure to be honest about your weak point. I had Dave Turner look at my Clean recovery, not my front squat. Get the point where you slow or noticeably "gear change."

An Attempt to Match the Old York Courses...

That "thump" you heard was my rear end crashing down. I decided to do my own little variation of York Course Three and try to get to the Bronze standards on a few of the lifts. Well, I tried. I did learn more in the last hour and change, though, than I have in about six months. One arm clean and jerks: okay, I've done them. But, I keep missing jerks in meets, so I paid attention today. I only got up to 151 with the right (160 is bronze for my weight) but I noticed that I was falling left just like I do in meets. I split with the left foot front. All of a sudden, it made sense why Dave Turner gave me Dave Webster's article on the jerk. I am not "Pushing my head through." And, I don't do it on snatches either, so I either dump them forward or lose the rack behind. Head through!!! I decided to do reps with one arm snatches and did fives with 81. (Oh,

my revolving dumbbell is 11 pounds, that is why the numbers are odd.) I got an easy three with the bronze Military Press, 175, then did my front squat workout. I am amazed how hard I am breathing after doing right arm, left arm, right arm, left arm, two armed then squat. I added a bunch of power cleans after the squats. Then, I finished with Snatch Grip Romanian Deadlifts. I want to be able to do strapless sets with maybe 40 pounds over my meet projection for smooth sets of five. So, it is only six days after a meet, in which I was not satisfied, and I am seeing the problems: 1. The one arm stuff highlights my jerk tech problem. 2. The soreness in my lats from Wednesday's York Three: Dan John Protocol System tells me that my pulling muscles need more work. (One arm snatches kill my lats and traps. Snatch RDLs point out my pulling errors from the knee area, then crush my mid back.) 3. Anyone who can do Gold standards in the one arm lifts is VERY strong. As I was going through my archives, I found an old xeroxed thing that the Soviets made about correlations between training exercises and the platform lifts for advanced lifters. The Power Clean was first, followed by the Power Snatch, the Clean, then the Overhead Squat. The Power Clean was also Johnny Terpak's 'secret' for athletic success (I agree, but most coaches would, too). Bob Bednarski through Power Cleans in on Thursday (Only lift that day) during his big breakthrough year of 1966. These big movements like the one arm lifts, and power clean and snatch seem to really build the system. I think that I am going to continue working through some variations of what I have been doing this week to see if I can get that triple bodyweight total. Which is hard to do at 43 and a fat guy.

I just found a post that Dustin 3 had put up a few years ago. It discusses the old East German training theories. It really interested me because so many of these ideas have surfaced among the resources that I use and respect. A quick and inadequate overview: 1. Squat once a week, generally with 5 sets of 5. For part of the year, all five sets are the same weight, other times, one increases all five sets. 2. "Hip Snatches," or High Hang Snatches into the split are done twice a week. The reps are 3-2-1-3-2-1-3-2-1. 3. Presses are done four days a week. Bench, incline, decline and military are rotated through each

week with lots of the lifts done off of “pads” or cushions, so when they come down, the bar has a little “pop” off the pads. Reviewing the programs, as well as some of the throwing drills, I started to understand why Eric Lindquist has made such progress in a year. His dad bought him a set of chains and O weights and he has started this interesting little cycle of: Day One Squat with Chains Press Behind Neck with Chains (sitting on a low Box) Day Two Clean Press with Chains (sitting on a low Box) He alternates this M-W-F, so one week he squats twice, the next once. Then, when he visits me, we always work on the snatch, generally, Power Snatch followed with an overhead squat, followed with a hang snatch, then a full snatch from the floor. We also pull sleds, farmers walk, toss heavy stuff...the usual. As I looked over my “Transformation Program,” one of the criticisms I would now make is the need for additional pressing. So, I will be reconsidering this in the next few weeks. Although this may only be interesting for thrower types, I thought that the insight of squatting seriously once a week, pulling twice and doing a variety of presses four times a week paralleled my personal and coaching experiences with overtraining by squatting too often. It just seems something to think about.

e been gone for a few days in Orlando coaching at a discus camp and then off to Tempe to watch Ohio State play Kansas State...if you want my opinion, you bench the QB for curfew violation and, win or lose, show integrity. Enough of that...I spent four long evenings with John Powell talking lifting and throwing. He has a couple of Olympic medals in the discus and a World Record which is a pretty good career plus a World Championships medal. Now, he threw terrible in the WC in 1983, but that failure really helped him. It was there he saw Litvinov the Hammer winner Front Squat 200 kilos for sets (John said of 8!!!) followed by 400 meter runs in 75 seconds...for three sets. Moreover, he also learned about the Polish shotputters use of rapid fire lifts (measure your improvement by benching a set weight...100 kilos for 8...faster and faster over time) and the British Javelin Workouts (see like my first edition of Get Up) where you mix Snatch, Front Squat,

Jerks and Back Squats (and lots of other variations) for four continuous sets of ten...measuring heart rate. I guess all this points to an insight that came to me as we talked...perhaps the Crossfit WOD is right for throwers. I'm going to kick some new ideas around, but I wanted to share this. Tiff and I found that those days of mixing clean or snatches with runs were really excellent. More later...tired.

The exercises that "work" for me on Tabatas are: Military Press: but you will do 11 reps in the first 20 seconds and be praying for 3 in the 8th. Maybe the muscle groups are too small. You could add more legs as you go through, but I found that then the weights are too light. It is a tough one on the lungs as you just can't seem to hold your chest in one place, breath that heavy, and push through your chin. Clean Grip Snatch: good idea on paper, bad in practice. I tried Clean and Press and just thought I would try these. Your traps just roast! It would be great for a wrestler type though. The first two minutes are too light, the last two are very hard. Clean and Press: The problem is getting a handle on reps. It might be an idea to do this: First 20: Clean Second 20: Press Third 20: Clean Fourth 20: Press...repeat for all four minutes. Doing clean and press is hard as you take up a lot of seconds with each attempt and you don't seem to "get going." Try it and you will see what I mean. Full Olympic Lifts: Good idea, but you only get about two attempts in...too much bar movement, physical adjustments. If you choose this, try "Clusters" instead. Do 8 perfect reps with a 10 second rest in between each...rest for two to three minutes...repeat for three cycles total. The problem with TABatas is that you have to work a bunch of muscle groups...but not too many. The lift has to have a long stroke, but not too long. If you go from the floor to overhead, like a power snatch, you won't get many reps in. If you do wrist curls (if you are just a nerd) you could get 40 in the first 20 seconds. That is the process that I went through to settle on the Front Squats. Oh, you also have to use a bar, not bodyweight. You really need to have weight selection to adjust from workout to workout. If you do Tabata Front Squats with Chains, you will still struggle to sit down two days later. I think it helps the nervous system, but there is no question your heart and

lungs are working. It also speeds up the metabolism, if such a thing happens.

"8. Great weightlifters would readily (one year) make elite/champion kettlebellers and not vice versa

" Igor, I can only address #8 with my experiences, but I have only found two things in life that "carried over" into other sports: high school wrestling and the O lifts. Wrestling in high school is one of the rare times in life that it is just you and one other person. If your team gets pinned and pinned, but you win...well, you won. O lifting is an amazing sport for carryover. I once, on a stupid bet for a twelve pack of beer, raced a ten kilometer run without ANY (zip, zero, nada, nothing, any) running in the past year or two or three (or maybe five years), but I was getting ready for an O meet. Lots of people...lots...finished well behind me. In fact, this Nazi psycho running chick at the job I had at the time finished behind me, too. O lifting gives your VO2 intake a ride every workout and it carries over into other sports. Moreover, it is much easier to go from a 300 pound snatch for one to 50 one hand kettlebells with a heavish kettlebell, than it is to do 50 one hand snatches with 72 pounds to a single with 300. When I was at Skyline College, one of the geek runners said that "we work harder than you guys (throwers)." First, I challenged him to fight (actually I told him to attempt a bizarre act by himself), then, I thought about it. At the time, I was snatching in the 240's and Clean and Jerking in the low 300's, plus tossing the discus over 170 and the shot over the low 40's. He would do repeats of the 400 in the mid-60's as much of his training. My question: if you switched us for, say, \$1,000,000 to the first to repeat the others workout...who do you bet on? I feel that a power athlete can always build the endurance end up quicker than an endurance athlete can build up the power end. As a personal challenge to yourself, simply get your snatch up to 300 and your clean and jerk up to 385 at your current bodyweight. This should not take long. Then, test your kettlebell endurance and see if you have lost or maintained anything.

Well, actually we lost the old ball...but, we have discovered that one on

one Hooverball with a sixteen pound ball works far better for overall work than the lighter balls. The court can shrink down quite a bit and, while the running may be shorter, the intensity goes way up. This might be a better variation for most people as you only need two athletes and a net. We found that "two paces" from the net is a good distance to set the squares. A couple of other variations: 1. There is no "back line." Really, reward the athlete, if they can, for tossing it so far back you can't get to it. 2. We just have the two lines "two paces back" and the outside lines from the posts. We stop "spiking" by calling all balls inside the two paces as short. 3. Be sure to use tennis rules...ping pong rules would probably kill you before 21. 4. We don't try for aces on serves (it really doesn't matter anyway), but we just toss it to the opponent. The only real rule we enforce is the "throw where you catch it" rule. No adjustments or running to the net. Great training for thrower types.

If I can toss in one or two things... First, by doing the lifts...even just the squat variations...you are miles ahead of most people who just talk about them. So, you are on the right track. As a beginner, I would recommend the same thing I told Mike from Calgary, do the two O lifts very light multiple times a day. I would recommend a little more than a broomstick, but honestly not much more. I told Mike to do 3 or 4 sessions a day of maybe 8 sets of two in the snatch or just 4 sets of 2, and 8 sets of singles (or 4 X 1) as many sessions as you can a day. This will get the nervous system and the flexibility issues taken care of in a hurry. Most men can learn the O lifts well doing this little "trick" in about three weeks. Never miss, don't go too hard, gently coax yourself into doing it right. Women pick it up in about a day or so. That last line has some insights...women tend to naturally NOT try to "arm" it...saves weeks of work. They use their butts and legs. Big butt=big lift.

If you can snatch 155 with a sandbag, you are pretty damn impressive. Lane Cannon's "Judy," his 150 pound sandbag is a nightmare to clean

and press. I would recommend, in order of 'ease of learning,' the following progression for snatches: 1. One arm dumbbell/kettlebell snatches (Five seconds of learning) 2. One arm dumbbell/kettlebell swings (don't worry if you have never heard of it...think Highland Games Weight over Bar without the release) 3. Barbell Cleans 4. Clean Grip Snatches (first from hips, then below knees, then floor) 5. Regular Snatches...buy the World Class Coaching Video I snatched, in a competition, 187 pounds...weighing 184, three weeks after seeing the snatch for the first time. What helped me the most was snatching three days a week for three weeks. Now, I would recommend five snatch sessions a week to learn the movement.

Not a perfect answer for Crossfit WODs, but you may want to "cluster" your sets. Testing, now, would be a different concept and plan, but for a general workout, you might consider a "set" of fifteen like this: 3 reps 2 reps 1 rep 1 rep 2 reps 3 reps 2 reps 1 rep Put the bar down completely between the set/reps...those reps of 3, 2, or 1...and shake your arms out, catch your breath...but don't leave the platform. Stand tall, a couple of good breaths, and do the next reps. This is how I learned to Power Clean before I met Dick Notmeyer. This Stanford football player told us (a group of SSF football players) that we had to be able to handle 135 for 15 straight power cleans to really be game ready. I don't know whether or not this was BS or not, but it sure worked for me to get into shape. Don't go up in reps, rather, try to limit the amount of time between the "clusters." This is actually a good idea for all O lifting. Mike Stone taught me a similar concept at the USOC where you do something like five sets of five, but rest ten to twenty seconds between each rep. (Hard to do on Bench and Squats, but great for the O lifts) You get volume, but with more intensity that one usually expects.

You can find them for free here:

<http://www.sandowplus.co.uk/Competition/Hoffman/hoffmanindex.htm>

The following is a series of discussion between me, Brooks Kubik, and Andy Fochtman discussing the programs: York Course Number 3 (Do one set of each exercise, 5 reps minimum, or do 5 singles without too much rest between each single): Warmup...Flip snatches 1. One arm jerk (w/ bb) 2. One arm snatch (w/ bb) 3. Standing press 4. Squat 5. One arm overhead squat 6. High pull (to belt height) 7. Press behind neck, standing 8. Power clean or dead hang clean 9. Jerk 10. Dead hang or regular snatch Hoffman suggested that lifters use four different schedules: (1) Course no. 1, consisting of one set each of 10 standard barbell exercises, performed for one set of 10-15 reps. (2) Course no.2, consisting of a similar course, but using different exercises. For example, press behind neck instead of standing press.

(3) Course No. 3, consisting of 10 repetition weightlifting movements, performed for one set of 5-10 reps each. (4) Course no. 4, consisting of a heavy day where you worked up to your max on the Olympic lifts (including the clean and press and the one hand snatch), along with the bent press. This was a 5/4/3/2/1 day for many lifters, although the sets and reps were very much at the lifter's discretion. You would do course no. 4 on Saturday. If you were really strong and energetic on that day, you'd follow course no. 4 with one of the other courses. You would rest on Friday and Sunday, i.e., the day before and the day after the heavy day. On Monday, you would take a medium day by doing course no. 1 or course no. 2, or both of them. On Wednesday or Thursday you would do course no. 3, the repetition weightlifting course. This was the "medium" day. On the other two days (Tuesday and either Wednesday or Thursday, depending on when you did course no. 3), you would have a "tinkering" day where you did light dumbbell moves, Iron Boot work, gut work, grip work, headstrap exercises, and cable (chest expander) work. (These were sort of what we now would call "active rest" days.) Thus, the York program had different workouts, different exercises, a combination of Olympic weightlifting and "body-building", different set/rep schemes, Ol work for reps and OL work for singles, competition lifts in split or squat style and "power" style moves (e.g., power clean or power snatch), lifting from the hang,

active rest days and a combination of heavy, light and medium days. In a sense, those simple old courses were far more complex and much better thought out than 99% of the courses you see written up nowadays. If you use a three day a week pressing program and want to continue to do so, you can do a simple heavy/medium/light schedule by dropping 10% for the medium day and 20% for the light day--or just drop 10-15 pounds for the medium day and 20-25 for the light day. It varies from lifter to lifter, but here's the key: if you usually feel strong and aggressive on the heavy days and you get good workouts on those days and are gradually moving up in weight, then you are doing things right. Otherwise, you are working too heavy on the other two days of the week. York "Weight Lifting" Course -----

----- The following course is from "York Advanced Methods of Weight Training" I recently sent a copy of the booklet to Dan John. He commented that the weightlifting course in this book, in his opinion, appeared to be better than the traditional "York 3" that appeared in the "Four Famous York Courses" that many of you are familiar with. I thought you'd be interested in seeing this version. I'll use the modern terms for the exercise in most cases and where it differs from the booklet, I'll place their name in quotation marks Andy Fochtman 1. Clean without using legs or back (this is a clean using only the top pull, trap shrug followed by the arm whip. Dan might know an actual name for this. I don't) 2. Power Clean and Press "Continuous Pull Up and Press" 3. Snatch 4. Push Press "Two arm push". This is actually a variation where you lean forward, shove the bar up and lean back to get under it. I don't like this version and prefer the push press 5. High Pull to Chin "Pull up to chin" 6. Jump Squat "Rapid Bouncing Leaping Squat" Fairly light weights in this one 7. Upright Row 8. Press Front and Back. Watch Rocky II if you don't know what these are. Traditional standing press followed by press behind neck, alternating from rep to rep 9. Power Clean 10. Jerk 11. Deadlift with extended Pull. "Deadlift to Continental Position"

This is similar to what Doug Hepburn called "High Pulls" in his courses, but different from the more explosive versions found in current olympic style programs. Basically, a deadlift, but you keep pulling to waist height. Calls for 20-40% less weight. Brooks Kubik likes to substitute

standard high pulls to belt height for these 12. Front Squats "Deep knee bend as in squat cleaning" 1 set, 5-10 reps each. This and the original York 3 are said to be the hardest and most result producing courses available Comments from Dan John: From the book, I would recommend what he called "Heavy and Light" training. Total of 15 reps, but the first set 7-8, rest "lighten" the bar, then get reps up to 15.

Maybe do a set of 5, back off to 80 percent, and do a set of five. You could even do 3 sets of 3, or 2 sets of 3. For an O lifter, this would be general prep training, but anyone could do this program. You know, I really like this one from the book and the one arm program. I would dump a couple of the one arm lifts (two kinds of curls), but it is great.

One thing I missed the first time I went through the book was Hoffman's week. Let's assume three days a week: One day: Hard Day. Heavy and Light program, but these are truly heavy, right on your bests. Day off before the hard day and after the hard day. Another Day: Medium Day. Do the York Three again, but with weights (or even an extra set...three by five, maybe) that don't tax your "nerve." The other day: Tinkering Day. I miss understood this: you do grippers, machines, one arm stuff (whatever you like) iron boots, machines, neck work, ...kind of the training I do with my friend, Lane Cannon. Maybe sandbags or stones. As I read this it made perfect sense. This is how one could blend "normal" training with Dino work or Highland Games training. I'm not an expert on this stuff, but it makes sense to me.

Never let go. Dan John "An Excellent Heavy Dumbbell Course"--
from York -----

----- This course appeared on page 36 in "York Advanced Methods of Weight Training" by Bob Hoffman, published in 1951. We get a fair amount of questions about workouts on limited equipment so here's one for all you guys out there who get stranded with a pair of dumbbells. Course No. 5 AN EXCELLENT HEAVY DUMBBELL COURSE 1. Thumbs up curl-two dumbbells (Hammer Curls) 2. Two Dumbbell Press 3. Two Dumbbell Swing 4. Bent-arm Pullover--two dumbbells 5. Side Bend with one dumbbell 6. Deep Knee Bend and Press--two dumbbells 7. Bent-over Rowing--one dumbbell 8. Dumbbell Supine Press 9. Raise on Toes--one dumbbell 10. Continuous Pull up and press 11. Situp on bench with dumbbell

12. Deep Knee Bend--dumbbells overhead Andy Fochtman This is excerpted from "York Advanced Methods of Weight Training" by Bob Hoffman, 1951 pgs 16-17 With the three days a week training system, Monday, Wednesday and Friday are the usual training days. This system leaves the week end free to spend with one's family, or to enjoy other activities.... If a man works quite hard with his muscles, (Note by Andy...this refers to manual labor and not training) I would recommend a somewhat different three day training method. One limit day to build strength, for handling heavy weights for a few repetitions under the Heavy and Light System or other form of York Set system. There should be another good training day, working up to at least 12 repetitions, and an easy or tinkering day of training. A man who works hard physically must be careful that he does not make too much demand upon his nerve, he must train without straining, yet gains are made only when demands are made upon the muscles, so he **MUST MAKE DEMANDS**.(emphasis added) We are outlining a method of training which will bring excellent results without too much effort on the part of the trainee. When you make satisfactory gains with one of our suggested training systems, that is a good method to continue. If you don't gain as you desire, change your system, perhaps moderate your effort for a time, remembering that fewer movements and heavier weights are not tiresome, not as nerve force consuming as working up to higher repetitions. Heavier work builds a surplus of strength, nerve force and energy. Some men prefer to train 3 1/2 times per week, or every other day. The only objection to this method is that training comes on a different day each week, on Sunday every two week Hoffman mentions that he used this system to build 30" thighs. Use this program 2 days a week with 1-2 other days devoted to upper body work 1 set each 10-12 reps, never more than 15, with the exception of calf work. Hoffman believed super high reps during leg work, gave a man dead legs. That is, no spring. 1. Full Squat on Toes w/barbell or dumbbells (150 lbs should be enough for an advanced man) 2. Calf Raise 3. Full Squat 4. German Goose Step (essentially marching German style with weight on shoulders) 5. Partial Squat* 6-12" At least 15 reps 6. Straddle Hop 20-50 reps 7. Leg Press while Lying** 8. Running with weights, hill sprints, stairsteps, etc...either a barbell on back, or

dumbbells in hand 9. Lifter's Choice: Rapid Full Squats or Overhead Squats 10. Compound Exercise Four exercises 6-12 reps per exercise; no rest between. You may choose your own exercises. Example: Full Squat, Straddle Hop, Rapid Squat, Calf Raise Thus you have completed a leg and calf workout of 13 sets, using a variety of exercises. If Iron Boots were available, it was suggested to continue with the Iron Boot Course (This was reprinted in an issue of the Dinosaur Files) Note that you also alternated a heavy thigh exercise with a calf exercise to keep the program moving smoothly *

"The lowering is done slowly and the legs are straightened with a very quick movement...It is one of the finest exercises known. It is especially beneficial to those who wish to star as weight lifters. As most advanced barbell men will use at least twice their bodyweight, in reality the legs become accustomed to supporting three times the usual amount of carrying weight. This is one of the exercises which will make you light on your feet and enduring" Note by Andy: Please note that this is not a super-heavy partial rack squat where the lift is grinded up. It trains the quick dip recovery that you use when you push press among other benefits. The goal is training for "spring" with a fairly heavy weight. Try it in both the front and back squat position, but don't neglect the full range lifts **Note by Andy: If you don't have a leg press machine substitute hip belt squats or trap bar deadlifts for a direct hit on the legs without much back involvement From "How to Build Super Strength, Health and Development with the York Leg Developing Course" by Bob Hoffman, 1943

I plan five off days after every three weeks. Often, I max the sixth day and discover that those five days were as valuable as training. I learned about this years ago from a Soviet thrower who argued that the single biggest problem with American throwers was chronic overtraining. Bondurchuk had an interesting training idea of going 100% one week, 80% in both volume and intensity and "15%" the third week...active rest of volleyball, swimming and fun stuff. It was called "load leaping," and the idea was to keep trying to pop up on the week after the 15%

training with bigger P.R.s. There is a book called "Consistent Winning" that talks about what you are trying to do with long term, no stop training. The author argues for several total rest days in the middle of severe training. Recently, I went down to Las Vegas to compete against two of my good friends, Mike and Mindy. They have been training double sessions since June to prep up for a run at 2004 (Olympics). They have really improved their technique and ability to handle a load, but when the ring judge called their name, you could see that the long haul had eroded their ability to "snap." Whether the muscles had lost their stretch reflex or their nervous system just couldn't rewire a big throw, both struggled with nailing a big mark. So, if you are in a sport that demands high performance, you need to take time off in some kind of intelligent plan to relax and reload. You could probably just keep putting in workouts, but you seem to have found the problem with that already. If you do the WOD here, truly do the rest day as a rest day. Of course, if you are overtrained (high morning pulse, flu-like feelings, lethargy, generally pissed off, trouble relaxing and sleeping, difficulty concentration), you may need more than a day or two. The Soviets used to take two months (!!!) of active rest before starting a new year. Today, many O lifters will take a full year off of training (that is serious) before starting a three year push towards the Olympics. It usually all gets back to your goals. As a thrower, I have some built in things (the season, for example) that allows me to float my training up and down. Maybe you could find a natural way to do this in your training.

It's funny, but at 19, I would go to track meets and watch my competition start to get really wired from taking amphetamines before throwing...plus all the anabolics they did during the week. If the internet would have been around then (before I invented it), I would have posted a question exactly like yours...if you follow my point. My wife and I have a little motto, if you want our Christmas Card drop me an address as we always have it on the card, "It's not where you start, it is where you finish." (Lincoln will remember the Nationals where I was the first to start in the Clean and Jerk among the top three...) Any time

you decide to begin the path of sports, health, or just that odd word "fitness," you have to realize that each day and each diet decision do add up. My goals are fairly simple: at age 46, I strive to keep at the same level I was at 19. (It is actually funny in a way that you are 19 as I think about this...) So, that, for me, is keeping my snatch over 240, Clean and Jerk over 300 and discus over 160. Each year: done, done, and done. I also train about 1/5 as much as I used to train, too. Part of the reason is that I established good habits at 19 that continue to Bless me at 46. To me, this is the real competition, will you be able to keep on doing what you love to do even with the pressures of a career (two for me), spouse, children, mortgage, bills, pets, lawns et al? Now, your buddies, as our other friends have posted, have ideally set themselves up to follow in the path of the balloon people that we see in Disneyville and Las Vegas. I'm not being cruel, but I sometimes want to scream when I deal with people who tell me that they can't get in shape because: 1. They had a bad high school P.E. teacher 2. They are addicted to chocolate 3. Insert bizarre reason of the day. I feel it starts with the choices that one makes in the teen years. So, I feel like I am grandpa here by the way, but I do want you to keep your eye on the longer road ahead. When my dad and mom first met Dick Notmeyer (He was about 46 then), they couldn't believe the kind of shape he was in. But, Dick ate a lot of protein, lifted, challenged himself and laughed a lot! So, I role modeled him. I always opted for health when given a choice (well...almost always) and reap the benefits today. Sermon over, but I understand exactly what you are saying.

The word about ephedrine in the throwing sports is that it does help burn fat and make your lifting go better (but it can really screw up your throwing with the whole "rage" issue), but your nervous system gets beat up very quick. Odd comment, perhaps, but "I've been told" that it works for a while, then you just crash. A buddy of mine used to take a lot of OTC ephedrine when it was 'more' legal and he would have great workouts for a while, then simply not be able to get ready for track meets. It seems to keep you in "battle mode" for waaay too long and you can't pull yourself up for competition. So, I would think that short

term, you would see some of the benefits, but when you crash, you crash hard. In the low carb world, those who push the ECA stack note that it does it best work when you no longer feel the effects...the heart rate up, the buzz, the chill/heat, that kind of thing. I wish I knew more about supplementing fat burners, but you may want to closely monitor yourself and check to see if the burners are really working on your fat or just making you irritable. The ladies who taught me some tricks about fat loss argued that sipping olive oil throughout the day was the best fat burner they knew...along with eat meat/drink water/lift weights. Your skin will look great, too. So, I would say that the problem with ephedra and stacks and all that is that it is hard to figure what made you lose fat. If you: 1. Ate Zero carbs 2. Lift hard 3. Drink 100 oz. of ice water a day 4. Sleep 9-10 hours each night 5. Sipped olive or flax oil every few hours 6. Took ECA, how would you determine which did what? For me, the more I sleep, the leaner I get...usually. That is why I do all my fat loss programs in the late fall and winter when it is easier (in Utah) to get lots of extra sleep. Perhaps try to circle a 3 to 6 week test on the map and decide to low carb the whole time with lots of sleep and water and intelligent training. Take before and after shots from lots of views. Compare and Contrast them. Then, if you still want to go that direction, add a fat burner, do the photos and see if you change. In six weeks, you should have enough proof whether it is the supplement or the lifestyle. I would hedge my bets on the lifestyle, but I honestly don't know.

HTML Attachment

Want more?

Questions and Answers About Lifting

Question: Will I lose my strength if I take time off?

I have never been convinced that improvement in lifting (or throwing or life) is linear. So, I like the idea of planning off weeks. But, what most people

misunderstand is that I think you really need to load those weeks before the off-week. I guess I straddle two theories here:

1. You are going to end up taking time off sooner or later, or submit yourself to endless crappy workouts that you will soon convince you that you are genetically inferior.
2. When you train, you really have to train hard.

I like Brooks' idea of picking twelve exercises and trying to attain Hoffman's Gold standards. Attempting a bunch of bodyweight snatches, cleans, and presses as well as a host of one arm lifts is hard work. In the "Body as One Piece" program that I have my throwers use (the fourth week is off), the squat workout is PR squats for 7 sets of 5 followed by jumps. We overload these lifts whereas the athlete stands and goes down under their own power then we help them come up. (Don't try this without talking to me more.) They can never grind these lifts nor slow down coming up. But, that is 35 reps (on paper) with their max, once a month. In reality, the first two sets are done with PRs, but the last ones are just pathetic attempts. Paul Northway once had to do 135 on his last set. He could snatch 265 in high school, but on his seventh set could no longer lower himself.

This is hard work in my world. Supersetting triceps x and arm curls is not. So, what does time off mean? For me, it might be a week of arm work and circuit training. Or, more rollerblading. It is active, but not killer. Joe Mills used to recommend the York courses when guys got stale in the weightroom. Whatever you choose to do, keep your eyes on four or ten year progress rather than week to week or even month to month.

When I use my "Body as One Piece" program with all the triple pyramids and overload lifts, you find that you come back stronger. Of course, you only squat twice a month on this program, so you are really fresh. Note: this program works for someone off the learning curve. It is fairly advanced. But, I would still recommend for someone who has a year or so under their belt to unload regularly. Joe Mills recommended going back to the York Courses when he noted a lack of progress. At the PBBC, we "bodybuilt" for a couple of weeks, usually just lots of arm work, inclines, hypers and assorted crap, along with bodyweight for reps contests in the squat and bench press. I can almost predict when a person is going to crash in a program by just looking at the structure of the month after month after month of expected training. Life is not linear.

Question: A high school thrower wanted to improve. "How often should I bench?"

I wanted to scream at first, but at least he is going to the right place. In high school I weighed 162 and threw 170 with an awesome bench. (I won't

put the number in because no one would believe me.)

Four years later, at Utah State, I threw the REAL discus 190 at a bodyweight of 218.

BUT...

I benched less than I could in high school!!!

Throwers don't need to bench. Throwers don't need to bench. Throwers don't need to bench. Throwers don't need to bench. Throwers don't need to bench. Throwers don't need to bench.

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Snatch and squat. Clean and press. Run hills. Work your abs.

Overhead Squat. Now, I did have an athlete follow my advice and he threw the high school disc 214'9". At a bodyweight of 215. He snatched and cleaned and ran hills and threw overweight stuff. Strong is such a relative word. When you say you bench 300 that is one thing: putting it overhead from the floor... Now, THAT is strong!

Question: For years, benching had become a religion. Now, in some places, squatting is "the answer to all questions." So, how much should you squat?

I know that to be a modern era O lifter at the international level, you have to squat, squat and squat. But, some of the points you make are worth thinking about. John Powell threw his lifetime best throws when he decided to keep the squat movement, but never go heavy again. (Sets of 8-10 with 225 with a good rhythm.) (Note: John has two O bronzes in the disc, as well as a silver at the Worlds) His comment on this was that the heavy squats made him hurt, made him slow and he didn't like them.

I think there is a gem in there somewhere. If your long term goals don't necessarily include a huge squat, maybe you don't need to do it. All of my lifts are better than John's except for the deadlift (and maybe the bench, he is vague about that one) but he completely humbles me in the discus.

I would still argue that everyone should squat, but perhaps we need to keep the proportions in check. At the USOC training center, we were told that all you needed to have the strength levels for a world record throw in the discus was a 250 snatch, 300 clean, 400 bench (I thought that was high in comparison to the snatch, but others guys thought it was low...) and a 450 squat. John Powell got a silver at the worlds with a yearly best of a 220 snatch and 286 clean.

Looking at Grimek, especially his success at the world and Olympic level in weightlifting, it would seem that squatting had a place in his training, but it was the "be all and end all."

So, do you need to squat? Sure. It is, when done correctly, a lift that does it all. It makes you more flexible, builds your cardio, strengthens all the connections, and carries over to all athletic movements. Should you wrap your knees, wear Levis, a supersuit, and eat chalk before you squat? I would argue "no."

Although all training is a question of balance and proportion, I would think that the squat, as well as the bench, seem to be the hardest lifts for most lifters to keep in balance. I know people who NEVER squat and wonder why they get no sports improvement from lifting. I know lifters who have four bench workouts a week. Ask them to throw a football hard a few times!

So, overall, I would say:

1. Yes, you need to squat
2. Squatting is not the only thing you need to do.

Question: How do you incorporate Overhead Squats into your training?

I'm a big fan of overheads, but you need to be sure you know why you are going to add them. Seriously, they will help with any goal I can think of, but if you are going to start doing them, there is going to be a learning curve. Six months from now, they will pay off with better flexibility, better "support" structure (I know some people don't believe in support muscles, but I do), and great thigh, hip and lower back strength. If you are doing them for sports, I think you will find an immediate carryover.

So, how to add? One idea is based on what Pavel T recommends: do them EVERY day for two sets of five for two weeks. First set heavy, second set is a back off.

Another is to simply make one day a week "overhead squat" day. Or, take a couple of weeks out and just do overheads three days a week. The few weeks of specialization will not retard your overall progress. Some guys act like a week or two of specialized work will kill them. That is bodybuilder thinking, "Oh no, I'm a quarter inch off my left bicep."

Another idea is just to toss them in and do them. It would be a great complement to your front squats. I often do overheads and front squats together. They really do seem to be a nice blend.

I usually teach athletes the overhead squat fairly early. Trust me, a kid who overheads with 95 pounds will find the back squat a fairly easy thing to learn. It is an odd thing about my coaching style: I don't teach discus throwers how to hold or release the discus. I use handled medicine balls and they do countless full turns and drills with throwing into walls or onto fields. So, they master advanced drills like "float-float-stings," three turns and a throw. One day, with nice weather, we go out to throw the disc. On the way down the hill, the new kid asks another, "how do you hold this thing?" Experienced kid takes two or three minutes to show how to hold and release the disc. Young kid goes to ring with a mastery of the big picture that will make the implement go far. Doing it the other way, like most coaches, the athlete spends the whole first year doing standing throws trying to make the discus fly right. No carryover at all to big throws.

If you teach a kid to overhead squat, the back squat and the front squat are a breeze. You don't even coach it, they pick it up by simply watching the kid before them. Teach an athlete to snatch, they usually pick up the clean. Show them the clean and jerk and they rarely need a great explanation of the bench.

I think we need to raise the bar high for new athletes and really demand a lot. I think the same about teaching, too.

So, dive in, so to speak, and just start doing them.

Question: What do you mean "the body is one piece?"

First, that is a good question. But be sure to understand the concept of "one piece." It is something I learned years and years ago and I call it the two rules:

1. The body comes in one, flexible piece.
2. Specificity works-but at a price.

The one piece concept is the idea that nothing a bodybuilder believes, basically, is true. If you tell me that benches are an upper body exercise, I need merely stick a fork in your calf while you bench your max. If it only is upper body, the fork should have no affect on your lift. Yet, it does. Be

careful who you do this experiment with, some people take it to extremes.

Being "one piece" is the real gift of the O lifts and why they carry over to Highland Games and the four Olympic throws; shot, disc, hammer, and javelin. I have a video somewhere of Soviet high jumpers doing set after set after set of power snatches to improve their jump. What the overhead squat and the O lifts, perhaps a few others too, including the front squat, do for the athlete is demand flexibility, balance, total muscular development, kinetic awareness and movement into one package.

After a few months of serious overhead squat work, you might only notice larger spinal erectors. Yet, your vertical jump and other athletic moves will increase. At the Upper Limit gym, we used to measure VJ, standing long jump and both "three jumps." (Continuous three jumps, hop-hop-hop, or, three combined standing long jumps) Athletes would improve radically when they started doing the Overheads and/or O lifts. These athletes were also off the "learning curve" for the jumps, so any increase usually reflected training. Well, I like to think that, anyway.

As a football player or a thrower, the "one piece" idea really carries over. I always talk about Paul's quote when he threw 182' as a sophomore, but it is true, he really did stay together in the throw and it went far for a 155 pounder.

Dumbbell exercises would have been a great complement to his program, but, alas, I failed him. I would imagine that the king would be Clean and Press/Jerk with two dumbbells followed by Clean and Press/Jerk with one dumbbell. One arm snatches would be in that top group, too. Basically, start thinking about the longest movement a bar or dumbbell can go, still held in the hands. That is why Reverse Grip Wrist Curls have little value for "one piece" training. (Note: don't mistake me here: grip strength has an enormous value and needs to be considered; however, small movements don't IN THIS STYLE OF TRAINING)

If you can do swings, I would imagine these would have a place, too.

For an example, I offer you the world's simplest program:

1. Clean and Press with two dumbbells, start light and go up to max.
 2. Overhead Squat. Mix reps each workout. 3 sets of 8 with a minute rest OR 5 by 5 OR 5 by 3 OR Pyramids OR multiple Pyramids.
- Go home. Repeat two days later.

This is almost exactly the program I recommend during the peak season

to throwers, although I would probably tell them now (November of 2000) to do one arm clean and press as it seems to strength the obliques. It is not a bad program, but it assumes a large base of general strength and an accumulation of specific skills, tests, and other training.

I hope this answers your question. The concept of "one piece" always needs to be tempered with "specificity works-but at a price." If all you did was snatch and clean and jerk, you would get very, very good in those lifts. If you did them for seven hours a day, six days a week, you would get even better. Or get crushed. Lynn Jones calls this "the Bulgarian Butcher System," if you survive, you thrive.

Doing just overhead squats and a little ab exercise at the peak of track season keeps the athlete together as they literally burn up before your eyes. Throwing the disc and assorted drills for nine months really starts to "pay the price." So, I think if you want to be good at overhead squats, do them three to five times a week KNOWING that everything else is going to suffer to some degree. That's "the price" of specificity. However, you will also master the movement and reap the benefits of training a full body lift.

Question: How do I prevent overtraining?

I'm not sure this will answer your questions, but I wanted to comment on overtraining. I really don't know how to transition from one school of training to another, but my experiences in sports may have some clues.

In high school, by the end of football season, I used to notice how "deconditioned" I had become in terms of strength, speed and endurance. Of course, my body and mind had compensated in terms of being able to tackle, shed blocks, and handle 21 other bodies moving about me without losing focus on my jobs. But, my lifts would go down and my off-season training gains would be gone.

The Monday after football season ended, we would get wrestling gear and go down the hall to the mat room. There, my nose would bleed almost daily for two weeks and I would literally die trying to keep up with the rounds of drills. A month later, no more nose bleeds, but I don't think I could handle 21 people moving around, only one guy across from me.

Wrestling season used to end early for me (I sucked), so I would head out to throw the disc. I could fight somebody for an hour, yet I would be off my best throws of the previous year EVEN THOUGH I weighed more and I was

stronger. A month later, I would be, on average, 26 feet farther than the previous year.

Why this voyage into my past? Well, I am a great believer in supercompensation. Short term overtraining leads to long-term success. I can hear the complaints about injuries, but, in truth, not too many of us suffer injuries that lead to surgery, according to those studies in the 1950's. In fact, if you are not a druggie and have some common sense, I think you can afford to train harder than you think.

I have always enjoyed training with people who have either wrestled or been in the military. These people seem to understand that they can push themselves much farther than they ever imagined. When I was in college, we still used to have guys who would come out of the military then compete in junior college. We had a steeplechaser at Utah State who was a former Marine. What I enjoyed about these guys (besides the fact they could buy me beer) was that none of the stuff I bitched about was that big a deal. If we had brown bag lunches on road trips: that was fine. Double up in a hotel: that was fine. Bad weather: that was fine. These guys had been pushed to a point that brown bag lunches were a treat.

I think that you are going to be very damn sore when you try dino-stuff, strongman stuff or the O lifts. If I did your HIT workout, I would puke. I probably couldn't walk right for a few days. I trained seriously on Nautilus equipment in 1982 and did everything as intense as possible. I got dry heaves and my heart rate stayed up for hours the first few weeks. Then, I compensated and my body adapted to it. In 1979, I did high rep squats with poundages and reps that amaze me today. Again, at first, I puked, weeks later, I got used to it.

The transition is going to be filled with ups and downs. You are going to give up some stuff when you abandon HIT. I have a friend, Lane, who got into high rep Trap Bar deadlifts and high rep squats in a HIT program. He then noticed that his best squats (maxs) hadn't gone up at all and quit doing the reps. He noted, though, that he missed the overall feeling of "?????" when he stopped HIT. What is "?????" ? He couldn't explain it, but it was the mental strength of pushing the reps as well as the heart rate and breathing rate stuff that he missed.

I don't think overtraining is really the term. I usually use "learning curve." When you first start to clean, you might only be able to handle 100 pounds. Six weeks later, you clean 200 pounds. Well, that rate of improvement is going to slow as you climb the "learning curve."

If you do dino-stuff, let's say sandbag clean and press, you are going to have really sore hands and fingers just holding on. Your back and shoulders are going to get roughed up. You might get bruises on your shoulders and forehead. (It happens when the sandbag decides to come down.) Yet, you might double or triple your weights in just a few weeks.

But, are you overtraining? You might, right now, be capable of a 250 pound sandbag clean and press. But, you have to learn the method, condition the grip and skin, and get the confidence to do the lift. Missing a 260 pound sandbag clean and press fifty-six times in a row may be a signal of overtraining, but not a lot of soreness from a seventy pound bag.

You will be surprised how soon you will get used to the grip problems, the technical issues and the joint soreness from pushing, pulling and throwing things around. But, I guess I would caution you not to think of this as "overtraining" rather as "learning."

I can't think of a better way to spend my life than to learn something new every day.

Question: Question: How do you develop rotational strength?

First, I have tried as a coach and a thrower to do every thing possible to build this aspect of my throw. It is harder than you think. I would always argue a good base of ab work for any thrower. We did a variety of crunches, situps, various ground based twists, and leg raises. I found that medicine ball throws were a very valuable addition, too. At times, I became lethal at those medicine ball situps where you try to bury your training partner after coming up.

Second, the coaches who really push rotational strength training often don't have good throwers. Or, it is an opinion. The best throws coaches train rotational strength on the field with overweight hammers, plates and "puds." Puds are weights with fixed handle. Throwing the 35 pound weight during the indoor season used to really prepare my muscles for the disc. My best was 58'11" with the old style of two turns and hit it. Bondarchuk, the great Russian coach, experimented with everything and he and Sedych ended up with a very simple program of clean grip snatches, half squats and a heavy over the shoulder throw to both sides.

Bondarchuk later developed a wonderful program that developed over a

year. You would change exercises every few weeks, but they built on each other. I mentioned that in a past post: Clean from box, clean from hang, clean from floor, snatch from box, snatch from hang, snatch from floor, clean grip snatch from box, clean grip snatch from hang, then clean grip snatch from floor. Well, the rotational work developed along the same lines with one arm throws to two and back varying weights.

John Jesse offered a program for throwers in Track and Field Quarterly Review, June 1966. He made an important statement: "Though timing and correct body position on arrival at the front of the ring are essential to the maximum application of "body torque," once the athlete arrives at that position, application of "body torque" is entirely dependent upon the strength of the waist and abdominal region, primarily the spinal rotator and lateral flexor muscles of the trunk"

Dan Gushard was right that Carol Cady did a lot of twists, but John Powell did none. Brian Oldfield's breakthrough training was simply pyramids of power cleans and push jerks twice a week.

At Utah State, we emphasized power cleans, push jerks, quarter squats and a power curl. Throwing muscles came from throwing. But, we also had everybody throwing over 180 in the disc. To make USU's top twenty, you have to throw 180 and change. (BTW, this list is almost 100% Americans, with one or two Canadians. Some schools simply buy older European throwers and claim to coach them; this is a real pisser in my life. I ended my Div 1 eligibility at age 21. I competed against a guy at another Utah school ((nameless)) that was a 26 year old freshman ((and major f---ing druggier)))

I guess my point is to look at successful throwers rather than what someone says. I know that seems assbackwards, but when you talk with Anthony Washington and he tells you that he spends four months a year just doing circuit training on the universal gym in his girlfriend's apartment complex, then nails a 232 throw, you need to reaccess "science" and review the throws as art. American throwers especially seem to do better when they focus on their strengths or local resources rather than listening to some guy at a clinic. Fortunately, we seem to be getting people at these clinics in the past few years, but we still have a major druggier giving a lot of throws clinics.

In my career, I tried everything, but I found that snatches and squats (front, back, overhead) gave me the biggest bang for my buck. I agree with Dan G that Pavel T's stuff is excellent and I would have used that in the fall and

winter. No question rotational strength is important, but safely developing it is another question.

Question: What are the lessons you (Dan) have learned?

The question is simple: what are the things that you have learned in your lifting experience that frankly surprises you today? Basically, what are the things that you may have heard or seen in the past and ignored that you find absolutely “right on” now?

My list:

1. The role of health in strength training. I knew this, of course. The magazine, “Strength and Health,” certainly emphasized this point, but it has only been in the last ten years that I have discovered that the key to long term strength gain is being healthy!
2. So, what is healthy? First, don’t get injured or sick. I think that most of the injuries and sickness come from “over-conditioning,” not overtraining. It is all that extra stuff: the aerobics, the step class, the “injury-prevention” exercises, bodybuilding stuff, the lat pulls, the extra sets of arms...the body deals with it by failing and falling apart. Try to overtrain the squat snatch. I’m serious. Go into the gym for three hours and snatch. Ian’s 100 rep challenge taught me this lesson: you can’t overtrain the core lifts of snatches, cleans, and a few others.
3. I’m shocked how the cheapest supplements, Magnesium and Potassium, maybe zinc, and a few others actually help me improve. Mg is amazing; I first discovered all its value with the Eades’ book, “Protein Power Lifespan Program,” but I never realized how great it was until I started investing the pennies a day to try it. The expensive stuff, all of it, just doesn’t do anything.
4. Flexibility. Forget it! If you want it: squat, dip, straight leg deadlift. If you want more: overhead squat. Stop doing stretches and do the lifts and you will get all you need and more.
5. “Show up.” It is the first lesson of success in the business and education world, but in the weightroom, too. Many of the athletes I deal with, who have failed, always have an excuse. “This, that, this, that....,” then they wonder why they fail in the key situations. Most of my success in the past ten years reflects the fact that I “show up.” Many of my

workouts stink! But, I do them.

6. In the area of nutrition, the key is digestion. My sister gave me a list of foods that have the most common allergies: wheat, cow's milk, corn, soy, eggs, sugar, and peanuts. Except for eggs, most of that list seems to apply to me. In the past ten years, I have focused on digestion rather than volume (calorie counting or whatever) seems to help me more than all the forced gains I used to try to do.

7. I'm not made up of parts. I'm one piece. Snatch, overhead squat, clean and press...use all the pieces of the body.

Question: How did you get your start and what would you recommend for others?

In the mists of my training past, I think we started when my aunt died and my brothers and I got a couple of hundred dollars in inheritance. Of course, we went through it like water...but, we bought the Ted Williams Sears Barbell set.

The basic training was pick it up and put it over your head. I remember in the 8th grade getting the bar bug and taking it seriously. I had ten pound dumbbells in my bedroom and did curls, reverse curls and something else every night. A couple of times a week I would clean and press. I could get 45 pounds like it was nothing, but kept missing 65. My neighbor could do it; so, I really started to push it.

Finally, it occurred to me that 45 was easy and my two dumbbells were easy and that easy+easy=make the damn lift!

So, I took 65 pounds; cleaned it and pressed it three times. It was here that I discovered that the mind is a touch more important than just looking pretty.

That spring, I went to my first Spring Training. As a Catholic school kid, the Junior High allowed us to go to Spring Training for the upcoming Fall. We had to change in the school bathroom then walk a half mile or so, then play Spring ball. I wanted to quit every day...but, I hung in there. The coach gave us a summer lifting program:

Military Press 75 pounds 3 sets of 12

Half Squat 75 pounds 3 sets of 12

Toe Raises 75 pounds 3 sets of 12

I couldn't do it! So, I lifted at home, lifted at a friends, use the high school Universal machines, and trained all summer. I still couldn't do the sets of 12, but I improved. When I showed up in the fall, they moved me to guard when some kids quit and I began coming to school in the morning to lift. We did the "Big Three," squat, bench and row.

After the season, we went into the first "Real" program I ever did:

Power Clean 8-6-4

Military Press 8-6-4

Front Squat 8-6-4

Bench Press 8-6-4

When you could do all 18 reps, you got to add weight next time. This was the basis of my programs for a few months.

I had been saving money to buy an adjustable bench and I got it in March of 1972. I started doing incline benches, bench presses, squats, reverse curls, toe raises and incline flies on this. I stayed with 8-6-4, or 10-8-6-4. The day after my last track meet, I did 132 and a half pounds for 8 in the bench. I had almost doubled my workout lifts, weighing between 118 and 130.

Now, comes the downside. Going to the high school, all the seniors loved the Universal gym bench press. They were very, very good football players. (South San Francisco High School has an amazing football tradition. When my sister was in school, they did not lose a football game while she was a student! We weren't bad either)

So, I became a bench fanatic. I kept doing half squats and ran lots of hills and stairs. I dropped the militaries. I will say that I got WIERD strong in the bench. At 162 pounds as a senior, I benched...ah, you wouldn't believe it.

After throwing the disc 170 as a senior, I knew I had to do something to get to a Division One school. I went to Skyline College and their lifting program was 4 sets of 8. Everything was 4 sets of 8. Reverse Curls, leg curls, lat pulls, bench press, miliary press, and on and on and on. I made less and less progress. They hired a guy to supervise the weightroom and he gave me the rudiments of snatch technique. I "knew" the clean, I thought. He then suggested going to an O lift meet to watch how it is done.

Literally, on the the way to the bathroom, I bumped into Dick Notmeyer. He said that he lived a mile from Skyline. It was true. So, for 25 cents a

week gym dues, Dick taught me the O lifts. I went from 162 to 202 in four months. The first day, I snatched 165. A few weeks later, at my first meet, (nervous as hell) I snatched 187. Nine months later, 231. I clean and jerked 231 in my first meet, nine months later 308.

A year or so later, I was a Utah State Aggie.

What would I do different? I think of this a lot.

1. I would have stayed with that 8-6-4 program for much of my high school years. I kick myself for dumping cleans, front squats and militaries.
2. I would have used the military as my strength standard rather than the bench.
3. I would have eaten more protein, especially at breakfast.
4. I would have learned more lifts to do at home; one arm stuff, jefferson lifts, all the leg variations, maybe power snatches.
5. Even in high school, zip over to Dick Notmeyers.

For the newbie?

1. Do the basic workout of 8-6-4 or some variation that works the whole body.
2. Gather the benefits of strength training; don't try to get it all done the first week. Be patient.

Question: You work with Brian Oldfield and John Powell. Can you tell us all their secrets?

Brian's breakthrough year came after he got serious with Dave Davis and actually lifted for more than a few weeks. He simply did Power Cleans followed by Jerks off the Rack. He did a single heavy pyramid of both exercises, two days a week.

He told me in Ohio that his "Best" training program was doing rack lifts of 15 reps of partial front squats, partial pulls and partial presses (short top end movements only) for about five heavy sets twice a week. "That's all you need to throw far."

He was a real fan of sprinting and sprinting on your toes. He told me the same thing, many, many times, Fred, that plyos are BS. Now, I have to agree with him: if you are a thrower or O lifter...what the hell are you doing leaping off boxes?

He also introduced shot throws, too. He started every workout with underhand throws, overhead throws, one arm throws, over the shoulder throws and tricks with the 16 pound shot. You could call this "upper body plyos" or you could call it "throwing," depending on your audience, I guess.

The other great Oldfield insight is overweight throwing. This "revolutionized" my coaching, I wish I would have done it sooner. (Actually, I did. The summer after I threw 190, I experimented with a 7 1/2 pound plate. I could really throw it far. When I went back to the disc after three weeks I tossed my lifetime best and lifetime goal in a good wind. Since this worked so well...of course, I stopped doing it)

At the John Powell Discus Camp in Granville, Ohio, we give everyone a "powerball" a handled medicine ball. All week long, the athletes relearn to throw from the ground up. After doing this, my athletes return to Utah and then throw well beyond their best. This, along with Overhead Squats, is the reason we were able to get Paul Northway to throw 214'9" in high school. Brian learned this from Highland Games' events, then applied it to his rotational throw.

Again, you could call some of these drills "plyos," it all depends on your audience.

The great insights of Brian:

1. Lift twice a week, but do full body, explosive, heavy stuff
2. Train with overweight implements
3. Take your minerals
4. Sprint training or hills is very important
5. Become a true student of your event and try to think through every single aspect of what you do
6. Discover what foods you are allergic to
7. Complicate the movement with drills to simplify it in the ring
8. Enjoy yourself...have some fun!

I think the reason people think that Brian, John Powell, and just about every other quality thrower or lifter "hide" their training is that, usually, it is so damn simple.

John let me look at his training diaries and I was shocked to see that he did run an 880 (800 meters) before each practice and recorded the splits for each lap. He then did situps, dips and pull ups. And recorded his numbers. He did clean grip snatches, he calls them "push presses," with 135 for sets of five, then did a very simple three day a week program.

Then, he worked on the disc. If he got bored, he did drills, if he found a problem, he spent a lot of time thinking about it and fixing it. He hung around quality people who could help him fix his lifts and throws.

So, some guy comes up in a meet and asks Brian: "how do you train?"

Brian says: "power cleans, jerks off the rack, sprints, and I throw three days a week."

Guy wants to hear: I microperiodize the loads, blah blah blah yadda yadda yadda. Or he wants to hear that Brian does exactly what the guy does THIS week! John told me that nobody every believes the good guys.

Everyone thinks they have a "secret." Then, of course, this guy walks

away and says to his buddies: drugs.

It is really simple stuff. My great throwers are good at power snatches and overhead squats. They throw about 15 to 20 full throws a day. They run hills twice a week. So, I go to a clinic, show how I teach the disc, give the coaches every detail of our training.

Paul throws 214: coaches claim he is on drugs.

It is not that Brian gives out conflicting advice, it is that he is also summarizing probably thirty years of training. Did you ever reverse curl?

Yes...coach now has his 9th graders reverse curling, but, truly, the question was flawed.

The great ones do the simplest programs. I just interviewed Dick Smith, Lee James' coach. It is the mind of the athlete that makes the difference and the ability to keep from overtraining that leads to greatness. The great ones can "turn it on."

If you go to discus camp, not only will you meet Tiffini, you can also talk for hours with John and Brian. You will be largely disappointed if you think that you will learn the "real" secrets behind doors. The worst thrower at camp has all the tools for greatness after the very first session.

Like Jesus told the Young Man in Mark: "Now, go and do it!"

People hate that kind of advice: you know the answer, now follow the path you KNOW is the right one."

And...

Question: What is the longest post you ever had at the Old School Site...Sometimes, you seem to ramble on forever!

Another "expert" showed up at "Old School"...disrupted things for a while and just shot down everyone...someone asked me about "internet experts."

I can't agree more with your statement. Where all this flaming nonsense comes from in the first place mystifies me. When I first posted at this site, I added "Please don't flame" because the basics work and many people want some pseudo-science to bail them out. If I posted Horoscope training systems, many people would fall over themselves trying to train based on their birth sign. Of course, I don't believe in horoscopes, I'm a Virgo and we are skeptical. In discus throwing, there is a guy named John Powell, former police officer, who spends a lot of time training young throwers. He has "never inhaled" and he is the straightest of the straight. Yet, some other guys make fun of him because of his values. I don't get it.

What bothers me most about the people taking pot shots is simply this: "What have you done?" Have you ever squatted so much so that you had to time the bar movements to get the lift? Have you ever been crushed by a

bar, yet made the lift? Have you a trophy? A medal? A state record? The answer to the critics is simple: Compete. Get out of the comfy confines of your home gym where everybody says "You're huge" and step on a platform. Bodybuilders who compete have my respect. I couldn't bear standing with really next to nothing having people critique every flaw I was born with or failed to develop.

Competitive powerlifters, my hat is off to you. The bar just stays on the floor unless you pick it up. It is a simple sport.

These are good questions. First, some background: in the 1970's, I was a high protein fanatic, weighed 218 in 1979 and threw the discus 190'6" for Utah State. Everybody thought I weighed about 195, because I was lean. I then got some advice (what the hell was I thinking) to go to the High Carb lifestyle. This is the basic grazing method of Americans, high in grains, corn, and milk.

Well, my weight increased up to a high of 262. Yes, my squat went up, but my cholesterol was awful, my waistline was as high as 42 measured. It may have been higher, after a while you don't check.

My wife, Tiffini, also grazed with me and got her weight up. The harder she trained, the less she got out of it. So, she comes home about 16 months ago and decides to do "Atkins" because this girl at work does this diet and loses. I think it is total BS, but lesson number one of successful marriage: support your wife in all body related activities.

Her mom gets in her grill and says: "It is all water." Well, my wife has lost forty pounds of water, she looks better than the day we got married (she was 19, 30 now) and her tubby husband?

Before "Meat, leaves and berries," I lifted 3 to 5 days a week. I used fairly complex lifting programs, but made my best gains on one lift a day.

For example:

Monday: Power Snatch for Fives, immediately followed by 8 explosive short movements with 30% of the bar weight. **Tuesday:** Squat, heavy, followed immediately by some kind of jump **Wednesday:** Stiff leg deadlifts, or nothing **Thursday:** Power Clean **Friday:** Off **Saturday:** Total: Snatch and Clean and Jerk I used this program to snatch 314 and clean and jerk 385, cleaned 402, but missed jerk.

I also used the Big 21 program, which I think I may have already posted, but it was three days a week, clean and press, snatch, clean and jerk for 3 progressively heavier sets of five, followed by six progressively heavier singles. I also ran hills on Tuesday and Thursday, threw the disc up to seven days a week, supplemented the hell out of my diet, and couldn't match my college throws. I lived in the 180's.

After starting this diet, I find that I just don't need much lifting. At age 42,

(this is a year ago) I am trying to get my weight around 206 (the 94 Kilo class) and just keep improving meet to meet. I snatched 231 last week (boneheaded a 253 behind me) and power cleaned and Jerked 308. These were easy lifts in a meet, but I hadn't lifted in a meet since 1992. I wanted to go 6 for 6, but I went 5 for 6. The last time I weighed in a meet, my belly stretched my singlet, this time, I couldn't find a belt to fit. My waist line, on waking this morning was 33 and a half.

My training now? Well, it absolutely varies. I know the techniques, so I lift two to four times a week. I try to only do a movement once a week, for example, I may warm up with overhead (or squat snatches) then really push front squats for 8's, then not do them for a week. Why? I have found that I just don't need the volume like I used to? If I get the job done, increasing my lifts each meet, looking better, why kill myself?

Here are a few insights from years of sports:

The Body is One Piece (See all my posts)

Little and Often over the long haul.

The key question: what is the least I can do?

Least I can do? It is a concept I learned from our old national hammer coach. Basically, in the Fall, after not lifting for two months, how far can I throw. Pretty far. In a weakened state, the disc still flies. Test yourself in the weight room. Were the lifts 10% of your best? (If you squat 600, did you struggle with 60?) NO, of course not!

IN two weeks, maybe three, your strength levels will be very close to last year's bests. Where last year, it took all season to get that 300 pound clean, two weeks of training has you at 290.

This is the concept: Once you get to a certain level, what is the least you can do to return? Now, what needs to be "tweaked" to get you ahead of the old level? This is the joy of training, using your head to make you strong.

One little mistake: when I state that the harder my wife worked, the littler she got, well, the aerobic dance fairies attacked me.

She got, ahem, "not littler." I pray she never sees this. It would be "bad."

Although I ultimately benched 405 for a single, at that powerlifting meet I

only got my opener with 297, then just blew the next two. That pause thing just killed me. A week later, I snatched 285 and clean and jerked 365, which is interesting, because most people tend to bench more than they can put overhead. I squatted deep and did a 465 (it was a kilo number, so I might not be exact.)

Yes, I believe the quick lifts will help the squat and deadlift, but I think doing some serious military presses would help the bench more. As I have found out, a lot of powerlifters today use serious bench shirts and wraps, fill their chest really high, sneak their hips right next to their shoulders and have a range of motion of about three inches. And that is all fine, that is the sport. But for a general trainer, I think some of the techniques of top end powerlifters would not be helpful, maybe counterproductive.

On the 405 bench, done in two different settings, my friend, John Price spotted and they were done without a pause. We had been doing this bench program of high reps with heavy loads, sets of ten up to 315 (and more, for John Price, b***ard,) and we decided to max.

One thing: please don't think I am an expert. I love discus and olympic lifting and hunter-gatherer eating. I hope I haven't come across as a "guru" or anything along those lines. I just love talking about this stuff.

Question: Do I need lifting boots?

The basic answer is simple: if you use the o lifts as a supplement and only "power" the bar up and don't catch it in the deep position, no, they have no value. It only helps when you take the bar to the deep squat.

Now, this is also relative. I can snatch a light weight deep with bare feet. In fact, before meets, I spend one or two workouts a week working on my deep position with flat shoes. It teaches me to run to save lifts and, I think, works some flexibility.

A few years ago, Dave Turner noticed that I kept missing heavy snatches, although I was pulling well. He recommended an additional heel on my heeled boots. Well, I was using these shitty Nike shoes with a soft heel. Weighing 250 and snatching 250 equals 500. Well, these shoes would sponge with heavier weights, eliminating the heel. The extra heel was a miracle, I added about 20 pounds to my training hall snatch and nailed a 314 at the next meet in the snatch.

So, do you need them?

Here is a post I sent a few weeks ago with some other ideas about the bottom position. Maybe you can decide after you read this:

First, I want you to take a light bar and do some simple overhead squats. Does the problem happen? Now, stand on a small plate or board. Increase the height two or three times. Does adding more heel help?

Generally, this solves the whole problem. Even though you may be stable with a light weight as you get heavier, you get pushed down and your body compensates by doing odd stuff. I can rock bottom snatch 225 all day long in tennis shoes and never have to step forward or twist to save it. Put 30 more pounds and I feel like I am lifting on the deck of a ship. That's why we wear heeled boots. Go to a shoe maker and ask to get your heel built up. Don't go crazy or anything, just a quarter inch can help, and a half inch can be night and day. Second, try this exercise: squatting behind the neck presses. Bar on back, really light bar, squat to rock bottom. Now, do behind neck presses. If your knees come in now, it is shoulder or back flexibility. How do you improve this? This exercise. You will hate me at first, but appreciate it later.

Third, Dick Notmeyer used to have me get into the deep snatch position with 135 on the bar. Then, he would push the bar down. My job was to hold the position and spread my knees wider. Then, still pushing, he would gently, and please do it gently, twist the bar a little. Right side forward, left back, then left side forward, right back. Then, I would stand up and realize how tight the groin muscles are and how they effect bottom position. Three ideas to try.

Finally, lifting boots are cool. Get low cut ones and amaze your friends.

Question: What are some throwing ideas?

Kit, you are certainly using the right methods from the track and field world. My single bit of advice would be to talk and/or work with a shot putter for a few sessions. Lots of really strong guys try their paws at the stone put and try to "jump shot," as in basketball, the stones. Somewhere, the thrower needs to "Lift-turn-punch" the stone. It is the turn part that gives the distance.

In discus throwing, we call it the X position. Do me a favor and try this sometime: kneel on both knees and throw a shot/stone with both hands from the chest. (Like a bench) Note the distance. (and put something under your knees) Next, put it in your throwing hand, on your knees and throw. Why the huge increase in distance? This twist is the secret to the disc, shot and javelin.

From space looking down, your hip line and, as you twist, your shoulder line, make an "X." Here is the insight of all this writing: it doesn't have to be

a very big X, something most people miss. They try to get more torque by bending their knees, but the hip line and shoulder lines form a = if you do it wrong. Or, they crank it really hard, the shoulders "stretch reflex" immediately, so when you need the X, it looks like =, again.

These kneeling throws can really help your putting by teaching you the progression of "turn- punch." Very successful Highland Games throwers are often former disc/shot guys who are may not be the strongest competitor but win because they are using their whole bodies and not "jump shooting" the stone.

I realize you may already know this, but it is the basic stuff that kills most people at Highland Games. Gym rats on roids show up and I kick their butts because they try to kill the weight in the various weight/hammer tosses. It's only "25 pounds" they say, not realizing that on a chain, whipped around your head, physics kicks in and ...

Your training looks good. Throwing overweight implements has been proved time and again to improve throwing. (It is simple logic: if I throw a five pound discus 160 feet, there is no question I could throw a four pound discus 160 feet. But, if I throw a one pound disc 300 feet, how does that tell me distance for a four pounder?) The East Germans did a huge study on overweight implements and decided that it was as beneficial as lifting. Training the legs for throwing, I discovered is best (now, read this correctly: I said "best" not "ONLY") done by running hills or stairs. If you have a set of steps or a hill near where you throw, toss in a few (a few!) between some of your throws. Again, the East Germans found this was the best method to strengthen the "blocking" movement of the legs. They found that if a thrower gets too strong in the squat that when they hit it with their hips and thighs, other parts of the "chain," ankles, knees or whatever couldn't handle the load and would break down. A friend of mine, the late Stephan Fernholm, used to squat huge amounts then go throw the disc and his ankles would cave and he would foul or miss the finish. So, hill running build the system needed to finish tall. Brian Oldfield was famous for his sprint workouts.

I hope this didn't go on too long, but there are lots of things from discus throwing that carry right into Games competition,
Keep in touch

Question: How are those Deadstop Front Squats coming?

Hey Andy, I was wondering if you were still around. Good to hear from you. A couple of things I have learned:

1. On these deadstops, and I would include a lot of lifts in this area, you have to cut back on volume. I am thinking that six singles would be just

about enough. I start with 255 at 35 or 36 inches off the ground (sawhorses) and take five jumps up...or I do a heavy, back off to 255, another heavy, back off, another heavy and move on to the next exercise.

2. Working on your sticking point like this REALLY pays off faster than you think. I have been doing the front squats three days a week, but with only six reps, I think I'm not going to creep into overtraining. One day, this Friday for example, I just do six singles with 255, but focus on flying up on each rep.

3. My one truly "max" workout each week has to be tempered. I'm trying to bump my max up over a few months. Last week, I did 335 very easily and had plenty more in me, but I stopped. I think missing on this exercise or pushing it too much is wrong. These are done to fix a problem, so practicing missing makes no sense.

They really work. Brooks bottom position lifts are very close to being the same thing, except I start from the slowing point or sticking point.

I am in pretty good shape overall, I was almost zero carbs all week, then a carb up on St. Pat's day: but no beer-I gave it up for Lent. (Scotch isn't beer!) As long as I can do my abs twice a day, lift hard on my workouts, and really tighten my diet, I think I have a chance to do well at our state meet next month.

I think that this exercise is a real gem for any lifter, especially someone who really knows that "this or that" is the problem spot. I will keep you up to date.

Andy's response:

Thanks Dan

So seeing as this is going so well, do you have any plans to use it for other lifts in the future? Say on overhead squats?

A couple years ago when I worked overhead supports for a while, I would start so I had to move the bar at least a foot in order to do the lockout.

Never even heard of an overhead squat at that time, but even a 12" overhead squat with up to 365 really benefitted my back and support strength

Andy

I would only use them for a clear weakness or long term problem. I know this goes against some of the advice I have received about functional isometric contraction, but I like focusing on a problem like a Lasix Laser beam and just eliminating it. For the next month, for example, I need to slowly bring my upper girdle and shoulder flexibility back around for my O lifts.

Dick Smith's idea of having someone watch for your sticking points and then training from that point was the inspiration for this whole last month or so. If you eliminate a sticking point, the rest of your lifts should shoot right up.

So, I won't necessarily go to another lift with this idea. My problem has always been the "buried front squat recovery." If I can fix this, everything else should get better.

Last night, I reread some stuff that Jason Keen discussed after going to a Pavel T workshop. After my conversations with Dick Smith, I have been trying to figure out an "optimum" way of working partials.

Keen noted that Pavel recommended no more than six singles. His base for a workout is "ten:" either 2 sets of five, three sets of three, but with singles, just go around six. It really tied some things together that I have noticed: I was really overtraining on my Deadstop Front Squats! So, last week, I started to back off on the reps and did the Deadstops "basically" five of the seven days with two of the workouts just being with 205.

Last night, I shot right up to 325 with just six singles and was surprised how fresh I was. This is my weakness and I just need to beat it to death. I have a meet in the third week of April and I'm just trying to cure this (once and for all) problem with getting buried in my cleans.

So, I think that I found a balance for these partial movements: doing much more than six seems to really bury me.

Anyone else find the same thing with partials, i.e. you just have to keep the volume down?

First off: I am just a shade over six feet, in fact, in college I was listed at 6'3" in one publication, so I am shrinking at a definable rate. I weigh 210-218. So, 36 inches is actually a couple of inches (two? three?) above my rock bottom position. But, this is where I get stuck. In fact, I could feel a "gear change" there when I first started this short "fix it" program, but now that is gone.

The Deadstops, the bottom position, front (or back) squats are NOT the same as the FIC stuff. I know I mix the two a lot, quoting Dick Smith usually. This is where the confusion showed up in the 1960's, too.

These deadstops are an attempt by the lifter to fix the grinding recoveries from cleans AND save wear and tear on the knees. From my experience, both reasons are true. In fact, Master lifters, or anybody, would be wise to use this method to increase intensity without killing the wheels.

Now, FIC is different. I'm not sure about the big quarter squat or the lockout, but Dick said ALL YOU DO is clear the pins with maximal weight, hold it, drop it and move to the next exercise. Smashing it into the other set of pins was "wrong, wrong, wrong" and would lead to problems.

So, two different things we are discussing here. What you and I are doing is the deadstop or bottom position work. You grind up and lock it out. This is NOT FIC.

This was my confusion, too. It lead me to overtrain in 1991 and 1992. I mixed two programs and just burned up. Now, I literally just do those six singles, toss in a couple of things for good luck and walk out. But, my front

squat is shooting up off the pins now.

Of course, the meets are where the rubber meets the road and we will find out how it all works.

Question: Is there a way to combine dieting and Olympic Lifting for a fat loss program?

Back in the dark ages, there was a little magazine called "Florida Weightlifting News" and they took Bob Gadjia's PHA bodybuilding system and put it into an O lift workout. One quick point, the military press was still part of the Oly Three, so they had a lot more options in training. If you decide to do PHA with the O lifts, expect your heart rate to go through the roof!

Just doing J.V.'s combo of power cleans and front squats and push jerks for reps of five each will burn something off your body.

I guess you could map out the lifts you know, then arrange your bars and stuff about so you could go from one to the other...

Maybe:

1. Power Snatch 2. Overhead Squat (same bar and weight) 3. Clean deadlift and shrug (another loaded bar) 4. Some ab thing Sets of three or five of everything then repeat, or if you have enough equipment, or want to vary: 5. Power Clean 6. Push Jerk/Regular Jerk 7. Front Squat (Same bar and Weight) 8. Some ab thing. Sets of three or five of everything... I'm just guessing, but you would possibly not need much additional running, jogging or step aerobics. I'm no MLL, although I do play him on television, but I think this combo would get you in condition. I must say this: if you diet too strictly, you could really suffer from "rabbit starvation" training the O lifts PHA style. Be sure you are getting your fats in your diet and try to lose the fat through carb depletion and fat burning training...not through starvation and overtraining. Losing fat is not always the same as losing weight.

Question: Don't be afraid...what I learned in 2001!

It has been a bit of an epiphany as of late, in the sense of the term as used by James Joyce. My great insight of 2001 revolves around the "approach" to training.

I have trained under two great Masters in the discus: Ralph Maughan and John Powell. Coach Maughan believed in a simple formula:

1. Throw three to four times a week
2. Lift three times a week "most of the time," focusing on the clean, the power curl, the quarter squat and the push jerk/press.
3. Do hills/stairs/sprints twice a week..."most of the time" During the track season, you would back off the lifting and speedwork and focus on the meets.
- 4) The big key: for four years. By the time your senior season rolled around, you would gather in the benefits of the huge base of good and bad workouts...over four years...and blossom into being a good thrower.

You throw in training like you throw in meets...enter from the back, full turn, stay in the ring, stay in the sector, walk out the back...repeat. You gather improvements by never working over your limit, but by consistently reaping the small rewards.

John Powell's approach (for the most part very similar in terms of gathering benefits) also includes a concept that to simplify things, make it more complex. To facilitate the right foot turn, invent a drill (the pivot drill) that demands that you turn-turn-turn that foot until it becomes a thoughtless reaction to the throw. Not accelerating...invent a drill, the "flying South African," that has you do a wind sprint into a turn and let it go! Fall on your face a few times, then reap the benefits.

Then, I got Tommy Kono's book and his zeal for "Quality Training." He insists, page after page, on perfect reps, perfect form. Everything should be contest-like in training, in fact, he emphasizes many times that you should practice with a hook grip or without a belt to make the lifts more of a challenge. Over time, with patience, you will learn to do it right.

Tommy Kono had an ally in Joe Mills. He drilled his lifters with repeat singles in the full, classic lifts. "Meet-like" training led to the building of a lifting machine.

But then, there is the Jim Schmitz approach. Struggling with part of your lift? Well, then, make it more complex. Not finishing pulls? Do a set of "one power snatch, followed by one hang power snatch, followed by one hang squat snatch, followed by one squat snatch from the floor. Toss in an overhead squat on those power snatches, too."

It occurred to me this year that Maughan, Powell, Kono, Mills and Schmitz are ALL right! I am amazed that I once dumped snatch and clean pulls because they "didn't work for me." They don't work for me ALL the time!

Yet, now, I do them exclusively one workout a week. How do I warm up for them? Well, I do these extension squat snatches with a light bar, then do some overheads then, toss in a couple of extra jump snatches...

The secret to success is listening to all five of these voices. As a football coach, you quickly master whole-part-whole-part-whole learning. Having 22 people stand around while you coach a QB on how to take a snap is a waste of everyone's time. Yet, to prepare for the game, you must be "game-like" on the field.

This year's insight: Coach Maughan was right...get the workouts in, regular and habitual, some great, some bad, but get them in, year after year. (Show up!)

John Powell is right: invent a drill that repeats, repeats, repeats a motion or action until it is automatic. Make a simple action simple but inventing a drill that makes it complex...then remove the complex parts...it becomes simple again.

Tommy Kono is absolutely right...quality training is the key. You compete like you train. Yet, he also really pushes the snatch and clean pull? Why??? You make a complex action simple, but working the parts, then the...

Joe Mills was right...you build yourself by repeating what you are competing! Drill-drill-drill until it is automatic...then let's see what happens!

Jim Schmitz is right...take that problem apart and add some extra moves and force yourself to fix it.

My great insight: there is a time and place for pure training...the core only. If a problem arises, take a week, two weeks, three weeks aside and attack it with every possible combination of drills and ideas until this weakness becomes a strength.

Over time, an emphasis on Quality Training will pay huge dividends.

Part II

NUTRITION:

1. Meat, Leaves and Berries (MLB)...read it at danjohn.org/diet.html
2. Mg and Fish Oil Caps for me and my health

3. Drink your water

HEALTH

If you low carb, you have to sleep more. It works, really.

DISCUS

1. Lock the tricep out with the disc on your right cheek
2. Pick up the right foot early...grind the left
3. Grind the right FOREVER and stay long
4. BOOM! Best throw of your life, age 43

SNATCH

1. NO, no, no...really arch your back and really suck in one big breath
2. Curl your wrists after the bar passes your knees, then whip your wrists over head after extension/jump
3. Sit between your legs, Monkey Boy Dan John, means "you, too," when you dive into the Overhead Squat position. Your chest "rests" on your thighs image helps! (Maybe just me)

CLEAN

Did you pay attention to the above? Whip your elbows rather than your wrists. If you accelerate in the pull, you NEVER miss the recovery (front squat). If you 'hit' the weight, rather than accelerate (poetry), you get crushed

JERK

Bring your feet together in the frog stance when you start missing the right flow.

TRAINING

Get in the gym. Make your lifts. Think about each rep, "HMMM, could I have done it better." If yes, fix next rep.

GRIP TRAINING

Underrated. Farmers Walks with Rosenberg Bars: Answer to all questions.

Finally, thanks to all my lifting friends on the 'net. I learned far more from you than you will ever learn from me. Guys like Mike Rosenberg have done a ton for me by teaching me stuff I could never have been exposed to in the Artic Climate of Utah. Shaf, Andy, Andy, all the other Mikes, Gary, JV, Dillon, MLL, Dustin, Greg and the throwing crews: Thank YOU! Lest we forget...Jeff A for teaching me to throw the big weights right this year!

Question: Any ideas for in-season football lifting?

1. The "heavy" day should be the day after a game...actually, right after a game works well, too, especially for underclassmen who play on the day before the Varsity, having them train on the Friday, for example, helps a lot.
2. The "other" day should be stuff that doesn't take a lot of nerve. Don't Snatch and Clean and Jerk, so to speak. Box Squats, Straight Leg Deadlifts, some dumbbell work and a few machines would work well, but don't have the athlete tax his nervous system.
3. Don't be surprised if he gets really stronger, maintains, or drops way down. Any reaction to the training program is normal. We used to find a lot of kids improved their cleans a lot in the football season. My idea then was that they were finally cleaning once a week with supervision. Now, I have another idea: sled work, driving the legs, sprints and the games were all training the system to clean better. Benching and squatting tend to drop, but that seems normal vis-a-vis the work load of football.
4. Don't be afraid to cut the volume, but strive to keep the intensity up. 5 x 5 just isn't going to work, but 2 x 5 would be fine. Pyramids would be 2-2-1, that kind of thing.
5. Watch the acne. If he starts breaking out, getting colds, that kind of thing...he is really overtraining. HS kids can handle a ton of volume, then seem to crash.

The Rosenberg Protocol

Formerly known as the "Lincoln Program"

Thanks to MLL for putting this together:

Day One

Warm Up

Overhead Squats A few Sets of Three

High Pull Cleans

High Pull Snatches

Three sets of Three with weights 5% under best of the lifts.(Do three sets of three clean high pulls followed by three sets of three snatch high pulls from the floor. The emphasis here is on perfect form. Use a weight 5% or UNDER your best clean or snatch.

Concentrate on the shrug at the end of the pull.

Back Squat: You won't do more than 20 reps total including warm up. Do triples then doubles as the weights get heavier. Your objective is to do one, two or three sets of max doubles. Usually one or two--on those rare occasions when you feel really strong you can do three sets. These sets should be just under your limit. You shouldn't have to REALLY worry about whether you make them.

Military Press ...3 sets of three

Situps

Day Two

Warm Up

Overhead Squats A few Sets of Three

Clean Style Deadlifts with a weight that allows you to maintain strict form: 3 sets of 3.

Front Squats: You won't do more than 20 reps total including warm up. Do triples then doubles as the weights get heavier. Your objective is to do one, two or three sets of max doubles. Usually one or two--on those rare occasions when you feel really strong you can do three sets. These sets should be just under your limit. You shouldn't have to REALLY worry about whether you make them.

Military Press ...3 Sets of 3

Day Three

Warm Up

Overhead Squats A few Sets of Three

Snatch: With weights from 60-85% depending on how you feel. Twenty singles. Each one perfect. One minute rest in between.

Clean and Jerk: 10 singles 60-85% with one minute rest. All full lifts.

Back Squat: You won't do more than 20 reps total including warm up. Do triples then doubles as the weights get heavier. Your objective is to do one, two or three sets of max doubles. Usually one or two--on those rare occasions when you feel really strong you can do three sets. These sets should be just under your limit. You shouldn't have to REALLY worry about whether you make them.

Do this for three weeks, then take a week off. Don't do anything!

Then, when you come back, achieve new maxes in squat and proceed as before. You probably could also add some weight to your cleans and snatches and all other lifts still keeping the lifts within ranges specified.

Do this for three more weeks and take five days off and then snatch up to max, clean and jerk up to max.

In other words, you do max lifts only once every two months to check things out...

As you relax your way into weightlifting greatness.

The Thirteen Minute Drill

Training with “Fibonacci's Rabbits”*

Be sure to Set the Clock and Time the total workout

Be sure to go from one exercise to the other in each “superset” group. Finish all three sets of eight before moving on to the next group of supersets.

Set the Equipment and Warm Up

Group One

Snatch from the Hang or Romanian Deadlift A set of Eight

Front Squat...with Chains A set of Eight

Repeat both exercises for Three Sets of Eight.

Group Two

Military Press A set of Eight

Deadlift or Variation of Deadlift A set of Eight

Repeat both exercises for Three Sets of Eight.

Group Three

Sidebend to Right A set of Eight

Sidebend to Left A set of Eight

Repeat both exercises for Three Sets of Eight.

Group Four

One Arm Press, standing, with Right A set of Eight

One Arm Press, standing, with Left A set of Eight
Repeat both exercises for Three Sets of Eight.

Group Five

Curls, any variation A set of Eight

Tricep Work, any variation A set of Eight
Repeat both exercises for Three Sets of Eight.

Quickly record total time (all five groups) after last set of last exercise. Try to beat it next time. When you get to 13 minutes for the whole workout, add weight to each exercise next time.

Recover

*The original problem that Fibonacci investigated (in the year 1202) was about how fast rabbits could breed in ideal circumstances.

Suppose a newly-born pair of rabbits, one male, one female, are put in a field. Rabbits are able to mate at the age of one month so that at the end of its second month a female can produce another pair of rabbits. Suppose that our rabbits never die and that the female always produces one new pair (one male, one female) every month from the second month on. The puzzle that Fibonacci posed was...

How many pairs will there be in one year?

At the end of the first month, they mate, but there is still one only 1 pair. At the end of the second month the female produces a new pair, so now there are 2 pairs of rabbits in the field. At the end of the third month, the original female produces a second pair, making 3 pairs in all in the field. At the end of the fourth month, the original female has produced yet another new pair, the female born two months ago produces her first pair also, making 5 pairs.

So, these numbers are: 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21, 34, 55..."

Training for the Busy Working Guy

A couple of principles that I follow might help the "thinking process" of someone who works a normal job, has a social life, and still wants to train.

First, embrace the concept of "Pareto's Law." This Italian economist discovered the "80-20 Rule": that is, 80 percent of your results comes from 20 percent of what you do. In a football program, you will find that 20 percent of your athletes produce 80 percent of the yards, the tackles and the points. In training, 20 percent of your program will get you to that 80 percent mark. That other 80, of course, gets you ever closer to that elusive moment when you produce a "100 percent effort." That could mean one's lifetime best lift, throw, or physical condition.

I have recommend for years that athletes attend to this 20 percent as early as they can in the athletic career. It can be summarized in a simple question: if, for some reason, you could only train 45 minutes a week (three sessions of fifteen minutes), what would you do? The answer to this question, if honestly addressed, is the key to a busy working guy's training. Would you warmup? Do yoga? Well, then, what? As a discus thrower, I answered this question with a couple sets of overhead or front squats, then half-turn drills with a powerball into a wall. I could easily hold "80 percent" on that schedule.

So, what are your goals? If you are an O lifter, what would you do in those 45 minutes? I might alternate snatches and clean and jerks through those 15 minute workouts. What about this or that or this: yes, they are important...but I only have a few minutes!

So, the working guy has to take the long-term goal and run it into the "Prison Riddle," the 45 minute question first. What ever answer arises...is the beginning point of the solution to the quandary of being a full-time person and a full-time athlete.

Second, take a touch of insight from the book, Dinosaur Training. On page 113, Brooks notes an old IronMan "Roundtable" where John Wooten describes his training:

"I started out on a strength routine, really piling on the poundage in the following exercises:

1. Two hands deadlift, favorite exercise of Goerner
2. Walk with weight, favorite exercise of Milo of Crotona
3. Carry bar in dead lift position, favorite exercise of Arthur Giroux
4. Bent Presses, favorite exercise of Saxon
5. Reverse Continental and jerk from behind neck, favorite exercise of Saxon."

Well, there is a great insight here: what is the favorite lift of the "heroes and heroines" of your sport? Westside guys should look at Box Squats, O lifters who like Bulgarian training, should think about Front Squats, fans of Russian training should look to squats, power cleans and heavy spinal erector work.

I have been collecting "gems" of lifting and recording them in a little red notebook since 1975. Every time I hear a point that just "rings true," I add it to this book. I have found through the years that one exercise keeps showing up as a "favorite lift:" the power clean. John Terpak, George Woods, many Soviets, lots of American lifters and throwers have labeled the power clean as "key" to athletic success. Certainly, take a little bit of this advice, no matter how busy, and toss power cleans into your program.

Read what the greats do, and follow their advice. Not blindly, of course, but when enough people argue for this or that as the key to success, listen. I'm a contrarian at heart, I like to go the opposite direction of the crowd at times, but, trust me, adding the O lifts, one hand lifts, overhead work or strongman moves is as contrarian as anyone can get in the last two decades.

Finally, Andy's question dealt with an interesting idea*what lifts give the most bang for the buck?

My short list:

Clean and Press: if all you did was Clean and Press, you could be awesome

Front Squat: flexible, solid and strong

Power Snatch and Overhead Squat Combo: Tony Nielson, a young man I coached for a few years, was the smallest football player on the field, yet I watched him run for 200+ yards in several games. His reason: this combo. Easy to learn, difficult to master, excellent long term benefits.

Dragging a sled, pushing a car or hill sprints:shoot me, but I believe these are superior to squats for most athletes.

Power Clean:'nuff said

Farmer Walk:a year ago, I would have laughed at these*now, I don't laugh

One arm lift of some kind:they work, they are simple to learn, they work

Total equipment needs: bar, weights; a revolving Olympic dumbbell is nice, a pair of Mike Rosenberg's thick dumbbells are nice; all you need is a bar and weights.

Option One: Saturday and Sunday Superstar

This kind of program is designed for the person who has some time on the weekends and not much the rest of the week:

Saturday

Lift Day

Power Snatch

Power Clean

Front Squat

One arm lifts (Clean and Press to max each hand)

Whatever reps and sets you like; I like 3 x 3 or 2 x 5 or Singles (after warm ups, these are the "meat" sets)

Sunday

Strongman or Highland Games or Whatever you like Day

Power Clean and Press (Singles up to a Max)
Sled dragging, car pushing, hill sprints
Anything else you would like to do!!!
Farmers Walk (Death March Style)

One other day a week (Wednesday???)

One lift: either Power Clean and Press, Power Snatch and Overhead Squat (might be best of the lot), Front Squat, Power Clean Some kind of carry: Farmers Walk, maybe that "Dead lift carry" idea, sandbags.

That's it. Now, O lifters would do the classic lifts on perhaps Saturday, and the power moves and squats on Sunday, with the "other" workout being an 80 percent (or less) total day. Highland Gamers would add an event or two on the back end of each day, although I would keep the walks and the dragging stuff.

Option Two:

Abbreviated Training Clusters:

Week One

Day One
Power Snatch
Front Squat
One arm Clean and Press
Farmer Walk

Day Two

Power Clean
Power Clean and Press
Overhead Squat
Sled Dragging, Car Pushing or Hill Sprints
Week Two

Day One

Power Clean and Press
Power Snatch and Overhead Squat
Front Squat

Day Two

One arm lifts (Presses, Snatches, Swings, deadlifts, whatever...have fun!)
Sled drag, car push, hill sprints

Farmers Walk

HTML Attachment
The 2001 Version of the Transformation Program!

Ch-ch-ch-changes!

Okay, I can't help myself...I tweaked it a little again. Day three was a failure, this seems to work better!

My recent experiences convince me that I thrive on:

Three Days a Week Training Deadstop Front Squats Measuring rest periods One arm lifts
Overhead Squats
So...I adapted my favorite program to fill my new needs.

Day One:

Start with a little Warm Up

Power Clean & Press: One power clean and eight presses.

3 sets of 8 with one minute rest between sets. If there is a single key to the program, it is the one minute rest period. By strictly monitoring the rest period, and obviously keeping track of the weight, one can track progress. At the end of each set of 8 presses, do multiple "pressouts."

Pressouts

At the end of every set of jerks, whether from the floor or from the racks, finish the last rep with short two-three inch "elbow bends" called pressouts. Do anywhere from three to eight repetitions. These build support strength throughout the body, especially evident in the serratus muscles covering the rib cage. (From the "Pacifica Barbell Club Program.")

Power Curls: 3 sets of 8 with one minute rest between sets. Using a curl grip, slide the weight to just above the knees and "curl-clean" the bar. Let it come down under control to about "sock" height, then "curl-clean" the bar again. So, the first rep from the floor, each additional rep from the "Romanian Deadlift" position. (Basically, push the butt back and keep the shins upright and really feel the hamstrings stretch as you lower the bar to about three inches below the knee.) Again, get all eight reps in, don't change the weights, and monitor the rest period.

Go Home and Recover

Day Two: (a day or so later, perhaps Wednesday)

Start with a little Warm Up

Power Clean and Front Squats. One power clean and five front squats. After the last rep, jerk the weight.

Once again, 3 sets of 5 with one minute rest. Stay "tall" in the front squats and keep your elbows high. Go hard on this. Occasionally, I will substitute my "Tabata" front squats of twenty seconds of front squats, rest ten, repeat for a total of four minutes. (A killer conditioner, my max is 95 pounds on this, still doing reps in the last thirty seconds. I guess, I could go heavier, but it just kills me.)

Overhead Squats: 3 sets of 8 with one minute rest. Using the wide snatch grip, lock the elbows with the weight overhead and squat down. Athletes who do this exercise well not only develop flexibility, balance and leg strength, but an incredibly strong lower back. Overhead squats make you very strong.
Go Home and Recover

Day Three (perhaps Friday or Saturday)

Start with a little Warm Up

Deadstop Front Squats: Up to a heavy (or max single) Total of only six singles.
Snatch Grip Deadlifts: Three sets of three, changing the weights each set. I use my frog leg stance on this and really strive to keep my butt down. One arm snatches: One hand snatches are simple: straddle the weight on the floor, grab with one hand, put the other on the knee (right hand, right knee; left hand, left knee), and just keep the weight close as you leap and snap it overhead. I will do them in this series: Right Arm: Set of five. Rest one minute.
Left Arm: Set of five. Rest one minute.
Right Arm: Set of five. Rest one minute.
Left Arm: Set of five. Rest one minute.
Right Arm: Set of five. Rest one minute.
Left Arm: Set of five. Rest one minute.
Go Home and Recover

The Irridation Concept

Recently, I received a number of e-mails asking me about a concept called "irridation." It is simply the wonderful method that the body employs to deal with tension. When one muscle is being asked to work, the surrounding muscles begin to tense up, making the original muscle actually work harder/better. If you get into an arm wrestling match at a party and wrap your legs around the table and squeeze, you discover more strength than if you just let the legs float around.

The more muscles you involve in a lift, the faster you will meet your fitness goals. (Fitness is the ability to do a task, health is the proper regulation of the body's organs; don't mix the two!)

The best lifts? Here is a list:
The Snatch
The Overhead Squat
Clean and Press and Clean and Jerk
One armed presses, snatches, and jerks
Shhh. It is the secret to athletic success!

The Snatch

My vote for the king of lifts.

Overhead Squat: Bottom Position

The World's Most Underrated Lift

**The proof is in the "putting," or weight throwing, in this case.
Irridation shows itself on the athletic field not in the MIRROR!**

The Overhead Squat Article

Your author, Dan John, at 43

Okay, there are two reasons I remember May 21, 1988. The first, in case my wife is reading this, is that we celebrated our one-week wedding anniversary on this day. The second relates to the single greatest athletic learning experience of my career.

Coach Ralph Maughan of Utah State University was retiring as head track coach. For the record, he had made the Olympics as a hammer thrower, played professional football with the Detroit Lions, and won a Purple Heart at the Battle of the Bulge in World War II. I know, I know, other than that, what has he done? Well, ...

After five decades of coaching at Utah State, Coach Maughan was retiring. His family organized a very fitting tribute: a surprise track meet. Utah State had developed champions in the hurdles, 800 meters, pole vault, shot put, and hammer but the program was noted, worldwide, for discus throwing. At

this tribute meet, alumni from all over the United States and Canada returned. The discus throw had former world record holders, national collegiate champs, Olympians from two nations, and hosts of league champs. Every alumnus had reached at least 180 feet/55 meters in the discus and the roll call neared two dozen.

Standing around between throws, we had all decided to do shot, disc and hammer no matter what the age on the driver's license said, I had a chance to talk with half of century of throwing excellence. It was a chance to dispel myths and respond to rumors. Glenn Passey, who set the national record at 190'9", weighing only 174 pounds, had attained mythological status among the others. The story that had been going around is that he never lifted weights.

"Is that true?" "Well," Glenn answered, "I didn't lift weights like you guys do now. I just did the Olympic Lifts all winter, you know, Clean and Press, Snatch, and Jerk. In the summers, I threw hay up into lofts for eight hours a day." The Olympic Lifts all winter and hay tossing (Dino-style if you wish) sounds like a perfect training program for a thrower.

Other athletes talked about the importance of quarter squats (squats in a rack doing just the top portion of the lift), putting weights over head "any way you want, doesn't matter, just do 'em," and the importance of staying away from more than three sessions in the weight room a week. One of the "young" guys, Chris Hatch, a 200 foot hammer thrower and 60 foot shot putter but still in his twenties, and I discussed lifting.

"I would only do one exercise, if I could do it all over again," Chris told me. "Really? Which one?" "Overhead Squats." I thought he was joking. Sure, I had done a few and I thought they never really amounted to anything. "This coach in California won't let his guys throw until they can do fifteen reps with bodyweight." What? Fifteen? "It makes you one piece, an animal."

Monday found me in the weight room. I thought I would just "toss" in a few overheads, just to see what he was talking about. I knew I had to do a few warm ups, so I tossed a 45 on each side of the bar. I thought I would knock off a quick ten or so. I went to the rack, stepped back and let my hands slide out to the inside collars (at just over six feet tall, this is my usual snatch grip), then push jerked the weight up to arms length. Locking my elbows and really trying to pull the bar apart while holding it straight over my head, I sank between my knees, dropped to rock bottom and came back up.

I thought: "Huh? Most not be warmed up enough." Rep two. "Woah." Rep

three. Aren't my legs stronger than this? What I was discovering was that the overhead squat requires total concentration, total lockout and perfect positions. There is no cheating; one can't squirm, roll the knees or hips, or let other body parts help kick in. It builds "Dad Strength."

When my friends and I used to lift the old six foot bar with cement filled weights, we all thought we were pretty strong. Then, Dad would ask us to help him move a car engine or open a rusted jar of nuts and bolts, or put the ping pong table up on a rack for storage. Yes, I was the strongest kid in the four-house area, but every Dad had that scary kind of strength that allows one to pick an engine out of a Pontiac station wagon and carry it to the lawn.

Overhead squats build that kind of strength. For an athlete, it turns your body into "one piece." Unfortunately, for the past few years, misguided athletes have been taught to do upper body one day, lower body another. Or worse, front of the thighs one day and back of the thighs another. One day soon, people will be asked to train the muscles that pull the left thigh in, then rest that overfatigued muscle for the next 21 days. Wait, you're right. It is already happening.

I got five reps and the bar started to move and shake too much for safety. I bent my knees, unlocked my arms, slowed the bar down a little with my upper body and caught the bar on the back of my shoulders using my legs like shock absorbers. I then realized the wisdom of fifteen reps with bodyweight in this exercise. First, you can't fake it. Nobody, NOBODY, just walks in and does this without training hard and steady. The ability to do this standard can only come from hard, steady work. Hard work, although some may deny this, is the number one factor in success in sports and life. Second, the athlete must be balanced in both senses of the word. Certainly, the ability to steady the bar overhead is a balance exercise. Throwers need excellent balance, but so do Highland Games participants, Olympic Lifters, and every other athlete. One needs balance, too, in the sense of the upper body and the lower body need to be able to work in symphony do those fifteen reps. Lots of guys, unfortunately, squat what they bench. You just can't do that with this drill.

Third, the athlete who completes this task will have strong, flexible legs. You can send your athletes to all the yoga classes in the world, but the overhead squat develops athletic flexibility. As for leg strength, that is the only way to get out of the whole in this exercise. You can't lean forward, twist, bounce or cheat in anyway. The bar will come off the top and you will have to start again. Maybe next week.

So, overhead squats became a staple in my athletic diet and coaching method. Pretty soon, other coaches began asking questions. “How can that skinny sophomore (Paul Northway weighed 155) throw the discus 182 feet?” I wanted to answer: “Brilliant coaching,” but Paul chimed in “overhead squats.” He explained that it “held him together throughout the throw.” Later, he would throw 214 as a senior. **Paul Northway as a Senior, during this workout he dropped ten throws over 190 feet.**

Another young man wanted to be a football player. He had no racks at home and his football coach wouldn’t let him lift free weights at school, I kid you not. So, he would Power Snatch the weight and do an Overhead Squat. Soon, he started rushing for over a hundred yards a game. In the off-season, away from his enlightened coaches who were having them lift five days a week on a bodybuilding program, he did what he called “The Exercise,” a power snatch followed by an overhead squat, usually in sets of five. He just finished his junior college career as the league’s leading rusher. He has been highly recruited and I hope he finds a University that allows him to lift in the school’s facilities rather than having to hide behind closed doors.

So, what did I learn on May 21, 1988? Five decades of champions seemed to agree on a few points regarding the weight room. First, train the whole body. Although lifting fashion tends to come and go, overall the successful throwers used whole body exercises. Cleans, snatches, squats, and many variations of overhead lifts were the fundamental movements of this group of athletes. Second, train, at most, three days a week in the weight room, IF you are a thrower. There may be times and reasons one can spend more time in the gym, but be sure you have a good reason. Universally, this group found that too many days in the weight led to injuries and staleness. Coach Maughan noted that any more than three days a week and the athlete is just fooling around every day in the weight room. If you train hard three days a week, you won’t be sneaking in the other four days. You’ll be recovering. Third, take Chris Hatch’s advice and try the Overhead Squat. You will wonder if you ever lifted before. For a beginner, try the bar for a few sets and make sure there is nothing breakable near the platform.

Your author, Dan John, at 19. If only I knew then...

I had been lifting for eighteen years when I “discovered” the Overhead Squat. It took a few more years to get it right in my training and coaching. The results have been phenomenal. Just when I thought I knew it all in lifting, the Overhead Squat came into my life. That was twelve years ago. Now, I am convinced I know it all.

Except, the other day, I was talking to this guy about one-handed lifts. “ I never do ‘em,” I said. He said: “If I could do it all over again, ...”

The Pacifica BarBell Club Program

The Never Before Published “Pacifica Barbell Club Program”

The attempts to steal this program are legendary. Members of other local clubs would use deceit, conniving, and lying to bring home the secrets of the gym on Moana Way. You may now view it for the first time:

Monday Snatch Clean and Jerk Hang Snatch Pull

Tuesday Front Squats Jerks off rack Behind Neck Press

Wednesday Snatch Clean and Jerk Hang Snatch Pull

Friday Snatch Clean and Jerk Hang Snatch Pull

Saturday Front Squat Jerks off rack Hang Snatch Pull **Tuesdays and Sundays were days of rest.**

When not pointing to a meet . . . When not pointing to a specific meet, we would include many different bodybuilding movements. Included in this were Snatch Deadlifts and Shrugs, Bench Presses, Back Squats, Incline Dumbbell Presses, and arm work.

Three Weeks Before a Meet Three weeks before a lifting meet was time for a “heavy, gutsy week,” to quote Dick. This week involved maximum attempts, lots of lifts, and lots of pain. The Friday session would be the heaviest, often resulting in personal records. Personally, when I followed Dick’s advice and went after it this week, I lifted well in meets.

The “Recycle” A term unused anywhere else in the world, “Recycling” was Dick’s term for the three week period getting ready for the meet. The first week would emphasize triples, the second doubles, and singles in the one or two easy sessions the week of the meet.

Daily Warmup After weighing in, general stretching would begin the day.

Two interesting stretches were shoulder dislocates with the “shoulder stretching machine,” a broomstick, and ankle stretches on the “ankle stretching machine,” a step. Sit ups and hyperextensions followed stretching. After stretching, we used an unloaded bar to practice snatch and warm up the bottom position. Moving up to 95 pounds, then 115 pounds to repeat the movement and get the bottom position ready. With 135 pounds, Dick would push the bar down while the lifter sat in the overhead squat position trying to squeeze the knees wider and wider apart. Now, you’re ready for anything.

Performance of the Lifts One thing Dick was adamant about, perhaps even obsessed about, was the insistence that his lifters never “power” the weight up but always take the lift to the deep position. He felt that power lifts taught the wrong pull and would fail the lifter on maximum attempts.

The Three Keys to Success in the Olympic Lifts Dick felt that there were three keys to success in Olympic Lifting: 1. Leg Strength 2. Pulling Strength 3. Tranquil Mind

Leg Strength Leg strength was increased by doing rock bottom, ass on the heels, upright, elbows high, Front Squats. Dick felt that “you can’t Clean and Jerk it unless you can Front Squat it for a triple.” High repetition Back Squats could supplement leg workouts, but the key is Front Squats.

Pulling Strength Pulling strength was increased by Notmeyer High Pulls. 1. Grab the bar in a snatch grip with straps. 2. Stand upright with bar at crotch. 3. Lean back to “align the shoulders” 4. Dip the bar to the knees 5. Pull it “High and Back to you” **Dick Notmeyer quotes on this exercise:** “In doing pulls, speed is the number one concern. And, pull it high, don’t go down to meet it.” “Twice a week, pull it high from the hang for 5’s and 6’s. And get the elbows high.” “Pull it high and back to you.”

Tranquil Mind Dick Notmeyer believed that a relaxed athlete, a composed athlete, competed better than an overcharged, raging bull. Humor helps, preparation helps, fun helps, packing your gear with you on a plane helps, getting to a meet early helps, anything that makes the athlete able to lift the correct way at the correct time is the key. Limit the number of warmups before going on the platform and know that the weeks of preparation will pay off.

Meet Warm Ups Dick always told me the story of Bob Bednarski warming up for a meet Our warm ups followed the same idea and, with Dave Turner’s help, I was able to find the original Strength and Health article about Barski’s back stage attempts: “Bednarski played it smart.

While Joe Dube took countless warmups, Bob took only a total of 15 lifts including the 7 successes he had on the platform. This means that he took only 8 warm-ups. It might be interesting to the lifter who always leaves his best lifts in the warm-up room to see exactly what lifts Bob took at the Nationals. Here are his lifts including his lifts in competition: Press: (205, 275, 325, 375), 420, 440, 456 $\frac{1}{4}$ Snatch: (205, 255, 295), 325, 340 Clean and Jerk: (325), 425, 486 $\frac{1}{2}$ " Dick's lifters strove for "6 for 6 and all P.R's" on the platform.

Pressouts At the end of every set of jerks, whether from the floor or from the racks, finish the last rep with short two-three inch "elbow bends" called pressouts. Do anywhere from three to eight repetitions. These build support strength throughout the body, especially evident in the serratus muscles covering the rib cage.

Heels on Lifting Shoes Many lifters feel that heels limit pulling power, but Dick always said that a stable bottom position more than made up for the loss of a few pounds in pulling power. One day, Dick showed me a number of lifters' pictures with built up heels. Bob Bednarski had high heels and he wrote: "I employ the squat style, but in order to maintain good balance in the low position I had to have my shoes built up in the heel. Some lifters need no heel at all for a good stable balance. These men are blessed with good flexibility. There are always basic rules we must adhere to in order to do our best. The Clean and Jerk is no exception. It may look simple to perform, but a pull performed incorrectly will leave a man flat on his back faster than if Frazier or Ali had put him there."

"Push the floor away" The best advice for lifting I ever received from Dick concerned the start of the lifts. He would emphasize "Hips down, Hips down! Hold your shoulders back!" Okay, fine, so how do I move the bar, with what? Dick simply said: "Push the floor away." This stopped me from shooting my butt up and dropping my shoulders. Just "push the floor away" until you pull it "high and back to you." The start of the lift becomes a leg press, not a powerlifting deadlift. Others describe it differently, for example, Bednarski writes: "When we start to pull off the floor we must always remember to get in a position that is both comfortable and efficient. Again this position will vary from lifter to lifter, depending upon his flexibility. It is most important that the shoulders be just in front of the bar with the back flat or in a slight arch, the arms should be straight and the head fixed in a forward glance. As the bar comes off the floor, it should be pulled smoothly and SLOWLY, with a gradual acceleration."

The Power Curl

The Power Curl is just one name given to fairly common movement in lifting and throwing circles. It also goes by the titles “cheat curls” or “curl grip power cleans.” Easier to teach and learn than traditional power cleans, power curls can be used as a core lift or assistance exercise.

There are two basic versions of the power curl. First, let us consider the standard “cheat curl.” Assume the traditional straight bar curl positions: erect body, arms grasping the bar in a “curl” grip with the bar in position at the bottom of the lift, and feet in a normal stance. In bodybuilding, the lifter attempts several normal repetitions before “swinging,” “bending” or “cheating.” With heavy cheat curls, the athlete simply starts adding back bend, some leg help, and trap pulling from the first attempt.

This exercise was a favorite of four time Olympic discus champion Al Oerter. Richard Sorin states: “When question about the best single exercise he used to develop his power for throwing I received a curious reply...Heavy cheat curls.” [Oerter Interview](#). Art deVany, author of “Evolutionary Fitness,” argues the opposite. “‘Cheating’ on curls, for example, is mostly a middle trunk exercise and a stressor to your lower back. You should only do one or two sets of curls a week, focusing on concentration curls to peak the bicep. If you work out like a grunt, heaving and cheating on reps, you will look like a grunt.” ([DeVany's Fitness Article](#)) Clearly, as always, your goals set your training.

The other variation is from the floor. Attempt the lift like the traditional clean, except hold the bar in the curl grip. Keep the chest full, lower back tight, and “push the floor away.” When the bar touches at the second pull position, perhaps an inch or so above the knees, continue to ‘jump’ and do the normal motions of back and thighs. However, the arms, rather than ‘screwing under’ or ‘turning over,’ the arms simply curl to the top curl position. The lifter should pause at the top with the bar, but often does crash off the top finished position.

As the bar comes past the body in the second pull, it is okay for the elbows to ‘sneak’ behind the upper torso, rather than staying square in a rigid curl position. This is not a curl, it is a power curl. When bringing the bar down, fight the bar off the top position as it goes down, if you want more biceps and forearm strength. Catch the bar at the mid-thigh and slowly reverse deadlift the bar to the floor.

Repetitions in this exercise work well as opposed to traditional power cleans. Sets of up to eight are easily managed. Singles with maximum weights are generally not recommended as this exercise is not a classic lift and maxs can lead to abuse of technique.

The Body as One Piece program

This is a real world program. It took years to develop, so it went through a lot of revisions. I will try to make the stuff that doesn't make sense, make sense.

Week one

Monday

Power Snatch 6 sets of 3 (18 reps) trying to do two double pyramids After each set of snatches, immediately do a quick set of light hang or "top" snatches with 30% of your best snatch. Dumbbells can be used here, too. (Think 8-10 reps) **Tuesday** Overload Squats, six heavy sets. Overload squats need spotters. The athlete takes a max or near max weight, fights to go down under control and then is assisted back up. Be sure the athlete comes up quickly! (And does most of the squatting) Reps are supposed to be high, but it really is hard to do more than three to five. Immediately after racking the bar, the athlete does ten vertical jumps, it is best if there is a target to touch (ceiling, rim, top of head, if really tired). **Wednesday** If able, do [Power Curls](#) 6 sets of 3, with two pyramids If fatigued, straight leg deadlifts Or rest (the first time through, many athletes can't walk after overload squats) **Thursday** Rest **Friday** Bench Press 6 sets of 3, immediately followed by Push presses with 30% of best bench. Dumbbells don't work well. Week two **Monday** Power Snatch 7 Sets of 5 (35 reps, double last weeks volume of reps) followed by 30% quick lifts **Tuesday** [Overhead Squats](#). Reps are five's. The athlete can do a single "ladder" sets of five to best, or, the double pyramid style of going up once, backing off and going up again. If gym situation permits, mix with exaggerated skipping or bounding **Wednesday** Straight leg deadlifts **Thursday** Rest **Friday** Bench Press 7 Sets of 5, mixed with 30% push presses (again 8-10 on these 30% lifts) Week three **Monday** Pyramid up to best double in power snatch. No "fuzzy logic" here. Get two reps or it doesn't count! **Tuesday** Test on vertical jump (jump and reach) and standing long jump. This is more important than it looks. We found the athletes really began to improve here in two cycles. **Wednesday** [Power Curls](#) up to a heavy triple **Thursday** Rest **Friday** Oddest thing of the program: Max 8 reps in 8 seconds on Bench. Using a stopwatch, see how much the athlete can bench 8 times in 8 seconds. It takes, perhaps, three cycles to get this right, but it is illuminating when the athlete throws the shot or disc. Improvement here leads to improvement in the throws, and the football field and the ... Week four Unload. Either rest from weights or do circuit-like training.

The "Bulgarian Twist"

Every so often, you bump into an idea that you immediately dismiss. "Absolute idiocy," you say. Then, a few years later, you come across it again. "That old foolishness," then dismiss it again. The third, fourth and fifth time you hear it, you try to run screaming again. Finally, though, it hits you when you are ready. After trying the idea, you ask yourself: "Why didn't I do this before?"

When I first the idea of squatting first in a workout was presented to me, I immediately thought: "overtraining." The Bulgarian lifters had been experimenting with this "squat first" mentality. In fact, [Anton Nikolov](#), the magnificent 198 lifter, only did squats followed by pulls THREE days a week! The other days were "play days." Of course, I dismissed it.

A few years later, Spassov toured the United States arguing that the Bulgarians got the information from reading about Bob Bednarski's programs. I cracked open my archives and found that same insight: squat first, then do your O lifts. To bulk up and build up his [Clean and Jerk](#), Bednarski had decided to focus on squatting first.

When Bob Bednarski got his first "Lifter of the Year" award after he doing so well at the 1966 World Championships, Strength and Health Magazine published his [workouts](#). Several brilliant training ideas seem to leap from Bednarski's programs:

He squats first! (Okay, no surprise) He focuses his energies on his weak point and the lift that will fix it.

He focused on "[one lift a day](#)," one of the lost "gems" of 1960's training. He continued to use isometric training, the most potent strength builder in history. For more, information, read from the master, [Bill March](#). For an excellent biography on March, go to: [the Bill March biography](#). His 1966 program devoted one day to nothing but [Power Cleans](#), one of the greatest strength building exercises.

So, after years of refusing to listen, I adopted the "Bulgarian Twist:" Squatting first in a workout. My clean and jerk personal record shot through the roof!

Now, as a Masters Geezer Lifter, I have had to adapt some basic parts of my workout. By sharing information with friends on the Internet, Coach Dave Turner, and Coach Dick Smith, I adapted this workout from one of my standard training programs.

My Bulgarian Twist looks like this:

The Bulgarian Twist Program

It is simply this:

Day One: (Perhaps Monday)

[Start with a little Warm Up](#)

[Deadstop Front Squats](#): Up to a heavy (or max single)

[Power Clean & Press](#): One power clean and eight presses.

3 sets of 8 with one minute rest between sets. If there is a single key to the program, it is the one minute rest period. By strictly monitoring the rest period, and obviously keeping track of the weight, one can track progress.

[Power Curls](#): 3 sets of 8 with one minute rest between sets. Using a curl grip, slide the weight to just above the knees and “curl-clean” the bar. Let it come down under control. Again, get all eight reps in, don’t change the weights, and monitor the rest period.

Some kind of ab work. We used side bends, but any kind of crunch is fine, too. Today, I might recommend [One Arm Lifts](#). [Go Home and Recover](#)

Day Two: (a day or so later, perhaps Wednesday)

[Start with a little Warm Up](#)

Power Clean and [Front Squats](#). One power clean and eight front squats. Once again, 3 sets of 8 with one minute rest. Stay “tall” in the front squats and keep your elbows high. We usually use this as more of a warm up for the next exercise.

[Overhead Squats](#): 3 sets of 8 with one minute rest. Using the wide snatch grip, lock the elbows with the weight overhead and squat down. Athletes who do this exercise well not only develop flexibility, balance and leg strength, but an incredibly strong lower back. Also, this exercise builds what we used to call “Dad strength.” Growing up, a lot of us used to lift weights all the time but still could not torque a wrench or open a jar like dad, who never did any lifting. Overhead squats make you very strong. Again, finish with some kind of ab work. [Go Home and Recover](#)

Day Three (perhaps Friday or Saturday)

[Start with a little Warm Up](#)

[Deadstop Front Squats](#): Up to a heavy single (or max)

Snatch Pulls: 3 sets of 8 with one minute rest. With a wide snatch grip, stand up and hold the bar at crotch level. Dip the bar to the knees and snatch pull the bar to the forehead!

Continue for 8 reps. You will be surprised how quickly this exercise can get into your blood. If you want big traps and explosion, this is the king.

Clean grip Pulls: 3 sets of 8 with one minute rest. With a clean grip, stand up and dip the bar to your knees. Then, explode up driving the bar, in one basic movement to the chin.

Ab work if you wish.

[Go Home and Recover](#)

On the three sets of eight, try to add weight when you can, but use the third set as your basis for adding weight, not the first. You will discover that the culmination of sets one and two really effect the third set. Really try to push the maxs on the deadstop front squats.

This is an excellent program for turning your recoveries from cleans around. Legendary Coach Dick Smith notes that front squats train recovery from snatches and cleans and back squats support the pull. By focusing on speed and reps in the other lifts, the athletes can use the "Bulgarian Twist" to develop some strong recovery strength without taxing the whole system.

Try this for a few weeks, then test yourself!

The Fall Training Program

A Program combining Cyclical Dieting and Fun Lifting for Fall Fat Loss!

Monday

Basically, Monday and Tuesday are the same day...same diet and same workout. Basically, these days are zero or low carb days. For breakfast, eat eggs, have a protein shake (low carb variety) if you need it a couple of hours later, meat or fish for lunch, meat or fish for dinner...pretty standard stuff. Toss in some salads here and there, but be sure to focus on greens

in the salads. Pour a little extra olive oil in there, too. Keep bowls of walnuts or almonds around to snack on throughout the day. I drink a lot of coffee, too, although some say it causes an insulin surge. I don't. Leave me alone about my coffee! Water is always important, but on the low carb days, it may not be as important. I drink a lot of water no matter what day it is.

Supplements: For overall health, and "according to some," fish oil capsules are excellent for fat loss and may or may not be the key to strength gains. Whatever, I take three in the morning and three before bed. I also take a Mg, a K, and a melatonin before I go to sleep. Yohimbe supplements may also help fat loss, I have been trying these drops under the tongue which really makes me feel cold at work. **Training [The Thirteen Minute Drill!](#)**

I always emphasis this word "[Recover](#)," but it is very important in a fat loss program. I really up the cold showers, too.

Tuesday

Everything is the same...except I might go "backwards" on the Thirteen Minute Drill or simply go lighter. I get very sore on Wednesday after low carbing and doing all the reps. I'm not sore in the typical "deep squat" sore feeling, rather I feel a little achy. Don't forget "[Recover](#)."

Wednesday

This is the day I try to be the strictest in terms of diet. Also, I try to sleep more this evening. No training in the weightroom. If I throw at all this week, Monday through Wednesday would be the days I work on drills and light throws. If I know of a real problem, three days in a row of focus on the issue technically seems to help.

Thursday

This day needs a little planning. I like to eat only three eggs for breakfast (I usually eat six) and only a can of tuna for lunch. Before I train, I will start the "carb up" phase. It is easier for me to eat a couple pieces of "in-season" fruit and slap down a protein drink with it, but this could also be the time, for some, to start eating grains. There is a very good high flax

cereal from Costco that doesn't make me feel bad the next day. I will be experimenting with this cereal this next go round.

Training

Warm Up

Overhead Squats A few Sets of Three; Mix in some "Extension Snatches" (From the extended "on the toes" position, pull yourself into the Overhead Squat position

Presses from low box...with Chains Serious workout...10 sets of 10 or 8 sets of 8...if I carb up right, I can feel some serious blood moving in my upper deck.

Thick Bar Deadlifts..."Lots" of Heavy Singles (Basically with one weight, maybe a "little" increase over the sets.

Sleds and Farmers Walks, if I feel like it.

Recover

After Workout Eating The Anabolic Diet and the CKD variations talk about eating cheese pizzas, drinking beer, downing bagels and massively consuming carbs. That's fine, unless, like me, you don't digest grains well enough to keep the windows closed on a long drive with the family. I carb up anyway I can...I have noticed that some grains...rice and oats...don't make my stomach boil as much as others. But, whatever you choose, carb up after you train.

Friday

No training, but continue to eat as many carbs as you can stand. I can only stand to carb up for 36 hours at the most before I start feeling awful, bloated, tired and ugly. So, get ugly. No training, graze like a typical American at a Mall.

Supplements: Stay with the fish oil and minerals, but really increase the water. Typically, I drink over 100-120 oz. of water a day...so "upping" this is difficult for me, but I should try. I also get groggy from the carbs, but, in all my reading, the experts seem to think that the most important thing on this day is to get in the carbs. Lyle McDonald writes that he eats two bagels every couple of hours...even during the night. He gets up to eat carbs!

Saturday

If I carb up right on Friday, I can eat a "normal" breakfast...cereal,

pancakes, or whatever...and be roaring to train in the morning. I use one of my favorite workouts:

Training

Day One

[Warm Up](#) [Overhead Squats](#) A few Sets of Three; Mix in some "Extension Snatches" (From the extended "on the toes" position, pull yourself into the Overhead Squat position **"The Drill"** One Power Snatch followed by one Overhead Squat...then, lower the bar to below the knees for one Hang Squat Snatch...then, lower the bar to where it just skims for the floor for one Full Squat Snatch At least **eight** sets of the Drill [Front Squat](#)...with **Chains** Five sets of doubles The **two** reps focus on *speed*, go as heavy as possible.

**Sleds, Farmers Walks, heavy throwing workout...whatever.
I usually feel really good today.**

[Recover](#)

It is usually a pleasure to go back to the low carb lifestyle after this workout. I like to zip right back down to nearly zero carbs after the workout. Basically, I like the "clean" feeling of eating just "Meat and Leaves," eggs, fish, meat, and salads.

Sunday

Sunday has morphed into a serious throwing day for me. Rarely do I eat more than two meals on Sunday, a late brunch and an early dinner. In between, the "thrower gang" gets together to toss stuff around. If I trained smart, I tend to throw very well on Sunday. I have really only had two heavy workouts, Thursday and Saturday, with the two 13 minute drills being light workouts. The drilling of the throws takes nothing out of me. Tomorrow, I start again. One thing that helps on Sunday is to review the diet and fatigue levels of the previous week and to judge the pluses and minuses.

The Four Seasons of Training

I agree. It makes perfect sense. The idea of progressively adding weight to the major lifts in an orderly, logical manner makes perfect sense. Starting at 100 pounds in the squat, one should easily add five pounds a week so in one year we squat 360 pounds, in two, 620 pounds, in three, ... Except the human body is not that kind of machine. It adapts in rhythms

predating the logical philosophers, the inventors of exercise machines and the prayers of lifting hopefuls. Taking inspiration from Vivaldi's "Four Seasons," I would like to suggest a year round approach based on the rhythms of the four seasons of the year. Now, I realize that some lifters may live in states with only two seasons, as the old joke goes: "July and winter." But, adapting training to the ancient echoes of our hunter-gatherer roots provides opportunities for continued improvement, enthusiasm and insights about one's true potential.

Everybody has a story like this: after months of frustration, "out of nowhere" one makes substantial gains in size, leanness, strength, speed or some other quantifiable, or noticeable, measurement. I work with a young lady who showed no progress in weight loss (although she went from a size 12 to a size 10) for months, then suddenly dropped twenty pounds "overnight." Wouldn't it be nice if we could plan these "miracles?" I believe we can, but we must respect the natural rhythms and patterns that help, or hinder, improvements.

As a teacher for most of my professional career, it is easy for me to relate to the kind of training that works best in the autumn. It is "Back to School" time, it is football season. This time of year is perfect for disciplined training programs. Long term programs based on extensive cycling and adherence to percentages can be done in the fall. Disciplined tough programs along the lines of "Twenty rep squat" workouts are ideal at this time. Construct structured programs in the fall. Trying to learn a new lift? Do you wish to add snatches and cleans to your training? Learning new lifts is ideal in the fall. As the children march off to school, march into the weightroom and spend four months learning the Olympic lifts.

As the winter months approach, we begin to prepare for the cold and the dark. Forget getting lean when nature wants to "add a layer." The winter is time for the three GH's of training: Go Heavy, Go Hard and Go Home."

Traditionally, winter training has been the time for three "total" body workouts a week along the lines of cleans, benches and squats. Recently, many people have begun training with an upper body day, a lower body day and a third "total body" day of snatches, cleans and variations. For many trainers, rest time and total training time is more affected by room temperature than fatigue. Garages in the Northern and Mountain States are not the place for long, drawn out workouts. It is hard to do tricep kickbacks with frostbitten fingers.

Yet, in the midst of winter comes New Year's Day. As the rest of world writes out resolutions, this is an ideal time to look forwards and backwards. Look past over the last year and the list the "Top Ten" things that have improved. Or, have separate lists for training, personal, and professional. Compare lifts or photos from last year. Then, write out a list of training goals for the upcoming year. Give yourself the full 365 days to

lose the inches off the waist or twenty pounds to the bench.

Spring is the time of rebirth, the time to renew. It is also the time to get injured. After months of heavy training, many people want to sprint outside on the first flower filled day and ...snap. Hamstring pull. Yes, all that heavy training led to wonderful improvements in muscles mass. The extra layers of body fat, to keep a cold lifter warm, also change the dynamics of movement. The extra strength and size are wonderful, except that the body needs a few days to adapt before all out sprinting. Spring is time for "Transformation" programs. Let the reps increase in the gym, but start to measure rest time. Add some movements that mimic outdoor activities. Traditionally, calisthenics have been used to prepare athletes for movement. Burpees (the Marine Corps "squat thrust"), "Jumping Jacks," High Knee Running ("Knees Up, Mother Brown!") and a host of jumping, leaping, pushing and pulling actions can be done in the confines of a small room. The old dictum of "If you want to run fast, you have to train fast" certainly remains true.

As the world begins heating up, it is also easier to get lean. By now, most people have forgotten their New Year's resolution to lose the gut, but this is the time to do it. Use the longer, hotter days of summer to train outside. Although sandbag training can be done year round, it is a lot "cleaner" to do a sandbag workout on a sunny day rather than in a deluge. Put the weights on the backyard lawn and do some workouts. Whether you ride bikes, rollerblade, run with the dog and kids, play sports at picnics, go to a Highland Games and throw stuff, have fun outside in the summer! Yet, as you are enjoying your fitness review your goals. What needs to be improved? Where are your weak points? What do you need to learn? The answers to these questions will provide the basis of your disciplined fall programs.

A year round approach can be this simple. Subtle changes in training, based on the seasons, lead to a better overall total training program. It is still progressive, yet allows for a great deal of variety. File training ideas and training programs into folders that correspond to the seasons. Hill sprinting is wonderful, but is it safe in the frozen evenings of January? Do you want to spend endless hours in the gym on a perfect summer day? Working with the rhythms of nature keeps the eye on the horizon and keeps progress in the gym. It's natural.

Spirituality and the Athlete

You know, sometimes I hate parties. As long as people think I'm a "jock," things go well. With my size, it is easy to field the questions about the

Super Bowl or lifting or sports in general. It is when people find out my “day jobs” that problems arise. I’m a professor of religious education and the director of religious education for the Catholic diocese of Salt Lake City. I’m in the “religion business.”

And, it never fails...the very next sentence most people usually say is: “I am a very spiritual person.” I used to nod and agree with them because I thought I understood what they said. Now, however, I go one step farther. “What do you mean by ‘spiritual?’”

The answers vary, of course, but I have heard everything from “I read my horoscope EVERY day without fail” to “I just finished a 30 day fast and retreat with the exercises of Ignatius.” Not long ago, a woman stunned me with a question: “How do incorporate your spirituality and your sports?” Good question. Athletes are often faulted for certain displays of religious belief or superstitions. The standard complaint filed on athletes is the pregame prayer: “Oh Dear Lord, let us defeat the hated South River Sabercats, and slew them with your Grace. Amen.” Across the stadium, the Sabercats are praying for their victory! One gets an image of God weighing out which team’s prayer had more merit...somehow.

That is not what I want to talk about. At the highest level of performance, there is a moment of transcendence, where the sum of the body’s potential and the training regimen are superceded by the beauty...the human potentiality...of the art of athletics. The athlete may never fully explain these moments in words...it is truly an “out of body” experience.

Brian Oldfield, the spinning shot putter who first broke 75 feet in the shot (a record not even approached for 14 years), discusses that moment in throwing when the centrifugal, linear, and vertical forces all come together and...just for a moment...the athlete has to pause to let them gather into the perfect throw. He calls this “the Nirvana Phase.” If you rush it, you miss it and you have a substandard throw. This, of course, is also a key to life: if you rush it, you miss it.

Oldfield’s point is crucial: there is a moment in every sport discipline where the forces have built up and athlete has to just let it all happen. For an interesting way to watch this in action, go rent “Groundhog Day” with Bill Murray. As he repeats the same exact day over and over and over, he decides to make a perfect day to seduce Andie MacDowell. His attempt at making the “Perfect Day” leads him to failure...over and over again. Finally, he decides to learn the piano, takes a turn at ice sculpture, and help people. With this approach, he gets the girl...and moves on to February 3. When he forced things, he failed. When he decided to learn new things, improve himself, he got what he wanted.

You have to let things happen in life and in sports. Yet, as all athletes know, there is someone out there with a pen and a calendar...someone scheduling a match, a meet, or a competition. The athlete’s task is show

up on this day ready to go. All too often, though, the athlete has finishes the day "off their best." Perhaps we can learn a little lesson from those of us in the "business."

Not long ago, I popped open the March issue of Emmanuel Magazine. In an enlightening article on Christian Ministry by Father Stephen Bevans, I noted a quote that sounded familiar. The person quoted was one George Niederauer. I sent off a little memo to Bishop George Niederauer whose office is literally "at my feet" one floor below to see if, indeed, the Bishop was responsible for this insight on prayer. The Bishop wrote back:

"Guilty!," then noted that the article spelled his name wrong.

The article noted the Bishop's interesting image of the kind of prayers that most people seem to struggle with. In the "Tale of Two Benches," Bishop Niederauer describes sitting on a bus bench. When one waits for a bus, one is filled with expectations. The "G" bus should be here at 8:11. It is 8:13 and my day is ruined. We want to get off this bench and get going somewhere else! The bus should be here...now. Wait...now! The park bench, however, is a time to sit and listen and watch. We wait for nothing. The local squirrels that showed up yesterday may or may not be here today. And, that is okay.

The approach most athletes take to competition is the "Bus Bench" image. "On Saturday, the 26th, I will defeat all who show up, break all my personal records, find perfection in all I do, and meet the person of my dreams."

This, my friends, is the "G" bus of sports preparation. It is a tough model to follow. As I look over my 35 years in organized competition, I can only think of a few...three?...times when the Bus showed up on schedule.

The most important moment of my athletic career reflects the keys to success...in the Bus Bench model. In my closet, there is a small trophy that bears a stamp "S.V. 67." For the record, it stands for "St. Veronica's, 1967," the first trophy I ever received and I got it one year before my wife was born. Although I often joke about my funeral, for example having Frank Sinatra's "One for My Baby, One more for the Road" as a closing song, I am serious when I ask that somebody remember this trophy. It is a lesson in, well, how things work.

I was the world's worst baseball player. My batting average was three zeroes. I hated sports while my brothers were getting their pictures in the local sports section on a weekly basis. As the right fielder, I was safe, until I batted. Then, I would close my eyes, swing like mad three times and sit down.

And, of course, like all great stories, we were heading for the championship game. I went to the local high school the night before the game and decided to learn to hit. Throw the ball up, close my eyes and swing. Ball up, close eyes and swing. As I tried to learn to hit, one of the local high school heroes, Dale Kursten, saw me trying and failing and

walked over and gave me a few lessons. Keep your eye on the ball, swing level and make contact. A few easy hits later, he said goodbye.

And, of course, like all great stories, it came to the last inning. With two outs and a man on third, our captain turned and asked "Who's up?" Me. "Oh great. We are going to lose." Well, with that pep talk, I walked to the plate. Dale's words echoed: "eye on the ball, swing level, make contact." And, I did. The ball slid between the fielders and I made it to first base. The guy on third scored and we tied the game up. Later, we would win. A few weeks later, I was given a trophy.

At my sister's twenty year high school reunion, she mentioned this story to Dale. It didn't register. Oh, he had heard about my athletic career, but was stunned to find out that he had anything to do with it. Yet, I point to those few minutes of his guidance as the turning point.

There are gems in that story that I still take out my shovel and mine. For example, each time I think about this story, I remind myself of the role that a mentor played in improving my game. Moreover, the mentor helped without a lot of fanfare...Dale doesn't market himself on the internet as "Coach of 400 Olympians and Dan John!" I am also reminded about the use of the "mantra," the flow of calming words that allowed me to ignore my captain and stay focused on the ball. Truly, gems.

In the championship game, I came through. But, don't ignore the two keys of mentor and mantra! The only advice I can give someone facing a date on a calendar is to make sure they have their external community of fans, buddies, friends, mentors and coaches at the event and their internal community of a few short focus words all ready to go.

For most athletes most of the time, the Park Bench model is much more appropriate. When you compete, or simply train, take time to enjoy the view, breathe the air, and don't worry about the squirrels! Whatever comes along during your competition or training should be viewed through the lens of wonder and thanks. My great joy in competing in Highland Games has a lot to do with the friendships made, the variety of events, and the party atmosphere. Highland Games athletes simply don't make fools of themselves complaining about a bad performance. The events make a fool of you!

To get a "Park Bench" mentality, the athlete has to realize that, at best, very few competitions are going to be perfect. In addition, when the stars arrange for you to have those perfect competitions, you had better not try to mess it up with a lot of extra energy...you just have to let it go. The Park Bench also helps you with the 20% of competitions where things go all wrong. If you can keep your wits, feed a squirrel or two, you may just salvage this competition! By the way, nothing frightens your competition more than a serene smile on your face...they will think you are up to something!

Train hard, but enjoy competition. Compete hard, but enjoy your training. One key final point must be kept in mind at all times...NEVER judge a workout or competition as “good” or “bad” solely on that single day. I often tell my new throwers: “Sorry, you just are not good enough to be disappointed.” Judging one’s worth as an athlete over the results of single day is just idiocy...and will lead to long term failure. Epictetus, the Roman Stoic philosopher tells us: “We must ever bear in mind --that apart from the will there is nothing good or bad, and that we must not try to anticipate or to direct events, but merely to accept them with intelligence.”

To close, I have a favorite story:

A farmer had a horse and a son. One day, the horse died. All the neighbors said, “Oh, how bad.” The farmer said, “We’ll see.” The next day, the neighbors got together and bought the farmer a new horse. They all said, “That’s a good thing.” Farmer said, “We’ll see.” The following day, the horse threw the son while trying to break the horse. The son broke his arm. The neighbors all said, “Oh, how bad.” The farmer said, “We’ll see.” The next day, the army came into the town, drafted all the young men, save the son with a broken arm. They all died in the first battle. The neighbors said to the farmer, “Oh, how good it was for your son to have a broken arm.” The farmer said, “We’ll see.”

So, from someone in the “business” of religion, take a few pieces of insight to heart as an athlete. First, let things happen and don’t judge them as good or bad. Enjoy the opportunity to train and compete. Second, find yourself a community of people who support your goals...and be sure you “support your goals,” too.

Do my ideas work in sports? We’ll see.

HTML Attachment

Supporting Dinosaurs

Every four years, the world brings it attention to the Summer Olympics. And, every four years, an announcer states, while trying to comment on the Olympic Lifts, that “the snatch is the fastest movement in sports.” True. A few minutes later, in all the coverage that weight lifting will receive, a massive weight will be cleaned, the lifter will rise, jerk it overhead and be declared “the world’s strongest man.” Again, true. Then, our announcers will return us to yet another five hours of full coverage of the women’s gymnastics warm ups.

Through much of this century, the United States dominated much of the sport of Olympic Lifting. A poor showing at the 1964 Olympics was considered a matter of bad selection of the athletes and poor planning of

the Senior Nationals and Olympic Trials was blamed in 1968. But by 1972, the era of American dominance ended, save for Lee James' wonderful Silver Medal performance in 1976, twenty –three years ago. Olympic Lifting could not survive the scandals of steroids and “uppers” that rocked the sport in the Sixties, the influx of Universal weight machines and the hype of Nautilus machines and the direct competition provided by the birth of Powerlifting.

In the United States, Olympic Lifters find quite a hill to climb. “Gyms” don’t allow weights to be dropped, or chalk used, or, in many cases today, weights to be put overhead. Meets are always a long drive away and poorly sponsored.

So, why do it? Simple: there is no other movement, no other feeling of accomplishment, like lifting a bar from the floor to overhead. There are no racks, no spotters, no special equipment and no other person affecting the bar. It is hard to blame the bar.

The best way to learn the lifts is to get with a coach, other lifters and plan on lifting in a meet. At an Olympic Lifting meet, one can learn more about the sport in three hours than all the articles and videos in the world. The snatch and the clean and jerk lead the lifter to constantly think “how can I do more?”

In this article, however, I would like to suggest some ways that Olympic Lifting can help the Dinosaur Lifter. I am convinced that a year of pure Olympic Lifting would more than repay any athlete for the efforts. Watching films of Russian and Polish high jumpers spending their winter months doing rep after rep of snatches taught me that these lifts carry over into any athletic arena.

For the dino lifter, I have three simple suggestions. Although the Olympic Lifts build explosion as no other activity can do, the most neglected benefits of the lifts is the development of support strength. When squat snatching, the lifter catches the bar in the deep squat position with the arms fully extended overhead. Many observers “ooh” and “aah” the flexibility,” lifters notice the support. Here are three simple ideas:

Pressouts. I learned this trick from Pacifica Barbell Club coach Dick Notmeyer. Simply, at the end of any overhead lift, including presses, jerks, or push jerks or presses, finish the set with “pressouts.” As you stand tall, with arms locked out overhead, bend your elbows so the bar moves no more than three inches. Continue to do this up to eight times. Now, put the

bar down. As simple as this seems, this exercise builds the whole support system. Soon, you may notice the serratus muscles, the “fingers” on the rib cage, becoming a lot more noticeable. As your body tightens to compensate during the pressouts, you are building support strength.

Overhead Squats. I am a fanatic about this exercise. A few years ago, I coached a young man who weighed 215 pounds and threw the high school discus 214 feet. People constantly asked how he kept himself “in one piece” as he threw. Our secret weapon was the overhead, or snatch, squat. Take a light bar off the racks like a normal squat. With a wide grip, experiment a bit with the grip, jerk the weight overhead. It helps to have heeled shoes or your feet, in a squat stance, raised on some plywood or plates. Now, squat down. As you do, you will find that your shoulders are stiff, your ankles are stiff, and your back is stiff. Try to sit down with your knees wide, keeping the bar directly above your ears. Did I say “a light bar?” Be very careful the first few times. A fellow coach once told me that he wouldn’t let his college discus throwers throw outside until they handled bodyweight in the exercise for fifteen reps! As you progress in this exercise, you will find your flexibility improving, your balance improving and your support strength skyrocketing.

Squatting Behind the Neck Presses. Maybe, you would like to enter a meet or train under a coach. One simple exercise for learning the “bottom positions” while building support strength is “squatting behind the neck presses.” As you may have figured out, the exercise involves taking a light weight and squatting down. Again, heeled shoes or standing on some plywood or plates will help. At the bottom, squeeze your knees apart. Now, the hard part. Remaining in this position, press the weight up. Try to get several reps. Don’t be surprised if you can’t press anything close to a normal weight. Again, the flexibility and support strength will help in any athletic endeavor.

These three ideas may be used any time. Try sneaking the pressouts into a workout, by the way, it also works in bench presses, but have a good spotter. Substitute overhead squats once a week for other leg movements. And, for the truly gung ho, add the squatting behind the neck presses. You’ll see the difference in your ability to support the big weights.

Pushing the Limits: the 100 Rep Challenge

"I see you had Grape-Nuts for breakfast." "Sorry, Mr. John." That short exchange between a coach and athlete may seem strange, but when it is written in the young man's Yale University application, it seems perhaps stranger. Yet, that is the key moment in Ted Vogt's letter for admission. He recounted how no one believed that he could lose fifty pounds of fat, no one believed he could become Student Body President, and, finally, no one believed he could get into Yale.

He achieved all three goals. He gave me a copy of his admission letter. To be honest, I was astounded. Rather than focusing on "how wonderful I am," Ted highlighted one of the worst experiences of his life: the "Big Al Challenge." As a football coach, I believed that there had to be a final task to wind up the conditioning work of summer before putting on the pads for double sessions. After my dad died, "Big Al," I dedicated this task in his memory. For the record, my dad was maybe five foot seven and never in his life weighed over 130 pounds. But, he was a fierce boxer, a fine shortstop, and proudly set forth five sons who competed in Division One athletics. (There goes the genetics argument.)

The challenge was simple: one lap around the football field, seven sets of stadium steps, flop down and do seven sit-ups. Seven times. Almost two miles of running, 49 stadium steps and 49 sit-ups, yet the killer was coming back up after the sit-ups. For most of the athletes, it was a challenge against time. For Ted, it was a challenge against himself. He noted in his essay: "All those axioms you hear like: 'A winner never quits and a quitter never wins,' suddenly made sense. It was just me and Big Al." He finished long after everyone else went in. Then, he puked on my shoes.

The lesson Ted learned is the single greatest lesson an athlete and lifter can ever learn: sometime, somewhere, somehow, you have to toss out science, toss out periodization, toss out logic, and do something that extends you far beyond what you think you can do. One of the great joys of being a parent is to discover that you can go for a week or two without truly sleeping as you care for a sick child, yet continue to work, commute, shop, and survive. Certainly, it is an act of love, but you retain the understanding that "if I have to" I can survive without eight hours of perfect sleep.

In high school, my friends Claude, Jack, Greg and I would buy football shoes together a few weeks before the start of double sessions. To break them in, we would jog around the high school field twenty times. Our feet would bleed, our skin would burn, and, to be honest, there was no carryover to the game. Yet, it taught us to keep going, keep moving. Throughout my adult life, I retain those lessons of success: 1. Show Up 2. Don't Quit 3. Ask Questions Later.

Throughout my life, I have occasionally "raised the bar" for no real good

reason. My junior year in college, I decided to see if I could squat bodyweight, Olympic squat style, fifty times. Why? I don't remember but I kept thinking around rep thirty there had to be a good reason. From forty to fifty, I breathed up to ten times per rep, fighting off back spasms and brain fog. I entered a Triathlon once, too, just to see what would happen. After nearly drowning, I crashed then staggered for ten kilometers. But, I finished.

In the past year, inspired by Brooks' insights about Kim Woods "100 Singles" training, a group of us centered at the Old School Training Site on the internet have met on-line in a friendly competition. Simply, find a lift, throw, or challenge and do it 100 times. Not in a row... no, no, no. Rather, it should be something that can be done once, rest, repeat.

I have seen a lot of criticisms of it. You will get hurt. I do. You will ruin your training. It does. It sounds stupid/It sounds unsystematic. Absolutely. What the critics don't understand is that every rep from twenty on is an effort of the spirit. Ted would understand.

For the last challenge, I erred in several ways. First, I chose Squat Snatches. In addition to its technical aspects of simply doing a snatch, I needed to overhead squat 100 reps. Second, I chose to do it with 165 pounds. I have this idea that I should keep myself in the condition I was as a Junior College athlete. In my first Olympic Lifting meet, I opened with 165 pounds, therefore...

The gym was too hot and too windy, hovering in the high eighties already by nine in the morning. My first twenty five singles, without a miss, finished in 27 minutes. Not bad. I did them "cluster" style, basically a set of five singles. Do a rep, rest a few seconds, rep, rest, rep... for five. Then, sit down and read for a few minutes. In one hour, basically "on time," I finished fifty reps, then I hit the wall. After seventy reps, I began to cluster in threes and twos. Soon, the cluster was one rep, stagger over and sit down. I monitored my water consumption, three 52 ounce mugs of water for the 100 reps. I added two pounds of bodyweight from start to finish, 220 to 222. The next day, I would weigh 216, the following 214. As the reps near 100, it isn't lifting anymore, it is the summit of Mount Everest. Most people die on the way down.

So, how do you train for the challenge that took me two hours and twelve minutes? The short answer is that you can't train for the 100 rep challenge. It is like those high school teachers that hand their students an egg for a week and everyone pretends it is like raising a child. Knowing where you left your egg is not exactly the same as caring for a newborn. Doing twenty singles is a great workout, but it doesn't mimic the stress of knowing you are "one-fifth the way there." Yet, there are some things I would recommend. First, build up a stable of classic lifts. Certainly, the deadlift and the squat are appropriate for the challenge (I wouldn't recommend the

bench for safety reasons, unless you have a very faithful spotter), but imagine the possibilities of clean and press, snatch, clean and jerk, one arm variations and a myriad of stone, balls and odd objects. Even if you decide on deadlifts, the other lifts will support your deadlift challenge. Second, set a date and prepare. You will need uninterrupted time, equipment in good working order, a place to sit and recover, water, perhaps some food, something to read and some method to record. I wouldn't trust your memory. I note the clusters of five in my training journal when I sat down and noted anything of importance. The mental gymnastics of keeping tabs of how many finished, how many to go, what percent done, what fraction done and all the other tricks of maintaining sanity vanish when it every single seems like a maximum attempt. What can you expect from a challenge like this? Hands like claws for a few days, additional blood blisters, probably some structural damage to something in your gym, and most important, you can expect a good story. In the weeks and months to come, you will discover a new reservoir of strength in your life and lifting. A typical quality workout like ten singles or three sets of three will be "a tenth" of what I can do. It is refreshing and life changing. Ask Ted.

Full Report of 100 Rep Challenge; June 8, 2000

Bar set at 165 pounds with spring collars. Lifting boots, gym shorts, thumbs taped.

Weigh in: 220 pounds

Books to skim: Vince Gironda's "Unleash the Wild Physique" and Bob Hoffman's "Functional Isometric Contraction"

Time: 9:38 am, Temperature: 84 degrees and windy in the gym

Rep's done in "clusters" of five, a single, rest, single, rest... sit down and read. First 25 done by 10:05.

After 40, ate a banana (started to "bonk"). Finished first fifty by 10:38.

After rep 60, daughter Kelly broke oven door, fixed it. Principal Judith Puhr calls to get recommendation for new teacher, I give the "thumbs up."

Urinated for the first time after rep 70, Tiffini calls. Urinated after rep 85.

Last 15 reps in an exhausted state, fighting every inch.

Finish time: 11:50, gym temp 88 degrees. Weighed out at 222???

Total mugs of water: 3 at 52 ounces each, plus two cups of coffee. I had to retape only one time.

Let me put this point out there: the bar goes from the floor to seven feet in the air on each and every rep. My best this year is a 242 pound snatch (okay, okay, lifetime best is 314, but...) so a 165 snatch is not bad. For 100, it is really hard.

The Big 21 Program

A few years ago, I trained myself and a number of outstanding throwers using a simple variation of the Central Falls Weightlifting Club's "21" program. It is simple on paper, but a killer in the gym. Don't try this too many times in a row. Do the three weeks, unload, and repeat it. We did the program three times and moved into the track season. It really is hard!

The Big "21"

Monday, Wednesday, and Friday
Three Lifts only!

Clean and Press
Power Snatch
Power Clean and Jerk

Now, the confusing part!

Each workout, add five pounds to the Opening Weight. After three weeks, Opening Weight will be 45 pounds more.

Reps and Sets
Opening Weight x 5
Add five pounds x 5
Add five pounds x 5
Add five pounds x 1
Add five pounds x 1
Add five pounds x 1
Add five pounds x 1
Add five pounds x 1
Add five pounds x 1
Total Repetitions 21
You see: the Big 21!

Rules:

1. All reps must be successful!
 2. Start each rep from the floor with heels together, feet pointing out to 45 degrees.
- Do each rep under control-start with hips down, and fully extend!

Record end weight Clean & Press Snatch Jerk

Session One _____

Session Two _____

Session Three _____

Session Four _____

Session Five _____

Session Six _____

Session Seven _____

Session Eight _____

Session Nine _____

One hint: you may wish to only do “threes” on the Clean and Jerks. At the end of three weeks, take a week off of heavy lifting, then go to the Transformation Program for a week or two before repeating.

Joe Mills Cheat Sheet

Mills believes weightlifting should be a “way of life,” aimed at teaching young men and women inner toughness, discipline and concentration.

“You’re feeling that weight. It should all be one movement. Look up at the top of the pull and jump down fast. All one movement. Time it right, and the weight will literally feel like it’s pulling you up from the bottom position.”

“You’re stubbing your toe on the jerk. And your shoulders are dropping down as soon as the bar comes off the floor. You’ve got to keep them back.” “Is that it?” Klonoski with some surprise. “I was told I was arm pulling, but that didn’t sound right.” “It wasn’t right,” retorts Mills. “Letting your shoulders drop slows you down.”

As the workout proceeds, it becomes clear that in response to Mills’ comments, all three lifters are quickly making adjustments which improve their lifts. Grillo, for example, brings his feet closer together at the start of the pull and, as a result, finds he can use his quadriceps more effectively.

“But if I can get a lifter down to one mistake per lift, that’s acceptable. With two or three, he won’t lift to his potential.”

“By doing the lifts three times a week, Brusie’s developing the core muscles, all the little muscles you use for lifting. To be good at lifting, you have to lift” says Mills. “Also, my lifters always know exactly what they are

capable of lifting. In competition, they can start with 10 pounds more than their best in training.”

“Say a guy is snatching 95 kg.,” Mills explains. “I’d have him start with 65 kg. For five reps, 70 for five, 75 for 5, and then take single attempts in 2.5 kg. jumps to 90 kg. That’s 21 lifts. If he makes all 21, he adds 2.5 kg. To all attempts in the next snatch workout. So he’d start with 67.5. If he misses the last lift (90 kg.), he stays with the same 65 kg. starter, no increase. If he misses several of the heavier lifts, he is probably just tired. He should listen to his body and rest.”

Mills believes that the York courses, including the fast deadlifts and repetition squats, remain the best general conditioners for weightlifting.

Lessons from the Past

This was originally some advice for new lifters that just couldn't stop going. I hope you enjoy it.

I thought a lot about this and I put together some training ideas from various sources. Basically, IGNORE the last thirty years would be my advice. Every day, I discover the great wisdom of the 1950's and 1960's lifters and throwers.

So, I submit:

The American Olympians of the 1960's had to sacrifice to compete. Dealing with either full-time jobs or full-time school commitments, as well as family life, took its toll in comparison to today's "Professional Amateurs." Yet, when you study the meet results from Olympic lifting or Track and Field, one soon discovers that the Matsons, Bednarskis, and Oerters of that era would still be competitive thirty years later. Actually, they would still be winning.

In the past few years, I have made a serious study of the training methods

of the American athletes of this era. I continue to ask one question: why did any abandon these methods? From aerobics and jogging, to tennis and high carbohydrate diets, the 1970's brought a myriad of fads and failures. So, if I may, here is a little of what I learned:

Don't want to read all this?

Do this:

1. Use a great variety of exercises in training and strive to be competitive (perhaps just with yourself) in every variation.
2. Spend only a short amount of time focusing on specific competitions.
3. Cut out white sugar and white flour. Eat protein "a lot." Have a great breakfast.
4. Do either one lift a day then total once a week or lift three days a week but seriously recover the other four.
5. Gather around people who are very good and train/compete with them.

Off- Peak Conditioning

Historically, most American training programs don't recognize those long 13 week (one quarter of a year) to four-year training cycles. For the classic high school three-sport athlete, there would be difficulties in performing a cycle throughout the intensive football season or the busy weeks of dual meets in other sports. For the college athlete, especially in the scholarship system, one may not have four years to prove oneself. This concept carried over into the Olympic Lifts. Few American athletes would focus on the Snatch and Clean and Jerk (and the earlier Press) for the entire year. The successful Americans of the Sixties and Fifties certainly did not narrow their training like this, instead they opted for intensive five week programs before competitions.

General training dominated those non-peak programs. The athletes that ignored this advice tended to burn out with injuries and lack of progress. The Pacifica Barbell Club used this time as follows: "When not pointing to a specific meet, we would include many different bodybuilding movements. Included in this were Snatch Deadlifts and Shrugs, Bench Presses, Back Squats, Incline Dumbbell Presses, and arm work." On the East Coast with

the Central Falls Weightlifting Club under Joe Mills a similar approach was advised: "Mills believes that the York courses, including the fast deadlifts and repetition squats, remain the best general conditioners for weightlifting."

An example of the York Courses would be this:

York Course Number 3 (Do one set of each exercise, 5 reps minimum, or do 5

singles without too much rest between each single):

Warmup...Flip snatches 1. One arm jerk (w/ bb) 2. One arm snatch (w/ bb) 3. Standing press 4. Squat 5. One arm overhead squat 6. High pull (to belt height) 7. Press behind neck, standing 8. Power clean or dead hang clean 9. Jerk 10. Dead hang or regular snatch I can't imagine a bodypart or aspect of Olympic Lifting this short regime wouldn't improve.

[The Hoffman Standards](#) a simple chart for gauging your progress by bodyweight (Gold, Silver, Bronze). Weaknesses Whether Olympic lifter, shot putter or discus thrower, one constant point that seems to resound throughout the Americans of this period is "work on your weak points." Perhaps that is the reason that general conditioning was emphasized over specific peaking programs; the athletes were constantly reviewing and restructuring due to a new awareness of a problem area. Some writers seems to appraise this as a false modesty when the athlete would respond "really, I'm not very good/strong at this or that," yet it seems part of common mentality that you are only as strong as your weakest link.

John Price, a good friend of mine and former Washington Huskie discus thrower, noted that this was the core principle of all the training programs while he was in college. The athletes at Washington learned this from a Swimming Coach who monitored the varsity weight room. Constant, diligent review of overall trends in one's training, usually from studying training diaries or from a trusted friend's advice, designed the next training program rather than a glossy magazine in the drug store. "Turn your weaknesses into strengths!" Diet This would be the radical departure. With the stretching cult and the jogging cult of the Seventies came the Carbohydrate Cult. With it, America's fortunes in Track and Field and Olympic Lifting crashed, save for a few events that emphasize picking fast parents. The simple rules: 1. No white sugar or white flour 2. Eat a high protein diet 3. Start the day with a "great breakfast" Dick Notmeyer of the PBBC believed that number three was the most important. From the Dick Notmeyer glossary: "This question: "What did you have for Breakfast?" is

the answer to all questions and the question to all answers. "I want to gain weight, I want to lose weight, I want to lift more" were all answered by Dick with "What did you have for Breakfast?" A good breakfast: Meat, eggs, other stuff A bad breakfast: Not meat, eggs, other stuff Note: the all-time answer by a young new lifter: "I had a great breakfast: seven bowls of Cheerios!" This concept carries over to losing weight for a contest, too. The biggest mistake that the athletes in the Fifties and Sixties believed was to slowly lose weight over the course of a few weeks. These lifters believed in losing weight extremely quickly. Of course, when you look at these lifters, rarely do you find lifters, even in local contests, who look as fat as lifters from the 90's and 2K. The High Carb fad has lead to a generation of obese children and adults. The "exercise police" will hate to admit it, but as Americans have cut back on beef and protein consumption, the general population has become fatter and fatter. In "Making Weight for a Contest" by Bob Hoffman Final summary: "To summarize: live as normally as possible as the big contest approaches but reduce your sugar and starches to a minimum. Eat lots of protein and use germ oil concentrate as this has a tendency to reduce excess weight. Drink normally until a day or two before the contest. If necessary, take off what weight must be lost the day before and the day of the competition. Bill March took off 12 pounds in two days before the recent Region 1 contest and was still strong enough to make a new American total record of 1040. And finally, don't reduce too soon or you will be weak. What you want to do is have the strength of the class above and the bodyweight of the class below." Note: this is all about weight loss, not FAT loss! Lifters lift in weight classes, therefore, they have to make the scale stop at a number. Never mix weight loss with FAT loss! Fat Loss Ideas: the bodybuilders in the Sixties turned to Vince Gironda for advice on how to strip fat. Basically, one eats meat and eggs in limitless amounts. Then, every third or fourth day, the athlete consumes a high carbohydrate meal with salad to keep the "pump." This is not different than the Atkins' Induction Phase or some of the various "Caveman" diets currently popular. Yes, it works and it is that simple. Training Programs Russian studies point to a couple of rules concerning training programs. The concept of building a base then doing specific work has merit and value but will only work once. The more advanced an athlete becomes the more specific the training must become. However, rather than dropping all general work, the athlete needs to blend general and specific. One law I once heard was: "Shock, Adapt, Regenerate, Restimulate." This is the basic approach of Supercompensation. The Soviets noted that the plateau on the Adapt phase was the key; better too short of a cycle than too long. This ties in well to the Sixties throwers and lifters attitudes and programs. Bob Hoffman was right about his "1001" exercises according to the Russians.

The more exercises one has in their quiver, the more variety and stimulus. It also allows the gains to continue. So, learning one arm snatches gives the athlete a few more workouts before “regenerating.” Olympic lifters would naturally mix physical and technical training, other athletes need to think of means of incorporating “mixed training” such as “lift-throw-lift-throw” for discus throwers. The East Germans used a term “accumulation” to describe the longest period of training through the year. Learning “1001” exercises, training the lifts or throws with various techniques (as simple as just using one hand) and mixing general exercises with specifics would all lead to the advantages of accumulation.

So, how do you put this in a program? One of my basic training dictums is that “everything works.” Of course, it might only work once. How does that relate to training programs? Well... Every new idea, every old training gem, everything will work. Matching your personal goals to everything you come across may be difficult. No, it is impossible. One needs to learn the skill of discerning what is going to help and what is going to hinder. But, there are some training program rules: 1. Just because the computer printed it out doesn’t mean you need to follow it. Days can be bad, weeks can be worse, expect a dip or two each month. I find a bad workout every two weeks, often just because of my job, the commute, or the weather. Why do I know this? 2. Because I keep a journal. No training program is more valuable than your own personal history. I am amazed with the gems that I find reviewing old journals. Three days a week works for me better than six, two better than four. Bodybuilding exercises have no value in helping me Olympic lift. Ten seconds of thinking is better than ten weeks of working out. And those are the obvious lessons from my journal. I’m sure a couple of years from now, I will discover what I am missing this week. 3. Remind yourself that you may want to avoid a program that assumes a nutritionist, a masseuse, a pharmacist, a mental therapist, outstanding facilities, no job, no kids, no spouse, no money worries and some fairly nice genetics. What works for you may be radically different. 4. Finally, my experiences have shown me that it is going to come down to this: three days a week is GENERALLY the best way to lift. You can do several exercises for a set or two or do a few exercises for many sets. I have success with just doing one lift a day and spending up to an hour varying the weights each set. This works best for Olympic lifts, squats, and one arm movements. Don’t do this with One arm cable Preacher Curls. The final key Surround yourself with quality people. Of course, this is true all the time, but more so for the athlete. Part of the coaching for all the great throwing colleges (Utah State, Oregon, UCLA, USC) involved recruiting good athletes to train together. Over time, the good athlete becomes great when surrounded by quality throwers. Even if you have to

drive a couple of hours every Saturday to train with others, do it. There is no better way to learn a sport than to be with people who have the same passion as you.

Norb "Skee's" Workouts: America's Champ for Three Decades

This material comes from a great Strength and Health article from 1964. This is GREAT stuff for a modern lifter to think about.

"As a contest gets closer, I eliminate more and more power and substitute it with more and more Olympic lifting. Approximately eight to ten days before the meet I eliminate all power exercises. During the last two or three weeks I concentrate entirely on lifts," Skee answered. When Schemansky totaled 1,200 pounds, he had a 400 press, 355 snatch and a 445 clean and jerk. The outstanding heavy weight weights 270 pounds, stands just one-half inch shy of six feet, and was born on May 30, 1924. His measurements: Neck, 18 1/2 inches; arm 19 1/2; forearm 15 1/2 ; wrist , 8 1/2 / chest, normal ,52, expanded, 53; waist, 40, hips, 44; thigh, 30 and calves, 18 1/2. Besides the Olympic lifts, he does a 600 squat, 630 deadlift, 440 bench press and 225 curl. His Olympic record is enviable. In 1948 he was second, first in 1952 and third in 1960. He has been national titlist in 1949, 1951, 1952, 1953, 1954, 1957 and 1962. In 1953 he was named Mr. Michigan. He was All-Detroit shotput high school champion. (Note: Back surgery in 1955 nearly ended his career, missed 1956 Olympics.) Schemansky's Training Schedule (Average Week)

Mondays Low Snatch Pulls (from rack) 3 by 315, 3 by 365, 3 by 400 Low clean Pulls (from rack) 3 by 375, 3 by 450, 3 by 525 High Snatch Pulls (from rack) 3 by 315, 3 by 365, 3 by 400 High clean pulls (from rack) 3 by 400, 3 by 475, 3 by 550 Press 3 by 250, 3 by 275, 3 by 300, 3 by 325 Tuesday Press 3 by 250, 3 by 275, 3 by 300 Squats 3 by 315, 3 by 405, 3 by 455, 3 by 505 One quarter squats up to 700 or 800 Sometimes he does press lockouts Wednesday No work outs Thursday Power Snatch 2 reps of 205, 225, 245, and 265 Power Clean 2 reps of 300, 320, 340, and 360 Press 5 reps of 205, 225, 250, and 275 Friday No workouts Saturdays Olympic lifts up to 90 per cent. Sometimes he does squats and/or deadlifts Two to three Weeks prior to

meets Mondays Press 3 reps of 250, 275, 300, 325, 350 Snatch 2 reps of 205, 225, 245, 265, 285, 305 Clean 2 reps of 275, 325, 350, 375, 400 Wednesday Press 3 reps of 250, 275, 300, and 325 Snatch 2 reps of 205, 225, 250 and 275 Clean 2 reps of 275, 300, 325, and 350 Saturdays Olympic Lifts up to 90 per cent, Concentrates on form, style and speed. Squats

And, from Osmo's "Iron Master" Interview, a million dollar gem: "Don't attempt maximums in the gym. Concentrate on doubles, and so saving a lot of nervous energy. Some members of the U.S. Lifting team couldn't believe how much more I could do in a contest, where it counted. I was never burned out. Doubles also develop technique. Attempts at limit weights should be restricted to once every three or four weeks. One should not work any more than 80 to 90% of his limit in training."

Combining Diet and Training

An approach to cycling fasting, feasting and lifting

Special thanks to Steve Shafley and MLL for guidance here.

Week One

One nice thing about this program and eating plan is that it is basically how I train and eat. Certainly, there are variations. When my wife, Tiffini, goes out of town, I really focus on just meat and water...while spoiling Kelly and Lindsay. Like all my programs, I strive for "doable." Can a normal person with a life, a career, a social calendar do it? Note: Feel Free to Change exercises, reps, sets or whatever to achieve your goals. Shafman and I began discussing the idea of cycling volume with cycling various low carb programs and, well,...here you go!

Day One

[Warm Up](#) [Overhead Squats](#) A few Sets of Three; Mix in some "Extension Snatches" (From the extended "on the toes" position, pull yourself into the Overhead Squat position

Snatch Pull Two Sets of Five **Clean Pull** Two Sets of Five **Snatch Grip Deadlift** about six singles...same weight. The **two** sets are the top end,

heavy sets only, doesn't *necessarily* include warmups. [Go Home and Recover](#)

I tend to do a "Farmers Walk" with the thick bars that Mike Rosenberg made for me at the end of each workout. They are 2 and 1/2 inch thick pipes that weigh 55 pounds each. I usually add fives or tens on the ends, really to make picking up and dropping down easier on my knuckles. I don't go very far, but it sure helps my grip.

Here is Mike Rosenberg showing us the "way:"

Day Two

[Warm Up](#) Extension Snatches...a couple of sets [Overhead Squats](#): 3 sets of 8 with one minute rest. Using the wide snatch grip, lock the elbows with the weight overhead and squat down. Athletes who do this exercise well not only develop flexibility, balance and leg strength, but an incredibly strong lower back. Overhead squats make you very strong. Power Clean and [Front Squats](#): One power clean and eight front squats Once again, 3 sets of 8 with one minute rest. Stay "tall" in the front squats and keep your elbows high. Go hard on this. Serious Farmers Walk...longest of the week. [Go Home and Recover](#)

Day Three

[Warm Up](#) [Overhead Squats](#) A few Sets of Three **Thick Bar Clean Pulls**..."around" ten reps. 3 sets of 3...a bunch of singles...whatever **Thick Bar Deadlifts**...Six Heavy Singles (Basically with one weight, maybe a "little" increase over the sets. [Deadstop Front Squats](#): Up to a heavy (or max single)Total of only **six** singles. [Go Home and Recover](#)

Diet for this week, straight MLB! [Eat plenty of food, watch your allergies and drink your water.](#)

For more food help [look over and print this shopping list.](#)
[For a few ideas about water consumption, look here.](#)

Week Two

Day One

[Warm Up](#) [Overhead Squats](#) A few Sets of Three **Snatch Pull** Three sets of Three **Clean Pull** Three Sets of Three **Snatch Deadlift** about six singles...increasing weight. The **three** sets of three are the heavy sets, warm up as you wish. [Go Home and Recover](#)

Day Two

[Warm Up Overhead Squats](#): 3 sets of 8 with one minute rest. Using the wide snatch grip, lock the elbows with the weight overhead and squat down. Athletes who do this exercise well not only develop flexibility, balance and leg strength, but an incredibly strong lower back. Overhead squats make you very strong. Power Clean and [Front Squats](#).

"Tabata" front squats of twenty seconds of front squats, rest ten, repeat for a total of four minutes. (A killer conditioner, my max is 95 pounds on this, still doing reps in the last thirty seconds. I guess, I could go heavier, but it just kills me.)(Note: I have gone up to 155 since writing this...but 95 or 115 is a more "realistic" weight...if you want to strive for 8 sets of 8...try it...then ask questions.) [Go Home and Recover](#)

Day Three

[Warm Up Overhead Squats](#) A few Sets of Three **Thick Bar Clean Pulls**..."around" ten reps. 3 sets of 3...a bunch of singles...whatever **Thick Bar Deadlifts**...Six Heavy Singles (Basically with one weight, maybe a "little" increase over the sets. [Deadstop Front Squats](#): Up to a heavy (or max single)Total of only **six** singles. [Go Home and Recover](#)

Diet for this week, Heavy on the protein...back off on the carbs.
(MLBers: lots of M, some L...little B!

Week Three

Day One

[Warm Up Overhead Squats](#) A few Sets of Three **Snatch Pull** about six singles...increasing weight. **Clean Pull** about six singles...increasing weight. **Snatch Deadlift** about six singles...same weight. Try to sneak right up on maxs this week. [Go Home and Recover](#)

Day Two

[Warm Up](#) Power Clean and [Front Squats](#): One power clean and eight front squats Once again, 3 sets of 8 with one minute rest. Stay "tall" in the front squats and keep your elbows high. **Use the same weight for overhead squats that you use for front squats** [Overhead Squats](#): 3 sets of 8 with one minute rest. Using the wide snatch grip, lock the elbows with the weight overhead and squat down. Athletes who do this exercise well not

only develop flexibility, balance and leg strength, but an incredibly strong lower back. Overhead squats make you very strong. Serious Farmers Walk...longest of the week. [Go Home and Recover](#)

Day Three

[Warm Up](#) [Overhead Squats](#) A few Sets of Three **Thick Bar Clean Pulls**..."around" ten reps. 3 sets of 3...a bunch of singles...whatever **Thick Bar Deadlifts**...Six Heavy Singles (Basically with one weight, maybe a "little" increase over the sets. [Deadstop Front Squats](#): Up to a heavy (or max single)Total of only **six** singles. [Go Home and Recover](#)

Let the carbs go up this week...especially after workouts. For MLB types, go after the B.

Do this for three weeks, then take a week off. Don't do anything!

Some Diet Ideas for the off week:

During the week that you don't lift may be an excellent time to tighten the diet and prepare for the next training cycle. Get your **sleep** in this week! Go to bed earlier, cover the windows, turn the LCD of the alarm clock around and sleep more! Emulate the bear in winter...live off your fat while sleeping. Consider starting each day with Psyllium Seed and some hot water with lemon...to "encourage" elimination. End each day with a similar concoction. Especially, if you are going to... Try to live on meat and water only for a few days. Try to cycle your diet with either "Three Days ON (meat and water)and one day OFF (eat freely)" or the "Five ON, Two OFF" variation." Cyclical dieting seems to help "cut" people up. If you take any stimulates like ECA stacks or other fat burners, back off this week, while you increase your daily water consumption. Spend some time this week getting your "lifting life" in order: keep writing in the journal, catch up on reading magazines and books related to lifting, plan the next few weeks. Stay in the game mentally.

After the Week Off

When you come back, achieve new maxes in Deadstop Front Squat and proceed as before. You probably could also add some weight to your cleans and snatches and all other lifts still keeping the lifts within ranges

specified.

Do this for three more weeks and take five days off and then snatch up to max, clean and jerk up to max.

In other words, you do max lifts only once every two months to check things out...

As you relax your way into weightlifting greatness.

If you decide to go to a program with more squat work, consider my [Bulgarian "Twist" Program](#) based on [Anton Nikolov's](#) program, the magnificent 198 lifter, only did squats followed by pulls THREE days a week!

The One Lift a Day Program

Perhaps two of the most interesting articles ever to appear in Strength and Health were the two part "The American System" from the "Behind the Scenes" column by Tommy Suggs. For the purposes of this review, I will only look at the "One lift a day" guys, but the "Hungarian Systems" was the second most popular. The Hungarian System basically alternated light and heavy weeks, light being 60 percent, and heavy cycling through a classic percentage wave. Lifting days alternated between power days and "classic" or full lift days. Personally, I used this system for a month but I really overtrained. The workouts took a long time and I used very little support systems, partners, whirlpools, saunas, drugs, et al. So, I feel I cannot comment well on the program.

Note: these are the training weeks for the third week before the Trials

The three heavy weights on the "One lift a day:"

Joe Dube-Olympic Team Member-Heavyweight Class

Olympic Tryouts-462 Press, 336 Snatch, 468 Clean and Jerk, 1267 Total

Monday

Press: 135 for 5, 135 for 5, 225 for 3, 295 for 2, 355 for 2, 405 for 2, 425 for 2

Clean High Pulls: 225 for 3, 305 for 3, 375 for 3, 425 for 2, 450 for 2, 480 for 3 singles

Tuesday

Back Squats: 225 for 5, 315 for 5, 405 for 3, 505 for 3, 575 for 3, 625 for 3, 675 for 3, 700 for 1

Wednesday

Snatches (Performs power snatches until weight forces him into full snatch position) 135 for 3, 135 for 3, 205 for 2, 245 for 2, 275 for 2, 295 for 2, 310 for 2, 325 for 1

Thursday

Clean and Jerk: 225 for 3, 305 for 2, 355 for 1, 385 for 1, 415 for 1, 435 for 3 singles

Snatch High Pulls : 225 for 3, 275 for 3, 295 for 3, 315 for 3, 335 for 3, 355 for 3

Saturday

Work up to a light poundage on the three Olympic Lifts

George "Ernie" Pickett

Olympic Team Member- Heavyweight Class

Lifts at Trials: 457 Press, 341 Snatch, 462 Clean and Jerk, 1261 Total

Training Program

Monday

Snatch: 135 for 5, 205 for 3, 255 for 2, 295 for 2, 305 for 1, 320 for 3 singles

Tuesday

Seated Incline: 135 for 5, 205 for 3, 295 for 2, 315 for 2, 335 for 2, 345 for 2, 355 for 2

Wednesday

Cleans: 225 for 3, 305 for 2, 355 for 2, 355 for 2, 385 for 1, 405 for 1, 420 for 3 singles

Thursday

Front Squats: 225 for 5, 305 for 3, 355 for 3, 405 for 3, 455 for 3, 500 for 2

Saturday

Approximately 85 % of limit for a single on Olympic Lifts (Note: every once in a while will go all out on Saturday.)

Bob Bednarski

Olympic Team Alternate-Heavyweight Class

Lifts in Trials: 424 press, 358 Snatch, 451 Clean and Jerk, 1234 Total

Monday

Military Press: 135 for 5, 205 for 3, 250 for 3, 250 for 3, 275 for 3, 300 for 3, 325 for 3

Note: Dave Turner, a fine O lifter and Math teacher, did the percentages on

this and feels Bednarski may have gone too light here. He got behind on the press at the trials and had to make huge jumps to try to edge out Dube and Pickett.

Tuesday

Cleans: 135 for 5, 225 for 3, 300 for 1, 350 for 1, 400 for 1, 425 for 3 singles

Wednesday

Squat: 315 for 5, 405 for 5, 475 for 5, 525 for 5, 575 for 5, 625 for 1

Thursday

Snatch: 135 for 5, 205 for 3, 250 for 1, 285 for 1, 305 for 1, 325 for 3 singles

Saturday

Work up in three Olympic lifts to approximately 1200 total

Sunday

Squats: same sets as Wednesday, except skip the last set

The roots of this training for Bednarski came from the time he went from a 950 total to 1100 in four months. He moved up a weight class and focused on weak points, especially his legs.

A typical week:

Monday Morning:

Squats: 325 for 5, 375 for 5, 425 for 5, 475 for 5, 500 for 2, 525 for 1

Evening

Press: 225 for 5, 255 for 3, 285 for 3, 305 for 2, 325 for 1, 340 for 1

Clean and Jerk: 355 for 2, 375 for 1, 400 for 1, 400 for 1, 415 for 1, 400 for 1

Wednesday Morning

Squats: 305 for 5, 350 for 5, 400 for 5, 450 for 3, 475 for 2, 500 for 1

Evening

Snatch: 225 for 5, 255 for 3, 285 for 2, 305 for 1, 315 for 1, 325 for 1

Clean and Jerk: 355 for 2, 375 for 1, 400 for 1, 400 for 1, 415 for 1, 415 for 1

Saturday

Squats: 350 for 5, 375 for 5, 400 for 5, 450 for 3, 475 for 2, 500 for 1, 525 for 1

Snatch: 225 for 5, 255 for 3, 285 for 2, 305 for 1, 315 for 1, 315 for 1, 315 for 1

Sunday

Try limit on three Olympic Lifts

In December of 1968, this workout was reported in his "Lifter of the Year" article:

Monday: Presses, working up to 5 sets of three with a moderate poundage-350 to 385 pounds.

Tuesday: Snatches, up to five sets of three with 305.

Wednesday: Squats up to three reps with 450-500.

Thursday: Clean and jerk up to 3-5 singles with 405-425.

Friday: Rest

Saturday: Total or work heavy on two lifts.

Sunday: Squats up to three reps with 450-500.

One forgotten little workout that I like of Bednarski's was his first "Lifter of the Year" award after he did so well at the 1966 World Championships.

Best lifts at the time: 402, 352, 446

Monday

Noon workout

Squat: 305 for 5, 355 for 5, 405 for 5, 455 for 5, 505 for 3

Afternoon

Military Press: 132 for 5, 220 for 5, 264 for 3 (for five sets of 3)

Tuesday

Isometric Work: 3 pulls, bottom, midway, top, 1 squat midway, 3 presses, start, middle, finish

Wednesday

Noon

Squat: Same as Monday

Afternoon

Snatch 132 for 5, 220 for 3, 264 for 2, 286 for 1, 308 for five singles

Thursday

Power Cleans

132 for 5, 220 for 3, 264 for 3, 286 for 3, 308 for 3 sets of 3

Saturday

Work up to three Olympic Lifts to 90-95 percent of limit.

Two weeks before a contest he goes up to starting attempts.
He gets at least three days' rest before a meet.
This is the program that I stole to do my best O lifting. Of course, it worked so well, I dropped it and did something else.

Four Reasons To Olympic Lift

It was January in Utah and as I looked out my garage door, I saw another blanket of snow layer my driveway. As soon as I finished lifting, I would march back into the house, change shoes and scrap the path clean again.

I have been banging plates and lifting weights since the first Nixon administration. When I started lifting, the sport of Olympic lifting was king and all the other lifting sports were snickered at for attracting "oddballs." Then came the machine age and these expensive and profit heavy behemoths slowly elbowed out barbells and dumbbells out of the gyms (now spas, fitness centers, and "heavens") and into the cellars and garages. So, that is why, in snowstorms, my neighbors peer out their frosted windows, look at the steam roaring out of my nose, shake their heads, and go back to watching "Must See TV."

What are the advantages of Olympic Lifting? Why do the Clean and Press, variations of the Snatch, and the Clean and Jerk provide not only a complete workout but complement any training program? Let's look at four reasons:

First, the most surprising aspect of Olympic Lifting is its effect on the cardiovascular system. A few years ago, Doctor Michael Stone studied the cardiovascular benefits of Olympic Lifting. He was shocked to find the improvements made by this form of training. But why? It is a simple matter of the length of the movement of the bar. In a wrist curl, the bar may move

four inches. In a Clean and Jerk, the bar moves from the floor to overhead, upwards of seven and a half feet! Every muscle in the body is used, including all the support system. A tough set of Snatches leaves the lifter heaving for breath, sweating in streams, and the heart racing. All this without even having to go the track!

Second, the human body is built in one piece. By lifting the bar from the ground to overhead, the entire body is called into act. As one begins the slow process of adding weights to the Olympic Lifts, the entire body compensates by getting bigger and stronger. One of the first areas most novices to Olympic Lifting discover is the whole chain of muscles from the gluteus and the spinal erectors to the trapezius. Shirts begin to fit funny as the muscles of the upper back grow to accommodate the pulling movements. What muscles do the Olympic Lifts build? All of them.

Third, it is difficult to overtrain or go too heavy on the Olympic Lifts. Certainly, it is possible, but because of the movement from floor to overhead, there is little room for forced reps, overload techniques, or any form of cheating. There is no bench, no rack, no supports. A lifting partner can't stick his hand on the bar and make you squeeze out an extra rep. Olympic Lifting demands discipline in choosing weights within your abilities. But, the payoff is worth it. The feeling of hoisting bodyweight from floor to overhead for the first time remains a treasured memory years later.

Fourth, Olympic Lifting workouts don't take very long. A solid workout of 5-4-3-2-1 or twenty singles can take less than half an hour. Working the entire body, as well as the cardiovascular system, the Olympic Lifts are very taxing. It would be hard to imagine ten sets of ten with bodyweight in the Olympic Lifts. It is hard to imagine one set. If time is pressing, take a warm up weight and Clean and Press it for ten. Add some weight, and do five. Add some more and do three. Then, keep adding smaller plates and knock off as many singles as you can, until you can't. Workout over.

When your garage is warming up to freezing because of the steam off your body, you will understand the importance of short, quick workouts. When you can do bodyweight in all three of the lifts, look in the mirror. You will understand the importance of the Olympic Lifts.

Hoffman Standards

Exercise	132#	148#	165#	181#	198+
Ab raise	70 62 54	76 68 60	82 71 63	88 78 68	94 84 74
Pull-over	94 84 73	102 91 80	110 100 90	117 106 95	124 110 96
Deadlift	400 355 311	430 385 335	460 415 370	490 445 400	520 475 430
Stiff leg DL	260 320 280	390 350 310	415 375 330	440 400 360	470 430 390
1 arm DL	295 263 230	320 285 250	345 310 270	365 330 295	385 350 315
Floor press	200 180 160	215 195 175	235 215 185	250 230 210	260 240 220
Bridge press	250 225 200	270 245 220	290 265 235	310 285 260	330 305 280
Box press	190 170 150	205 185 165	220 200 180	235 215 200	245 225 210
Front Hold Out	60 55 50	65 60 55	70 63 56	75 67 59	80 72 64
Crucifix	100 90 80	110 100 90	115 105 95	120 110 100	130 120 110
Lat Raise	75 67 59	80 72 64	85 75 65	90 80 70	95 85 75
Curl	115 103 91	125 112 99	135 120 105	145 130 115	155 140 125
Rev. Curl	95 85 75	105 95 85	115 100 85	120 105 90	125 110 95
1h Curl	70 62 55	75 67 60	80 72 63	87 78 69	95 85 75
DB Mil Press	85 77 69	90 81 72	95 85 75	100 90 80	105 95 85
Side Press	122 114 106	131 125 115	140 132 124	146 138 130	152 142 134
Hi Bar squat	300 275 250	325 300 275	350 325 300	375 350 325	400 375 350
Squat on toes	140 115 90	155 130 105	165 140 115	175 150 125	190 165 140
UP Row	140 115 90	155 130 105	170 142 115	185 155 125	200 170 140
Old Leg Press	400 350 300	435 385 335	470 420 370	510 455 415	550 490 430
Old Leg Curl	70 62 55	75 67 60	80 72 63	87 78 69	93 84 75
Half Squat	450 400 350	490 440 390	530 480 430	565 515 465	600 540 480
Straddle Lift	450 400 350	490 440 390	530 480 430	565 515 465	600 545 490
Leg Raise	45 37 30	50 45 35	55 48 40	60 53 45	65 58 50
Alternate Press	85 78 70	95 88 80	105 98 90	115 108 100	125 118 110
Bend Over	150 125 100	175 145 115	200 165 130	225 190 155	250 210 170
Strict Press	165 145 125	175 155 135	190 170 150	205 180 155	215 195 175
PBN	145 128 110	155 136 118	168 150 132	180 160 135	190 172 155
Snatch	170 155 140	185 170 155	200 185	215 200 185	230 215 200
			170		
Hang Snatch	165 150 135	180 165 150	195 180 165	210 195 180	225 210 190
1h Snatch	130 118 105	140 128 115	150 137 125	155 145 130	165 150 135
1h C&J	145 130 115	155 140 125	170 155 140	180 165 150	190 175 160
DB Swing	115 105 95	135 125 115	145 135 120	155 140 125	165 150 135
C&J	220 200 180	240 220 200	260 240 220	280 260 240	300 280 260
Hang Clean	210 190 170	230 210 190	255 235 215	275 255 235	290 270 250
Cont. & Jerk	230 210 190	250 230 210	275 255 235	290 270 250	310 290 270
Jerk BN	220 200 180	240 220 200	265 245 225	285 265 245	300 280 260
Cont. Press	175 155 135	190 170 150	200 190 170	215 200 180	230 210 190
Bent press	175 155 135	190 170 150	205 185 165	215 195 175	225 205 185
2hnd. Anyhow	210 190 170	225 205 185	240 220 200	260 240 220	280 260 240

In Season Training

Two rules for In-Season Training

First, the body is one piece. One can only ask so many demands on the

system. Once a season begins, it is time to focus on technical and competitive improvements, it is too late to improve on conditioning and strength.

Second, specificity works, but at a price. As one improves in the competitive arena through multiple repetitions, repetitive injuries begin to creep in. Balanced training, or crosstraining, may assist the health of the athlete, but may also overtrain the athlete. In addition, the effort spent to balance training takes away time and energy from training the sport. One might be “healthier,” but in second place.

It is important to define “health.” Health is the systems of the body working optimally. Fitness, on the other hand, is the ability to perform a task. Using the Harvard step test to test the health of wheelchair bound individuals would be obviously wrong, yet we often use running to test the health of strength and power athletes, like football players. Health can be measured by comparing blood tests; fitness is simply the ability to do a given task.

The implications of this discussion for the in-season athlete is simple: the athlete must measure fitness by improvement in sport, yet be sure to address issues of health. Drink water, don’t smoke, wear a seat belt, avoid sugar, and keep your relationships healthy. Simple advice, but often ignored during the season. If your not using your seat belt, ignore discussions about creatine.

A wonderful system for holding peak condition for weeks and weeks was developed by some guys in California. It involves training hard three days a week with weights, as well as three hard days of training the sport. The key, though, was to lift and train on the same days, while resting the other four.

Example:

Monday: Train hard

Tuesday: Rest

Wednesday: Train hard

Thursday: Rest

Friday: Rest

Saturday: After the competition, train very hard

Sunday: Rest

If it is impossible to train after the competition, this program was recommended:

Monday: Rest

Tuesday: Train hard
Wednesday: Rest
Thursday: Train light
Friday: Rest
Saturday: Compete
Sunday: Train very hard

I have trained athletes using this system, but young athletes tend to want to train daily. I believe that some athletes compromise the hard days by doing these extra “easy” workouts and miss the underlying concept of this program: to improve you have to have high intensity.

One lift a day training works very well on this system. Adding the Bulgarian twist, starting workouts with squats or front squats really seems to help, too, if the athlete feels that they can handle the loading of doing more than one exercise hard in a workout.

Monday
Sport Training Front Squat, single pyramid, followed by
Snatches (or variations) double pyramid

Wednesday
Squat, single pyramid, followed by
Clean and Overhead Work (Press, Jerk, Push Jerk) double pyramid

Saturday
Competition
Squat, single pyramid
Snatch, single pyramid
Clean and Press/Jerk single pyramid

Continue to vary loads from week to week.
Week one: 7 sets of 5 (35 total reps)
Week two: 6 sets of 3 (18 reps, half the week before.)
Week three: Simple pyramid 5-4-3-2-1 (15 reps) Week four: Off

An Overview of Bill March Materials

First, I didn't write any of this! I had some people ask me about Functional

Isometric Contractions and I put this together for those interested. I hope it helps.

From the July 1964 "Lifters Corner," by John Terpak, in Strength and Health:

"One of our bright hopes in the forthcoming Olympic Games will be Bill March, the sensational 26 year old middleheavyweight and world record holder. He has the ability, courage, determination and strength to come home with a Gold Medal."

The following are March's responses to questions:

"How do you develop strength?"

'The March overload power system.'

'My workouts are Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesday s, and Thursdays. On Fridays, I rest. Then on Saturdays I workout as if I am in a contest.

Whether you do the power lifts or Olympic lifts, go for the maximum. If doing this every Saturday is too much do limit poundages on every other Saturday.'

'I find that Saturday workouts really feel lighter and you suffer fewer mental blocks. I usually use 100 to 300 pounds less in the Olympic lifts than on the other days when working on the racks. It is an asset to the lifter. I know of men who are strong but when the weight gets to 300, 350 or 400 pounds, they become afraid and cannot handle this poundage. It is not because they lack strength but because of their mental attitude.'

'My routine is broken down into what I call low position and high position days. This I have done because as I progress and use increasingly heavier weight, the combining of the high and low positions places too much work on the muscles and fatigue sets in. I try to stay away from this problem. You want to work the muscles to get maximum effort from them but still not overwork or fatigue them. This system uses only one set of three repetitions in each position.'

First thing that has to be done is to find the individual sticking points. You have done enough lifting to know where you push or pull hard. Work on this point. Do not try to imitate me. Find your own sticking point. You might be interested in knowing that one inch up or down on the power rack can mean using 100 pounds more or less.

'Saturdays I go all out on the three Olympic lifts. Each Saturday, I try to do better than the week before.' 'I feel the trouble with most lifters is that they overtrain. They spend too much time doing endless sets and reps with weight they know they can handle. Take for instance the clean and jerk. There are many men who are good enough to do 380 pounds or 400 pounds, but they will never get there. The best exercise for the clean is high pulls, either on the rack or regular. If their best is 360, they never use that much weight or more or they should do so just to get the feel of heavier weights. When contest time rolls around, and they should reach

360, they have a mental block. With the rack, you are always using 300 or 400 pounds more than is necessary for your best Olympic lift.'

'I eat lots of meats, salads, milk, whole wheat bread, vegetables, and plenty of fruit. I eat quite a bit of dry fruit. I also take-with meals- Vitamin B and C and Energol (Hoffman's wheat germ oil). I am a strong believer in Vitamin C.

Best official lifts: Press 355, Snatch 315, Clean and Jerk 405, Total 1065. In training, he pressed 370.

March's measurements: Weight 200, Height 5-7, neck 17, arm 17 and three quarters, forearm 15 and three quarters, wrist 7 and a half, chest 46, expanded 48 and a half, waist 33, hips 42, thigh 29, and calf 17 and a half. Monday and Wednesday

Deadlifts: "On the third rep, when the weight gets two inches off the pins, I hold it at that spot for 12 seconds, then put the bar down and move on to the next position."

Low Pull (clean grip?)

Low Squat

Low Press

Tuesday and Thursday

Deadlift (every day)

High Pull (Note: "Here I use the snatch grip . . ." It seems that in the Sixties, racks were wider. I used a York rack in 1976, and I could use my normal snatch grip. This was a sturdy machine and it was very safe. As I understand, they were fairly inexpensive. Hmmm... Well made, sturdy, efficient, and cheap? No wonder fern bar gyms don't use them!)

Middle Press

Top Press

Quarter Squat

'I use the same poundage for one week then increase it 10 or 20 pounds the next, always trying to use more and more. In this I am using more and more each week. This builds a good mental attitude as well as overwhelming power.'

'If you are wondering about hitting a limit poundage-don't. I do not believe there is one! Each time I have taken a layoff from Power Rack training (about every two months) I always surpass my previous high poundages in each position.'

Just for the record and perhaps as a guide for other power lifters, here are the highest poundages I have used for each position:

Deadlift 575

Low Pull 700

Low Squat 430

Low Press 525

High Pull 475

Middle Press 380

Top Press 825

Quarter Squat 1,425

'There it is. For real power and a great bodybuilding workout you can't beat it. This system can be use on the Power Lifts or any bodybuilding movement. If you do try it, I hope it works as well for you as it did for me and fellow who train with me.'

Fridays: Rest

Saturdays: Attempts record Olympic lifts

From "Power Rack Training for the Beginner"

Sam Bigler shows all the positions including the Middle Pull. This article seems to contradict itself in a few places. However, these points seem valid:

"Power rack training is one of the best methods of training you will use during your lifting career. But, it is only as good as you make it. You must believe in it. You must give it a fair trial. You must be willing to do what the routine calls for and then stop, even though your workouts seem short compared to the routines followed by some of your friends. Concentrate so you can support the weight for the 12 second hold. Train, don't strain. If you come to a weight you can't handle, don't pass out trying to lift it, but instead drop the poundage back and stay with the lighter weight for a few days until you are strong enough to increase the poundage and still perform the exercise properly.'

'You may feel as though nothing is happening, but stay with this routine. As the weeks pass you will take great pleasure in the improvement you are making in both your strength and physique. Scientists and researchers have proven this system of training. It will work.'

From "Behind the Scenes" Sept 64 by Tommy Suggs

"The matter of overtraining is of the utmost importance. Bill March's favorite example on this point is one of the best I have heard. A lifter trains only irregularly and upon entering a contest finds that he may do some of the best lifting of his life. He then says to himself that if he could do this well with so little training, just think what he could do with a little extra work. He then increases his training due to his increased enthusiasm and number of weeks later enters a contest. To his dismay, he finds he does poorly. The reason-OVERTRAINING!"

'A good example of this point is Bill March. When he was training under the supervision of Dr. Ziegler, a director of the Hoffman Foundation, they were able to measure the amount of fatigue that existed in the individual muscles. Very often Doc would tell Bill to lay off for three or four days at a time and Bill's progress was nothing but up at this time. However, a lifter must be careful and distinguish between laziness and actual fatigue. One final thing, keep a record of the poundages and exercises you use at every

workout.”

From “Behind the Scenes” Oct 64 by Tommy Suggs

“After all, you can’t argue with success (a Bill March quote).”

In “Making Weight for a Contest” by Bob Hoffman

A nice pictorial study of March dropping weight to break the American Record

Final summary:

“To summarize: live as normally as possible as the big contest approaches but reduce your sugar and starches to a minimum. Eat lots of protein and use germ oil concentrate as this has a tendency to reduce excess weight. Drink normally until a day or two before the contest. If necessary, take off what weight must be lost the day before and the day of the competition.

Bill March took off 12 pounds in two days before the recent Region 1 contest and was still strong enough to make a new American total record of 1040. And finally, don’t reduce too soon or you will be weak. What you want to do is have the strength of the class above and the bodyweight of the class below.”

I had a request for some information about Bill March's training. He was an outstanding O lifter in the early 1960's. Although he gets a bad reputation today because of one of the reasons for his rapid increases, I worry we are "throwing the baby out with the bath water" by ignoring some of his insights into training. I called some people who worked with York Barbell at this time and got some insights about March. First, isometric contractions were designed to be "without movement," but March liked to see the weights moved which developed into the system I copy below. Also, for an o lifter, this program would only work with someone with good motor pathways, that is, a good athlete. Finally, in my calls, one man, whose name I forgot (sorry!), really emphasized the importance of choosing the right bar position and holding the body in proper positions and not cheating to get the lift.

In my opinion, March has some great insights on two things: first, arguing against multiple sets and reps with weights you can handle. Brian Oldfield, the 75 foot shot putter, told me his best year was the year he only did three exercises: partial pulls, partial squats and partial presses (his terms) in the racks twice a week always trying to go heavier. He could never clean, he said, the weights he was crashing in the racks. This is overload. Second, March's insights on overtraining is right on. I "could have been a contender" if I hadn't overtrained.

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Another Steroid Article

It has been happening. Just like my coaches and friends warned me about over twenty years ago. In the past year, three of my friends have died. Two of my childhood heroes are shells of men even though they are only in their fifties. In the tiny throwing community, guys who toss the shot, disc, hammer and javelin, the talk of early deaths, heart attacks, and terrible joint problems are becoming as commonplace of a discussion as the weather.

I saw it happening, too. A mediocre thrower would suddenly start dominating local and regional competition. In Olympic lifting, a lifter who had been making the usual progress would within months add forty pounds in the snatch and sometimes more in the clean and jerk. You could see the other effects, too, the bloated self-confidence, the terrible skin traumas, and then the injuries. It seemed that everywhere one looked you saw blown biceps, dislocated elbows, and popped ligaments as the body failed to keep up with the increased load and intensity over such a short amount of time.

And, we all denied it. I listened in shock as a former world record holder in the discus told a group of high school seniors at the Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs: "I took 'em and never had any side effects, but I was told I couldn't tell you to take 'em, so I won't." We watched men go from regional runner ups to national level competitors, then literally disappear from the sport in less than a few years. And, if it could get worse, a father, now a coach at a Salt Lake City high school, provide "em" for his own sons. The lying, the deceit, the cheating, ...I thought that was the worst of it.

Until I got that phone call that one of my training partners had died. Age 35, three kids, ...heart attack. A glorious athlete with all the numbers that stagger people: over 230 in the discus, over 800 in the squat, mid-300 snatch, over ten feet in the standing long jump. We were friends, too. We drove to meets together, trained together, partied together and gave clinics together. My wife, Tiffini, pregnant with my seven-year-old daughter Lindsay, cooked up a huge turkey dinner to celebrate our success at a big meet. After dinner, we talked about training. An injured wrist made him turn to the disc from the shot put. "You know, I have never thrown the discus clean."

What? "Yes, I started juicing at 16 as a shot-putter, my coach gave them to me, so when I picked up the disc, I was already heavy into them." No way. "Yes." When I put the telephone down after hearing about his death,

my mind drifted back to that dinner. Since 16. Died at 35. My brother-in-law, Craig Hemingway, was with me when the call came. After I hung up, I told him that my friend had died. Craig answered: "Well, you won."

It took me weeks to understand that insight. Walking my dog with my wife and two daughters, I understood Craig's point. I had just finished training; I was focusing on an upcoming weightlifting meet. It was that simple: I won. I was alive, strong, and healthy. I was 42.

Obviously, I am talking about anabolic steroids. They have been the curse of the strength sports since the early 1960's. "The answer to all questions," proclaimed one very famous powerlifter. Of course, he forgot to tell his audience that he would have multiple heart surgeries in his thirties. "Die big" proclaims the hoards of wannabe "Mr. Galaxies." Unfortunately, you just die.

But what else died? Training knowledge was another casualty. Almost two generations of athletes have lost the classic methods of lifting. Drugs allow more volume, so "more" became the rage. More exercises, more days a week, more sets, more reps, more supplements, more, more, more.

Isolation exercises became the fashion culminating in the rise of machines that continue to attempt to isolate each muscle from the other. A new problem emerged: if a group of us are all training on machines, how do we measure progress?

The first machines had "weights." Numbers were stenciled on the weight stacks, '40,' '50' and on up to the last plate. Soon, the ordinary numbers replaced the weight numbers. Now, it is usually the letters of the alphabet. How do we measure progress? Well, I began with 'E,' but now I am doing 'J' for the same number of reps. I hear there is a Russian who does 'Q.'

NO WAY! Way.

So, how do you measure progress? In the pre-drug era, you could look at your bench, squat, clean, snatch or press bests and compare those numbers to people lifting in meets or articles about athletes in the magazine. A 200 pound snatch for a 200 pound man seems like a good measuring stick. But, how do you compare plates on a machine. You can't. Let's look in the mirror. Now, pick up the soft-core porn bodybuilding magazine and compare yourself to this month's champ.

With the mirror and magazine as the only standard, what can you fall back on? Two things: go to the gym pusher and get signed up for a felony transaction or blame mom and dad. Mom and dad? Yes, blame your genetics. The third option is to do both: take drugs and blame genetics.

Of course, there are those willing to take enough drugs to make it work. Does it work? Flip through any bodybuilding magazine over two years old and look at the competitors. Besides those who have died, see if you can see a name that would be in a bodybuilding competition next month. Go to a magazine five years old. Do you even recognize the names?

Compare these may flies with the careers of Davis, Kono and Schemansky. These men all had careers that spanned decades; Skee was still stalking national titles into his mid-forties. Why the long careers? I argue that the slow and steady progress of using fundamental training principles is the key to long term success. It can be stated in a thousand different ways, but I like "Go Hard, Go Heavy and Go Home. Repeat." Yet, a larger question still haunts me. How we stop the deaths, the injuries, and the destruction of this plague of steroids. I can't enforce the crystal clear Federal laws when police officers in many areas are regular steroid users. As a citizen of Salt Lake City, I doubt the Olympic committee will do anything in the area of drug use after the widespread and unapologetic corruption of the leaders of "the movement." I can't compete with the muscle rags that promote pornography, questionable lifestyles, and "secret" mumbo jumbo that keeps adolescent boys shelling out their allowances for the next issue.

Let me give some simple ideas that may slow (I pray we stop) the progress of the steroid pushers: 1. Use poundage on the bar as a standard and use standard lifts. Compare progress by looking at what other lifters at the same weight and age lifted. Use the standards: press, snatch, clean and jerk, squat, deadlift and bench press. Maybe one or two other lifts would make this list, but stick with the standards.

2. Use a mirror when you comb your hair and brush your teeth. Don't use it to measure progress as an athlete. True, before and after pictures have their value in fat loss programs or prepping for a bodybuilding contest. But, if you are not on a fat loss program or getting ready for Mr. Vermont, why use them? Mirrors, on the other hand, lead to vanity, a classic deadly sin. Vanity leads to ...

3. Convince yourself, and others, that success is the steps one takes towards a worthy goal. First, determine a goal. As a high school athlete, I wanted a college scholarship. I had to go to a Junior College first, but I got my goal. Is a college degree a worthy goal? I think most people would agree it is. Is a fuller pec a worthy goal? Next, determine the steps you will need to take. If you need help on the steps, read Dino Training again. But, remember, be sure you have those other goals listed, too. The professional, personal, social, and other worthy things you wish to achieve in your life.

4. Redefine "winning." Take a moment with my brother-in-law's insight. "Well, you won."

I'm still lifting. I'm still throwing. I'm still walking with my wife and girls. I'm alive and I'm still trying to help others climb the mountain. I miss my friends and I don't want to bury anymore needlessly.

[The Resound! Home Page](#)

HTML Attachment [[Scan and Save to Computer](#)]

Conceptual Training

First, thanks to Mike Conroy from Idaho Weightlifting for providing me with this information. He is a gentlemen and a fanatic (for lifting). Second, keep in mind throughout that this is a “doable” program, as long as you listen to your body. 100 % is often a vague concept: think “100%” for today, not your completely peaked, high performance national contest best. Good luck.

Conceptual Training

Week One

Day One

Power Snatch (Olympic Movements are done for singles to maximum efforts each session then followed for 3 back off sets between 75 and 80 % (of that session’s max) for doubles. 24-30 reps for each session)

Push Press

Shock Squats (Shock Squats are a set of five followed by a heavy single. You should have 3 sets of five and two singles to complete the session. I am quoting the sheet here, maybe it means three singles)

Day Two

Power Clean and Push Jerk (Olympic Movements are done for singles to maximum efforts each session then followed for 3 back off sets between 75 and 80 % (of that session’s max) for doubles. 24-30 reps for each session)

Front Squat

Day Three

(Pulls and Squats are done for 3s as heavy as possible for 3 sets. Pulls should be in the 100-120% range. Squats should NEVER be less than 80 %.)

Snatch Pulls

Clean Pulls

Back Squat

Day Four: Total

Snatch

Clean and Jerk

Front Squat

Week Two

Day One

Hang Snatch (Olympic Movements are done for singles to maximum efforts each session then followed for 3 back off sets between 75 and 80 % (of that session's max) for doubles. 24-30 reps for each session)

Push Press

Shock Squats (Shock Squats are a set of five followed by a heavy single. You should have 3 sets of five and two singles to complete the session. I am quoting the sheet here, maybe it means three singles)

Day Two

Hang Clean (Olympic Movements are done for singles to maximum efforts each session then followed for 3 back off sets between 75 and 80 % (of that session's max) for doubles. 24-30 reps for each session)

Rack Jerk

Front Squats

Day Three

(Pulls and Squats are done for 3s as heavy as possible for 3 sets. Pulls should be in the 100-120% range. Squats should NEVER be less than 80 %.)

Snatch Pulls

Clean Pulls

Back Squat

Day Four: Total

Snatch

Clean and Jerk

Front Squat

Week Three

Day One

3 Stage Snatch: Three Stage Lifts are done with the first rep being a full power movement, next rep is from the hang, final rep is the full Olympic lift from the floor. (Olympic Movements are done for singles to maximum efforts each session then followed for 3 back off sets between 75 and 80 % (of that session's max) for doubles. 24-30 reps for each session)

Push Press

Shock Squats (Shock Squats are a set of five followed by a heavy single. You should have 3 sets of five and two singles to complete the session. I am quoting the sheet here, maybe it means three singles)

Day Two

3 Stage Clean (Olympic Movements are done for singles to maximum efforts each session then followed for 3 back off sets between 75 and 80 % (of that session's max) for doubles. 24-30 reps for each session)

Rack Jerk

Front Squat

Day Three

(Pulls and Squats are done for 3s as heavy as possible for 3 sets. Pulls should be in the 100-120% range. Squats should NEVER be less than 80 %.)

Snatch Pulls

Clean Pulls

Back Squats

Day Four: Total; but only go 80% for 3 reps.

Snatch

Clean and Jerk

Front Squat

Week Four

Day One

Snatch (Olympic Movements are done for singles to maximum efforts each session then followed for 3 back off sets between 75 and 80 % (of that session's max) for doubles. 24-30 reps for each session)

Push Press

Shock Squats (Shock Squats are a set of five followed by a heavy single. You should have 3 sets of five and two singles to complete the session. I am quoting the sheet here, maybe it means three singles)

Day Two

Clean and Jerk (Olympic Movements are done for singles to maximum efforts each session then followed for 3 back off sets between 75 and 80 % (of that session's max) for doubles. 24-30 reps for each session)

Front Squat

Day Three

(Pulls and Squats are done for 3s as heavy as possible for 3 sets. Pulls should be in the 100-120% range. Squats should NEVER be less than 80 %.)

Snatch Pulls

Clean Pulls

Back Squat

Day Four : Total

Snatch

Clean and Jerk

Front Squat

This is very similar to what Joe Dube was doing back in 1968, as well as the other great Heavyweights, Pickett and Bednarski.