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# POWER

JULY/AUGUST 2012

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**THE NEW KING OF THE 242s**  
**JUHA SOMEROJA**

JUL/AUG 2012 • VOL. 3, NO. 4

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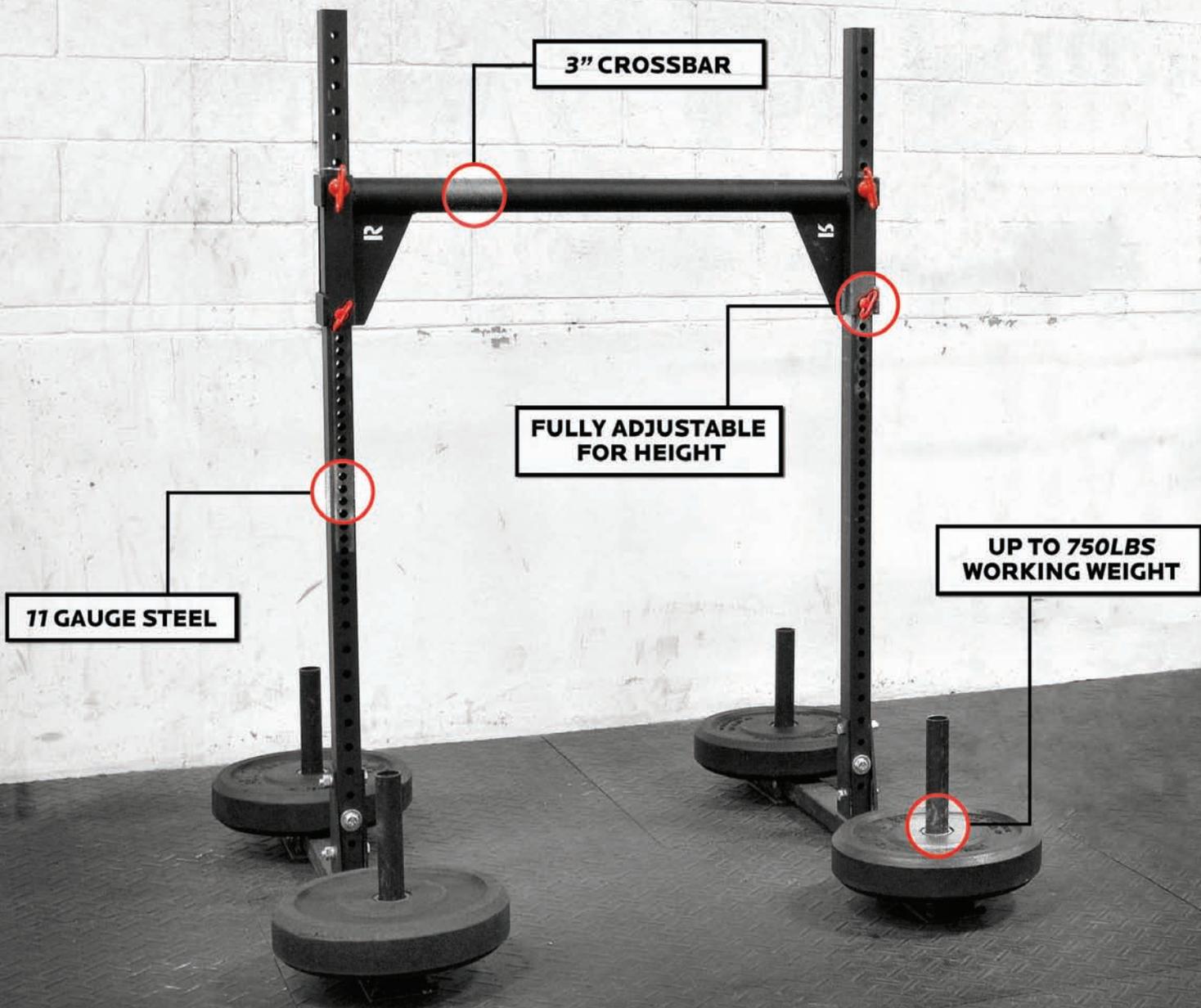
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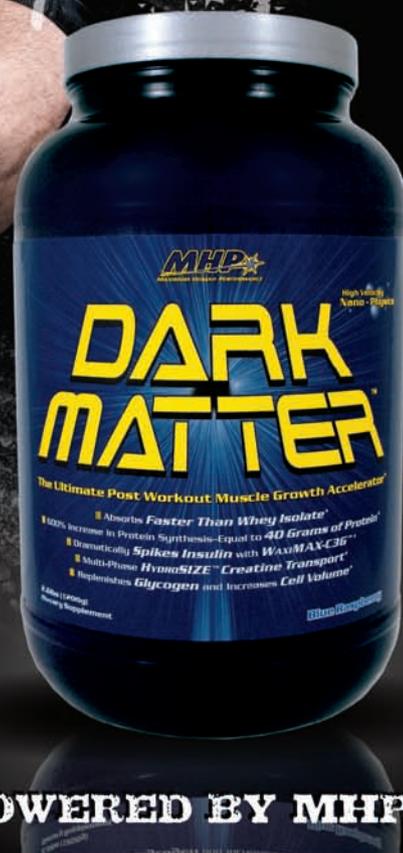
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## THE STRONGEST PEOPLE I EVER MET

**T**he strongest people I ever met in my lifetime are not Donnie Thomson and Dave Hoff, not Ed Coan and Derek "Chicken Shake" Poundstone. The strongest people I ever met are my mom and dad.

I know what you're thinking: Another big sob story from Mark Bell. Call it what you want, but I need to write about it. I saw my mom's strength in a whole new light as she deflected each strike that was thrown her way, like she was the Dragon Warrior (aka Kung Fu Panda). I saw her stand tall (she's actually pretty short) and give an amazing speech in front of hundreds of people at her church. These people were on the edge of their seats with tears dripping down their faces as they listen to her heartfelt yet lighthearted testimonial. She was a real pro on the mic! My mom pointed out to people that life is a choice, and that ultimately my dad, through the blessings of his unrelenting wife and god, decided I WANT TO LIVE!

There were times where my dad physically said, "I am done, I don't want to be here." But in the end, when he realized how badly he actually wanted to survive, he recovered rapidly. This ended up taking a lot of support, which goes to show that no one is strong on their own. My mom stood by my dad's side through some awfully dark places. That's right, I'm talking about New York City (ha, ha, ha). The courage they both displayed on a 75-day journey, while my dad nearly died several times, was flat-out biblical. Makes me think to myself that there was a reason I saw it. I will never forget the strength and love they displayed, and next time someone asks about the strongest person I ever met, I'll tell them it's a tie between my mom and dad for No. 1!

### SPEAKING OF FAMILY

Remember when you reached the point when you were stronger than your dad? In the case of the Lilliebridge family, that accomplishment actually means something. Jeff "Mr. Robot Pants" Irion reports on the family that has 777-lb. deadlift minimum requirement to be part of it. What better guy to conduct an interview on "strength genes" than a guy called Mr. Robot Pants? Last issue we featured Brad Gillingham. Together with his brothers Karl and Wade, they're one of the strongest families in the world. This issue we feature another strong family: the Lilliebridges.

Carb/Breakfast "Nazi" John Kiefer gets put on the hot seat by yours truly. I explore many aspects of Carb Nite and carb backloading so we all have a better understanding of Kiefer's message.

Punky, aka Sheryl Condon, interviews one of the strongest women in the history of the sport: Jennifer Thompson. Jen lifts in a drug tested federation and she has benched 300 lbs. at 132, raw.

Derek Poundstone has been added to juice up the pages with expert Strongman content. Not only that, I'm going to try to keep up with Derek to have him in every issue of Power!

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"What is the point of being on this earth if you behave and act like everyone else? You must break the rules." —Arnold

#### Mark Bell

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Pound for pound arguably the strongest woman in lifting today. Sheryl

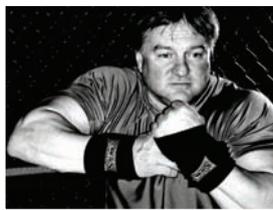
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**JOE MAZZA** – World Record Bench: 705 lbs. @ 165 lbs.

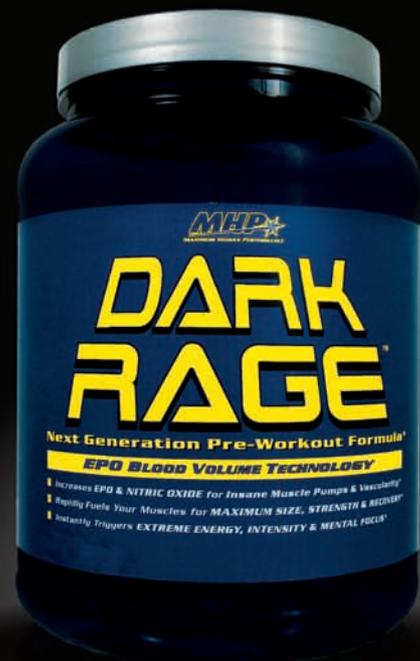
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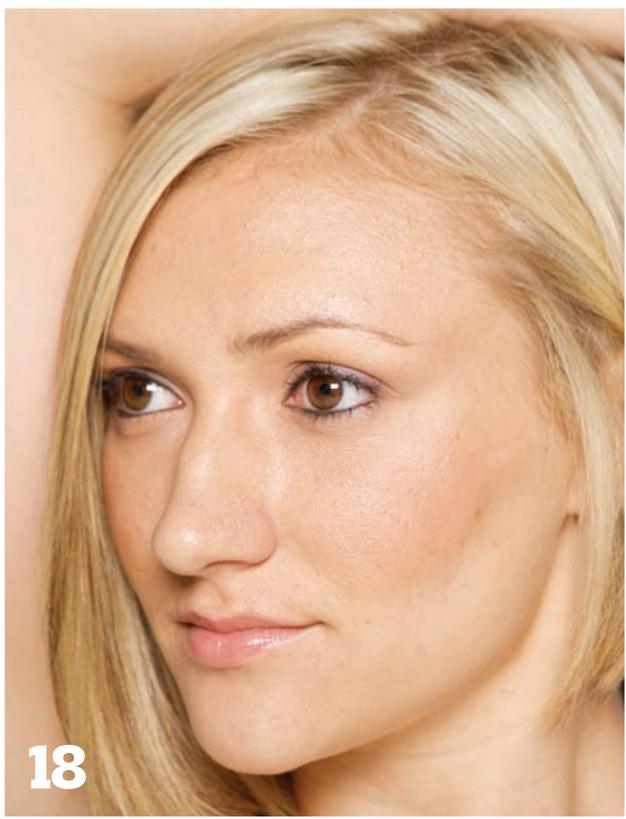


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# SQUAT

**BRIAN 'THE MAMMOTH' SHAW – 6'8", 435 lbs.**

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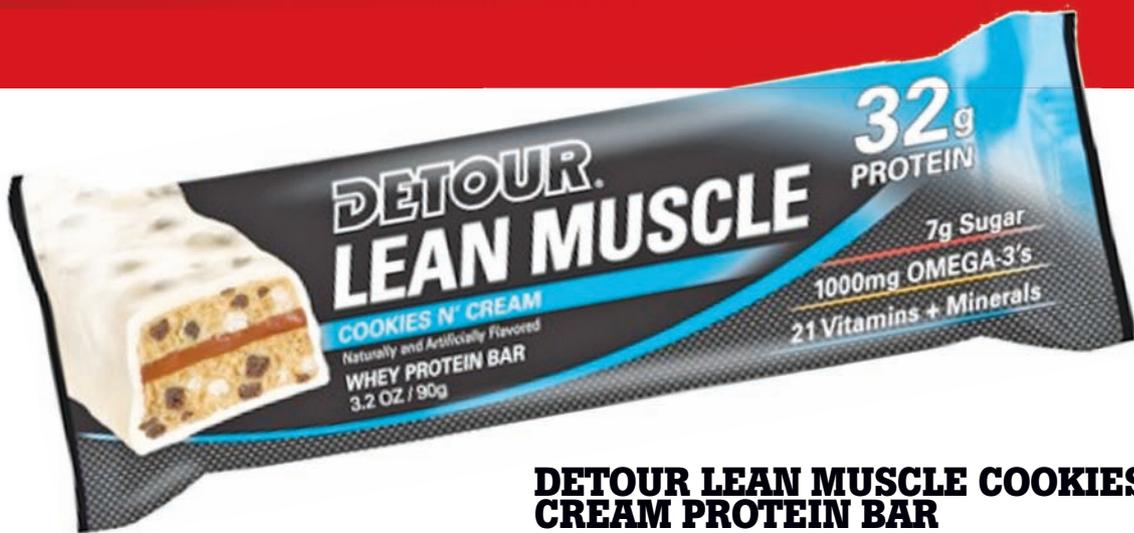


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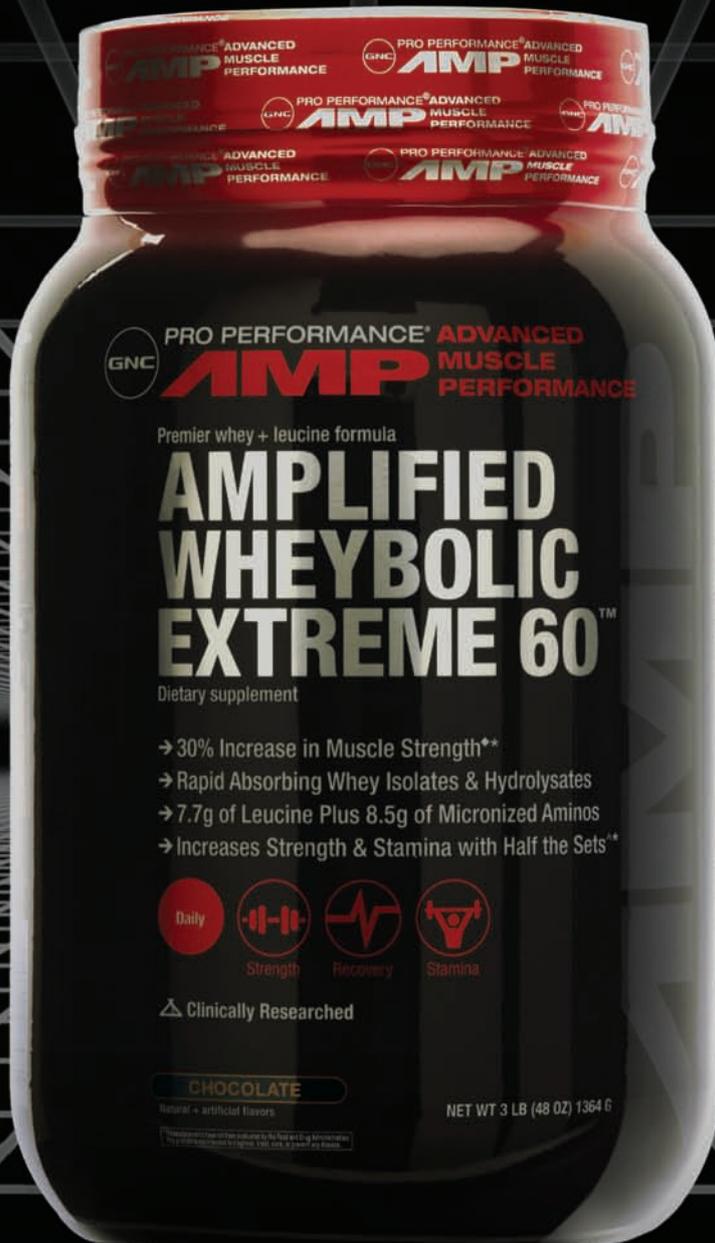
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# MUSCLEPHARM POWER SPOTLIGHT:

BY MICHELE ATKINSON

## DEBBIE SCHWARTZ DAMMINGA

BY MIKE REILLY

At the 2012 APF Master Nationals, the 50-year-old Debbie Damminga set national and world records in squat, deadlifts and total. She won best lifter and is an all around badass – a true inspiration to all her teammates and to lifters everywhere. Damminga is not strong for a 50-year-old woman; she is just flat-out strong and demonstrates that there is no excuse for being anything other than exceptional.

**POWER:** What are your stats?

**DAMMINGA:** I'm 50 years old (I turn 51 on July 4), I'm 5'7" and usually compete in the 148-lb. weight class.

**POWER:** What are your best lifts?

**DAMMINGA:** My best multi-ply full meet lifts are 465-lb. squat, 275-lb. bench and 460-lb. deadlift for a 1,200-lb. total. I've also pulled 501.55 in a deadlift-only multi-ply meet. I've benched 253 lbs. and deadlifted 457 lbs. in a WABDL meet, for the best women's coefficient deadlift in WABDL history.

**POWER:** What are your biggest powerlifting accomplishments?

**DAMMINGA:** The 501.55 deadlift was a big deal for me. It's a number I never imagined I'd lift.

**POWER:** What's your favorite lift? Why?

**DAMMINGA:** I love to deadlift, probably because I'm built right for it. My arms are ridiculously long and my torso is very short. I have a pretty nasty case of scoliosis, which helps my deadlift but hinders my bench.

**POWER:** Where do you train?

**DAMMINGA:** My husband, Gregg, and I have a gym in our home in Eagan, Minn., called Twin Cities Barbell.

**POWER:** Do you have a coach?

**DAMMINGA:** Gregg is my coach and is genius at seeing corrections I can make with my form, and saying just the right thing to help me make them. I am so fortunate to have his help.

**POWER:** How and when did you get into powerlifting?

**DAMMINGA:** I started powerlifting in 2004 when I was 43. I competed in three bodybuilding shows, had lots of fun, but knew the sport was not really for me. Some powerlifters in the gym noticed how strong I had become from the bodybuilding training and asked if I'd like to join them on bench days. Gregg became involved and I started deadlifting and squatting soon after.

**POWER:** Do you have a background in other sports?

**DAMMINGA:** In high school I played basketball. "Played" might be too strong a word. I was on the team. I was not a good player, but loved the team, the competition and being on the court. In my early 40s I rowed for a few years and again loved the competition, the team and the training.

**POWER:** Lifting seems like a family affair. Tell us more about that.

**DAMMINGA:** Gregg and I began powerlifting in 2004 and our son, Dave, joined us in 2008 after he graduated from Yale. Our daughter, Cara, is a competitive runner and a big supporter of our lifting. I have such a wonderful opportunity to share a hobby with my husband and son that we all enjoy so much. It's a way for Gregg and me to spend free time together doing something we both love. It gives me the opportunity to know Dave not only as a mom, but also as a teammate and friend. I can't imagine another activity that we all would enjoy so much. All that, plus I have the best spotters in the world, two huge strong men who make sure I'm always safe and taken care of.

**POWER:** What are your goals for 2012?

**DAMMINGA:** First and foremost, keep improving and stay healthy. I've squatted down and up with 501 lbs. in a meet, but was red-lighted for depth. I know I can come back and get that. Also, I can't help but have an eye on a 1,300-lb. total.

**POWER:** Long-term goals?

**DAMMINGA:** Staying in the sport as long as I can and breaking as many records as I can. I really like records.

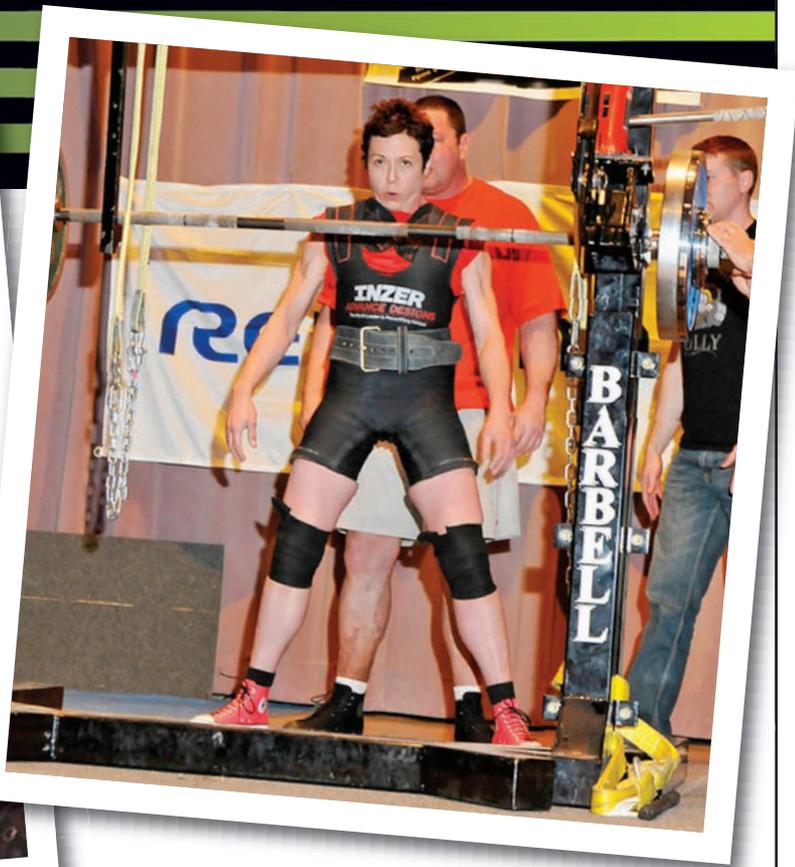
**POWER:** What do you do for work?

**DAMMINGA:** I am fortunate that I don't have to work outside of our home. Gregg does wish, however, that I would learn to mow the yard.

**POWER:** Who are your biggest fans?

**DAMMINGA:** My family and our team.

**POWER:** Do you have any superstitions?



**DAMMINGA:** You betcha I do. I like to think of them as consistent habits that help me to succeed, but others have pointed out that they are indeed superstitions. Let's see ... salted nut bar after weigh ins, lucky underwear, special pen in my training notebook, TicTac powermints in my bag, the list goes on. But all these things are within my control and it makes me feel prepared when I have them. I feel like I can roll with anything that goes wrong in the meet, that's just liftin'.

**POWER:** What do you do to get amped for a meet or attempt?

**DAMMINGA:** I'm pretty quietly focused when I lift, but really hate to fail when people are watching me, so I'm a good meet lifter. I can always count on Gregg or Dave to get me ready for a lift in exactly the way I prefer. I'll run through a list of cues in my head while I'm getting wrapped or strapped and ask them to yell a cue or two to remind me during the lift. Aside from that, I'm a big fan of '70s funk when I'm training and love it when I can get some played at a meet.

**POWER:** If you weren't powerlifting, what would you be doing?

**DAMMINGA:** I don't know, but I would still find a way to compete, either in a different sport or in some other competitive endeavor. Powerlifting has shown me that I can accomplish things I never imagined I could do by consistently training and just flat

out being stubborn. I think I could apply what I've learned here to many other challenges.

**POWER:** What lifters do you admire most? Why?

**DAMMINGA:** When I began powerlifting I met a lovely lady in her 70s named Melicent Whinston. She's still competing in her 80s, in both bench and deadlift. That's just incredible. Also, I met Kara Bohigian-Smith soon after I began powerlifting. Kara has always been there to answer questions and provide encouragement. Not only does Kara inspire with her lifting accomplishment, but also with her unassuming nature and sweetness. But more than anyone, I am inspired by my husband, who gives so much to our team. He provides so much advice and guidance to our team, coaching many of us while sacrificing some of his own gym time and focus. He is what makes our team possible.

**POWER:** What influenced you to start competing?

**DAMMINGA:** When I began training in 2004 I saw that the Washington State WABDL bench record for my age was 159.7 lbs. That felt challenging, but attainable, and I really wanted it. I didn't get it at that meet, but I came back and got it in another meet. I fell in love with the platform, the camaraderie at meets, the great feeling of accomplishment when things go well and the opportunity to set and achieve goals.

**POWER:** Is there anything you would like to add?

**DAMMINGA:** I'd like to say how much I appreciate our team and how we are able to support one another. I'd also like to thank Mike Reilly for hooking me up with Mark Bell and giving me this opportunity to tell my story in Power. **PM**



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**THIS CHICK CAN KICK YOUR ASS,  
AND YOU MAY LIKE IT!**

# VANESSA GALE

**H**ow old are you, where are you from and what are you wearing? I am two-dozen years old. I am from New Orleans, La., but I live in Marietta, Ga. I am wearing my custom pink high-top Chuck Taylors embroidered with "SQ BP DL" on the side, and a navy-blue PrettySTRONG tank top.

**Where do you train?** I train my main-effort lifts at North Georgia Barbell, which was one of Powerliftingwatch.com's top-10 powerlifting gyms in 2011. I also train at Crossfit on the Square on GPP days.

**Do you lift with other girls, or all guys?** I train with a large group of people, mostly men, but there are three very strong women in that group.

**Are you in school? Do you have a job?** I am in Chiropractic School at Life University, and owner and operator of PrettySTRONGpowerlifting.com.

**How did you get involved in powerlifting?** I started powerlifting my senior year of college when a group of trainers at my gym decided to start a team and begin competing in the area. I was majoring in dance at Marymount Manhattan College at the time, and let's just say my dance teachers weren't thrilled with my desire to lift weights. I had always been athletic and competitive, and dance just wasn't doing it for me anymore. My first meet was an APF meet directed by Shawna Mendelson. I can still hear her on the microphone: "Let's go, Vanessa, smoke show!" Needless to say, I never looked back. I don't even think I hit any PRs at that meet



because I had no idea what I was doing or how to pick attempts. Everyone on the team was sharing the same belt. We were the real deal, not! But after that, I began training under Matthew Gary and haven't gone less than seven for nine in a meet since, including two perfect nine-for-nine days and PRs on every lift.

**What do your "normal" friends think of how much you can lift?** "Better than me!" People who don't want to lift weights won't, and people who do will. It's that simple. I feel like a disciple of powerlifting because I will talk about it for hours to people whether they care or not. I have tried convincing people of its health benefits, but all I can really do is lead by example and the ones who want to be stronger will tag along. I'm more than happy to help anyone and everyone that respects the weight.

**When you go to a PL meet with a room full of men with massive levels of testosterone, do you feel like the center of attention?** I've never really noticed a room full of men. Ha, ha, ha. Just kidding. I actually feel like it's quite the opposite. Guys are more concerned with what they are lifting on that day than getting into PrettySTRONG pants. I am the guilty one, totally checking out the big, strong, sexy men all day long! I find myself sighing, "I love this sport," over and over again.

**Do you have a boyfriend?** Yes. He is also a powerlifter. We are each other's biggest fans. We handle/coach each other on meet days and train together every other day. I actually wrote an article about being training partners with your life partner, inspired by him. In my opinion, training is probably the greatest thing you can do with your boyfriend or girlfriend because you are always on the same page when it comes to nutrition and recovery. Understanding each other's need to train keeps me focused and motivated on a daily basis.

**Do you remember the first time you out-lifted a boy?** How did it make you feel? I don't remember the first time, but it still feels awesome to get under the same weight that a dude in the next squat rack is doing partial reps with and drop it ass to grass. Luckily, that doesn't happen much at NGBB, but step into any corporate or school gym and it's over for those guys!

**Do you wear make up to the gym?** I lift at the end of the day, most days. So, if I put on makeup for class in the morning and haven't washed it off at some point throughout the day, then yes, I will wear it to the gym. But, I do not re-apply makeup to go to the gym. I'm not that worried about being "pretty."

**What do you have to say to women who don't lift weights because they think they'll get too big?** Define "too big!" I'm not going to sugarcoat this answer to get girls to lift weights, because the reality of it is that lifting heavy does put size on. Why do you think guys do it? It puts size in all the right places, though. Lifting weights makes women curvier, and thankfully that look is coming back! Big glutes, legs and shoulders with a tiny little waist, and the outline of some abs ... I can't think of a healthier way to be! No one is looking at chicks going, "check out those toothpick legs."

**How has powerlifting helped you?** Powerlifting has really changed my life. I have scoliosis. I know a lot of people do, so it's no big deal, but with the amount of dancing I was doing in high school through college, my back was taking a brutal beating. I was warned over the years about the dangers of overuse injuries to my spine. When I was introduced to powerlifting, my back pain virtually disappeared. I was getting stronger and my spine was loving its new erector muscles. Since then, I can thank powerlifting for introducing me to some of my best friends, my boyfriend and some totally awesome people.

**What is your favorite lift?** When I started lifting my favorite was the deadlift because it was what came most natural to me. Since then, I have grown to love the squat. If you get a better squat, everything in life just becomes easier.

**Tell us about your current best lifts.** My best lifts in competition are: 352 lbs. squat, 165 lbs. bench and 352 lbs. deadlift, for an 870 total, all on the same day. I have only competed raw thus far in my career, and I plan on sticking with that for the time being.

**What are some of your PL goals?** My most pertinent goal at the moment is qualifying for and competing in the IPF Raw Challenge at the Arnold. Secondly, I want to deadlift 400! Maybe then, I can think about my third goal, which is IPF Raw Worlds. Other than my goals on the platform, I'd love to see PrettySTRONG change the face of powerlifting for women in this sport. I am doing my best to get women the recognition and competition they need to make this just as much of a sport for women as it is for men, because there are some seriously strong, beautiful women out there who deserve recognition and equal prize money (when prize money is awarded at meets). We have to get more women into this sport!

**Anything else you'd like to add?** Thank you, Power, for showcasing me in this issue. Live light, lift heavy. Do what you love, and live life loud so other people catch on! **PM**

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# THE FINNISH LINE

Juha Someroja-  
#1 ranked 242

BY SAKARI SELKÄINAHO

**Before this article about Juha Someroja gets under way, we at Power felt that it was important to know how to pronounce his name. "It's kind of tough to explain," said Sakari, "but phonetically it's something like 'Juuha Soumrojaaa.'" Now you know!**

## USA ALL THE WAY

For a long time, Juha Someroja want to do two things: compete internationally and break the all-time world record total in the 242-lb. weight class. Sometimes his work would allow enough off days, but he didn't have the finances for travel. Then there was the 2006 Arnold Classic, where he was planning to compete but had to pull out when he tore both hamstrings.

Finally, in May 2011, I asked Someroja if he was interested in lifting at the premier pro event in powerlifting. He only needed a second to think. "I have my summer holiday during the meet, so no need to beg leave from the boss, I'm definitely in," he said. I sent his entry in to Louie and the training started the very same day.

Someroja was supposed to have two people with him to help him out, but neither could go. He decided to go by himself after I told him the Westside guys would help him out. That was a tough call from a guy who doesn't speak English and had never been outside Finland in his life. Many thought Someroja would never compete off Finnish soil, but they couldn't have been more wrong.

Then there was the matter of the 242-lb. world record total. Greg Panora had held the record since September 2006, and it sat at 2630. Great lifters such as Dave Hoff, Brian Carroll, Jeremy Frey and Jim Grandick were all unsuccessful in their attempts to capture it. Someroja's main goal had always been a 1,200kg (2,645 lbs.) total, which would give him the all-time total.

In August 2011, not only did he compete outside of Finland, but he broke the world record with a 2,640 total. He PR'd on all three lifts, squatting 1,010, benching 810 and deadlifting 820.

But Someroja didn't stop there. When he got home he began training for the BullFarm meet, held at the biggest Fitness Expo in Scandinavia. His squat started moving, and he hit a new world record total of 2,695 lbs. (55 lbs. PR) by way of a 1,047 squat, 793





bench and a whopping 854 deadlift. I keep telling him that he's good for 1,250kg (2,755 lbs.), he just needs to put the pieces together. His 2,695 total was close, but his bench needs some work.

## TRAINING, RECOVERY AND LIFE

All athletes face setbacks, and Someroja is no exception. Two months before the 2006 Arnold Classic, he tore both hamstrings while deadlifting. He was supposed to have a light week, but went on to try a new PR because he felt strong. This time the iron took the win, and that trip was over before it even began. But other than that, Someroja said he hasn't had any serious injuries. He didn't mention the 8-inch scar on his arm.

Someroja has a two-way approach to injury prevention. First, he stretches to enable him to recover better and train heavier. Second, he makes sure there are enough spotters at the gym when training heavy so no one else gets hurt.

One thing most powerlifters have to deal with is how to fit training around work.

Someroja works in a steel mill as a processor. The work doesn't stress him physically, but it is a nonstop three-shift job with four workdays and two off days. Making time for training, family, work and recovery is always an issue. Someroja's everyday schedule and rhythm get messed up easily. He has to plan everything carefully so that he has time for eating, sleeping and training. Thanks to the help of IFBB Pro Jari "Bull" Mentula, nutrition is easier since Someroja doesn't have to drop bodyweight at all. He usually weighs between 235 and 240 lbs. But rest is still an issue, especially in the summer. Someroja lives in the northern part of Finland, and there is sunlight for more than 20 hours each day for almost 2 months.

## FROM BASICS TO FINER POINTS

Someroja started powerlifting in order to get stronger for another sport: hockey. However, he was soon bitten by the power bug and became "too strong." His hockey days were over. Someroja said he's been destined to be a powerlifter ever since he



was a little kid. "I was only two or three years old when I started to do weightlifting movements with a broomstick every time I saw it on TV," he said. In the beginning his training was very basic, having lots of exercises for legs and the midsection. He first heard of powerlifting from newspapers and television and compared his results to those in meets. Back in 2000 he entered his first powerlifting meet and it's been nonstop from that day on.



At first his training was very basic. He quickly became famous for the big weights he would hit in the gym. In fact, Someroja's gym lifts are still ahead of his meet numbers, but the distance is closing. He trains heavy almost all the time and concentrates mainly on the powerlifts. His training started out being all about the basics, but now it's all in the details. A decade ago Someroja had no knowledge of speed-strength or other special strengths, and he is grateful to Louie Simmons for all his work for powerlifting and other sports where strength plays any role.

## TALKING SHOP

One thing that stands out about Someroja is his big bench and deadlift, with a best bench of 810 and 854 deadlift. That's a rare combination, as many lifters are only good at one or the other. But according to Someroja, it's not that rare at all among top lifters. "Kazmaier and many others used to have that," he said. "Today, if you want to reach the top, you must excel in all lifts. Dave Hoff, AJ Roberts and Jerry Obradovic were great push and pull lifters, and so were many others, too."

Someroja stressed that technique is crucial. "The most important thing is to get proper form for each lift," he said. "That is the only way to move more weight without getting stronger. Technique is the key to stress your strong points and eliminate weaknesses." Speaking of technique, one thing that stands out about Someroja's lifting is that he looks down when he deadlifts. He does this because keeping his head

straight or slightly down helps him to relax his shoulders, thereby improving his leverage.

While Someroja's bench and deadlift have always been solid, it's the progress he's made on his squat that pushed his total to world record status. In April 2008 he squatted 881 en route to a 2,336 total. Three-and-a-half years later he squatted 1,047 and totaled 2,695. One thing that held back his squat was when he tore his hamstrings in January 2006. But aside from that, he also had serious balance problems

that came from training with too much band tension too close to the meet. Again, he stressed the importance of lifting technique. That, together with squats and good mornings done with Kettlebells suspended from the bar, has helped drive his squat to new levels.

Someroja has an open mind and is never afraid to apply something new to his training. He gets new ideas from many sources. I trained Someroja's training partner and teammate Markku Nevala on some back problems. Nevala used the same techniques

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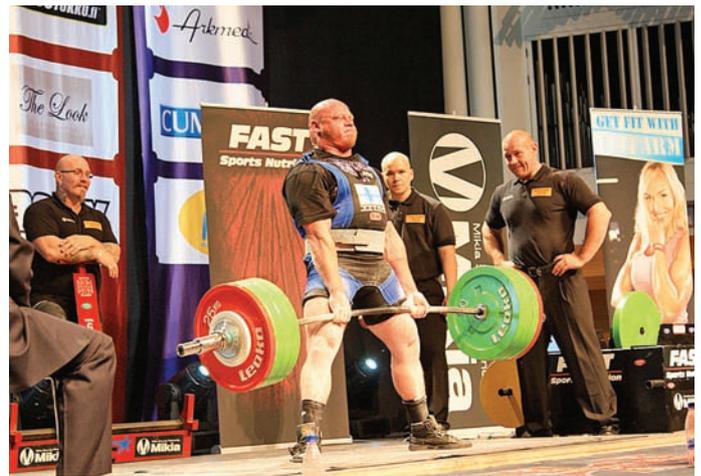
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to help Someroja solve his balance problems in the squat. Someroja loves max-effort days and says there's nothing like straining under the heavy loads. All the squats and deadlifts done with bands, chains or both are his favorites.

## GEAR AND POLITICS

Juha doesn't care about politics or the war between federations. "I have no money and don't care about the politics," he laughed. The fact that powerlifting is such a small sport doesn't bother him, either. "There are no front page headlines if I stumble when coming out of a plane at the airport."

As for lifting gear, Someroja said that powerlifters must be both brave and strong to be able to use the gangster gear. Gear has evolved a lot during the last 10 years, and the carryover from bench shirts has gone from the usual 20 to 30 lbs. from a single-ply blast shirt to a whopping 300-plus pounds. "You may easily get the wrong picture," he said.

## NEXT STOP: POWERSTATION PRO-AM 2012

Someroja's main goal for this year is the Pro-Am meet and some other international meets after that. He has huge potential and I expect him to squat 1,100, blast up an 850 bench and pull at least the same. Yes, he has 2,800-plus in him at 242. He wants to do it against the best in the world, but the venue doesn't really matter to him. Whether it's on Someroja's back porch or at Yankee stadium, the main thing is that all the best are there. **PM**



## SAMPLE TRAINING PROGRAM

**DAY 1:** Benchpress raw with chains and minis, work up to max 3; close-grip bench: 3x5; ultra-wide bench: 2x20; dumbbell press: 3x8; lots of triceps work.

**DAY 2:** Squat: 5x5; sumo pulls: 3 intervals, each 5x1x270kg; rest 5 minutes between intervals and 30 seconds between sets; ab work.

**DAY 3:** Stretching and aerobic training.

**DAY 4:** Speed bench with minis: 8x3+3x1; floor press: 5x5; shoulder work.

**DAY 5:** Good mornings 3x5 with Kettlebells suspended by bands; raw snatch: 10x3; lunges in Smith machine: 3x8; Kettlebell front swing: 5x10.

**DAY 6:** Stretching and aerobic training.

**DAY 7:** Bench: 3x10 with Kettlebells suspended by bands; dumbbell press, light: 3x15; light triceps and shoulder work; heavy upper back work.

**DAY 8:** Box squat: 3x3x2, adding weight/bands/chains after every third set; conventional deadlift, no belt: 7x4; Romanian deadlift sumo stance: 5x8; ab work.

**DAYS 9 AND 10** are dedicated to rest.

## SOMEROJA'S BEST LIFTS

	At 220	At 242	Gym lifts	Raw lifts
Squat	925 lbs.	1047 lbs.	1036 lbs.	694 lbs.
Benchpress	755 lbs.	810 lbs.	837 lbs.	573 lbs.
Deadlift	775 lbs.	854 lbs.	837 lbs.	749 lbs.
<b>Total</b>	<b>2430 lbs.</b>	<b>2695 lbs.</b>		



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# JENNIFER THOMPSON'S MATH: 2+2=300 LBS. RAW

BY SHERYL "PUNKY" CONDON

**J**ennifer Thompson is a 38-year-old, 132-lb. math teacher and mother of two boys from Denver, N.C. She looks like the girl next door and you would never know, if you saw her, that she benches 300 lbs. raw. Not only is she the No. 1 ranked American lifter of all time in the 132-lb. raw bench press on powerlifting-watch.com, but she outlifts No. 2 by 70 lbs. She can squat and deadlift also holding the No. 2 position on the same list in the squat at 315 lbs. and No. 1 in the deadlift at 429 lbs. Her 300-lb. raw bench at this year's Arnold Raw Challenge was a new world record.

**Aside from bench-pressing math students all day, how often do you train and what is your training like?** We used to train like crazy six days a week. Then, about 10 years ago, we figured out that we got stronger the more rest we had. Currently, we train two days in a row and then take two off on an eight-day cycle. We train for about an hour and a half to two hours, depending on how many people showed up to the gym that day. It is an intense hour and a half. There isn't a day that goes by that I am not muscle sore somewhere.

**Can you describe your eight-day cycle? Types of movements, sets, reps?** We have a heavy cycle and a speed cycle. On our speed cycle we start with three competition lifts, working our way up to our max. Then we have three sets that have reps of three, five and seven using rubber bands. The five reps are 95 percent of the three rep weight and the seven reps are 85 percent of our three rep weight. We do this for squat and deadlifts. Squat day is the three max singles, three, five or seven reps with bands, box squats (three sets of five). Our bench day is three max singles, band presses, incline, decline and then what we call "t-shirt presses." We take a light

weight, do an exaggerated pause on our chest and then fire it up as fast as we can. We have a triceps day that is comprised of lock-outs, decline close grip bench, push-downs, shoulder presses with a neutral bar. On deadlift day we use the three, five, seven reps off a 2-inch box, rack pulls (two sets of five), good mornings, pull-downs, pull-ins, bicep curls with the bar and dumbbells (all two sets with reps of eight).

Then we switch to a heavy cycle. Our bench and squat workouts start with a heavy hold. You take a heavy weight out of the rack, settle it and hold it for 15 seconds. The most I have done on the bench press is 510 lbs. and the most on the squat is 520 lbs. On bench day, we do three sets of five reps on the flat bench, two sets of five on incline and decline and reverse band presses, where we hang the weight from the top of a squat rack and load up the bar (two sets of five) then finish off with dumbbell presses. On squat day, we keep the three, five, seven reps and then hit the ham glute and reverse hyper machine. Triceps day doesn't change much, except we do regular close grip presses and preacher curls. Deadlift day is reps with three, five, seven rack pulls from a higher rack, Romanian deadlifts, t-bar pulls and pull-ups along with shoulders.

**Are you on a special diet?**

**What do you eat in a typical day?** I try to eat well. I diet depending on if I am lifting in the 132s (national weight class) or 138s (international weight class). I get 200g of protein in a day (about one and a half times body weight). If I am trying to lose weight, I will keep my carbs around 150g. If not, I let them get up to 300g.

I start my day off with a Quest Nutrition Ana-pro protein shake with milk (50g protein), some Jacked Stacked 2 for my creatine and then some of my beloved coffee. I hit a Promax bar at 11 a.m. (20g





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rotein) and a high protein lunch at 1 p.m. I usually eat eggs at lunch. Then a Greek yogurt (I love Cobani) when I get up from my afternoon nap (I love a 30-minute nap!) I have the System's pre-drink from SSP 20 minutes before I work out. I drink the Post and Maintain afterward (more protein); my dinner usually consists of chicken or pork. Then I drink one more Ana Pro before I go to bed with water. I do splurge on pizza and other bad things periodically.



**your openers and jumps for a meet?** Raw lifting has a different method than equipped lifting. With the equipment you can always tweak something and hit several heavy lifts one after another. With the raw lifting, you really have to plan out your lifts so that you will have enough strength to hit your big number on the third attempt.

I always start with a super easy opener. I really use

it as my last warm-up. I think in my deadlift I opened with 371 and then jumped to 420. I choose my second lift as a max that I have no reservations about achieving. It is usually something I hit in the gym before the competition. The third lift is something I think I can achieve if I give it everything I have and all the stars fall into place.

At the Arnold everything fell into place nicely. I made weight after eating a light dinner. I hydrated quickly with an SSP Post drink,

**You look fairly lean in competition. Do you usually cut weight for meets or stay the same weight all year?** I only have to cut some weight for the 132s. I usually walk around at 138-ish. You wouldn't think 6 lbs. would be tough to lose, but I am pretty lean all ready, so it takes about six weeks to lose it.

**“POWERLIFTING IS A GREAT SPORT FOR WOMEN. I KNOW THE USAPL HAS A GOOD SUPPORT SYSTEM FOR WOMEN. WE HAVE A WOMEN’S NATIONALS, WOMEN’S COMMITTEE AND WOMEN’S HALL OF FAME.”**

**Your bench is literally off the charts. Do you do any special training for the bench?** I really try to keep my back loose enough to arch. I am not very flexible, so every day I stretch my back over a football two or three times. I start with the football somewhat flat and then pump it up over time. This allows me to get up on the top of my shoulder blades when I bench. I also work on my leg drive — that is really what most lifters are missing, and it makes a huge difference. I focus on driving my heels into the floor and push with my legs as if I am trying to push my head off of the top of the bench. Other than that, it's hard work.

**You also compete equipped, what are your best lifts in equipment and how do you incorporate gear into your training?** My best-equipped lifts are a 403-lb. squat, 331-lb. bench and a 409-lb. deadlift. It has been about a year since women's nationals and I haven't gotten back into the equipment yet. Mostly when training for an equipped meet, I do my max lifts with the equipment on and I will incorporate board presses in for the bench. Other than that, my training really doesn't change much.

**I noticed at the Arnold Raw Challenge this year all your lifts were strong and fast, including your record lift. How do you plan**

Emergent-C drink and ate oatmeal and a banana. I had an SSP Pre drink right before my lift, which has a good amount of caffeine in it. Then I ate again after the squats with a protein bar, cookies, more drinks. It is important to eat (snack) throughout a meet without getting too bloated. I think a great training cycle, dieting for six weeks to gradually lose a few pounds and really nourishing myself the day of the meet made it super successful.

**I understand your husband is your coach. How has he contributed to your success? Does being married to your coach create any challenges?** Donovan is an excellent coach. He is constantly looking at our workouts, re-evaluating and adjusting. He is very good with body mechanics and is able to identify which exercises are going to work the best for us. He can look at anyone's form and make small adjustments that will improve the lift. Plus, if you ask anyone on the USAPL World Bench Press Team (he was the head coach for five years), no one can run numbers like he can. He is like Rain Man when it comes to jockeying for positions.

In the beginning of this adventure, we had to have a “meeting of the minds.” He had coached high school wrestling for 10 years and was a collegiate wrestler himself. So he had a coaching technique

down that we needed to adjust. I perform much better with a positive environment with a lot of encouragement. Yelling really doesn't motivate me; it just makes me angry and want to quit. Also, in the beginning, I was the only one competing. Donovan decided to compete in a meet with me to get some experience and I think that really helped him get a good perspective on the pressures of the sport. Plus, he caught the powerlifting bug and has been competing ever since. Most people probably don't know this, but he has won master's nationals, been on the world master's team and holds the American record in the bench. That seems to fall behind my shadow, but he doesn't seem to mind, he is my biggest supporter.



I most definitely would not be where I am today without Donovan Thompson. Not only is he an awesome coach, but husband and father. I couldn't ask for anything more.

**Do you think powerlifting is a good sport for women? Why?**

Powerlifting is a great sport for women. I know the USAPL has a good support system for women. We have a women's nationals, women's committee and women's hall of fame. I feel like our side of the sport is celebrated and given notice though social media.

**Do you have any tips for success for women powerlifters?**

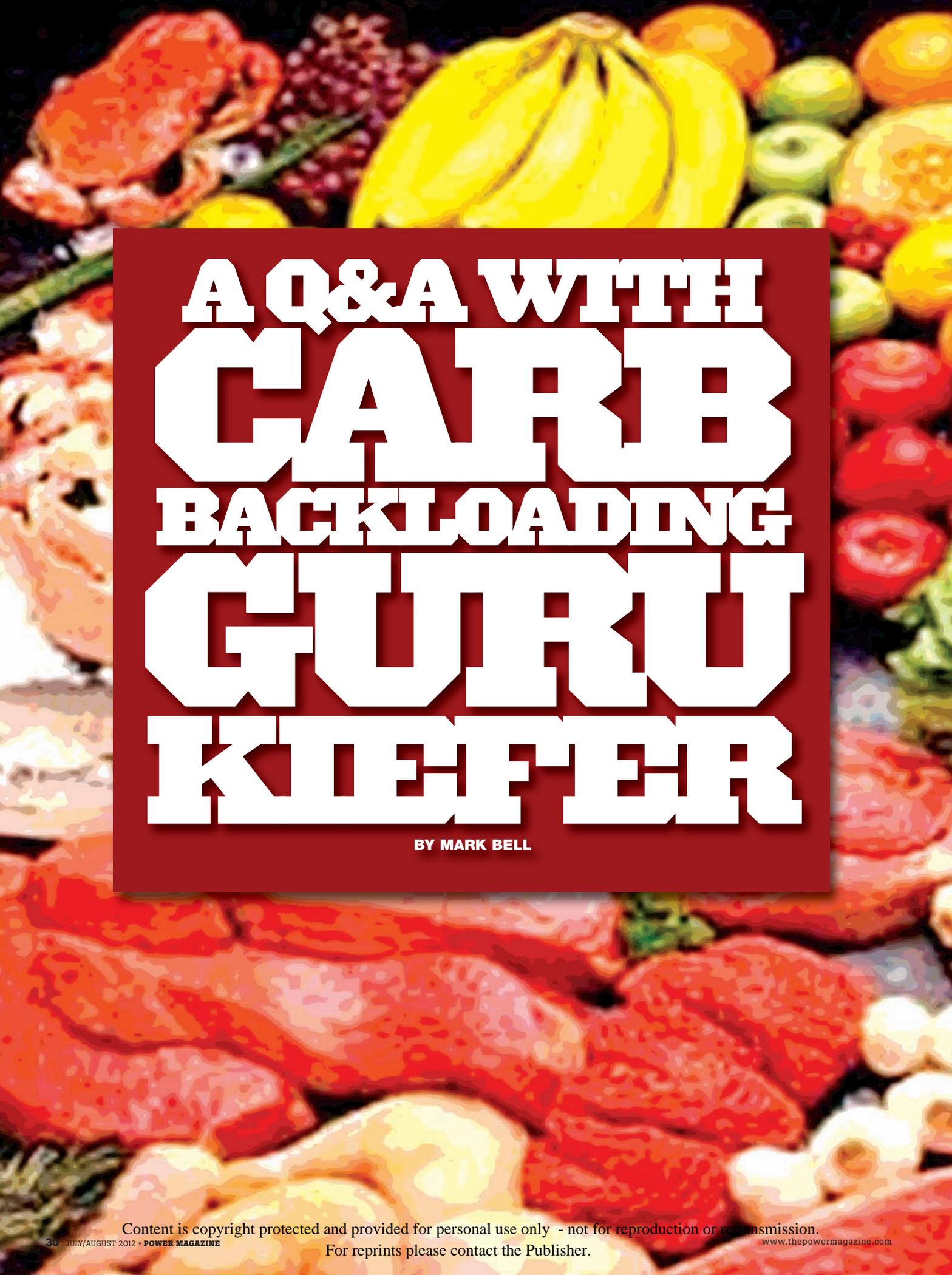
Women will be successful in powerlifting if they don't let the stigma of the gym being for men hinder their participation or worrying if they will look like a guy. Also, never limit yourself. Set goals for this workout, this month, this year. You will be amazed at what you can achieve. I can remember thinking if I ever got to bench 135 lbs. it would be amazing. I participated in an e-book called Powerlifting For Women. It is a great book for those starting out in the sport and those who have been in it for awhile. It has great workouts, shows good form and has interviews with great female powerlifters such as

Sioux-z Harwig Gary. There are great tips on how we all prepare for meets, plus videos on the lifts as well. Visit this site for more information: <http://powerliftingforwomen.com/success.html?hop=gablej>

**Whats next for you?** IPF Raw World Cup, June 13 in Stockholm, Sweden. I am very excited to participate in the first raw world championships. Then the USAPL Raw National Powerlifting Championships, August 3rd in Killeen, TX. After that I am not sure.

Thank you my sponsors: Inzer Advance Designs (the best powerlifting gear), SSP Nutrition, Quest Nutrition and my husband, Donovan – he is the mastermind behind this operation and my biggest supporter. **PM**

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**A Q&A WITH  
CARB  
BACKLOADING  
GURU  
KOEFER**

BY MARK BELL

"Only eat carbs at night." "There is no scientific reason to eat breakfast." "Bacon grease is a good source of fat." "The more muscular and leaner you are, the more 'junk' you can consume while still getting results."

These statements are uttered by "Carb Nazi" and breakfast slayer John Kiefer. To make him more annoying, he goes by just Kiefer. He tells people he doesn't have a first or last name. "Just call me Kiefer," he says in his nerdy voice behind glasses that are way too small for his face. "Kiefer" has the unique ability to get under people's skin by giving advice that often seems to be just the opposite of what we are all used to hearing about nutrition. My own thoughts are that there is always room to go faster and there is always room to do better, so listening and trying new things can only help. So let's see what the owner of [www.dangerouslyhardcore.com](http://www.dangerouslyhardcore.com) is up to.

**MARK BELL: What is your background? How have you become an expert in nutrition?**

**KIEFER:** It's not a unique story. I was a fat kid who started lifting and running and cycling and ... but I never looked like all those guys in the magazines. One fine Indiana winter evening, I used my parents' credit card to purchase a copy of *The Anabolic Diet*. Since I'm curious by nature and lived about 30 minutes from probably the most extensive medical library in Indiana, I checked out the references in *The Anabolic Diet* and found that some of them didn't really support the diet, and left open some questions. So I kept digging. After about a dozen years, I had read through about 40,000 research papers and stumbled through my first "Carb Nite," so I wrote a book. And I've never stopped studying. I wanted to become an expert on the human body, not just well versed about one diet or one training protocol.

Over the last five years, I've had the opportunity to experiment on friends and work with athletes including Ironman competitors, figure, bikini, bodybuilding, powerlifting, Strongman and MMA competitors, and marathon runners. I've worked with Fortune 500 CEOs and average people who just want to look better naked or decrease their chances

of having another heart attack. I've been able to use my breadth of knowledge to help just about anyone move closer to their goal, whatever that might happen to be.

**MB: What is Carb Nite? What will Carb Nite do?**

**KIEFER:** Carb Nite is (or was when it first came out) a radical method of stripping fat from the body and preserving muscle mass. It's rather simple, too: Eat extremely low-carb for six days of the week, consuming less than 30g of carbohydrates per day. One night per week, blast through all the carbs you want, from French fries, rice, pasta, pizza, donuts, whatever. The once-per-week splurge keeps the body burning through the fat by preventing the drop in metabolism that can occur with pure ketogenic dieting. As an unintended side effect, because of the increased efficiency of both the central nervous system and the sympathetic nervous system (fight-or-flight response), athletes continually get stronger while they shed the fat. It even amazes me at times.

**MB: Because I think you're a nerd, I'm going to pick a fight with you. So here we go, Mr. Nutrition Pants. Maybe for some athletes the heightened systems may be enough for them to do better at their sport. Maybe you can argue that one can, hypothetically, recover faster with this type of diet. However, strength sports do not work that way. Sports like weightlifting, powerlifting, shotput, etc., require a certain level of bloat that only carbs can provide. Strength sports are unforgiving and the weights do not care about your six-pack. Even my boy Stan Efferding gets some major bloat going when it's time to get his lift on. I guess the bottom line is if you lose 12 to 15 lbs. or more you will most likely have a very hard time being the same strength, let alone stronger. Your thoughts?**

**KIEFER:** Are you kidding? This is barely worthy of my full attention. I do realize that changes in water balance can make a huge difference in lift performance, especially with the powerlifting trimurti: squat, bench and deadlift. And even more so when you consider geared lifters — if a bench shirt doesn't fit the same anymore, then it's probably going to be a hell of a bad lifting day.

But I work with a lot of powerlifters and make them tighter. That's right, I make strong guys look better



naked. Not much, but better all the same. The nice thing is that during the dieting process with me, I normally change their body composition as they drop weight. The scale may show a body weight drop of 15 lbs., but the body comp has been a drop of 20 lbs. of fat and increase in muscle of 5 lbs. So we've got a guy with less body fat and more muscle. Oh, boo hoo.

But come prep time, I manipulate their diet and water to completely wipe out glycogen and water storage. At this point, they're probably down another 10 lbs. So we've got a guy 25 lbs. lighter than when he started but with more muscle. Then comes weigh-in; not too tough in most cases. Because of the de-carbing process that week and a target re-hydration, nutrient repletion phase, the body will go into glycogen super-compensation and store twice as much water and carbs as normal. Not to mention, if done correctly, the muscles will soak up a ton of triglycerides with the appropriate fat-repletion protocol. So a guy who weighs in 25 lbs. lighter than when he started working with me will walk into the meet 25 lbs. heavier than his weigh-in with all the bloat you can imagine. Except the bloat is in the muscles, increasing leverages and making them strong as shit.

On top of this, the body still burns fat efficiently come game day, the sympathetic nervous system is still amped, and you've got enough fuel in reserve to run a crystal meth super-lab. The whole process is a combination of CBL (carb backloading) and Carb Nite, so it's not as simple as just using one or the other. That's why it's nice being an expert on the human body and not just a single diet — or being an expert in pounding down Oreos, like you.

**MB: Tell me briefly what carb backloading is and what it will do.**

**KIEFER:** Carb backloading is a method of eating to drop body fat while gaining muscle, or to simply lean down without jeopardizing performance. But unlike Carb Nite, which can be done by anyone, sedentary or active, the ability of carb backloading to work depends on resistance training. Carb backloading is a method of eating low-carb (less than 30g) for the first half of the day, resistance training in the afternoon between 3 and 7 p.m. (depending on your schedule), then pounding an almost unimaginable amount of carbs through the night. Another caveat, besides requiring resistance training, is that you have to eat the "evil" high glycemic carbs in the evening, like white rice, potatoes, even flaky pastries. In short, if you resistance train, there is no other diet that can add clean mass while losing body fat, or at least not gaining with the ease and efficacy of carb backloading.

**MB: Um, eating carbs at night? I recently heard a sought after nutritionist say to eat carbs only before 5 p.m. He made it seem like you'd turn into a Gremlin if you ate carbs past 5 p.m. Isn't our body more prepared for carbs in the morning? Are you trying to make everyone fatter?**

**KIEFER:** I'm pretty much going to be fighting this one until I die. The problem's pretty simple: too much focus on one detail. Yes, the two body tissues most susceptible to insulin sensitivity are most sensitive during the first half of the day. The two tissues are muscle and body fat. So, both tissues will be soaking up carbs and doing what they can with them — muscles will store them as glycogen if there's any room left and fat cells will store carbs as fat. Who knew? Since most people's carb stores are nearly full, most of those carbs are



going to get stored as fat, not muscle. And eating carbs first thing in the morning not only makes you fatter, it prevents the body from burning body fat for the entire day.

But wait, there's more to the story. If you resistance train, you can beat the system. Lifting heavy weights (making your muscles produce force) creates a scenario where muscles soak up carbs without insulin. It doesn't matter if you're insulin sensitive or not, the muscles soak up the carbs, but fat cells can't. This fact is the foundation on which carb backloading rests.

In short, so many hormonal and biomolecular events take place first thing in the morning to accelerate fat burning and help muscle growth that it's almost stupid to create an entire diet plan on one detail, like the daily rhythm in insulin sensitivity. We need to step back and see the forest for the trees. Kind of like stepping back far enough to the point where you actually look good.

**MB: Oh please, I look great even up close and in poor lighting. Okay, so I got it, no carbs in the a.m. You don't have to get all mad. So what do I eat when I wake up? A big omelet?**

**KIEFER:** It really depends on your goals. Most guys want to get lean and strong, so skipping breakfast is the best option. Other guys just want to build mass while staying as lean as possible. In that case a meat-and-cheese-filled omelet would be perfect.

**MB: I'm confused. I thought that, without breakfast, death would occur. Also, what about calories in vs. calories out? Is that not a major concern on your type of diets?**

**KIEFER:** Slow down there, killer. One question at a time. First, there's no scientific reason to eat breakfast, and much experimental research to refute it. I stress "experimental" here because most people try to defend the institution of breakfast with observational studies — poorly analyzed ones, at that. Many healthy people (and I even use healthy subjectively here) eat breakfast. That doesn't mean, however, that breakfast is necessary for health. To discover if breakfast is a critical component, you have to conduct experiments. And when they do, they find that heart attack risk instantly falls, attention span increases, fat metabolism rises, academic performance increases. I mean, it's almost ridiculous that anyone with half a brain still says breakfast is the most important meal of the day.

On your second question, about calories in and calories out, that's just about as lame of an idea. No one has a problem understanding

that their car gets different mileage under different conditions – you can go 32 miles on a gallon of gas on the interstate but only 18 driving around town – but if you suggest in any way that the body might increase or decrease the efficiency of any process then people blow a gasket.

**MB: Your diet seems very performance-based, but what about overall health? Did that factor into any development?**

**KIEFER:** That's originally where I started, from the health angle. The Carb Nite Solution is actually a health book. In that case, the diet itself is so powerful that the performance enhancements draw a lot of athletes. Carb Nite decreases body fat, creates a healthy cholesterol profile, drops triglyceride levels and even fixes devastating, but poorly publicized problems like hyperhomocysteinemia, a nasty cause of inflammation and oxidative damage.

**MB: Give me your thoughts on the Paleo diet. Have you found evidence that backs it up as a diet that can reduce overall body inflammation? Also, how is it as a weight-loss diet?**

**“eating carbs first thing in the morning not only makes you fatter, it prevents the body from burning body fat for the entire day”**

**KIEFER:** I think calling the Paleo eating style a diet trips a lot of people up, first of all. Paleo is a set of guidelines that can cover a wide array of diets. For example, 95 percent of the time Carb Nite is Paleo, and carb backloading is Paleo 50 percent of the time. The Spanish ketogenic mediterranean diet is Paleo. So there can be low-carb Paleo and high-carb Paleo; totally dairy-free Paleo and not. There can be a sashimi-only version of the Paleo diet, and fruitarians – people who eat nothing but fruit – technically eat Paleo. So, it's hard for me to talk about all Paleo-qualified diets. Some are healthy and some, like eating nothing but fruit, are downright dangerous, not to mention stupid.

**MB: What are your thoughts on high-fat, very low-carb diets such as the anabolic diet and Atkins?**

**KIEFER:** The anabolic diet is only very-low carb for five days and actually sparked the creation of Carb Nite. Because certain information didn't exist when Mauro DiPasquale created his diet, so he couldn't refine it as much as I could with Carb Nite.

Atkins, on the other hand, is only ultra-low carb long enough to get people some quick results before allowing users to consume as many grams of carbs as “feels right” according to suggestions. I think the Atkins camp cares more about making a product that sells rather than one that works. His 1972 edition of his work had “The Famous Vogue Superdiet” in bold lettering on the cover. I mean, come on, Atkins, let's try to be a little less obvious.

**MB: I have been a big proponent of managing carbs to control my bodyweight for years. In fact, I used to do Body Opus from Dan Duchaine and I had great results – I was around 250 and maybe about 10 percent BF. Obviously, if you're going to eat low carb then you need to eat a decent amount of fats and proteins. So keeping health in mind, what are your favorite sources of fats and proteins?**

**KIEFER:** Fat: butter, coconut oil, fish oil, macadamia nuts and

bacon grease. Protein: Whey, venison, grass-fed beef, and eggs.

**MB: What are your five favorite carbs for CBL/CN:**

**KIEFER:** In order, cherry turnovers, granulated-sugar coated donuts, mashed sweet potatoes with coconut oil and cinnamon, cookie dough, Chicago-style pizza.

**MB: Huh? Really? Cookie dough should always be No. 1! Anyway, do you like these disgusting foods because those foods are dense and have a high glycemic index ?**

**KIEFER:** Mostly because they're high GI. I get the result I need quickly, then I switch gears the next morning. I do love using cookie dough when I need the extra calorie load and I just love Chicago-style pizza. No magic there.

**MB: What about disrupting the gut and inflammation?**

**KIEFER:** I don't have a big problem with that, but I do choose my foods for the least potential bloat response, and all of the above treat me well. But for clients who do have issues, I usually have them stick with items like the mashed sweet potatoes above, wheat-free break-

fast cereals, rice crispy treats and rice pudding with cinnamon.

In general, people need to find foods that agree with them and still cause the appropriate insulin response. People also need to remember that the more muscular and leaner you are, the more “junk” you can consume while still getting results.

**MB: That's kind of mind boggling. Your book talks about the amount of carbs to consume for back loading. A 220-pounder should backload with 770g of carbs? Do I have that right? This is a huge amount of food. Are we supposed to get this in one meal? A large, thick crust pizza has about 360g of carbs.**

**KIEFER:** That's the maximum amount you can store, not the amount you're trying to consume. That table represents an upper limit, by no means a necessary amount. In general, to store at maximum capacity would take most people two full days of extensive carb eating.

**MB: How does the diet work for other athletes besides fitness, bodybuilding, powerlifting, etc.? Still applicable? Any changes? Why?**

**KIEFER:** No changes from what the book says. Only distance runners and endurance-based athletes need to worry about making major modifications to the diets. And those modifications would take too long and are too individualized for me to put out here.

**MB: In an interview with Vinnie Dizenzo (who does your diet but still looks fat), you made a comment that people were messing up by eating too much protein and not enough fat. You said that by eating a lot of protein, they're training their bodies to use protein as fuel, so the body starts breaking down muscle to be used as energy. Instead, they should be eating more fat to train their body to use fat as its fuel source. Can you elaborate on this?**

**KIEFER:** There's nothing too complicated here. No matter what fuel the body burns, it needs enzymes to sustain the process from start to finish. If you eat primarily one type of food, the body up-reg-

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ulates the enzymes needed for that fuel source and becomes incredibly efficient at burning it. If you eat too much protein (as most strength athletes tend to do) and not enough fat (as most everyone does) then your body gets really good at burning protein, which means that muscle tissue is now a viable energy source. But as long as there's enough fat coming in, the body just keeps burning it off and gets damn good at it. So, when necessary, that tub of lard called a beer belly gets burned right off!

**MB:** You said in working with world record powerlifter and Power contributor Brian Carroll that you had him do a different type of protocol, so he wasn't really backloading or doing Carb Nite. What did you have him do recently?

**KIEFER:** Brian's last training cycle had massive amounts of volume and heavy loads, so he'd never be able to get in the food necessary to recover with Carb Nite or carb backloading, especially at his size. So I worked some of my dietary magic and put together a program to help keep his inflammation low, his nervous system firing efficiently and his muscles crammed with glycogen. There's much more to it than that, but I'm not willing to share at this moment.

**MB:** Okay, enough of all the mumbo jumbo, let's get to the nuts and bolts here. To recap a little bit: With carb backloading we are trying to increase muscle mass while keeping and/or slowly losing body fat. You eat less than 30g of carbs until about 6 p.m. and then you carb-load for the next two or three meals. At this time it's acceptable to get in some junk carbs. However, if you're fat or you don't have a lot of muscle, you may want limit

your junk to just a little dessert after dinner, but still be sure to get in a hefty dose of carbs. Although you're eating carbs, your body will still be feeding off body and dietary fat. If done properly, you'll still get into ketosis, which is a state where your body feeds off of fats in order to preserve muscle.

Carb Nite is a radical way to strip fat off your body without eating many carbs except for during a few hours one day per week. In this diet you will be in ketosis most of the time. It's common to drop about 20 lbs. in one month on this program. A good diet for a photo shoot, wedding, to drop a weight class or to just stop being so damn fat. Once the weight is off you can move into a backloading program. Does that sound about right?

**KIEFER:** Impressive: I didn't realize you were that astute. That's about as "right" as anyone's ever gotten it.

**MB:** I'm listening to the "10 Crack Commandments" (which is one of the greatest songs of all time) by the Notorious BIG off the legendary "Life After Death" album. So, tell me the 10 Kiefer Commandments to being successful on either one of these diet plans.

**KIEFER:**

10. Don't sweat the small stuff.
9. Watch for hidden insulin spikers, like acesulfame potassium in sugar-free drinks.
8. If you lift heavy and eat a lot of nuts for your fat source, use macadamia nuts.
7. Choose whole foods for your low-carb periods.

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6. Never eat your carbs before 3 p.m.
5. Don't be afraid to eat carby-junk every now and again.
4. Make caffeine your bitch.
3. Eat mostly animal proteins during low-carb periods.
2. Don't fast for more than a 12-hour period (this includes sleep).
1. Once again, don't fast for more than 12 hours.

**MB:** All right, Kiefer, so what the hell do we eat? What's a day look like on carb backloading and Carb Nite?

**KIEFER:** I can sum them up pretty easily. Low carb meals look like this:

**Base:** Fatty meat or a lean meat plus nuts.

**Additive (optional):** Low-carb veggie like broccoli or asparagus in a tbsp or two of butter or coconut oil.

**Additive (optional):** Maybe some cheese.

**High-carb period (either a Carb Nite or a backload).** On a training day, this will be kicked off with a post-workout shake that contains carbs and protein. MusclePharm makes a product called Re-Con that works well.

**Meal 1:** Steak, two large sweet potatoes mashed with coconut oil and cinnamon, green beans.

**Meal 2:** Protein shake and 2 quarts of ice cream.

**MB:** Are there some supplements that make all this dieting stuff more efficient or easier?

**KIEFER:** Good protein blends that contain hydrolysates are always a good choice. Fish oil in high doses (minimum of 10 grams of EPA/DHA, so about 15g of fish oil) increases anabolic signaling to

muscles, so that's always a bonus. The branched chain amino acid, leucine, also potentiates and enhances growth. And there's a "secret" supplement that I have clients use that can accelerate getting ripped and getting jacked all at the same time. I don't want to let the cat out of the bag just yet because I'll be announcing my own supplement line in the coming months, and the anabolic-lipolytic amplifier will be among the flagship products.

**MB:** What's the most drastic results you have seen so far from Carb Nite and or backloading?

**KIEFER:** Well, Jesse Burdick is the most extreme case I've had with Carb Nite. (see photos on page 32) Jesse lost a lot of fat mass, but his head seemed to grow! Not the desired effect I was looking for, but it did help him pull 804 and earn the nickname MegaMind. In his case, I made some mods to Carb Nite, but it's not far off of what's in the book. Getting his training volume tuned was a big component of his success. Brian Carroll, Andy Deck, Scott Paltos and Julia Ladewski have all had incredible results as well, and it's hard to say who's the most impressive, although Brian had to graduate to CBL Phase 2 — and like I said before, I'm not sharing yet.

**MB:** I'm about to dive down to 242 within the next year, so let's get to work and see what you can really do!

**KIEFER:** I will shape you into the gnarliest looking powerlifter in the history of the sport. And what would be really bad-ass is to get you on stage on a Saturday and to blow out a huge total the next day at a meet. What better place to build a superhero than at Super Training Gym? **PM**

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# THE LILLIEBRIDGE THREE

BY JEFF "ROBOT" IRION

The date was April 21, 2012, the place was Dubuque, Iowa, and the event was UPA Nationals. Three raw lifters each finished the day with massive 777-lb. deadlifts, with two of them totaling more than 2,000. But their deadlifts weren't the only thing they had in common. They also had the same last name: Lilliebridge.

Power sat down with all three: Ernie Sr., 40, Ernie Jr., 24 and Eric, 22 to find out how they train and why their family is so damn strong.

**POWER:** What are your best raw competition lifts?

**ERIC:** My best raw competition lifts are an 826-lb. squat in a belt and knee wraps, a 523 raw bench and an 804 raw deadlift. My best raw total is 2,132.

**ERNIE JR.:** I've hit a 633 squat, 429 bench and 777 deadlift. My best raw total is 1,813.

**ERNIE SR.:** I've squatted 749, benched 518, deadlifted 777 and totaled 2,000.

**POWER:** Ernie Jr., you had some tough luck on your squats and benches at this past meet, but you still managed to pull a PR 777 deadlift on your third attempt. Tell us what was going through your head as you prepared for that lift and what it meant to you when you successfully pulled it.

**ERNIE JR.:** Coming into the deadlifts at the end of the meet, I was already feeling tired and I'd suffered a back injury during my squat warm-ups. That really put me down in the squats and bench, so I was not all that confident coming into the pulls. I was honestly looking to only pull around 750. I had no idea I had a 777 pull in me, and it wasn't even an all-out max! My brother is the one who called for me to take 777 on my third attempt. It's a good thing he did because I would have gone for less in order to lift conservatively, so I'm very happy I finished with 777. Leading up to that lift I kept going through the motions in my head — big breath, butt down, head up and pull — and visualizing myself completing the lift. Once the lift was over and I saw the three white lights I knew right there that I had the highest pull of the meet so far, and the heat was on for my brother and dad.

**POWER:** Eric, while a 2,017 raw total is nothing to scoff at, it seems you weren't your best at this recent meet. Were you having an off day, or just sand-bagging so that all three of you would finish with a 777 deadlift?



The Lilliebridges:  
Eric, Ernie Sr.,  
and Ernie Jr.



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Ernie Jr. gets a bench handoff from his "little" brother Eric.

**ERIC:** My squats were actually feeling very strong on the day of the competition, and my opener with 727 and second attempt with 782 felt strong and easy. I then went for a meet and all-time PR with 837, but I got forward on my toes out of the hole and got stuck with the lift. For my other two lifts I just wasn't feeling 100 percent like I was at my last meet. I decided to pass on my third attempts for both the bench and deadlift and not risk any injury because, in my opinion, there's no point in pushing it to the limit when you aren't feeling your absolute best. There are always other meets, and I treat every training session and every meet as a learning experience on what to do and what not to do for the next one.

**POWER:** Ernie Sr., you missed an oh-so-close final deadlift attempt with 788 lbs. Do you blame this on the fact that they were playing a Spice Girls song while you lifted?

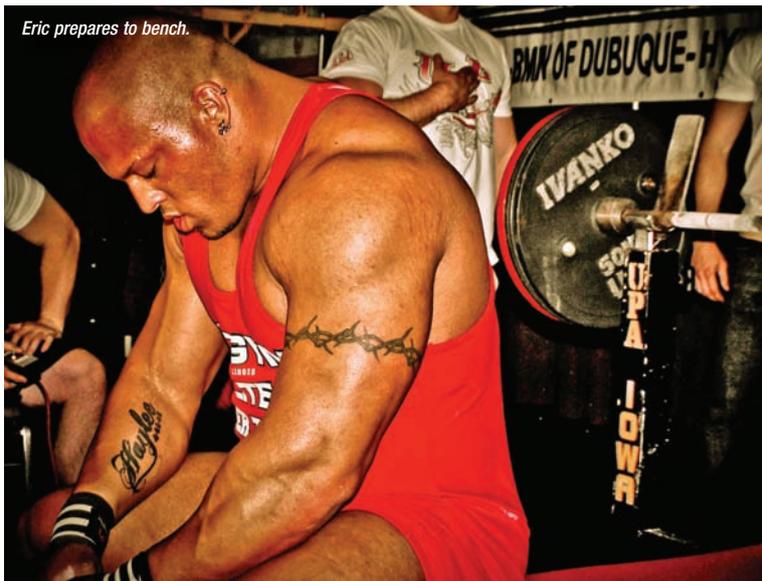
**ERNIE SR.:** No, the song was fine, it just made me laugh. I thought I had totaled more than 2,000 with the 777 deadlift, but remembered that I had dropped my second squat attempt by 22 lbs. and needed to pull 788 in order to total 2,012, which would break the current No. 1-ranked 308 raw total of 2,006. If I had tried the 788 on my second attempt pull, I believe I would have had it, but taking an 11 pound jump after 777 was not to be had. And the reason? There were too many green and red things on the bar!

**POWER:** Kidding aside, a 777-lb. deadlift as a master is some serious old man strength! Furthermore, you don't look like you're particularly built to deadlift, you're just a thick dude who muscles the weight up. How did you build such a huge deadlift?

**ERNIE SR.:** Well thank you for your kind words, but I wouldn't call 777 a huge deadlift; 800-plus is the weight to beat. As far as technique goes, I was much more efficient at a lower bodyweight (250-275). As my weight and strength increased my deadlift remained pretty much the same. As you can see, my technique has changed for the worse as I got bigger, but I'm working on that and hope to pull more very soon. I have pulled 800-plus in training several times, I just need to get one in at a meet. My deadlift training has always been very basic: deadlifts, bent rows and heavy ab work.

**POWER:** Tell us about the gym where you guys train.

**ERIC:** The gym we train at is called Pro Gym. Originally the Frantz



**"I WAS ALWAYS AMAZED SEEING MY DAD LIFT LOTS OF WEIGHTS AND FOR THE MOST PART BEATING EVERYONE IN THE GYM ON EVERY LIFT AND THEN GOING TO POWERLIFTING MEETS WHERE HE WAS COMPETING RAW VS. PEOPLE IN GEAR AND STILL COMING HOME WITH THE FIRST-PLACE WIN"**

so geared lifters from the original Frantz crew. We also have many guest lifters on a week-to-week basis, both for geared and raw. It's a great team, of which most are currently nationally ranked, and the rest will be very soon.

**POWER:** Eric and Ernie Jr., when and how did you two get involved in competitive powerlifting?

**ERNIE JR.:** I was always amazed seeing my dad lift lots of weights and for the most part beating everyone in the gym on every lift and then going to powerlifting meets where he was competing raw vs. people in gear and still coming home with the first-place win. I started to lift with my dad at the age of 12, but it was on and off at that point. I became very serious at the age of 16 when my brother Eric got into it and have never stopped since. I did my first powerlifting meet at the

age of 16 and did very well against the older teens. I was in the 165-lb. weight class and lifted raw. My squat was 315, bench was 205 and deadlift was 475 for a total of 995.

**ERIC:** I got into powerlifting and competing from my dad. He had been training and competing for years before I was ever even interested in the sport.

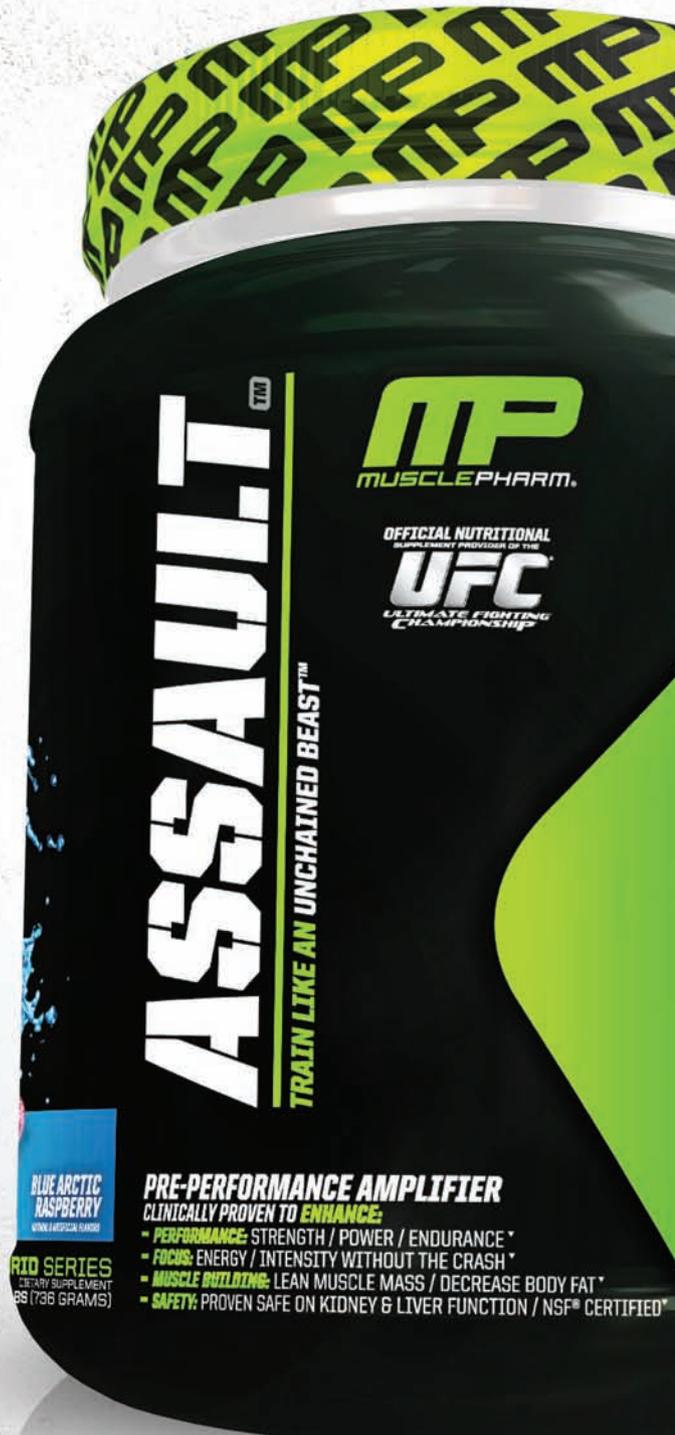
When I was 13 years old I started training seriously with my dad and brother, and I did my first competition at 14 years old. I was in the 165 weight class and I squatted 285, benched 195 and deadlifted 400 for an 880 total. My deadlift was always my strongest lift out of the three for the longest time, but eventually my squat caught up and they have evened out and are very close now. I've been hooked ever since and haven't stopped once to take any breaks. The only break time I have is one week before and one week after a competition. Otherwise, training is year-round, whether it's training to get stronger and peak for a competition or to just train to stay in shape.

**POWER:** I've read some stuff online about Eric's training, and it



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Eric deadlifts 777 @ 275



Ernie Jr. deadlifts 777 @ 242

reminded me a lot of how Ed Coan trained. It looked like basic linear progression for the competition lifts, and even the choice of assistance movements seemed Coan-like: barbell rows, stiff-legged deadlifts, etc. Tell us more about how you guys train. Did you base this off of Ed's training at all?

**ERNIE SR.:** Believe it or not, our training routines were developed through many hard years of trial and error, and finally sticking with what works. It would have been great to know about Ed Coan's train-

ing routines! It would have saved me a lot of time, hard work, injuries etc., because he obviously had it figured out.

**ERIC:** Everything that I've learned about powerlifting and training was from my dad, and I actually haven't copied anything from anyone's training routines. Our training cycles for competition are usually anywhere from six to eight weeks long. The accessory work for both the squat and deadlift are very similar: either bent rows or some type of seated rows, upright rows, leg extensions, reverse hamstring curls

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Ernie Sr. deadlifts 777 @308

# “OUR TRAINING ROUTINES WERE DEVELOPED THROUGH MANY HARD YEARS OF TRIAL AND ERROR, AND FINALLY STICKING WITH WHAT WORKS.”

**ERNE SR.:** No, not really. We have always stuck with the basic movements, and have had great success in doing so. Keep it simple, train hard. We do use boards for benching on occasion, kind of like an overload. For example, we usually add 25 lbs. to the bar for each board used. So if on that training day I took 500 to my chest, I would go 525 to the one-board, 550 to the two-board, 575 to the three-board, etc. We also do bench cycles where we use the same weight throughout, but each week we drop a board. For example, the first week is 550 to the three-board, second week to the two-board, third week to the one-board, and on the fourth week to your chest. And finally, there are times when you feel “tight,” or you don’t want to stress your pecs and risk a tear, so you use the one-board which allows you to handle the heavier weight through a shortened range of motion to reduce the chance of injury.

and a lot of ab work. We always do our accessory work right after the powerlifting training. We bench once a week on Wednesdays and we alternate squats and deadlifts on Saturdays. For our bench accessory work, it’s usually either dumbbell or cable pec flies, triceps extensions and ab work. We like to keep it simple and basic because that’s what has worked the best for all of us.

**POWER:** Do you use any variations on the main movements in your training?

**POWER:** Do you guys use any accommodating resistance (bands, chains, reverse bands)?

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**ERNIE SR.:** We have trained with bands, chains, reverse bands, etc., but we still find basic movements with real weight to work the best.

**POWER:** Ernie Jr., one could say that you are the dark horse in the family. You're certainly a strong guy, but you seem to keep a low profile online and you don't have the same Internet fame as your brother. That said, it looks like you've been gaining momentum and are ready to put up some big lifts. What kind of numbers are you looking to put up in the near future?

**ERNIE JR.:** Well thank you! I guess you can call me the "dark horse." It's better than being called, "Oh, Eric has a brother? And he

powerlifts?" I'm not very big into posting about myself on the forums; I'm not one to brag or pound on my own chest. I let my numbers speak for me. Then again, maybe I should try it! I need sponsorships too! As far as my recent lifting, I nearly finished an 800 pull in the gym, but my grip was an issue. I'm really looking forward to hitting the big 2,000 raw total in the 242

weight class. I'm looking to squat 727, bench 468 and deadlift 804. That would give me the No. 1 ranked spot in the raw 242 class. I'm not there yet (ranked No. 8), but it's definitely within my reach. Soon!

**POWER:** All right, let's stop sugar-coating it and get right to the chase. How badly do you want to out-lift your younger brother?

**ERNIE JR.:** It would be awesome if I could out-lift my brother, but let's face it: We are worlds apart! I was ahead of Eric until life got in the way of my lifting. Everyone knows Eric's a "superstar powerlifter." No doubt about that, but they don't know why. Powerlifting is at the center of Eric's life, and everything revolves around it. There's nothing wrong with that; he wants to be the best and this is the sacrifice that had to be made. While me and the rest of the world are at work busting our butts trying to make a living and feed our families, Eric's eating, sleeping and getting ready for lifting. I have rent, car payments, credit cards, a wife, kids and countless other obligations. I'm now at a point in my life where I can dedicate more time to powerlifting, and the gains are coming. I usually get to train two days a week, sometimes three if I'm lucky. Eric, on the other hand, works at a gym and has the opportunity to train any time. To my brother, powerlifting is his life/world. I love my brother to death and wish him the best of luck in both his career and powerlifting. He just graduated from college with his degree in kinesiology, and he is doing personal training. He's just a physically bigger person than I am. I can hang with him a little on the bench, just about tit for tat on the deadlift, but on the squat he blows me out of the water. Me on my best day ever vs. Eric on his worst day and I would still get my butt handed to me. The one you should be asking if they want to beat Eric is my Dad. Their numbers are VERY close, and it could go either way at any time. If anyone is going to beat him, Dad's got my vote! But Eric is still not done growing yet. When he fills out, watch out! No doubt this kid will hit

some crazy raw numbers. I don't see why (in due time) he couldn't take the No. 1 worldwide spot raw at 275.

**POWER:** Ernie Sr., your oldest son says that you're the man who can take down Eric! Although he has put up better numbers than you on the platform, I know that your gym lifts are very close: 800 lbs. squats and deadlifts and mid-500s benches. When are you gonna put Eric in his place and claim the title of strongest Lilliebridge?

**ERNIE SR.:** If you look at our performance at this past meet, our totals were only 17 lbs. apart. Granted, we both passed or missed all

of our 3rd attempts, but if I had watched the numbers more closely I could have easily taken him out! Had I not dropped my 2nd attempt squat I would have beaten Eric by 5 lbs. with a 2,022 total. We both were shooting for around 2,150, but again only got 2nd attempts in. I'm trying to heal my shoulder/bicep right now, and if healed, I will beat Eric at the next

**"I WILL BEAT ERIC AT THE NEXT COMPETITION IN JULY THIS YEAR. I AM THE ALPHA AND OMEGA MALE IN THIS FAMILY! DON'T BELIEVE ME? JUST ASK ERIC!"**

competition in July this year. I am the alpha and omega male in this family! Don't believe me? Just ask Eric! Haha, I love you son. By the way, I outweigh Eric by 30 lbs... It's all scar tissue! I've had more injuries than Eric has had victories, so give an old man a break!

**POWER:** Eric, in his interview in the Sept/Oct 2011 edition of Power, Stan Efferding said, "I've even trained with that damned teenage phenom Eric Lilliebridge, who squats and deadlifts more than me!" What was it like to train with Stan? How much longer are you gonna let his world records stand? (854 squat and 2,226 total, raw with no knee wraps)

**ERIC:** It was awesome getting to train with Stan. At the time we trained together, I believe he was having some hip issues, which held him back from going heavier than he could have. But even so, his strength was incredible! Right now I have the fourth highest ranking in the world in the 275 weight class. My goal for my next meet is to try and take the No. 3 spot, which Konstantin Konstantinovs holds with a 2,171-lb. raw total. After I achieve that goal, I will train to break 2,200 and shoot for Stan's total (albeit with knee wraps). My ultimate goal is to break Jon Cole's 2,259 total, which has stood since 1972.

**POWER:** Is there anyone you guys would like to thank?

**ALL:** We would all like to thank the Prom Gym owner, Dr. Robert Buchla, for being part of the team and providing us with great equipment and a great place to train. We would also like to thank all of our team members (especially Tyler Wilson) for spotting, loading, etc. We'd like to thank Mr. Ernie Frantz, the legend, for taking us to the next level. Last but not least, our coach: WPO judge, world champion powerlifter, and 2nd father, Mr. Dick Zenzen. Through the years he has always been there and helped us in more ways than we can mention. You are truly appreciated! And of course, Mr. Jeff Irion and Mark Bell for giving us the time to do this interview. Thank you! **PM**



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# MAKING A CASE FOR BENCH PRESSES

BY MIKE REILLY

**R**ecently I read a blog online explaining why the bench press was not important. I would have simply ignored this as the ravings of an idiot, except I heard the same sentiments espoused by several other athletes and strength coaches. Stupidity is like cancer; it grows fast and takes over otherwise healthy cells. How the hell could any serious strength coach say the bench press doesn't matter? Because stupidity is a powerful foe.

The blogger ranted that the bench press is simply a vanity exercise that has little impact on core power. Further, the blogger went on to say that the bench press was an injurious lift that endangered elbows and shoulders.

On the contrary, the bench press remains the critical lift for upper body strength: a true multi-muscle move as much based on technique as force. Most people who dismiss the bench simply are not very good at it. Their form is incorrect. From lying flat on the bench to neglecting to activate the lats to rolling the wrists to lacking leg drive to sub-optimal bar path, it is no wonder they fail to actuate the potential of the lift and accumulate injuries.

## WHY PEOPLE GET HURT

People injure themselves because they do not take the time to learn and respect the lift. Yes, you can tweak shoulders and elbows on the bench, but to use that as a reason to dismiss the lift is silly. Squats and deadlifts are daredevil feats compared to the bench! A bad bench day will keep you down for a month, while a bad squat day gets you better parking for life. Would we ever tell people squatting is not important? However the discussion opens the door again to address safety.

In my gym we have a saying: safety third. Not that safety is not important; it just falls just behind results and performance. When people fixate on safety, they fail both to push themselves and to actually be safe. Injury prevention in the weight room is all about technique, and focusing on results first necessitates cultivation of good technique. With proper technique, we can give maximum performance and reap the best result. Results, performance, safety!

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## WHERE SAFETY STARTS

Injury prevention starts when mounting the bench. Every day in my local globo-gym I watch dozens of people lie down to bench with no thought of technique. There is no arch, no tuck, no breath; many do not even get on the bench consistently between sets. Skilled bench pressers nearly all have a routine and mount the bench the same regardless of the weight, reps or sets. Consistency is the mother of perfection. Shoulder placement is critical, and lifters need to pull their shoulders back tight. As the weight comes down, the elbows should be pulled in and stack on the lats. On top of giving the lifter far more power, this protects the shoulders by eliminating sheer angle force and allowing more of the weight to be controlled by larger muscles. A proper arch ensures the feet have firm contact with the ground and fosters a solid leg drive that delivers power and protection. At 47 years old, I can tell you that just holding 400 lbs. without proper technique would lead to an immediate injury requiring surgical intervention. As with any lift, the key is do it correctly.

## THE VALUE OF THE BENCH PRESS

Arguments about the value of the bench press are similarly clouded by people who don't understand that it is a true multi-muscle, large muscle, core power-building lift. A key ingredient of strength is coordination, as any practical application of strength involves movement. Getting your body to move together as a unit in



one direction is what creates power. All sports can benefit from developing this upper body strength and coordination. As someone who trains fighters, I view the bench press as critical to success in the cage. Not only does it improve your ability to push, it also elevates your overall upper body coordination and control. It increases

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your burst power as well as your ability to hold and stabilize. Some might disagree, but I can only find one logical reason for dissent; they simply don't know what they are talking about. Most people, even strength and conditioning coaches, never really break down the bench press to learn the parts and thus master the whole.

Learning the bench press requires lifters to break the lift down and work on specific parts of the lift to become proficient at the entire movement. Benchers use a lot of different lifting techniques to accomplish this. I'm not going to provide a complete list here, but will break down several techniques I use in my training regimen which allows me to train often, avoid injury and have some fun in the weight room.

**THE SLING SHOT.** If you have never heard me mention the Sling Shot, then you have never spoken to me. Two weeks after the USAPL Minnesota State meet I was looking forward to the APF Masters in Louisiana when I tore my forearm (this, shockingly, while deadlifting, not doing the bench press). The tear was just-this-side-of-surgery bad, incredibly painful and gave me a companion tear in my bicep. With only 10 weeks to nationals, it looked like I would not need to book that flight to Baton Rouge. However, my coach, Gregg Damminga at Twin Cities Bar Bell, had me test out a Sling Shot. Later that day, I ordered my own Maddog version, and for the



next six weeks I managed to steadily progress in my bench while healing from my injury. At the time of this writing, I'm 90 percent healthy and my SRM progressed from 405 raw to 430 in a lower weight class, putting me on track to set a national record and earn a spot at WPC Worlds. I use the Sling Shot once a week to work toward PRs in three-rep and SRM on alternating weeks. I love my Sling Shot because it allows my to put an extra 60 to 70 lbs. in my hands for a complete motion.

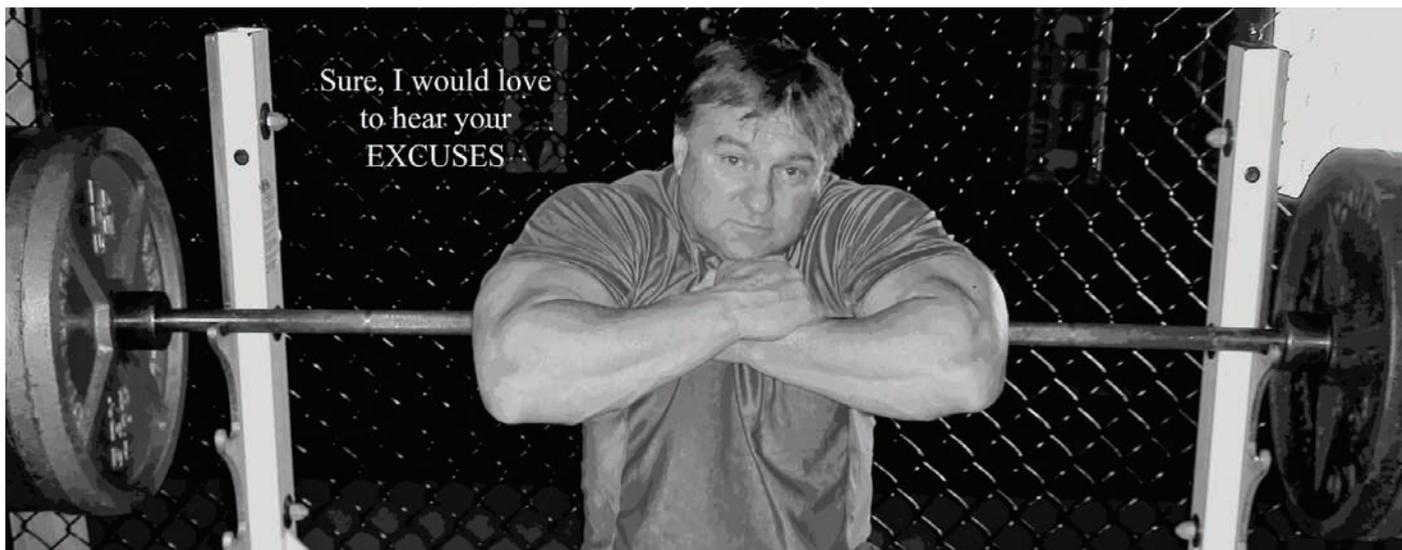
**WOBBLE BAR.** There are specialty bars built specifically for this exercise, but a more economical variation is to take weights (such as Kettlebells) and use light elastics to hang them on the end of a bar loaded with 40 percent of my SRM. Total weight used should be

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no more than 60 percent. If your feet are not properly planted, if your shoulders are not tucked, if your drive is not even, the wobble bar will let you know immediately! She is a nagging bitch that will not let a single mistake go unpunished, and is indispensable at the beginning of a cycle to tighten up your form.

**BOARD GAMES.** Ideal for developing both speed and lockout strength, boards offer benefits to both raw and shirted lifters. Each board takes 2 inches off your stroke, giving to the opportunity to work with heavier weights with faster acceleration. Often lifters will work boards with 110 to 130 percent of SRM. At Twin Cities Bar Bell, Coach Damminga created a game whimsically named "Triceps Death." Using roughly 60 percent of SRM, do five reps to the chest, then five to a one-board, five to a two-board and so on until a four-board. That is 25 reps. If you stop for any reason, you get a 10-second count to compose yourself. It is a great finisher, and another exercise in which to set a PR.

**PAUSE PRESS.** I frequently tell my teammates I need to spend more time working out of the hole and they just giggle at me, often after snorting, "That's what she said." Pause presses are one of those essentials competitive lifters should do, but dread. Bring a relatively high weight to the chest and pause for a three-count. Now, of course you always need to pause, but the three-count really forces you to hold it together at the bottom. Form perfection and leg

**"ARGUMENTS ABOUT THE VALUE OF THE BENCH PRESS ARE SIMILARLY CLOUDED BY PEOPLE WHO DON'T UNDERSTAND THAT IT IS A TRUE MULTI-MUSCLE, LARGE MUSCLE, CORE POWER-BUILDING LIFT."**

drive are the focus of this drill.

We can add to this bands, assistance and resistance, floor presses, lockouts, negatives and a dozen other exercises. Somewhere along the line we also do full, to-the-chest bench presses. The result is getting stronger. Regardless of what anyone says about the bench press, I've yet to meet anyone who could bench 150 percent of their body weight and was not powerful. If strength matters then so does the bench press. It is a cornerstone lift, and a key component to an overall fitness/strength picture. Dismiss it at your own peril. Learn it, master it,

love it like you would do with any power lift, and the bench will give you a great many rewards. Without it there will always be a huge whole in your programs that frankly no Kettlebell will fill. **PM**

*Mike Reilly has been involved in combat sports since childhood and has trained pro MMA fighters for 12 years. In the corner for 650 wins, 30 regional titles, four top-10 rankings and 15 fighters who went from day one with me to the big shows. In 2012 he competed in his first contest and set a new state record in the USAPL. He's looking for a national record in the APF Nationals and plans to compete at Worlds this fall. Reilly is relatively new to powerlifting, but he's logged more time in weight rooms than most chalk buckets.*

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1	1074.8	RYAN KENNELLY	334	UPA	7/13/08
2	1047.2	PAUL "TINY" MEEKER	310	NSM	5/8/10
3	1025.1	SCOT MENDELSON	319	APF/WPC	11/22/08
4	1010	GENE RYCHLAK	355	APF	12/16/06
5	950	DONNIE THOMPSON	385	SPF	8/21/11
6	942.5	MIKE WOMACK	N/A	WABDL	3/28/09
7	931.5	HARLAN "CLAY" BRANDENBURG	400	APF	10/27/07
8	925.9	GARRY FRANK	374	APF	11/18/06
9	910	ROBERT "TEE" MCCRAY	373	IPA	11/23/08
10	910	ASHLEY "A.J." ROBERTS	312	SPF	12/10/11
11	909.4	ROBERT VICK	375	WABDL	5/17/08
12	905	SHAWN T. LATTIMER	380	APF	5/12/07
13	903.9	ROY BRADSHAW	452	SPF	2/7/10
14	903.9	JANI MURTOMAKI	328	GPC	10/9/10
15	860	ANTHONY BOLOGNONE	329	IPA	6/28/09
16	859.8	MIKE WOLFE	342	WPO	3/3/07
17	854.3	STEVE WONG	310	APF	2/16/08
18	854.3	MIKE GUAY	315	WPC	1/14/12
19	848.8	KARI KALLIOLA	356	WPC	6/18/08
20	845	JOHN ROBINSON	350	UPA	11/13/10
21	841.1	JAMES CRAWFORD	351	WABDL	7/17/10
22	837.8	RICHARD LIGIER	316	WPC	4/26/08
23	832.2	DOUGLAS GERONA	408	USPA	8/27/11
24	826.7	TRAVIS ROGERS	325	WPO	3/3/07
25	826.7	CLINT HARWOOD	311	WPC	6/4/11
26	821.2	CHAD AICHS	375	WPO	11/4/06
27	815.7	JEFF LEWIS	528	WPO	3/4/06
28	815.7	JIM HOSKINSON	350	APF	1/21/12
29	815	TONY BARBACCIO	390	IPA	5/22/10
30	805	MIKE "MULE" MILLER	385	APF	4/17/04
31	805	PAUL RATSCH	329	APA	12/1/07
32	805.8	OTTO SELIN	321	WPC	9/24/11
33	804.7	CHRIS COOKE	316	WPO	9/25/04
34	804.7	BRIAN SIDERS	349	USPF	6/24/05
35	804.7	JIM SHEFFIELD	350	UPA	9/20/09
36	804.7	LOGAN LACY	339	APF	2/6/10
37	804.7	BRANDON BRANER	347	APF	3/24/12
38	800.3	BILL GILLESPIE	318	WABDL	4/30/05
39	800	JOEL "CUBAN BULL" TORANZO	333	APF	7/15/06
40	800	TERRY CORWIN	341	APF	4/7/07
41	800	JARED MENNE	320	IPA	12/8/07
42	800	JAMES WILLIAMS	313	SPF	10/17/09
43	800	PAUL CHILDRESS	327	SPF	4/30/11
44	800	JONATHAN BERNOR	N/A	SSA	2/11/12
45	793.7	MARK "JACKASS" BELL	317	UPA	9/13/08
46	793.7	SIGFUS FOSSDAL	399	USPA	9/16/11
47	785	JOHN GALLIGAN	352	IPA	11/21/04
48	782.6	JOHN EWING	343	APF/WPC	6/12/11
49	780	ANTHONY CLARK	372	NSM	9/22/96
50	777.1	JONATHAN BERNOR	340	WPO	10/30/05

FIRST MAN TO BENCH PRESS 500 & 1000 LBS.

DONE WITH REVERSE GRIP

## SQUAT

RANK	WEIGHT (LBS)	LIFTER	BODYWEIGHT (LBS)	FEDERATION	DATE
1	1265	DONNIE THOMPSON	385	SPF	8/21/11
2	1250	VLADISLAV ALHAZOV	336	IPA	1/20/08
3	1220	MIKE "MULE" MILLER	367	IPA	4/9/06
4	1213.6	ANDY BOLTON	344	WPO	3/3/07
5	1212.5	JEFF LEWIS	528	WPO	3/4/06
6	1207	HENRY THOMASON	316	APF	11/5/11
7	1174	CHAD AICHS	366	WPO	3/3/07
8	1160	MATT SMITH	378	IPA	8/19/07
9	1160	SCOTT "HOSS" CARTWRIGHT	313	SPF	8/23/09
10	1151.9	MAT COURT	330	WPC	5/8/10
11	1140.9	BRENT MIKESELL	319	APF/WPC	11/30/03
12	1125.5	BEAU MOORE	332	WPO	3/5/05
13	1125	ANTHONY BOLOGNONE	331	SPF	12/5/09
14	1125	PAUL CHILDRESS	327	SPF	4/30/11
15	1102.3	GARRY FRANK	366	APF	9/24/05
16	1102.3	JONATHAN BERNOR	340	WPO	10/30/05
17	1102.3	KARI KALLIOLA	349	WPC	11/22/08
18	1102.3	JOHN EWING	322	APF/WPC	6/14/09
19	1100	MATT WILSON	326	IPA	11/12/06
20	1100	ROBERT WHITE	324	SPF	4/30/11
21	1100	CHAD WALKER	328	XPC	3/3/12
22	1075	BEN BRAND	360	SPF	8/23/09
23	1074.8	SYLVESTER CRUMBLY	318	APF	12/4/05
24	1069.2	CRAIG GALLO	335	APF	12/2/06
25	1063.7	PAUL STRATAKIS	331	APF/WPC	6/5/05
26	1058.2	JANI MURTOMAKI	330	GPC	10/3/09
27	1050	MICHAEL RUGGIERA	348	IPA	4/4/04
28	1047.2	TODD GRENINGER	319	WPO	11/4/06
29	1040	WADE JOHNSON	338	SPF	2/12/11
30	1030.7	MIKE WHITE	322	APF	6/27/09
31	1025.1	SHEDRIC "TEX" HENDERSON	400	APF/WPC	6/5/05
32	1025.1	IGOR NASTYNOV	335	WPC	8/19/06
33	1025	TONY HUTSON	358	IPA	7/11/04
34	1025	JOHN MORROW	320	APF	7/23/11
35	1020	JAYSON MCNETT	337	IPA	3/5/11
36	1019.6	BRIAN SIDERS	336	USAPL	5/15/10
37	1015	ANTHONY CLARK	333	APA/WPA	3/27/93
38	1014.1	HOLGER KUTTROFF	313	WPO	11/9/03
39	1014.1	LOGAN LACY	339	APF	2/6/10
40	1014.1	DMITRY IVANOV	411	IPF	11/13/11
41	1010	MATT DIMEL	319	APF/WPC	5/3/86
42	1010	TIM HAROLD	415	APF	1/27/07
43	1010	CLINT LOWE	314	SPF	7/10/10
44	1010	JOSH CONLY	339	SPF	3/11/12
45	1008.6	SHANE HAMMAN	373	USPF/IPF	3/10/96
46	1008.6	PETER TREGLOAN	372	WPC	12/8/02
47	1008.6	ED RUSS	370	APF/WPC	6/8/03
48	1008.6	LANCE KARABEL	N/A	USPF	12/11/10
49	1005	GENE RYCHLAK	345	IPA	4/13/03
50	1005	THAD COLEMAN	324	IPA	8/18/07

FIRST MAN TO SQUAT 1200 LBS.

Listing compiled by Michael Soong. Records accurate (as to my knowledge) as of 3/20/12. For more records/rankings go to <http://www.powerliftingwatch.com/records>

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# 50 ALL-TIME

## DEADLIFT

RANK	WEIGHT (LBS)	LIFTER	BODYWEIGHT (LBS)	FEDERATION	DATE
1	1015	BENEDIKT MAGNUSSON	381	HPL	4/2/11
2	1008.6	ANDY BOLTON	346	WPC	4/5/09
3	931.5	GARRY FRANK	365	WPO	11/9/02
4	927	TIBOR MESZAROS	317	GPC	11/27/04
5	925	GARY HEISEY	358	APA/WPA	3/15/92
6	925	VLADISLAV ALHAZOV	336	IPA	1/20/08
7	914.9	MIKHAIL KOKLYAEV	348	WPC	6/26/10
8	903.9	MARC HENRY	406	ADFP/WDFPF	7/16/95
9	895.1	LARS NOREN	312	IPF	4/10/88
10	887.4	PETER TREGLOAN	352	WPC	7/6/97
11	887.4	VUGAR NAMAZOV	318	USPF/WPF	11/13/11
12	886.7	BILL KAZMAIER	325	USPF/IPF	11/29/81
13	885.5	DON REINHOULDT	357	AAU/IPF	5/3/75
14	881.8	VLADIMIR BONDARENKO	321	IPF	1/18/04
15	881.8	BRAD GILLINGHAM	323	USAPL/IPF	3/7/09
16	876.3	O.D. WILSON	380	USPF	2/16/89
17	876.3	VLADIMIR KALINICHENKO	325	IPF	8/28/05
18	865.3	BRIAN SIDERS	335	USAPL/IPF	12/1/07
19	865	GUS RETHWISCH	343	APF	1/25/86
20	859.8	DOYLE KENADY	314	USPF/IPF	5/4/79
21	859.8	ALEXANDER KLYUSHEV	314	COT	5/21/11
22	855	PAUL WRENN	345	AAU	8/15/76
23	855	TIM HAROLD	396	APF	2/4/06
24	855	JAMES "PIT BULL" SEARCY	350	NOTLD	11/3/07
25	850	MATT SMITH	335	IPA	4/13/03
26	848.8	CRAIG YOUNG	350	USPF	2/2/86
27	848.8	GERRIT BADENHORST	311	WPC	12/3/89
28	848.8	YURIY FOMIN	323	IPF	9/30/00
29	848.8	CHRIS WIERS	328	APF	11/14/09
30	845	JOHN KUC	322	AAU/IPF	11/11/72
31	843.3	RANDALL HARRIS	355	USAPL	4/23/11
32	840	GARY REYNOLDS	315	USPF	6/5/82
33	840	JOHN WARE	343	APF	1/29/89
34	837.8	PETER PETRAS	332	WPC	4/3/11
35	837.8	DAVID HANSEN	330	NOTLD	10/22/11
36	835	SEAN CULNAN	330	USAPL	5/1/99
37	832.2	RICH LACY	N/A	USPF/APF/WPC	12/3/88
38	832.2	YURIY SPINOV	309	IPF	11/19/95
39	832.2	DONNIE THOMPSON	383	WPO	10/10/04
40	832.2	KYLE CLOYD	332	APF	3/31/07
41	832.2	CARL YNGVAR CHRISTENSEN	355	IPF	3/3/12
42	830	DAN KOVACS	319	IPA	11/19/00
43	830	AARON ANDERTON	350	UPA	2/26/11
44	826.7	RICK RAINEY	N/A	USPF	4/19/86
45	826.7	HJALTI ARNASON	312	IPF	4/2/89
46	826.7	HANK HILL	323	APF/WPC	7/16/95
47	826.7	VASIL OROBETS	354	IPF	3/22/02
48	826.7	ANDERS JOHANSSON	320	IPF	12/20/03
49	826.7	BRIAN SIDERS	344	USPF	8/14/04
50	825	CHAD WALKER	332	APF	10/30/10

FIRST MAN TO DEADLIFT 1000 LBS.

DONE WITHOUT A BELT.

DONE WITHOUT A BELT.

DONE WITHOUT A BELT.

## SHW

RANK	WEIGHT (LBS)	LIFTER	BODYWEIGHT (LBS)	FEDERATION	DATE
1	3000.0	DONNIE THOMPSON	385	SPF	8/21/11
2	2806.5	ANDY BOLTON	345	WPO	3/3/07
3	2805.4	GARRY FRANK	375	APF	4/3/04
4	2805.0	VLADISLAV ALHAZOV	336	IPA	1/20/08
5	2799.9	JEFF LEWIS	528	WPO	3/4/06
6	2733.7	CHAD AICHS	366	WPO	3/3/07
7	2705.0	ANTHONY BOLOGNONE	331	SPF	12/5/09
8	2700.0	PAUL CHILDRESS	327	SPF	4/30/11
9	2673.1	MATT SMITH	369	APF/WPC	6/4/06
10	2656.6	JANI MURTOMAKI	330	GPC	10/3/09
11	2655.0	CHAD WALKER	328	XPC	3/3/12
12	2651.1	BRIAN SIDERS	336	USAPL	5/15/10
13	2650.0	HENRY THOMASON	328	SPF	8/21/11
14	2630.0	ROBERT WHITE	325	SPF	4/30/11
15	2625.0	MIKE "MULE" MILLER	367	IPA	4/9/06
16	2625.0	SCOTT "HOSS" CARTWRIGHT	313	SPF	8/23/09
17	2570.0	BEN BRAND	360	SPF	8/23/09
18	2568.4	KARI KALLIOLA	349	WPC	11/22/08
19	2568.4	MAT COURT	330	WPC	5/8/10
20	2565.0	MATT WILSON	326	IPA	11/12/06
21	2560.0	TIM HAROLD	396	APF	2/4/06
22	2557.4	BEAU MOORE	328	WPO	3/6/04
23	2551.9	JONATHAN BERNOR	340	WPO	10/30/05
24	2513.3	BRENT MIKESSELL	334	APF	6/29/03
25	2510.0	MICHAEL RUGGIERA	348	IPA	4/17/05
26	2502.2	CHRIS WIERS	318	APF	12/8/07
27	2502.2	LOGAN LACY	339	APF	2/6/10
28	2502.2	JOHN EWING	323	APF	11/1/08
29	2502.2	CARL YNGVAR CHRISTENSEN	357	IPF	5/12/12
30	2496.7	VOLODYMYR SVISTUNOV	351	IPF	11/13/11
31	2490	JOSH CONLY	339	SPF	3/11/12
32	2480.2	SIGFUS FOSSDAL	399	USPA	9/16/11
33	2474.7	VLADIMIR KALINICHENKO	332	IPF	1/22/06
34	2469.2	VLADIMIR BONDARENKO	341	IPF	8/28/05
35	2460	ANTHONY CLARK	333	APA/WPA	3/27/93
36	2458.2	MARK "JACKASS" BELL	316	UPA	9/13/08
37	2430.6	O.D. WILSON	380	USPF	2/16/89
38	2427.5	JOHN WARE	343	APF	1/29/89
39	2425.1	BILL KAZMAIER	330	USPF/IPF	1/31/81
40	2425.1	ANTON KIBIREV	311	IPF	5/29/11
41	2420	DAN KOVACS	319	IPA	11/19/00
42	2419.6	ANDREY KONOVALOV	337	IPF	5/7/11
43	2414.1	LANCE KARABEL	327	USPF/WPF	11/13/09
44	2408.6	PAUL STRATAKIS	331	APF/WPC	6/5/05
45	2408.6	TODD GRENINGER	337	APF/WPC	6/4/06
46	2408.6	DMITRY IVANOV	391	IPF	2/19/11
47	2403	BENEDIKT MAGNUSSON	343	IPF	4/16/05
48	2403	TRESTON SHULL	323	SPF	11/6/10
49	2400	TOM SKIVER	331	IPA	11/16/03
50	2400	TONY BARBACCIO	N/A	SSA	10/11/08

FIRST MAN TO TOTAL 2800 & 3000 LBS.

FIRST MAN TO TOTAL 2500, 2600, 2700 AND 2800 LBS.

Listing compiled by Michael Soong. Records accurate (as to my knowledge) as of 3/20/12. For more records/rankings go to <http://www.powerliftingwatch.com/records>

# GENETICS & HARD WORK

BY MIKE TUCHSCHERER

**A** very good friend of mine recently asked me an interesting question: What does it take to develop a champion athlete?

I have given this question a lot of thought. Although it seems like a very big question, it might not be quite as big as I first thought. At first, I thought it would depend a great deal on athletes' natural abilities, training age and so on. But as I thought about things more and more, I realized that the answer for pretty much any individual is the same.

The coaching world - or at least the small segment of the coaching world in which I am involved - is undergoing somewhat of a paradigm shift. My thoughts have shifted quite a bit, too. But in lots of ways, I have come back to where I started. Allow me to explain ...





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I was a strong kid in high school. As a freshman, I was above average. By the time I was a senior in high school, I had broken all my school's lifting records, some by a lot. Not only that, but I was the strongest high school student that I or any of my friends knew. I'm not saying that I was

cent of the time that most kids my age had been lifting. And even before that, I had probably a year to two years of bodyweight training. I didn't take summers off like many others. I didn't stop lifting in the "in-season," either. I was a one-sport athlete (football), so I had a very long off season

**"IF YOU PRACTICE THREE HOURS A DAY, SEVEN DAYS A WEEK (A TOTAL OF 21 HOURS PER WEEK), IT WILL TAKE YOU ABOUT 10 YEARS TO ACHIEVE MASTERY."**

the strongest ever. I probably wasn't the strongest in the state. But in the context of my small-ish high school and rural region, I was a "freak of nature."

Some of the guys on my team who were not so strong would often bring up "genetics." That is to say, the reason I was so strong was because I was born with some genetic gift that allowed me to excel beyond what they could ever hope to do. That used to make me very angry because I knew there was more to it than that, but at the time I don't know that I could articulate what it was. Now I can.

### **PUTTING IN THE WORK**

By the time I was a senior in high school, I had already been lifting weights for six years. That's 150 per-

cent of the time that most kids my age had been lifting. I thought about lifting weights, practiced my technique, read about lifting weights, etc.

My point is that tons of work that went into my performance at the time. And at this point in my career, there's even more work still. I was happily obsessed with lifting weights for years and still am, to a large extent. Getting muscular and strong has been something I am passionate about, and that passion has provided near-endless motivation for training, researching, experimenting, visualizing, and so on. Are there some genetic gifts that I possess that make it so these efforts are more fruitful for me than they are for others? Perhaps. But there's not much I or anyone else can do about that. I can tell you that there is a ton of



hard work that goes into it. It's a level of work that many are not interested in doing. And that's okay. I'm not placing myself on a pedestal because I'm obsessed with strength. It doesn't make me better than anyone. In fact, outside the iron sport culture itself, it's probably kind of odd. But there is a deeper explanation for my powerlifting success than innate talent.

**“WHETHER YOU WANT TO BE A MASTER CHESS PLAYER, A MASTER VIOLINIST OR A MASTER POWERLIFTER, IT TAKES ABOUT 10,000 HOURS OF PRACTICE. THAT IS, TIME SPENT PRACTICING WITH THE EXPRESS INTENT TO GET BETTER.”**

Part of this paradigm shift that I was referring to is a resurgent emphasis on the hard work required to become an elite athlete. We've always known that hard work was required, but I think it's only been more recently that we're learning just how much is required. In his outstanding book "Outliers," Malcom Gladwell makes the case that to achieve mastery at any activity seemingly without exception, it takes about 10,000 hours of dedicated practice. Whether you want to be a master chess player, a master violinist or a master powerlifter, it takes about 10,000 hours of practice. That is, time spent prac-

ticating with the express intent to get better.

Ten thousand hours is a big number, so let's break that down a bit. If you practiced two hours a day for seven days per week, it would take you over 13 years to reach the 10,000 hour mark. What about if you do the more conventional one-and-a-half hours a day for three days per week? Well, then it will take you about 42 years. In other words,

you're never going to get to the elite levels by being a recreational athlete. In fact, the earlier start you get, the better off you'll be.

I've listened to seminars talk about how this applies to sports like hockey, basketball, etc. They have found that for all the strength coaching, cone drills and medicine ball exercises we have invented, the best hockey players still play hockey more than their peers. Same with other sports, too. Then you look at groups like Bulgarian weightlifters and you start to see a pervasive trend - lots and lots of practice. Then more practice. During one presentation, Jed Smith

said, "Individuals who become professional athletes practiced on their own an average of twice as much as their teammates who did not make it." That's in addition to normal team practices.

The irony is that to reach the 10,000-hour mark, you don't only need a lot of time practicing. In many sports you also need an early start if you are to get to the 10,000 hours at an age where you can grab other opportunities. If you practice three hours a day, seven days a week (a total of 21 hours per week), it will take you about 10 years to achieve mastery. Say you are trying to become a professional basketball player. If you don't start playing seriously until you are 12 years old, then you only play 21 hours per week, you won't reach 10,000 hours until you are 22 years old. By that time, you are probably not going to get to play

weightlifting.

Of course this starts to get into some concerning areas. Who can maintain that kind of workload without burning out? Is it healthy to maintain that kind of single-minded obsession? I think this is where the conversation turns back to genetics. Or at the very least, to some other personality factors that are perhaps beyond the control of an individual. Clearly the people who can maintain the workloads required to meet their 10,000 hour mark are passionate about what they do. If they were not, then they wouldn't put that kind of time in or at the very least, they wouldn't be focused on getting better. So passion really becomes the lynchpin on which the whole idea of working toward mastery hinges. Where does passion come from?

Perhaps here is where we get to a more significant

## **"WORK HARDER THAN ANYONE ELSE AND SEE HOW FAR YOUR GENES CAN REALLY TAKE YOU. IF YOU DON'T WANT TO WORK THAT HARD, IT'S OKAY. IT DOESN'T MEAN YOU'RE A BAD PERSON"**

on a major college basketball team because you're too old and your opportunities for making it to the pros are greatly reduced. You could play more than 21 hours per week. That would help you get there faster, but it does have a cost.

### **CASE STUDY**

One case study of how lots of practice can make up for lost time is the story of another lifter that I know. I'll spare his name from this story, though. This guy was a world-class powerlifter. Then he got an itch to try his hand at weightlifting. He wanted to go to the Olympics. After making the switch, he rocketed to the top ranks of his weight class relatively quickly. At first, I chalked up his meteoric rise in part as natural born talent and also as carry-over strength from his powerlifting days. But this was not the whole of it. When he converted to weightlifting, he became obsessed. Or dedicated, depending on how you see it. A friend of mine who knew him personally told me that the lifter trained 11 or more times per week. I'm not talking about dragging a sled or doing easy stuff. I'm talking about serious weightlifting workouts. Dedicated practice. And between those workouts, you would often see him miming his snatch technique and other practice. So even when he wasn't training, he was thinking about getting better. And after leaving the gym and heading home for the day, he would watch videos of weightlifters and do visualization drills for hours. His whole life was aimed at the goal of competing in the Olympics. And the result of all that time spent was a very fast rise in skill for a lifter who was already kind of old to be starting Olympic-hopeful

genetic cause. But passion for a certain activity is also just as likely to come from some sort of socio-cultural part of our upbringing. Using myself as an example, I obviously value strength. Perhaps my value of strength and subsequent passion for it is tied to my genetics. Perhaps it's part of the way I was raised. But either way, I don't think it's something that can be faked.

I know a lot of people who have passion for what they do. Perhaps they don't have the passion that my weightlifter friend has, and that's okay. I'm not sure it takes that level of single-mindedness. But it takes enough passion that you're willing to put in the work. I'm sure that genetics play a role at some level. Even though some genes can be turned on and off, there is likely little that can be done about the genetic cards you were dealt. So if you've read this far, you probably have the passion for at least some hard work. So my advice to you is to not worry about genetics or other circumstances that are beyond your control. Work harder than anyone else and see how far your genes can really take you. If you don't want to work that hard, it's okay. It doesn't mean you're a bad person. But it also doesn't mean that the other guy is just blessed with some unseen talent that allows them to be better. Chances are you're just getting out-worked.

So to get more to the core of the question that was asked: What is required to develop a champion athlete? I think the answer to that is, more than anything else, it takes an extreme amount of hard work. That kind of work takes passion. The centerpiece for any truly elite athlete is going to be passion enough to out-work their competitors. **PM**

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# POUNDSTONE POWER



BY DEREK POUNDSTONE

## HOW DO I BUILD A "STRONGMAN" LOWER BACK?

The best exercises for lower back includes deadlifts, for obvious reasons, reverse hyper extensions done with a 1.6-second up cadence and a 2-second down cadence. This slower than normal execution feels better on my injured lower back. When I swing the reverse hyper up then resist it down slightly, it creates too much torque at the top for my liking. I actually have beginners set up on the machine then perform the movement with no weight, and everyone loves it. Finally, I'd have to say seated rows. Most seated rows hit the mid and upper back, but I had custom ordered a seated rower with a 350-lb. weight stack because they destroy the entire back. Remember, you are only as strong as your weakest link. Wavy seated rows (with good form) will help develop your

mid and upper back and help you handle the heavy load of heavy deads. My perfect monster back routine would be deadlifts, four sets of four to eight reps, stopping on each rep, no touch and go; seated row, four sets of six to 12 reps and reverse hyper, four sets of 10 to 20 reps. Do this and you will have a lower back Strongman athletes will be envious of. Also, on every third week, do pull down or chin-ups in place of seated rows for same reps. Do this once a week.

## HOW DO I DEVELOP A WORLD CLASS GRIP LIKE YOURS?

There are a few different types of grip. First, there's "crushing grip," which is your ability to apply closing power to your hand. This type of grip allows me to tightly grip an object and is very



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important when I do demonstrations such as rolling frying pans, breaking hammers and snapping baseball bats. Next there's "static grip," which is used when holding onto a bar, like during deadlifts and farmer's carries. Then there's "wrist flexion," which is described as the curling of your wrist. This is not technically a "grip" movement, but it directly affects the grip by helping improve a lifter's ability to prevent a bar from rolling out of their hand.

To train crushing grip, you can use grippers like your father used back in the '80s. Check out the hard core "Captain of Crush Grippers" from Ironmind. Another way of training crushing grip is plate pinches. Start out facing two 10-lb. weight plates so the flat sides are facing outward.

Grasp the top of the weight plate with your fingers on one side and thumb on the other, then hold the plates in each hand for time. You can graduate to three 10-lb. weight plates, or a pair of 25s, 35s or 45s. Top Strongman can pinch a set of 45s.

For static grip, you can train by doing a farmer's hold or hang from a chin up bar for time. If you're a deadlifter and have an issue with grip, after your final set you can set up a bar with 70 percent



of your max in a rack set a few inches from lockout and hold it for two maximum sets for time.

Finally, wrist flexion can be trained by attaching a rope to a plate then wrapping it around a 1- or 2-inch piece of bar or wooden dowel and row it up and back down using only wrist flexion. Additionally, there are behind-the-back wrist curls or wrist curls in front of your body with your forearms on a level flat surface.

To train total grip, after a deadlift session perform one exercise from only two of the three methods I listed. For instance, perform deadlift bar holds and plate pinches, three sets to failure. Repeat on arm day but mix it up a bit, so perhaps behind-the-back barbell wrist curls and plate pinches, three sets to failure.

Enjoy your new hand crushing, bar breaking grip! **PM**

*Poundstone's world-class strength can be seen on ESPN's Worlds Strongest Man, where he has been a finalist since 2008. He is a full time police officer for the Naugatuck PD, owner of Poundstone Performance Training Center, a soy spokesperson and a global ambassador for the Special Olympics.*

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## Bulletproof lower back with Dave Hoff and Jesse Burdick

**MB:** Three exercises to build up the lower back.



**Dave Hoff:** Reverse hypers, 4x15; good mornings (light), 3x10; conventional pin pull, 8x2 (heavy).



**Jesse Burdick:** Reverse hypers are a given, so I won't mention them. Static low back holds off GHR and/or 45 degree back ext. Good mornings suspended and full range with all bars and accommodating resistance. And I'll be a little unconventional and say anterior hip stretching and mobilization.

**MB:** Okay, that was twice the amount I asked for, jerk face. Anyone who wants more information on mobility and how to manage your own tweaks and injuries, do yourself a favor and visit the ultimate healer Kelly Starrett at [www.MobilityWod.com](http://www.MobilityWod.com).



## Abs with Ed Coan

**MB:** What are your three favorite ab exercises?

**Ed Coan:** Kneeling rope crunches, straightedge sit-ups with weight, hanging straight-leg raises.

**MB:** The straightedge sit-ups on the old-school ladder thingy, right?

**Ed:** These are done on the floor.

**MB:** Do you anchor down your fat little feet?

**Ed:** Somebody holds legs, sissy boy.

**MB:** Wow, that's hot!

**Ed:** Indeed, hot enough to give Yuri Spinov from Ukraine a 947 squat with no belt in the IPF. I saw Yuri do these with a regular power bar and 275 across his upper chest!



## Mike O'Hearn

**MB:** What's the deal with cardio? Do you do it? Do you think it can chew up muscle mass?

**Mike:** Yes, I do it. You're gonna lose some muscle tightening up, but that's just the way it goes. Just do what I do: Put on more muscle. All joking aside, I do cardio, usually Stepmill. But that's just because I need to stay leaner than most. In a perfect world, or in my terms if I could just have "leash off," I would just eat and not do cardio.

## Size matters with Stan Efferding



**MB:** What are your three favorite movements to increase size?

**Stan Efferding:** Jelking, vacuum pump, suspension weights.

**MB:** Um ... okay ...

**Stan:** Oh, and Extenz pills!

## Bench Monster Ryan Kennelly



**MB:** What are three of your favorite movements to build a solid raw bench?

**RK:** Close grip bench with bands, floor press with chains, decline bench.

**MB:** What do you feel are three key factors to your huge progress and WRs in the bench?

**RK:** Technique, diet and Louie Simmons.

**MB:** How often should a new, intermediate and advanced lifter train in a bench shirt?

**RK:** I would say every workout, but I have learned along the way that you only go so far training in your shirt before you hit the wall, so you need to train without it to further build your overall strength. Bottom line: Train in your shirt once a month for new lifters, and more advanced lifters should use a bench shirt every other workout for technique and heavy board pressing movements.

Peeps, don't forget to check out [www.SuperTraining.Tv](http://www.SuperTraining.Tv) and subscribe to [www.YouTube.com/SuperTraining06](http://www.YouTube.com/SuperTraining06) to see all my Power Project videos.

# MATT KROC

**What superhero power would you most like to possess?** Immortality. The possibilities are truly endless.

**What is your idea of perfect happiness?** Being in a committed relationship to the most perfect person for you, having a very close bond with your children, having family and friends that you can share all of your deepest secrets with, doing what you love for a career and working toward all of your biggest dreams.

**What is your greatest fear?** Dying before I've achieved every goal that I have set for myself.

**What is the trait you most deplore in yourself?** My insecurities, and I have a lot of them. However, I am conscious of them and I approach them pragmatically. I have managed to use them to motivate me to achieve my goals.

**What is the trait you most deplore in others?** Selfishness.

**What is your greatest extravagance?** I'm not overly concerned with material things but if there's one area I find enjoyment, it would be in extremely fast cars.

**What is your current state of mind?** Motivated and excited about what lies ahead.

**On what occasion do you lie?** In general I abhor lying, but I will lie when the truth will hurt someone more than the lie.

**What do you most dislike about your appearance?** I don't know that I can name just one thing. I constantly feel too small, too fat, and I don't think I'm very attractive.

**What do you most value in your friends?** Loyalty and honesty.

**What or who is the greatest love of your life?** Without a doubt, my beautiful wife, Lauren. Every day I look at her and think to myself how fortunate I am to have her in my life.

**When and where were you happiest?** Every time one of my sons tell me how much they love me, every night I snuggle with my wife and every time I achieve a very difficult goal I have set for myself.

**If you could change one thing about yourself, what would it be?** I've spent the majority of my life wishing that I could change a lot about myself, but now I can honestly say there's nothing that I would change. I have plenty of flaws, but they are all part of what make me who I am.

**What do you consider your greatest achievement?** So far it would have to be breaking the all-time total record for the 220-lb. class by going 1,003-738-810 = 2,551 after cutting 35 lbs. in 24 hours to make weight, but I think my biggest achievements still lie ahead of me.

**What is your most treasured possession?** I don't have one.



Material possessions pale in comparison to relationships and achievements.

**What is your most marked characteristic?** My mental toughness.

**Which historical figure do you most identify with?** I am a complex and unusual person and, as such, there are very few people who I can identify with. I identify with certain traits or characteristics a person may have, but I have never really met or heard of a person that is similar enough to me to be able to identify with them.

**What is your greatest regret?** I have made many mistakes, but I don't regret them because they are often our most valuable learning experiences.

**What is your motto?** Never let anyone ever tell you that achieving your dreams is impossible.

**Which living person do you most admire?** I respect a lot of people and their achievements but I wouldn't say that I really admire anyone.

**Who is your favorite hero of fiction?** Neo from the Matrix. He begins as an average person searching for the truth and then gradually ascends to nearly limitless abilities by realizing that there are no limits to what one can become. Also, he risks everything for love and refuses to give up even when everything appears to be impossible.

**If you were to die and come back as a person or thing, what do you think it would be?** I don't believe in such things, but if it were possible I would like to come back as myself in the near future and take a completely different path and see how differently my life would turn out.

**What is your favorite movie?** The first Matrix. So many great ideas and philosophies expressed in that movie, not to mention that the cinematography was ground breaking at the time.

**Who is your favorite lifter?** Ed Coan. In my mind, he is hands-down the greatest powerlifter to ever set foot on a platform. He dominated the sport for almost two decades and, at 220 lbs., often out totaled everyone in the meet — including the super heavies. To put that in perspective, that would be like a 220-lb. lifter now going out and totaling over 3,000 lbs. He was that good.

**What do you prefer: single-ply, multi-ply or raw?** I have competed in all three, and it really doesn't matter to me what the rules are as long as they are applied fairly to all lifters. For me, it is more about the challenge of competition than the rules.

**Besides yourself, who would you like to see on the next cover of Power?** Any lifter who is truly deserving of it.

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