

SKIP BREAKFAST TO BURN FAT?

POWER

**UNDER
LOADING**

By Mark Bell

GET RID OF
**ELBOW
PAIN**

ANDREY MALANICHEV

RAW POWER

Donnie Thompson

**NOTHING
COMES EASY**

JULY/AUG 2011 • VOL. 2, NO. 4



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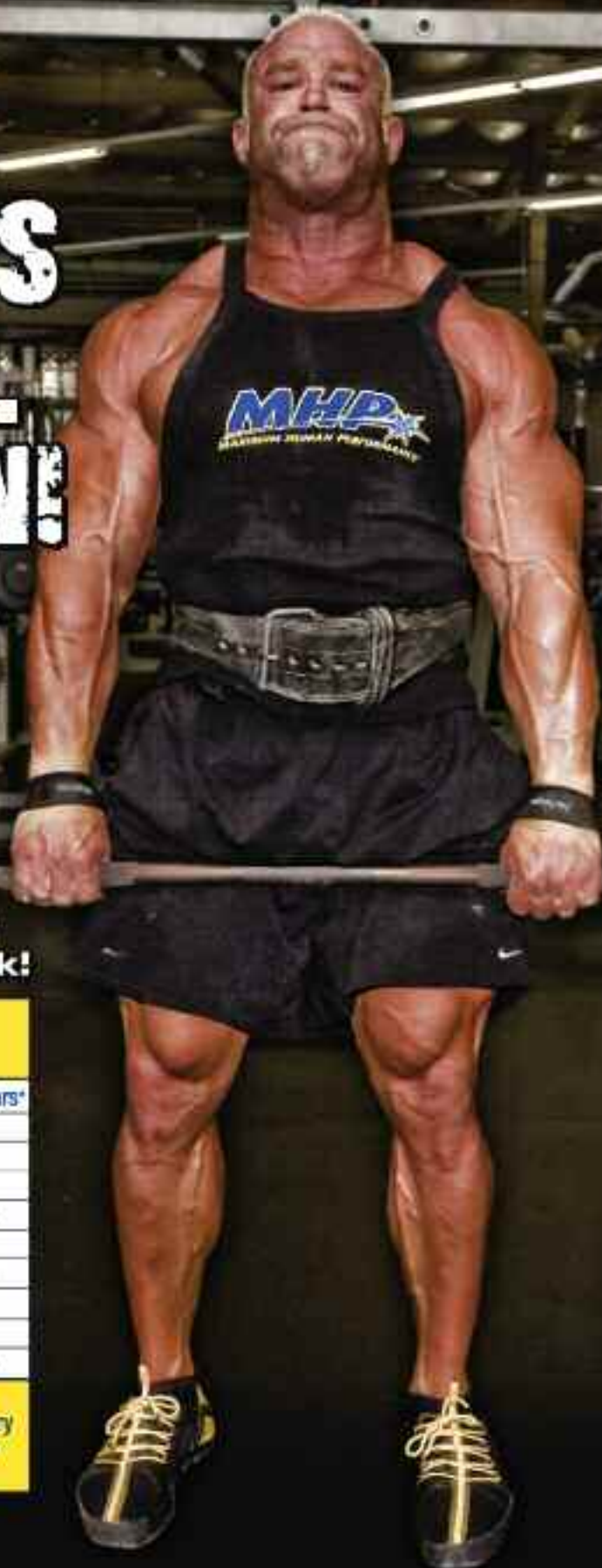
NUTRITION FACTS COMPARISON

Power Pak Pudding vs. the Leading Protein Bars*

Per Serving	Power Pak Pudding	Leading Protein Bars*
Total Calories	190	350-400
Protein	30 grams	30 grams
% of Cals from Protein	63%	30-34%
Total Fat	4.5 grams	13-16 grams
Calories from Fat	40	120-144
Total Carbohydrates	9 grams	27-34 grams
% of Cals from Carbs	19%	27-39%
Sugars	0 grams	6-9 grams
Sugar Alcohols	0 grams	13-27 grams

In a side-by-side comparison, it's easy to see that MHP's Power Pak Pudding is the superior high protein snack in every nutritional category. Power Pak Pudding is the smart snack choice for a lean, healthy body!

*Average profile of popular high protein bars.



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Other TEAM MHP Athletes: **VLAD ALHAZOV** - World Record Squat: 1,250 lbs. @ SHW. **RYAN KENNELLY** - Greatest Bench Ever: World Record 1,075 lbs. @ 308 lbs. **BRIAN SIDERS** - IPF World Record Total: 2,601 lbs. @ SHW, USAPL Record Total: 2,650 lbs. @ SHW. **BRIAN SCHWAB** - World Record Total: 2,045 lbs. @ 165 lbs. **JOE CEKLOVSKY** - World Record Bench: 600 lbs. @ 147.6 lbs. **AL OWIS** - Raw Unity Record "Raw" Bench: 633 lbs. @ 265 lbs. **BRANDON CASS** - World Record Deadlift: 610 lbs. @ 220 lbs.

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SQUAT

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FIRST WORD



Here we are with issue 10. We are moving right along, like a snowball rolling down a hill. We pick up a little more momentum with each issue. I really do love compiling this magazine with all the Power media staff (consisting of myself and my hot wife). With each issue I get more and more excited to provide "infotainment" for the great readers of Power. This issue provides a wide variety of information, so be prepared to be overloaded with info.

A new section, dubbed "Power Texting," is a sample of my text messages with some of the greatest athletes/minds in the world, which also happen to be in my Rolodex. For you kids out there, when I say "Rolodex," I'm referring to the contacts in my phone. This unique column will be a staple — so those of you who I text, look out! Where else will you find Brian Carroll, Jesse Burdick, Ed Coan, Stan Efferding, Kelly Starrett, A.J. Roberts and Brian Mackenzie all in the same spot?

Now for the underloading manifesto. Let's talk about training optimally, not maximally. Let's figure out how to squeeze the most out of the least. Let's talk about sitting on your couch to get strong and jacked as all hell! Okay, maybe that last part is a pipe dream, but what if I told you there are methods out there that allow you to make progress by using less weight? I share these methods with you (for the first time), which I have coined "underloading."

"Super D" Donnie Thompson talks about his quest to nail down the all-time squat record. It only took him three years and bombing out of a bunch of meets to get there. Donnie had tunnel vision about the record, and now it is his!

The "Breakfast Nazi," aka John Kiefer, has never seen an early morning pancake or bowl of oatmeal he agreed with. The Breakfast Nazi not only hates breakfast, but says he thinks breakfast can get in the way of performance and burning body fat.

Andrey Malanichev's style takes us back to the old-school method when there was only one way to lift: raw! Andrey's 992-lb. raw squat was legendary, but I have the feeling that it was just the start of this Russian icon's career. At the 2011 Cup of Titans, Andrey blasted through a 2,604-lb. single-ply total. I think only three men have ever done that before.

Sometimes the response we get from our fans is just flat-out overwhelming. Just thinking about the impact we have on people's lives gives me the chills. Listen to what this one fanatic confessed to me at the last powerlifting seminar I did in Orange County, Calif.: "I never read a magazine and pooped at the same time before Power magazine!" ~Anonymous Female Powerlifter

Making the world a better place to lift.

Mark Bell

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POWER

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SHAWN FRANKL - World Record Total: 2,715 lbs. @ 220 lbs.

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Andrey Malanichev

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Underloading=Reloading

Mark Bell explains how to get stronger by lifting less weight!



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Nothing Comes Easy

Donnie Thompson takes us through his 3 year quest to break the Squat World Record.



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WHICH WOULD YOU RATHER TAKE?

Dear Fellow Lifter,

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Up until the point "pump" products have mainly relied on one pathway to increase Nitric oxide (or NO), the classical L-Arginine-NO-Synthesis pathway.

What if I told you There Was Another Pathway?

And, what if I told you there was a single compound that utilized both pathways at the same time?



Nitrate-Nitrite What?

This particular compound yields the nitrate ion, which works through a little-known, "REVERSE" pathway called the nitrate-nitrite-nitric oxide pathway.

In essence, nitrate is reduced to nitrite which is further reduced to NO...

But, the second pathway is also exciting because it can generate Nitric oxide via several routes that are enzymatic and non-enzymatic, making this pathway, in some respects, a more reliable and better overall way to increase NO. (1-4).

The "Reverse" Nitric Oxide Pathway Is Like Striking Oil In Your Backyard While Planting A Tree...

Furthermore, this pathway becomes much more important and is favored over the classical pathway in conditions where oxygen levels are much lower and to some extent acidification occurs in a given tissue (i.e. weight training) allowing for vasodilation to occur and oxygen to be transported in these conditions.

By combining the "reverse" pathway with the classical pathway, we can utilize both to obtain very high M.O. levels to achieve a level of vasodilation never experienced before.



"You won't lying about those little pills bro. I don't know what the hell you sent me, but this is sick... My arms ballooned up from high-rep squating... haha... AND I got a damn P.E.!! Listen man... Ted Jacod was in his sickest condition yet. Speechless bro... GREECHNESS" - Steve Taurillo - Pittsburgh, PA

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To the Editor-at-Xtra-Large:

I was so glad to see some CrossFit attention in the last issue of Power, and from the man himself, BMack. Awesome! Keep up the



great articles and bring on the endurance and power advice. I'm located in Philly and looking forward to putting power into motion.
Robert G., via email

To the Editor-at-Xtra-Large:

Great job on the deadlift article (May/June Power), I have re-read it a few times to make sure I had everything right. I can really tell the difference. Thanks.



Jeff W., via Facebook

To the Editor-at-Xtra-Large:

Thanks for all that you do for the powerlifting world. It was great to meet Mark at the Arnold Classic.

Matt F., via the Power website

To the Editor-at-Xtra-Large:

Power is the best value for my money when it comes to getting straight information. Thanks for the hard work.

Justin J., via the Power website

To the Editor-at-Xtra-Large:

I came across Power by chance at Barnes & Noble last month. I'm surprised at how quickly I got hooked. Very good work.

Jeff I., via the Power website



To the Editor-at-Xtra-Large:

I love all your stuff! I had to stop reading before because the crazy-high price to Canada. I'm so happy it's dropped! I hear rumors that Sarah Leighton is in the next one! She is amazing.

Shane C., via the Power website

The Editor-at-Xtra-Large replies:

We have lowered our subscription prices to Canada. They are now \$39 a year or \$59 for two years.

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OUT AND ABOUT



Kelly Starrett, Chris Bell, Mark Bell and Jesse Burdick



Jesse Burdick, Tim Ferriss, Mark Bell



Kelly Starrett admires a Smelly poster at Wheezy's Burger Stand



Jannett Loveall and Mark Bell of Super Training Gym



Mike Tuchscherer and Mark Bell

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Bryce Williams, Bodybuilder

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Travis Jackson, Triathlete

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Ryan Donohue, Powerlifter

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BY MICHELE ATKINSON

Sarah Leighton

If you thought you didn't need motivation to push your lifts to the next level, you do now. We've got two words for you: Sarah Leighton. Do you have National records that will hold forever? Leighton does. Do you crave squat day? Leighton does. Can you slam a buffet and still look hot in a bikini? Yup, Leighton can.

Who is Sarah Leighton in 10 words or less? Humble, but devoted to being the best I can be.

How old are you? 31.

Where do you train? I train at Ultimate Fitness in Renfrew, Ont., Canada, which is one of the two gyms my husband and I own.

Do you get hit on a lot at meets? Not really; my husband handles me at every meet and he is pretty scary-looking.

How and when did you start powerlifting? I competed in my first meet in 2008 and have been hooked ever since.

What is the typical reaction when people find out you are powerlifter? Many people assume that powerlifting is body building, so I have to explain the difference to them. Then, the most common question is, "How are you so small yet lift so much weight without hurting yourself?" My mom has asked me why I can't do something "normal."

What is your favorite lift and why? I love squatting and look forward to every single squat training day. I think it's because I just love the way a well executed squat feels. It's a beautiful thing!

On a scale of 1 to 10, how girly are you? Hmm, sometimes a 4



and sometimes a 7. I was always kind of tomboyish. The only really girly thing about me is my sneeze. And maybe my curves.

What meets are you currently preparing for? I just won my Nationals at the end of March, so other than a couple of meets throughout the summer, my main focus now is IPF Worlds in Plzen, Czech Republic in November.

What is your favorite food? I love food. All of it. I have a nutritionist, so my diet is very strict to keep me looking good and performing well. When I get a cheat meal, it's off the charts. I can out-eat a lot of men.

What powerlifting records do you hold? I lift in the CPU, which is the Canadian branch of the IPF. I own the retired squat 413 lbs. (187.5kg), bench 260 lbs. (117.5kg) and total 1,052 lbs. (477.5kg) records in the 148 lb. (67.5kg) class, which will hold forever now with the weight class changes.



Who is your favorite lifter? Definitely Ed Coan, but I also love watching Benedikt Magnusson lift. So much energy!

How has powerlifting helped you? Powerlifting has really helped me gain confidence in myself. Prior to lifting, I had played many team sports. I did well, but with powerlifting it's just you and the weights on the platform. There is nobody to rely on but you. Nothing is more satisfying than constantly challenging yourself to do better, reaching your goal and then moving on to the next one.

Do you intimidate a lot of dudes? Yes. But I also challenge them and keep them on their toes. When I start drilling weights close to their numbers, they have to step it up.

What are your powerlifting goals? Before March I would have said win my weight class at Nationals and be the best female lifter. Now, I am looking forward to a good placing at Worlds.

What is something unique about you? My smile.

Anything else you would like to add? I am looking for sponsors! **PM**



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BY GEORGE OKUNEV

A CONVERSATION WITH ANDREY MALANICHEV

POWER: Hello, Andrey. Thanks for taking the time to sit down with Power. Can you please give us a brief biography of yourself?

MALANICHEV: My name is Andrey Vladimirovich Malanichev. I was born on January 10, 1977, on the outskirts of Moscow in the Odintsovskiy region. I live in Moscow. I work as an assistant for head of sports of the Barvinsk Region. My parents are Vladimir and Galina Malanichev; I also have a sister named Irina.

POWER: What are your current best lifts, raw and equipped?

MALANICHEV: Equipped is 1,036 lb. squat, 661 lb. bench and 903 lb. deadlift (2,600 lb. total)— all done under IPF rules (single-ply, walk-out squat). At that competition, the deadlift bar was a little stiff. Raw is 992 lb. squat (with knee wraps), 507 lb. bench and 815 lb. deadlift (2,314 lb. total). During the squat I had to use a Monolift. I didn't like it because it bounces too much when I try to push my back under the bar. We had four spotters hold the Monolift for me. In addition, I was still recovering from bicep and chest injuries.

Note: Malanichev said later that he had plans to squat past 1,000 lbs. that day, but because he could not setup properly on the Monolift, the 992 lb. squat put more pressure on his back than it did in training and he decided to stop there.





Russian Strongman Mikhail Koklyaev and Andrey Malanichev

“My sports philosophy is to set high goals and achieve them, to dare myself to do new weights that no one has done before.”

POWER: When did you start lifting? Do you do any other sports?

MALANICHEV: I started powerlifting when I was 16. I also box and do some wrestling.

POWER: What is your training philosophy? How do you motivate yourself to lift weights that very few people have ever tried to lift before?

MALANICHEV: My sports philosophy is to set high goals and achieve them, to dare myself to do new weights that no one has done before. I have always been driven by my ambition and curiosity to find my limits. Every day when I go to train and don't feel like it, I tell myself that I have to do it, I owe it to myself to train and complete my plan for that day.

POWER: Do you follow any special diets?

MALANICHEV: My diet doesn't change when I compete. I just eat a lot more food when I am training for a competition. I eat a lot of oats, different types of porridge, fish, chicken and red meat. I always eat high-quality food.

POWER: What training methods have you used in the past and how do you train now?

MALANICHEV: My first coach, Andrey Chuprin, was very brutal. He wrote programs for me and my friends that were very broad and very hard. I had six training sessions a week. I would squat twice a week and then train the other lifts four more times. I would do four sets by six reps in winter, four sets by eight reps in spring and four sets by 15 reps in summer. After that I would do six exercises for back for six sets each. It was very hard to train this way. My coach told me that I needed to build a very powerful base. After that I turned to professional powerlifting coach in Igor Zavyalov. When he wrote me my first program I was very surprised by how little there was to do and how light it was. After my previous nightmare, training with Zavyalov seemed like child's play. But with him I became the champion of Russia, then Europe and then the world! Now my training is very simple, just four times a week — Monday: squat; Wednesday: bench; Friday: deadlift; Saturday: bench. Just one exercise a day and no assistance work besides bench twice a week.

POWER: Does your training change from raw to equipped competition?



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LIVE WELL



“...training with Zavyalov seemed like child’s play. But with him I became the champion of Russia, then Europe and then the world!”

MALANICHEV: No, training is the same. Approximately 4-6 weeks before the competition I will put my gear on. For raw, I don’t use it at all.

POWER: What are your views on raw vs. equipped lifting, and will we ever see you do a multi-ply competition?

MALANICHEV: I like lifting raw because I don’t have to squeeze myself into suits and shirts. Also it enables me to demonstrate my true physical strength. I don’t want to use multi-ply gear – not this year, anyway. Later on? Maybe, we’ll see. Unfortunately people want to see the biggest weights being lifted. They don’t care how many “plys” the lifter is wearing and how much it helps the lifter. I don’t like it. I like pure powerlifting.

POWER: I would think it would be hard to have idols when you are the best, but I know you are very fond of Ed Coan, do you have any other idols?

MALANICHEV: In music, Iron Maiden. In literature, Sergey Yesenin. In powerlifting, Ed Coan.

POWER: What are your best times and worst times during training? Does it ever feel too hard?

MALANICHEV: My training doesn’t depend on what mood I am in. I give maximum effort and intensity all the time. I feel great when I complete my planned training and do well in competitions. I feel bad when I don’t. It’s very simple.

POWER: What are your goals in the next year, and next three years?

MALANICHEV: I don’t like setting long-term goals. I only focus on my next competition. I don’t waste time thinking of competitions to come. During the Cup of Titans I want to total more than 2,667 lbs. using IPF rules.

POWER: You have some very strong friends: Andrey

Belyaev, Misha Koklyaev, Yevgeniy Yarymbash. How much do they motivate you?

MALANICHEV: We don’t catch up that much because we live in different towns. We talk on the phone and on the ‘net. Our training is too different; we can’t really borrow anything of use from one another. At this very moment, what motivates me is the fact that there is a guy by the name of Yevgeniy Yarymbash. He will create very serious competition for me during the 2011 Cup of Titans.

POWER: What can you tell us about the upcoming documentary you are involved in?

MALANICHEV: The film is made by my promoter, Dimitriy Spiridonov. I like his professionalism and his work very much. I trust him completely. I think it will be very interesting. I can’t wait to see it when it’s finished. If, after watching this documentary, 10 or more young people decide to get into powerlifting, Dimitriy and I will feel that we have succeeded in our task.

POWER: Thank you so much for taking the time to speak to us. Is there anyone you would like to thank?

MALANICHEV: I would like to thank my parents, especially my mother. She brought me into this world. I weighed over 13 lbs. at birth! I want to thank all of my friends; they are always there to support me. I would like to thank God, who is always with me.

POWER: One last question: When will you squat 1,100 lbs. raw?

MALANICHEV: Raw? I think you are confusing something! I want to squat 1,100 lbs. equipped, walked-out and single-ply (IPF rules). If I ever squat 1,100 lbs. raw, then I am from another planet and I am made out of steel, not bone! **PM**

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MUSCLEPHARM POWER SPOTLIGHT:

BY MICHELE ATKINSON

BRENT WILLIS

MusclePharm's Power Spotlight is a new column in Power aimed at shining a light on lifters who are doing some great things. Each issue, the featured lifter will receive a box of supplements from MusclePharm worth \$100. Nominate yourself or a friend to be the next MusclePharm Power Spotlight! Send nominations to andee@thepowermagazine.com.

This issue's Power Spotlight is Brent Willis, a young lifter with some big lifts under his belt and even bigger goals on his horizon.

What are your stats? 21 years old, 308-lb. weight class, 6 feet, 2 inches, raw lifter.

What are your best lifts? 705-lb. squat, 462-lb. bench and 832-lb. deadlift.

What is your favorite lift? Why? My favorite lift is the deadlift. It has always been my best lift and I have a lot of fun training it.

Where do you train? I train in Bakersfield, Calif., at Oildale Fitness and Wheeler's Hog Pit.

Who is your coach? How has he helped you? Ken Wheeler has been a tremendous help in my powerlifting endeavors. His knowledge and implementation of the Westside routine has completely changed my programming since I started working with him. He has also corrected a lot of the form issues I had. My total has





gone up almost 300 lbs. since I started working with him last year.

How and when did you get into powerlifting? I got into powerlifting after I graduated high school because I missed setting goals for myself. I had been lifting for a while and really enjoyed it, so the next logical step was to compete.

Do you have a background in other sports? I wrestled for five years.

What are your 2011 goals? My goals for 2011 are to deadlift 900 lbs. in a suit at Mr. Olympia. I will then deadlift 900 lbs. raw at the 2012 LA Fit Expo. I would also really like a 500-lb. raw bench by the end of the year.

Long-term goals? My long-term goal is to break the world record deadlift. Right now it's 1,015 lbs., but I can only imagine where it will be in years to come. It appears that Benedikt Magnusson hasn't even come close to his potential, so his career will be really fun to follow. But I would really like to make a name for myself as a great deadlifter. I would also like to try a Strongman competition in the future; I think that would be really enjoyable.

What do you do for work? I work in a school as a special education aide.

Who are your biggest fans? My biggest fans are my mom and dad. They have always been my biggest supporters. My friends and co-workers are also really supportive of me.

What do you do to get amped before a meet or before an attempt? I have always been extremely nervous before and during competitions, almost to the point of debilitation. It affected me to the greatest extent during wrestling; however, it has carried over in to powerlifting. I spend most of my time before and during meets trying to calm myself down as opposed to amping myself up. I also find that visualization helps me a lot before a lift.

If you weren't powerlifting, what would you be doing? I would still be lifting weights. Once I started lifting in high school, I knew I would do it for the rest of my life.

What lifter do you admire most? Why? I admire all great deadlifters, in particular Konstantinovs, Bolton and Magnusson. Someday, God willing, I'll reach that level of strength. **PM**



FARMER'S WALK

BY KARL GILLINGHAM

The Farmer's Walk — or Fergus Walk, as it was previously known — has been a staple in Strongman contests for 40 years. The Farmer's Walk is a great test of core, legs, back, grip and endurance. Modern professional Strongman contests use many variations of Farmer's Walk parameters. Weights, distance, turns, handle size, terrain, size and shape of implements are all variables to the modern Farmer's Walk event. Typically the weight will vary from 275 to 400 lbs. per implement and the distance will be 50 to 200 feet. Consider that the event starts with a 550- to 800-lb. side handle deadlift, and you can see the daunting challenge to the Strongman newbie. Being proficient in the Farmer's Walk is a requirement to the success of the modern professional Strongman. The Farmer's Walk also is a very beneficial event for cross-training for athletes looking to improve performance.

FARMER'S WALK EXECUTION

The basics for executing a proper Farmer's Walk are fairly self-evident.

- Chalk your hands to help maintain a firm grip.
- Crouch down as if doing a deadlift and grasp the handles with a very firm grip. Make sure to get the handle in your hand as far as possible.
- Place your hand on the implement so the implements are parallel or slightly tipped down when picked up. The strongest parts of the grip are your first two fingers and the thumb, so it is important to avoid having the nose of the implement sky-high.
- Lift up the implements with your legs and back, and avoid bent arms to keep the strain off the biceps.
- Start walking with short, even steps. Concentrate on keeping the core solid and the walk straight and controlled. Build up speed as you go, but always maintain control. Speed will come with time; control is most important when starting out.
- Proceed down the course until the distance required has been completed.
- After doing some straight-line Farmers, try a turn. Set up a cone and work on turning around it. The hardest thing to prevent when doing turns is over-rotation. You really only have to start the turn, and the implements will swing around on their own due to momentum. Practice makes perfect, and a very awkward maneuver will feel easier over time.
- Increase your poundage, speed and distance as you become more proficient. Once proficient, vary the weight and speed. Don't always try to just go heavy, as you will lose some of the benefits of muscular endurance under strain and grip endurance. Gains in this exercise can be obtained quickly, and soon you will be doing it like a pro.

ATHLETIC BENEFITS

The athlete performing a well-executed Farmer's Walk will receive many benefits. Most progressive strength coach-

es now utilize some variation of Farmer's Walk to train their athletes as part of their strength and conditioning programs. Increased back and leg strength, as well as athletic coordination, are main benefits of Farmer's Walk. For powerlifters, the upper-back development and overall core strength increases will help with better squat set-up, increased bench press and deadlift.

Farmer's Walks will help to strengthen weak points that develop from doing stationary lifting only. Eliminating these weak points will help reduce injuries. It also is probably the best way to increase athletes' supporting grip strength. This is paramount for all sports, especially powerlifting, baseball, football, hockey and even basketball players.

Muscular endurance under strain is another great benefit of Farmer's Walks. Nothing will wear you out like several Farmer's sets, especially if you have never done them before. The core strength gains are incredible. Beginner athletes often start out like Gumby and have a hard time controlling their cores. Soon the athletes progress in core strength and are rock solid while moving down the course. It is important to start light and controlled before moving up the weight to avoid injury.

ASSISTANCE EXERCISES

Some of the assistance exercises that can be done to improve the Farmer's are thick bar holds, Ironmind Rolling Thunder to build thumb strength, gripper work, IM tug holds with the ring and pinky finger, side handle deadlifts, and any moving event. Take care of your calluses, especially before your hands toughen up. Get a callous rasp and file off excess skin. Eventually your hands will become conditioned and torn calluses will not be an issue. For warm-up prior to Farmer's and for rehab, it is good to try the expand-your-hand bands. Also, Reband knee supports and thermal pants are a must as the weight increases. These items will help keep you tight and offer joint support and warmth, and are available online. The stronger and faster you become, the better your Farmer's will be. **PM**

POWER-TEXTING WITH THE WORLD'S ELITE

BY MARK BELL

BRIAN MACKENZIE

ME: Yo, BMack. How have you incorporated stuff you learned from Super Training into your CFE?

BMACK: We've applied a complex strength program to a complex endurance program that is changing our game. We use both max effort and dynamic effort to increase performance.

ME: What's a typical week look like?

BMACK: I'm not texting that; it's too long.

ME: Ummm ... are you getting tired, endurance boy?

BMACK: Yes, very! Leave me alone, Smelly!

ME: Well wake the hell up, son. This is for my Power peeps. Why is an endurance coach so into coaching strength?

BMACK: Simple. Strength is the missing component in endurance training. It's the only reason you hold up. It's why our athletes are back to normal quicker than most.

BRIAN CARROLL

ME: You like to use lots of doubles in training, right?

BRIAN: Yes. I did a double with 738 lbs. on the deadlift and that's my opener for the meet.

ME: The doubles allow you to manage the intensity without getting killed, huh?

BRIAN: Cool. Yeah, pushing to failure more than once in a blue moon is horrible. I like heavy, but not much over 90%.

KELLY STARRETT

ME: When I go to set up for a conventional deadlift, I drop my hips I roll forward on to my toes. Is this a problem in my Achilles?

KSTARR: The problem is not your heel cords, it's you! You are a freak and a tight mutant. Your freaky restricted hip flexion is forcing your knees forward when you load up (yeah, your heel cords are short too, probably, but are you pulling with a vertical shin?) Fix those granny hips, Smelly. Take a green band and put it in your hip crease with max stretch going behind you (don't trap a nut). Now move yourself into your dead set up 20x. That hip capsule will open up and you should be able to out-pull Mark Bell!

ME: I'll check www.mobilitywod.com for instructive videos.

ME: I was squatting yesterday and my knee felt like someone was driving a frigging dull knife into it. I had to cut my workout short with 700 for a double. What's something quick I can do to get rid of the evil gnome pulling on my patella tendon before I lift?

KSTARR: Make sure your mechanics are good. Quick-hit the tissues that cross the knee/calve for 2 minutes. Also stretch hip and quads for 2 minutes. If it's still hosed, try hammering your hammies. But I bet it's your tight ass, calves and quads.

AJ ROBERTS

ME: Nice job destroying a 30-lb. face pull on the Crossfit Journal video.

AJ: I do a set every half-hour, bro. That's how I maintain this tightness and jacked-ness.

ME: Some of you "Westiders" train raw for two weeks in a row then get into your bench shirt every third week, right? When you're in your shirt, what are you doing?

AJ: Yes, fatso, I do the first shirt workout off a three-board, then the next time I'm in my shirt I go to a two-board. For the last shirt workout I'll do a weight that is around an opening weight off a one-board. Then I'll repeat or rest and get ready for a meet.

ME: Wow, AJ. You might lift something some day!

AJ: It's all about the illusion of being strong.

ME: And fat.

AJ: Yes, and fat!

JESSE BURDICK



ME: What's a good exercise for people who lift SLOW? We are already using box squats and speed-deads and they still lift like a 400-year-old tortoise.

JESSE: Jumps of any sorts. Try and be slow while jumping and u will get hurt. There is something about the fight or flight response and the sheer athleticism of them that lends itself across the board.

ME: What do u think about women with large breasts jumping with tight shirts on? Gross, right?

JESSE: Only thing that could make that worse would be if those T-shirts were white and wet.

STAN EFFERDING

ME: Biggs, I got a kid who is coming from a bodybuilding background. He's in good shape, but really needs some bulk. He came in yesterday and said he wanted to do extra workouts and really get a shitload of volume for his back and chest. You carry, like, 270 lbs. of muscle on your frame, so what do you think?

STAN: Fathead, you don't grow in the gym, you only break down muscle tissue. 80% of your progress comes from the recovery phase (eating and sleeping), so extra workouts is NOT the place to start. I'd get his diet right first and keep the workouts brief, heavy and intense. He'll grow from more eating, not more training!

ME: Higher protein? Or carbs? Or lots of candy?

STAN: The growth diet will consist of equal amounts of proteins, fats and carbs. All nutrients are necessary for growth. Protein will be at least 2g per pound of bodyweight. A 200-lb. powerlifter will need 400g protein, 400g carbs and about 200g fats. These nutrients will be broken up into six balanced meals eaten about every three hours throughout the day. One variation will be the post-workout meal, which will be eaten immediately after training and will consist of at least 75g fast-digesting whey protein and 75g of a high glycemic carbohydrate, such as white rice or dextrose based drink. Creatine will be taken post workout, as well. Proteins will consist mostly of lean animal sources such as steak, lean ground beef, eggs, salmon, chicken. Carbs will be primarily oatmeal, rice, potatoes, pasta — no candy, fatso! Most of the fats will be included in the meats. Additional added fats should be mono or polyunsaturated sources, such as macadamia nut oils, olive oils, nuts and peanut butter. The ongoing goal is to gradually increase the nutrient intake as the body grows and the metabolism becomes more efficient at processing the additional calories. Much the same way an athlete will push to lift more gradually over time, athletes must train themselves to eat more over time in order to continue to grow.

ME: How fat is your face now that you're powerlifting?

STAN: I thought it was getting fat. Then I looked at yours and now I think my face is anorexic. ;-)

ME: I hate you!

ED COAN



ME: Great One, what's the best fix for people who are slow off the floor in the pull?

ED: Stay tight and learn how to drive with your legs.

ME: OK, that's how you pulled freakin' 901 lbs. at 220?

ED: Yes!

ME: What are some good exercises to keep you tight or to train that tightness?

ED: Pause squats in the hole, high bar squats, standing on a block during deadlifts.

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UNDERLOADING

When you first get into strength training it's to get chicks or to make the football team —which could also lead to chicks. What you didn't realize is that chicks want to see you cruising the streets in the latest whip (car) and they couldn't care less that you had 18 tackles and two fumble recoveries.

Some of you may reject the idea that you picked up heavy stuff to impress girls. You may say, "No way man, not me," or "I got into this to make myself stronger." Look man, don't deny it, embrace it. Everything in life centers around chicks.

In addition to getting broads, you also realized that with a better and stronger body you can probably kick the crap out of that jerk that punted your New York Jets football into the woods and then ride off into the sunset on his girlfriend. Everyone knows that having a big bench will increase your street cred, plus chicks dig big benches. Okay, chicks aside for a minute.

When you first got into lifting you got some results from doing a lot of basic training, like three sets of 10 reps. Maybe you took it a step further and started out overloading with more weight from one week to the next. I bet you started to get into everything you thought would make you better: forced reps, super sets, negatives and so on. The effects of your early training go a long way.

After a year or two of training hard, the gains start to slow down. The fun hammer is coming to halt your progress in its tracks. How does a person continue to make progress and not get hurt? How do the pros like Shawn Frankl, Dave Hoff and Donnie Thompson make any progress after they all have reached such a high level? What is their secret?

PRO SECRETS

I hear many lifters talk about de-loading. When I asked Donnie Thompson about de-loading (or back-loading off), he laughed. "I do all my heavy stuff the last three weeks leading into a meet," said Big D. Dave Hoff and many of the Westside boys do similar things by using various forms of a Circa Max. Frankl uses kind of an old-school, Ed Coan approach where he adds more gear and weight from one week to the next running into a meet. Frankl seems to be able to handle heavy weights for a long time with no de-load. Brian Carroll manages his volume and keeps himself from going too heavy in training by using a lot of doubles.

I hate seeing people write the word de-load in their training logs or that they had to shut it down because of severe forearm pain, or whatever. Stop being a bitch! But just because I hate the term de-load I'm not going to tell you that de-loading is totally worthless. However, I will argue that it's probably not needed if you're training optimally and not maximally all the time. If you are training heavy and doing overload work every week, then you will most likely need a de-load.

The amazing athletes I mentioned are in tune with how their bodies feel and how they react to a certain training stimulus. Plus, many top lifters have a trick up their sleeves. I call it underloading.

UNDERLOADING?

You may be asking, "What in god's name is Underloading? And is it free? Because every time I turn around Mark Bell is reaching into



Donnie Thompson uses his 910 lb. bench to reel in the females.

my wallet." Underloading is free — for now. Underloading refers to using less weight to lift more.

"Wait, time out!" you say. "Coach Bell, you're trying to tell me I can use less weight to get better results?" Yes, that's exactly what I'm saying. This means you don't always have to go heavy and kill your whole face to make progress. There are ways to trick your body into training maximally and optimally without overdoing it. Using underloading will help you go into your next workout fresh without feeling like you overdid it.

Underloading will work for you because it:

- Varies with similar exercises
- Allows you to stay fresh and keeps you ready to kill shit at all times
- Allows you to pack on muscle
- Controls volume and intensity
- Prevents injury by using less weight
- Allows you to get stronger with less

THE UNDERLOADING METHOD

This is a method that will force you to use less weight but still make outstanding strength gains. Keep in mind that underloading is a method, not a training system. Underloading needs to be utilized within a sound training system like Westside Barbell. Implement this

= RELOADING

BY MARK BELL



Abi Grove doing dumbbell bench.



Westside Barbell uses the Bamboo bar bench press- light, but very difficult!

method for one- or two-week cycles, then resume your regularly scheduled programming. One of the simplest examples is to do something for reps instead of a max. Doing a set of three to five reps will still give you enough weight to get stronger, but it will also be a light enough percentage to keep you from destroying yourself. Remember, the athlete who can handle the most work wins. You can't handle the most amount of work over time if you destroy yourself in one day. You need stimulation without annihilation.

FORMS OF UNDERLOADING

Most forms of underloading should be done in the one- to five-rep range. No gear, no belt, deep ply squats, deficit deadlifts, using a fatter bar. You follow? Your making lifts harder by adding range of motion or taking away supportive gear. All of the above methods will

force you to use less overall weight, but you can still go for a max on them. You may find yourself 5, 10 maybe even 15 percent weaker on these lifts, but it will force you to work hard.

Let's say your best squat is a 450-lb. box squat with a belt for one rep. Try doing a low box squat (about 3 inches lower than your normal box) max double with no belt. You may end up with around 330 to 360 lbs., which is about 75 to 80 percent of your 450 lbs. After you try this, you will see how demanding using 75 to 80 percent can be. At this point in the workout, you can add the belt and see what you can get for double. You may end up with 380 to 400 lbs., which is about 85 to 90 percent. The weights are still about 10 percent lower than your best. You just dipped your hand into the strength bucket and extracted a lot of points without being bitten.

Dynamic effort work, also called speed training or compensatory

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acceleration, has protocols suggesting the use of 50 to 70 percent of your one-rep max for multiple sets (eight to 10) for multiple reps (two to three), but you are moving the weights as fast as you possibly can. You are working on becoming more explosive by producing the most force possible. Although you are using less weight, you are producing similar amounts of force or even more force on this day than you would with a max lift.

Bands and chains allow for speed work to become even more effective by accommodating resistance. Bands and chains will force your body to accelerate throughout the entire movement faster. Force = mass x acceleration. The weights are lighter at the bottom of the lift, where leverages are the poorest. As you finish the lift, the bands are stretched as you get into a better mechanical advantage.

Dumbbell bench press is a great example of underloading, as even a 600-lb. raw bencher will only use 150 to 200 lbs. in each hand, which is 300 to 400 lbs. total — about 100 lbs. less than what they'd normally train with using a barbell. I like using 10- to 20-rep sets for dumbbell work. I mainly use DB bench as an assistance movement but it can also replace the main movement for Max Effort or Dynamic effort every 4-6 weeks.

Further range of motion lifting— like dumbbell bench press, deadlifts while standing on mats or low box squats on to a 10- to 12-inch high box. The greater range of motion will make the lift harder and force you to use less weight.

Change up your stance, or change to a weaker grip. For example, try doing a wide-grip bench press when you rule at close grip, or vice versa. Ultra-wide sumo pulls would be another example.

Add reps to an exercise. Try sets of 10, eight, six or five, instead of what we normally do: triples, doubles and singles.

Add tempo to the exercise. Use pauses, eccentric and concentric tempos. This refers to moving the weights slower to increase time under tension. An example would be counting to four on the way down in a bench press.

Finally, have the guy who is lifting off to you teabag you on the bench. Underwear is optional. This approach is probably overused at Super Training. Or have a pit bull chew on your undercarriage while doing Sumo deadlifts. This method, on the other hand, may need to be used more often at Super Training.

MORE DETAILS ON UNDERLOADING

The Underloading Method can be used by lifters of any level. However, a newer lifter may need to focus on handling heavier weights in order to prime their bodies for bigger weights. A more experienced lifter will be able to draw upon more muscle mass when using sub-maximal or lower weights.

The idea of underloading stems from years of training using Louie Simmons' Westside Barbell method. Simmons advises using the lightest weights to lift the heaviest weights. He often talks about getting a big carryover. For example, at Westside they will smash a big squat off a box with bands in briefs and their suit, but they will do so with the straps down and no knee wraps. This forces their athletes to use less weight. However, at the very top of the lift, because they have a band on the bar, the weight may be about equal to what they do in a meet. When they do go to the meet they

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have extra gear to lean on for those world record attempts. Basically, you want to find optimal weights to get the best results.

Some say a workout is only as good as how well you can recover from it. Using 100 percent too often can cause problems that can actually make you weaker or, even worse, leave you injured. An example would be when Jonny Knuckledragger says, "I do deadlifts out of the rack with 655." Then he goes to the meet and pulls 555, full-range. Knuckledragger is already the man at rack deadlifts, right? He likes doing them because the veins in his shoulders pop out when he holds the weight at the top and screams. Knuckledragger loves getting the attention of the ladies, but they are only looking at him because he turns bright purple when he lifts. What he fails to realize is that he is working on something he is already good at when he should, instead, focus on something much harder. He should focus on a weak point — something that will make him use less weight and work harder.

Maybe he's slow as dog shit off the floor. Deficit speed pulls against bands would help a ton in this situation. Deficit deadlifts are performed while standing on 1- to 3-inch mats. This exercise increases the range of motion, thus making it more difficult. The more difficult the exercise, the less weight that will be used. Knuckledragger can make some great gains by training with less weight rather than more weight. Another option, if you are good at a lift, is making it more difficult by adding reps, bands or chains. Knuckledragger could try 555 to 575 lbs. for a set of three in the rack if he is really that obsessed with rack pulls. The bottom line is, don't let your ego paralyze your progress.

POINTS OF DIFFERENCE

To better understand underloading, let's look at the difference between overloading exercises and underloading. Underloading should be used with forms of overloading, which consists of exercises that allow you to use about 100 percent or more of your max. Conversely, in underloading we are looking for exercises that force us to use at least 10 percent less than our best. A quick example: I did 675 lbs. with the Zercher harness a while back. The next time I did the Zercher harness, I got up to 500 lbs. for six reps with no gear, off of a lower pin. The 675 lbs. for one rep was more like a strength test and the 500 for six was more like a strength builder. I personally use underloading on my max-effort days. I flip flop back and forth between under- and overloading as I see fit. Normally I do two weeks of some type of underloading followed by one week of overload. I use overloading less because it's more demanding. I

choose to either overload or underload based on how I feel, what I did the workout before and what I did the week before.

I'm looking for a solution that's optimal. Oddly enough, bands and chains do a little bit of both under- and overloading. Again, weights are lighter at the bottom and heavier at the top. They allow you to overload the top of the lift but they also force you to use less overall real weight on the bar, which is important when using a method like underloading. Bands and chains can be demanding but, in my opinion, they allow for a safer way to get to bigger lifts due to the fact that you're not just loading up tons of iron on the bar.

A.J. Roberts recently hit a 1,140-lb. squat, and the heaviest squat he did in training was a 935 lbs. with the cambered bar (underloading). Roberts also hit a 695-lb. squat with 440 lbs. of bands. That equals 1,135 lbs. at the top of the lift (overloading), which is needed as a meet gets closer. Both squats were done to a parallel box in gear. The same is true with his 50-lb. deadlift PR. Roberts did a block pull with 800 lbs. for two reps, which is 98 percent of his 815 lb. pull in the meet, but at partial range of motion. The partial range movement allowed him to go heavy, handle a big weight and not over-tax himself. Could he have done 800 lbs. for two from the floor? Maybe, but who cares? Just because you can doesn't mean you should. (That statement of awesomeness was made by my fat little world-record-holding buddy, Donnie Thompson.) The rest of the time Roberts worked on skills, form, explosive strength, speed and mental prep. All of his hard work combined led to an unheard of 175-lb. increase on his total.

I recently did a 1,003-lb. squat in a competition (measly compared to Roberts, Hoff and Carroll but hey, I'm trying) and pulled 760 lbs. The heaviest weights I handled were on a reverse band lift, which is a form of overloading — and that was done only once in eight weeks. The heaviest squat I did was about 940 lbs., the heaviest pull was 635 or 655 and some chains.

The rest of the training time was spent on being fast, becoming more mobile (aka building the supple leopard) and keeping the best form I could. In addition to that, I am constantly learning and adapting.

Powerlifting legend Donnie Thompson came and trained with Super Training for four weeks and, in that time, I saw the 390-pounder use 515 to 550 in the deadlift for sets of five while maintaining an 800-lb. raw pull. Thompson likes using sets of five as a form of underloading. He's using more reps to limit the amount of weight he can use, but still build up the proper muscle stimulation needed to pull 800. Super D also squats 500 to 550 lbs. raw on his dynamic/recovery day for sets of three, while doing kettle snatches for sets of six to raise his work capacity and force the muscles to work hard with weights that are measly compared to his 1,260-lb. world-record squat. Remember why I said we all started training? To get chicks. Super D has 99 problems (one of them being that he is nearly 400 lbs.), but getting a chick ain't one of them.

Both over- and underloading have their place in making a bar-bending, ass-kicking power athlete. Underloading is a fantastic method for building strength the old-fashioned way. Overloading is effective in many ways as well, but it can kick your ass if it's overdone. Overloading for geared lifters is how they can be so strong when they take the gear off. Now, here me out on this before you raw peeps jump down my throat. Powerlifting gear allowed Scot

FIVE-WEEK UNDERLOADING PULLING CYCLE

OR HOW I USED UNDERLOADING TO PUT 60 LBS. ON MY DEADLIFT.

WEEK 1: Speed pulls on a deficit, 8-9 sets of 3 against bands or chains at 50-60% of my contest-best 760. Work to a heavy set of 3 sumo in briefs.

WEEK 2: Speed pulls on a deficit 8 sets of 2 reps against bands or chains at 50-60%. (Raw lifters may need to use 70%.) Complete 8 sets, then pull mats and work up to an easy single in a suit with the straps up. The single will be about a level 8 or 9 out of 10 on Mike Tuchscherer's rate of perceived exertion (RPE). No missing! The work up is to focus on form while having heavier weights in my hands.

WEEK 3: Suspended goodmornings for a max set of 5 with about 200 lbs. of chains.

WEEK 4: Conventional speed pulls against bands 10x2, no gear or belt.

WEEK 5: Sumo fully geared reverse band deadlift, max single overload.

Finish all workouts with a lot of reverse hypers, static sit-ups, side bends and glute ham raises.



Jesse Burdick sets up for a brutal deficit deadlift against bands.

Mendleson to bench over 1,000 lbs., but Mendy also holds the raw world record with a bench of 715 lbs. By using powerlifting gear (or my Sling Shot), you can get in some great overload training, which over time can make you stronger.

THE GREAT ONE

The great Ed Coan used a lot of underloading in his training. He'd use reps, paused squats and stiff-leg deads to allow him to train optimally, but not maximally too early in his training cycle. Coan trained his ass off to be the best, but do you recall seeing him do lifts that were at 100 percent in the gym? Maybe he did, but most of the videos show him leaving a little something for the next training session — and, even more important, for the next meet.

As a meet got closer, Coan would begin to start to "overload" his body by using lifts and gear that would allow him to lift the most. I put overloading in quotes because Coan told me recently that he never took maxes in the gym. Think about that for a minute. He also said he never missed a weight in training. Wait a second. Really? That tells us that even the Great One left a little in the tank when he was training. In addition, underloading-type methods early in the cycle helped Coan lay down the bricks for a bigger foundation going into the heavier training sessions. You remember that all this strength training and muscle building is to get chicks, right? Well, Coan has had a very pretty girlfriend for more than 20 years. If he wasn't so strong and jacked, I seriously doubt his personality and height (5'5") would have gotten him any women.

UNDERLOADING RULES

No missed reps. Ever.

Leave something in the tank. This leaves something to the imagination and keeps you intrigued. Kind of like how a chick in a skirt is sometimes hotter than a naked chick. Leaving a little strength in the

tank also keeps you in a positive frame of mind at the end of the workout, and going into the next one.

Wrap. If you're not in the gym to get jacked or to get strong, then what are you doing there? Even those of you who want to lose body fat or get skinny, that is done out of the gym, not in the gym. You lose body fat and keep bodyweight in check by controlling the foods you eat, not by burning an extra 300 calories on an elliptical. If you want to go from dud to stud, then you may as well train properly to get the fastest results and the hottest chick possible. Use the underloading method and feel yourself get reloaded for future workouts. The next time someone says, "Hey, how much can you lift?" you don't have to give 20 excuses on why you suck. You'll be able to look them right in the eye and say, "A lot more than you!"

"LOOK HOW STRONG I AM!"

This phrase normally means you're probably telling a lie somewhere else. "Look how strong I am with my 700-lb. rack pull!" Then it comes time to do 700-lb. full range in a meet and you can't budge the damn thing off the floor.

Louie Simmons says that if you're about 10 percent stronger on an exercise, it's time to flip over a few more rocks and find the next one that'll take you to the next level. I'd go as far as say to try finding exercises you're 10 percent weaker at and utilize them two or three times per month on your max-effort days. Let's face it, doing things we are not good at sucks — but sometimes it's necessary, right? I hate reading, but I love lifting. Well, you can't get better at lifting unless you're educated. I hate to write; I practically finished high school at a fifth- or sixth-grade reading and writing level. But here I am, writing to help spread the word. Do the things you suck at, and get ready to go from dud to stud. Remember, it's what you think you already know that prevents you from learning. Do not let your ego paralyze your progress. **PM**

ELBOW PAIN

The Uninvited Guest

BY DONNIE THOMPSON AND DR. TONY MIKLA, DPT, MSPT, CSCS

Of all the ways to suffer when you play sports, lift weights or just plain live, elbow pain tends to be the one thing we just can't manage. There are all types of treatment for knees, lower back and shoulders. But most people just brush off elbow pain and try to deal with it.

CAUSES OF ELBOW PAIN

NORMAL WEAR AND TEAR. Pain to the lateral elbow for a powerlifter is usually a two-fold problem. The first is the tremendous wear and tear placed on the muscle, tendon and bone it is attached to. Elbow pain from overuse is a problem because, as lifters, we cannot avoid training for too long and must continue to push the envelope. This wear and tear can cause tissue breakdown, irritation, inflammation, partial tearing or even rupture of the tendon (which is thankfully not likely). The region of the muscle that becomes damaged has poor blood supply, so it doesn't heal well. But there are ways to improve blood flow, and therefore improve healing.

COMPROMISED MOBILITY AND RANGE OF MOTION. The second major cause of elbow pain is lack of range of motion and mobility of the elbow joint in powerlifters. How many of you walk around with your elbows bent because you can't straighten them? This is a problem. The natural response of the muscle tissue is to get tighter as it gets stronger. As a result, you gradually begin to lose range of motion in the joints under that muscle. This decrease in motion effects the biomechanics of the muscle, tendon and joint tremendously. A muscle wants to move, and is designed to work through a full range of motion. If this range of motion is altered, then the muscle gradually begins to change, as well. However, these muscle adaptations are not the ones you are looking for; this adaptation increases tension and force on the junction between the tendon and the bone — which results in pain, often sharp and severe.

THE BENCH PRESS. Let's break the lift down to find the source of elbow pain. You grab the bar with a killer grip. The shearing force of the bar is on the back pad of your hands, traveling through the elbows and into the shoulders, from the shoulders it makes contact with the pad under you.

NAKED ELBOWS. Your wrists, elbow and shoulders take a lot of abuse. However, your wrists have some sweet reinforcements in the form of wrist wraps. These are nylon filled with rubber band material, so they stretch and compress the joint to stabilize and reinforce the wrist. Your shoulders usually have the bench shirt to reinforce them, which is also a form of compression. The shirt also helps to deal with the force of the weight in the shoulder and upper arm area. But the elbow has nothing. We have knee wraps that are so strong that it takes a grand to even bend them. Yet our elbows remain naked. The Sling Shot (developed by Power Editor-at-Xtra-Large Mark Bell) is great because it also helps the elbows deal with strenuous shearing force. It is like a knee wrap on one end, while the other end is counter-pulling it. Given that the elbow is mainly free of material and open, it has much force to deal with — and a hard-worked joint takes a lot of trauma. That is where pain sets in.

ARTHRITIS. One of the problems an athlete faces, especially those who play or have played contact sports, is arthritis of the joint. This condition leaves very little space between the ulna/radius and humerus. Any trauma that takes place will cause inflammation, and there is no room in the joint for that. Result: pain.

SOLUTIONS TO ELBOW PAIN

There are many treatments and preventive measures you can take to try to help get you back on track with elbow pain. You can perform these before you lift or practice, during or after. Perform the follow exercises about two to three times a week.

MAINTAIN ELBOW MOBILITY. Stretch: Perform simple elbow stretching to maintain full extension of the elbow. Raise your arm out as straight as possible, palm down. Use your other hand to reach out flex your wrist as much as possible. You should feel a stretch in the top of your forearm. Hold for 30 seconds and repeat at least three times on each arm.

MAINTAIN EXTENSION. Apply joint compression around the elbow. Set up a band, as shown. Start with your elbow bent and then let the band pull your elbow straight as quickly as possible. Repeat 10 times on each arm.



Elbow extension facilitated with large bands



Elbow extension against resistance



Compression Wrap for Elbow-Start



Compression with medicine ball rotation



Compression Wrap for Elbow-Finish

COMPRESS AND STRENGTHEN. Dick Hartzell was first on the scene with compression bands made by his company, Jumpstretch. Start with the band toward the hand and wrap up. I like going small mass to large for comfort in an uncomfortable situation. Pull the band aggressively around the elbow with the tightest pull directly on pain. The underside does not need to be cranked as aggressively, but it should be tight enough to not compromise the treated area. With epicondylitis, I will take a small section of cut, 1-inch band and put it directly on the swelling. Then I will proceed to mash it down under compression to help remove any remaining swelling. **NOW THE MOVEMENT STARTS.** For tennis elbow, grab a 1- to 2-lb. medicine ball. If this is not available, then a softball or tennis ball will do. Extend your arm and start rotating your wrist

around while holding the small medicine ball. You can hold your arm out in front of you. Rotate it and really pull back and push forward with your wrist. This is all done while you have your elbow compressed. Keep this up for at least two minutes. Next, put your arm on the bench with only your hand hanging off. Have someone take a light band and put it over the top off your hand halfway from your knuckles to the base of the wrist. Start pulling against it. Rotate your fist up in small rotations. You can even wrap it around your hand. Do this while under compression. Release and let the compression band loose. You will feel wonderful.

CONSIDER SUPPORTIVE DEVICES. Try using the Sling Shot or compression around your forearm/elbow while lifting. These supportive devices should reduce tension and therefore reduce pain.

COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: My elbow hurts like a mofu when I lower the bar in the bench press. The pain seems to be just slightly above the elbow bone kinda on the forearm.

A: One of the reasons you're feeling pain is the prolonged tenonitis you may be fighting. The swelling in and around the end of the humerus has no place to go but dwell there. Your constant, year-long heavy training and even light training will not allow it to dissipate. First, consider an over the counter anti-inflammatory or see your doctor about getting a stronger prescription option. Now you need to start compression therapy on a routine basis. Prior to benching and after benching would be suggested. As soon as you can, put ice on your elbows where the pain is right after bench workout and leave it on for about 20 minutes. Also a portable E-STIM unit would be nice during your icing sessions.

Q: My elbows hurt after heavy squat day. My heavy bench day is two days later. I have a pre-existing condition with my elbow being highly arthritic.

A: The straight bar you are using for squats before meet training tends to roll on some of your attempts. When you are holding onto it, it is wreaking havoc on your shoulders and elbows. There is really



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nothing you can do to stop this when it happens. However, you can try and use a Jumpstretch band in between sets to maintain shoulder flexibility and minimize shoulder immobility. Two days prior to your bench, have physical therapist work on massage and neuromuscular activation of your forearm muscles. Have this done for a short period of time to minimize soreness that deep tissue work brings. When your pain is acute the day of benching, try the dry laser treatment. Set it for the higher dose to accommodate your size.

Q: What other lifts cause my elbows to hurt?

A: Just about any of them. Sorry, but lifting weights is mostly a linear objective, so your body moves to make the point from A to B. Extensions and nose-breakers are a great elbow aggravator. Small bars used to bench and press at any angle, over time, will stress the elbow. Your hands are too big for the standard bar and you have used it for so long that you don't realize you're damaging your wrists, elbows and shoulders with the skinny bar. Those bars are for girls and pulls — end of story. Deadlifts will lead to elbow pain. Pull-ups, also. Age is often a cause because of Type II collagen loss. I suggest performing the band therapy for the elbows at least two or three times a week for your elbows. This will help keep them keep fit and ready for work.

Q: I can't extend my elbow to a straight position. Can I still bench?

A: Yes, but continually work on improving the ability to straighten. Due to injuries when they were young or surgical repairs, some lifters may not be able to straighten the elbow to full extension. Be careful with Kettlebell swings if you are in this category. The constant partial swings are using centripetal force. Your shoulder, elbow and wrist are conductors for this force. When your elbow can't straighten, it is forced to perform five to 10 degrees off. This can be very painful over time. Lay off the swings and stick to two arm swings, at best. For Kettlebell diehards, use a lifting strap to hold onto the Kettlebell. This will alleviate some of the force on the elbow.

When you bench in a meet, try and rotate your non-compliant elbow internally at lockout. This will mimic the locked out position. Also, tell the judges about your pre-existing condition. I highly suggest you get deep tissue work done on your forearm and triceps tendon as you need it. It will relieve a lot of pain. There is another technique called "dry needling" that is akin to acupuncture. It works with the same needles as acupuncture, but is administered to trigger points. I really like this procedure. If you are needle-shy, you won't

feel them. But it looks scary, so turn your head.

Q: Will elbow pain eventually lead to shoulder pain?

A: Not necessarily, but don't rule it out. When our elbow hurts, we lose that pop and snap that accompanies the bench press. It just shuts down the whole process. We wear elbow sleeves to keep the joint heated and pain under wraps. So the tendency to protect the elbow won't let us get to the point we drag the shoulder into it.

However, young lifters who are coming into powerlifting in high school and get into the lifting gear are, by age 20, benching around 700-plus lbs. That is a lot to lift at that age. What has been our experience at the orthopedic clinic is that youngsters who get strong fast experience elbow pain of a different kind: stress fractures at the end of the humerus and radial/ulna bones. It is severely painful. We have braces that run at patient cost about \$800. They have range limiters on them and redistribute weight on the upper arm and lower forearm. If you do not allow this to heal, major things can happen. Don't be the teenage phenom who disappears into oblivion. When your elbows give like that, your shoulders are sure to follow.

Q: What means are available to me — besides surgery — to control my elbow pain?

A: There are a few orthopedic tricks you can use to curb elbow pain, or at least manage it.

• **Deep tissue massage to the fore-**

arm extensor muscles.

• **Dry or cold laser treatment.** This helps to take the edge off of acute pain, such as the pain one feels with carpal tunnel syndrome. It is easy, fast, pain-free and usually works short-term rather well. This is a good modality for sharp and pinpoint pain in the muscles and tendons.

• **Acoustic shockwave therapy.** This uses a silicon gel to conduct the waves. It is not painful, but you can't use the treated area for 24 to 48 hours. This is a great modality for joint pain.

• **E-STIM Unit.** This uses an electrical currency to send to the pain affected area. It aids the area in blood flow and causes the healing process to speed up naturally. It is not suggested to use the very painful setting, where your muscles freeze and you are in tremendous pain. This is not more effective. When you adjust the setting, you may add a stronger setting on the E-STIM unit until it is almost uncomfortable. Again, this modality is great for muscular pain that contributes to joint suffering.

• **Heat.** Heat is a great tool to help the joint (in this case the elbow) to warm up and get ready for work. Heat is also good in the

"BE CAREFUL WITH KETTLEBELL SWINGS IF YOU ARE IN THIS CATEGORY. THE CONSTANT PARTIAL SWINGS ARE USING CENTRIPETAL FORCE. YOUR SHOULDER, ELBOW AND WRIST ARE CONDUCTORS FOR THIS FORCE. WHEN YOUR ELBOW CAN'T STRAIGHTEN, IT IS FORCED TO PERFORM FIVE TO 10 DEGREES OFF."

form of analgesics (or sports creams), and can be dry or wet. Use heat prior to exercise.

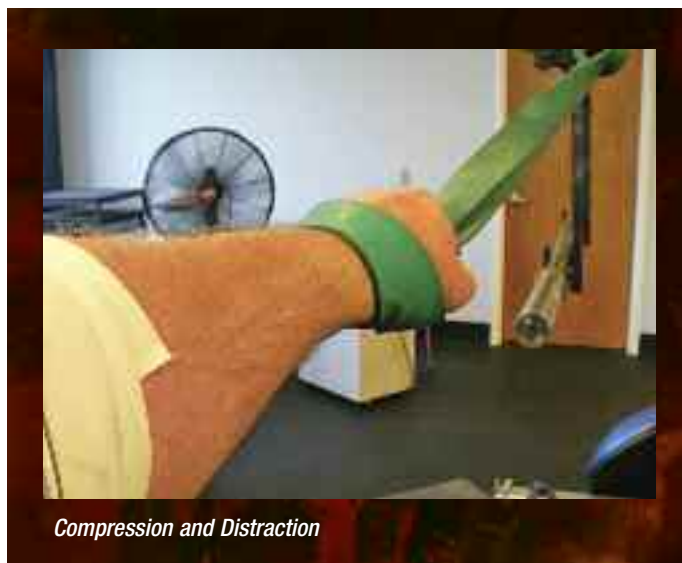
• **Ice.** If you have an inflammation or irritation problem, you have to ice. Ice for 15 minutes at a time for multiple sets after taxing the elbow. There is a big problem with the theory that powerlifters should only ice for the first 72 hours after the injury. The problem is that you re-injure the elbow every time you lift and make a fist. You need to ice more.

• **Compression.** Dick Hartzell fame has made this a mainstay in PT clinics and training rooms. The strong lifters all know about compression bands. This is the one dynamic and most often used of the portable joint pain stimulants. There are just so many options with this. It is an awkward feeling, but it works to alleviate pain in and manage your elbow for the sets of heavy benching in front of you. This is the most affective for tendonitis.

• **Physical therapist.** Find a good one. They are a critical member to your team and can be a huge part of future success. All of the treatments discussed above should be available at the physical therapist, and many more treatments may be available such as dry needling in some states, ultrasound and PNF muscle retraining. A good PT can also give you guidance on how to modify grips and lifting angles to reduce forces through the elbow.

Q: Is there a way to prevent needless elbow pain so I won't suffer through this again?

A: You can't prevent all joint pain from happening. But the best way to prevent it is by promoting joint fitness and mobility with



Compression and Distraction

bands. Have a training session that is dedicated to joint fitness with the use of bands and weights. Also including compression. For instance, after benching heavy, you can use the bands to distract the wrist, elbow and shoulder. This will de-load the joint and keep it as pain free as possible to prepare for your next workout. Compression along with distraction is a win/win combo. It flushes the bad fluids out and rushes blood back in after the compression band comes off. Your body thinks the compression band is traumatizing your joint, so it flushes it with blood as a knee-jerk reaction to the tightness of the band. **PM**



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THE BENCH JERK (SHIRT)

BY AL CASLOW

PHOTO CREDIT: SAM MCDONALD

Today we face 1,000-lb. bench freaks and phenoms weighing 165 benching 700-plus. It's an era where numbers have no limit and records stand no chance. The things that amaze us now are things we never imagined would become common. Within all this, one thing is common: the use of the bench shirt. Bench shirts have changed the game, and now are changing how we train.

In my career, if you want to call it that, I have been my own splinter in the bench. One thing that continues to surprise me is the stern discipline that it takes to master the bench shirt. If you look at some of the top benchers, you will notice one thing: They have all found a shirt that works and they stick with it. In other words, they are consistent.

ARE BENCH SHIRTS ALL THE SAME?

For the most part, learning to use the bench shirt is no longer an issue of having the right one. If you are in single-ply or multi-ply, for the most part, the differences between each competitive shirt are so little that the time under



the bar is probably the one essential component to going heavier.

Unlike the squat and deadlift, the type of fabric, physical makeup and/or style of performing the lift have very little impact on exactly how the gear will play out. I've worn every type of shirt in the market, from very supportive shirts to very stretchy shirts, denim shirts to stiff shirts. After all this wasted time, I learned that if I did the necessary things in training, the shirts had the same effect on how I performed. If my training time was spent productively and I did the right things to learn the shirt, nothing changed.

I have benched 550 lbs. in competition in three different shirts and 540 lbs. in competition in four different shirts. There really isn't an issue about the materials that make a bench shirt. At least, not anymore. Every manufacturer has been able to find that particular material and design to make their shirt work competitively. So what's really important, besides training? It's the fit.

FINDING THE RIGHT FIT

If you talk to some of the best benchers in the world and ask what specifically is the key in the lift, they will answer size and fit. Rob Luyando, for example, knows exactly how the shirt should feel and how much the chest plate on a shirt should be. Shawn Frankl has been wearing the same shirt for more than two years because it just "fits right." Look at Brian Schwab — he wears the same old raggedy denim from years ago, yet has the second highest bench at 148 and 165 lbs. Denim is not dead. I remember talking with Ryan Kennely about his shirts. He had one for every height of board he planned to use that day.

SO, WHAT ABOUT THE FIT EXACTLY NEEDS ATTENTION?

- Sleeve tightness. Make sure the sleeves are tight. The first and second time, it should probably feel like your circulation is being cut off. But after two or three uses, the shirt should be stretched out to the just-right fit.

- Chest plate. The first two or three times you use the shirt, at the end of the second or third week you might be able to get your comp grip without trouble or help from handler.

- Shoulders. The shirt should allow you to pull your shoulders back. If it doesn't, this will help cramp you up when the bar is descending and is close to your chest/belly. This makes it tougher to touch, but also to press. You need to have your shoulders pulled back so you can push your chest up.

- Collar. Whether open back or closed, you should have a good amount of room to allow the shirt to be dropped down at the collar. Velcro allows multiple settings by relaxing or tightening it.

- Sleeve length. One thing that constantly comes up is shirt sleeves being too long. The longer they are, the more material there is to grab onto the triceps. This inhibits the stretch at the chest plate. You want just enough length that if you need to pull it down to add support, you can pull it half-inch down and still not cover the elbows.

WHY A SHIRT MATTERS

These are the common ingredients collected from individuals who I believe to be well schooled in the shirted bench press. Take note of how or why you did well one meet and why you did poorly at another. Preparation allows for education and the development of comfort. The better prepared you are, the more confidence you build. These shirts have come a long way and continue to increase in performance. Once you have your ideal brand/type, work on making it fit just right. Spend time thinking and playing around your ideal fit. Focus on what's not working and what is. Learn the whys of both issues and learn to adjust the product. When you find your ultimate Ferrari, you build on it, you transform it, you drive it. You don't ditch it for a Porsche or Lamborghini — or vice versa. **PM**

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BREAKFAST

Not Just for Champions

BY JOHN KIEFER

When was the last time you skipped breakfast? Whenever that was, you might have experienced anything from lethargy to the worst hunger pangs imaginable. Maybe you felt weak and a bit dull on the mental side.

Or did you?

Maybe you did get a little hungry but it faded fast — then you felt sharp, motivated and, well, even strong. I can tell you one thing you definitely experienced without even knowing it: You burned more of that fat gathering over your belt than normal.

Look around on the web and you'll find one consistent truth: I'm not a well-liked guy. Maybe it's my brazen personality or pompous persona; maybe it's just jealousy because I still have all my hair. Or maybe it's because I accidentally make people look stupid.

You also can't go anywhere on the Internet without finding a strength coach or diet guru telling you that for health and perfor-

mance, breakfast is key. Then here I come, with about a hundred citations from medical journals showing that breakfast, at best, is useless.

I'm not here to debate the matter further. Breakfast is optional. But it's not completely useless. Choosing the right foods and eating at the right time can enhance everything from strength, fat burning or muscle growth. If you know your goal, you can eat or not eat breakfast and supplement to accelerate your results.

STRENGTH

Let's just start at the most important topic in powerlifting: strength. People associate eating breakfast with being strong and feeling good, being mentally focused and primed for performance, especially one containing large amounts of carbohydrates. Pancakes, oatmeal, Wheaties: These are the champion-makers, aren't they?

The truth is, they're not. You need carbs for work capacity, or the





total volume of work you perform. You don't need carbs for strength; you don't need carbs for mental focus; you don't even need carbs for coordination. In fact, carbs actually limit each of these. Numerous studies show that for maximum mental focus, you're better off without breakfast or at least a breakfast that lacks carbohydrates. Bacon and eggs before a test make you smarter.

And don't worry about training on an empty stomach or without a bowl of oatmeal. When you remove carbs, the body produces epinephrine and norepinephrine (adrenaline and noradrenalin) faster, your muscles are more sensitive to them and you produce larger amounts. Skip the carbs and get supercharged.

The last strength advantage comes with heightened coordination. Carbs directly decrease psychomotor performance, making it difficult to maintain near-perfect form on a lift during heavy loading. Ditching the carbs can make it easier to keep your groove during a lift, possibly making the difference between an impressive 700-lb. bench and PR of 750.

FAT LOSS

Everybody, even some of the strongest guys on the planet, wants to lose fat. Sure it's cool to squat a grand, but it's bad-ass to squat a grand with six-pack abs. Breakfast can screw this up.

When you first wake and get moving after the six- to eight-hour fasting called sleep, your body burns fat like the government burns

through money. Cortisol levels spike first thing in the morning, which normally sounds bad, but without insulin floating around, cortisol mobilizes and triggers the burning of a lot of fat. The hunger hormone ghrelin peaks as well, which causes that transient hunger response, but if you fight off the temptation of Pillsbury Toaster Strudels, the ghrelin causes growth hormone production — another potent fat burner, not to mention anabolic agent. The liver also pitches in by turning triglycerides into ketones, a wasteful process that also helps strip the fat. The minute you eat carbs, or even just enough food to satisfy your hunger, you shut off all of these effects.

The right combination of food and supplements can keep the fat burning moving along and even increase it. Just 10 to 20 grams of whey isolate — not hydrolysates of any kind — and 10 grams of coconut oil or a refined medium-chain-triglyceride (MCT) oil enhances and extends this hormonally-charged fat-burning wave. There are no substitutes here: whey isolate and some source of MCT oil. Both have very specific properties that enhance this morning fat burning and can be taken alone or in combination with one another.

HYPERTROPHY

Manipulating your morning routine for increased muscle growth takes a combination of nutrient timing and specific training time, and represents an excellent example of the principle of Modulated Tissue Response (MTR), which is signaling one tissue in the body to

“DON'T WORRY ABOUT TRAINING ON AN EMPTY STOMACH OR WITHOUT A BOWL OF OATMEAL. WHEN YOU REMOVE CARBS, THE BODY PRODUCES EPINEPHRINE AND NOREPINEPHRINE FASTER, YOUR MUSCLES ARE MORE SENSITIVE TO THEM AND YOU PRODUCE LARGER AMOUNTS. SKIP THE CARBS AND GET SUPERCHARGED.”

do one thing (like fat cells to shrink) and telling a different tissue to grow (like muscle fibers) at the same time.

It turns out that if you train first thing in the morning fasted — which means no food — and eat carbohydrates immediately after, you can trigger twice the level of genetic factors that trigger muscle growth. Same workout intensity, same amount of time spent in the gym, double the growth. Of course, including something in your post-workout shake to increase insulin release increases the effect, say, casein hydrolysate and l-leucine.

For you fans of carb back-loading, (see *Jan/Feb 2011 Power Magazine*) some warning bells should be going off: You're eating carbs first thing in the morning, which means all those fat cells you're carrying around want a piece of the action so they can fill up and grow, too. Not a problem. Have anywhere from 300 to 800 mg of caffeine — about four espressos or more — before, during or after your training and you can mimic the effect of carb back-loading after your morning training session.

PRACTICUM

Maybe I'm not as anti-breakfast as people think. I'm pragmatic: I do what's practical and what's necessary. I'm going to eat breakfast or not eat breakfast based on my goals, and when I do eat breakfast, I'm going to pick the right regimen. And if I happen to be without a goal, I go for the safest breakfast of all: I skip it. **PM**

GOAL BREAKFAST PROTOCOL

Peak mental performance: Skip it.

Strength: Eat breakfast, but no carbs: bacon and eggs.

Fat loss: Take 10 to 20 grams of whey isolate and 10 grams of MCT or coconut oil.

Hypertrophy: Take 300 or more mg caffeine; train on an empty stomach, except for the coffee; ingest 50 grams of carbs plus 40 grams of a protein hydrolysate with added leucine immediately post-workout.





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NOTHING COMES EASY...

My 3 Year Quest to Become Squat King

BY DONNIE THOMPSON



In 2008, I saw the most incredible thing. Vladimir Alahozov, from Israel, was lifting in the same meet I was at in Columbus, Ohio. Everyone knew he was a good squatter. He opened with an easy 1,150 lbs. Done. Then he jumped to 1,250.

This is the first meet we used a Mastadon bar for squats. It's thicker, so it can handle heavier weights without whipping. Leading up to his second attempt, I found it strange that he took his squat suit all the way off and rested. Then, when he was about four-out, Alahozov had his handlers put him right back in the Inzer canvas suit with no problem. I figured it was a European thing.

Alahozov approached the bar looking determined and confident. He didn't waste much time setting up and starting his descent. The weight looked relatively manageable, like he was squatting a few hundred pounds. Up he came and in the rack it went. He nailed 1,250 lbs. Then he just shut it down and relaxed until he had to bench. He was efficient, powerful and explosive. He didn't waste any time. I thought, If Vlad can do that, so can I.

I figured he would push that number up immediately, but he went through some injuries and left the sport. Alahozov's 1,250 lbs. stayed the top squat for more than three years.

SUITING UP

Immediately I got the Inzer canvas squat suit. Everyone who squatted more than 1,200 lbs. had one. Being the exception to the rule is not important to me. As soon as I got the suit I was attempting over 1,200 lbs. I finally got one passed when I hit the all-time total for the second time at 1,235 lbs. Only 15 lbs. away from Alahozov, but he was still the squat king. My next training cycle I herniated my L-4 to L-5 disc, and the MRI showed the two on top of that were blown too.

I went to sleep fine, but by morning I was in tremendous pain. I had drop foot and my right leg was partially paralyzed. Also, the muscle in my hip, called the piriformus, was locked up. It stayed that way for three weeks.



The neurosurgeon wanted to operate that night. I refused. They made me sign a waiver that I refused surgery to correct this herniated disc. Dick Hartzell had shown me the lower back distraction using bands, so I went to work immediately on hanging upside down suspended by two monster bands. I never stopped moving or training, even though I couldn't sleep or stand up straight. It took three months for my limp to go away. I didn't think I would ever be myself again.

Making matter worse was an injury I'd suffered a few months before that when I tore my bicep trying to catch a Monolift that was falling forward. It exploded like a shotgun and all that was left was a big flat spot where muscle once was. I opted out of surgery for that one, too.

So there I was, a washed up, uni-cep, powerlifting-wannabe gimp. Talk about the bottom of the barrel. What was funny is that no one seemed to care. When the guys found out I couldn't train like usual, they came to the Compound, they got their belts, briefs

and all the free stuff I gave them — and walked out. I felt like my wife left me.

I was in the dark, hot Compound, leaning sideways because of my back, and standing on one leg. I was the wounded beast getting eyeballed by lions. The zebra with the red X on him. I laughed it out and went inside to watch a John Wayne movie.

ROUND ONE: IPA WORLDS, JUNE 2010

Three months after my injury, I had worked my squat back to the strongest it had ever been. I set my sights on Mark Chaillett's meet in June 2010. My weight was back up to 380 lbs., I was doing great. Then I got the swine flu and, after that, the rotavirus.

My body weight went from 380 to 351 lbs. in less than two weeks. It was mid-April and I had to start training for the meet. None of my gear fit. I ate and drank fluids until I got my weight back up. Training was okay and I was starting to hit the 1,200s again for the first time in two years.

Then it's June. I'm at the meet, and I was shocked to see Alahozov. He looked great, and many Russian lifters were there to bench. Now was the time to break his record. I opened with 1,155 and was high. So what? I went up to 1,225 lbs. and flubbed it up. I can't remember what I did, but they said I never straightened my legs or knees.

I had come to break the record and put it to 1,255 lbs. I was tired. It was hot and there was not much left in me. My knees were wrapped. The bar was too high. I un-racked part of it and the old guy at the rack pulled me forward. I stumbled with 1,255! My calves immediately swelled up and I couldn't lift my foot. I tried again and he pulled me forward again. I thought I wasn't going to have any lower leg left. The meet director came over and told me to un-wrap and sit down.

I sat up on stage and he brought me oxygen. After a bit I got my knees re-wrapped and got ready to go for 1,255 again. Before I could get the bar out, he pulled me forward again. This was the final straw. I asked the head Russian judge to please let me try it one more time. I thought I was going to get red lighted no matter what. We had our own guy work the rack and I came out. I descended and hit right above parallel. I opened my knees and rammed the hole and made it back up. The crowd went nuts. The record was broken and everyone there saw it.

Then the lights displayed two reds and a white. I had to leave. I was so disappointed and couldn't make sense of it. The film indicated depth, which was a hard pill to swallow. I was at chump status; everyone avoided me. I gathered my gear and limped out to the

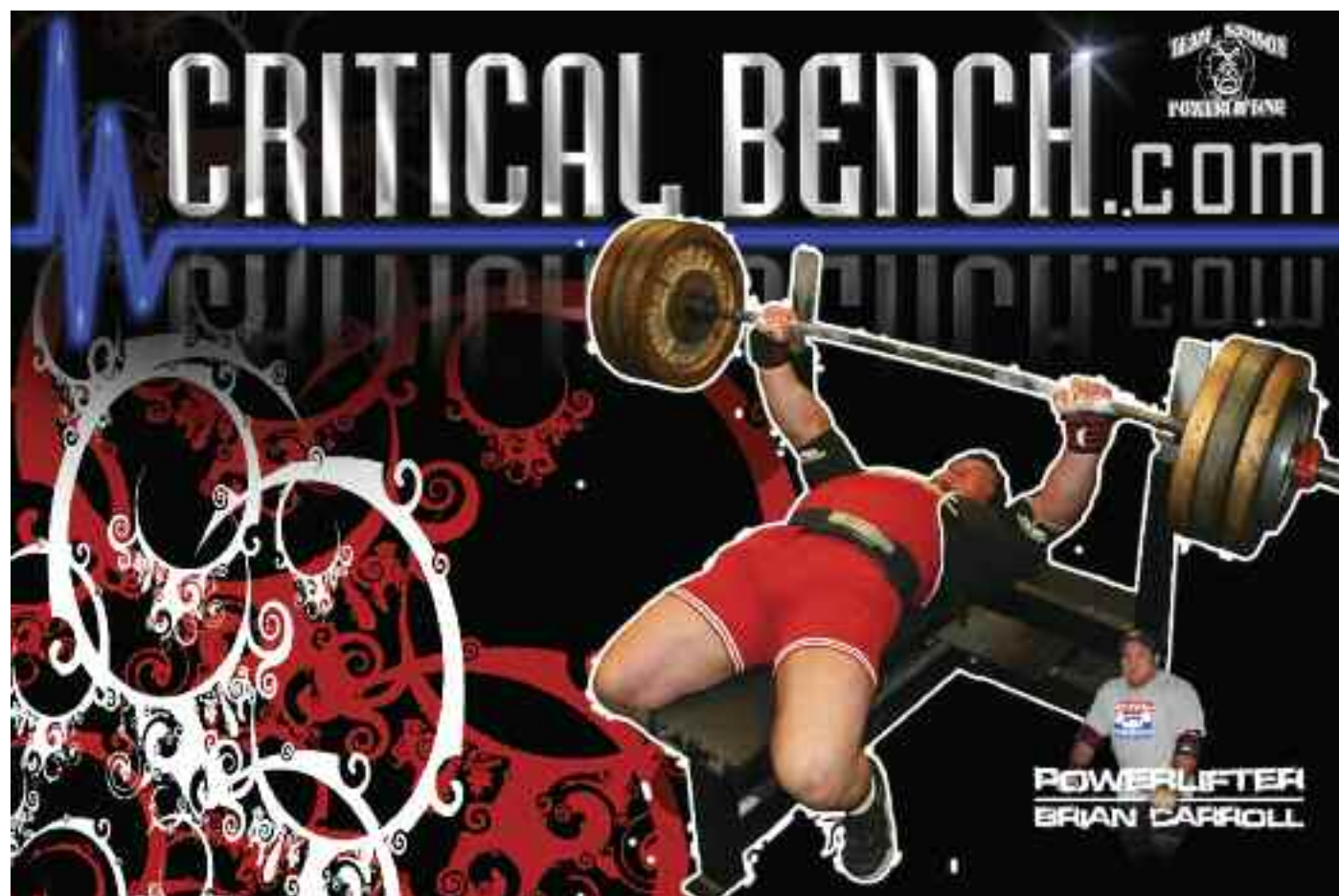
car to head home. It was five weeks before my calves were normal again. I wanted to quit.

ROUND TWO: IPA LEXEN XTREME – OCTOBER 2010

Dan Dague called me from Ohio to ask me to do his meet in Columbus. I said "okay" because he offered hotel, entry fee and gas. Back to training hard. I lost my regular crew to their jobs, so I got all new guys. My training was going great. When we got guys to show up, they would help. The last squat night was great because the crew from Sorinex came and filmed it. We had about 14 people there. I did a reverse band squat of 1,300 lbs. and everyone loved it. Then, it was off to Columbus.

When I arrived, there was no reservation for me. I called Dan, who told me he can only cover the hotel for one night instead of the three he promised. He gave me my gas money, and that was that. In addition, there were no pro lifters at the meet like I was told would be there. It was a large regional state meet, at best. There was really no reason for me to be there. I wanted to just go back to the room, but I went forward. Mike, John and Billy were great at keeping me paced and organized.

Despite all that, everything was going great. I opened with 1,160 lbs. and hammered it. Three white lights. I went back to rest. Then Dan came back and said the one name that nothing good comes from when you are called it. He said, "Hey, big guy." He said I need to hurry up and be wrapped when the weight is loaded. I told him the squat before mine was 800 lbs. He didn't care. He said one of



was no fewer than 15 powerlifters at a time in the gym, which is called Super Training.

This was so euphoric for me. I helped them, they helped me. I never met one bad person there. Everyone was so helpful. My group changed a lot, but I made friends with the two Jims, Treston, "Jew boy," Tara, Cara, Jessica, Bafus, Spencer, Roy, Billy, Austin, Matt and many others. The training went great. I got spoiled. They called me "prema-Donnie." Very clever.

Then came the meet. I felt great. Finally I was going to bust this out. I opened up with 1,173 lbs. Juan wrapped my knees. Third meet, third different wrap. I got the squat, but it was high. My weight was around 390 lbs., so my gear was tight. I went to 1,273. It took awhile for the lift to start. We were all trying to get it done when the knee wraps were on. I lifted it out twice. Both times I fell back. Big Roy was there to catch me. My legs were blue, so I went to rest before my third attempt. I had been in this position many times. I wasn't worried.

My turn again. The wraps were great. I stabilized better. Down I went with the weight. I got to above parallel and hovered. It took awhile, but I opened up and dipped. Down I went, then right back up. As soon as I reached the top, I drove my back into the bar so hard that I fell backward the last few inches at the top. This has never happened before. There was no explanation for it. I racked the weight and apologized to everyone for letting them down. It was humiliating.

It was back to South Carolina. Back to reality. Back home to the same old grind. But I did learn something from all my California friends: Do not be around the negative. If people or situations are continually draining you with negativity, change it or leave it. That's what I did when I got home. Everyone says they like the "pre-California" Donnie better, but I like the new Donnie. He is optimistic and doesn't tolerate negativity.

ROUND FOUR: SPF NORTH MYRTLE BEACH SC POWERLIFTING CHAMPIONSHIP — APRIL 2011

One lesson I learned from Mark Bell is to be patient with everyone and be nice to them. Treat people with respect and be light about it. Have some fun. That's what I try to do now. He is a great example of what a powerlifter should be. Like some of my old football coaches used to say, "If I had a team of all (fill in the blank), I wouldn't lose a game!" Well if powerlifting was full of Mark Bells, there would be one federation, no bashing on the Internet and everyone would help one another break records and PRs.

At another meet in Myrtle Beach, I felt it was time to try again and get some respect back from my new friends, as well as from myself. I committed to the meet. Everyone was very nice to me and offered me fair treatment. Pat Flynn is a powerlifter from that area and he was hosting the meet at the Aquatic and Fitness Center. I



met Jesse Rodgers, the SPF president and a good ole southern boy.

I wanted to knock this squat out once and for all. My training now spanned four meets in less than a year. Who said breaking the all time world squat record was going to be easy? Mark Bell had my buy an Ed Coan DVD, (available at www.supertraininggym.com) when I was in when I was in California, so I watched Coan squat every night for two weeks. I learned a ton from his setup and focus.

He has a fat boy decent with the bar that worked well for me, too. The wedging of his shoulders into the bar takes about 30 seconds to do. I mastered it. I got to the meet early and started warming up with the first of three flights. I have more than 12 warm-ups, so it takes about an hour and a half to get to my first attempt.

Adam Kicklighter, Dave Brown and Blake came down from North Carolina to help me. Donna Armstrong came from Columbia to help, too. Without them, it would have been rough. They loaded my warm-ups for me and helped me with my gear. After much trial and error, I decided not to do a typical opener. It only tired me out and I could never get worked up for it. When you go for big weights, there is no point in doing an opener. You open with your WR or the lift you need. Take the rest in the back.

Everything went so smoothly that it seemed surreal. Dave Brown and my old training partner and powerlifting legend Marc Bartley helped wrap my knees. I use Velcro on the end of my wraps that are off an Inzer Phenom shirt. They work perfectly. The Breeze worked the rack on the pin side. We set it high so I could get under the bar. Then once set, he would lower it. It is a technique we came up with in California. The weight was set and I went to get under the bar. I got centered, set up and nodded for the Breeze to lower the bar. I tightened up under the bar and pushed all I had into my stomach. The bar levitated out of the rack. Everything went out of focus except for the head judge.

I remembered from the Coan DVDs that I should just commit to go down. That is what I did, and it went right back up. Nothing was off balance and nothing was really that hard. It just happened. I looked up and everyone bum-rushed me. The Breeze was the first to come up and grab me to tell me it was good and no one can argue with that squat. When I looked up to the ceiling, I expected the sky to open up and angels sing! That didn't happen, so I guess God wasn't impressed.

There is really no way to explain the silence of a goal that is met. It is a feeling of "what now?" So I told them to skip my second attempt and put 1,300 lbs. on the third attempt. It actually felt easier to handle than the 1,260 lbs. The bar started to roll at the bottom so I had to cut it high. It is a shame. That would have been the icing on the cake.

But for now, for this moment, I am the squat king. There are a few out there who may break this record, and I will be their biggest fan when they do. However, for this moment, Donnie Thompson did the impossible. **PM**

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BRIAN CARROLL

What superhero power would you most like to possess? Bane [known as "The Man Who Broke the Bat"] because he's stronger and has mind control over Batman.

What is your idea of perfect happiness? Crushing a big PR meet total and hanging out with my awesome wife and good friends. Maybe tie a buzz on, as well.

What is your greatest fear? Underachieving.

What is the trait you most deplore in yourself? My A.D.D.

What is the trait you most deplore in others? Lying.

What is your greatest extravagance? Going out to eat a lot.

What is your current state of mind? I'm chilled. Just ate two apple turnovers and drank a quart of milk.

On what occasion do you lie? I don't; I just hurt feelings.

What do you most dislike about your appearance? My fat face and my fupa. Nah, kidding. I don't like my fat forehead.

What do you most value in your friends? Dependability and knowing they have your back.

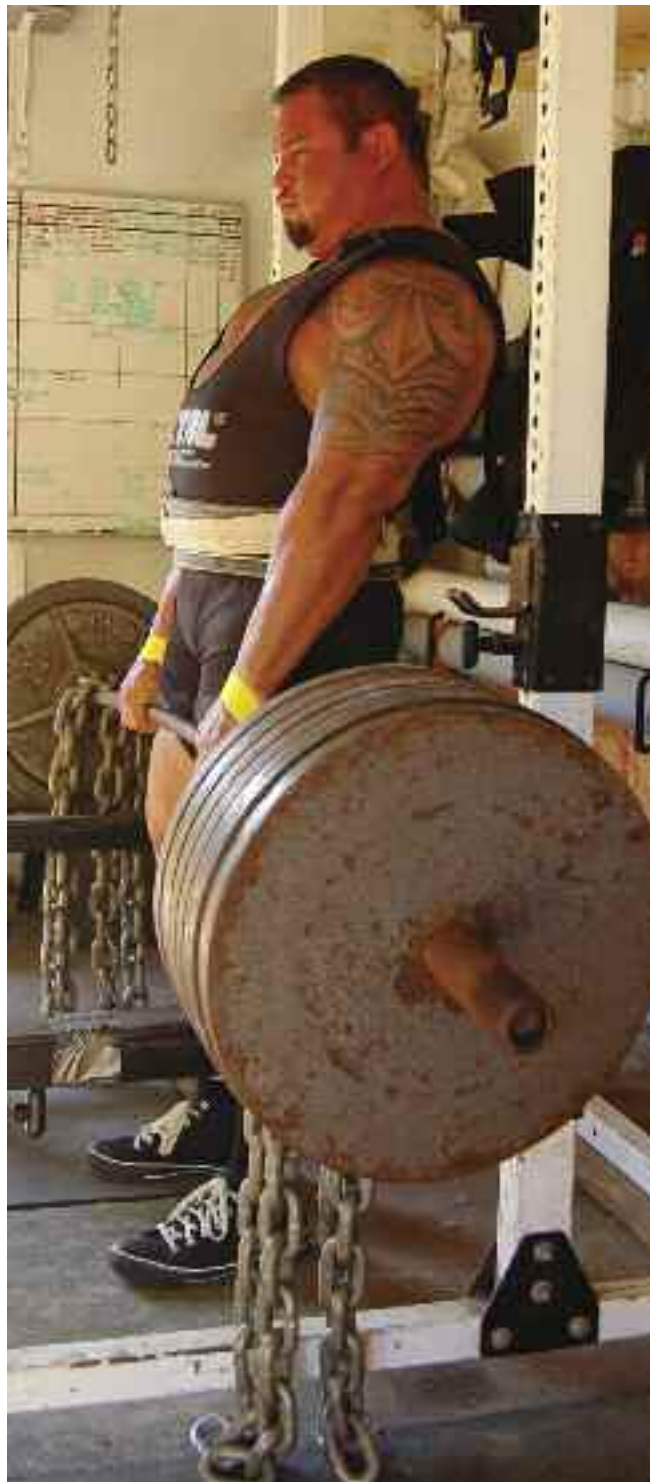
What or who is the greatest love of your life? Who? Ria Chennel Carroll. What? Powerlifting.

When and where were you happiest? I'm pretty happy now. I work for myself and make my own schedule.

If you could change one thing about yourself, what would it be? My impatience.

What do you consider your greatest achievement? Being ranked in the top 10 all-time in total, in three different weight class at the same time (currently).

What is your most treasured possession? My 2001 ford F-150 lighting. And my two pit bulls.



What is your most marked characteristic? Probably/unfortunately my sarcastic smile/smirk.

Which historical figure do you most identify with? Ha, ha, probably nobody.

What is your greatest regret? Not achieving more in meets when I was lighter.

Which talent would you most like to have? Be a top Parkour dude.

What is your motto? Listen to your body and if someone is overly nice, it's for a reason: They need something from you.

Which living person do you most admire? I admire many.

Who is your favorite hero of fiction? The person who always squats way deeper than everyone else.

If you were to die and come back as a person or thing, what do you think it would be? Myself in high school. I would really live it up.

What is your favorite movie? Fight Club, Snatch and Pulp Fiction.

Who is your favorite lifter? Lots: Stan Efferding, Weech, those Russian freaks (a few of them), Evgeniy Yarmybash, Shawn Frankl, Dave Hoff, Michael Cartinean and Al Caslow.

What do you prefer: single-ply, multi-ply or raw? All of them, just don't put yourself on a pedestal.

Are you married? In a relationship? Married one year in July.

Besides yourself, who would you like to see on

the next cover of Power? Dave Hoff. It's his time, for sure! He's on a rampage.



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