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# POWER

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# FIRST WORD



**H**ere's a stream of unconscious thoughts from the "anti-social" social networking meathead.

I forgot to share with all of you a most memorable moment at the Sling Shot booth at the 2012 Arnold Classic. A huge fuscular (fat and muscular) guy burped big-time in my booth and then proceeded to blow the gasses down his shirt! Best part was is that he was walking like a bloated half-crab, half-horse type of thing with the classic beginner's stance — a.k.a. "imaginary lat syndrome" pose. The guy was more fat than big, with the sleeves of his shirt rolled up and his shirt tucked so tight it looked like a onesie.

I have powerlifting certification seminars coming up in Sacramento (June), San Diego (July) and Atlanta (Oct.), where Jesse Burdick and I teach you every step of the Westside Barbell program. Check out CrossFit.com and look under "Specialty Certs" for more info.

Speaking of CrossFit powerlifting seminars, I realized at the last one that I must have lost my communication skills. It seems that no one can hear me or, if they do, they are not truly listening. I'm not just talking about using my dumb-ass smart phone, I'm talking in general. A conversation with my four-year-old daughter goes about the same as a conversation with the coaches and athletes I help. Just a few days ago I asked a guy to straighten his legs on a GHR. He then bent from the hips. I said okay, I see you bending your hips but now un-bend your knee and make your leg straight. He continued on his own path as I searched frantically into my empty vocabulary toolbox to try to explain to this guy how to make his legs go straight. I shouted, "Your bent leg is the opposite of what I mean when I say make your leg straight!" I pointed to my own leg and said, "This is your leg. Can you straighten like this?" He then did another rep with his leg at a 90-degree angle. I said, "Sir, can you extend your leg? Do you have the ability to straighten your leg out?" He said yes and performed his last rep with his knees still on lockdown and still bent! I shook my head and told him he should go talk to my buddy Jesse Burdick.

Speaking of Jesse Burdick, he cranked out another great article about Max Aita, who has converted from Olympic lifting to raw powerlifting.

Jeff Irion, a.k.a. Robot, put together an awesome interview with super-jacked Al Davis, who has nailed a 675 raw bench.

At Power magazine we were lucky enough to have Stan Efferding track down the vanilla gorilla Eric Spoto for an interview about his insane raw benching strength. Eric has benched 645 for four reps but has yet to hit the platform to be put to the real test.

Big Brad Gillingham landed on the cover of this issue due to the fact that he has kicked ass for more than 20 years. Check out his deadlift chart and see how many times this super-heavyweight has pulled more than 825 lbs. in competition. Brad has competed in the USAPL and IPF the toughest, hardest feds there are.

Peeps, don't forget that we have a digital version of Power that comes out about one or two weeks earlier than the printed issue. Subscribe at [www.ThePowerMagazine.com](http://www.ThePowerMagazine.com). Don't forget to subscribe to [www.YouTube.com/supertraining06](http://www.YouTube.com/supertraining06) so you don't miss any of my free Power Project videos. We are almost at 200 Power Project videos already! Make sure to also tune into [www.SuperTraining.TV](http://www.SuperTraining.TV)

## Mark Bell

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## POWERLIFTING AND CROSSFIT?

With East Sacramento CrossFit owners Travis and Justin

**Mark Bell:** I train you guys with brutal powerlifting techniques. What are some of the pros and cons to adding this to your CrossFit Game?

**Justin:** CF is very much about power, so the stronger and more explosive we get, the more efficient we become in handling heavy stuff in CF WODs.

**Travis:** CrossFit athletes are getting stronger and more powerful each year. In order to keep up we needed to take our training to a higher level – not necessarily more volume, but smarter. We need more time under heavier weight. The benefit was total body strength head to toe; personal bests on lifts that I hadn't done in months without training. Olympic lifts felt insignificant in comparison. The only drawback for me was less "constant variance," which led to a decrease in conditioning, but mostly because I hate doing that. Being stronger even helped met cons, because we are now expending less energy to lift the light weights.

**Justin:** The only thing that's difficult for me is that I did it hard to build strength while trying to maintain peak conditioning levels. So periodization seems to be the key for me. Get as strong as I can for as long as I can, then ramp conditioning back up prior to important CF competition. I really don't see any drawbacks to getting stronger, though.

**Travis:** I think periodization is totally necessary with what we do, even though the powers that be might disagree because it's impossible to make progress in every direction at once. You end up always maintaining your strength instead of increasing it.

**MB:** Sounds to me like you're referring to block periodization and prioritizing your goals.

**Justin:** I agree with Travis. I have seen the carryover to other lifts and efficiency in metcon. I have PRed oly lifts after six months away from them and am close to metcon PRs while only conditioning twice per week. The best CFers are real strong these days, and the CF community will undoubtedly start to shift even more towards strength-based training.

**Travis:** Yes exactly. CrossFit likes to say we specialize in nothing, but in order to smooth out a weakness I think it's necessary to a certain degree.

**MB:** In the Crossfit powerlifting seminars Jesse Burdick and I do, we teach people this: "I use powerlifting to make my Olympic lifts easier," a quote from Paul Anderson (a super heavy-weight in the 1960s, one of the last Americans to win Olympic weightlifting gold). Do you guys find that quote to be true?

**Travis:** I agree completely. If I can move 500 lbs off the ground for a conventional deadlift, then 250 lbs for a clean feels insignificant. The benefit of this (powerlifting's effect on weightlifting) is twofold. First, the weights feel less threatening because you are used to feeling much heavier loads on your body with the power lifts. This is a huge benefit psychologically. And second, with all the speed work, you become capable of generating much more bar speed, which translates to better/faster first pulls and bigger lifts. The load I use on speed dead and squat days still is greater than what I can clean, so my power cleans feel like a breeze in comparison. Not to mention the support system (back and stomach) is much stronger now, so even if my technique is a little sloppy from being rusty with a particular movement, I'm strong enough to bias it now and save otherwise hopeless attempts.

**Justin:** I was stuck at for a year at 100k on my snatch and hit 101 after four months of powerlifting with no oly lifting. It felt easy and I am confident I will be bumping that up very soon. I was also power cleaning more than I could front squat, and my jerk was well ahead of my clean. So my limiting factor on the clean and jerk is my squat. I am going back to more varied training for regionals and feel ready to hit significant Olympic lifting PRs.

**MB:** Damn. You guys agree on everything. You both love CrossFit more than life itself, you own the same gym and the same exact style and color truck!

**Travis:** Thank you, Coach Bell!

**Justin:** We know, coach, and thank you! **PM**



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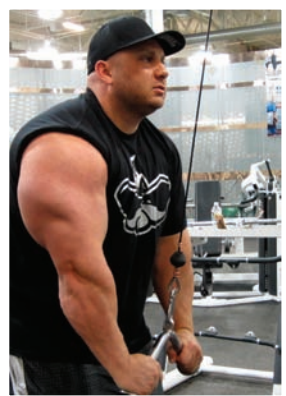
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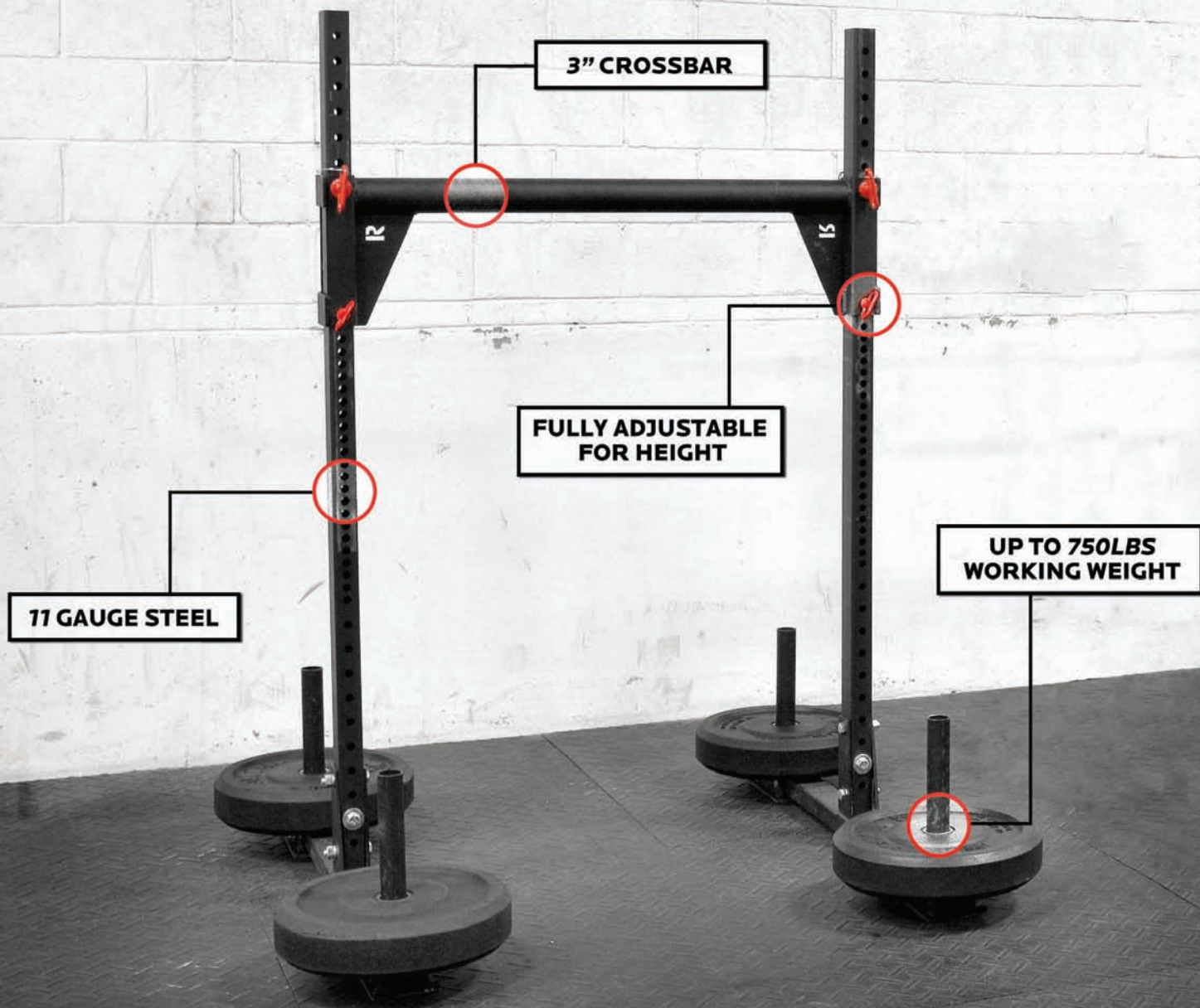


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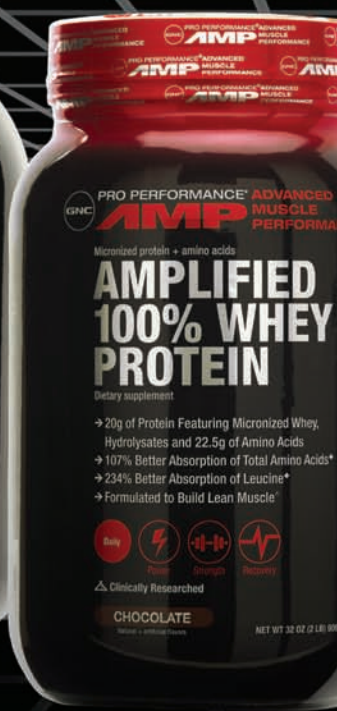
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# CHAD WALKER

BY MICHELE ATKINSON

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**What are your stats?** I am 30 years old, I weigh 330 lbs. most of the time, I am 6-foot-2 and I lift in multi-ply gear.

**What are your best lifts?** My best lifts are 1,100 squat, 755 bench and 825 deadlift. These were not all done at the same meet, so my best total is 2,655.

**What are your biggest powerlifting accomplishments?** Getting a sponsorship from Elitefts.com. Another huge accomplish-

ment was squatting 1,100 lbs. at the XPC meet in March.

**What is your favorite lift? Why?** The deadlift. I like the dead because when you are competing in a meet it is the last lift, so everyone is usually exhausted and it is fun to see people dig in and pull big weights.

**Where do you train?** In my garage in North Port, Fla.

**Do you have a coach?** My coaches are Ken Richardson, Don



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Daubert and Josh McMillan, and my training partners. They help me by giving me honest feedback about my training and form.

**How and when did you get into powerlifting?** My great friend Matt Kroczaleski introduced me to powerlifting while I attended Ferris State University in 2000. He was a member of the weightlifting club I joined. Matt taught me a lot about powerlifting and mental toughness. He encouraged me to compete and still helps me to this day. I can't thank him enough for all of the help he has given me.

**Do you have a background in other sports?** Yes, I played hockey from age 4 to 15. I enjoyed it but I started getting too big, so I started playing football. I also wrestled and threw shot and discus for Jackson High School in Jackson, Mich.

**What are your 2012 goals?** To qualify for and compete at WPC Worlds.

**Long-term goals?** I want to become the top SHW in powerlifting.

**What do you do for work?** I am a police officer in Florida. I am in the K-9 Unit and my partner is a 2-year-old German Shepherd named Atlas.

**Who are your biggest fans?** My wife Kelly and son Magnus. My friends and family are also very supportive and actually travel to most of my meets no matter where they are.

**Do you have any meet superstitions?** No superstitions, I just get really nervous and feel like I am going to throw up. This lets me know I am ready and it will go away after my opening squat.

**What do you do to get amped before a meet or before an attempt?** I usually take at least a week off and try to relax. If I get too amped during the week, I will feel exhausted. As far as getting amped for an attempt, I usually think about someone or something that is pissing me off. I am not an angry person, but there is

always a great supply of these thoughts that can fire me up.

**If you weren't powerlifting, what would you be doing?** I would be a member of a local gym. I would walk around wearing a sweet cut-off and a velcro

belt trying to be as swole as possible. I might even join Planet Fitness ... Bang! ... Pow! Wow, I am glad I love to train heavy and I don't have to worry about that!

**What lifter do you admire most? Why?** There are a ton of lifters I admire. Truly anyone who lifts because they love it and doesn't get caught up in all the hype is a lifter I admire.

**What influenced you to start competing in Pro/Ams?** A few years back I competed at Orland Barbell's Fall Classic. Brian Carroll competed there and was being helped by Shawn Frankl. After the meet I was talking with both of them, which was cool because I knew they really had no clue who I was but they took the time to talk with me. During the conversation Shawn asked what my next meet was and I didn't have one planned. He explained that if I wanted to get better I would have to go to higher-level comps like the Pro/Ams. The next Pro/Am was in August 2011, and I was there. They were right, because if you are not challenging yourself to improve, you will just remain average. Since then I competed at the XPC meet and now I am training for APF Senior Nationals and then Worlds. I also earned a spot at the XPC meet that is going to be held at the Arnold Expo Center in March 2013. So a big thanks goes out to Brian Carroll and Shawn Frankl.

**Is there anything else you would like to add?** Thank you for the opportunity to do this interview. If anyone wants to follow my training, I post my training log on the elitifts website. **PM**

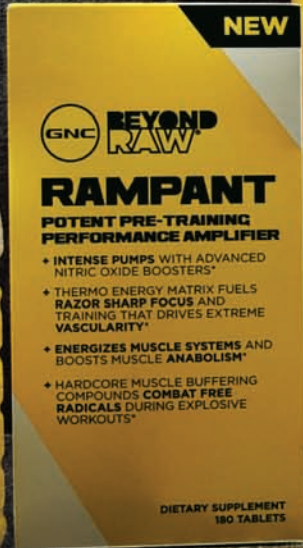




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# BRAD GILLINGHAM: INTERNATIONAL POWERLIFTING FEDERATION HALL OF FAME POWER LIFTER

BY KARL GILLINGHAM AND MARK BELL

**I**PF WR deadlift, five-time IPF world champion, 12-time USAPL national champion, strength training professional, drug-free competitor, NSCA, CSCS, Arnold Strongman competitor, all-state basketball and Track & Field, 6-foot, 10-inch high jumper, too many national records to list. Brad Gillingham has seen and done it all in his athletic career throughout his 45 years on earth. Let's get to know him better in this interview conducted by Mark Bell and Karl Gillingham.

**POWER:** How and why have you lifted so heavy for so long in the strictest fed there is?

**GILLINGHAM:** Karl and I first learned about powerlifting from watching it on television with the old man, and eventually reading about it in Powerlifting USA. We became familiar with the names of Ed Coan, Larry Pacifico, Bill Kazmaier, Rickey Dale Crain, Dave Ricks, Dan Austin, Kirk Karwoski, Gene Bell, OD Wilson and many others. We both started lifting in the ADFPA. Eventually the ADFPA turned into the USAPL and became the IPF affiliate.

I've really enjoyed the international aspect of the IPF. I have been able to travel the world and compete on all continents except Antarctica. I have tried to speak a lot of different languages, eaten some interesting food and sampled beer all over the world. The IPF is the right fit for me. That being said, I respect all lifters and have friends that compete in all federations.



Gold Medal Deadlift at 2010  
IPF World Championships in  
Potchefstroom South Africa



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2003 Arnold Strongman Axle Lift

**POWER:** Where do you train?

**GILLINGHAM:** I am co-founder and owner of Jackals Gym in Marshall, Minn. Marshall is a small prairie town located in the sparsely populated southwest corner of Minnesota. Jackals Gym started out as a small group of guys who were sick of training at the local health club. It has since become a very well-known name, and has developed many of the top powerlifters and Strongmen in the country. In addition, we have had a number of high caliber high school and college athletes train with us over the years, and even a NFL professional. I serve as the strength coach and help develop training programs for the members. Wade and Karl are the owners and operators of the [www.jackalsgym.com](http://www.jackalsgym.com) website and store.

**POWER:** How do you train?

**GILLINGHAM:** I generally train with weights three days a week and do other cardio-based exercises on my off days. I have my own training program that I have developed through years of experience, and have produced both a DVD and a training manual. On Mondays, I alternate partial rack pulls and full deadlifts every other week. My assistance work includes front squats, box squats, RDLs, bent rows, power cleans, leg presses, GHR and ab work. On Wednesdays I train the bench heavy with progressive singles and a high volume of sets. My assistance work includes front raises, biceps, and triceps work, partial bench presses, and some rowing movements. On Fridays I primarily train a 5x5 squat approach in the 60 to 80 percent range. I train at a fast pace

and try to complete all five sets in 15 to 30 minutes. My assistance work may include shoulder presses, light bench press, bent rows, GHR, reverse hypers, partial squats, leg extensions and leg curls. I add in various Strongman exercises and grip training to keep things interesting. I continually add in extra exercises for rehab purposes as needed, and am always looking for new ways to torture myself.

**POWER:** How did your father, a Green Bay Packers hall of famer, influence your athletic career?

**GILLINGHAM:** My father is Gale Gillingham. My father introduced my brothers Karl and Wade and me to weight training at a very early age. The old man passed away last year and is greatly missed by all of us. He was our coach, mentor, motivator



and biggest fan. He was a five-time all-pro offensive guard with the Green Bay Packers. He played for 10 seasons in the NFL. He was inducted into the Green Bay Packers hall of fame in 1982. Back in the 1960s and 1970s, not many small towns had gyms or training facilities. All of his training in the off season was done at our home in the small community of Little Falls, Minn. The three of us watched him complete brutally heavy workouts from the time of our earliest memories. Gale Gillingham didn't know the word "quit" and he expected others to follow his lead. He was one of a kind. They don't make them like the old man anymore. My brothers and I have competed against the biggest and the strongest in the world, but we still consider the old man to be one of the strongest to ever walk the planet. I think, even in his absence, we all still try to find ways to impress him!

**POWER:** How do you eat and why are you so huge?

**GILLINGHAM:** I like to compete in the 330 range. In order to get to 330 I need to really push the calories. I am not real scientific in my diet other than I try to eat for



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performance and I try to generally keep track of calories. My breakfast may include a box of mac and cheese, Ramen noodles, or four to six boiled potatoes supplemented with 60 grams of GNC 100-percent whey. I try to do my best with lunch, as I spend a lot of time on the road for work. Suppertime is typically sit-down, family-style with the wife and kids, and generally involves some kind of red meat and potatoes or pasta. Generally I work in a couple other small meals in between or following supper. These may include protein supplements like GNC WheyBolic Extreme 60 or peanut butter

and jelly with a big glass of milk.

**POWER:** You have hook gripped 881.

**Why the hook grip?**

**GILLINGHAM:** Because I am crazy. Well, maybe a little crazy to put up with the pain. Actually I had trouble with my pronated hand losing grip when I got above 800 lbs. I watched a Russian lifter, Maxim Podtynni, pull 854 at the Battle of the Giants in Orebro, Sweden in 1999. I decided I needed to give it a try, and I have never looked back. It gives you confidence to try any weight, and allows for a more symmetrical pulling motion.

**POWER:** Tell us about your affiliation with GNC.

**GILLINGHAM:** I always figured that I became a professional in the strength training industry when I signed my first contract with GNC Pro Performance in 2001. I am now working under contract with GNC in my 12th year. Karl and Wade have also signed on with GNC and we do several shows every year promoting GNC Pro Performance products. All three of us attend the Arnold and the Olympia each year and run a grip contest called the GNC Grip Gauntlet. GNC has opened up doors for me



that I never envisioned would happen though their support and the work that I do for them. GNC is a great company to work for and they are the supplement industry leader in providing quality, safe sports supplements.

**POWER:** Did you like getting up at 6 a.m. to chop wood as a teenager?

**GILLINGHAM:** The old man grew up cleaning barns and driving tractors from the age of 5. His nonstop work ethic and drive to do his best was formulated from the heavy farm work he did in his youth. I think he was afraid that we boys would become soft and lazy without physical labor. He found an answer for his concerns as we neared our teenage years. He decided that we would start heating our home with firewood. I remember those boot camp, work camp Saturday trips to the woods very well. "Boys, get the @%\*&@ up! We're going to the woods!" Karl and I carried and dragged logs out of the woods and split, piled and stacked wood on a regular basis for many years. Wade got to participate when he got older. There was not much time for breaks or sitting around. Work needed to be done and it was going to get done. It was the old man's way of making sure we learned how to work hard. We learned a lot of good lessons out in the woods in addition to building a good starting base for our strength development.

**POWER:** Tell us about your wife and kids.

**GILLINGHAM:** My wife is Diane. She teaches 6th grade in the small town in which we reside. She is not a lifter, but is very supportive of my sport. I have two very active daughters that are into everything from figure skating, volleyball, running, basketball, swimming, piano and everything else. Emily is 13 and Lizzy is 11. I have both of them lifting, but very light weights to start with.

**POWER:** What are your hobbies?

**GILLINGHAM:** I basically live the small town, raised-in-the-country lifestyle. I crank the heavy metal up when I'm lifting, but on the way home I drive a big four-wheel-drive truck and listen to a lot of country music. I enjoy hunting and fishing and hanging out with family and friends.

**POWER:** How many American and

world records have you set and what were they?

**GILLINGHAM:** Record lifts in competition:

**Squat:** 859 lbs. (390 kg) - USAPL Open American record 145kg

**Deadlift:** 848 lbs. (385 kg) - USAPL Open American record 145kg

**Total:** 2,271 lbs. (1,030 kg) - USAPL Open American record 145kg

**Deadlift:** 837 lbs. (380 kg) - USAPL RAW Open American record +125kg

**Total:** 2,066 lbs. (937.5 kg) - USAPL RAW Open American record +125kg

**Deadlift:** 881 lbs. (400 kg) - USAPL Masters American record +125kg

**Total:** 2,331 lbs. (1,057.5 kg) - USAPL Masters American record +125kg

**Squat:** 716 lbs. (325 kg) - USAPL RAW Masters American record +125kg

**Deadlift:** 837 lbs. (380 kg) - USAPL RAW Masters American record +125kg

**Total:** 2,066 lbs. (937.5 kg) - USAPL RAW Masters American record +125kg

**Deadlift:** 865 lbs. (392.5 kg) - USAPL Masters National Meet record +125kg

**Total:** 2,237 pounds (1,015 kg) - USAPL

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GNC Grip Gauntlet with Gillingham Brothers

Masters National Meet record +125kg

**Deadlift:** 876 pounds (397.5 kg) - IPF

World Open record +120kg

**Deadlift:** 881 pounds (400 kg) - IPF

World Masters record +125kg

**Deadlift:** 876 pounds (397.5 kg) - IPF

World Masters record +120kg

**Total:** 2,331 pounds (1,057.5 kg) - IPF

World Masters record +125kg

**Total:** 2,281 pounds (1,035 kg) - IPF

World Masters record +120kg

90 competition deadlifts above 800 lbs.

**POWER:** What do you consider your greatest athletic accomplishment?

**GILLINGHAM:** This is a tough question.

I am not sure if I can limit it to one event. I am most proud of my longevity in the sport.

I have been at it a long time, and I have been able to make a lot of friends through the sport all over the world. Another thing to mention is all of the great times I have been able to have with Karl, Wade, the old man and family over the years because we three brothers all continued to lift and compete beyond 40. We have been able to train, travel and support each other for a



Brad Gillingham and Gale Gillingham in Cape town South Africa at the 2004 IPF Worlds

long time, taking time to have a few beers together along the way.

**POWER:** What do you have upcoming for this year?

**GILLINGHAM:** I am planning to compete in the GNC Pro deadlift at the Empire Classic in Spokane, Wash., in late April, then I will train for the USAPL Raw

Nationals. I would like to try and make the IPF Classic Raw Worlds in Russia next year. I also hope to compete in a deadlift invitational in Brazil in December.

I would like to thank Mark and Andee Bell and Power for this great opportunity to be interviewed. Also, big thanks to brother Karl for conducting the interview. **PM**



# BRAD GILLINGHAM 825+ COMPETITION DEADLIFTS

LB	KG	CONTEST	PLACE	DATE
881	400	AC IPF GNC Deadlift	Columbus, Ohio	3/7/2009
881	400	IPF World Championship	Potchefstroom, SA	11/13/2010
876	397.5	IPF World Championship	Pilsen, Czech Republic	11/13/2011
870	395	IPF Masters Worlds	Palm Springs, CA	10/4/2008
870	395	USAPL Nationals	Bay St. Louis, MS	6/12/2011
870	395	IPF Pacific Open	Melbourne, Australia	7/31/2011
865	392.5	AC IPF GNC Deadlift	Columbus, Ohio	3/1/2008
865	392.5	USAPL Masters Nationals	Killeen, Texas	5/2/2010
859	390	USAPL Masters Nationals	Killeen, Texas	5/7/2006
859	390	IPF World Championship	Solden, Austria	10/20/2007
859	390	AC IPF GNC Deadlift	Columbus, Ohio	3/6/2010
854	387.5	IPF World Championship	Trencin, Slovakia	11/17/2002
854	387.5	IPF North Americans	Oranjestad, Aruba	6/21/2008
854	387.5	World Games(IPF)	Kaohsiung, Taiwan	7/26/2009
854	387.5	Empire GNC Pro Deadlift	Spokane, WA	4/25/2011
848	385	USAPL Nationals	Omaha, Nebraska	7/15/2001
848	385	IPF Battle of Giants	Orebro, Sweden	11/26/2005
848	385	IPF Masters Worlds	Killeen, Texas	10/7/2006
848	385	IPF World Championship	Potchefstroom, SA	11/13/2010
848	385	IPF World Championship	Pilsen, Czech Republic	11/13/2011
843	382.5	IPF Pan American	Chicago, Illinois	4/9/2000
843	382.5	World Games(IPF)	Akita, Japan	8/21/2001
843	382.5	AC IPF GNC Deadlift	Columbus, Ohio	3/7/2009
843	382.5	AC IPF GNC Deadlift	Columbus, Ohio	3/5/2011
840	381	USAPL Minnesota State	Faribault, Minnesota	1/23/1999
837	380	IPF World Championship	Akita, Japan	11/19/2000
837	380	USAPL Nationals	Baton Rouge, LA	7/11/2004
837	380	USAPL Nationals	St. Louis, MO	7/15/2007
837	380	USAPL Masters Nationals	Miami, Florida	5/4/2008
837	380	IPF Masters Worlds	Ostrava, Czech Rep.	10/3/2009
837	380	AC IPF GNC Deadlift	Columbus, Ohio	3/6/2010
837	380	USAPL Masters Nationals	Killeen, Texas	5/2/2010
837	380	Pacific Open	Melbourne, Australia	7/31/2011
837	380	AC IPF GNC Deadlift	Columbus, Ohio	3/3/2012
837	380	Ozark Open	St. Louis, MO	3/17/2012
832	377.5	IPF World Championship	Trento, Italy	11/21/1999
832	377.5	Danube Cup	Stockerau, Austria	3/17/2007
832	377.5	IPF World Championship	Solden, Austria	10/20/2007
832	377.5	IPF Masters Worlds	Palm Springs, CA	10/4/2008
832	377.5	World Games(IPF)	Kaohsiung, Taiwan	7/26/2009
830	376.5	USAPL Minnesota State	Faribault, MN	1/23/1999
826	375	IPF Battle of Giants	Orebro, Sweden	12/4/1999
826	375	USAPL Nationals	Chicago, Illinois	7/16/2000
826	375	IPF World Championship	Sotkamo, Finland	11/18/2001
826	375	IPF World Championship	Trencin, Slovakia	11/17/2002
826	375	IPF Battle of Giants	Orebro, Sweden	11/26/2005
826	375	USAPL Masters Nationals	Killeen, Texas	5/7/2006
826	375	IPF Masters Worlds	Killeen, Texas	10/7/2006
826	375	AC IPF GNC Deadlift	Columbus, Ohio	3/1/2008

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# BIG AL DAVIS

BY JEFF IRION  
PHOTOS COURTESY OF MHP

**Al Davis' nickname is Big Al, and deservedly so — he's 6-foot-3 and 300 lbs., with massive arms and no gut to speak of. A former national-level bodybuilder, Davis is now one of the top raw bench pressers of all time. Here's what he had to say about gettin' yoked and benchin' a load!**

**POWER:** When did you start competing in bodybuilding? What are some of your top finishes? Do you still compete in bodybuilding, or are you a full time powerlifter now?

**BIG AL:** I believe my first competition was in 2002. It was what is now the Europa, sponsored by Ed and Betty Pariso. I won first place and then went on to do about a show per year up to my last show, the 2009 Jr. Nationals, where I got a top-five finish.

Now that I'm powerlifting, I've put bodybuilding on hold because it was very hard bouncing back and forth. But I would like to go back and try to get my pro card one day. That's one chapter in my life that I feel is not complete yet.

**POWER:** How did you get started in powerlifting? When was your first powerlifting meet and what did you bench?

**BIG AL:** Well, it really all started one year as I was literally walking off the stage at the Ronnie Coleman Classic. I bumped into Ken Anderson and he was trying to convince me to start competing. I fought him on it even when he told me about the raw meets. He then told me about a meet that would be held at the Europa in Dallas and that it was paying \$1,500. That quickly changed my mind! I thought, "Hey, I can come do my regular Saturday morning workout and win money!" That was the Clash of the Titans in 2007. I benched 605, then did 18 reps with 405 in the bench-for-reps contest.

**POWER:** What is your ultimate bench press goal? *Editor's note: For reference, Scot Mendelson holds both the all-time raw bench record (715) and the all-time 308 raw bench record (701). Aside from Mendelson, the only other person to raw bench 700-plus in a meet is James Henderson at SHW.)*

**BIG AL:** My goal, naturally, is to break the world record of 715. I am a competitor. I love to compete and I like striving to be the best at what I do.

**POWER:** You once described yourself as a former skinny guy, and said you played soccer and were on the swim team. How did you transform into a 300-lb. behemoth? What tips do you have for our readers who are looking to make similar transformations?

**BIG AL:** You know, that is a fight that I still struggle with. I am not a big eater like some of these guys, so I can't pile the food up and just gorge. So I have to eat often, and if I can't eat it I have to drink it. When I was in college I would do stupid things like go drink a six-pack, come home and get on the bench. Today my struggle is that I work in a cold data center all day where no food or drinks are allowed. I have to force myself to stop and go eat, and if worse comes to worse go grab some aminos or a shake or something, just to get some food in me.

**POWER:** To make those of us who raw bench a little (or a lot) less than 670 feel better about ourselves, tell us about the first time you ever bench pressed. Also, how fast did your bench progress?



**BIG AL:** I didn't start until ninth grade. Until then my mom didn't want me to lift because she said it could stunt my growth. When I got to high school I was behind a lot of the guys in my class because they had already been lifting for a couple of years, so I was totally embarrassed because I was struggling with 90 lbs. But I went to a high school that was a football powerhouse: Dallas Carter. I'm sure you've heard of them, the good and the bad. Anyway, when I started training I was able to add about 90 lbs. to my bench each year until I got into the 600s.

**POWER:** When it comes to bench press technique, you do everything "wrong:" you don't tuck your elbows, you don't arch and you don't use leg drive. And to top it all off, you have long arms. However, you're one of the top raw benchers in the world. It doesn't make sense! How are you so good at benching?

**BIG AL:** Hell, I don't know! When I started benching it was all about the aesthetics and bodybuilding, so at the time things like arch, tuck and leg drive didn't matter. I'd even do things like bench with my feet up in the air. Until I got with my coach, Josh Bryant, I'd never had a coach except my buddies in the gym. The only thing I knew was that I needed to get the bar from point A to point B, so I needed to build the strength to do that. Who knew I would be a powerlifter in the future? Now that I'm with Josh, I'm starting to learn a lot of the technical aspects of benching, but bad habits are hard to break. He has me work on trying to get a little more arch in the back and bringing in the leg drive, but he does not want to change my elbows. As for my bench press success, I guess it's totally based on the desire to win.

**POWER:** In August 2007 you benched 605 lbs. in competition. Four years later, you hit a 670 bench in competition. Everyone thinks that benching raw (especially with a wide grip like yours) will beat you up, wreck your shoulders and eat away at your soul. Yet you have managed to stay injury free while making steady progress. What's your secret?

**BIG AL:** I listen to my body. I know that sounds like a BS answer, but it's true. Your body tells you everything you need to know. For example, there have been days when I didn't feel my best and I did nothing but cardio or sometimes turned around and walked right back out the door. What I'm saying is, I put in what work I can and leave it at that. On the other hand, there are those days when everything is working right. Those are the days that I go all out and really push myself to the limit. Also, I believe that if it hurts, leave it alone and give it rest.

**POWER:** Let's talk about bench press grip. In January 2010 you hit a 633 bench using a full grip (thumbs around the

bar). At some point in that year you switched to a false grip, which is what you used for your 670 bench. Why did you make the switch? What do you feel are the advantages of using a false grip?

**BIG AL:** I've been using false grip for a while, but until I got really comfortable with it I wouldn't do it with the really heavy weight. I prefer it because it protects my wrists. When using a full grip, you have a better chance of the bar rolling back in your

hands, bending your wrists back and injuring them. With the false grip, the bar sits right against the palms of your hands, perpendicular to your forearm, which takes the wrists totally out of the game.

**POWER:** What about placing less stress on the pecs and shoulders? Is that a factor in why you choose to use a false grip?

**BIG AL:** No, not at all. I've been lucky to not have any issues with my shoulders or pecs. Maybe it's because of my bodybuilding background, but I tend to specifically train those muscles so that they are ready for the heavy weight. For example, I do really heavy front raises and heavy flies.

**POWER:** And now the question everyone wants to know: How do you train the bench press?

**BIG AL:** I have always trained bench twice a week, one heavy day and one not-so-heavy day with more volume. You know, so many in the bodybuilding world believe in training a muscle group once a week, but I

would lose strength doing that. I'm a true believer that I need to keep an adequate amount of blood in those muscles at all times.

Before Josh I was self-taught, and my workouts were all about volume. Heavy volume, but still volume. What Josh introduced me to is what I call classic powerlifting training: bands, boards, chains and a host of other specialized training methods, including speed training.

**POWER:** Do you train the squat or deadlift?

**BIG AL:** I still train my lower body like a bodybuilder. I do a lot of partial deadlifts, and for my legs I normally do my full workout and put squats at the end so that I don't have to go as heavy. My knees are not very good.

**POWER:** Give us your top three tips for making consistent progress in the bench press.

**BIG AL:** 1. You need to get in tune with your body. You need to know what you can and can't do each workout.

2. Every time you get ready to bench you have to have the right mindset: "I will not let this weight defeat me!"

3. No matter whose workout method you follow, you must be consistent. Make sure you get in the gym, do your work, leave and go eat.

**POWER:** "Leave and go eat." I'm awesome at that! What are





your favorite exercises for building your bench press?

**BIG AL:** I actually love the bands, and also the hammer strength close grip press. What do I hate the most? Heavy front raises.

**POWER:** Rapid fire! Give me your first thoughts on the following items as far as raw benching goes.

**POWER:** Triceps.

**BIG AL:** Must be stronger.

**POWER:** Pecs.

**BIG AL:** Pumped and full of blood.

**POWER:** Shoulders.

**BIG AL:** Must protect and keep them healthy.

**POWER:** Upper back.

**BIG AL:** Cannot neglect it.

**POWER:** Lats.

**BIG AL:** Wednesday night.

**POWER:** Speed bench.

**BIG AL:** Has helped me improve tremendously.

**POWER:** Bands.

**BIG AL:** Love them!

**POWER:** Chains.

**BIG AL:** Not so much...

**POWER:** Board presses.

**BIG AL:** New to me, but I must say they help me get past my sticking point.

**POWER:** Floor presses.

**BIG AL:** Cool, but I feel like there are other exercises that benefit me more.

**POWER:** The Sling Shot.

**BIG AL:** Genius! Although I use mine differently than most people.

**POWER:** How do you use the Sling Shot differently from how others use it?

**BIG AL:** For example, Josh wanted me to rest my pecs for an upcoming workout, so I used the Sling Shot on dips and close grip presses to not work the pecs as much and to give them rest.

**POWER:** Bodybuilders are known for short-stroking bench press reps in training, and you are no exception. Don't try to lie, I have video evidence! But I must say that your competition lifts are always clean and locked out, with a nice pause to boot. So what's the deal: Is there a reason for not locking out each rep in training, or are you just a big fat cheater?

**BIG AL:** It's a very bad habit that I developed over the years which I try to focus on not doing anymore. If you notice, when I miss a lift it's usually at the last few inches of my bench, and I directly attribute it to that. So that is why I have to do so many board presses and triceps exercises to make up for the bad training over the years. **PM**



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# THE VANILLA GORILLA

INTERVIEWED BY STAN "RHINO" EFFERDING AND MARK BELL

The albino gorilla is extremely rare, but not more rare than the site of the vanilla gorilla. No one has ever seen the vanilla gorilla on the platform. With only a few slight (but extremely impressive) glimpses on YouTube, people are crowning vanilla gorilla Eric Spoto as the new king of the bench press. We would personally go as far to say that the bench press world has never seen this kind of bench-pressing power. We'd never take anything away from the power of Ryan Kennelly (biggest geared bench ever at 1,075), Scot Mendelson (all-time raw champ with 715) or James "Hollywood" Henderson who was the first to press 700 raw. We don't even know if big James wore wrist wraps for his attempt! However, this is a different type of strength and stamina on the bench that makes you speculate that Eric Spoto is on another level.

Recent feats of 645 for four reps, 585 for eight reps, and (in a Maddog Sling Shot) doing 315 for 62 reps and 785 for one leave us all intrigued. We are all asking the same question: "Who is this mutant? Where did he come from? Why are his forearms 20?" And we all want to know when he will step on the platform to prove his metal. Well, Super Training faithful, world-class powerlifter and pro bodybuilder Stan Efferding trapped the vanilla gorilla by hypnotizing him with a chocolate banana (insert filthy powerlifting humors here) to get answers.

**STAN EFFERDING:** It seems like you're in the witness protection program. Tell us about yourself.

**ERIC SPOTO:** I'm 35, 5 feet, 11 inches, 310 lbs. Born and raised in Long Island, N.Y.

**EFFERDING:** How long have you been training?

**SPOTO:** I started lifting when I was about 10. You know those old gray plastic weights you fill with sand? Well I used to lift those up a bunch. I got my first gym membership at 13.

**EFFERDING:** How did you get so strong?

**SPOTO:** It has been a long journey. I remember being 13 thinking if I could just bench three wheels (315) I would be happy. Then once I was in the 300 club, if I could just hit 405 that would be good enough. Well, anyone who lifts knows that once you hit that number it is never good enough and you think you are capable of more. I think consistency is one of the main things that helped me get strong, plus being born with pretty good genetics doesn't hurt. I see a lot of kids today that want an instant fix to add 50 or 100 lbs. to their bench. They think there is some secret exercise

or supplement they can take. They don't want to hear that its hard work, consistency and dedication. I always looked at strength training as a marathon event, not a sprint, slow and steady wins the race.

**EFFERDING:** You use to arm wrestle. Tell us about that and why did you stop?

**SPOTO:** I have always loved arm wrestling. We would have matches at the cafeteria growing up and I would beat kids older and bigger than me so, of course, you like what you're good at. Many years later I stumbled on some information about arm wrestling tournaments on the Internet and thought I would give it a try. I went to a couple tournaments won a couple decent events, but the wear and tear on your arm is so great it would affect my workouts way too much. I decided that I would rather focus on the bench press while the window of opportunity was still open and see if I was capable of putting up world-class numbers. A lot of top arm wrestlers are in there 40s and 50s so I plan on going back at some point.



**EFFERDING:** You are a bench press specialist. Powerlifters will want to know why you don't squat or deadlift.

**SPOTO:** I grew up benching, squatting and deadlifting. I was always a great squatter and bencher and, I would say, a pretty good deadlifter. At 19 I was 198 lbs. and hit a 465 bench and a 675 squat for a triple with a 635 deadlift. I blew my lower back out a few years later – young and dumb (no belt not properly warmed up) – and it's never been the same. Several years later I was in a bad dirt bike accident on a KX500. My right ankle got shredded so my Achilles tendon is about four or five times thicker than it should be. Long story short, I was told I would walk with a limp the rest of my life and wouldn't really be able to run or jump, but I can run and jump so you can't always believe what doctors say. I just started training squats again not too long ago but from all those years of heavy pressing I can't get my arms back to hold the bar. I have been using a safety squat bar and stretching my shoulders a lot so maybe I'll be able to squat again, you never know.

**EFFERDING:** It looks like you can kill bench reps all day long. What are the most reps you've done with 315, 405, 495?



**SPOTO:** When it comes to my rep work, I rarely do full reps. Anything over five reps I don't go to lockout for two reasons: With lighter weight anything 80 percent 1RM or less my goal is to keep tension on my muscles, and locking out takes the tension off my chest. Plus, that's just too much wear and tear on my elbows. So I call them three-quarter reps. I try to perform them fast and explosive without locking them out or bouncing off my chest.

315 lbs: 62 reps; 405 lbs: 41 reps; 495 lbs: 22 reps.

**EFFERDING:** When do you think you will compete in a sanctioned bench press meet?

**SPOTO:** I have my eye on a few meets to get my feet wet and get comfortable with the whole process of lifting under the guidelines of a meet. I honestly can't say a particular one at this point because I haven't decided.

**EFFERDING:** What's your long-term goal? What records are you chasing?

**SPOTO:** My long-term goal is take my strength as far as my body will let me. I am chasing the all-time raw bench press record of 715.

**EFFERDING:** What's your training week look like?

**SPOTO:** My training split goes like this:

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**Monday:** All heavy chest, shoulders, triceps. I don't do any direct shoulder work but heavy benching kills my front delts better than shoulder presses.

**Tuesday:** All heavy upper back and biceps. I really focus on row movements the emulate bench press. When I row I try to get in the exact position I bench press in. I do heavy rear delts on this day, too.

**Wednesday:** Heavy legs.

**Thursday:** Heavy shoulders, dynamic and rep sets for chest, medium triceps, higher reps, a couple isolation exercises.

**Friday:** Medium back, light biceps, focus on reps.

**Saturday:** Off

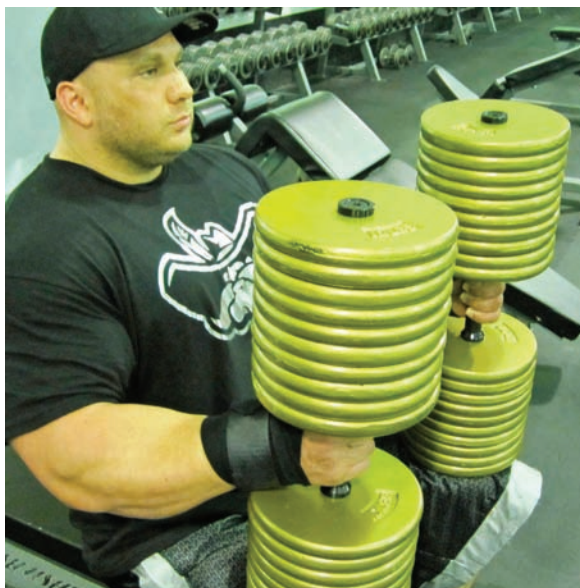
**Sunday:** Off

**EFFERDING:** How does one develop a gorilla-like bench press? What's a typical training day look like?

**SPOTO:** My typical bench night starts with flat barbell bench. I try to loosen up my rotator cuffs before I bench and in between each warm-up set.

**All one set of each weight:** 135x 15-20; 225x 15; 315x 10; 405x 6-10; 495x 4-8; 585x 3-5.

**EFFERDING:** That's a lot of work, biggs!



**SPOTO:** Not really, I'm not even half way through the workout yet. 635-650 for three to five reps. Depending on how I'm feeling, I will usually do two to four sets of that weight. After that, I pick a weight, 315, 405, or 495, and do fast three-quarter reps to burn out and fill with some blood. I take 5-plus minutes between each work set.

**EFFERDING:** How many sets of high reps do you hit?

**SPOTO:** One to three, depending on feel. They are often times not done to 100 percent failure.

**EFFERDING:** Okay, what's next?

**SPOTO:** After flat bench I will hit either incline dumbbells or rack lockouts. I only do rack lockouts max twice a month; it's pretty rough on the joints. Then I finish with some dips. For triceps I like JM press on the Smith machine.

**EFFERDING:** What are your three favorite exercises to bench like a mutant?

**SPOTO:** Bench press, JM press, Dumbbell press (flat or incline).

**MARK BELL:** Thank you for the interview, Eric. Good luck whenever you compete next. If you do break the raw bench record, I will give you the cover of Power! You will be the first and perhaps the last bench-only lifter to ever be on our cover. **PM**

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# GETTING THE MOST OUT OF YOUR OFF-SEASON

BY MATT VINCENT

I've been involved in various strength sports for a long time, and one of the big mistakes I see is that powerlifters never take time to have a real off-season. You also see powerlifters who have no idea what the off-season is for. We all did it growing up with different sports. There should be a long period when competitions were not happening. Take a break from all of the max lifting and sport-specific training to get our shit together, reassess and plan our attack for the next season. Instead of always just going from one meet to the next with a minimal de-load, followed by the same cycle. Putting together solid off-season programming can make the difference in your next season.

I schedule my off-season for throwing at the end of



the season after the big games are done, usually in October. By this point I have been throwing and competing since March. I know that the Highland Games bring out some different training than other strength sports due to the volume of competitions. I can do as many as 20 games in this time. Whether or not you are competing this much, it is the same thing of continuous stress you have from powerlifting, weightlifting or Strongman. This continuous

abuse you are putting on the body from event training or geared lifting takes a toll over the year. It seems that more and more people are getting smart to taking pre-hab and recovery seriously. Yet still many have no idea of how to plan an off-season.





Figure 1

**90 PERCENT RULE: TRAINING MAX = RAW MAX X 90%**

CYCLE 1	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4
WEEK 1	SQ: 10x10@50%	OH: 10x10@50%	DL: 10x10@50%	BP: 10x10@50%
WEEK 2	SQ: 10x10@50%	OH: 10x10@50%	DL: 10x10@50%	BP: 10x10@50%
WEEK 3	SQ: 10x10@55%	OH: 10x10@55%	DL: 10x10@55%	BP: 10x10@55%
WEEK 4	SQ: 10x10@55%	OH: 10x10@55%	DL: 10x10@55%	BP: 10x10@55%
WEEK 5 (deload)	SQ: 3x10@50%	OH: 3x10@50%	DL: 3x10@50%	BP: 3x10@50%

Figure 2

CYCLE 1	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4
WEEK 6	SQ: 5x10@60%	OH: 5x10@60%	DL: 5x10@60%	BP: 5x10@60%
WEEK 7	SQ: 5x10@60%	OH: 5x10@60%	DL: 5x10@60%	BP: 5x10@60%
WEEK 8	SQ: 5x10@65%	OH: 5x10@65%	DL: 5x10@65%	BP: 5x10@65%
WEEK 9 (test)	SQ: Test	OH: Test	DL: Test	BP: Test
WEEK 10 (deload)	SQ: 3x10@50%	OH: 3x10@50%	DL: 3x10@50%	BP: 3x10@50%

My off-season consists of 20 total weeks. Two blocks of high volume split into five-week cycles. I take some time to completely de-load (two weeks no lifting) and think of the issues I need to address so that I can fix the problems, nagging injuries or weaknesses I had throughout the season. Generally speaking I take my four main lifts: squat, bench, deadlift and overhead press-

ing and really focus on regaining full range of motion. Getting back to the basics of training and build a better base for the season to come. These four lifts, no matter what your sport, are the best way to build full-body strength. Also spending extra time or some real time rolling, stretching and properly warming-up each training period will really make a difference here.



The first block is high volume training. It is going to kick your ass. You will come out mentally and physically stronger. All of the major lifts are done 10 sets of 10 reps. The main focus is on full range of motion and hitting all of the reps. You will be working up to a prescribed weight. This weight is going to be based off of your raw max. You will be using the 90 percent rule to establish your training max. All of the lifting percentages will be based off of this. This accomplishes a couple of things. First, starting with weights this light for the off-season means there is no risk of injury (you are trying to repair at this point). This lightweight rep work will start to establish lots of blood

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flow and help you heal. Second, it will allow you to hit all the reps as prescribed. Here is a basic breakdown of the main lifts in the first cycle of Block 1. (see Figure 1)

This is the basic of the progression on the main lifts for the first five weeks. There are some slight changes to the sets and reps moving into the second cycle of the high-volume block. The main difference is that the weights are going to increase and the sets will drop to five. Also, during week four you are going to make it a test week on your main lifts. This is going to be for pushing a rep max. By this point you should have a good idea of what you can do for seven to 10 reps – the weight you are going to give hell. The basic percentages, sets and reps are as follows: See Figure 2.

There is also some basic accessory work that goes with each workout: a main lift and two accessory lifts. Olympic lifts will be added on the days 1 and 3; however, they are very light weight and used as an accessory to work on speed and flexibility (can be replaced by clean pulls and snatch pulls). For your daily training session, just input the



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Figure 3

### CYCLE 1

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4
Squat:	Push press:	Deadlift:	Bench:
Snatch: 3x5 50-60%	Pull-ups: 3x10	Cleans : 3x5 50-60%	Dips: 3x10
Good mornings: 3x10	Single-arm rows: 3x10	Good mornings: 3x10	Single arm rows: 3x10
Prowler: 10x40 yds	Prowler: 10x40 yds	Prowler: 10x40 yds	Prowler: 10x40 yds

Figure 4

### (Weight lifted x Reps x .0333 + Weight lifted) x 90% CYCLE 1

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4
Week 1	SQ/BP: 5x5 @ 85	OH/DL: 5x5 @ 85	CL/SN: 5x3 @ 85
Week 2	SQ/BP: 5x5 @ 90	OH/DL: 5x5 @ 90	CL/SN: 5x3 @ 90
Week 3	SQ/BP: 5x3 @ 95	OH/DL: 5x3 @ 95	CL/SN: 5x2 @ 95
Week 4 (test)	SQ/BP: 5x1 @ 100	OH/DL: 5x1 @ 100	CL/SN: 5x1 @ 100
Week 5 (deload)	SQ/BP: 3x10 @ 50	OH/DL: 3x10 @ 50	CL/SN: 3x5 @ 50

### CYCLE 2

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3
Week 6	SQ/BP: 5x5 @ 90	OH/DL: 5x5 @ 90	CL/SN: 5x3 @ 90
Week 7	SQ/BP: 5x5 @ 95	OH/DL: 5x5 @ 95	CL/SN: 5x3 @ 95
Week 8	SQ/BP: 5x3 @ 100	OH/DL: 5x3 @ 100	CL/SN: 5x2 @ 100
Week 9 (test)	SQ/BP: 5x1 @ 105	OH/DL: 5x1 @ 105	CL/SN: 5x1 @ 105
Week 10 (deload)	SQ/BP: 3x10 @ 50	OH/DL: 3x10 @ 50	CL/SN: 3x5 @ 50

### The daily template is as follows. Insert weights and percentages.

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3
Squat:	Push press:	Clean:
Bench:	Deadlift:	Snatch:
Good mornings: 3x10	Pull-ups: 3x10	Seated box jumps: 3x5
Weighted dips: 3x10	Single-arm rows: 3x10	Single leg jump: 3x5
Prowler: 8x40 yards @ 90lbs	Prowler: 8x40 yards @ 90lbs	Prowler: 8x40 yards @ 90lbs

**“FOLLOWING THE HIGH VOLUME, I GO INTO A 10-WEEK STRENGTH BLOCK OF TWO FIVE-WEEK CYCLES. THIS BLOCK WILL START RAMPING UP THE WEIGHTS AND PUSHING DOWN THE REPS. NOW THAT YOU ARE DONE WITH THE VOLUME, YOU WILL BE MUCH BETTER CONDITIONED FOR THE THREE DAYS A WEEK TRAINING AND SETS OF FIVE AND THREE WILL SEEM LIKE A BREEZE.”**

different weights for your main lifts based on the percentages. Your accessory lifts should be kept light, as well. I never do more than 135 lbs. on good mornings, for example, keeping them strict and acceleration the bar hard is the goal. (See Figure 3)

Yes there is conditioning in there as well. Dropping some of that extra baggage and becoming a better athlete is not going to hurt any of us. I use a prowler since I find it to be the most bang for my buck. Hills are not an option since I live in

Louisiana and it is flatter than ... well, things that are really flat.

Following the high volume, I go into a 10-week strength block of two five-week cycles. This block will start ramping up the weights and pushing down the reps. Now that you are done with the volume, you will be much better conditioned for the three days a week training and sets of five and three will seem like a breeze. The shift to three-day-a-week will give some more time for recovery between training days. The days break down



with a squat/bench day, overhead press/deadlift day and an Olympic lifting day clean/snatch (again, high pulls or snatch pulls are possible alternatives). The basic sets, reps and percentages are as follows.

You should set a new training max based off of the previous 10 weeks. You can figure that out by taking whatever your rep max was one week nine. By using this formula you will have your new training max to base all of your percentages off of. This formula already has the 90 percent rule set. The formula is as follows: See Figure 4

We all get caught up in the chase for the next completion and breaking the next PR. It is easy to lose some focus and forget the simple things that got you where you are now. Spending some extra time during the year readdressing those things will help you be in better shape for your next season. I personally still love competing on a regular basis and need that edge I get from it. So at the end of 20 weeks of off-

season I will find a competition that will test my training. For example, last year I did a raw powerlifting meet. This coming year I will do some weightlifting meets. I have never done one before and it seems fun. It's more fun than doing it in the gym. Also this gives something to think about as a reason to the training. Spending some time to de-load mentally and physically from your regular training will put you in a better position of a healthy year of training and breaking PRs. **PM**





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# FLIGHT





# FIGHTERS

BY MIKE REILLY



**T**he distance from the locker room to the cage is entirely dependent on prior preparation. For the well prepared fighter, it is a short, sweet stroll surrounded by friends, family and fans. For the ill prepared fighter it is an endless green mile, terrible, treacherous and terrifying – the last chance to reap fears sown from the furrowed ground of negligence.

Training's physical benefits are just a small portion of the rewards. Yes, proper training will make you faster, stronger; it will sharpen your technique, timing and endurance. But more than any of that, it will make you more confident.

As a coach, I structure my athlete's training to maximize their confidence on fight night.

Nothing does that quite as well as power training. My fighters will all spend a great deal of time on the mat training technique, sparring and grappling. They will also do their fair share of plyometric circuit training. But I add one more element: powerlifting.

There are those in martial arts who believe strength is unimportant, that technique is all that matters. Of course, if this were true, there would be no need for weight classes. The reality is that stronger athletes have a huge advantage over weaker ones. Sheer raw power can change the game in a heartbeat. Powerful fighters shoot faster, hit harder and shrug off otherwise bone-breaking submissions. Fighters who train power gain an edge – confidence – and every athlete knows a confident athlete is a dangerous opponent.

Powerlifting builds the right mindset. Every time we attack a PR we step to a "do" or "do not do" moment. There is no grey area under the weight. Either the weight goes where you want it to go or it wins. You commit entirely to one effort, one moment. Success is sweet, defeat painful. Fighters know the payoffs all too well. You need to commit to every action, every plan with complete dedication. You focus on success.

Powerlifting builds precision. While to the outside world power lifting may seem simply brutish strength; the truth is powerlifting is highly technical. Fighting is similar. To many a cage fight is a street fight with better lighting.





**“POWER ATHLETES HAVE A HARMONY WITH THEIR MUSCLES, A COORDINATION TO GET EVERYTHING TO FIRE AT THE SAME TIME IN THE SAME DIRECTION. STRONG IS GOOD, BUT POWER CHANGES LIVES”**



Mike Reilly modeling the Sling Shot wrist wraps

But combat athletes study the art of combat. They are playing chess inside the cage. Granted it is violent, bloody chess — but chess all the same. Mindless brutes do not survive in side the steel or pushing heavy iron. Even the simple bench press requires a complex series of movements to be performed with precision to have success. The bench press is not much different then a right cross.

Powerlifting builds power. Many people have strong muscles, but getting those muscles to work together is a different story. Power athletes have a harmony with their muscles, a coordination to get everything to fire at the same time in the same direction. Strong is good, but power changes lives. Everything a fighter does is a multi-muscle movement. There is little to no use for fighters to work isolated muscle groups. Powerlifting focuses on pure functionality.

While the benefits of powerlifting are clear, the truth is most fighters cannot train solely like a powerlifter. Athletes need sport-specific training and while the weight room is a critical piece of the fighters puzzle, it is not the only piece. Fighters need to maximize their time in the weight room and get the most bang for their buck. Most true powerlifting training regiments will not work for fighters, so we need to fine-tune the routine to get most from the least amount of time.

## THE FIGHTERS’ POWERLIFTING ROUTINE

Twelve weeks out from a fight gives us nine good weeks to really build strength. Since the last three weeks before a fight the focus needs to be on weight management, sparring and sharpening technical precession, there is little time available for strength training.

We will create a three-lift-a-week PR-based routine that we repeat three times. Time in the weight room is limited to roughly 45 minutes. Each trip to the weight room will be to hit a PR and then perform two or three other balancing exercises. With each trip we want to get an optimal performance in our PR efforts, but you should be leaving the weight room ready to tackle or second or third training secession of the day. Day one will be power legs, day two power bench and day three dynamic lifts. I realize that, for powerlifters, this does not sound like much. However, coupled with six to eight hours of mat time, six to eight hours of mitt or bag work, 10 miles of road and hill work and three to five hours of plyometric circuit and another three to five of sparring/grappling, trust me it will be plenty.

## POWER LEGS

**EXAMPLES OF POWER LEGS PRS: SAFETY SQUAT, BULGARIAN SQUAT (THREE REPS), SQUAT,**

Day one of week one, my first lift would be towards a SRM with a safety squat bar. I like to start with a safety squat bar because it is safer. Okay, laugh all you want, but most fighters are not experienced lifters and do not have a lot of practice attacking SRMs. The Hatfield bar tends to be more forgiving then a regular bar. Plus most lifters are able to move more weight with the SSB then with a straight bar. I have found this helps young lifters become more focused and gain poise.

Day one of week two is almost the opposite experience, as Bulgarian squats tend to be humbling. However, since hip strength is so vital for fighters and Bulgarians tend to be so vicious, deep and nasty, fighters feel the effect for the rest of the week. That biting pain normal people find annoying, fighters find comforting. We attack a three-rep PR for this lift. Doing singles with Bulgarians can be risky.

Starting week three is the straight-up, plain old squat, because no one should live without squatting.

Balancing exercise include banded deadlifts with 50 percent SRM, leg extensions, calf raises, Roman chairs and standing abs.

## POWER BENCH

**BENCH FIVE REPS, BENCH THREE REPS, BENCH SRM.**


On average, fighters throw thousands of punches in any given week. Plyometric training, as well as bag work, jujitsu and wrestling, nearly everything a fighter does is a strain on elbows and shoulders. Show me a fighter without shoulder pain and I’ll show you a guy who needs to work harder. For this reason many fighters shy away from the bench press. The bench has also lost some of its status in the fitness world. The new gurus of fitness poo-poo the venerable bench press as old hat. They have tried to replace it with Kettlebells, machines and 200 different forms of push-ups. But the bench remains the critical lift for upper-body strength, a true multi-muscle mover based as much on technique as strength. However, even as highly as I value the bench press, I have been slow to prescribe it to fighters with shoulder issues (which is all of them). In this case I have my fighter pursue their PRs with the Sling Shot. The Sling Shot from Mark Bell gives new life to the bench press. The Sling Shot helps protect shoulders and elbows while keeping the lifter in perfect form. It allows even novice lifters to really focus on critical leg and back elements the bench press. For those lifting under 300 lbs. and whose focus will be on speed of lift as much as strength, I suggest the “reactive” model. This is a great design for doing multi-sets

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# OLYMPIC LIFTER TO POWERLIFTER

BY JESSE BURDICK

**W**hen I was first introduced to Max Aita, I had no idea who he was. I was told he was an Olympic lifter who wanted to powerlift. Then Max went on to tell me about all his injuries: in both shoulders he had a torn rotator cuff/sub acromial impingements/torn labrum. He had a hernia repaired and, after recovering, he jammed his wrist on a 175kg clean that dislocated the lunate bone. Unaware of this, he continued to train on it and snatched 130kg with the bone out of socket, which contributed to severe tendon and nerve damage. After surgeries and a lawsuit or two, the bone in his hand is completely gone.

Did he really talk in kilos? And how am I supposed to take this dude seriously while he is wearing those glasses? I explained to him what kind of a program I ran, how it could help him from an injury standpoint and how powerlifting could be a sport for him and when to come back. When Aita walked away that day, I really didn't think he would ever come back, let alone come back to gain 20 lbs. of muscle, squat an American record of 705 at 220, get new glasses and become a great training partner of mine.







## THE ROAD TO POWERLIFTING

Aita's road to powerlifting was interesting. He had been lifting since high school and, before landing broken and crying on my door step, had snatched 308, clean and jerked 374 in competition while weighing 206, and had racked up quite an impressive list of Olympic lifting coaches in the U.S. He started with Steve Gough in Montana, trained with James Smith in California, was coached by and lived with the former Bulgarian coach and Olympic lifting demigod Ivan Ibadjiev, and spent time with Jim Shmitz and Glenn Pendlay. This was all before the age of 27. But while getting exposure to all these great coaches, their brilliance and programming had left Aita practically broken. He could no longer Olympic lift.

I was trying to give a broken lifter a new chance on lifting while being up against a who's who list of badass coaches. So what did I do? I started Aita off just like I would anyone else. He grabbed a sled and stepped in line. He's a very smart guy and the best Olympic coach I have ever come into contact with. I knew that if I tried to give him the whole program, the big answer, it would come off as if I were trying to sell him something. Not only was I not trying to sell him something, after awhile I could actually see how talented he was. So I had to bring him along very slowly, one small thing at a time. I wanted him to learn it, believe it, feel it and see the difference a properly applied conjugate system style of training can have. I knew what I was up against. I did my best to stick to my guns and realize that it would take him time to make the switch.

## TRANSFORMATION

The difference in training was too great to expect a full transformation. I knew it would take time to break Aita of the habits Olympic lifting taught him, even though Aita was playing a different sport now. He was used to training six days per week, where he would squat up to eight separate times to a near maximum then do two to five down sets. He bench-pressed once per week and deadlifted up to four times per day sumo-only. This was low volume and intensity programming compared to the infamous Bulgarian Olympic lifting program.

Every Monday, Wednesday and Friday morning he performed front squats to three max singles, followed by a max power snatch and finished off with a power clean and jerk to max. Then after eat-

ing, sleeping and crying (I assume), would come back in the evenings to polish off a quick snatch, clean and jerk, and front squat workout. All movements were pushed to their all-out maxes and at times saw 10-plus misses at weights.

Aita's Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays were his "off" days, where he was allowed to perform the front squat, snatch, clean and jerk, and front squat again with 5 to 10 kilos less than the days before, and only had to do so for three singles. And he only had to do this twice a day.

What was I offering him? Four days a week, about an hour each, two of the days we didn't go very heavy and we very rarely did our actual competition lifts. I'm sure there were times where he was muttering underneath his beard that I was crazy to think this would ever work for anyone.

So what happened? Aita joined the team. For the first month I'm pretty sure we were still doing double days every day, but he was there, on time, and his eyes started to open. While he was with us he got coached, he was taught how to powerlift by a powerlifter, and shown how to lift with more efficiency and less pain. At the end of this, Aita did his first powerlifting meet. He squatted 605, benched 292 and deadlifted 605 all while wearing a singlet that was three times too small. Into the second month he had figured out that he needed to change something up, and he did. He kept improving and I kept showing him more and more about the system we ran, why it worked and why he was getting these results. After his second meet, which saw him squat 650, bench 313, and deadlift 639, and by the third month, he was sold. Aita was a powerlifter. I had stopped hearing stories of him squatting 500 for 30 in honor of his wife's birthday. He looked better, more rested, actually started to gain muscle. He had a back, hips and hamstrings, and his arms stopped looking like they were going to break. Most importantly, he was injury free, lifting heavier than he ever had and we had Aita's white whale in our sights: a 705-lb. raw squat.

## KILLING MOBY DICK

Coming in, Aita was a talented squatter with a best squat of 666. But to accomplish this, all he ever did was squat. Due to injuries to his shoulders and wrists, when Aita was squatting he couldn't get his hands on the bar. So he had to create what he dubbed "the poor man's safety squat bar." He wrapped straps around the bar so he could hold the wraps by his shoulders and squat. This also gave him the ability to squat more than 600 with no hands on the bar as well, a very important skill set and equally impressive resume booster. So, I had the job trying to make a squat specialist better





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while adding two lifts into the mix. What was the plan?

Training was business as usual, for the most part. After seeing Aita move under weight, a few things were made very clear and directed the focus of our training. First and foremost, he was a fast squatter and relied a lot on the whip of an Olympic bar to get him out of the hole. This led to some major sticking points when Aita was forced to use a non whip bar and squat to a box. He needed to find and build stability in the bottom while also learning to be even more explosive throughout the entire range of motion; the box squat was the perfect fit for him. So was accommodating resistance, especially chains where his midline stability was challenged and he was slowed down by the chains adding on more weight on as he ascended.

My idea was that we would get the most out of Aita's strengths

right away by focusing on his weaknesses opposed to playing to his strengths. We used lots of special bars, accommodating resistance and kept to heavy reps of three to five when a max effort squat was the move of the day. I wanted to force him to feel where he was going with his squat, and not just drop and bounce off the bottom. We also had to deal with Aita's need



to "feel" weight. I have heard this term used a lot in the weightlifting world and I feel that it has a lot to do with the technical aspect of any movement. Part of the training we do using the conjugate system, and why its so effective, is getting a "feel" of weight through different modalities and therefore not doing the same thing over and over again and burning ourselves out and getting injured. The moves we "tricked" Aita into getting a feel for that 700-plus lbs. on his back without beating him up were a reverse band squat, heavy chain squats and the use of bands on our speed days.

For his deadlift we did a lot of heavy sets of three to five reps in the good morning, both full-range and suspended at different difficult heights and deadlifted conventional for sets of three to five in the worst positions we could jam ourselves into. Aita's least favorite was the deficit deadlift against bands.

## AITA'S LOWER MOVEMENTS:

**Week 1:** Conventional deficit deadlift vs. bands. Two- to three-inch deficit against a light band for a triple.

**Week 2:** Suspended good-morning vs. lots of bands. We set the bar at a back angle similar to conventional starting position load of the bands, then load on the weight for five reps.

**Week 3:** Chain gang box squat. Work to 500 on the bar for a triple and then add a chain for single until fail or chains ran out.

**Week 4:** Raw sumo pull on 1-inch platform, work up to 600 for as many reps as possible.

**Week 5:** Full range good-morning with the spider bar vs. 200 lbs. of chain. I wanted him to walk it out and hit a heavy set of three.

**Week 6:** Reverse band squat. The goal here was to get Aita underneath his opener and 700-plus for two singles

For our dynamic squat waves we cut things down to two weeks due to travel and the fact that we found three weeks was too much when training raw.

## DE SQUAT WAVE:

**Week 1:** SSB box squat, no hands vs green bands 50% $\times$ 2 $\times$ 12.

**Week 2:** SSB box squats, no hands vs green bands 60% $\times$ 2 $\times$ 10.

**Week 1:** Texas power bar vs green and blue 40% $\times$ 2 $\times$ 4 45% $\times$ 2 $\times$ 2, 50% $\times$ 2 $\times$ 2.

**Week 2:** Texas power bar vs green and blue 50, 55% $\times$ 2 $\times$ 4, 60% $\times$ 1, 65% $\times$ 1.

**Week 1:** Giant cambered bar box squat 60% $\times$ 2 $\times$ 12.

**Week 2:** Giant cambered bar box squat 60% $\times$ 2 $\times$ 4, 70% $\times$ 2, 80% $\times$ 1, 90% $\times$ 1.

All lower body accessory work was concentrating on the hamstrings, glutes, lower back and abs. We would try and get five exercises in per day, but after awhile due to scheduling difficulties we switched things around a bit. We needed to get a lot of work in the least amount of time. So we picked one big exercise, like a stiff-leg deadlift and a "small" exercise like a band leg curl, and smashed them together for a big "as many reps as possible" set. The person doing the stiff-leg deadlift dictated the time and did as many reps as they could, all while the person doing the small exercise was repping away as well and doing two to three times the work due to the weight and complexity differential. After that we would use the same method for our abs and lower back. The exercises themselves changed from workout to workout and week to week. We would find our way back to some moves, but on the whole the constant change was refreshing.

The bench was easy. Since Aita never benched, anything we did was a huge improvement. So we kept it pretty simple, focused on form and started building up quality reps and habit in his press. One wrinkle we had to deal with was Aita's wrists. When he started, the biggest step forward was introducing him to wrist wraps. This finally allowed Aita to get a lot of reps in and handle the weights. When he started, the wrap would come on right away. But after awhile he would test it out and try to delay



putting on the wraps. There was actually one time when Aita was over 90 percent before he remembered he had forgot his wraps for the day.

We rotated between speed and repetition effort day on Mondays. This was to stay healthy and also get max as much volume and varied time under tension in as fast as we could. Keeping to similar ideals, we had our max effort stuff set up to get Aita to feel and get used to handling heavier weights. This was done by using the Sling Shot and accommodating resistance. For all of our accessory work, we blasted the lats, hammered the tris and killed the shoulders in the same fashion as we did for our lower body.

### DEB/REB

**Week 1:** Old-school speed 50-60% x 3 x 15

**Week 2:** 6x6 floor press with 60%

**Week 3:** Speed press vs chains, 2 chains per 50%ish x 3 x 10

**Week 4:** 3x5 at 60%, 3x5 at 70%

**Week 5:** Speed press vs. bands, x 3 x 12

**Week 6:** 3x3 at 70%, 3x6 with reactive SS at 70%

### MEB

**Week 1:** Chain press, 3-4 chains per add weight till 3 rep maxWk2 5 rep 2 board, 80% x amap

**Week 3:** Reverse green band

**Week 4:** 80% x3 off chest, red Sling Shot x heaviest single, 80% x amap

**Week 5:** Floor press vs. chains, 2-3 chain per add weight till max triple, chains off x amap

**Week 6:** Opener off chest, second attempt x 1 off one-board, third attempt off two-board

The result? In a little under nine months Aita got new glasses and his competition squat went from 605 to 705, bench from 292 to 313 and deadlift from 605 to 639. He set an American record with the squat and this is just the start. He's just getting started and he is a

powerlifter now, 100 percent. He is sold. In fact, Aita has taken some of the knowledge, methods and exercises from powerlifting and started to apply them to his Olympic lifting clients with great results. After his taste of success, he now has even bigger goals, believes in what he is doing and is motivated. His future is bright. **PM**

## "AITA HAS TAKEN SOME OF THE KNOWLEDGE, METHODS AND EXERCISES FROM POWERLIFTING AND STARTED TO APPLY THEM TO HIS OLYMPIC LIFTING CLIENTS WITH GREAT RESULTS"



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# Q&A

## HOW CAN I HELP YOU GET STRONGER?

BY MARK BELL

**Q:** Do you have any advice for someone competing in multiple sports? We follow a modified Westside and integrate event training when possible, but it seems like between rest periods and training days there just aren't enough sessions to cover them all. I'm trying to build a hybrid approach: Highland games, Strongman, powerlifting, Olympic lifting.

**A:** *Instead of trying to do everything all at once, you need to lift and separate, much like a push-up bra. Develop four- to eight-week block of the conjugate system to lead into each competition. Getting stronger and faster will translate to all your disciplines. Keep this in mind: The man who chases two rabbits goes home hungry. Have one focus, even if for only a small amount of time.*

*Another possibility is to break the training days up the way you need. I have seen success with ME one week, speed the next and more sports related stuff stuck in between. I have also seen people make the four-day program span eight days. So in this case, you'll go Monday, Wednesday, Friday, Sunday, Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday and so on. This method may allow you the freedom to introduce the things you think you need to work on.*

**Q:** What are some ways to help rehabilitate my biceps tendon? I have recently ordered a pair of heavy sleeves from Elitefts.com.

**A:** *First thing you need to get right is the range of motion, so doing light biceps curls and griddle extensions. Making sure your elbow is really locked out on both will help a lot. You will also need to look to your shoulder. How is your posture? Any forward and medial rotation can cause some biceps problems. Work on getting those shoulder blades together, opening your chest up and that end range of the elbow. For examples of those, jump on [www.mobilitywod.com](http://www.mobilitywod.com).*



**Q:** I need ideas on knee cartilage repair. I was told surgery will not help much. Ideas?

**A:** *Have you tried shark cartilage? Just kidding, but I've been around so long that I used to take that supplement. Have you followed [www.mobilitywod.com](http://www.mobilitywod.com)? It has great information, but in the mean time get the 42-inch multi-purpose wraps from [www.howmuchyabench.net](http://www.howmuchyabench.net) and wrap those knees up. Try to get some compression on your legs/knees and do some backward sled drags. After you have gone about two laps, pull the bands off and blood will flow like crazy to the injured area.*

**Q:** I need help building strength at the start of a raw conventional deadlift. I've been doing deficits. Anything I could be missing?

**A:** *You can be missing a few things. Training with a combo of bands and/or chains can attack the strength curve from some different angles and allow you to learn how to pull explosively. Also don't get too far away from straight weight and reps sets of three to five. Lastly, don't forget to check your form.*

Check out Mark Bell on Facebook to get more information on how to get stronger! **PM**



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# LAURÉN MITCHELL

**How old are you, where are you from and what are you wearing?** I am 25, from Santa Cruz California and wearing some blue velour lounge pants and a black V-neck kicking back enjoying the rainy beach weather.

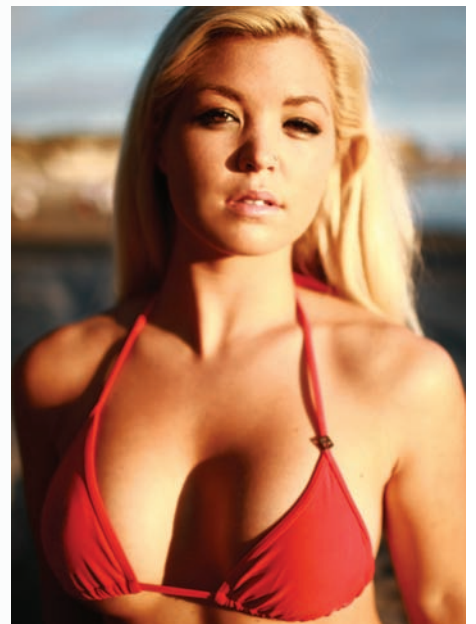
**Where do you train?** I am between gyms but I've trained at Hyde Park Gym in Austin, Texas, up until now. It's an awesome gym full of body builders, figure competitors, pro sports players, Olympic lifters, Strongmen and your local neighborhood folk. It is a wonderful community there and I miss it very much.

**Do you lift with other girls, or is it all guys?** I've trained primarily with the male population. I wish there were more women training powerlifting who live near me. I love all the women I've met in USAPL.

**Are you in school? Do you have a job?** I graduated from University of Texas in August, and I am seeking employment. Anyone want to offer me a job?

**How did you get involved in powerlifting?** A friend offered to train me in powerlifting over my winter break two years ago. I had been messing around with weight lifting and CrossFit for a while. I realized after a month passed that I had found something I loved that was both empowering and challenging. I was hooked and it took off from there.





**What do your “normal” friends think of how much you can lift?** It is a mixed bag, but generally everyone is really supportive and interested in what it is I do — the glory of picking things up and putting them down. Though several of them still are convinced I’m a bodybuilder, others have joined me for workouts and learned about what the sport actually consists of. A group of friends once lured me into the kitchen at a friend’s restaurant, where they insisted I bench press a small fellow on the prep table. I officially have a badass party trick.

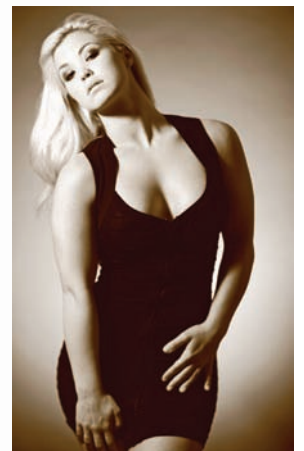
**When you go to a PL meet with a room full of men with massive levels of testosterone, do you feel like the center of attention?** I think anything that has a rack with heavy weight on it gets these fellas excited.

**Do you have a boyfriend?** Yes. He only likes me for my muscles.

**Do you remember the first time you out-lifted a boy? How did it make you feel?** Not specifically, but there is a long list of commentators who inform me that I’m stronger than they are. Some are impressed, others are offended. I’ve been told I’m on the wrong side of the gym (one guy tried to point me over to the elliptical machines). I’ve been informed that guys don’t like girls with arms that are bigger than theirs. Well, good, because I don’t go for guys who are smaller than me.

**Do you wear makeup to the gym?** I like to joke that I’m striving to be the Anna Kournikova of powerlifting. If I can’t get first place, I might as well look my best. Joking aside, makeup doesn’t make much sense in the gym. I’d rather surprise people outside the gym. I clean up all right.

**What do you have to say to women who don’t lift weights because they think they’ll get too big?** I hate this myth for so many reasons. When I first started training I actually leaned out and looked more shredded than ever before. People asked me if I was a gymnast all the time, and even skinny-fat girls were asking me how they could get my figure. It blew their mind that they could lift heavy and not get bulky. I think bulkiness has more to do with what



you eat and genetics. If you really want to see results, you have to lift, ladies! Not to mention the booty you get with powerlifts. Nationals was like a gosh darn ass convention.

**How has powerlifting helped you?** I have been greatly empowered by my involvement in powerlifting. Society tells women they need to conform to a certain body type in order to be beautiful. There have been times I fell into that kind of mindset. Powerlifting has taught me to embrace my shape and really push my body to the limit. When you squat, deadlift or bench that new personal record, you feel a body high like nothing else.

**What is your favorite lift?** I’m a squatting kind of gal.

**Tell me about your current best lifts.** In competition: squat 125 kg (275 lbs.), bench press 77.5 kg (170.5 lbs) and deadlift 125 kg (275 lbs.).

**What are some of your PL goals?** My current goal is to get an 800-lb. total, and to tune in my deadlift so I can really compete with the other competitors. Even though it has been two years, I feel like I’m only just starting, I have a lot more improving to do!

**Anything else you’d like to add?** I’m very grateful for all of my friends who have pushed me to be my best. I’ve lifted with USAPL and I can’t say enough about all the wonderful people I have met. Last but not least — thank you, Power. I feel like I’m an official powerlifter now! **PM**



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# MIKE O'HEARN

**What superhero power would you most like to possess?** I wish I could be a little more witty here, but I'm honestly thinking flying. L.A. traffic sucks.

**What is your idea of perfect happiness?** Dinner with mom and dad.

**What is your greatest fear?** To have to work a 9-to-5 job.

**What is the trait you most deplore in yourself?** That I keep forgetting to live in the moment. I hate that I can do something, or win something or be honored, and I pull myself out of that moment to think, Okay, what do I need to do next? I hate that.

**What is the trait you most deplore in others?** I guess you guys call them "haters." It's the people who have never done anything, or can't believe you have achieved anything out of hard work. They have to talk negatively about people.

**What is your greatest extravagance?** My dogs. There is no spending limit on them. Whatever they need, I provide. Yes, I know you're laughing, I probably provide a hell of a lot more than they actually need. But you asked, so shut up.

**What is your current state of mind?** Diet, diet, diet! Oh, shit! Gotta be ready!

**On what occasion do you lie?** Any time I'm asked personal questions. Not too comfortable with talking about that stuff.

**What do you most dislike about your appearance?** I could definitely use some shoulders, so I could stop having to use coat hangers to hold my shirts up.

**What do you most value in your friends?** I value the passion they have for life, and how they treat me like family, rather than a friend.

**What or who is the greatest love of your life?** My mom and dad. More love for them than anybody I've ever met. If you're talking about a significant other, then that's my dog, Bunny.

**When and where were you happiest?** When I shot my T.V. show "Battledome." My mom and dad were there to see it. It wasn't so much because of the show, it was what my father said to me after the show.

**If you could change one thing about yourself, what would it be?** Again, to live more in the moment, to enjoy the day-to-day things.

**What do you consider your greatest achievement?** Being inducted into the Hall of Fame so young, and doing this "fitness world" my way and never caving in.

**What is your most treasured possession?** My dog, Bunny.

**What is your most marked characteristic?** My real life superhero look, as well as my outgoing, silly personality.

**Which historical figure do you most identify with?** William Wallace. He believed in something and fought for it, and would not stop until it either happened, or he was killed.

**What is your greatest regret?** I moved to California when I was young, so I missed out on a lot of time with my dad and mom.

**Which talent would you most like to have?** The ability to eat what ever I want and stay as ripped as I am.

**What is your motto?** You're so much stronger than you think. Don't let your mind fool you.

**Which living person do you most admire?** Robert Redford. He's accomplished so much in his field, but he has done so much more outside of it, helping others. I would have said Paul Newman, but you can add that in there for someone who has passed.

**Who is your favorite hero of fiction?** Superman.

**If you were to die and come back as a person or thing, what do you think it would be?** Me again. Life rocks!

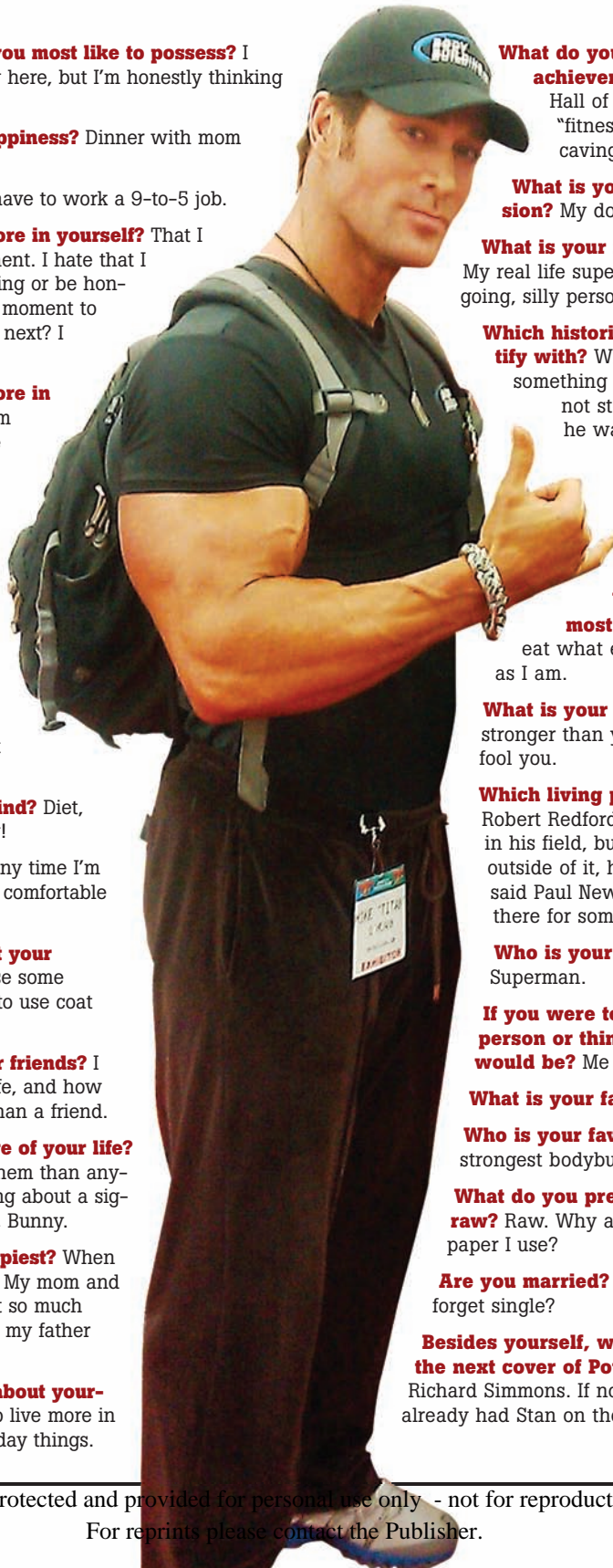
**What is your favorite movie?** Braveheart.

**Who is your favorite lifter?** Stan Efferding, strongest bodybuilder.

**What do you prefer: single-ply, multi-ply or raw?** Raw. Why are you asking me what toilet paper I use?

**Are you married? In a relationship?** Did you forget single?

**Besides yourself, who would you like to see on the next cover of Power?** You guys won't do it, but Richard Simmons. If not, I will assume that you already had Stan on there, so put Johnny Jackson.





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