

BIG BENCHING WITH ROBERT WILKERSON

POWER

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2010

BOBBY LASHLEY

UNLEASHED

LOG PRESS TRAINING

By Karl Gillingham

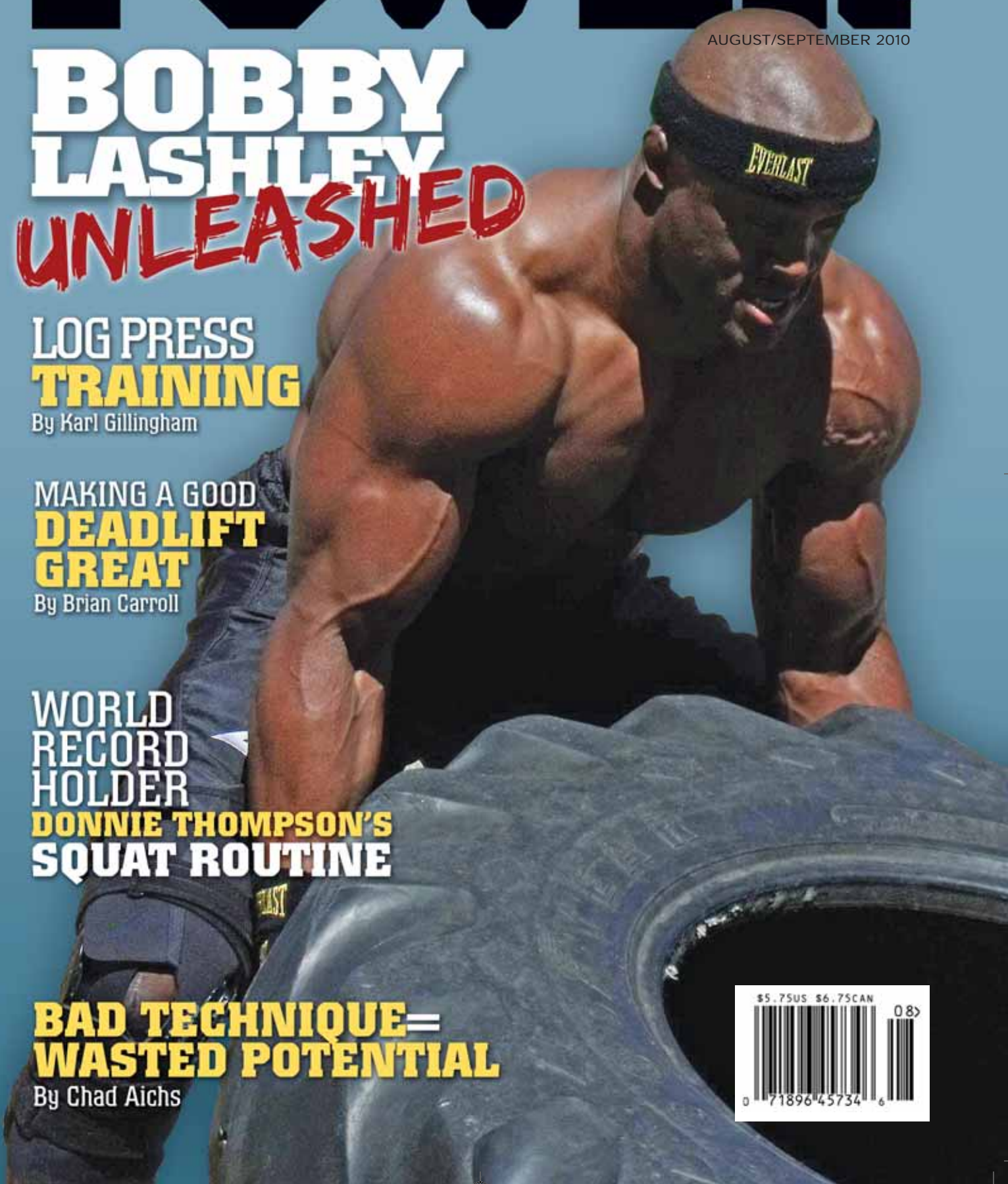
MAKING A GOOD DEADLIFT GREAT

By Brian Carroll

WORLD RECORD HOLDER DONNIE THOMPSON'S SQUAT ROUTINE

BAD TECHNIQUE= WASTED POTENTIAL

By Chad Aichs

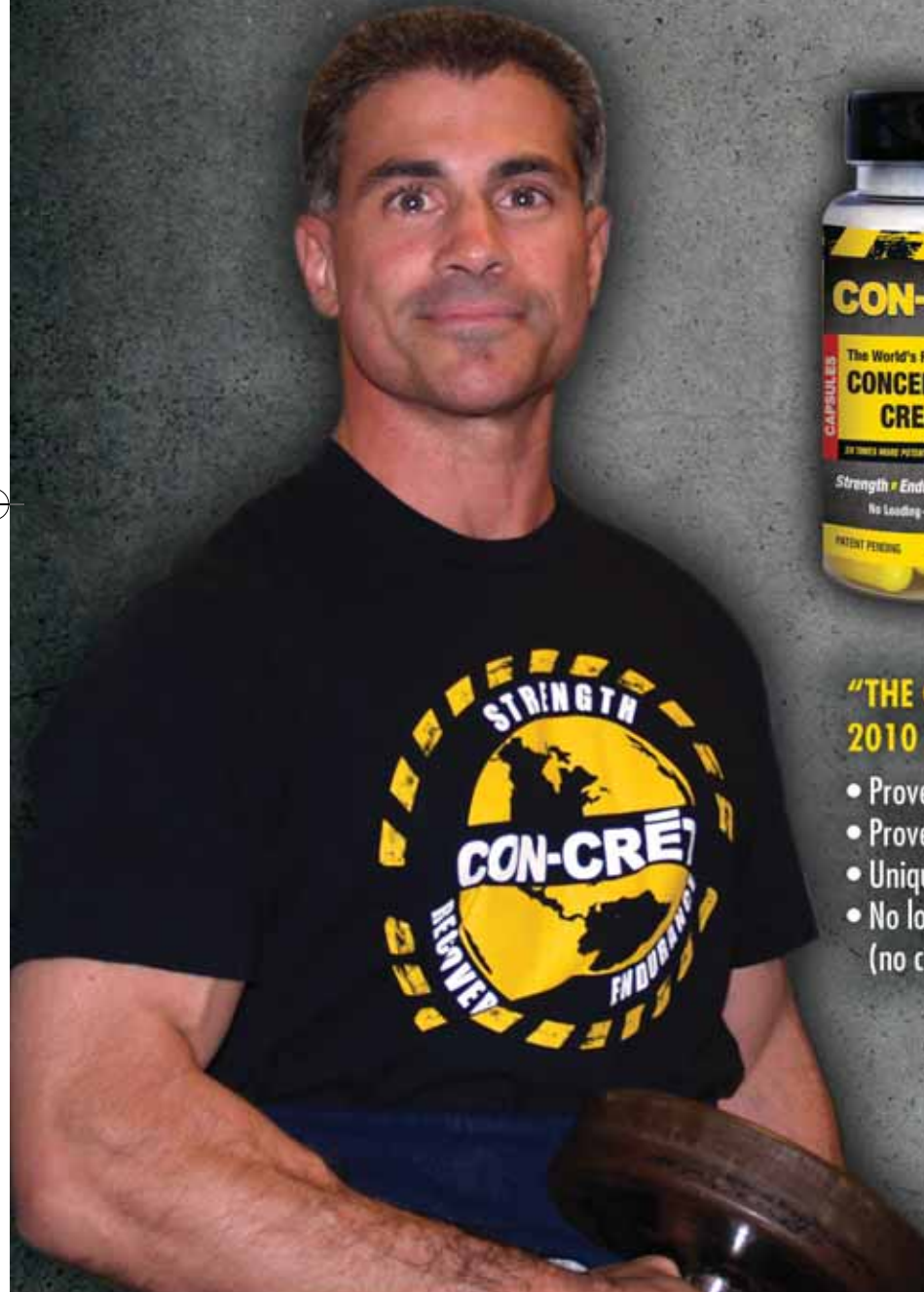


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FIRST WORD



I'm excited to announce that I'm going Down Under in October to do a Power seminar in Australia. The main topic I'll cover is ... myself.

Speaking of myself, I should be on the cover of Power some time, don't you think? I'm just messing with you. I'm not Oprah.

In other news, my six-year-old, Jake, has finished kindergarten, learned how to ride a bike, jump off a diving board, swim and earn money. My little girl, Q, age 2, says, "Girls don't have pee pees, they have extra butt cracks." Kind of awesome to have all that going on at the same time. As I write this, on Father's Day, know that your mom and I are so proud of you, Jake and Quinn!

This issue of Power has Chad Aichs roaring out "T E C K N E E K K" louder than Tony Little on an infomercial. When a 385-lb. lumberjack-looking dude with a near 1,200-lb. squat speaks, I think you'd better listen. Aichs drops some nuggets of info. that may help add pounds to your lifts in just one day.

Allow "Kong," aka Robert Wilkerson, to give you the "Assistance" your bench needs to get you to the next level. Getting advice from a guy who can bench more than 625 lbs. any day of the week and twice on Sunday will help any lifter slap poundage on to their bench.

Mike Tuchscherer tells you about how to stay on "TRAC" with a unique style of finding the optimal time to push yourself by testing your nervous system on the floor and on a computer. I'm serious.

My homie, Jesse Burdick, gives you a simple lower body warm up workout that'll prime you for a great workout.

The chick that'll "kick your ass" this month is Natalie Freed. She is only a buck and a quarter but she can pick up over 300 lbs. Wait, I bet a few of you guys reading this right now weigh about 300. Hmmm.

I'm excited to introduce all you Power readers to Bobby Lashley, former NCAA collegiate wrestling champion, WWE former champion and current Strike Force MMA title contender. I first met him in Louisville when I thought I was cool enough to become a big-time wrestler. Lashley's frame tells you he's made out of something different than the rest of us. He stands at 6 feet, 3 inches and weighs 260 lbs. — and if you find an ounce of fat on him, you are staring way too long. Lashley is a phenom with a pedigree that would make a championship racehorse shake his head. He is brutally strong, routinely smashing on 600-lb. deadlifts, 500-lb. bench presses, 50-rep sets of pull-ups and hundreds of pushups. Find out how a bank robbery changed Lashley's life.

Need to know how to press a giant log over your head? Your search ends here, with Karl Gillingham's article that outlines how to log press.

"Big D" Donnie Thompson is one of the strongest humans to ever walk this planet. He has a 2,905-lb. total to his credit. Notice I didn't say under his belt. With a name like "Big D," I'd rather keep things above the belt. He gives insight into how he plans to crush the all-time squat record of 1,250 lbs. Thompson says this brutal squat routine, if you're man enough to survive it, will add 100 lbs. to your squat.

As I write this, Sling Shot production is almost complete. I dedicate this project to my brother, Maddog Mike Bell. May you rest in peace knowing your baby brother is pressing forward and carrying out his hopes and dreams and the plan we all used to talk about.

Sling Shots will be sold at www.HowMuchYaBench.net and www.SuperTrainingGym.com

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER.

Mark Bell
Editor-at-Xtra-Large



POWER

MAGAZINE

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2010

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Rob Luyando
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Joe Mazza
IPA World Record Bench
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Vlad Alhazov
World Record Squat
1,250 lbs. @ SHW

Ryan Kennelly
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WR 1,075 lbs. @ 308 lbs.

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Jeremy Hoornstra
World Record "Raw" Bench
615 lbs. @ 242 lbs.



Brian Schwab
World Record Total
2,045 lbs. @ 165 lbs.



Shawn Frankl
World Record Total
2,630 lbs. @ 198 lbs.



Joe Cekiovsky
World Record Bench
600 lbs. @ 147.6 lbs.

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CONTENTS

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2010 • ISSUE #5

FEATURES



28

COVER STORY

Bobby Lashley Unleashed!

Michele Cogger Atkinson interviews Strikeforce MMA sensation Bobby Lashley. As a former collegiate wrestler and WWE Champion, Lashley has an interesting story as to how he became the athlete he is today. He also happens to be strong as hell! See where he came from and where he is heading...perhaps a fight with Brock Lesnar is in his future?



18

Choosing the Right Bench Accessories

Robert "Big Wilk" Wilkerson tells us the secret to his huge 625 raw bench: Accessory training!



34

This Isn't Your Daddy's Squat Routine

World Record holder Donnie Thompson takes us step by step into the five-week squat routine that got him to his 1,225 lb. squat. You may want to take notes!



20

Listen Up! Can you hear what your body is saying?

Mike Tuchscherer gives us some instruction on how to "listen to your body" by performing a series of tests that allow you to "hear" your body better.



38

Log Press Training

Strongman Karl Gillingham gives us tips and techniques for mastering one of the hardest Strongman events.



22

Westside Without Gear?

Becky Rich from Wild Iron Gym discusses her personal experience with using the Westside method as a drug-free, raw lifter.



42

Making a Good Deadlift Great

Brian Carroll breaks down how he took his deadlift from the 700s to consistently over 800 lbs.

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Rob Luyando - Team MHP Member
World Record Bench Press
909 lbs. @ 275 lbs.

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CONTENTS



COLUMNS

16
**This Chick Can Kick Your Ass...
And You May Like it!**

42
Lower Body Dynamic Warm Up

46
Chad Aichs talks Technique

50
**Get to Know...
Donnie Thompson**

DEPARTMENTS

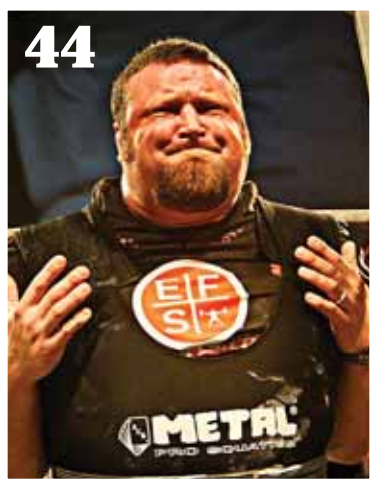
4
First Word with Mark Bell

12
Mailbag

14
Out and About

48
New Products

49
What's Next/Ad Index





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To the Editor:

I got the new cover. It looks so cool. I really like it. Very good magazine! Thanks for everything. I read past issues and really like them, good stuff. It's a very interesting and professional magazine. I'm glad to be in *Power*. The Ed Coan DVD is good, too. I learned a lot from Ed Coan.
Konstantins Konstantinovs
via email

To the Editor:

I got my *Power* magazine and at first was a little disappointed when I saw how thin it was. But when I started reading it I was like, hell yeah — this is the kind of information I want to read about. Loved Konstantins Konstantinovs's view of man against steel with nothing helping you out, although I wish he would come to the Andy Bolton challenge and at least set a raw record.

Then that pain management article from Donnie Thompson was priceless. It needs to be put onto a DVD! The discussion between Hoss and Burdick was pretty funny. I would say I am somewhere in between those two. I think foam rollers, dynamic warm ups, and mobility drills suck; I tried all that crap and it didn't work. I found that doing the less of everything has reduced my strains tremendously.

Jeff H.
via email



To the Editor:

As one of your older, fatter subscribers, I would like to know why I never received my issue with Chuckie V. on the cover? Was it because I'm old or was it because I'm fat? Perhaps both, plus you thought I would never remember that I never got the magazine because I'm so ... what was I talking about?

Whatever the reason, I ask that a copy be delivered by Pony Express or the next fastest way. And please remove all the pictures of Mark Bell's face before sending it out. I want to be able to insert pictures of my face on his body so I can say I'm in a magazine. Thank you for your kind attention to this matter.

OFD
via email

To the Editor:

I just wanted to drop a line and tell you what a good job you did on the June/July issue. I subscribed because I saw that Donnie Thompson would be having an article in it, and I am glad I did. His article was quite timely for me (I'm battling some knee pain while getting ready for my first meet). The Konstantins profile was very, very well done. There wasn't a single article that was not worth my time, and the content-to-ad ratio is outstanding. I

have had the issue in my hands for less than 12 hours, and I have already read it all of the way through and have told a few other people about it. I am already looking forward to the next issue. Thanks for putting out such a great product!

J.Ja
via www.thepowermagazine.com

To the Editor:

Another great issue, Andee and Mark! Have always admired Konstantins and that was a sensational cover shot and article.



Continued success with this mag. The Facebook page is tremendous, I had honestly forgotten that it was there.

If you don't mind, I have a recommendation for a future issue. How about Matt Kroczaleski? Kroc is a record-holding

powerlifter in Michigan who recently won a state bodybuilding show (won his class to qualify for national level). He is competing in PL this year and going for Jr. Nationals BB in 2011. A true athlete and super guy, also. He is on Facebook under Matthew Kroczaleski. I know he would make an inspirational interview.

Gerry
via www.thepowermagazine.com

To the Editor:

Just found *Power* at my local Barnes and Noble, and it's phenomenal! I will be ordering a subscription and the back issues I missed.

I imagine it's a long shot, but just wondered if the first issue be offered in hard copy again?

Dave P.
via www.thepowermagazine.com

The Editor replies:

Thanks, Dave. We are thinking about re-releasing the premier issue as a special supplement sometime in the near future. We'll keep you posted via www.thepowermagazine.com.

To the Editor:

Thanks for *Power*. I've been anxiously waiting for it and have been rushing to the mailbox each day for the last two weeks. I really like the magazine, especially the variety — there have been articles about Strongman and raw lifting, in addition to the gear-orientated articles.

Travis W.
via email

To the Editor:

I would like to say, first off, that my wife and I love your magazine. Almost five years in powerlifting, we're always hungry for more

Send us your comments, suggestions, gripes or whatever. We would love to hear from you. Submit your questions for Power's staff and advisory board at www.thepowermagazine.com



Eleanora Reeves

about our favorite sport. I always drop your magazine in the gym magazine rack when we're finished with it to share it with others.

I don't know if it is going to be a monthly thing or not with your magazine, but we loved your story on power babe Thelma in this past issue. With that said, I would like you to meet my 50-year-old power babe wife, Eleanora (aka E-Girl Reeves).

Eleanora has been competing for about five years, taking off a year to do a figure show to celebrate turning 50. She took four of six divisions as the oldest competitor there, going against other ladies in their 20s and 30s. She dropped 58 lbs. total to do this show and placed first in their novice class, first in the open class, first in the masters over 40 class, and took the win in the overall class.

Not to worry, though. She's not lost to figure. She's back to her

powerlifting roots. She's back on the platform breaking records again as a raw and geared lifter. I would like to mention that E-Girl has no athletic background and started powerlifting at 44! She is a two-time World/National champion and holds many national, American and state championships and records.

Her best geared numbers are a 420-lb. squat, 245-lb. bench press and 385-lb. deadlift, pulling 400 to knees in April 2010. Best raw numbers are a 260-lb. squat, 180-lb. bench press and 328-lb. deadlift. All drug-tested.

I hope you consider E-Girl as a candidate for one of your issues.

Tim Reeves, proud husband
via email

The Editor replies:

When we started this column, we had no idea it would be so popular! We have been flooded with nominees from husbands and training partners about the "hot chicks" in their lives. Keep them coming! We have our hot chick judges, aka Mark Bell and Stan Efferding, hard at work selecting the hottest chicks for this section.

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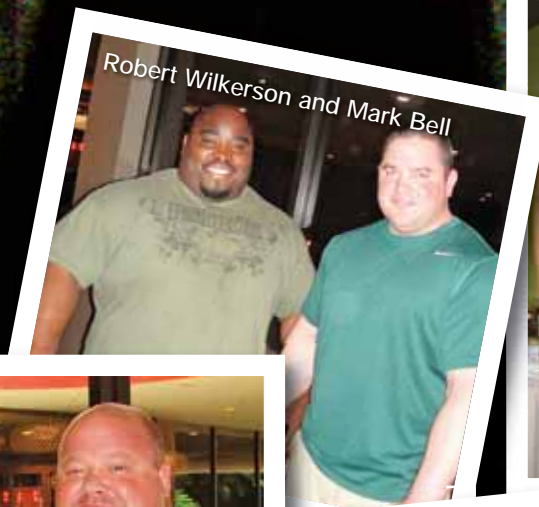
<p>Bench Shirts Super Katana Bench Shirt Katana Bench Shirt F6 Bench Shirt Fury Bench Shirt *Single and Multi-ply</p>	<p>Squat Suits BOSS Squat Suit Super Centurion Squat Suit Centurion Squat Suit Superior Squat Suit *Standard or Custom available</p>	<p>Deadlift Suits Titan Velocity Deadlift Suit Titan NXG Deadlift Suit Titan Superior Deadlift Suit Centurion NXG + *Sumo and Conventional</p>	<p>Essentials Titanium Wraps THP Wraps Max RPM Wraps Red Devil Wraps *Knee and Wrist Wraps</p>
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OUT AND ABOUT

SPF Nationals in Nashville, TN



Joe Jester and David Hoff



Robert Wilkerson and Mark Bell



Matt Smith loading up at the buffet



Separated at birth?
Jack Kottwitz and Hoss Cartwright



The one and only Louie Simmons



Mark and Chris Bell



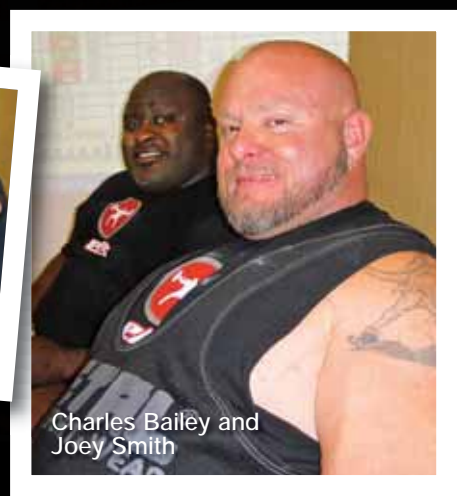
Charles Bailey



Jack Kottwitz and Mark Bell



Tony Balogne and Matt Smith



Charles Bailey and Joey Smith



Robert Wilkerson



Mark Bell jokingly checks David Hoff's bench shirt



Mark Bell and Louie Simmons



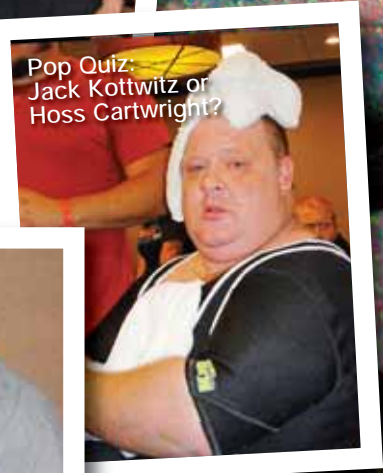
Dana Shealey



Jake "Candy Man" Anderson and AJ Roberts



Mark Bell, Chris Giatano of House of Pain and Jim McDonald



Pop Quiz: Jack Kottwitz or Hoss Cartwright?



Priscilla Ribic and Mark Bell



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

Natalie Freed

Power is pleased to introduce Natalie Freed, a hot powerlifting chick that hails from Pittsburgh, PA. She may look 12 years old, but we assure you we have checked her ID and she is in fact over 18...so enjoy!

POWER: How old are you, where are you from and what are you wearing?

Natalie Freed: I'm 24, from Pittsburgh, PA., and I'm wearing (hmm ... sorry!) my gym clothes. Ironic, right? A black t-shirt and soccer shorts.

PM: How do you maintain a great body while still lifting weights that would crush your average man?

HERE ARE SOME OF NATALIE'S BEST COMPETITION LIFTS:

Raw:	Single-Ply:
209-lbs. Squat (114-lb. class)	300-lbs. Squat (123-lb.class)
165.3-lbs. Bench (123-lb.)	203-lbs. Bench (114-lb.)
314.2-lbs. Deadlift (123-lb.)	325-lbs. Deadlift (114-lb.)
672.4-lbs. Total (123-lb.)	777-lbs. Total (114-lb.)

NF: It's pretty basic: I hardly ever miss workouts and eat bland and boring (aka healthy and clean!) food. I like to run every once in a while, too.

PM: What do you have to say to women who don't lift weights because they think they'll get bulky.

NF: I'd tell them they're wrong (in a nice way). Sure, it's possible to get bulky if you want to, but I don't think that's really something that happens without intent. As we all know, more muscle burns more fat!

PM: What's your secret when it comes to diet? It's rare to see a girl with abs.

NF: To those of you looking for a magical quick fix, sorry! I cook my own food, no salt, nothing processed about 90 percent of the time, and I obsessively keep a notebook of what I eat. And, maybe throw in some super-freaky genetics. That couldn't hurt!

PM: Does squatting in a tight thong give you any support out of the hole of a deep squat?

NF: Shhh! Don't give away my secrets!

PM: How many sports bras do you need to wear for speed squats?

NF: You may want to refer to a picture of me. Believe it or not, they're real! Just one sports bra does the trick.

PM: How did you get involved in powerlifting?

NF: I spent some time in the hospital after fracturing my neck and back. When I got done with rehab, I decided lifting heavy stuff would be great! (Obviously.) Also, for the hot bench bellies.





How did it make you feel?

NF: It made me smile. I'm sure he didn't think it was so funny.

PM: Do you wear make up to the gym?

NF: Yeah, and I wear a matching jumpsuit that matches my gym bag. Not! If I hap-

PM: When you go to a powerlifting meet with a room full of men with massive levels of testosterone, do you feel like the center of attention?

NF: I'm going to give this one a definite "no." When I'm in a room of giant men squished into tiny squat suits, etc., they usually pay more attention to each other. For that matter, I usually lift so early at a meet that it's common for a lot of people to not be there yet!

PM: Do you have a boyfriend?

NF: Not right now. Please send applications to ... (I'm totally kidding.)

PM: Do you remember the first time you out-lifted a boy?

pen to have makeup on already, sure. If not, forget it.

PM: What are some of your powerlifting goals?

NF: It would be cool to have a 2x body weight bench. I already deadlifted 3x body weight a few years ago, which was fun. A respectable squat would always be great!

PM: As a fitness competitor, how does powerlifting help you?

NF: I don't compete in fitness. But since lots of people are under the impression that I already do, I guess it would help.

PM: What's next for you?

NF: I'm actually thinking about doing a Pump 'N Run bench press for reps and then a 5K run. (Earmuffs, boys! I'm talking about cardio!) **PM**

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Model: Kristyn Nicole wearing Skull-Heart T.
Photo: Custom Images Photography

CHOOSING THE RIGHT BENCH ACCESSORIES

BY ROBERT WILKERSON

The age-old question we all ask is, “What can you do to increase your raw bench?” If you are like me, even though I bench over 600 lbs. raw, I still do research and ask other powerlifters about what has helped them increase their bench press.

Based on my research, I believe accessories are the key to improving any lift. Most novice lifters do not understand the importance of accessory movements, which increase balance, strengthen weaknesses and promote recovery. The best formula for this is the “K.I.S.S.” method: Keep It Simple, Stupid.

Take the bench press. It’s not a very complex movement, but it requires a lot of technique and incorporates different muscle groups. The problem many lifters run into is the dreaded plateau; their bench doesn’t want to move 5 lbs. — or worse, it goes down 5 or 10 lbs. This is where lifters lose their minds and think they need to do more sets of bench or bench heavy two or three times a week.

The key to breaking this plateau is incorporating the accessory work needed to get the bench moving in the right direction. This means take a new approach to training and having fun, because powerlifters should enjoy what they are doing before they make gains.

Secondly, lifters must understand their bodies by understanding their weaknesses and imbalances, and then attack them every chance they get. The final step is to get other core lifts stronger, like the military press, which incorporates many of

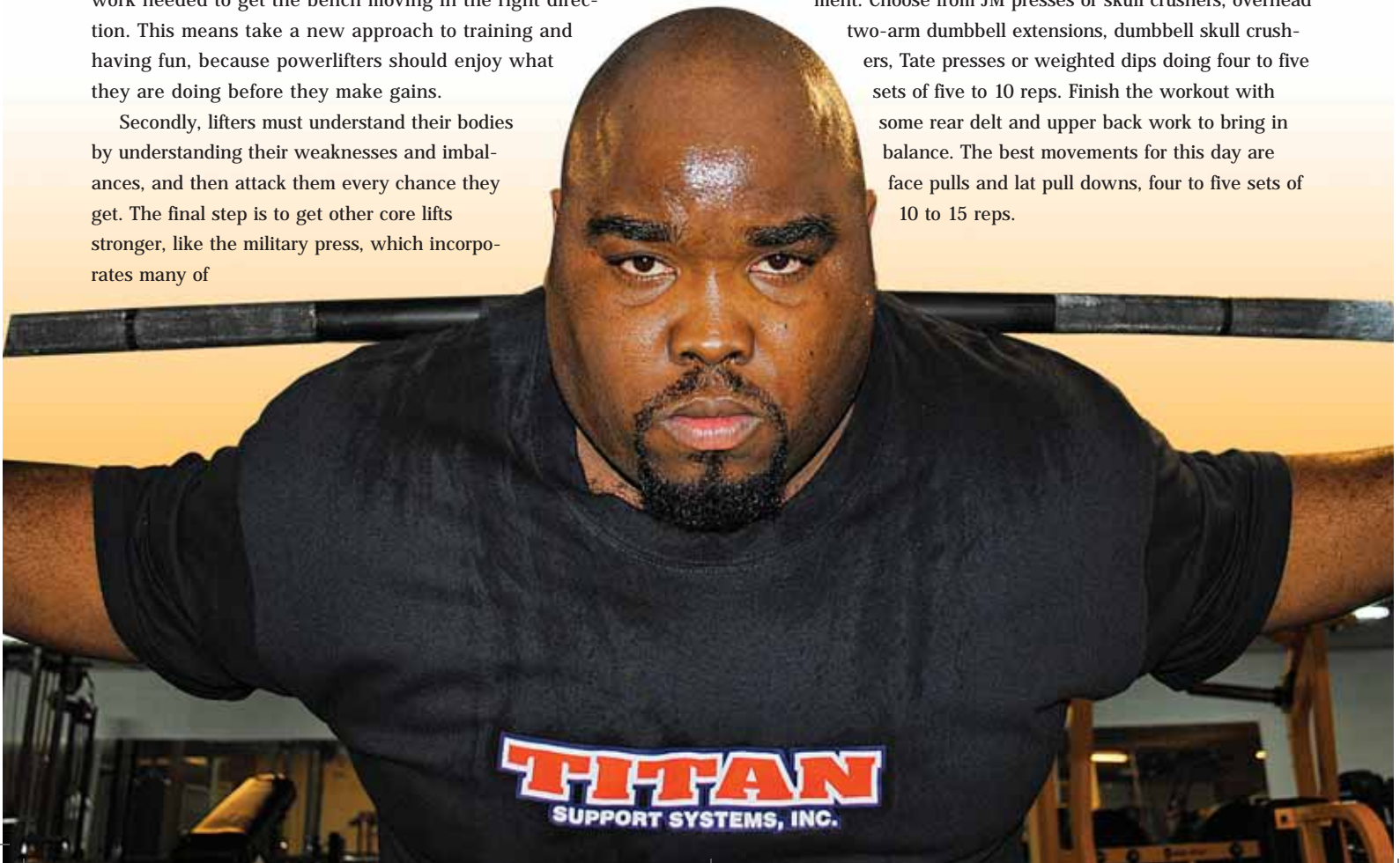
the same muscles as the bench and eventually adds pounds to the bench press.

SIMPLE, COMPOUND AND EFFECTIVE

The way to bring up weaknesses is to attack with simple, compound and effective accessory movements. The key word here is simple, because we all have a tendency to pick pointless or lazy exercises. The simplest way to incorporate this is to designate your ME (max effort) bench/heavy upper day and DE (dynamic effort) bench/upper accessory day. On your ME bench day, focus on heavy press movements and heavy triceps, then finish upper back and rear delts work after ME exercise.

First, pick one of these pressing movements: incline barbell, close grip full range, close grip floor presses, or close grip two- or three-board presses and do four to five sets of three to five reps.

Second, pick one barbell and one dumbbell heavy triceps movement. Choose from JM presses or skull crushers, overhead two-arm dumbbell extensions, dumbbell skull crushers, Tate presses or weighted dips doing four to five sets of five to 10 reps. Finish the workout with some rear delt and upper back work to bring in balance. The best movements for this day are face pulls and lat pull downs, four to five sets of 10 to 15 reps.





“Lifters must understand their bodies by understanding their weaknesses and imbalances, and then attack them every chance they get”

The DE bench upper accessory day is when you focus on imbalances and weaknesses your upper body may have after speed bench. On DE/upper accessory days, focus on working the entire upper body. This is the heavy shoulders and upper back workout, and an extra chest and arm workout. Compound and finisher exercises for the shoulders and back are to be performed. The best movements for shoulders are military press, front, side and rear laterals, face pulls, upright rows and shrugs using dumbbell, kettle bells or a barbell. The best movements for the upper back are Kroc rows/dumbbell rows, chest supported rows, seated cable rows, T-Bar rows, hammer rows, pull-downs with different grips, and pull ups.

Focus on building muscle and balance. The best way to do this is to pick one compound and one accessory for each body part and finish with rear delts. For the chest, do dumbbell movements like high-rep dumbbell incline or flat, three- or four-board work for high reps, high rep triceps pushdowns or light dumbbell extensions and hammer curls to work the biceps. The sets and reps depend on strength levels, but for beginners start with four to five sets of five to 15 reps on the com-

pound movements and on finishers three to five sets of 15 to 20 reps. The key to breaking that plateau is taking a new approach to training. Recognize your imbalances and weaknesses and get your core lifts stronger. And most importantly, add accessory work! It's the only way to reach your full potential in your bench press. Train hard. **PM**





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Listen Up!

Can you hear what your body is saying?

BY MIKE TUCHSCHERER

Have you ever wondered why certain training protocol might be extremely difficult for one athlete, leaving him wrecked for over a week, but to another athlete, it may be easy? Of course, it's dependant on a huge number of factors from work capacity, energy systems, fundamental capability, fatigue tolerance and so on. How do you find out which athlete you are and, more importantly, which way you should train? For that, you've got to be able to train according to your body's needs.

LISTEN CLOSELY

There's some trouble with the whole "listen to your body" concept, if you ask me. I agree that it's great in principle, but in application it often falls apart and athletes use it as an excuse to be lazy.

"Listening" can be difficult to do, especially when the body speaks in whispers and we are hard of hearing.

For the past couple of years, the Reactive Training System research and development team has been working on a "megaphone" for the body so it's easier for athletes to read its signals. The Reactive Training System as a whole is centered around the law of individual differences, but this megaphone takes it a giant step forward.

We call it TRAC, which stands for Training Recovery Assessment Computer. It is composed of a series of tests lasting about 10 minutes. These tests are performed first thing in the morning when you wake up and require only your home computer. TRAC software analyzes the tests and generates a report that indicates how much

Tuchscherer doing the Reaction Time portion of the TRAC test



stress the body is under, the status of its central nervous system and the level of adaptive reserves.

What does this have to do with listening to your body? TRAC amplifies what your body is “saying” to a higher degree. And it also removes the subjectivity and consequently the laziness from your training. On the flip side, it will tell athletes clearly when they are overtraining or when their CNS is spent. It even provides recommendations on how to modify training based on TRAC scores.

BUILDING AN EFFICIENT MACHINE

During some TRAC software trials, it became apparent that people have varying skill levels when it comes to subjectively listening to their body. This much you would probably guess. But what surprised us was that high-level powerlifters aren’t necessarily good at knowing how their bodies respond to the training.

In my training, the TRAC system allowed me to train more efficiently. While it wasn’t absolutely required to improve, when I did use it and followed its suggested protocol, I improved more. This sped up my gains and improved my recovery. It also taught me to keep my GPP training within appropriate limits. This made sure I got better, but didn’t drain myself for main training sessions.

PITCHING TO THE CHOIR

If you think this is a sales pitch for TRAC, you’re not totally wrong. But consider that the tool was initially developed for my team and me to be the primary users. We developed it because it

was something we wanted to use. There are other products out there that can perform similar functions, so it’s not like we have the market cornered on this technology. However, we have a surprisingly accurate and inexpensive means to assess the recovery of our bodies — one that greatly enhanced our training productivity. We want to share it with the world.

SOME NUTS AND BOLTS

TRAC works like this: You perform a few short tests when you first wake up in the morning: the orthostatic, reaction time and tap tests.

The orthostatic test measures differences in your heart rate due to changes in posture. You start the test lying on the floor and stand up after the “resting” portion. Heart rates are taken at various points during the test and entered into the computer.



Tuchscherer is beginning the Orthostatic portion



Tuchscherer doing part 2 of the Orthostatic portion

Next is the reaction time test. Reaction time is determined based on a five-trial reaction time test.

Then the tap test measures how many times you can tap the spacebar in 10 seconds. Some of you may be familiar with a low-tech version of the tap test, but it’s important to note that we believe there is more to it than just how many taps you get. The variance in tap intervals and the number of pauses in tapping are also important to the overall picture.

Data from reaction time tests and tap tests are automatically entered into the data entry page. Then the software on the website “gets to know” you and makes a determination based on your results instead of a static database.

As a whole, the battery of tests takes about 10 minutes to perform and requires no special equipment other than a computer and Internet access.

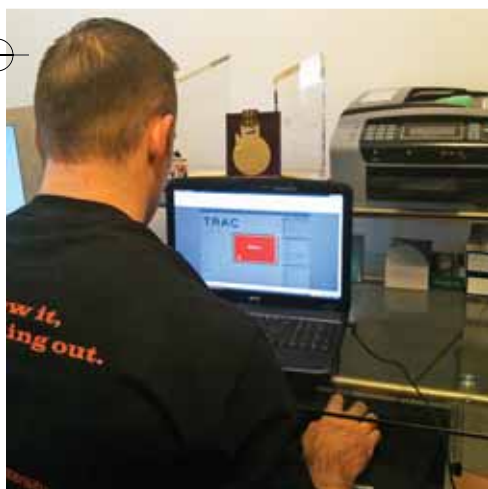
LISTEN UP

If you are the type of person who trains to get in better shape, you probably don’t need TRAC. But if you are a competitive athlete, especially if you’re interested in pushing your limits, inefficiencies like technique flaws and nutritional habits have to be tuned. TRAC is a tool you can use to make sure that you don’t have wasted potential. It’s a high quality test to help you stay on task and avoid overtraining — and it’s based on physiological inputs, not speculation.

If you’d like to learn more about TRAC, please visit the Team RTS section of our website at www.ReactiveTrainingSystems.com. **PM**

Mike Tuchscherer owns Reactive Training Systems, a company dedicated to individualized physical training. The goal of RTS is to help athletes become a dominant force in their sports. Learn more by visiting www.ReactiveTrainingSystems.com.

Mike is an accomplished powerlifter. He has more than 12 years of experience training and researching the best training methods in the world. He has competed in raw and single-ply competitions. He won the Gold medal representing the USA at the 2009 World Games, becoming the first American male to ever win this distinction. His best lifts in IPF competition are a 903-lb. squat, a 644-lb. bench press, an 826-lb. deadlift and a 2,342-lb. total in the 275-lb. weight class.



Tuchscherer doing the Tap Test portion

Westside Without Gear?

Can Westside be Beneficial for a Raw, Drug-Free Lifter?

BY BECKY RICH

When I was in college, the athletic trainer at school let me borrow a couple of Louie Simmons VHS tapes. In the six months it took me to remember to give those tapes back, I think I learned that I should do more skull crushers and that sitting on a box was important. Needless to say, I'd missed the big picture.

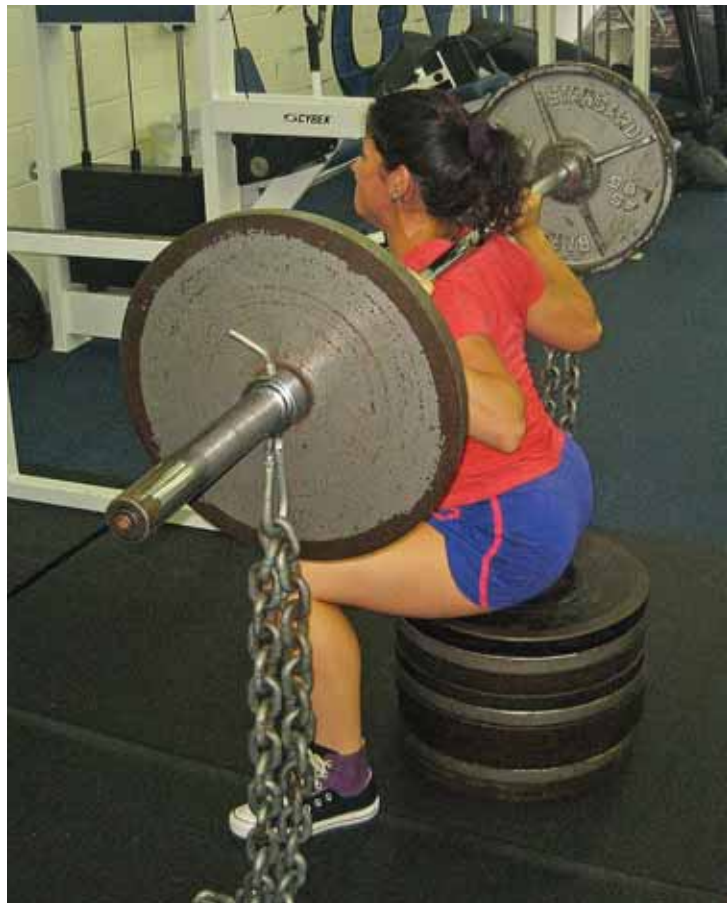
Fast-forward almost a decade. Thanks to my team and the wonders of the Internet, I now have a reasonably sound understanding of the Westside system. And, happily, and my once-stagnant total is climbing again. I also learned something else: Apparently, there are those who believe that Westside only works in the world of canvas and syringes.

Here are some of the fallacies I've overheard: "Westside doesn't allow lifters to practice good form." "Bands and chains are useless for the raw lifter." "Speed work is only important in gear." "You have to be on steroids to be able to recover fast enough to use Westside." However, as a raw lifter, predominantly in the USAPL, who has had great success with Westside, I can also attest that the majority of these arguments simply don't hold water.

TIME FOR TECHNIQUE

Some coaches and lifters believe that Westside doesn't leave enough time to work on competition lift technique. In some cases, this stems from a belief that less technique is required for multi-ply lifting than for strict single-ply or raw competition. Personally, I feel that the most room for technique error is in raw lifting, followed by single-ply, then multi-ply.

When lifting raw, if your form is off, you can still recover from small mistakes and brute strength can often overcome the worst



form. Some small mistakes aren't fatal in single-ply lifting. But in multi-ply lifting, getting a half-inch out of the groove is the difference between an 800-lb. bench opener and a 90 mph face dump. If Westside is suitable to hone the form of multi-ply lifters, who require precision technique and have infinite possibilities when it comes to working in full gear, briefs, suits, straps up, straps down, raw, etc., then how can it not be suitable for someone who can probably get away with small technique flaws and will inherently have a smaller pool of exercises to choose from?

There are many lifters who need to work on their form more than others. This does not automatically mean that Westside is not for them, because the Westside template is infinitely customizable. Generally speaking, get three to five lifts in over 90 percent on max effort days, do eight to 10 sets of two to three fast reps on dynamic effort days, space those days out by at least three days, add assistance as needed. There is nothing in this template that necessitates numerous variants of the competition lifts, or that rules out longer



sets at lower weight to work on form.

If a lifter needs to work more on squat form, he can squat. If a lifter gets benefits from using a box for those squats, he can use one. If not, no one is forcing a box under him. The stronger you are, and the more gear you use, the more bands/chains you can use, whether that's around max for a multi-ply lifter or no accommodating resistance at all for a new raw lifter. There's nothing inherent to the Westside system that says you can't do straight-weight competition lifts ad nauseum if necessary.

THE NEED FOR SPEED

Many people question the importance of speed work for a raw lifter (some altogether). However, developing speed and explosiveness during a lift will always benefit a lifter, raw or geared. Granted, a raw lifter will feel the same weight at the bottom of the lift as he will at the top, so high contrast doesn't benefit him the way it does a geared lifter. However, the ability to quickly apply force to the bar will result in a higher initial acceleration on the bar, which results in less force that needs to be applied later to continue the bar on its upward path. This allows the raw lifter to speed through would-be sticking points and avoid grinders who let the occasional red-light hungry judge have his way.

ASSISTED RECOVERY

Lastly, some make the assertion that Westside requires superhuman recovery abilities available only in oral or injectable form. Yet that assertion could be made about any powerlifting program – or any training program, for that matter. Granted, lifters with “special” supplement routines will recover better and may be able to handle a heavier workload than those without, but there is nothing inherent to the Westside system that would require a lifetime suspension-inducing recovery aid. Rarely are such claims made about more volume-intensive programs like Smolov and Sheiko, although one could argue that you see high rates of overtraining with such programs.

As with any other program, careful exercise selection and attention to nutrition and rest are what is really important in preventing overtraining while using Westside. Intensity and volume need to be controlled, and deloads implemented when necessary, with respect to the lifter's individual recovery abilities – regardless of where those abilities come from.

ONE-WEEK EXAMPLE:

Tuesday – ME Lower

Sumo deadlift – 1RM
 Front squat – 5x5
 Glute Ham Raise (against mini band) – 3x10
 Reverse hyper – 3x15
 Decline abs (weighted) – 3x10
 Farmer's carry – 200m

Thursday – ME Upper

Bench (50-lb. chain, off manpon) – 1RM
 Overhead press – 5x5
 Barbell rows – 3x10
 Skull-crushers – 3x10
 Pull-ups – 3x10
 Triceps pressdown – 3x10

Saturday – DE Lower

Speed box squat (against light band) – 10x2
 Stiff-legged deadlift – 3x10
 GHR – 3x10
 Back extensions (against light band) – 3x10
 Sit-ups on GHR – 3x10
 Sled drag – 200m

Sunday – DE Upper

Speed bench (against monster mini) – 9x3
 Floor press – 5x5
 KB rows – 2x20
 DB incline bench – 3x10
 Hammer curls – 3x10

(I do Crossfit workouts on off days, but that's getting into a level of volume that is hard to recover from.)

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Generally speaking, raw lifters can set up a Westside program the same as a geared lifter. The schedule is set up the same, rotating between max effort and dynamic effort days (or repetition effort). There are no fundamental differences in the selection of main movements between the geared lifter and the raw lifter, although subtle changes and tweaks in main lifts and accessories will better address the raw lifter's needs and weaknesses.

The raw lifter will naturally have different weaknesses in the lift, and needs to select main lifts accordingly. In squats, a raw



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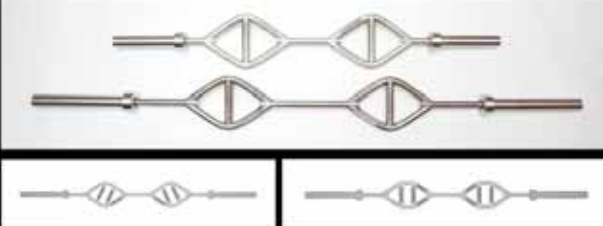
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lifter doesn't have the benefit of the rebound from a suit, and will often fail near the bottom of the lift. Raw lifters typically need to use a box less, or may get benefit from pause squats. For bench, the point of failure is also usually lower than that of the geared lifter, so more work needs to be done near the chest, rarely higher than a two-board. Deadlifting is virtually the same for a geared lifter and a raw lifter, so those exercises remain virtually unchanged.



Accessories may also be adjusted for the raw lifter. Many raw squatters are more quad-dominant than geared squatters, and could benefit from more quad work, such as leg presses or front squats. While a shirted bencher focuses mainly on lockout and stability, a raw bencher may do more chest and shoulder work to increase the power off the chest. This may include more dumbbells or incline bench. Again, deadlift accessories remain fairly unchanged.

Bands and chains also play a different role in the raw lifter's training than that of the geared lifter. A raw lifter will not feel the same increase in weight on the way up as a geared lifter, so large amounts of contrast are not necessary when training. However, this does not mean that bands and chains are useless to the raw lifter. Both can still be utilized to work on stability and speed throughout a lift. Higher contrast can also be helpful in overloading the top portion of a lift to help with strong lockouts, or to overcome mental blocks.

Most other differences between Westside for the raw lifter versus the geared lifter come down to personal preference more than a fundamental difference in training. Some raw lifters choose to work with higher percentages on dynamic effort days, but so do some geared lifters. Some raw lifters will deload more often, some less often. Some may have a lift that they recover from faster, and can work on more often. Some may have a certain lift that requires more competition-style training, while the others can be worked more effectively with variants.

While Westside is obviously not the only game in town, I believe it is the most versatile training system out there today. The main thing that limits its effectiveness is nothing inherent to the template, but the knowledge and the imagination of the lifter. And while it might not be ideal for some lifters (such as novice lifters or for those with gross form errors), that doesn't mean it can't be adapted for nearly anyone. It's just a matter of lifting smart and addressing your specific strengths and weaknesses as a lifter, and often surrounding yourself with a group of lifters able to help you recognize and address those strengths and weaknesses. Using Westside, our gym has produced six lifters with elite totals: raw, single ply and multiply, tested and untested — with more to come. **PM**



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FROM ATHLETE TO WRESTLER TO FIGHTER:

The Many Lives of



BOBBY
LASHLEY

BY MICHELE
COGGER ATKINSON

Photos by Stan Carradine

Many know Bobby Lashley as a former professional wrestler who once wore the Championship belt in the WWE. Now he is rising through the ranks on the MMA scene, boasting a 5-0 record since his debut fight in 2008.

Never having trained specifically for strength sports, this 6-foot, 3-inch, 260-lb. athlete has been known to bench press more than 500 lbs. in a T-shirt — just for fun. Oh, and then go out and run 5-minute miles. Bobby Lashley is a self-defined “freak of nature,” and this is by no means an exaggeration.

In his interview with *Power*, Lashley talks about how he came to reign over the WWE, his transition to MMA fighting, and his training techniques and extreme determination, which set the stage for his successful career.

History

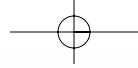
POWER: Going way back, how did you initially begin wrestling? Had you been also doing other sports?

BOBBY LASHLEY: I was one of those kids who constantly played sports. Baseball, basketball, football, track — I did everything. When I went into seventh grade, I naturally joined football. I was a running back; kind of like the little star on the team.

After the season was over, my football coach, who was also the wrestling coach, told me to come try out for wrestling. I was a pro wrestling fan, so when he said try out for wrestling I said, “No way, I’m too small and I’d rather watch it than actually do it.” He educated me on what amateur wrestling was, so I went to a practice. My first year I went 13-1, and the rest is history. I just kept on wrestling.

PM: When did you decide that you wanted to begin a career in professional wrestling?

BL: I didn’t really see it as an opportunity before. I think there are some areas where pro wrestling is really big — where they have different wrestling camps and schools where you can



learn how to do it. But there was nothing like that around me. I enjoyed watching it, but I didn't see myself as a pro wrestler because I didn't know how to go about doing it.

The first time I thought about it was when I met Kurt Angle. He came up to the Olympic Training Center and was doing a promo vignette for his upcoming PayPerView. Kurt saw me and talked to me for a little bit, and he said, "Man, you should definitely pro wrestle. You have a great look, a great build, and it would be a great fit for you to jump into pro wrestling." But I still had a lot of wrestling to do. We were gearing up for the Olympic year so I didn't really take him too seriously. I mean, I wanted to look into it and proceed, but my eyes were set on making that Olympic team. Then, at the next tournament, I was fortunate enough to meet Jerry Brisco, another guy from pro wrestling. When he told me the same thing I opened up my ears a little bit.

What ultimately opened up that door and sent me in was when I had finished a wrestling tournament the year before the Olympics. I was in a bank when it was robbed. I had to dive to the ground and that busted my knee up and open. It ended my amateur wrestling career.

At that same time I was talking to the guys from the WWE, so when the door closed on amateur wrestling, the door to pro wrestling opened even wider. I had to have two surgeries, but I didn't want the pro wrestlers to know

that my knee was messed up. I just said, "Yeah, go for it," and went for the try-out. I made it through and they offered me a contract.

PM: So you were still recovering from surgery when you were trying out?

BL: The funny story is, when I came to the try-out I thought it was more of an interview. So I had been on my couch with pillows under my leg for two months. I was talking to these guys on the phone and I said, "Sure I'd like to come out," thinking we



would be in meetings so they could take a look at me.

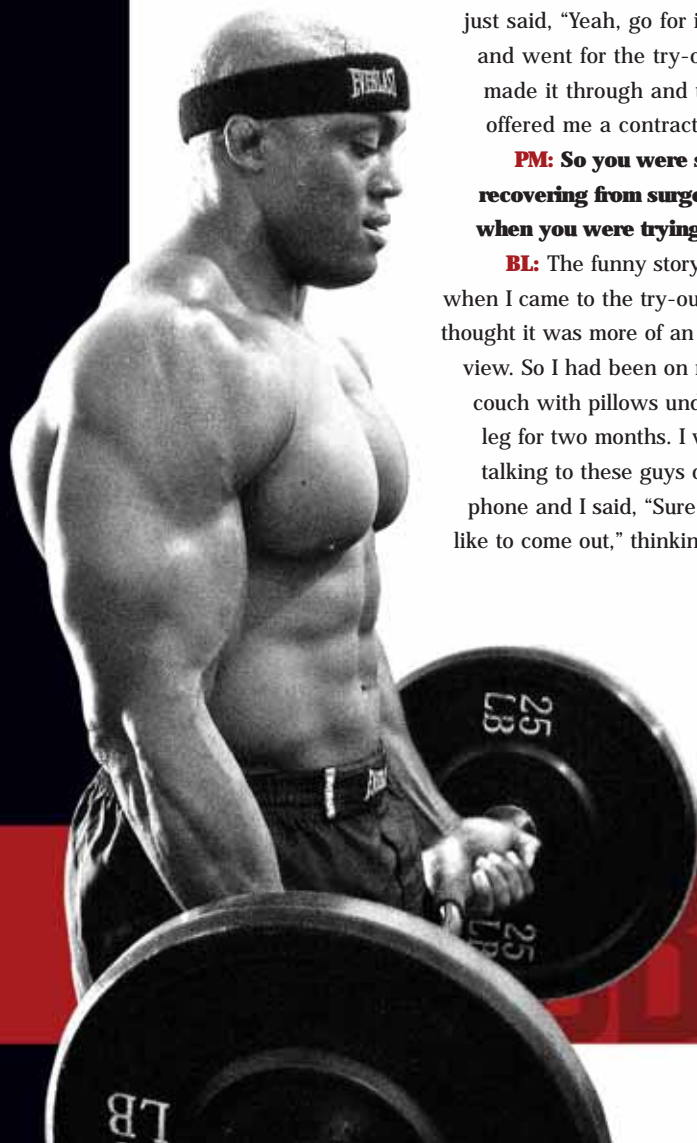
I had been doing some upper body lifting, but I wasn't doing anything serious for my legs because I couldn't even walk. I was still in a straight-leg cast on crutches. So when they told me that they wanted me to come up, I hit my rehab really hard – but I wasn't able to really do anything. Two days before I caught the flight to Louisville for the try-out, I took off that leg brace, put down the crutches and was able to take a couple of baby steps.

When I got to Louisville the first thing they asked me to do was "run the ropes," a wrestling drill where I had to run. My eyes got big; I didn't think I'd be able to do it. But I just said a prayer and I ran. And every day for four days I had to go back to my hotel, throw ice on my knee and pray that I could make it another day. I was in excruciating pain, but I knew that this was my opportunity, this was my break, and I had to do it.

PM: Growing up as a pro wrestling fan, how did it feel to actually become the WWE champion?

BL: You know when you train so hard for something and you actually accomplish it? That's what it was like. Because when I went to the WWE it was a learning experience the whole time. I was like a kid there; I was soaking up as much as I could, and I was trying to learn anything and everything I could about the whole wrestling business and about everything that had to do with it. So I was just a workhorse.

When it was time to win that title, I had a whirlwind of emotions, to say the least. All that hard work paid off – the years and years I had put into both the amateur and the professional side of wrestling finally paid off. Sometimes pro wrestlers say they have to pay dues; well, I paid my wrestling dues. And I was well rewarded in amateur



BY LASHLEY

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wrestling and I was well rewarded in pro wrestling.

PM: What goes through your mind when you walk down to the cage for a fight? Is it much different than when you were headed to the ring for a match?

BL: The big difference is that when I walk down to a cage and a ring [for an MMA fight] I am super focused. I know the crowd is there – I see the crowd, hear the crowd, feel the crowd – but I don't acknowledge the crowd much because I am so focused on what I am doing. There are a lot of nerves and a whirlwind of emotions when you are walking there because it's a fight. And there are a lot of people watching you fight.

For pro wrestling, I feed off of the crowd, the applause, the noise, everything. I focus more on them, I feed on it and give back. So I am actually not worried about my match, per se, until I get in the ring. I want to entertain the crowd before getting there. That's the difference between the two.

Training

PM: How does strength training help with MMA?

BL: When you go to war, you've got to have as many weapons as possible. And strength is a weapon. Some people think that it's not, but I think it is. There are several aspects of MMA – there's jujitsu, stand-up, boxing, kicking, wrestling ... a whole bunch of things. Your cardio is one thing, and your strength is another. Everything comes into play. When I train, I make sure every aspect of my training and my game is solid. I don't want someone to be better than me in the strength category, I don't want someone to be better than me in the striking category, I don't want someone to outwrestle me. So I think that's just another weapon in your arsenal that you need to have.

PM: How would you describe your style of strength training?

BL: When you are fighting,



you want to do more reps and quick-paced workouts to work your fast-twitch muscles, so you teach yourself how to be quicker and faster. You can increase the weight, but don't decrease the reps so much that you aren't getting the actual explosion out of your lifts.

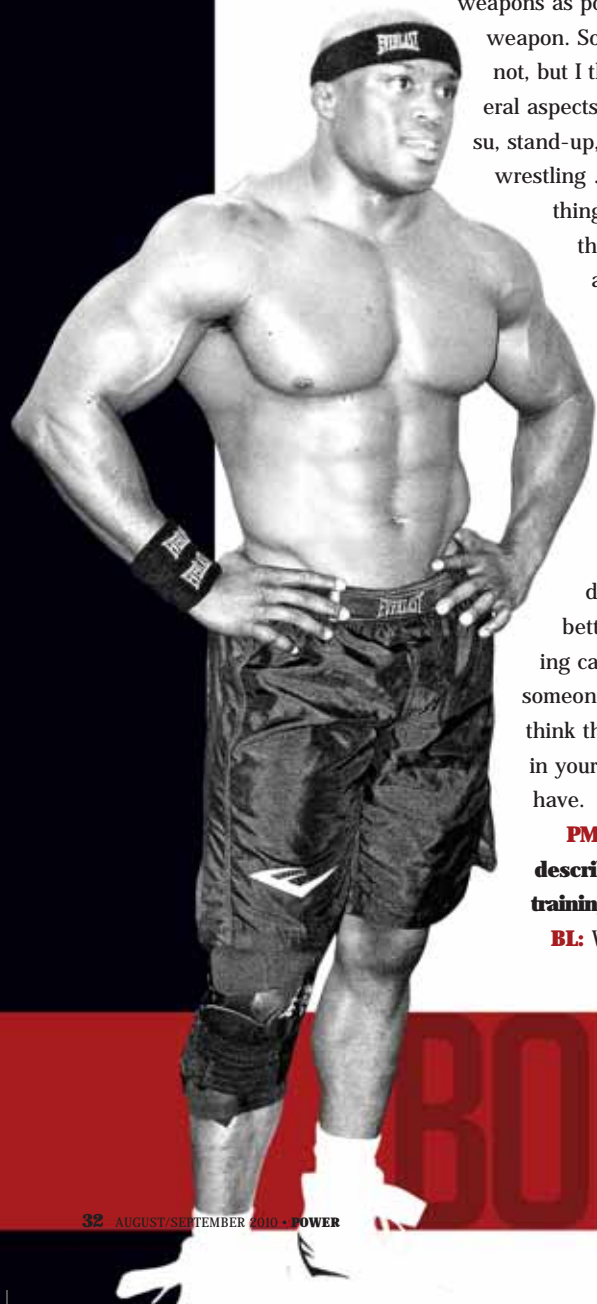
PM: Can you describe a typical workout?

BL: It depends on where I am at in my training. If I am several months out from a fight, I may kick it back and do some lower-rep lifts, single-body exercises and stuff like that to build my strength back up. But the closer I get to a fight, the more it becomes a circuit-style, quicker paced, cardio/strength-training kind of workout.

PM: Do you change your training based on your upcoming opponents?

BL: I don't change my workout too much. I stick to going forward, learning everything and keeping my body in shape as well as I know how. Some people look at their opponent and say, "OK, I have this opponent, and he's a ground guy, so I am just gonna work on my stand-up and keep him in stand-up and take-down." For me, I just want to be proficient in every style of the game. I feel really comfortable with my stand-up now, so I feel comfortable with striking, but I always have my "go-to" – my wrestling. I know that with almost anyone I match up with in MMA, my wrestling is going to be superior, and I know that I am going to be able to rely on that at some point in time.

PM: We've heard rumors that you have done some pretty incredible things in the gym. Can you tell us



BOBBY LASHLEY

about some of your lifting and speed stats?

BL: I am more of a freak of nature versus anything else, as far as strength goes. I've always been a leaner person, but I've also always been super strong. At the end of a workout after four or five sets, I remember benching 540 lbs. and doing that with no wraps, no shirt, just a straight lift. It's always crazy because a lot of people think that if you get strong then your endurance is going to be down, but at that time I was running pretty fast. I think I did my 2-mile in 10:30. I weighed 250 to 260 lbs., I was lifting some incredible weight, but my time in my long distance running was still at 5-minute miles.

And for legs, I would always do a lot of reps with squats. I've always been like that. In the days of training at the Olympic Training Center, we would do a lot of reps with short breaks in between. That's how I usually condition my legs because they get bulky quick, and I never want them to get too bulky.

Looking ahead

PM: Are there any fighters you are hoping to face-off with in the ring?

BL: I don't think there is any one person. There are a bunch of names I could throw out. I know what the fans want. The wrestling fans and a lot of the MMA fans would love to see that fight with me and Brock Lesnar because we're two big guys, two pro wrestlers who have made it in the business, or have done well. Brock is, of course, doing a lot better than me since he's already won the UFC title, so I am not going to compare that. But I think a lot of the wrestling fans would like to see us go at it.

Another person who comes to mind – and just because he's such a fight legend now – is Fedor. I think he's incredible. I think in this game, it's about having the experience of getting in the ring with somebody like him. I would like to be able to do that at some point because he's the best. Thirty straight wins, you can't compare that to anyone else. At some point in my career, before we retire, I would love to be able to fight him.

PM: Speaking of Lesnar, what is your relationship like with him?

BL: I don't know him, never met him.

PM: Do you have any superstitions or routines before a fight?

BL: I hate giving this one away, but there is this one thing I do. When you train in the gym and work out a lot, you get this stench in your clothes. No matter how many times you wash them, this little smell gets embedded. But when you compete, you get new stuff from your sponsors and there's this brand-new smell in your clothes.

So I always bring one of my workout shirts from the gym. Then, right before the fight, I grab that shirt and squeeze it as hard as I can. I put it up to my nose and take a deep breath. I breathe in the smell I get from the practice room. That's when you are alive, that's



when you are really full-force – when you are going hard. So I always have that trigger in my mind. I think, “OK, this is when its time to turn it on.” The smell triggers my brain to how it felt in the practice room, where everything was going crisp, where my coach tells me, “All right, that's the punch, this is the shot.” So it's kind of a mental game.

PM: Last year you opened a gym in Aurora, Colo. What can you tell us about it?

BL: My gym is an American Top Team gym, called ATT Altitude (American Top Team Altitude). It's such a nice gym – we have everything: 24-foot cage, 24-foot boxing ring, 3,000 square feet of mats for jiu-jitsu and wrestling broken up into different areas. I have 24 heavy bags and another 50 for cardio kick-boxing. I have a whole CrossFit room, a yoga and Pilates room, a spray tanning area ... it's an all-encompassing gym. We have a pro shop where you can get boxing gloves, wraps, all your gear, your T-shirts, everything. A lot of people come in: UFC fighters, StrikeForce fighters, local fighters, people who just want to come and get in a workout.

PM: What does the future look like to you?

BL: I am very dedicated to fighting right now. I want to turn the fighting up and earn some respect by going out there and taking my fights to the next level. I want to take out some top guys, and hopefully win a title. That's what I'd ultimately like to do. After that, somewhere down the road, I'd like to pay some respect back to my pro wrestling fans and maybe get back into pro wrestling for a little while and have some fun with it. And then just retire and be a dad.

PM: Thank you for taking the time to share with our readers. Is there anything else you want to add?

BL: I love talking with people. I have a Facebook page at www.facebook.com/fightbobby. Power readers can come there and chat with me, or ask questions about what that I do. **PM**

This Isn't Your Daddy's Squat Routine

BY DONNIE THOMPSON



PHOTOS BY PATRICK CLARK FROM WWW.ARTISANSPECIALTIES.COM

I have been at this for many years. Most weeks out of the year, I have around 900 to 1,050 lbs. on my back in training. There are a lot of other lifters who do that, too. Are you one of them? If not, let's look at a way to increase your strength and power output throughout the year.

TRAINING FACILITY

My little place in Columbia, S.C., is called The Compound. It's a two-bay warehouse located downtown, and it's not uncommon for about 50 homeless crack heads to walk by and look at us while we train during the evening. We have a chain link fence around The Compound with barbed wire on the top. Also, my aged bulldog took to hating homeless vagrants as a puppy and has unwelcomed them ever since. Great times, for sure!

No matter what, you have to have the proper training facility to get the job done. Squat night is the hardest night of the week. It takes more out of lifters than any other night and, if that's not true for you, find another gym.

The Compound has every bar imaginable: the Original Safety Squat Bar, Cambered bar, Buffalo bar and the Mastadon bar. Yes, it gets expensive. But if you buy your own stuff, you are not left out of the mix when your buddies don't show up to train. The Compound

has only milled York Barbell plates. They are not made anymore, and are very valuable. I plan to be buried with them. All jokes aside, they are and remain the best plates ever.

The Compound has everything we need to lift, and our record board over the last 10 years has seen some great powerlifters. We try to attract only those who want to train and be the best. We cut up and have a lot of fun, but every member adds around 150 lbs. to their total every six months. Like at any gym, lifters at The Compound come and go, quit and ditch training, so we came up with a routine that requires a minimum of four people to show up. It is a five-week cycle and you will get strong if you follow it.

THE "NOT JUST ANOTHER" SQUAT CYCLE

We rotate the bars during the first four weeks of the routine, and usually start with the Buffalo bar and chains. This is all box squats; if you don't do box squats, just adapt this routine to your free squats and do the same thing. The second week is the Cambered bar. We use a strong band to go over the plates and squat. The third week is back to the Buffalo bar and we use three strong bands on each side of the bar. (Very hard, but not as hard as the fourth week.) The fourth week is the SSB and chains. It sucks and will kill you. The fifth week is de-load. We usually pull that week and then do leg



presses. If we don't deadlift, we do belt squats first, followed by the leg press. Then we start the whole cycle over. We use only briefs for gear. Each week we may choose to do a single with the event we are doing. Use your own judgment. Now let's break down the specifics:

WEEK 1: BUFFALO BAR CHAIN SQUAT

Using the Buffalo bar, start by adding two logging chains on each side of the bar to go through warm-ups. Then begin adding plates. Use a box that is slightly below parallel. You are only using briefs, so it should be easy. If you go too low, you will develop some problems down the road in your hips.

Work your way up and do whatever rep scheme you want. When you get to Max Effort (ME) weight, start your first set of doubles. Keep the same bar weight throughout your work sets. You only have four of them. In the second set, add a chain. By the fourth set, you will have five chains on each side of the bar weighing more than 200 lbs. The chains should be making contact with the floor when you un-rack the weight, but not dragging on the floor. When you squat the weight to your box, there should be a little bit of chain stretching up to the bar. Work in that realm.

If you have a training partner who is really tall, like Tony Balogne, you may need to add an extra dog chain and re-loop it for his set. After four sets, you should be taxed. Now take a 50- to 90-lb. jump and do a single. If that is successful, then add another 50 lbs. Don't do more than two singles. Remember, you need to live to lift another day. Pick your weights wisely. Be honest with your training partners and don't let them under or overshoot the set weights. If your fourth ME set is cake, you held back.

WEEK 2: CAMBERED BAR BAND SQUAT

Using the Cambered bar, put the blue strong band from Jumpstretch on the bar. This bar is holding the weight about 13 inches down from your shoulders. It has a different feel and, when used heavy, you'll feel the erectors right below the scapula. When you get up to three plates, wrap the band around the top of the plates. Secure your monolift so it doesn't flip. Again, work your way up to four sets of doubles. The band tension is the same for all four sets, so keep the bar weight the same too. Use a weight that is a challenge. Then take the same 50- to 90-

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lb. jump for a single rep, one more if necessary. If you choose your weights wisely, half your group will bag out on the singles and not want to do them.

WEEK 3: CAMBERED OR STRAIGHT BAR SQUAT WITH TRIPLE BLUE BANDS

This day is fun — but it sucks because you are still working your four sets of doubles. Warm up properly or you'll die. Do not make big jumps. When you get to your set weights, you can escalate them. I may jump 50 to 90 lbs. during the four sets. It should be a real hard double. Now the single. You may want jump up 50 lbs. at first. Do one or two singles, and then you're done. Try to remember what you did and beat it the next training cycle.

WEEK 4: SAFETY SQUAT BAR CHAIN SQUAT

This bar is bulldogging you the entire time you are squatting. Imagine an angry 400-lb. woman running full speed and then clothes-lining you unexpectedly. Ouch. Again, start with two chains on each side. Work your plate weight up until you get to your sets. This is the hardest squat you will face. It works the top end of erectors. I can't hold on the tips of the bar, so I usually make fists and hope for the best. If you are able to hold the tips, that's great.

When you sit on the box, you must drive your upper body into this bar, including your head, to come up. This is the best tip I can give you. Do not sit back timidly. Open your knees and sit back with commitment. If you fight the weight down, you will fail. Do four sets of doubles, then move on to singles. If you want to bag out on singles, this is probably the day to do it. If you didn't do singles on Week 3, do your heavy single here. You will end up with 200 lbs. of chain on your last set. It is a lot. Never use bands with this bar. The safety squat bar holds the plates about 3½ inches forward and takes a lot of upper back out of the lift. Your abs will get a great isometric workout.

WEEK 5: DEADLIFTS, BELT SQUATS AND LEG PRESSES/DELOAD

We usually pull this week for speed or some fast singles. We might even do heavy reverse band pulls for a PR or the Jumpstretch board banded deadlifts for singles to failure.

Choose any ME deadlift. Different exercises work for different people. The ole' seated good morning was like that for me. Some of my training partners swore by it, yet it did nothing but anger me.

Next is the leg press. I work up to about three sets of eight reps on the leg press. We band it to make the sled snap down toward us. Fun stuff. I learned from Steve Goggins years ago to never go heavy on these. Just use weight that is taxing. The leg press is quad-dominant. Since we do not get

quad-specific work in, it can be refreshing. If you are lucky enough to have a belt squat, you can do this in place of the leg press. It also is tough on the hips and quads. We finish up with glute hams and reverse hyps. Some Kettlebell swings are in order here, too. If you do not want to deadlift, do the belt squats first for sets of six, then the leg press.

SPEED DAY

Speed day is the secret to this program's success! Dynamic lower body training should take place around 72 to 96 hours before you do ME work. Here is the key: You will perform your speed work to match what you are doing the next ME day. For example, if I am doing my heavy squats on Monday, on Thursday or Friday I am doing my speed work. I will not use a box to squat on for speed work. I suspend chains around the rack and set the bottom of the chain so the bar is slightly below parallel when it rests on the chain. Notice I said "rest." The bar must descend down into the chains and come to a complete stop before you overcome the bar to ascend. Flex reflex lasts about two to four seconds for elite level lifters. Also, it will carry over to the deadlift!

So, for week one, I will average the chains out and use three on each side. I follow the three- to four-plate rule and do not go much heavier than that. Remember to keep your speed work light! It is just used for recovery now. When you are up and coming and getting stronger, speed work is very important. But even world record squatters need to get smarter as they get stronger. At some point you need to know yourself and know when enough is enough. Just because you can, doesn't mean you should.

PRE-HEAVY PHASE SPEED

WEEK 1: Buffalo bar and three chains each side. Work up to three or four plates and five to eight sets of triples. Do not rest long between sets. Squat down into the suspended chain and come to a complete stop without losing isometric integrity. Then hammer it.

Practice the little things, like holding air and pushing out externally on your trunk, or wedging your feet into the floor while pushing up on the bar. Everything needs to be perfect.

WEEK 2: Cambered bar and blue bands over plates. Again,

“Pick weights that are very difficult so you know that if you don’t give everything, failure is imminent”

follow the three-plate rule. If it is ridiculously light, add another plate. You are going extremely heavy in 72 hours, so do not blow your wad here. Come to a complete stop at the bottom of the chains. Hold trunk and isometric tension so you don’t sacrifice the integrity of the lift.

WEEK 3: Buffalo bar or straight bar. Use a blue and a green band. Do not use triple-band tension because it will be too much. Follow instructions for the previous weeks.

WEEK 4: Safety squat bar with three chains. Follow instructions for previous weeks.

WEEK 5: Speed pulls on the Jumpstretch board. Hook the monster mini-bands doubled over the bar. Use the sumo board, if you have one. Start easy and get used to the movement. Too often guys get on this thing and are not prepared for how aggressive the bands are going to get at the knees. Do a few repeat sets with your lighter warm-ups. Six sets of doubles are great for speed.

Here is an example of what you might want to do: After your speed deads, get a heavy Kettlebell and do three sets of five fast and powerful reps on the dead snatch. Go to the double Kettlebell front squat for three sets of eight to 10 reps. Next is double Kettlebell swings between the legs. Use the sumo or squat stance.

Take a few swings to get it up! Three sets of eight reps are plenty. GHRs for three sets of eight to 12 reps. Lastly, do the back raise or reverse hyper machine.

CONCLUSION

Following this program will prep your body go heavy and stay familiar with the training stimulus. This routine got everyone at The Compound squatting big for when it is time to train for a meet. We did three in a row this winter—that’s 15 weeks of non-stop progress.

Tweak it as needed. Wear briefs or pick one of the weeks to go raw, if you want. You can do weight releasers on the band day, or you can manipulate bar to chain weight ratio. Carefully replace your ME exercises wisely. They should resemble whatever you were originally going to do. Just remember that you are trying to improve each five-week cycle. Do not forget to push yourself during your four or five sets of doubles. If you go to light, you muffed it. If you go too heavy and have to constantly be saved, you will get beat up mentally. Pick weights that are very difficult so you know that if you don’t give everything, failure is imminent. Always try to construct yourself and be your own coach. **PM**



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LOG PRESS

BY KARL GILLINGHAM

The log press is a staple event in most Strongman contests and is a critical event to master in order to obtain top results. It is a movement that must be trained consistently to reach peak performance. Some of the best bench pressers and Olympic lifters have been humbled the first time they attempted a log press. The movement requires precise technique, overhead strength and repetition to hit big numbers. In this article I will go through the basics to explain the log press, and offer some tips on how to improve results.

WHAT IS A LOG?

In modern contests, most logs are made of steel. The size is typically 10 to 13 inches in diameter and 4 to 7 feet long. There isn't a standard size, but the majority of Strongman contests have 13-inch diameter logs that are usually 5 to 6 feet long.

The handles are spaced around 24 inches apart and are centered on the log to provide proper balance. Empty logs weigh 200 to 275 lbs.

Natural logs are used in some contests. They are usually a little more difficult to handle due to the difficulties posed in balancing them perfectly. The logs usually have Olympic-sized bars on the ends to add bumper plates for increased weight, as required.

LIFT EXECUTION

To perform a log press, pick up the log from the ground and lift it overhead. The final position is executed with locked arms and the log positioned directly overhead. The only real technical rule is not allowing the bar to rest on the head.

Most competitors complete the lift in two or three steps: pickup, clean and press overhead. If the log is light enough, it is possible to pick-up and clean in one motion, and then press — or to pickup, then clean and press in one motion. This technique is used by Hugo Girard and Derek Poundstone with great success when doing log press for reps.







PROPER TECHNIQUE

PICKUP PHASE. There are a few different ways to approach the pickup phase. The idea is to lift the log to the top of your thighs and against your core. Most Strongman competitors use a modified bent row-type movement that combines some leg drive, slightly bent arms and a row toward the chest /hip area. Other lifters use straight arms and a deadlift-type movement to position the bar to the top of the legs. The idea is the same for both; the bar must end up on top of the legs and tight against the body.

CLEAN PHASE. The clean phase is next. I clean the log in a way similar to an Olympic lifter: on the second pull of a snatch using the same technique as when I load a stone. I start with the log tight against my abdomen, making sure it is on the top side of my belt. I then explode my hips forward, driving the bar upward, then catch it on the top of my chest. Other lifters use less hip drive and turn the log over, using wrist and arm power to "roll" it to the top position. Very big men like Zdrunas and Glen Ross lift the log to the top side of the abdomen in the initial pull and turn their hands under to complete the clean. Experiment to find what works for you. The biggest mistake at this phase is the newcomer's tendency to try to strictly curl the log, which can lead to injury.

PRESS PHASE. The press phase completes the lift. There are many different ways to achieve the press. Some lifters continue in one motion from the clean phase and continue right up into a press. Others rest at the shoulders and do a push press, using some leg drive combined with shoulder and triceps power to complete the

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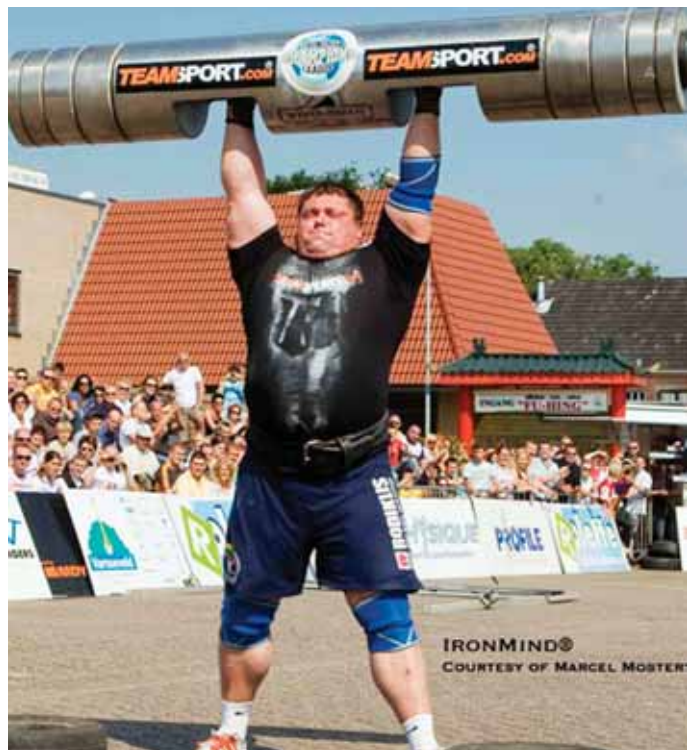
movement. The big guys sometimes do a movement very similar to the old Olympic-style press, using very little quad drive, lots of calf drive and a lean back technique to drive the log up overhead. Dave Ostlund has perfected the lean-back technique, with great success. A few experienced Olympic-style lifters have also been successful in jerking the log to completion. This becomes more difficult as the diameter of the log increases.

ASSISTANCE EXERCISES

All exercises that increase the overall power of the triceps and shoulders are beneficial to perfecting the log press. Laterals, triceps extensions, dips, standing dumbbell clean and presses, narrow grip and incline bench press, cross-body dumbbell curls and stone loading are all exercises I do to improve my log press. Another exercise is pressing in a rack, either seated or standing, with a log or log bar for partials. These can be done with chains and or bands, as well. Quick movements are beneficial, and practicing some of the Olympic lifts will also increase your results.

RECORD PROGRESSION

Hugo Girard was the first strongman to officially log press 400 lbs. in a competition. Over the past six years, Zydrunas Savikas has since rewritten the record book all by himself to its current mark of 212.5 kilos, or 468 lbs. Brian Schoonveld and Bill Kazmaier were near the 400 lb. mark and were America's best log pressers for many years. In a previously unprecedented display of power, the American record of 400 lbs. was destroyed at the Olympia last year



and rewritten to its present mark of 430 lbs., held jointly by Van Hatfield and Scott Weech.

The log press is a great exercise to increase overall body power. It should be a staple in all strength athletes' workouts. Proper execution of the lift will allow for maximum poundage and results. **PM**



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Improving the deadlift can be very tricky. Many great lifters have struggled with improving it after a certain point, and even have problems with declining deadlift quality, including me. The squat has always come much more naturally for me. Initially, so did the deadlift. However, it's very difficult to improve both the squat and the deadlift at the same time.

There is a thin line between pulling too much (where it will negatively affect the deadlift) and not pulling enough (where the body isn't specifically ready for a heavy deadlift). What do I mean by specifically? At times, I would be strong as hell and thought I was prepped for a big pull. My back was strong as an ox's, I was squatting very fast and explosively, didn't feel beat up, my form felt good, etc., but I didn't feel secure and confident with a deadlift past 90 percent.

Why?

My central nervous system wasn't primed for a big dead. There is something to be said for the ability to hold the weight on the squat and bench before you reverse it up. You get to feel the weight and, for the most part, know how heavy it is going to be. Well, with the deadlift, you don't. And the body can do some very funny (and not-so-funny) things if it isn't ready to yank a huge dead from the deck. For me, wobbly legs and a faulty grip are the first signs that it's been too long since a big pull. I know you can train your grip with all kinds of specialized exercises, but it isn't the same as a holding onto a huge pull, at least for me. If I don't pull, I suck.

The good news is, you can fix the deadlift without overtraining. Here's how.

Making a Good Deadlift Great

BY BRIAN CARROLL



WORKING BLOCK PULLS

The biggest thing that helped me take my pull from 700 lbs. to consistently upper 700s and into the 800s was doing lots of block pulls from varying heights. I like to use 6- and 4-inch blocks. When I say block pulls, I mean the weight is sitting on blocks — you're not standing on the blocks. I like to work a percentage from the floor and overload from the blocks, depending on where my weakness is at the time and how far out I am from a meet. The block pulls are better than rack pulls because they mimic the deadlift from the floor with the same bar whip. Plus, you don't have to "wedge" it out of the rack, as the bar is bent across the rack supports and not flat, like it would be from the floor.

REPS FROM FLOOR

Pulling double and triples from the floor was something I've recently implemented. Now warming up and pulling reps is one thing, but pulling 90 percent-plus for doubles isn't for everyone. It can really suck, especially if you have a brand-new deadlift bar with razor sharp knurling that can open up even the most weathered and proven calluses — not to mention ruin a great workout or PR pull in a hurry. I was very stubborn about staying



with pulling singles until John Inzer and Al Caslow (700-lb. dead @ 165 lbs.) talked me into working reps. That seemed to work out well for both of them, eh?

ASSISTANCE WORK

Aside from the things listed above, I stick to basic movements that can help the deadlift in most cases.

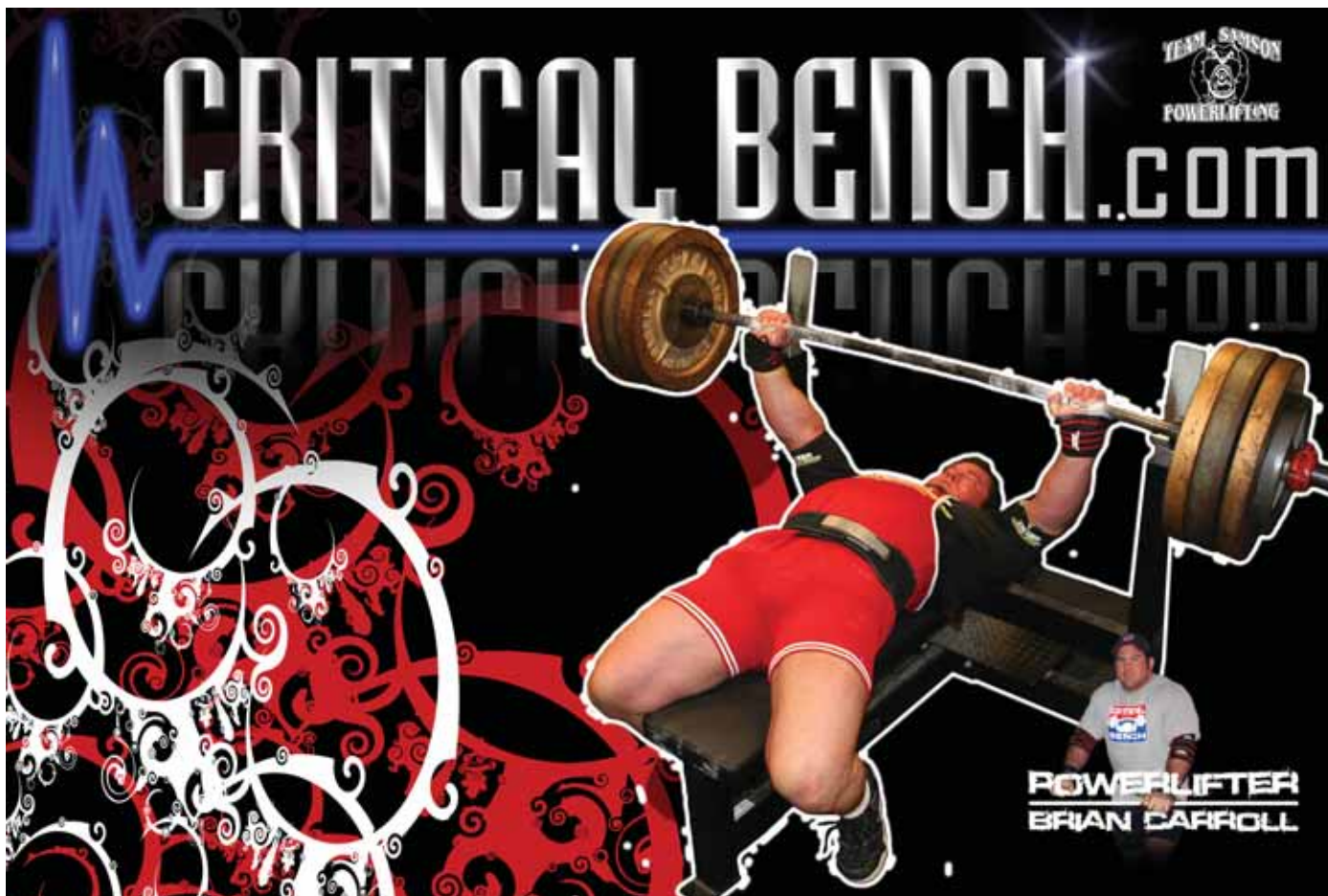
UPPER- AND MID-BACK: Lat pull-downs, bent-over and chest-supported rows and shrugs.

LOWER BACK: Good mornings, SLDL, Romanian DLs and reverse hypsers.

OTHER: Rope crunches, GHR, calf work.

PUSHING THE DEADLIFT HIGHER

These aren't exercises that have worked only for me. They have worked for many people who have successfully pushed their deadlift higher than they could have ever imagined; whether they used three of these methods or one; or whether they have used my help or not. Not all of the same things work for everyone, and sometimes it's hard to figure out what exactly applies to you. But I can guarantee that some of this can work for you. Even if you can't pull but once a month due to injuries or don't respond well to deadlifting often, you can probably incorporate some of these methods to help you become a better puller. Even if it's just changing your assistance work, it can make all the difference in the world. When all else fails (even my advice) listen to your body! **PM**



DYNAMIC LOWER-BODY WARM-UP

BY JESSE BURDICK



FIGURE 1

There has been a wave of interest in athletes' warm-ups in the past few years, and the concept is starting to take hold in strength sports. Are the days of warming up with the bar for a set of 10 over? Is there a better, more effective way? Might it take away from the main movement of the day? Will it make powerlifters stronger?

DEFINING A DWU

A dynamic warm up (DWU) is a set of movements biomechanically similar to the exercises performed with one's own bodyweight in an attempt to increase range of motion, improve joint mobility, restore proper muscle firing sequences, improve performance and reduce the risk of injury.

Two DVDs — The Parisi Warm-up Method and Cressey and Robertson's Magnificent Mobility — showcase roughly 123,456 possible warm-up exercises. Still, warming up doesn't have to be a huge process. It can be just a few moves and last a few minutes. There are some simple gems that have helped many hips, lower backs and knees to feel better — and not as if they are going to snap when lifters bend over to tie their shoes.

MAKING DWU WORK FOR YOU

Say it's a lower body day at the gym. The first step is to stop leaning on the Reverse Hyper. Instead, grab a mini-band and go lay on your back as far away from your training partners, rack, monolift or platform as possible. (There is a point to this, I swear.)

GLUTE BRIDGE. This is a great warm-up exercise to help activate the glutes. Lie on the ground with knees bent and feet flat on the floor. Push your heels into the ground and lift your hips as high as possible (see figure 1). Hold this position, then return to the

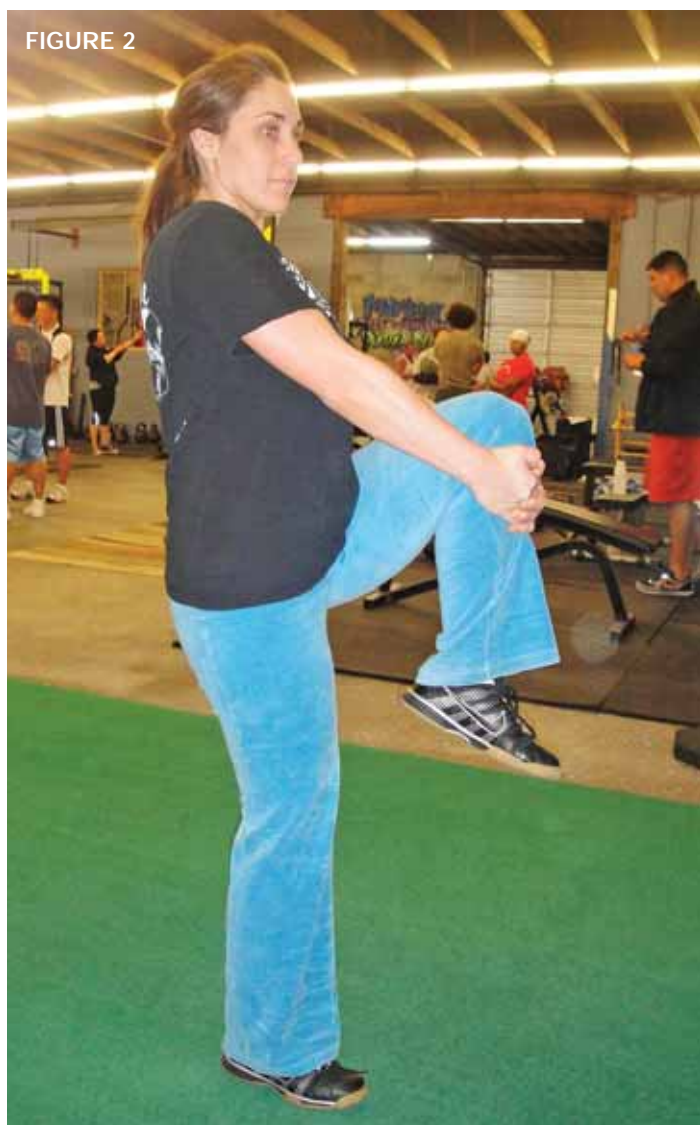


FIGURE 2

starting position. You should be in the 15- to 30-rep range.

While on your back why not throw in some crunches, take some deep breaths, or foam roll? No? OK, then flip over.

BIRD DOG. Now that you are on all fours, move to a bird dog. This is used to warm up the low back and glutes, and can also be used as a strengthening exercise for an athlete who isn't ready to perform more complex movements. Raise your left arm and right leg. Hold this position, then return to the starting position. Repeat on

opposite side. Again, reps should range from 15 to 30 on each side.

Once you're sick of being asked if you need help up, get off the ground. Sweet! Now it's off to where you dropped your gym bag. On your way over there, let's throw in a few more warm-up movements.

WALKING KNEES TO CHEST. Stand up straight and lift your knee in the air (see figure 2). Grab it and try to pull it up toward the same shoulder. You should feel a good pull or stretch in your glute/hamstring area. If you can't grab your knee and pull up, don't worry. Just do your best and work on getting that knee higher and higher. Take a step forward and repeat with the other leg. You're looking at 10 to 15 reps per leg, so plan your route accordingly.

Remember that mini-band? Good, because next up is X-band walks. It sounds like some thing Wolverine does for his warm-up, right?

X-BAND WALKS. Step on the mini-band and twist it so it looks like an X. Hold the other end of the band in your hands. You can adjust the tension, depending on where you hold your hands; the higher you hold them, the more the tension. Once you're in position and the tension is correct, start walking sideways, keeping your legs straight. Concentrate on moving from your hips (you'll feel the stretch in your glutes). Start off with 10 to 20 reps in each direction.

Congratulations! You made it back to your gym bag. Only two more exercises, I swear.

STEP-BACK LUNGE. Grab a band and a rack. You should be



strong and warm enough to perform this lunge with out hanging onto the rack, but it's an "athletic" lunge. If you have any nagging knee and/or hip issues – or if you're a weak little kitten – hang on. Square up to the rack, take a large lunge backwards and descend into a deep knee bend. Once at the bottom, push your front heel into the ground, squeeze your glutes and come back to your starting position. Repeat about 15 times per leg.

Out of breath? Holding onto the rack? Great. Grab that band and get ready for TKE.

TKE (TERMINAL KNEE EXTENSION). Choke the band around a power rack post around knee height (see figure 3). Step into the band so it's around the back of your knee; walk backward until you feel some tension on the band. With your heel on the floor, bend and flex your knee and hold it for a few seconds at contraction. You should feel this on the inside of your knee. Do as many reps as it takes to get, as Ron Burgundy would say, "a deep burn."

Now you are ready to get after it.

WARM-UP VS. WORKOUT

Keep in mind that this routine is a warm-up and not a workout. You can progress this as needed by adding more reps or more sets. You might be sore the first few times through, but you don't need to make it harder or more complicated. Remember, you are there to work out – not just to warm up. **PM**



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RANT OF THE MONTH...

Bad Technique = Wasted Potential

BY CHAD AICHS

Sometimes it seems like “technique” is a bad word in powerlifting. People won’t say it, think about it or work on it. They avoid it like the plague. In other cases, people think they work on it and that their technique is great, when clearly it’s not. Then we have lifters who don’t try to help their partners improve their technique.

I’m fortunate to be able to attend many different meets and go to a lot of different gyms, but everywhere I go it’s the same. I often try to help other lifters, and one of the first things I ask them about is their technique. I get all kinds of answers about how great their technique is or assurances that there’s no problem. When I ask to see them lift, either in person or by video, 99 percent of the time their technique is complete shit.

Maybe I missed something along the way, but I thought powerlifting was about lifting the most weight you possibly can. Technique is so important to putting up huge numbers and meeting your personal potential. It never ceases to amaze me how screwed up most lifters’ technique is. It also never ceases to completely piss me off.

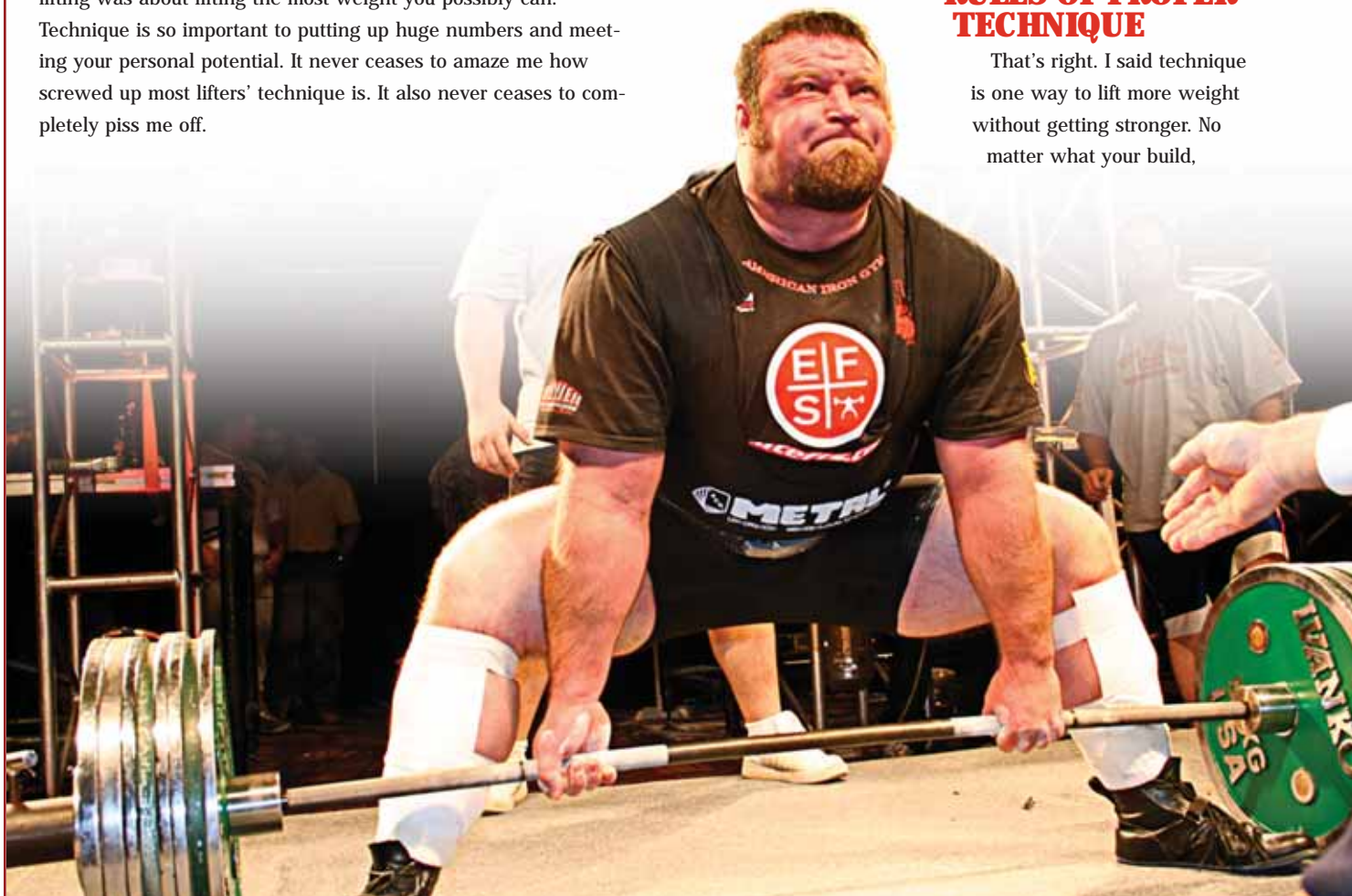
WASTED POTENTIAL

Ever since I was a kid I’ve hated to see potential wasted. Like the talented, superstar high school athlete who doesn’t work hard because he’s only worried about being good in his specific area. Or the local lifter who packs on strength and size like it’s nothing but is perfectly content to be a big fish in a small pond. Well, I see shitty technique in the same light.

Good technique is a way to lift more weight without getting stronger, and that’s what powerlifting is all about – lifting the most weight. If you’re not working on your technique and helping your partners fix their technique, you’re just wasting potential. No matter how hard you work, you’ll never lift what you’re capable of or become the lifter you could be.

RULES OF PROPER TECHNIQUE

That’s right. I said technique is one way to lift more weight without getting stronger. No matter what your build,



there are rules of proper technique you need to follow. These rules will make sure you're putting your body in the strongest positions to lift the maximum amount of weight. Technique should provide a strong foundation for every powerlifter's program. It will also help keep injuries to a minimum by putting you in the safest position for every lift. We all know what we do comes with a certain amount of risk, but good technique will result in fewer injuries, more hard training and stronger powerlifters.

Technique is also important because we're only as strong as our weakest link. When you're all over the place, it's hard to identify your weakest link. In most cases, it's technique. If your technique is good and you have an understanding of which muscles work each part of the lift, then it's much easier to see the weak muscle groups. Then it's as simple as working that group to get your lifts moving up again. It basic logic and makes a hell of a lot of sense.

FINDING INTERNAL MOTIVATION

I'm so damn sick of going to gyms and hearing, "Good job," "It's all you," "You got it," "Great lift!" I hear this crap and think, Wow, that lift looked like shit. He'd be doing a hundred pounds more if his technique was good!"

A good lifter's motivation comes from within. All that rah! rah! bullshit just isn't necessary.

GOOD PARTNERS ARE HARD TO FIND

Lifters need partners who really want them to meet their potential and will help them with the stuff they can't do alone. That includes being a good spotter, helping with gear, and being honest about strength gains and technique. This doesn't mean saying, "You could've done another 100 lbs. It looked so easy!" when they just barely got it. Or telling them, "Great lift; it looked perfect" when their technique was terrible.

And lifters need to return the favor and help the partners who help them. No prima donna crap! I don't care how strong a lifter is. He or she started at the bottom, like the rest of us. It's their responsibility to help others come up just like partners helped them.

I'm not suggesting that you rip on lifters all the time, but they need information that is going to help them. Plus, if you throw around compliments all the time, they become meaningless. I very rarely give lifters a compliment, but you know what? It's a big damn deal when I do, and those lifters know they really did something well!

If you think about it, rah! rah! compliments aren't positive; they're actually building a false idea inside lifters' heads. They think they're doing things right and making good progress, but they aren't even coming close to their potential. Telling the truth is positive; false compliments are not. The truth about technique is what will make powerlifters improve and meet their potential.



IT'S PERSONAL

I was lucky when I first started powerlifting. I went to an EliteFTS seminar that got me going in the right direction. I remember squatting 550-plus lbs. for five sets of five reps, but when I got back from my first seminar I couldn't squat 135 lbs. off a box correctly. I sucked it up and swallowed my pride. I stuck with it, and within six months hit a new personal record squat — but the best part is, the weight just kept going up. I was always able to stay on top of my weakest link and kept fine-tuning my technique. Now I own one of the biggest squats and totals in history.

I didn't get there because I am a genetic freak or natural athlete. I got it because of my heart, stubbornness (will) — and the fact that I approach lifting from an intelligent position thanks to some other great lifters. I looked up Dave Tate of EliteFTS and learned so much about lifting from him. Then I taught my partners good technique, and we hammer each other on it. My partners are awesome about that. My training partner, Ethan, is one of the best technicians anywhere. He's so damn tight. His technique isn't great, but he knows it better than anyone. He's never cut me any slack and hammered me on it every work out. I'm one stubborn S.O.B., and I needed that.

Now I am trying my best to do the same and give other lifters the chance to become the best they can be by showing them how I achieved what I have. Technique is everything. Once you have good technique, it is easier to get a solid program going so you're always hitting weak points for continual growth in all the lifts.

Hopefully every lifter reading this article will begin to see the real importance of proper technique, start hammering it and push forward to reach huge PRs. You'll reach your goals and my massive aggravation level when visiting gyms and going to meets will decrease. Now get your ass in the gym and start nailing your technique! **PM**

Chad Aichs is a world-class strength athlete who focuses mainly on powerlifting, but also competes in the Scottish Highland Games. In his first full meet he totaled 1,700 lbs. and because of his knowledge and dedication to the sport, 10 years later he has totaled more than 2,700 lbs. with an average increase of 100 lbs. per year. With his 1,173-lb. squat and 2,733-lb. total being two of the highest of all time, he is considered by some to be one of the top powerlifters ever. Aichs' best competition lifts are a 1,173-lb. squat, 821-lb. bench, 755-lb. deadlift and 2,733-lb. total. He has held all of the AAPF National records and AWPC World records at the same time, broken the WPO Professional Powerlifting Full Meet Bench World Record multiple times and been ranked as high as second in Powerlifting USA National Standings.

You can see more of Chad and his explanations on technique in the Never Enough DVD series, available at www.SuperTrainingGym.com.

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GET TO KNOW...

Donnie Thompson

What superhero would you most like to be? Superman! I chose him because he can reel in the snapper. I want to be the strongest superhero, which is the Hulk, but he is too angry to please the ladies.

What is your idea of perfect happiness? Living in a place where everyone is not necessarily equal, but like-minded.

What is your greatest fear? Being paralyzed.

What is the trait you most deplore in yourself? I am not mean enough! Nice guys finish last. I am at the end of the line.

What is the trait you most deplore in others? People who claim they are one thing, yet time proves they are another.

What is your greatest extravagance? Buying weightlifting equipment.

What is your current state of mind? I am in a conquering mood.

On what occasion do you lie? To get the end result I want.

What do you most dislike about your appearance? My lower legs look banged-up.

What do you most value in your friends? They accept me for who I am and still remain my friends.

What or who is the greatest love of your life?
1. My daughter, by far. 2. Lifting weights. 3. History.

When and where were you happiest? My daughter is a baby and she falls asleep on my chest. That is something I can't describe.

If you could change one thing about yourself, what would it be? I would increase in wisdom.

What do you consider your greatest achievement? I benched 405 lbs. the day I turned 19. I have benched 405 lbs. every year of my life since then, and I am 45.

What is your most treasured possession? My monolift.

What is your most marked characteristic? Determination. I never quit.

Which historical figure do you most identify with? Joshua and Samson in the Old Testament.

What is your greatest regret? Not getting into the NFL.

Which talent would you most like to have? A great singing voice.

What is your motto? Just because you can, doesn't mean you should.

Which living person do you most admire? The WWII and Vietnam war veterans.



Who is your favorite hero of fiction? John Wayne.

If you were to die and come back as a person or thing, what do you think it would be? A polar bear or hippopotamus.

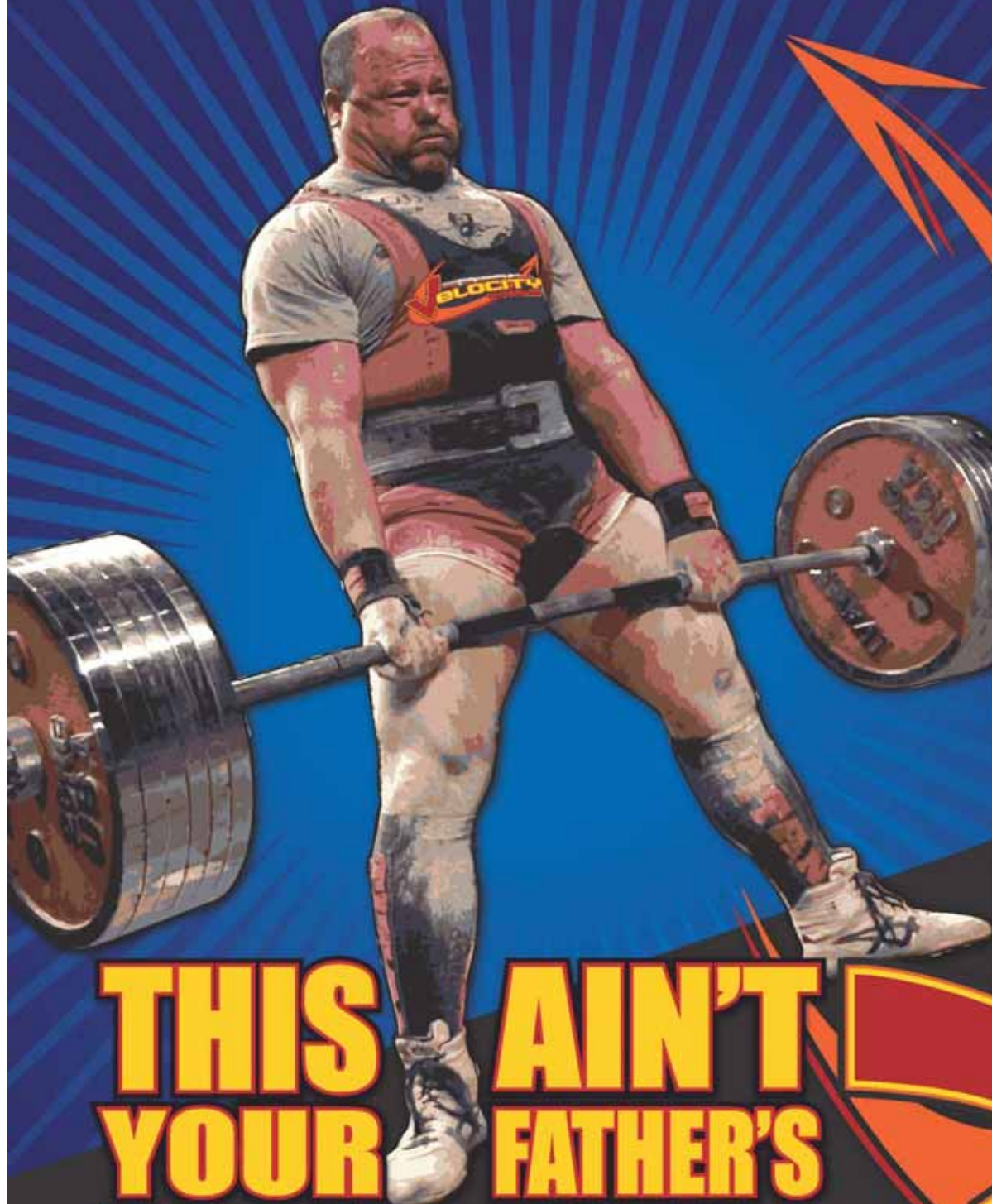
What is your favorite movie? Passion of the Christ.

Who is your favorite lifter? There is a list. Garry Frank, Andy Bolton, Beau Moore, Chuck Vogelpohl, Eddie and Paul Childress.

What do you prefer: single-ply, multi-ply or raw? Raw, because all you need is a belt.

Are you married? In a relationship? Not married, and relations are good.

Who would you like to see on the next cover of Power? Myself, of course! **PM**



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