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# GET JACKED AND STRONG WITH **STAN EFFERDING**

BY MARK BELL

Photos by Michael Ochnicki

**MARK:** During your stay so far here at Super Training Gym, I've already heard several people ask you about losing body fat, so let's start with that; what are some ways that you help people lose body fat?

**STAN:** It's hard to talk about dieting and training in general terms because everyone is unique. Everyone has different goals, different starting points, genetics, food allergies - there are so many things that go into it. So, it's hard to throw anything out there that can meet everybody's needs. Generally speaking, I like to lose body fat by increasing workload and not starving myself with limited calories. There's no upside to that [starving] long-term - you can only cut out so many calories. I just like to move more and increase my activity, which just means doing more than you were doing. I also keep my protein intake elevated and keep the muscles stimulated with resistance training to retain muscle mass. Beyond that, we start getting into specifics of people's personal needs.

**MARK:** It's obvious to us that weight training has huge value in terms of muscle mass and overall health, and you talk quite a bit about allowing your body to work for itself. Tell us more about that. People get into this cycle of reducing calories and doing tons of cardio. They get into an issue of how low they can cut their calories and how much cardio they can do until it becomes a question of how long they can sustain such a screwed up way of trying to lose weight.

**STAN:** To me, it's about messaging. Long term, you want to have more lean body mass to burn more body fat at rest because that is when the bulk of body fat is burnt--at rest, not during work. So, I try to maintain lean body mass through resistance training as much as possible and I minimize the kinds of activities that might cause one to lose muscle tissue, such as endurance cardio, which sends the wrong message to the body.



When you do endurance cardio, your body adapts to that stimulus, which is saying "I need to be able to perform this activity for an extended period of time." Muscle tissue is heavy - it has a high nutrient, oxygen, and water demand, so the body will gladly give some of it up when you regularly engage in endurance cardio like jogging, walking on the treadmill, stepmill, etc. You are setting yourself up for failure long term because you are slowing your metabolism and sacrificing muscle tissue.

For me, it really is about weightlifting. It used to be a hard sell, particularly when you were talking to women. But it seems well-known by now, particularly because of the advent of the physiques developed by the CrossFitters. They do a lot of Olympic lifts and heavier training - they can see that the females get more muscular and are able to eat more food as a result of that increased muscle

tissue and workload. This is a desirable thing because who really wants to starve themselves? It's unsustainable.

**MARK:** With the exception of someone who is eating a box of ice cream every night or polishing off a few pizzas a week, what are some things that someone who is weight training and following decent nutritional habits can do to knock off 10-15 pounds of body fat either within their lifting program or with additional HIIT training [High Intensity Interval Training]?

**STAN:** First and foremost, it is calories in and calories out. Macros [macronutrients] are only marginally important after that is taken into account. I prefer to simply expend more energy but if you are going to shave off some calories, I prefer to take them out primarily in carbohydrates. I also don't prescribe a specific diet for individuals. I try to find out what they like to eat, when and

where they like to eat, and then I design a program that would allow them to do what they normally do. Anytime you go on a "diet" and change things drastically, it's something you can't sustain, either because of your work or travel schedule, or it just requires you to eat things that you don't enjoy eating. I start with the calorie count and after that, I can make some macro adjustments, but that is way down the list in comparison to workload. If your diet is 70% right in terms of caloric intake most of the time, the way to go is in terms of workload. Once you have a reasonable intake and have established a steady training workload, you have to start taking yourself to new places in terms of your training if you want it [your body composition] to change.

**MARK:** Jon Anderson refers to that as "Deep Water".

**STAN:** Yes, Deep Water. And, in this



case, one of the most effective things would be the HIIT training you mentioned. You can get your heart rate up to 150 beats per minute or more in a number of ways: you can superset synergistic bodyparts, you can push a prowler, you can run stairs, you can ride a recumbent bike on high resistance, and it can be brief. You can start to simply increase the volume of your workload and decrease the rest periods, but it's the 100% explosive effort with a resistance component, with increased volume and less rest over time, that will cause the body to adapt to that stimulus.

**MARK:** So let's say on day one, you are doing 5 sprints and you're not in great shape. Those 5 sprints might take you 30 minutes to complete because you needed lots of rest in between. So are you saying that you just have to get a little bit better each time?

**STAN:** Yes. I was there myself doing exactly what you're saying. The first time I ran stairs after your last meet, I lost 30 pounds in 30 days. In the beginning, I just walked in the morning and then I started adding more volume and frequency in my training. I was just trying to elevate my heart rate. I started training four times a week instead of two, and in three weeks, after building my cardiovascular system from walking in the mornings, and then gradually increasing my pace, I was able to go hit the stairs.

I found a set of stairs in a parking garage at one of the casinos in Vegas and would run up the stairs as fast as I could, which wasn't terribly fast at the time. I used a timer and measured my rest periods walking my way down the stairs, and it would take me over 3 minutes before I could run another set of stairs. Initially, I was doing 5 sprints

with 3 minutes rest, and now I'm doing 12 sprints with a 1 minute rest and the times are sharp all the way through. So, gradually, you can build that kind of cardiovascular fitness and you will burn fat and stimulate muscle through the whole process.

**MARK:** Aside from HIIT training, could lifters do supersets or the 20 rep squat sets you had us do today to help them burn fat as well? It seems so simple to add that kind of thing into the end of a training session.

**STAN:** Yes, those are both great ideas and it's about consistency. It can seem pretty intense at first, but if you start doing it consistently, it gets easier and you can start increasing the weight or decreasing the rest periods. I'm not talking about this whole concept in terms of general health, now, though; I'm talking about it in terms of sports performance. If you're asking me how powerlifters can



improve their performance, I'm absolutely one to tell you that the bodybuilding work I've done over the years is what made me a great powerlifter.

**MARK:** I can tell you firsthand that it made a huge difference because I've never met somebody that was able to pick up something so quickly. You came in and did a reverse band deadlift with 765 for 2 reps. You also did a couple of other big lifts and I thought, "You know, I'm not going to be able to catch this guy on much of anything. Rhino is a bad mofo - I have to figure out a way to kick his ass!" So we did something you've never done before: we hit up some wide-stance, safety squat bar box squats with bands, and you weren't doing so well on the first few sets. After we got to about 4 plates, you said "Bigs, I figured it out," and then you started smashing on the remaining sets. I thought about it and realized that as a bodybuilder,

you were doing a huge work capacity with a huge number of movements. You were hitting all of your muscles at many different angles - it wasn't a big deal for you to do something new, set after set after set.

**STAN:** When you take a relatively inexperienced lifter and you put them on a new exercise, it can take them many weeks for something called "neural adaptation" to kick in. The body needs time in order to get used to how to recruit all of the muscles necessary, in the right order, to effectively perform the movement. But when you take a bodybuilder with 20 years of lifting experience with a whole range of exercises and put him on something new, it only takes a few sets.

**MARK:** I was just blown away because I had never seen that before. I've trained at Westside Barbell, and I've lifted with some of the greatest lifters of all time--Dave Hoff, Dave

Tate, Chuck Vogelpohl, and Louie Simmons--and I told many of the guys at Super Training that nobody will ever do anything that will impress me. You made me eat my words. Some of the things you did in our gym were earth shattering and world record breaking, at the time. I think the things you are talking about, such as the work capacity and the volume, made a huge difference for you.

**STAN:** That's the point in regards to trying to train a really top-level athlete. Louie Simmons talks about training your weaknesses. He does it with lifts. He'll find your weakness and put you on a lift that exploits it in order to build that weakness up. If your weakness is your cardio, that's a huge factor in terms of your recovery because if you have good cardio, then your red blood cell count will be higher and your blood volume will be thicker. All of those things contribute to healing the damage that

occurs after the workout. If you're not in somewhat good condition, it's going to take you longer to recover and you won't be able to train as often, which is a huge part of your progress as you become more advanced.

**MARK:** You had Silent Mike and I do a back routine today, and once the weight got a little bit heavy, you had us rotate so that our rest was basically just during each other's sets. It got progressively harder, to the point that I felt that I needed to use less and less weight for the same result. So, if I built up my work capacity to the point where that weight wasn't as difficult or I could even add weight, I imagine I would eventually be that much stronger.

**STAN:** Eventually, yes, you'll be just as strong or stronger with the increased volume as you were with less volume. I used to press 14 plates per side on leg press for 10-12 reps. Well, when I started training with Flex Wheeler, we did sets of 20 reps with 90 second rest periods, and next thing I know, I'm doing 6 plates per side - with each set, I was more and more tired. However, over the course of 4-5 weeks, I built back up to 14 plates per side for 3 sets of 20 reps and 90 seconds rest, and I was recovering fast enough to do those workouts twice a week.

My point is, as a powerlifter, you will spend years building your bench press from 225 to 450, but you will take 6 or 8 weeks building your cardiovascular system - building it is so much harder than maintaining it.

**MARK:** How many months did you go without squatting before you came back to me and did a 900 pound squat in my gym?

**STAN:** At least 6 months. I hadn't squatted a single thing before I came back to you, and within 5 weeks, we had me doubling 800 and 850.

**MARK:** That doesn't mean readers have to completely stop the main powerlifting movements to improve their cardiovascular system, does it? They could still practice the movements or variations of the movements, but move their focus to other things like their conditioning for a while?

**STAN:** Of course, but at my age I have to be careful of potentials for injury, so I don't want to carry as much body-

weight. I choose movements like the high bar, close stance squats that are more muscle than joint dominant.

**MARK:** You're 47 now. Do you feel like you can do as much as you could when you were 27?

**STAN:** Absolutely. I don't have the same top end strength: my bench went from 600 to 500. However, I can sprint stairs and I'm in excellent condition year-round. There are other things I can do. You know yourself that you have to invest in the long term plan. You lost all

that weight and were stronger at the raw bench weighing 250 than when you weighed 310. The strength comes back, but you have to stick with the program.

**MARK:** That makes sense, but as a powerlifter, that can be hard to embrace.

**STAN:** Yes, but at the same time that I was talking about training less, everyone else was talking about the Bulgarian system. I'm always a little contrary to the latest fads since I've been around for

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30 years and seen them all.

**MARK:** When you were with me, we would go hard about once a week on a squat, bench, or deadlift, or a variation of those lifts, like a reverse band or a deficit, and we switched things up quite a bit. As your goals got bigger and you got stronger, you realized you needed more recovery.

**STAN:** When you're younger and you haven't developed your potential, and you're in the beginner and intermediate stages, you can recover a little quicker because you aren't putting yourself under as much load. When you're squatting over 800 pounds every week, you might not recover as fast or you might actually decline in performance. So, I found that I had to pull back on the frequency and alternate heavy squatting and deadlifting each week. Over time, I've seen more powerlifters realize that their frequency can't be that of a weightlifter because the eccentric loading is totally different. The guys that were successful that were in the Bulgarian program were what was left after the 85 to 90 percent who quit.

**MARK:** People argue about the best program all of the time and they get very frustrated over hearing that kind of advice. This is because it takes a long time, as it did for you, to find out what is going to work best for them. That led you to stumble upon what is now known as the Lilliebridge method, which is going heavy every other week.

**STAN:** I think that people try to look towards other successful lifters to see what works for them. Malanichev said the same thing. His former coach used to put him through an enormous amount of volume and now his volume has drastically decreased.

**MARK:** Ed Coan has said the same thing on the big lifts - the squat, bench, and deadlift. He stopped doing anything over 3 reps because he found that when he was younger, he could do sets of 6 and 8 and he built a huge foundation off of that. As he got stronger and was squatting over 1000 pounds, what did he have left to do? Squat 900 pounds for 6 reps? What kind of abuse would that incur on his knees, hips and everything else?

**STAN:** Benedikt Magnusen said about the same, and he knows a little

bit about deadlifting and heavy training with his 1019 pound deadlift. He told me that he just can't pull that heavy, that often. He said he pulls less frequently and at a lower percentage of his max in training because he knows he has the top end strength when he needs it.

**MARK:** What about someone younger, 15 or 16 years old, trying to get stronger for sports? How would you start somebody like that?

**STAN:** Typically, you start guys like that with a 5x5 program. Singles and doubles don't produce enough hypertrophy, and hypertrophy training alone doesn't produce enough strength. You want to make these [the lifts] sport specific movements, not low bar, wide stance squats.

**MARK:** That's a good point. Powerlifting, as done in competition, is almost a little bit of a trick. We move in the ways that allow us to lift the most amount of weight. When I'm trying to bench the most weight, I almost drop the weight down to my chest. In training though, I try to keep things more strict. Would you say that moving weights as you would in competition should be saved for competition, and training for sports should be stricter?

**STAN:** Muscles respond best through a full range of motion for repetition work, but as powerlifters, we don't necessarily want to be at an end-range, stretched position. In powerlifting, we don't want to reach those ranges of motion. But in sports performance, as a football player or sprinter, you want to develop the kinds of skills that are necessary to improve your sprint or vertical jump, and there are angles you need to respect. For a squat or a sprint, you can't have a completely vertical shin or back and expect to be explosive out of that position.

**MARK:** You have some of the most vertical shin positioning I've seen on a squatter.

**STAN:** Yes, and that wouldn't translate very well to a sprint. For that, you want to be doing things like a front squat or a high bar squat. And then, there is also a limit as to how much of that actually translates to actual sports performance. At some point, getting stronger doesn't necessarily help and can actually hinder sports performance. I like the basics and I believe that they

should be part of every sports program and I'm frustrated when they aren't. Full body movements that require you to use your core, incorporate multiple muscle groups working together, challenging balance and coordination--that's sports.

**MARK:** Every time I ask you for advice, I think I'm always looking for something a little fancier, but now I know, better. It's always going to be the real deal; something that is effective and something that works.

**STAN:** I hope that we are coming full circle, like we have done with nutrition in the last 40 years in terms of cholesterol and sodium and their value to athletes. For a while, everyone was so crazed with their instability training, and ladder running to develop speed, and box jumping without squatting. This is all accessory work; you can't improve your squat by box jumping, but you can certainly improve your box jump by squatting.

Resistance training is how you build strong ligaments and tendons for your knees and other joints, especially for these dynamic sports where you have lots of angles and change of direction. That is all supported by heavy training like squats or prowler pushes. You're not necessarily building a powerlifter, you are building a stronger, more durable athlete that can perform better on a wide variety of movements. I think we are coming back to that now. Football programs are using weight training consistently. Even basketball players like Kobe Bryant are doing it in the offseason, and he maintains with just one session a week in season. For athletes, it takes so many months or years to build a strong physique, and you can build your cardiovascular system in just a matter of weeks.

**MARK:** Not many people realize this, but you aren't only working with high level bodybuilders and powerlifters. You also work with a lot of professional athletes.

**STAN:** Yes, I have been training professional athletes since back in college at University of Oregon in 1993. I worked with Keith Williams. He was a running back for the Vikings, an Olympic sprinter and he beat Carl Lewis' 60 meter indoor [sprint], and that was a matter of increasing his body weight and muscular strength so that he could be a fast

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sprinter. I've worked with NFL players from over a dozen different teams. I've also worked with NBA players, soccer players, MMA fighters, and I believe that often, these guys are underweight and under-strengthened for their sports.

In the case of an NBA player I worked with last year, he was sidelined with back pain. A few questions later, I realized that his college weight was 10 pounds heavier than his NBA weight. The guy was just under muscled. In college, maybe he was eating more or maybe he was playing less. He got to the NBA and they tend to run you pretty hard, so he ended up compromising lean body mass as a result. That's what worried me about LeBron James when he went on his diet over the summer. It's the kind of thing that makes you susceptible to injury under those dynamic forces. Even with injuries, I try to maintain or gain lean body mass, and the best way to do that is under load. As long as you can find a functional form that doesn't compromise the athlete's injuries, you should be loading them. For tall guys, it might be something as simple as a farmer's carry, which still builds a lot of stability and strength through the whole body. Just about with everyone I work with, I try to put more muscle mass on them.

I worked with a 175 pound track athlete for the Oregon Ducks in 1994. He was worried that he wouldn't start the next year for running back because the next choice was bigger and stronger than him, so he came to me for help. Over about 6 months, we put about 17 pounds of muscle on him by decreasing his distance work, increasing resistance work, and increasing his calories. It was still sports specific work—prowler pushes, running sand, squats and clean and presses. His track coach was livid because I told him to never run more than 100 meters. This is Phil Knight, co-founder of Nike, and his track team, and I'm telling this athlete to tell his coach what he is and isn't going to do. The coach called him out in front of the whole team. He ended up taking second in the Pac-10 championships at 192 pounds and ran his fastest 100-meter dash ever, a 10.17 second run or something like that. He then went on to set a record for the most touchdowns ever at the University of Oregon that

year, and they went on to go to the Rose Bowl. It's a great thing for athletes when they begin to buy into the program and understand the long-term benefits of increased lean body mass (e.g., preventing injuries). It's great when they start to build stability and muscle, as well as see an increase in their performance.

**MARK: With a lot of these athletes, did you have them doing the same movements that you are always preaching, with similar diet principles?**

**STAN:** There are so many things you can take out of programs. Work for the sake of work is just exercise, it's not training. Just because someone sweats, it doesn't mean that they are becoming a better athlete. That's for amateurs. You have to be getting stronger to perform better.

**MARK: That's a great quote! How have you acquired all of this knowledge? Is it trial and error?**

**STAN:** Yes. I got to college weighing 140 pounds and I wanted to get bigger. After two years of training, I only gained 16 or 18 pounds, and at my first bodybuilding show, I weighed 158 pounds. I realized I was doing something wrong.

**MARK: Wow, that's embarrassing!**

**STAN:** It was embarrassing! Especially when I was going to the gym 6 days a week, 2 hours a day. The problem is, that's too much, and I wasn't eating enough. The bodybuilding diet was chicken and tuna.

**MARK: And you probably weren't eating enough fat. At the time, fat was frowned upon. Were you lean?**

**STAN:** Yes, I was really lean. But there's a point at which lean is a detriment. When you get under about 10% body fat, things get more difficult. You get joint strain and other negative effects.

**MARK: Is it possible to get too lean for one's sport? It's cool to look good, but don't you need a little bit of tissue on you?**

**STAN:** When you get down below 10%, or 8% [body fat] certainly, your performance is going to suffer. Your strength to weight ratio will also suffer, as well as your joints, your endurance for dynamic sports like football, your ability to endure impact—that will all suffer. Guys like Rich Froning and other athletes that look great in pictures and competition don't typically train at that

body fat level. They are only at that level around competition time in order to make the weight cut. That's why bodybuilding is a weird world. When you're on stage, you can't fight your way out of a wet paper bag. You're one step away from being hauled off in a gurney. I don't train athletes like that and I don't see it as a means of peak performance.

**MARK: There are some people that will just naturally perform well at a low body fat percentage, though, and people sometimes take that to be the norm. People also confuse what you did, saying that you did bodybuilding and powerlifting at the same time. In reality, you hung out with powerlifters when you were powerlifting, and you hung out with bodybuilders when you were bodybuilding.**

**STAN:** Right. When I was powerlifting, I tried to get my weight up to 280 or more and when I was bodybuilding, I got down to 250. But I never got too heavy because I had to turn around and do a bodybuilding show, and I never got too shredded because I had to turn around again and lift heavy.

**MARK: So you weren't lifting heavy weights while you were completely shredded?**

**STAN:** No. I remember many times, such as when I lifted in the Animal Cage at the Arnold a week after I competed in the Flex Pro bodybuilding competition, and they wanted me to do the 200 pound dumbbells on incline bench, and I struggled with them. When I weigh 285, I do them like nothing, but when I'm 250 and just did a show, it's a whole different world and you can't maintain that strength.

**MARK: What do you think about powerlifters dropping weight for competition at the novice and intermediate level? Someone who weighs 175 and wants to compete at 165 in a competition, what should they do?**

**STAN:** I think that you can inhibit your progress by cutting weight all the time. In high school, I was always overtraining and undereating. Ed Coan started at 165 and ended up at 242. His progression over the years was to get as big and strong as possible to see what he was capable of doing. At what point will you build a sustained level of strength and body mass?

**MARK: I get a lot of people who tell**

me they want to bench, squat, and deadlift x, y, and z weights, but they also want to drop weight in order to be a little more competitive. I always ask them, "Why don't you just stick to goal number one and worry about the weights you lift on the platform before you worry about the bodyweight that you do it at?"

**STAN:** Yes, I've always just wanted to be as strong as possible. I look at the weights, not the weight classes. I wasn't looking at what the weight classes were for a 2300 pound total, or the Wilks formula. I just wanted to lift the most weight I could.

**MARK:** Exactly. Eric Lilliebridge just squatted 914 without wraps. Who cares what he weighed?

**STAN:** Right, it doesn't matter. As you make your way into an elite level, you are going to need more muscle mass, and that is going to equate to more weight.

**MARK:** You mentioned you grew up very thin. You told me you actually got a scholarship to college for soccer.

**STAN:** That's right, but I got there and the coach said that I was too skinny for soccer and wanted me to go to the weight room. I grew up playing a variety of sports, but when I stepped into the weight room, I told the soccer coach that that was it. I just wanted to get jacked. I was tired of being scrawny.

Every time I go and do a seminar for a high school sports team, I ask them, "How many of you know that lifting weights builds muscle?" They all raise their hands, and I tell them that, well, that's wrong. You break muscle down when you lift weights. That's how we start the conversation on eating. You have to eat, and eat consistently in order to build muscle. The coaches only get the athletes for 1 hour a day, and sometimes it gets lost in translation that it is the responsibility of the athletes to eat and recover from the training.

**MARK:** When you transitioned from soccer to lifting weights more, did it take you a long time to gain size?

**STAN:** Yes. As we just discussed, I was doing everything wrong, training too much and eating too little. Then I ran into a longtime friend, Mark Delp, owner of Delp's Gym in Eugene, Oregon.

**MARK:** What was that gym like? Was it old school? Did it have a certain

smell to it and stuff like that?

**STAN:** Yes, the dumbbells were all on the floor and it had a very distinct smell. You didn't go in the bathroom, and it was full of ex or future convicts, but everybody in there was serious and lifting some big weights. Everyone just wanted to be strong. It was quite an interesting place. Mark competed in bodybuilding, as did many people in his gym, and he told me I had to train a little less and eat a little more.

**MARK:** I think it's great to hear that you had a mentor like that. People look at athletes like you or me, or Ed Coan, and think we did it all on our own. It's good to hear that people like that actually run into people who help or inspire them. We all need help.

**STAN:** Even after studying as much as I did and learning what I have through observation and competing at the level I did for 20 years, when I wanted to be really great, I packed my bags and went down to train with Flex Wheeler every day. And when I wanted to be great at powerlifting, I packed my bags and came over here to Sacramento. I lived in an extended stay, and trained with you every day!

There's a point at which, whether or not you think you know it all, a collaboration can be hugely beneficial. You can put ideas on the table and come up with a more consistent game plan or have someone like you pushing the team. Every time we came into the gym, it was a competition. That's what really helps you excel. People say, "If you're the strongest guy in your group, get a new group," and that's true. You need to be around the kind of people that take you to another level.

**MARK:** It helps when you come in and say "I want to squat 800 pounds," and I say, "Okay, I've seen that before", not "Hey, that's a lofty goal, I don't think it's going to happen, buddy."

**STAN:** Well fortunately for me, I didn't know the sport, and when I squatted that 854 pounds without wraps, I didn't know it was a world record. I didn't know it hadn't been done before, particularly by a guy who was 40 years old. Or, if we're in the gym and Hoss Cartwright bangs out a few reps with 800, I think, "Who's this fat guy squatting 800?" and that becomes believable

to me. After seeing that it can happen, and training at that level for a while, I was doing it, too, sure enough.

**MARK:** So what's the deal with the noises?

**STAN:** I don't know where they come from! I don't even hear it most of the time, or the music, or anything else in the background. Even 20 years ago, doing dips back at home, I remember people complaining about it.

**MARK:** Why do you move so slow on eccentric portion of the squat? Could you move faster?

**STAN:** I think of it as keeping tension on a spring. I don't think I could go any faster, I would just fold up like an accordion; I wouldn't be able to stop. If I keep tension on the way down, I feel like I can always pop back up.

**MARK:** It was really rare, in all the times that we trained together, that you would miss a lift. You might have had an error here and there, but I don't recall any missed squats. I only recall one missed bench attempt - a 595 pounder in training, leading into your first meet. You still benched 606 at the meet. When you missed the 595 bench, we had a conversation about your form--the same one I had been having with you repeatedly up until then--and I told you that you needed to decelerate the weight with your lats by tucking your elbows in more. It was really impressive that you took the information from me and were able to apply it to a heavy weight with very little practice.

**STAN:** I went home that night and thought about it and practiced it in the mirror, pushing my triceps into my lats, and with only one more bench workout before the meet, I didn't even feel that 606 bench on the way down at the meet. The pecs weren't loaded on the way down. I realized that when you lock in with your lats, you actually break inertia with your lats, and the emphasis on form in powerlifting made so much more sense to me. When you had me switch from a narrow, shoulder-width stance to a wide stance with the safety bar, it took my squat from 755 to an easy 821 at that meet. The 854 would have been easy too if I hadn't slightly lost my balance. There's such a huge difference that can be made with technique, bar placement, and foot placement. **PM**