

JO JORDAN

as told to Powerlifting USA by Ben Tatar of Critical Bench

Thanks for the interview opportunity, Jo. Go ahead and tell us about yourself. I'm 37 years old and was born in Alabama, but I grew up in an Army family, so I am from all over. I'm married to my high school sweetheart, Kim, and we have three beautiful daughters, Meredith, Lynsey and Norah, and we live in Oviedo, Florida. My job is that of a stay-at-home dad and I have been since 2004. It was an adjustment after being a retail manager for a while, but I have enjoyed every day of it.

Where do you compete and what are your best lifts?

I compete in the APF, IPA and SPF. My best lifts at 242 are a 970 squat, 650 bench and a 720 deadlift. At 275 pounds, I have squatted 1,003, benched 630 and pulled 650. I plan on being at 275 for a while, so the numbers there should get better here soon.

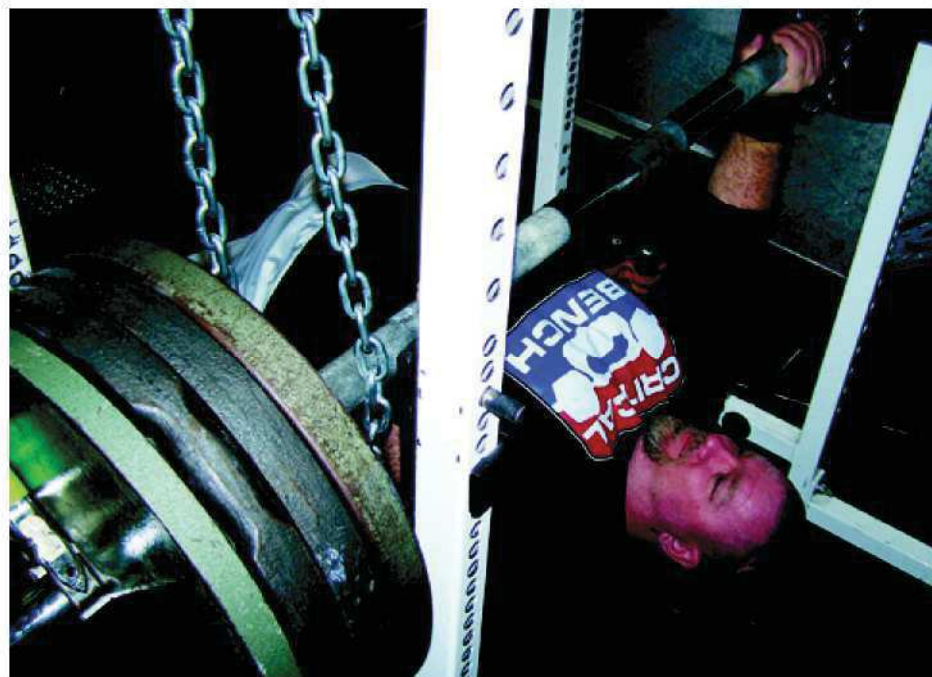
Tell us five things that you love about being a powerlifter.

1. The camaraderie between powerlifters or strength athletes in general.
2. Knowing that at the PTA meetings I'm the strongest SOB in the room. Ha ha.
3. Having people not want to sit next to me on planes.
4. Being able to lift heavy crap.
5. Having to take the collars off my shirts so they'll fit my neck.

Let's talk about your training. How do you set up your workouts and meet cycles?

Recently I have begun working with Jeremy Frey and doing block periodization. There are basically 3 blocks: Accumulation, Transmutation and Realization.

"The accumulation mesocycle focuses on the development of generalized abilities necessary for success in powerlifting. This mesocycle is also very important for increasing the potential working effect of the following block's mesocycle. Morphological changes (maximal strength, hypertrophy) of the active and supporting musculature and of the connective tissues, including the ligaments and tendons, will be of utmost importance during the accumulation block. The second block will be that of transmutation, in which the training load becomes more focused toward the special strength preparation needed for the sport of powerlifting. Fatigue will accumulate during this mesocycle as more workouts will be performed during the microcycles, and these training sessions will contain a higher volume and intensity than what was found in the accumulation mesocycle. This block will build upon the generalized traits developed in the accumulation block and transfer them in



Jo Jordan has benched 650 pounds at 242 pounds bodyweight

specific preparedness for the upcoming competition. The realization mesocycle is meant to be directed toward achievement of peak performance in competition. This block is traditionally referred to as the taper. Because this block begins under the influence of the accumulated fatigue of the previous transmutation mesocycle, restorative measures are very important, as is a reduction in the volume and load level of the workouts. During this stage, we will develop event specific technique and tactics as well as normalize the levels of special strength preparedness and special work capacity in the competitive exercises. During this block, the majority of work will be done with the competitive exercises as well as with the special development exercises, which serve to retain special strength." — Brendan Gonrig.

I've quoted Brendan here since he can explain it much more efficiently than I. My description would be much more like... "It's hard." Seriously, though, it has helped me recover faster. I'm less tired during and after a workout and I feel that I have become stronger overall and not just on the three lifts.

Brendan sounds like a smart dude. What would you say was the best and worst advice you were ever told.

The best advice I've been given is to 'listen to your body and follow your gut.' If you're in the

gym and feel like crap, the weight feels heavier than it should and everything hurts, then it's time to back off and let things regroup and heal. For the longest time I would just train heavy as long as I could and through some agonizing pain with the assistance of pain killers. In the end all I got was more messed up and ended up having to take a good six months off from any heavy squatting or pulling to let my lower back heal and there are still days it hurts, so it will always be a work in progress.

This brings me to the worst advice. "It's only pain, it'll go away. Just train through it." There's a difference between being hurt and injured. Hurt is something you can deal with and work around. Injured means that no matter what you do it's not going to get better unless you take a break. The trick is finding out which one is what you're dealing with.

You've had your fair share of being hurt as well as injured and you've battled back, which is great to see. Tell us about your training facility and atmosphere.

I train at Orlando Barbell and it's a very fun, but challenging, place. We all bust each others' balls constantly, push each other to go beyond what we think we are capable of and support one another in and out of the gym. They are like my family. I know I can depend on them to help me if I'm in need and I would do the same for them. For the most part it's fun and loose. Lots of

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Jo Jordan pulling 705 at the Pro/Am (left) and ready for some serious training (right)



loud, angry music and we joke around, give each other a hard time and just talk trash in general. However, when a meet is coming up it becomes a little more intense. There are certain numbers that need to be hit or reps that need to be achieved. So even though we still have a good time the atmosphere is a lot more serious.

Could you share with us a really hardcore moment, a funny moment and moment that has changed you thus far in your powerlifting journey?

Hardcore moment – at one particular meet I had missed my opener of 903 and then got it on my second. I had intended to squat a grand at this meet, so figured *what the heck* and I went for 1,003 on my third attempt. A difference of 100 pounds from one attempt to the next is something I had never done or advise anyone to do. After descending with the weight and getting the up call I stalled ¾ of the way up and had to show some testicular fortitude as I struggled through it and finally stood up. It was a good lift and my one and only 1,000 pound squat thus far.

Funny moment – At AWPC Worlds a while back, myself and my handlers had missed hearing my name as the next bencher. We were frantically trying to set my shirt, wrap my wrists and get to the bench before the clock ran out. After taking the handoff and bringing the bar down I was watching the clock above me instead of the bar. Luckily the bar hit the right spot on my chest and I got the press call. As a conditioned response I pressed it to lockout and got the lift, but never actually watched the bar touch. I do know that there was one second left on the clock when I did get the call. We all let out a sigh of relief and joked about it in the back, but it's not something I hope to ever do again.

A moment that changed me – I'd have to say when my friend Bob Youngs was diagnosed with Leukemia. It made me realize that you can't take today or tomorrow for granted. It's not guaranteed. He has made a remarkable recovery, which also showed me that if you have the will to overcome and the support of family and friends that anything is possible. Bob is an

amazing person to me.

What fires you up?

AC/DC and squatting. Squatting fires me up because you get to handle a lot of weight that would crush most people. The feel of your blood pressure rising, blown capillaries, blood shot eyes, etc. It really gets me going when someone hits a big squat or sets a new PR. It makes me want to train that much harder and put more weight on the bar. I have the most fun while squatting.

What makes Jo Jordan happy?

Seeing my girls and my wife happy. If they are sad or hurting it tears me up inside and I can't help but feel like I should fix it. Sometimes I can by a hug, a lollipop, lending an ear or just snuggling on the couch and watching *Hannah Montana* or *The Suite Life* (with my girls, of course). Luckily, the fixable things have outnumbered the non-fixable ones. So as long as they're happy, Daddy is happy.

What makes Jo Jordan different from everyone else?

When I was four I had what some would call a near death experience. I had gotten into a power substation and climbed up one of the poles. As I reached down to help a friend up I lost my grip and started to fall. I reached out and grabbed whatever I could, but it happened to be a 40,000 volt powerline that I latched onto. I hung there for a couple of minutes until some construction workers that happened to be on their lunch outside heard me screaming. They jumped the fence and got me down by using a 2-by-4. I had second and third degree burns over ~85% of my body and had to spend two weeks in the hospital. I still have scars on my head, right hand and right shoulder. My mother even still has the shirt I was wearing that had to be peeled off of me. I was lucky.

Oh man, that is insane! You're here for reason, Jo. You survived and have a great future. Speaking of the future, what are your upcoming goals?

As of right now my goal is to finally total 2,400.

After that it will of course be 2,500, 2,600 and so on. I will most likely be staying in the 275 class where I am most comfortable and won't have to drop the 18 pounds—I used to make the 242s. So I'm a bit excited about that. However, benching three-times my bodyweight is something I've been shooting at for a couple of years now and would love to accomplish this within the next year.

How do you see the future of powerlifting?

It's going to keep growing, people are going to continue to get stronger and gear is going to keep improving. I look forward to it and I'm up for the challenge.

Tell us something random that you never shared with public before.

When I go to bed I sometimes listen to Enya to calm my nerves and help me sleep better.

What is your advice for strong people who want to be super strong?

Stay consistent with your training. Just because you're strong doesn't mean it will stay that way. Slacking off just because you've reached a particular goal is going to do nothing but set you back and you'll be playing catch-up again. Also, don't be afraid to try something new. If what you've done in the past isn't working any longer, don't be afraid to reach out to other lifters to find out what they are doing different and how it works for them. Chances are that it may benefit you too.

What shirt do you use and what is it like?

I wear a Metal Ace shirt. It's almost like wearing a neoprene dive shirt. Ha ha. It's pretty thick material that is very supportive throughout the movement and has a great deal of pop off the chest. Took me some time to get used to it, but it's finally coming around.

How have the shirts changed over the past five years?

They've become thicker, more supportive, tighter, more explosive and more expensive. It's the way most sports progress though. Baseball bats have become lighter, better designed and

engineered. Same thing with tennis rackets. It's the nature of the beast. Whatever is going to help people excel in their chosen sport.

What are your favorite exercises for a bigger bench press, squat and dead?

Bench press – Close grip bench, close grip floor press vs. chains, reverse band bench, DB row, band tricep extensions.

Squat – Box squat vs. chains or bands, GHR, reverse hyper, band leg curls, SS Bar suspended GM's.

Deadlift – DL vs. bands, GHR, Reverse hyper, Pull through, °45 back extension.

What does your wife and family think of your powerlifting?

My wife thinks I'm a bit crazy wanting to get under the weight that I do, but she supports me 100% and has gone out of her way to make sure I'm able to compete in certain meets or attend training sessions that simply can't be missed. She tolerates the long hours I spend in the gym and even though she still gets pissed at me from time to time about all of it, she has never said I need to stop or quit and has even talked me out of quitting a time or two.

My daughters think it's great. They'll watch my training videos and tell me I'm strong, scream encouragement at meets and tell their teachers and friends about how much weight I

lift. They are my biggest fans and I never want to disappoint them in any way.

How do you want to be remembered?

As a person that had a good sense of humor and was willing to help out in any way he could. Someone that loved his family and friends and respected those that returned the respect.

What do you think of the people involved in the sport of powerlifting?

I think they're great. I have met amazing people from all over with a lot of different backgrounds that can all come together in one venue and just enjoy being there and having fun. Powerlifters are very giving and approachable. Willing to share ideas and training methods or just share stories with. All in all I enjoy spending time with powerlifters more than I do most any other group of people.

Switching gears, what supplements do you take?

- Biotest Supplements:
- Anaconda
 - Surge Workout Fuel
 - Surge Recovery Fuel
 - Metabolic Drive
 - Flameout
 - Curcumin
 - Z12

Supplements from AnabolicSecrets.com.

If you could be any kind of animal what kind of animal would you be?

An eagle. They are majestic, powerful, swift and respected.

What do you like doing away from powerlifting?

I enjoy watching cartoons with my daughters and going to the movies with my family. My girls are what my world revolves around. So as long as I'm doing something with them, I'm usually happy.

In closing, is there anything you would like to say or anyone who you would like to thank?

I'd like to thank my sponsors, *CriticalBench.com*, *EliteFTS* and *APT Pro Wrist Straps*. They have all been amazing to work with and have helped me more than they'll ever know.

My wife and children for tolerating me being gone so much, and for being so supportive and loving at the same time. I'd be nothing without you.

My training partners for all of your help and patience over the years. I'd never be where I'm at without all of you at OBB.

Last, but not least, Jeremy Frey for all of his assistance and guidance with my training. It's greatly appreciated! «

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