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Consult your physician before starting any exercise program.

INTRO

By Zach Even – Esh

This has been a beautiful journey since beginning my career in the fitness, strength and conditioning industry. I have met my best friends since starting in this business all while doing what I love.

I've learned how powerful and magnificent the mind is and that the mind is truly what makes EVERYTHING happen. I've been given the gift to help people like YOU, and in turn, this flourishes to other areas in your life, and on and on the circle continues.

I am not here because of my own actions. I am here because of the team of friends who always support me, the people who purchase my products and write to me about how happy they are with the information and of course, my family.

My father has been a mentor to me all my life. I've seen him do everything most people say can't be done. He has taught me to stay persistent and to believe all the time, no matter what the situation looks to be on the surface!

My mother, who would always bring me to Israel to spend time with my Grandparents. It is there I met my best friend, my Grandfather! It is there I was taken to Underground gyms to train for bodybuilding contests and traveled through some of the most amazing areas I have ever seen!

My great friend and mentor, Alwyn Cosgrove, has guided me through thick and thin. Can there truly be a tougher man, a more genuine man out there? His examples of simply being himself, and always giving to others selflessly, never asking for anything in return, shows me what it truly means to lead from the front.

My homeboy, Jason C Brown, a great friend, a great motivator, always making me laugh and always down to earth. Jason has educated me and made me a better Coach every time we hang out!

My Coaches, my business partner, my friend, Ryan Lee. I would not be paying my mortgage or taking my wife on vacations without his education. Beyond Ryan's coaching is his friendship. A man who shows me what it means to truly be a family man and a great friend. From my days of training others for \$ 5 per hour to speaking in front of thousands, Ryan has helped me realize my true potential!

Jim Labadie, the dreamer, the achiever, the fellow jersey boy! Jim has helped me see beyond the ordinary and has taught me how to see what life can truly become. Jim has taught me that life is meant to live our dreams, NOT dream our life!

The members of Underground Strength Coach! I am grateful for your ego free, selfless ways! You're always giving to one another and making our web site feel like a family! I have a home at The Underground when I always thought I'd be the outsider who carried logs, stones and sandbags!

Brian Grasso, the man who has shown passion like no other, giving to the most important population in the world, kids! Brian has shown me that if you go for something you go BIG! Taking his information and the IYCA around the world has shown me that The Underground must go around the world. We are all connected and we can all share and spread the knowledge as soon as we pick up our first sandbag, stone, kettlebell or sledge hammer!

My brothers, who are quite crazy and all so different, no matter what, in the end I must make you proud and set an example as well. We're all about becoming the very best we can be and that means to be magnificent at all times!

The team at Elitefts.com! It is an honor to be considered a team member and I would never have made it without all the knowledge I've gained from all of you. Most of all, you are all genuine, down to earth, humble people. I am blessed to have friends like you. Thank you for giving me the chance and the opportunity!

Most of all, this manual is dedicated to my wife, Danielle, and our baby girl, Summer. The loves of my life who drive me to be greater every day and to live life fully, so I can set the right example of what it means to live life to the fullest. Thank you from the bottom of my heart and thank you for being my sunshine every single day!

Without giving thanks and being grateful, I would not be here. Thank you to all who have supported me and believed in me from day one. I am a blessed man!

Now, it is time to enter the world of Underground training! Whether you are a combat athlete or not, this style of training is for you! No rules, no judges. Just train with pure freedom and allow your training to become your art and your meditation!

Keep it Underground, and always remember, you must "Pay it forward"!

In strength,

Zach Even – Esh

The Underground Strength Coach

CHAPTER 1

WHY CREATE YOUR OWN GYM?

First question you may be asking is, “Why create a program for us to train at home?” That is the short, unedited version of your question I bet! Ask anyone else, and they want to be at a gym with the high tech equipment, the cool machines, “the atmosphere”, and bla bla bla!

Hey, I am not here to pull any punches, so pay close attention and we’re gonna get you rolling on a tough program. A program to help you dominate the competition! That is, if you decide to stick to the programs and bust your butt with them!

Now, there are my reasons, some of them are for keeping you out of a commercial gym which has too many rules to follow for combat athletes. This is why you will be training in your own home, outdoors, or at some make shift gym in a shack!

First of all, I do not want you training at a gym where they make you feel like an outcast because you break into a sweat every time you train, or use more than 225 lbs on any movement! These gyms have employees who will shake you down like the Sopranos to ensure you have left no trace of sweat behind on that last pretty machine you used!

You will create your own world, your own atmosphere, your own training zone where there are no rules and records are always broken! Turn that garage or basement into a dungeon, a place where no one can steal your thunder. Pump your favorite CD and set aside a time of 30 – 45 minutes that is undisturbed. Put up your own posters and pictures that will motivate you. Remember Rocky 3 and 4 when Rocky goes away to train? Well, he needed that environment to get back the Eye of the Tiger.

People look at you in a funny way in those ridiculous pretty gyms when you have The Eye of the Tiger. Most people are there simply to stay fit or work the beach muscles.

How many gym members do you see hitting heavy deadlifts, heavy dumbbell snatches, heavy barbell rows and other challenging movements? Not many I can assure you!

Next reason is you need to stay away from machines, especially those that allow you to lay down and sit down too much. They make you lazy, they don't allow the body to work as hard as it should and they don't allow you to move your body freely. Your body may not be able to move in the machines guided path which can lead to injury.

As a grappler, everything you do on the mat or in the ring is ever changing, never predictable. A grappling match, a street fight, an MMA fight or practice is never absolute. We can never say that every time we hit a low single, throw a hook or jab, your opponent reacts the same way. Your opponent can react in an infinite number of ways!

Free weights help your body develop balance, they recruit more muscles to work together and they strengthen tendons and ligaments to help reduce your chance of injuries. Machines will not be as beneficial as far as strengthening tendons, ligaments or balance. There is a huge difference between squats or lunges on a smith machine compared to a barbell.

I saw a few wrestlers training at a gym that I used to go to when I did not have my own place. I watched them perform leg extensions, shoulder presses on a machine, chest presses on a machine, etc. I felt like shaking them and taking them through my own training regime!

Training like a bodybuilder using machines and excessive cables can get you big and muscular but it will not give you the strength, power and speed you really need to be a beast on the mat or in the ring!

In addition, we want to train movements, not exercises. Let me make this even more specific, I prefer to incorporate **ground based movements!** This basically means your

feet are grounded as opposed to you laying on your back or being secured inside a bench or machine.

Let's look at some of the benefits that come with ground based movements:

- Strengthening the joints
- Strengthens the entire body, recruits more muscles
- Economic – you get a lot of work done in less time because you are working more muscles at the same time
- Most sports are ground based, even in Grappling, you are on your back and constantly moving. Machines, benches, etc lock you in place
- Your core truly gets worked

I have seen many grapplers who look jacked but get a rude awakening from their thinner opponent. Sure, the opponent is highly skilled, but, the opponent was surely doing tons of dips, push ups, squats, lunges, jumping movements and pull ups. These movements develop athleticism and strengthen the body in a manner that machines don't!

In addition, the bodybuilding training will work against you, limiting your ability to gain strength, power & speed. The emphasis on moving slowly, feeling the muscle and squeezing through the movement gets you away from “train the way you want to move.” If I want to be explosive as an athlete, then I should train explosively during my resistance training!

What is functional strength? Functional simply means that you are able to use it effectively for what ever endeavor you are involved in. Functional training for you might not be functional for a soccer player. The training philosophies outlined in this book will give you functional strength specifically for combat.

Picking up a weight from the ground and lifting it to your chest explosively might be considered functional. Try lifting a sand bag up and placing it on a barrel or a table next

to you. This move has you incorporate lifting from a low level and rotating – very similar to hitting takedowns and cutting the corner, or performing a throw in Judo.

We are not trying to mimic movements in combat and then replicate them using weights. We want to strengthen the musculature and improve the body's motor behavior by training explosively and correctly. Functional training is such an overused term that I truly dislike using it, but, sometimes I do!

Back to training at home....

Another reason for you to train at home is that you will have the necessary equipment that many commercial gyms do not have. And if they do have the equipment, it is not in a convenient place for you. Outfitting your home with a small make shift gym will be easy and relatively inexpensive.

Training with the “right stuff” will put you on the road to the success not only physically but mentally as well! You will quickly see how our style of ‘Underground’ training has a great carry over to the psychological aspect of your training. We need the proper mental attitude, but that is probably another book in itself! Instead, I will outline key methods you can use quickly and easily for excellent results in your mental game. And believe me, this new mindset will have tremendous carry over to your performance!

My own experience in training at gyms has taken me literally through much of NJ, and at times, other countries! I found one place, 30 minutes away that suited me perfectly when I began to take bodybuilding seriously. The gym was dark and dungeon like. The music was loud, very loud! Never was a radio station playing, only CD's in order to avoid the annoying commercials that came on every 5 minutes.

The loud music put all the lifters in the zone. It also made it too loud for conversation, so distractions of small talk never occurred, keeping the gym a serious place, a dead serious place, nothing less. Too many other gyms have people reading the newspaper and doing

the same exercises using the same weights year after year. Their results speak for themselves, unfortunately. If the radio shuts off for a minute you hear everyone chatting. It sounds like a crowded coffee shop!

When I entered this gym there was a certain smell in the air. The smell of hungry gladiators pushing their mind and body to new limits. Everyone was sweating! Heavy weights were dropped on the floor constantly and no one told us to be nice to the weights. We were there to go to war. War against our training partners and war against the weights. If a CD was being changed you heard no one talking. You heard weights clanking together, weights being dropped to the floor and people grunting while pushing out those last few reps that separate the men from the boys.

My training partner was a former wrestler. I knew my best training partner would have to be a wrestler for him to be able to understand & accept the intensity of the workouts. Pain tolerance was not a problem for either of us and we pushed each other to our limits and beyond.

Often times I recall my partner getting nauseous and taking trips to the bathroom. We all had the eye of the tiger. The gym reminded of the gym Rocky trains at in Rocky III, it was called TOUGH Gym. When Rocky walked in he saw all the boxers had the eye of the tiger. It pushed Rocky to a new level that he never trained at before when he was “training modern”.

As years and years passed, I evolved into my own training style and left the bodybuilding scene. I grew interested in keeping the gladiator within well and alive. I pursued mixed martial arts and learned that my strength training was truly inadequate, especially against smaller opponents which initially shocked the heck out of me.

I suffered numerous injuries that sidelined me for more than just a few months. Knee injuries and shoulder injuries hit me quickly. The years of leg extensions, leg presses, upper body machine work and basically, very little ground based training did me in.

In response to my frustration and anger I researched how to properly train for the sport of grappling and mixed martial arts. I am still researching and my mind changes almost daily because of all the new information I come across.

I have completely changed my strength and conditioning training programs (compared to my bodybuilding days) and in turn I feel healthier and more athletic. Unfortunately, during high school I read all the bodybuilding magazines. I followed the programs outlined in them and they had very little carry over to wrestling and MMA.

As you will learn through reading this manual, hopefully more than once, training like a bodybuilder is one of the biggest mistakes you can ever make as a combat athlete! The workouts in the 'Gladiator Training Manual' will be just what you need to gain the extra edge over your opponents and will make a huge difference in your future performances!

Bodybuilding movements do have their place in our programs a little bit, but not a lot. Our sets, reps, rest periods, speed of reps and choices of exercises will help you stand out from the competition. Let us delve into how you should start training for combat.

CHAPTER 2

Prepare Yourself The RIGHT Way

This chapter is going to give you a thorough understanding of what must be done and how it must be done to be more successful on the mat or in the ring. Body weight training is a big component to improve your strength and muscular endurance for combative sports.

Especially in the beginning of a program, I like to use a lot of bodyweight exercises to get the body alive and prepared for heavier free weight type exercises in the near future. Before any of my clients touch a weight I want them to master a hand full of body weight exercises, and become very good at many more.

After all, you are using your body in combat. Hand to hand combat it is, and so you must be able to master your own body first! There is a progression to everything, and one key component of smart training is always looking at the long term. Even when your days of competitive grappling and fighting are over, you'll still be a Gladiator. You'll need longevity because you will always be involved in some form of training, unless you are too beat up from years and years of uneducated training methods!

Training with your own body can be adapted in countless ways & they are convenient as well. Most of the exercises require no equipment. We can change the position of our hands, arms and legs to work different muscles and change the pressure we place on the body. Elevate your legs or balance on one leg and then an exercise gets changed dramatically!

If you so choose, you do not have to purchase any of the equipment I recommend and you can simply do the body weight exercises and you will easily be outdistancing yourself from the competition! I say this because most combat athletes only train on the mat. This is one aspect of training and with regards to becoming stronger, more powerful

and improving overall conditioning you are limited by what you do on the mat. Specialized strength training gives you the extra edge that many others are not dedicated enough to utilize!

Make no mistake about it, body weight training can be brutal and exhausting when done properly. Still, it is only one component of a solid strength & conditioning program. I am a firm believer in using a variety of tools to make the most of a program.

Even an advanced lifter / athlete should incorporate body weight strength training in his / her routine. Every athlete I train, including myself, will use more than one bodyweight exercise each workout, especially during the warm up portion! The most common used exercises here are pull ups & the many variations, parallel bar dips & the many variations, push ups & the many variations and squats or lunges & their many variations. If I list each variation we can get probably over 75 exercises just by varying the 4 exercises just mentioned!

Shameless Plug: For the Ultimate resource in bodyweight training, visit www.BodyWeightU.com

The next portion of our strength training involves free weights and bodyweight conditioning together. If you have no access to free weights, implements such as sand bags, wheel barrows, sledge hammers, stones, logs and buckets of sand will work very well!

No machines, no cables, just good old dumbbells and barbells, & a few toys from Home Depot or the local hardware store can turn you into a modern day gladiator! Back in the 1800's and early 1900's there were no machines. Those men back in the day were called strong men. Not only did they look strong, they WERE STRONG! They had massive strength and were able to use their muscles to lift enormous weights, lift cars, people and other odd objects. They could lift hundreds of pounds over their head using one arm!

Real strength will come from using unusual objects such as the Home Depot products I listed above in addition to the free weight & / or body weight strength training.

Free weights force your ligaments and tendons to get stronger as well as the muscles. The problem with machines is you are moving the resistance in a guided & predictable motion, which limits the benefit you can gain. And if you're training with existing injuries, it's likely your body does not move in a manner that matches most machines.

You do not want to waste time when training. Making the most use of your time is obviously a key here to avoid cutting into recovery time, or time spent with family and friends. In addition, training with machines can “detrain” you as an athlete. This simply means that you are taking away the body's ability to learn simple physical stress, such as balancing a heavy weight, stabilizing a heavy weight, etc.

As a grappler, there are injuries that plague many of us. The knees, shoulders and neck are vulnerable to injury if they are weak. Free weights and bodyweight movements allow you to load your body with heavier weights forcing your muscles, joints, ligaments & bones to get stronger, more powerful and less prone to injuries.

If you want longevity in your combative career, avoiding injuries is key. Injuries have sidelined some of the best athletes at key points in their career due to uneducated & unsafe training methods.

As far as how many reps and sets to do, this is a key portion of your program. As a grappler, we need strength, strength endurance, muscular endurance, power endurance and power (there are many more such as speed – strength, strength – speed – but we will not over do it here – we will keep this simple & basic!).

Let me explain these terms in an easy manner. There are many more though, these are the basics. Don't get into paralysis by analysis – I am likely to be the LEAST scientific Strength and Performance Coach you know, but the bottom line is I get results, big time!

It should be emphasized that, in any given athletic activity, strength rarely manifests itself in only one pure form. The different components usually appear mixed and vary according to different activities.

- **STRENGTH** is defined as the capacity to use muscle activity to develop internal tension and external resistance against external forces, or to overcome these forces (Hartmann & Tunnemann, 2001)
- **RELATIVE STRENGTH** refers to the ratio between an athlete's maximal strength and bodyweight. Combat athletes and Gymnasts often have high relative strength because all the pushing, pulling, lifting we do against others or our own bodyweight is, in essence, strength training!
- **STRENGTH ENDURANCE** (also referred to as **Muscular Endurance**) is the capacity to resist fatigue in strength performance over a relatively long duration. This is what gives you the strength to finish your shots in the third period when your opponent is unable to finish shots due to fatigue in their strength levels. This is where you do sets for low reps (3 – 6 reps) but do a larger volume of sets – sometimes up to 10 sets, w/little rest periods, no more than 1 minute (very challenging). This way you are using heavy weights for longer periods of time. Your body becomes better at handling heavy loads (exerting heavily) for extended periods of time and in turn becomes more efficient in staying strong during the entire match or fight!
- **POWER** is sometimes referred to as speed – strength. Power is your ability to overcome an external resistance by developing a high rate of muscular force. For example, if you can bench press 300 lbs and it takes you 15 seconds to push off your chest, and I can bench the same weight but it goes up in 5 seconds, I have more power in that specific movement.

Power is necessary in order to explode out of the bottom position in double over time in a wrestling match. Power is hitting a double leg takedown and driving your opponent into the air and on his back in the blink of an eye! Power is when you are on

your back and in an instant your hips pop up and you nail a triangle or kimura in the blink of an eye!

Training for power requires moderate weights, lower reps (1 – 5) and fast repetition tempo. Training for power is an advanced method and should not be attempted until you have a solid foundation of strength.

As you continue a set with more repetitions, your power decreases because your body becomes more fatigued. Often times, scientific studies have found that generous recovery periods (3 – 6 minutes) should be used when training to improve power.

For example, Scholich (2003) recommends a recovery period of 90 – 240 seconds between bouts of power training to ensure optimum recovery.

From watching countless athletes train using moderate loads with low reps (power focused training), I have found that their mind tends to lose focus as rest periods exceed the 90 second parameter. I have frequently used rest periods of 45 – 90 seconds during power focused training.

Can I say it is more effective? It's tough to be specific unless a case study with many athletes was performed, or unless I can measure their power output through a tendo unit. But, when analyzing an actual fight or grappling event, power is required to be in effect very often, possibly anywhere from every 5 – 15 seconds if the match is active in takedowns, escapes, throws and submission attempts.

NOTE: Many of these principles can be tweaked for your own sake or for training other athletes (high school, college, adult, etc). Young athletes are different than those in college; physically & mentally. The weekend warrior has different requirements as does the beginner to Underground training, who may not be as physically prepared as a young athlete.

Even though I give guidelines here, they are just that, guidelines. Change sets, reps, weights, rest, etc. as you feel necessary. This is where the art of coaching comes in. Listen to your athletes and yourself and adapt accordingly. I have some athletes who respond well to a high volume of training with high intensity while others thrive on less intense workouts done less frequently. If I trained them all the same then the results would certainly not be as good.

How can we train for these traits, sometimes referred to as “special strengths”? Let me explain. It is easier than you think! Your work outs will need to change often in order to develop these traits as well.

Training for strength requires heavy weights, doing 3 – 5 heavy sets (not including warm up) per exercise for 3 - 6 reps per set, perhaps going as low as 2 or 1 if you are highly advanced. Rest should be approximately 60 - 180 seconds between each set, but, getting away from any science, we still like to go fast here and usually rest 1 minute at most.

You should be able to have energy left for 1 or 2 reps when finishing your last set if you are a lesser prepared athlete. I call this leaving 1 or 2 left in the tank. It is not necessary to train to muscular fatigue unless you are highly advanced (this is when you can no longer lift the weight under your own strength and need assistance from a partner).

Notice that as a set gets more difficult, your speed becomes less. Although you may not feel or realize, as the set continues, your maximal effort becomes less and you are not working on strength as you go beyond 8 reps.

As a set continues and fatigue sets in, form tends to diminish which can lead to increases in injury. For the young athlete, low reps and higher sets serve best here. As you become more advanced you can gauge your own needs better and determine what works best for you in strength development.

Training for strength endurance requires doing a lot of CHALLENGING body weight exercises such as weighted pull ups, hand stand push ups, weighted parallel bar dips or using heavy weights for low reps & high sets. It also comes from heavy odd object or strongman movements executed for high sets and low reps.

Push ups, pull ups, hand stand push ups, parallel bar dips as I just mentioned are tough to do, and are some of my favorites, especially when adding weight through weight vests, weighted back packs, weighted belts, etc. Doing 1 pull up might be difficult for you & we can improve strength simply by doing 1 rep at a time, aiming for a grand total of 10, or 15, etc. Do these body weight exercises with shorter rest periods in between each set (30 seconds – 1 minute) and try doing 4 – 6 sets per exercise (maybe more if you are feeling so) and reps will vary greatly here according to your strength levels. Pull ups you may only be able to get 5 or 6 at a time, maybe even less. Some athletes can do more.

One of the most important skills you can acquire is that of understanding methods and principles, not just blindly following them. Although there are months and months of sample programs here, you will do best if you tweak them for your personal benefit, or the benefit of your own athletes.

Regarding the training of strength endurance, if you can only do lower reps for a movement, rest a bit longer and do a few extra sets. So rather than 5 sets, try doing maybe 8 sets. Dips you might be able to get 12, 20 or even more. Push ups might be 30 or more.

I like having my athletes do low reps on pull ups, sometimes 2 or 3 reps only, but they will do 6, 7 or more total sets. This way they are pulling w/all their might on each rep, exerting high force each rep and the tempo of the exercise is as fast as possible. When you train towards muscular fatigue, your reps start slowing down and your exertion lessens with each successive rep. I prefer to see speed in each exercise once my athletes master form and gain appropriate strength levels.

DO NOT CONFUSE SPEED & BEING UNDER CONTROL FOR A SLOPPY, OUT OF CONTROL REPETITION!

If you are having trouble controlling a weight, lighten up, and slow down until form is mastered. As you gain strength & control you will start feeling more comfortable with speeding up your rep tempo.

Often times when I am short on time I do pistol squats, then chin ups, followed by dips with no rest in between movements. I will do this for maybe 10 minutes straight. I will do 5 pistol squats, 6 – 10 pulls ups or chin ups, then 10 – 20 dips. As I fatigue, the reps reduce slightly.

The body gets stronger and endurance is built up because I am barely resting. After 10 minutes of pistols, chins & dips, I'll go and knock out push ups ranging anywhere from 25 – 50 at a time, followed by 1 minute of jumping rope or some form of lower body work (walking lunges, squat jumps, split squat jumps). I will do this push up – jump rope circuit for 5 – 6 minutes and then after 15 minutes of total exercise I am done!

Talk about an awesome work out! As always, my hand spacing and grip changes on pull ups, push ups and dips. Constantly add variation to your workouts to keep your muscles working from all angles! I bet you if every athlete on your team did this workout twice a week he / she would be in awesome shape compared to their current fitness levels.

The problem is that many athletes do not take strength training seriously. Combative athletes especially are not tuned in yet to the importance of strength training, many of us are still old school and rely on long distance jogging, some half hearted sets of push ups and maybe some curls.

These habits start young. Most young wrestlers attend wrestling camps and clubs and leave out strength training entirely. This can explain the high incidence of injuries many young wrestlers are plagued with.

Strength endurance with free weights is more advanced so this should be reserved for the athlete who has been working out regularly and has developed a higher level of physical preparedness. An example of training for strength endurance would be if I took the barbell squat & worked up to 315 lbs. after a sufficient warm up. I would perform numerous sets of 2 – 5 reps, resting approximately 1 minute between sets, totaling 5 sets at first, then building up to 10 sets perhaps for future workouts! Very advanced lifters will do even more sets! The lower reps require extra volume in sets to have the desired effect of strength endurance.

Notice how I always emphasize variety & experimentation. I much prefer you see what works best for you. Athletes are all so different, some kids are age 14 but look 18, and vice versa. This will change the way they train. A young athlete can improve athletic performance on almost any strength training program b/s it is a new stimulus! After some time training through, the program should be solid and well planned.

An adult combative athlete may have amassed numerous injuries and movements using heavy loads beyond 90 % of their 1 rep max may be out of the question! So we are all individuals and must therefore become more independent with our training methods.

For the young combative athlete, I am not a big fan of training below 3 reps with free weights. You can still become strong by doing sets of 5 with sub maximal loads. Notice I said free weight exercises. Body weight exercises might be different. Pull ups you may only be able to do 1 or 2 reps. No problem, that is a body weight exercise and is not dangerous to do low reps.

Free weights add extra load to your body, so do not max out until you are operating at a high level of physical preparedness. So, for bodyweight exercises, you are safe if doing reps below 5 if you can only accomplish that many reps.

One interesting way of training for strength endurance is doing exercises for **longer periods of time under tension. I learned a lot of these ideas from Louie Simmons.** He

used to train PRIDE fighter, UFC Champ and D 1 national champion Kevin Randleman. He had Kevin doing chest presses with dumbbells on a stability ball for up to 10 minutes using dumbbells as heavy as 70 lbs! Kevin used to get exhausted on his back during fights and would often times get submitted by the higher skilled fighters because his lack of strength and muscular endurance.

Louie tried to make this movement more specific by placing Kevin on a ball (similar to being on his back). This movement can easily be done on the floor as a floor press using dumbbells or kettlebells as well.

Another interesting workout looked like this for Kevin:

1. power clean x 1 rep
2. hang clean x 1 rep
3. hang clean and press x 1 rep

The 3 reps above made up one set, each rep was done after the other without placing the 205 lb barbell down. He would then rest for 30 seconds and repeat again. This went on for 10 minutes and this workout was used for strength & power endurance.

Here is another strength endurance work out I have used with grapplers utilizing a sandbag, doing 5 reps per movement. This is more of a full body strength endurance work out and also allows the athlete to work on conditioning and toughness.

- 1) zercher squat
- 2) zercher good morning
- 3) zercher reverse lunge (5 reps per leg)
- 4) bent over row
- 5) burpee, clean & press
- 6) shouldering (5 reps per shoulder)

Training for power requires lower repetitions anywhere from 2 – 5 reps, using moderate loads (40 – 75 % of your 1 RM). Your sets will increase here due to the fact that we are training the endurance factor, and should be around 5 sets per movement. Rest longer in between power exercises (2 – 4 minutes) if you can keep your focus, and at other times rest only long enough to allow your partner to do a set. If the 2 – 4 minute rest protocol is too long for you to stay focused, you can perform some **active recovery movements**. This might include some light work for the abs, neck or upper back using bands and bodyweight. The extended rest time is used to allow the Central Nervous System (CNS) ample recovery time.

Power will mostly be achieved with moderate or light weights, or bodyweight exercises that are plyometric in nature. If the weight is TOO heavy you will not be able to move it quickly enough to improve your power. When you get to the exercise photo / description portion of the manual, you will see exercises with body weight and free weights that lend themselves towards power development.

Some of my favorites movements for power are plyo push ups, jump squats & their variations, medicine ball throws & tosses, kettlebell throws and tosses and light weight free weight exercises with higher speed.

REPETITION TEMPO

One more thing I want you to understand when training for power is the **tempo** of your exercises. This simply means how fast you should move your body or the weights. When training with free weights, first of all, there should be near perfect form for all athletes, and text book form w/beginners. The last thing you want to do is find way to increase chances of injury.

Some body motion is fine as long as you're in control of the weight and not vice versa. Some exercises lend themselves to some body motion and you will feel your way through them. Notice I said SOME BODY MOTION.

Being too strict is not what we want because as a combat athlete you want to involve as much of your body as possible when training. Isolation movements are used to bring up certain weak areas or injured areas. We don't use isolation movements excessively though.

During a match or fight, if you are the in the top position you are not going to try to move your opponent using your arms only, or throw a punch or land a kick without involving your hips, rather you will drive, rotate, push / pull with your legs and upper body, working together as one unit. We never use only our arms or only our legs during a fight or match. The body has to use all the muscles together in order for you to be as successful as possible.

Move the weights under control yet with speed at the same time. Lower the weights under control and avoid letting them drop with out control. Unless you are training with bands you won't be flying down on each exercise. For those of you just starting with the weights, you need to move down slowly and under control. This allows you to keep proper form during the exercise.

An athlete who is more experienced with strength training can vary rep tempo more so than a beginner obviously. If you can not control the weight, it's too heavy. Dropping the weights on the downward portion of the rep eliminates half of the rep, which then makes half your set a waste of time. Unless you are highly experienced and can use the dynamic effort method correctly, keep everything under control.

Take the dumbbell clean – press combo. When I clean the dumbbell up I use my hips to explode the weight up to my shoulder quickly. Then with no rest I press the bell quickly upward & give a slight push from the legs. I lower the weights under control down to my shoulders and once again lower the weights down through my legs with speed yet under control.

In addition, I have found that many athletes benefit greatly from switching the speed (aka, rep tempo) of the exercise, especially those new to strength training. Sometimes I have an athlete move the weights slowly on the upward & downward phase, sometimes the complete opposite. I use a lot of variety when training athletes! Vary the sets, weights, rest periods, the repetition temp, the position of their body, etc.

Tempo Contrast Method

This is an interesting method of varying your training. You will be varying the speed of the exercise during the same set of an exercise. For example, on the barbell squat, let's say you have a weight where you can complete 10 perfect reps. On reps 1 and 2 you lower yourself slowly, taking 5 seconds up slowly, taking 5 seconds down.

Then on reps 3 and 4 you move slightly quicker, 4 seconds down, and maybe 2 or 3 seconds up. This allows the athlete to work the muscles differently, and keeps the body responding to a new stimulus. In fact, as a beginner, before you increase your weights, try using the tempo contrast method for 2 weeks. This is a safer way to intensify your workouts as a beginner as opposed to loading the weights on. It also gives you more time to master your exercise technique. If you are doing an exercise incorrectly, it doesn't matter how heavy of a weight you are moving! Do not worry about what your friends are doing in the gym. Focus on your own progress.

Rest Periods are next when determining how to move through a work out. When using body weight exercises you can rest very little between exercises or simply perform one exercise after another in circuit style. Here are the various names given to performing more than one exercise at a time.

- **Super sets** – this is when you perform two exercises in a row with no rest after the first exercise. Perfect example is doing chin ups and dips. Do 10 chin ups then immediately do 15 dips. After the dips you can rest anywhere from 30 – 90 seconds. The more advanced you get, you can go non stop with no

rest and go for a certain time (5 – 10 minutes non stop) or 5 sets of each non stop (this non stop training for time is a CIRCUIT, explained below)

Another example would be to do dumbbell chest presses on the stability ball immediately followed by the barbell row.

Last example, medium grip flat bench press immediately followed by a few reps of plyo push ups.

- **Circuit Training** – this is when you perform more than 2 exercises in a row non stop. You can do this using free weights or body weight or a combination of both. Here is a sample circuit.
 1. chin ups - 8 reps
 2. dips - 8 reps
 3. leg raises on dip bar – 12 reps
 4. trap bar deadlift – 8 reps
 5. squat jumps – 8 reps
 6. push ups – 12 reps
 7. walking lunges with body weight – 30 seconds
 8. dumbbell curl – press combo – 8 reps

No doubt about it, a circuit like the one above will kick your body into high gear and get your heart beating faster than a steam train! You can rest 1 – 3 minutes after a circuit and then repeat it once or twice or even more depending on your energy level as well as how long you have been training for. A circuit is more for an intermediate or advanced trainee. I've seen beginners lose form quickly during circuits and waste the entire workout with half reps as well as increase chances of injury.

Circuits are also highly beneficial in the dojo or practice room – picking all bodyweight exercises and performing them in circuit fashion helps the body get used to higher fatigue levels in the muscle. Your body then becomes better trained at performing in a higher state of fatigue. This is a key factor in tough matches where the score is neck to neck – who is the better conditioned athlete?

- **Straight sets** – this is when you perform a set of one exercise, rest the appropriate time period, then perform the same exercise again, etc. until you complete the correct amount of sets. I like to use straight sets when I work on power & strength in order to give the central nervous system ample time to recover. Often times the first exercise of the day is going to be straight sets where you are performing max effort lifts and shooting for heavy weights and sets of 1 – 6 reps. Make no mistake about it though, power & strength training can still be brutal and exhausting. Yes, you rest longer, but you NEED to rest after you exert yourself so intensely to move the heavy weights with proper form.

CHAPTER 3

Developing Superior Physical Conditioning

This is when you need to get your body prepared for the difficult strength training workouts, the difficult practices and the intense demands of being a combat athlete. How long does this time last? It varies according to the physical maturity of the athlete, but in essence, all strength training is considered GPP (general physical preparedness). The only time a movement becomes sport specific is when are actually performing and practicing the sport itself in its true environment.

Think of your athletic potential as a triangle. The foundation of your athletic potential is the base of the triangle. The larger and wider the base is, the greater the peak will have the potential to be higher.

You can address your weak spots with bodybuilding type training, farm boy type training or any other method to specialize in weak areas. In the our DVD's, you will see many forms of sled dragging along with GPP ideas explained as I comment during the DVD.

All of our workouts improve the work capacity of an athlete because we push the pace fast and often perform 2 exercises in a row. It pushes the body to get in shape as opposed to the traditional methods of performing 1 exercise, rest, repeat – that gets pretty boring as well!

In essence, your GPP should focus on bringing up / working on your weak areas. This obviously makes perfect sense but not too many people want to work on weak areas. If you want to get better at what you do, attack those weak areas. It will improve your overall Grappling / MMA game as well as help reduce likelihood of injuries to those areas. If you truly want to make a work “General”, then perform very simple

movements such as truck pushing, sandbag carries, sled drags in all directions, push ups and pull ups. These movements are not requiring a high level of skill, rather they are all about utilizing your entire body to push and pull heavy objects.

On the internet, you may read about GPP workouts being separate workouts in their own right, or called extra workouts. This is an option, but if they are truly extra workouts then their intensity should be lesser than those regular training days. These “extra” days should last 30 minutes or less. Remember, these are not full blown workouts, they might be considered “feeder” workouts or “mini” workouts that enhance recovery and allow you to improve your physical preparation.

The body can not tolerate high intensity training every day, so these mini workouts are great for helping you physically and mentally tolerate the intense training required for combat athletes.

In addition, small bits of GPP training can be done during a regular workout. Sledge Hammer, farmer walks with various implements and sled work are great additions to a strength and conditioning program. That being said, a GPP workout can simply be sled dragging for 10 - 15 minutes, or farmers walk / carry with either a sand bag, heavy dumbbells, or buckets filled with sand. I am a **BIG PROPONENT** of training with these implements and they have a great overall conditioning effect on our grapplers!

I have been experimenting with adding GPP in the beginning of my workouts as a warm up. Louie Simmons advised me to start doing a few sets of moderate rep deadlifts to improve my ability to hit powerful takedowns for the full length of a wrestling match. Normally I would be shot by the end of period two so this was something I was willing to try. You have to experiment, right?

I have been using only 135 lbs and doing 3 sets of 15 reps along with kettlebell swings and the reverse hyper. This gets the posterior chain rolling big time and we all need

those muscles to be strong and powerful if we want powerful takedowns! This was also my weak area so some extra work was certainly in order here.

Even in the winter time, put on your gloves and do the sled dragging, truck pushing and rope pulling with added weight. Maybe your GPP day could be doing pull ups until you reach a maximum of 40 reps or doing a circuit of bodyweight exercises non stop for 10 minutes. Just imagine the edge you would have over your competition by training smart & hard!

Another key here is to make sure you do not avoid training your legs. Especially key here is training your hamstrings and lower back – and in addition, the entire rear portion of your body, called the posterior chain.

For most athletes, the weakest part of their body is everything they can not see when looking in the mirror. Strengthening the posterior chain makes an athlete stronger, more powerful, less likely to become injured and balances the strength from the front of the body as well. Sled dragging with a rope attached around a weight belt is awesome for the posterior chain. Take big steps and walk for 10 minutes or so. You will gain a ton of strength in your hamstrings, calves and lower back! I LOVE these!

Regarding GPP workouts, make sure you are not over doing it. If you over do it, you'll know. How will you know? You will feel like you need to rest or take the day off the following day. If you follow my guidelines of light weights, short duration, sled training, etc., you will benefit from these extra GPP workouts. If you feel wiped out the next day after a GPP workout, it was too strenuous (time, load, volume, etc.).

Here are a few sample GPP workouts for a better understanding of how these will look like when done as “feeder workouts”:

1. Forward & backward Sled drag, strapped around weight belt – 8 minutes, non stop, alternate directions every minute

2A. Pull ups – 5 x 5 reps

2B. Push ups - 5 x 10 reps

GPP work out # 2: perform movements 1 – 4 in circuit fashion for 3 rounds

1. Recline pull ups – 3 x 12 reps
2. sit ups using a medicine ball in pull over fashion – 3 x 15 reps
3. Suspended chain Push ups 3 x 12 reps
4. walking lunges with bodyweight, perform two sets walking 3 x 20 steps

I had a young wrestler start training with me the summer before he entered high school. Physically he was very weak and needed a lot of GPP. Let me rephrase that, A LOT OF GPP!! He was unable to do 1 pull up or 1 parallel bar dip and his push ups were quite weak as well. What did I have him do?

He would extra push ups, pull ups & squats EVERY DAY at home! He started by jumping into the top portion of the pull up & lowering himself slowly a few times a day throughout the entire day. A little bit after school, again in the evening and again a little before bed time he repeated these movements. He did the same for parallel bar dips whenever he passed by a playground.

In one week he was able to do 1 or 2 reps of pull ups and dips on his own. We then started having him do a total of 10 pull ups and 10 dips every day, 1 at a time. In a week he was doing 3 in a row, and we upped the total to 3 at a time. A few weeks later he was doing pull ups for sets of 5 – 8 reps and dips for 6 – 10 reps. He also did push ups every day. These workouts lasted him 2 or 3 minutes at a time and in total added up to less than 10 minutes or so daily.

These daily sporadic workouts might be called “working the groove”, GTG or Grease The Groove. By doing so you are practicing strength training instead of training to

exhaust yourself. Every time he did pull ups he was fresh so this enforced proper form and allowed him to work maximally with out any fatigue.

Strength is a skill. To improve at a skill, you must execute perfect practice, not just practice. Working the groove seems to work very well with challenging bodyweight movements such as handstand push ups, pull ups, pistols and 1 arm push ups. So if you are new to working out, remember that strength is a skill, as is BJJ, Muay Thai, Boxing, etc. – you must practice the skills regularly to improve on them, correct? Same principle applies to becoming stronger.

Back to our young combative athlete: His workouts with me were loaded with GPP training: sand bag carrying, pull ups, dips, push ups, med ball slams into ground, med ball chest pushes against the wall, sled dragging walking forwards & backwards and kettlebell lifts (swings, cleans, rack walks, overhead walks) and abdominal work. All of these movements are super basic, and allowed little room for error. He basically lifted odd objects, pushed, pulled and carried them.

His workouts lasted 30 minutes with me, and he saw me 2x week. After 6 weeks of this training at a bodyweight of 115 lbs he is Deadlifting 185 lbs for 5 reps using a trap bar and is doing deep squats with a 1.5 pood Kettlebell (53 lbs) for sets of 10 easily. His posterior chain was strengthened big time from all the GPP work. We also wanted to strengthen his entire posterior so he could add muscle quickly. These are large muscles so when they increase in strength and size he added bodyweight, mostly lean muscle mass.

Often times, adults need GPP training as well. Don't mistake yourself thinking only high school athletes need GPP training. I use GPP extensively all year long. I do the sled work, sand bag lifts, truck pushing, sledgehammer work, medicine balls and more!

Here are a few sample GPP workouts for the adult grappler or MMA fighter

These workouts are going to be short, 15 – 25 minutes total, choosing higher reps and a fast pace, very little rest in between sets.

Workout # 1	Pull ups, push ups on medicine ball, shadow box, sprawls for 4 – 8 minutes & various abdominal work
# 2	Push ups with hands on stability ball, med ball throws against wall, low rep KB snatches & abs
# 3	DB presses (rotate from flat bench, incline bench & standing), side, rear and front DB raises, abdominals
# 4	Forwards, lateral & Backward sled drag
# 5	Flat Barbell Bench – vary grips each set, pull ups, suspended chain push ups, deadlifts & abs
# 6	Pull ups – complete 50 – 100 reps total by end of the day (each time you walk by your pull up bar, do 5 – 10 reps at a shot)
# 7	Bent over barbell rows, lying leg raises with ankle weights or med ball between feet
# 8	Walking lunges, side bends holding 1 DB, sit ups holding med ball
# 9	Barbell hang cleans, suspended chain push ups, face pulls with bands, v ups
# 10	Truck pushing for 3 x 1 minute, 25 pull ups, 50 reps of abdominal work
# 11	Sledge hammer overhead swings (alternate top hand every 10 reps) x 100 reps, band face pulls and band pull aparts 3 x 10 each
# 12	1 arm dumbbell complex (light dumbbell) x 5 reps per arm / leg: 2 rounds total: 1 arm snatch, 1 arm row, 2 hand squat, 2 hand reverse lunge, 1 arm clean and press, 1 hand swing

The movements above should be used with lesser intensity. You lessen the intensity by doing several things:

- lighter weights
- less sets and less reps
- less overall volume
- less total time spent on a movement or an entire workout

There are a lot of basic exercises in the GPP workouts listed above as well as some isolation exercises for the shoulders, such as various shoulder raises, all of which are great to use to ensure we still work the smaller muscles of the body.

Be very creative and work on weak areas. Sometimes I have my athletes lay on a bench and do leg raises but have chains on their feet – the chains swing all over the place and really work their hips and core like nothing else! This places a lot of stress on the abs and hip flexors in an awkward manner which is exactly why we perform such a movement. Don't allow the body to become accustomed to movements or methods!

Chapter 4

Kick Ass Program Design Methods!

Cycling your training means changing the focus of your work outs, changing your intensity, changing the way you split and organize each workout as well as any other changes you focus on. Cycling or Periodization allows the body to improve on a regular basis if applied correctly. There are so many variations of periodization it can get confusing.

Changing the focus of the previously mentioned principles (strength, power, muscular endurance, etc.) is what many people do in time frames of 2 – 4 weeks. This is not my favorite method, but it is a popular one in the United States. It is called Linear Periodization.

When you periodize your training, you will change the sets, reps, rest periods and amount of weight used. The body easily adapts to an exercise program. Keep doing the same work out with the same weight and the same reps, same exercises and the same rest periods, the body simply stops responding!

“Just when your body starts thinking it has all the answers, you change the questions!”

~ Louie Simmons ~

Owner, Westside Barbell Club

There are scientific ways to do this, but before talking about the science of periodization, (a fancy word for cycling your training program) let’s talk about you! What I mean by this is to listen to your body and react accordingly. On high energy days you can train heavier and push yourself more. On low energy days you can perform an easier circuit and use lighter weights or simply take the day off.

On the days you feel middle of the road, perhaps do a light circuit to get warmed up and some chins and dips for low reps. This will get your mind and body warmed up and then you can decide after 5 – 7 minutes which direction you want to take that day. I have found that a properly performed warm up (approximately 5 – 7 minutes in length) can completely change the way the mind and body feel. Do not skip the warm up! This is pure laziness and can also increase chances of injury during the workout itself.

After so many years of following programs, I started doing what ever I wanted with relation to how I felt with great results. I basically focused on full body work outs and just kicked ass when I felt strong and went easier when I felt tired. This is called auto-regulation. This style of training allows the body to undergo less stress than if you were to push very hard on a day that you felt weak.

Model 1: Lindear Periodization Model

***This Model is Popular in the United States**

- Strength 3 – 4 weeks
- Power 2 – 3 weeks
- Hypertrophy 3 – 4 weeks
- Circuit training / Endurance 2 - 3 weeks
- Active Rest / Restoration 1 week

This is NOT a favorite of mine. What happens here is that when you focus on one trait, you lose proficiency in the other traits that are not being trained. Simply stated, use it or lose it. The methods outlined below are more effective for grapplers, and all athletes in general.

Model 2: Conjugate Sequence Method

*** This model is popular amongst many powerlifters**

The Conjugate Sequence Method is where you focus on three basic traits in one week. For example, we can take a look at how many powerlifters train, which has become popularized amongst some college teams as well. You will notice that during Conjugate training there is a lot of volume directed at a specific physical trait, such as Maximal Strength (using the max effort method), or focus on power / speed (using the Dynamic effort method). These methods are used for both upper and lower body.

The week will have 4 days of focused training, and then you can add additional workouts for weak areas, or conditioning, energy system training and so forth. The body gets divided into upper and lower body workouts. Here is the typical training week:

Sunday: Dynamic Effort (DE) Upper Body

Monday: Max Effort (ME) Lower Body

Wednesday: Max Effort (ME) Upper Body

Friday: Max Effort (ME) Lower Body

In between these max effort and dynamic effort days, you can add energy system training, or extra feeder workouts to work on weak area, prehab and rehab.

For those of us who train regularly in combat, these four training days may not be feasible for you. So you might end up tweaking the conjugate method by splitting the body into two training days, an upper body and a lower body.

Look at the variation below, which becomes the concurrent method (explained in detail below):

Monday: ME & DE for upper body – choosing strength and power movements for the upper body in the same workout

Thursday: ME & DE for lower body – choosing strength and power movements for the lower body

Model 3: The Concurrent System / Complex Training

The Concurrent system is when various traits are emphasized during one workout and through the course of a training week. These workouts are often full body workouts. You would find an athlete using methods training for strength, power and muscular endurance during one workout.

This is sometimes referred to as the “Multi lateral skill development approach”. In essence, it states that you are training various strength skills in one workout. This method was popular amongst young athletes in eastern bloc countries when Coaches were trying to develop young athletes by exposing them to numerous training qualities in order to develop them into a more complete athlete.

In their mid and late teens, Coaches would then analyze these athletes to see how, or more specifically, where they developed most, and would then place them into a sport that best suited their physical attributes.

This is a great method for athletes of all ages though, not just younger athletes. The full body approach mirrors what happens during combat, which is the use of our entire body during combat. It also allows us to train strength, power, endurance and metabolic conditioning during the same workout.

The next time you perform this workout, you can still utilize the same movements, but instead of training the same traits, you might use the same movement with a focus on power as opposed to your last workout which utilized that same movement for strength.

Let’s take a look at a typical full body workout utilizing the concurrent method:

- 1) warm up properly
- 2) full body movement (power focus) 6 x 3 – 5 reps

- 3A) upper body pull movement (strength focus) 4 x 4 – 8 reps
- 3B) upper body push movement (power focus) 4 x 3 – 6 reps
- 4) lower body movement (strength focus) 5 x 5 reps
- 5) extra movement for posterior chain or unilateral leg movement (muscular endurance focus) 3 x 15 reps
- 6) finish with core and grip work

The next time you perform this full body workout, you change the focus. So if Monday was strength focused, Wednesday can now be power focused. Friday can revert to the same focus as Monday's workout.

The concurrent method can be performed in 2 – 4 week training phases. This means that for 2 – 4 weeks you are performing the same workouts, but you are trying to break a record or improve in some manner.

The lesser prepared you are, the longer you can perform a workout without the body adapting. For example, young athletes will train Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Those three workouts will be different, but, every Monday of that month will be the same workout, as will Wednesday and Friday. So, in essence, three different workouts repeated 4 times that month. Each week, trying to improve from the previous week.

But, we know that the human body is ever changing and so we can not always, every single workout, improve without fail. So remember, listening to your body is the way to go when planning a single workout.

For the more advanced athlete, he / she can perform 2 weeks of the same workouts with the same focus. So on Monday of week 1 and 2, if your focus is strength with squats, then during week 3 and 4 of the month, your squat can be focused on with power. Following the same protocols of trying to improve every workout, simply track your progress.

Your body can adapt to movements and methods. But, switching the set – rep parameters will keep the body off guard and can keep progress flowing. You can switch the order of movements by performing the full body movement last in the workout, as opposed to first. Or, you can perform the lower body movement first, instead of last. Change is a good thing, but too much change can make it very difficult to track progress or to allow the body to elicit a response to the training stimuli.

Model 4: Westside for Skinny Bastards (WS4SB) / Joe DeFranco

Joe DeFranco primarily trains Football players and wrestlers. This program has been wonderful for improving strength, power and muscular endurance. In addition, this has been a very effective program for adding muscle, and you'll see why very soon.

Below is an outline of the typical week using WS4SB:

- Monday: Upper body – max effort
- Wednesday: Lower body – max effort
- Friday: Upper Body – max repetition day
- Do 1 – 2 GPP workouts per week on “off days” according to energy levels (do more if you feel the energy is there)

As you have already learned, you know that max effort training days are great for improving strength, and strength has a carry over towards improving speed / power.

Friday utilizes what is called as the repetition method, or the repeated effort (RE) method. This method utilizes light to moderate weights with moderate to high reps. The rep range can be anywhere from 12 – 40 reps, sometimes even more reps. The RE method is a great way to improve muscular endurance and increase the size of the muscle. This method can cause increase in bodyweight because you are increasing the size of the muscles. So keep this in mind if you are working on staying in a certain weight class.

If you are trying to maintain weight or stay in the same weight class, do not use the repetition day on Fridays, instead use this day to train strength and power in the same

day, or go lighter and make this an active recovery day. The repetition day promotes hypertrophy which equates to weight gain. So this is a day in which you will have to decide on according to your own goals.

Model 5: The High – Low Method

I learned this method from **James Smith of PowerDevelopmentInc.com**

This method is awesome! Simply stated, the training program does not allow for the individual to perform two days in a row of high intensity training methods, which in turn fries the central nervous system. This method can and should be incorporated into the technical / sparring aspects of Grappling and MMA as well.

For example, if Monday was a sparring day, this would be considered a high intensity day which imposes greater demands on the body's recuperative abilities. If the individual is planning to perform extra training in the gym that day, the training should also be of high intensity, but these two sessions should be spread apart with a minimum of 4 hours.

The next day will be a day of lesser intensity activities. So on the mat, this would be a day of technical / drilling only. This will allow the body to tolerate the training stimuli without (or less likely) negative effects, such as overtraining, becoming weaker, etc.

This is where discipline plays a huge factor. Discipline is doing what must be done, not what you want to do. So you may want to spar or go live and roll hard with your teammates. But, if you truly want to reap the rewards of a well planned program, you will follow your high intensity days with a rest day or a low intensity day, thus, the high – low method.

Don't get caught up with harder training is better. The truth is, smarter training is better, and the high – low method is a very smart way to train optimally!

Model 6: The Simple Method

This will be the absolute simplest way of cycling your training if you do not understand the skill of “listening to your body”. For the first 3 weeks of each month you will train intensely (a very vague term – push yourself to your limits) and on the last week of the month train with moderate to high reps and lighter weights for recovery purposes.

Train three days a week utilizing full body workouts or alternating between upper and lower body workouts. Use the concurrent method by incorporating strength, power and endurance methods within each workout.

After 3 weeks, reduce the intensity and go nice and easy on the last week. Give your body and mind a much needed rest. Pushing to your limits every week, every workout without a reduction in volume / intensity will lead to burn out and overuse injuries. Force yourself to lay low on the last week of every month. This works well for the typical combat athlete who is an overachiever and keeps thinking on outworking everyone else.

A very important part of avoiding plateaus is to keep changing your exercise selection, number of sets & reps & rest in between sets. During the 3 weeks of higher intensity training you can vary the loads within each workout. It is not necessary to go heavy the entire workout, or light the entire workout. An example of varying training loads (various physical focuses) in the same workout would be like this (after a thorough warm up):

1. Squatting, heavy weights, 3 – 6 reps per set, 6 – 8 total sets (including warm ups) (strength focus)
2. Stability Ball Chest Press w/DB's, light weights, high reps (15 – 40 reps), 3 total sets (muscular endurance focus)
3. 1 arm Rows using Db or KB, 4 x 8 reps (moderate weight) (strength endurance focus)
4. 1 arm dumbbell snatches 3 x 12 left / right (power endurance focus)
5. rope climbing x max reps in 5 minutes (strength endurance focus)

As you can see, some exercises were heavy, then light, then moderate – constantly shocking the body, keeping it off guard. Switch your hand / foot positions, change the load, etc.

Not only will you increase progress, but you will keep each workout more fun than the last one. Doing the same thing repeatedly is never a good thing, regardless of the activity.

Which do I prefer? I prefer to use **The Concurrent Method:**

I like using this method because I attack heavier weights for strength, moderate weights for power, full body lifts for full body strength and power, plus a circuit at the end of each workout for improving strength endurance and muscular endurance. This approach is very practical for Grapplers and combat athletes.

In America, the most popular cycle is where you switch from strength to power, to muscular endurance every 3 weeks or so. The problem with that program is if you focus on one phase at the expense of another (which you do for 2 – 4 weeks normally), you can lose strength or lose power or lose muscular endurance all depending on which cycle you are focusing on.

So why did I show this? I like to give examples because variety AND knowledge is important. This type of program might work well for some athletes. It is recommended by many strength coaches as a matter of fact, but, this does not mean these are the most educated Coaches. Some coaches like to lay it all out on the table, perhaps they feel that if they hit you with everything then they can't possibly miss. The goal should be to use an optimal training model that brings the best results quickly and efficiently.

Louie Simmons has stated often that if an athlete does the same workouts and same lifts repeatedly than he / she will rapidly decrease their coordination and overall athleticism. This is where special movements come into play (SPP / specialized physical preparation) as well as variety of workouts.

These special exercises will be similar to your basic lifts & will address your weaknesses. An example would be doing trap bar deadlifts for 2 workouts, then 2 workouts of barbell squats (with or without a box), and then switching to good mornings for 1 or 2 workouts, and then kettlebell front squats using 1 or 2 kettlebells for another 1 or 2 workouts. After performing your major lift you can then follow up with anywhere from 3 – 5 special exercises. Special exercises vary per each individual and their individual weaknesses.

Once again, as an athlete I prefer to train the entire body during one workout, or splitting upper and lower body workouts. There are many movements that are similar in nature to how you move on the mat or in the ring. These can be termed as **general – specific** training. Perhaps you are using a heavy bag, shooting in on the bag, lifting the bag and then slamming it to the ground.

General – specific might be performing a sandbag circuit, non stop, for 5 minutes to replicate the time of a grappling match. Moving the odd object has some similarity to an opponent.

Changing the exercise or the angle of the exercise allows you to improve consistently. Change the exercises before they stop working though. If you are strong in one lift ego can often take over and you want to do this exercise in the same position all the time to look good for others. Big mistake! That will lead to a plateau & over use injuries.

It is very important that you pick the movements that address your weak points. Just because your friend likes an exercise or your coach believes the barbell curl is the best exercise does not mean it's always right for you.

Balancing Training Stimuli & Movements

Some workouts have major flaws, others have some flaws, but in the end they ALL have flaws. There is no such thing as the perfect workout, period. But, some workouts really open up the flood gates for injury or exposing weak areas to become even weaker.

A few things to keep in mind when creating a balanced program is to attack weak areas regularly, but not so often that the area becomes overworked. Also, balance the push / pull movements with a 1:1 ratio moving in the same plane.

For example, a correct balance would like this this:

1A) push ups 5 x 8 reps

1B) recline body rows 5 x 8 reps

Notice that the sets / reps are identical and the movements are both in the horizontal plane. At the least, your pull / push ratio should be identical. But, because pulling movements / motions (and the posterior chain) are common place for weak areas, I suggest performing some extra work for the pulling movements.

Example 2:

1A) weighted pull / chin ups 8 x 3 reps

1B) double kettlebell military press 8 x 3 reps

The above example is through identical pairing of sets / reps with vertical movements.

Remember though, all workouts are flawed. You'll see workouts here that are not perfect, or not paired through identical sets / reps of opposing movement patterns. So during our warm ups, we include movements to get some extra work done for our weaker areas. For example, the use of jump stretch bands for face pulls, rowing and band pull aparts are

commonly used during our warm ups and as active rest between heavier lifting. This is something we do simply by reacting to what the body needs, not what is written down on paper.

On paper the pairing of identical sets and reps looks correct. Let me play devil's advocate. There is no individual w/perfect balance, so, we almost always perform more pulling movements because that is where the weak areas tend to fall. And so the ratio of 1:1 is always the minimum we use, most often we perform an extra 25 % volume for pulling motions.

Underground Training Methods

Living in NJ does not allow me or my athletes to train outdoors safely year round. When weather allows, they are outside doing a lot of sled dragging, pushing & pulling. In addition, we use a variety of techniques w/sand bags, logs, water filled kegs, rope climbing, stone lifting, playground workouts and outdoor medicine ball throwing. If you live in the southern states or out west, take advantage of these “Underground” training methods.

The other day I was in the backyard chopping wood for 10 minutes after a large tree came down due to a heavy storm. The next day my entire abdominal region was extremely sore like never before! I was also feeling a major workout on my entire body; legs, shoulders, arms & forearms. It was tough! Try some sledge hammer chopping for a GPP workout! Do these overhead, and to both left and right sides, as well as using one hand.

When you move sand bags or wheel barrows you are picking up and moving the object, just as you would during wrestling. This makes the exercise more applicable, having a greater carry over to the sport of grappling. Sled work is tremendous because it allows the

grappler to work on explosive pushing and pulling movements with out having to lower the weight.

Lowering weights leads to muscle soreness, especially when done slowly as bodybuilders do. This is why sled training is great on GPP days because they do not make you feel exhausted and sore. This means if I pull the rope into me as hard as I can (rowing the sled), I do not have to return it back to position as I would during a bodyweight or free weight rowing motion. This allows me to turn this exercise into a true power movement. How is this possible, a true power movement? Let me explain.

A true power movement will allow you to fully exert yourself with out having to slow down the motion at any time. Medicine ball throwing is a perfect example. If I do a medicine ball granny toss, I am using all my power to release the ball from my hands behind my head. Do I need to slow down at the top? NO! If I have a dumbbell or barbell, I need to slow down at the top or else the bar or DB will fly out of my hands. This is simply not possible or safe with free weights when done inside a crowded gym (obviously!).

My body is literally putting on the brakes at the last moment to avoid releasing the bar or DB. If I can release the object and use all my force, then it is a true power move. So when rowing or pressing the sled, I exert all the force w/out worry of the rope handles or the sled doing something dangerous (such as crashing into me). Releasing a barbell or DB sounds a bit scary!

Medicine balls are used often with my athletes for GPP work. We go to a school that has a cement wall and do high reps with a medicine ball weighing anywhere from 5 – 12 lbs. It sounds very light but the repetitions are high and we are looking for maximal exertion on each rep. Too heavy of a medicine ball will lead to poor form and not enough speed on the throw.

Some examples are pushing the ball from chest level against the wall, overhead throws against a wall, rotational throws against a wall (make sure you do the same reps for each side), med ball slams onto the concrete and granny tosses facing forwards with a partner or having your back face your partner. Repetitions vary from 10 per set, to doing 5 minutes of 1 movement or 5 minutes total, 1 minute on each.

For the parents reading this or the coaches, these are great for your young athletes. It sounds very elementary and simple but after performing more than 10 reps with full effort you will see how difficult and taxing these medicine ball exercises become!

These throws are also great for experienced fighters. You can get smaller, hand held med balls and throw them against a wall, punching bag or a rebound board to help improve striking power.

We also throw small tires, stones, kettlebells and small logs for increased power & GPP work. Most football fields (recreation and high school) still use tires for the agility run. I will take an athlete to the field and have them throw them in granny fashion (this is done using a keg in the world's strongest man contest).

They will then walk, jog, or run to the tire and repeat this process for reps, time or until the tire reaches a certain distance on the field. Tires can also be carried one in each hand for a variation of the farmer walk. Do this across a football field or up & down bleachers / stadium stairs. The tires can also be thrown in a rotational direction using one or two hands. Once again, throw from both directions so you can strengthen each side of your body equally. Rotational throws are great for all combat athletes due to the fact that our throwing and striking power generates from the hips.

One more way of using tires is to drag them or row & press them, just as we would use a sled. You can see this in our DVD, 'Ancient Training Methods'. To make the tire heavier, keep the wheel inside the tire! Tires eventually tear and fall apart from all the dragging but a wheel will never tear or fall apart! Plus, tires can be FREE if you go to a

junk yard. You just need to be creative and use your imagination. There are so many variations of exercise out there if you open your mind!

Lactate tolerance is the ability of your body to tolerate the build up of lactic acid in the muscles. Ever see a grappler or mma fighter getting weaker and weaker, no longer able to finish shots or even hold a guy down while in the mount position? Often times their arms have gotten such a pump & burn from lactic acid build up they simply can not function at full steam any more, so their muscles practically shut down on them.

Lactic acid is defense mechanism basically. Your body works harder and harder and more lactic acid builds up in the muscles – trying to stop you from pushing further and further. If you can train at this high repetition mode with repeated efforts, or using heavy weights for high sets, you will train your body to work more efficiently during this lactic acid build up. Circuits and complexes are great for lactate tolerance training.

Another way to improve lactate tolerance is to use heavy weights, low reps (3 – 5), and multiple sets (8 or more) with short rest periods (30 sec. – 1 minute maximum). You continue moving a heavy weight with short rest intervals for a larger volume of sets. This will prep your body to handle the moving of heavy weights for longer periods of time – sounds just like a grappling match, right?

Favorites here are push ups, pull ups, recline pull ups, light barbell squats, light dead lifts, light bench pressing, bench dips, BW squats, rope climbing, kettlebell, barbell and dumbbell complexes.

Be creative, and have fun! Keep this workout well balanced. Include lifts that work lower body as well as upper body. As always, vary the exercises. Do not do high rep benching every single week, or high rep deadlifts every single week! Avoid the overuse problems that come with repetitive movements!

If I knew how to listen to my body more and followed a program which included max effort, dynamic effort, max rep, energy system & GPP training then I would have been a much healthier athlete! I went full steam year round. Light days were unheard of and I NEVER did any GPP training to work on weak areas or performing prehab / rehab and flexibility work.

Another point concerning variation is for your max effort day. Your max effort lift does not always have to be a conventional lift. It can be something like a farmers carry with heavy dumbbells, or heavy sandbag walks uphill. Try pushing a wheel barrow up a hill and then walking it back down for a few sets! So remember to keep variety in each portion of your workout!

The last portion I listed in your cycle is called Active Rest. This can be placed into your yearly training program AT ANY TIME! You use active rest on the day (s) you are feeling tired or simply in need of change yet you still want to do something active. Here are a few examples of active rest:

- Wall / rock climbing (indoor or outdoor)
- Hiking
- Mountain Biking
- Kayaking
- Surfing
- Swimming at the beach

You can come up with more of these activities, but they simply give you a break from the daily grind and keep you fresh. I can not emphasize this enough, as the goal is for you to arrive fresh, ready and stronger than ever for your next competitive event (grappling match / tournament or MMA fight).

The importance of rest is truly underestimated. If you feel completely exhausted, then you need to do a few things. First, do not wrestle, grapple, fight, etc or strength train for

at least one week and you may even need to take 2 weeks off. Second, cycle your training more often. Change the volume, intensity, order of exercises, type of exercises, etc.

Do not think that heavy strength training is needed to be done all the time. This is why I encourage you to use max effort, dynamic effort, repeated effort and GPP training, it gives your body time to rest by forcing you to train lighter on max rep days, and with less intensity on GPP days. Strength training (using your body or free weights) can be done 2 to 3 times a week.

Following the concurrent method has you training 3 times a week maximum, no more. This way you still have energy for your actual mma training which you most likely will be doing another 2 – 4 times a week, and sometimes more. Add this to your daily school work and perhaps a part / full time job, maybe family and you're a great candidate for over training.

Over training means you are over worked and need a rest, plain and simple. You will know when you're over trained. Here are some signs:

- Lack of motivation to train
- Amassing injuries
- Feeling weak and exhausted during training
- Getting weaker in the gym
- Lack of mental focus

If you do not listen to your body and you keep on pushing you increase chances of injury. Learn from my mistakes, don't experience them! GPP focused workouts can replace normal weight training as well, especially for the lesser experienced grappler who must increase their level of physical preparedness to withstand the difficult training on the mat.

For the adult with greater physical fitness, pick one core exercise (one focus lift) and then follow up with GPP training as well GS training (General Specific). Some examples of GS training would be:

- 1) 5 minute circuits / complexes using bodyweight, free weights, and / or odd objects
- 2) 5 minutes of drills on a grappling dummy mixed in with lifts and throws of the dummy

Max Effort Days

On these days, you choose your first exercise to be the most important exercise of that day, and the heaviest. This exercise will probably be a dead lift, some form of a press, barbell squats (if you have access to a squat rack), Romanian Dead Lifts (RDL's) or weighted pull ups. You would perform sets of 1 – 6 reps on this first exercise. Shooting for heavy weights as well, but still having 1 or 2 reps left in the bank if you are a novice.

The more advanced trainee is looking to set a PR (personal record) and so he / she will go to their maximum effort, which sometime means they do not achieve the lift. After the focus exercise, you would follow with your movements working on power and strength endurance.

HOW OFTEN SHOULD I STRENGTH TRAIN?

For young athletes or lesser prepared athletes I try not to have them train 2 days in a row unless that second day is an easy day with some simple bodyweight and sled training. Once again though, there is never an absolute here. I know this variety thing is getting confusing & perhaps annoying, but it all depends – some grapplers go to a club 5 days a week for 2 hours, then train with me 3 times a week. When this is the case, I always take caution to keep workouts brief and to the point, often lasting 35 – 40 minutes max. In addition, those 3 workouts will vary so as not

to over stress the central nervous system (CNS). If your CNS is run down then you will not make gains!

Strength training tears down your muscles. They get stronger from rest and proper nutrition. The more time I see an individual has available to them for resting, the more training I might suggest. If I see there is not much sleep, a high stress job, a family, strength training, BJJ / MMA training, then I will look to find a balance between all of these.

If the trainee is looking to improve their technical skills, then we will focus more training time on the mat, less in the gym. The opposite would also hold true. If the trainee is a highly skilled combative athlete, yet needs improvement on physical preparation, then we will fill in those holes through an appropriate strength and conditioning program. It's all about the individual.

At least one day of the week should be an entire day of rest, and it's best to have two days off scattered through the week!

BOTTOM LINE: You can work as hard as you want, harder than anyone else, but if you do not get adequate rest & nutrition then your body will always be in a state of repair. Our goal is for you to have rest days in order to reap the benefits of your strength training.

In addition, the old saying of getting 8 hours of sleep EVERY DAY is key for progress! Your program of grappling, boxing, muay thai, judo and strength training does not end when you finish a work out. It includes everything you do in addition to these workouts (rest & nutrition). Do not waste your efforts by over doing it! I encourage a daily nap when you have the time, even if it's just for 30 minutes.

CHAPTER 5

Training for Power & Speed

Power is a critical component for all athletes! Power is simply your ability to perform a movement in the shortest amount of time possible. Power can also be called speed, or explosive strength. Plyometrics are often referred to hand in hand with power training. Plyometrics was originally called “Jump training” in Europe because the majority of these movements were various jumping movements.

The first time I was exposed to plyometrics was during wrestling practice as a freshman. It was the squat jump & we would do 50 squat jumps after practice. Back then I did not know any better regarding proper sets & reps for plyo training and neither did the coaches. They simply used them as a torture device as do most uneducated coaches. Performing 5 - 10 reps of the squat jump doesn't look like much to the onlooker. It may not be very exhausting, but, the reps are kept low to recruit the most motor units for the activity. The more reps performed, the more fatigued the body becomes and hence it becomes less of a power movement.

If you go back to when we spoke about power training earlier, you'll see use various movements and methods to improve power and speed.

Plyo training, or jump training as it was called over seas is also very strenuous on the nervous system so be sure to keep reps & sets fairly low. Specifically speaking about repetitions, understand that one can only exert power for a short period of time. That being said, you must understand that plyo training is not done so you can feel fatigued & exhausted and get that numb feeling in your legs. The reps are kept low, anywhere from 1 – 10 reps per set or for approximately 5 – 15 seconds per set, so you can exert all your force into the short period of time you perform your plyo exercise.

Going back to the 50 reps of jump squats, I recall us getting lower & lower in height on each repetition because of our fatigued legs. During plyo training, if the speed of the

exercise begins to slow down, immediately cease doing any more reps! In fact, through time & experimentation you will learn to stop BEFORE you slow down. This is truly the best way to improve power, by stopping before fatigue sets in, not when fatigue sets in!

When you reach the workouts portion of this manual you will see some kick butt plyo exercises and a little story behind my first real plyo training experience. It was an embarrassing moment for me to say the least!

Before your plyo training can begin you need to develop a strong base of strength. Strength is your first goal and from there you can slowly begin to improve power (speed) with plyo training. I will never have an athlete perform plyo push ups until he can perform weighted push ups and other heavy pressing movements, and often times even then I want to see greater strength. Remember, strength is required to overcome resistance to start a movement.

According to Starzynski and Sozanski (1995), the best time to perform plyo or speed training is immediately after a warm up, before fatigue sets in due to other training. In addition, Starzynski and Sozanski encourage the use of speed training after a rest day or a low intensity day when the central nervous system is best prepared and most likely to respond highly to speed training.

In the Gladiator Training DVD and at www.BodyWeightU.com you will see various plyo exercises done for upper & lower body. On the flip side, there are times when an athlete is very strong but does not exhibit speed when competing or in the weight room. This is when you know you must focus on implementing dynamic effort days, using weights that are 40 – 70 % of your max and performing 2 – 3 fast reps per set with short rest periods, but for high sets, around 5 – 10 on average.

Plyo training is also an excellent way to intensify your training when using only bodyweight. Coaches of Grappling and wrestling teams can use plyo training with great success if they are short on time & can not take their athletes into the weight room (or perhaps you don't have access to a weight room). I have trained countless wrestling

teams and have trained athletes in MMA with plyo training. Here are a few examples of how I include them in a workout.

Using a partner, he holds your ankles and you walk on your hands. This exercise is called a wheel barrow. You can also travel forwards, backwards and laterally by performing a plyo push up from this position. Divide your team into lines of 5 and have them perform long jumps or hops across the mat, allowing minimal ground contact time with the feet.

Spread out all the athletes and have them perform jump squats with reps in the 5 – 10 range. The jump squats can progress to split squat jumps. Rather than doing the simple squat thrust and push up, you can do a jump squat when coming up & out of your squat thrust movement.

I have also experimented with plyo training using a sand bag. I took a sand bag filled with 50 - 60 lbs. I looped a tow rope through the bag and then hung it over the bar from a swing set at the local park. From there I explosively pressed the bag away from me and then absorbed the bag back into my arms. Make sure to bend your arms with the impact. I like to call this “melting” with the bag. If you try to stop the bag with stiff arms you run the risk of hyperextending an elbow or injuring your wrist, hands, etc. This movement is great for improving pushing power in the upper body.

Jumping rope is a mild form of plyometrics or jump training as well. You can also place a cone or another high obstacle down on the ground & jump over the obstacle moving laterally or front & back for reps or time. Another great form of plyo training is to jump up stadium stairs using two or one foot. This will make your legs extremely powerful. Remember, all movement begins from the feet and then travels up. So training the legs is critical if you want to have a fast takedown, fast escapes from the bottom & fast defense.

If jumping up the stadium stairs is too difficult for you, you can bound up the stairs. Bounding when you are leaping (taking off on 1 foot, landing on the other). This is just like when you raced your friend up a long set of stairs when you were a kid. You ran so fast that you would skip the stairs and leap over 2 or 3 steps at a time.

As you can see, creativity and research allow one to create some awesome training activities and do not require fancy equipment. Often times, no equipment is necessary at all for plyo training methods. Your goal is to do the exercise while exerting high speed & force. If you slow down you should stop immediately.

Vary your rest periods as always, sometimes resting 30 seconds other times resting 5 minutes. As a combat athlete you get little or no rest during a match, so I like to incorporate incomplete recovery periods. Scientifically speaking, the longer rest periods allow for full or optimal recovery of the central nervous system. As I have mentioned before though, the writings of many books are correct on paper but too often do not have a strong carry over to real life, in the trenches competition. This is why experimentation is so important! Do not blindly follow the methods you read in all books.

Chapter 6

NO BS Training Tips

Nutritional Tips

Eat Regularly: According to Berardi (2005), eating every 2 – 3 hours is one of the most important changes you can make to your diet. Regular feeding intervals stimulate the metabolism, balance blood sugar, and improve health, body composition and performance.

Protein is the key nutrient required for you to repair and build lean muscle tissue. With all your intense training, your body will need plenty of lean protein during every meal! In addition, to keep your digestive system working properly, to aid in vitamin and mineral intake and to prevent loss of muscle tissue and bone density, you must have 1 – 2 servings of veggies at every meal!

If you feel that you need to lose body fat, then a simple rule to follow is to ingest your carbs (except for fruits and veggies) only after your workouts. Your body utilizes carbs efficiently after a workout, as opposed to the times when you are not active. Berardi likes to call this “earning your carbs”. If you did not just finish a workout, then put away that bowl of pasta until after your workout!

Your fluid intake should regularly be water. Sodas, fruit juices and fruit shakes are often loaded with simple sugars and tons of calories, none of which do much in the way of improving performance or appearance. After a workout, a small glass of juice helps kick start recovery, other than that, less fruits, not fruit juices be where you receive healthy sugars from.

On the flip side, with our focus on individualizing training and nutrition, I must emphasize I am NOT a nutritionist. But, I have seen how so many of us react differently

to certain foods as well as when we eat those foods. If you're looking to gain weight, then adding carbs to your other meals carefully might be what you need.

The most important meal of the day is your POST WORK OUT MEAL. After you finish a strength training work out or intense grappling (especially live sparring), you have what is called an "window of opportunity." This window lasts approx. 30 minutes. In this time period you must eat a quality meal, balanced with protein and carbohydrates. The body utilizes carbohydrates best at this time so make sure that this meal is balanced with protein, carbs and healthy fats.

If you do not get this meal within 30 minutes (45 minutes max!) your muscles start to eat off other muscles to repair themselves. This is a break down process that we do not want to happen! Remember, you just tore your muscles down from training and now you must feed your muscles to help repair them. The benefits of strength training only occur AFTER the workout if rest and proper nutrition are taken care of.

Here is an example of what you want to do after your work out. Start by having a glass of juice to get some simple sugars in your body. A glass of apple, cranberry, grape, orange or raspberry juice will be perfect! Even better, would be to have two pieces of fruit. Two oranges that are already sliced up and waiting in a zip loc bag would be key!

This simple carbohydrate consumption lets your body easily absorb some of the nutrients that have been drained from your body during the tough work out & kick starts the recovery process. The key here is restoring depleted glycogen reserves.

Afterwards it's time to sit down and eat your post work out meal. If you are far from home, pack food with you or have a protein shake ready to go. Get plenty of water to drink right now, as this is a key part of keeping your body systems moving smoothly & transporting the nutrients.

In addition, soda is just a bunch of empty calories and does nothing good for your body. Eat a small salad, a chicken breast, and a serving of rice (or another carbohydrate rich

food such as pasta or a baked potato). If you don't have the salad, then you must get in your 1 – 2 servings of veggies.

For the athlete in need of gaining more weight (often the case incoming high school wrestlers at a lighter weight class), eat a calorie dense post workout meal:

Glass of grape juice

Steak

Baked potato

Salad

This meal kick starts the recovery process by replacing all the nutrients that were lost from the work out and takes care of much of the recovery process. The next portion occurs during rest / sleep. **If you skip this meal, your work out has just been wasted!!**

A sample for someone who is not close to home would be a protein shake mixed in water or juice, plus a piece of fruit. If you have a potato pre baked or boiled, eat that as well because post workout is the best time for you to consume carbs.

There are no excuses if you want to improve. So take nutrition & rest as serious as you take your grappling and watch your performance improve at a much faster rate.

Some meal replacements that you can use are Lean Body or Myoplex. Try a few others out and see which has the best quality nutrition. Do not simply buy what is the cheapest. Many of the cheap brands have little protein, empty calories and a ton of sugar. Do not confuse a weight gainer for a protein shake or a meal replacement shake.

So remember, learn to eat regularly, especially breakfast and post work out meal. These two meals are key and get you functioning at a quality level. Force yourself to rest in order to reap the benefits from strength training.

Cycle the intensity of your workouts to keep your body responding as opposed to adapting to doing the same thing day in and day out. Never strength train two days in a row if you have just done a full body workout, unless you are performing a GPP day (again, lasting no more than 20 minutes). If you are still sore after a day of rest, then take another day off or perform some active rest activity which helps alleviate soreness and speeds up the recovery process.

Mental Preparation

This is where many Grapplers and athletes in general fail to train. Perhaps I should simply say they do not know how to train their mind. Combat is a highly psychological activity. I was always floored when I saw some major slackers place top 3 in their county wrestling tournament and sometimes qualify or even place for the states!

On the flip side, I have seen some of the most dedicated, hard working wrestlers never make it out of the first round of the districts! The difference here was that one wrestler was confident in their ability and had no fear of losing. They went out on the mat and layed it all out on the line. The other wrestler placed insane amounts of pressure on him self & ultimately would perform at a level below their true potential.

Training your mind is equally important as it is to train your physical self, possibly more important. How can you train your mind? There are countless ways, and everyone must come up with a way that is good for them and reaps the most rewards. What works for me may not work for you and vice versa.

Of major importance is letting go of your fear to lose. All the athletes in the world lose, no matter how great they are. Once upon a time they lost, and sometimes when they are ranked as the best in the world they lose as well! If you can learn to approach each match or fight knowing that you are going to fight for every inch of that mat or octagon, you increase your chances of winning greatly.

If you enter a match focusing on how difficult it will be & how tough your opponent will be then you are going to have a tough time capitalizing on your own ability & strengths. Start giving it all you have no matter who stands in your way. Someone has to be the champion, why should it be someone else, why not let it be YOU?!

“Thoughts Become Things”

~ Unknown ~

Another factor regarding your mental preparation is being able to recover from a setback, which might include a loss when you were expected to win or perhaps an injury mid way through the fight or match. This recovery may be required immediately if it is mid match or if you have another match in a matter of 20 minutes!

I recall Dan Gable and his athletes getting very emotional when losing. Often times they would cry and be overwhelmed with negative feelings. If you lose in a big tournament you need to let any negative emotions work to motivate you, especially if you have a chance to return and place in that tournament. Focus on the negative too much & you will bury yourself in a hole so deep that you will not be able to get out & refocus your energy towards winning again.

“What You Focus On Grows”

~ Dr. Joe Vitale ~

I have watched state champs and national champs lose to relatively unknown wrestlers. I have seen blue belts tap out black belts! How could this happen? Someone demanded more of themselves and took a stand to bull doze through any & all obstacles that stand in their way.

First timers in the states pinning defending state champs or D 1 Collegiate walk ons beating defending national champs are no longer a shocker to me. I have learned how powerful the mind can be and have witnessed some amazing feats by those who possessed a powerful attitude.

Champions have made a solid choice to become a champion. They train hard and they also believe in their ability to accomplish what so few can attain. The bottom line here is that you can train as hard as you want, harder than anyone else – go to a wrestling club all year, get private BJJ sessions with a black belt, workout all year, etc – but, this will be of no use if you compete while not believing in yourself.

Take a stand & blaze a winning trail for yourself. Only a few athletes can do this & you must have absolute belief in yourself. Confidence comes through training the mind regularly, even several times daily! Visualize yourself achieving your goals every day. Put yourself on the line by competing regularly. Some athletes train very hard but avoid competition because of their fear of testing their abilities.

Do not focus on your fears or worries. Remember, “What you focus on grows.” Instead, focus on what you want the outcome to look like, feel like and keep that mental picture running through your mind and your feelings every day, all day.

Surrounding yourself with positive, motivated people will have a likening effect on your self. Hang out with people who dwell on the negative & complain about everything will only bring you down and literally suck out all the positive energy you once had! Like attracts like.

Create an environment that is conducive for becoming a champion! Leave no regrets to be had! The possibilities are endless if you so choose to take the path of being a champion!

Here are two activities that have proven to be very successful for my athletes and can be used in other areas of your life as well:

- 1) Create a Vision Board – Get a bulletin board and hang it in a place that you are very often, so you can get tons of face to face contact with your vision board. On your vision board, post photos and words of what you want to achieve. Maybe you'll have a photo of someone getting hand raised in the octagon and you place a picture of your head in place of their head. This vision board should look like a scrap book of all your future successes.
- 2) Create an ID book – this is a photo album of your future. Look through this photo album daily and FEEL your success, do not just visualize. More important than visualizing is feeling the emotions you will feel during and after these amazing feats of success. If that means jumping up and down and screaming with joy because you just won an 8 man MMA tournament or the local grappling tourney then do it!

If all this sounds too crazy for you then I must ask you, 'How badly do you want change?'

THE MOST EFFECTIVE BASIC FREE WEIGHT MOVEMENTS

The following exercises are the best for adding muscle mass, strength & power. Exercises such as the dead lift or the barbell squat may be too difficult for a beginner due to weak muscles, especially the posterior chain. This can be corrected by addressing weak muscles (traps, low back, abs, the ENTIRE posterior chain basically) and bringing them up to par with the stronger muscles when you first start a training program. Once you have brought up your weaker muscles (the posterior chain) you can then begin to regularly perform all of the top free weight lifts.

Make sure that you include unilateral training / exercises when focusing on weaker muscles. This helps shift a greater amount of stress to those muscles, forcing them to come to life!

Examples of unilateral exercises for the posterior chain can be:

1. walking dumbbell lunges (or bodyweight)
2. barbell or dumbbell lunges (forward, sideways or reverse)
3. barbell or dumbbell step ups
4. Walking Russian Kettlebell swings w/ 2 hands (walk straight or multi directional)
5. Sand bag exercises – lunges, step ups, stair climbing are all uni lateral in nature
6. 1 arm DB row, alternate KB rows, 1 arm sandbag rows
7. 1 leg squat w/back foot elevated, or not elevated, & pistol squat
8. Sled drags with ankle straps (forwards and backwards) – these are awesome and brutal!

Here are My Favorite Free Weight Movements:

1. **Deadlift** (trap bar, straight bar, feet elevated dead lifts, rack pulls, bent leg, sumo style or stiff leg (RDL – Romanian dead lift) – trap bar DL’s have shown to be easiest for young athletes to start with. Progress to a straight bar when form is perfect.
2. **Military / Overhead Presses**
3. **Bent over barbell / dumbbell row**
4. **Barbell squat (box or no box)**
5. **Barbell Power Clean or Clean and Press**
6. **1 arm dumbbell / kettlebell snatch**
7. **1 arm dumbbell / kettlebell clean and press**
8. **Dumbbell / Kettlebell swings**
9. **Farmer walks / carries**

10. Sled Drags in all directions

We can also add a few more basics here rounding out the top lifts

- Pull ups – Chin Ups
- Parallel Bar Dips
- Push Ups (all variations)
- Back extensions
- Glute Ham raises
- Rope / Pole Climbing

The last list of exercises can certainly help add strength, power & overall functional muscle for the grappler. The clean & press is a very advanced exercise & should only be done after you have a solid base of strength & are taught the exercise by a qualified strength coach. Regarding push ups, I can not say enough good things about them! There are so many variations to the push up and even the most advanced athletes do push ups, from the basic push up progressing to reps in the 1 arm push up!

Pull ups are a required movement for combat athletes in my opinion. Add variety here by using ropes, towels, and varying your hand and grip.

These lifts are basic and allow the athlete to attack a large number of muscles in a relatively short period of time. Training wisely means choosing exercises that allow you to get the most bang for your buck. This can also be called “training economy.” The beginner as well as the most advanced lifter can benefit greatly from these lifts. Learning to do them correctly is also a critical factor, as it is for every exercise. If you perform an exercise wrong, the benefit is wasted & you open yourself up for injury.

Once again, do not expect to start performing these exercises immediately. They will take time to build up to. I do not have my athletes perform a flat bench press until they can crank out push ups like no tomorrow. The squat & deadlift take even longer for them to

start doing because we focus big time on the posterior chain in the beginning, performing a lot of the unilateral lifts listed above, kettlebell swings and odd object carries.

One side not regarding the dead lift (DL); the beginner and intermediate benefit greatly by using a trap bar before using the straight bar. The trap bar will place greater emphasis on the glutes, quads, and hams – where as the straight bar places a lot of tension on the lower back. Mastering form is much easier using the trap bar and is a great alternative for the young athlete.

THE GOAL OF A STRENGTH PROGRAM FOR YOUNG ATHLETES

We want to reduce injuries, strengthen tendons and increase bone density. From here, we can progress safely and correctly. It is not necessary to go below 5 reps for young athletes. Unless on a bodyweight exercise like a pull up or dip and you can only do 2 or 3, that is fine. But, doing flat benches for 1 or 2 max reps is ridiculous and a waste of time and does nothing to improve your athletic ability. Always train with safety in mind. If you are unsure, seek the help of a professional and learn to do things correctly.

Why is reducing injuries the main goal? Simple. You can not perform or participate when injured. Reducing injuries is addressed by bringing up the lagging muscles and building a balanced physique. The use of free weights & BW exercises strengthen the bones, tendons & ligaments because they force the athlete to balance the weights or their own body while simultaneously pushing against a resisting load.

As I have mentioned previously, the young athlete who is new to resistance training can make improvements by following the simplest exercise programs. Make sure each workout is short & intense enough to reap the benefits, but not so grueling where they do not want to come back for more.

I like to leave my athletes wanting to train a little bit more when they walk out the door most of the time. This keeps them coming back with great energy each workout. A

strength training program is not going to make you feel like you just finished a grappling or mma practice. We are training for strength & power, so the workout will obviously be different! Do not approach strength training with the goal of exhausting the individual. Any Coach can kick your ass and make you tired, the good Coaches get you results.

THE OLYMPIC LIFTS

A quick note on the Olympic lifts: they are very complex and difficult to learn when you try to learn them on your own or from a coach who is not highly experienced in the O Lifts. For a beginner and even an intermediate, they are not necessary to use. I would rather see beginners & intermediates performing the basic exercises, focusing on the top lifts mentioned above as well as bodyweight strength exercises & kettlebells if you have access to them.

Kettlebells are derivatives of the O lifts and are easier to learn. If kettlebells are not an option, dumbbells can be used for the snatch, clean and jerk or clean and press.

In addition, the Olympic lifts are often done incorrectly by the young athlete and take a long time to learn. I've seen some scary technique used to move weights by unqualified athletes (i.e. – too weak and unskilled) while attempting to perform an O lift.

I would rather spend 45 minutes doing (dead lifts) DL's, pull ups, push ups, barbell lunges, sled dragging and sand bag carries. I've found through experience that once a good base of physical preparation is developed the O lifts are much easier to learn!

If you have a solid year of strength training under your belt and have been receiving qualified coaching from a strength coach, then I would recommend practicing one Olympic lift as a warm up using the empty Olympic bar. Practicing the hang clean for 5 – 8 minutes is a great warm up and gets you focusing on form before piling on weights.

This Olympic lifting warm up raises core body temperature and allows for the athlete to focus on form. As mentioned before, the Olympic lifts are out for a beginner, use them as a warm up for the intermediate, and if you have been training with weights for a few years, you can become trained in the Olympic lifts to do them properly. Still, you should stick to the other exercises listed in the manual. Why? Because too many athletes and even coaches, have the athlete train too heavy on the Olympic lifts sacrificing form for technique. So before you do something, know why you are doing it & have proper coaching! The Olympic lifts are better suited for the Olympic lifter, who is specializing in Olympic lifts!

In addition, the O lifts do not have a eccentric portion, so they eliminate the stretch reflex or reactive component of a movement. Your body utilizes reaction speed during combat extensively and using basic movements allow you to train with reaction speed.

Russian Kettlebells

The use of Russian Kettlebells have proven to be highly effective not only for training my own athletes, but combat athletes world wide! The benefits of Russian Kettlebells are countless! They improve flexibility while simultaneously increasing strength & power. They also place heavy emphasis on the posterior chain which is a very weak muscle for all athletes as I have mentioned a million times before.

Kettlebells were a rude awakening when I first began using them. I carried a pair of 53 and 70 lb bells and they felt heavy as all heck, way heavier than dumbbells of the same size! I had no problems throwing around 70 lb dumbbells while training but using 70 lb kettlebells seemed like a goal that would take a while to reach. I spent months working with the 53 lb kettlebells before progressing to the 70's!

The kettlebells will certainly challenge you and hit your body in ways you never experienced before. This is often described as building “smart muscle” as opposed to

beach muscles. To me, the kettlebell is just one tool of many that is an effective means for training combat athletes.

As a grappler or mma fighter power is crucial. In fact, Coach Ethan Reeve of Wake Forest University told me that power is more important than strength! Why would he say such a thing? Simply put, having too much strength & not enough power is like being too fat. Too much fat is of no use to an athlete!

Power is the ability to put speed behind a movement coupled with strength! Power is strength & athleticism combined. Kettlebell movements require starting strength (speed) to complete most movements. Often times an athlete does not understand when we tell them explode through your opponent on takedowns, kick through your opponent, punch through your opponent, etc.

With kettlebells, the individual must “Rip” the bells up to get them into a rack position before pressing or squatting the weight. This teaches the individual to be aggressive while moving!

The thick handles on kettlebells turn every exercise into a grip exercise. Dumbbells can NEVER do that since the handles are so skinny. Kettlebells for the most part will always be in the rack position during many of your exercises. The rack is when the KB's lay across your upper body, very similar to where the weight of your opponent will be when you shoot in for a takedown. Dumbbells can never sit here as do KB's. Doing squats & lunges are awesome for improving your strength & power for takedown's & fighting in the clinch!

Kettlebells also develop major mental toughness when done for high reps! Let me tell you my friends, doing high rep snatches will make you into a man of steel in no time. Doing reps of 15 or more on snatches will also help develop the power endurance and burn fat like nothing else! How about performing a 5 minute kettlebell snatch test! This is a brutal test!

Kettlebells will lend themselves greatly to doing high octane cardio (HOC). Placing one KB on opposite ends of a basketball court or on a field, or using only one KB if that's all you have is great as well. For grapplers & fighters, HOC with Kettlebells will send your conditioning through the roof! If you are not well prepared for this type of training get your bucket ready! I have seen many people get nauseated from using kettlebells due to the nature of each movement (full body). The kettlebells recruit all muscles which is something many barbell & dumbbell exercises do not do unless done in combo fashion (i.e. squat, curl & press).

Anyone can learn to use Kettlebells, no matter how heavy or light, big or small you are, etc. A large factor that I love training with kettlebells is their versatility. I can take them to the park with me, the back yard or to a football field and combine them with sled training. Sometimes I even place the kettlebell on the sled and mix in my dragging with a kettlebell movement.

The locking out of many of the movements help improve joint strength & stability making us grapplers less prone to injury. In bodybuilding it was always emphasized to keep tension on the muscles so don't fully lock out! In grappling and mma you often post with locked arms on the floor or against your opponent.

And, as many of my athletes tell me, "These are fun!" They truly are. There is so much variety available with Kettlebells in addition to the unusual movements incorporated with them that all athletes remain stimulated physically & mentally.

The best way to see how great Russian Kettlebells are is to get your hands dirty and take a few lessons with them. It might take 2 or 3 classes to feel comfortable with them. After a few classes watch your strength, power & flexibility sky rocket! One thing I DO NOT like is when any coach espouses the use of only one training tool or method, such as only using kettlebells. This is completely untrue. I use a variety of effective tools for training

my athletes, never only one method or tool. This will diminish your true potential from training.

EDT / ESCALATING DENSITY TRAINING

This is a great method for improving strength, power and hypertrophy. This method simply deals with how much work you do in relation to time. I tweak it a little bit when I train, but Coach Staley came up with this method and I love using it for conditioning as well as gains in strength, power and endurance. It can also be a great way to train when crunched for time. I also like it for the mental toughness aspect when trying to beat your previous past best lifts. Here are the protocols to follow:

1. choose two exercises, best that they are opposing movements (push – pull, upper – lower body)
2. 15 minute time period (called your PR zone)
3. Choose a weight that allows your 10 rep max in ea. movement
4. Count & record reps for the two exercises in that 15 minute time period
5. Try to beat the total reps each workout (your reps for that 15 minute time zone is your PR)
6. After 15 minutes, choose another two exercises (if you have the energy) and do another PR zone – if you still have energy more power to you!

These are tough work outs!

I'm going to cut to the chase here and give you examples that simply outline escalated density training. Let's use the double Kettlebell push press (military press) and the straight bar dead lift.

On Monday I will set my timer for 15 minutes. Every set I will shoot for 10 reps of kettlebell presses followed by 10 deadlifts. I may not get 10 reps as the time goes on but

that's ok, the true goal is to beat your previous best in total reps. I will repeat this workout several times during the week, possibly twice, maybe three times. After a few workouts (this is completely individual, you might be able to increase quicker than several workouts) I will keep picking up the pace shooting for more total reps (PR zone) each work out. The Bottom line is you need to push yourself!

If you have done more work in your 15 minute time period than the last time, then you have a new PR (personal record). Coach Staley recommended to me that people switch their exercises too often. This makes it hard to gauge progress. He recommended upping the weights when you start "feeling" that the work load is too easy.

You can use this EDT technique with basic exercises such as pull ups, dead lifts, kettlebell exercises, barbell squats, pistol squats, etc. You can also use this technique with sled work. The example with sled work looks like this: I train an athlete and they will alternate 5 reps in the sled press with 5 reps in the sled row for 15 minutes. We count total reps in that 15 minute pr zone and if he gets in better shape, resting less, or exploding through the reps faster, he will likely achieve new PR zones.

Or, the other variable would be to use heavier weight for same reps in the same time frame. This way, you are doing more work in the same amount of time by either increasing reps or increasing weight.

I have found this technique to be tremendously effective on exercises that many athletes have difficulty with. I often use the technique with 1 arm military presses and pull ups as well as sled work. Escalated Density training is another way for you to train more effectively in addition to adding more variety. These two variables alone will improve performance, decrease injury and decrease the rate of boredom or burnt out from any strength program.

No Rules Strength Training

These are some of my favorite workouts. I call them “No Rules” b/c I set no limits on the sets, reps, rest patterns, exercise selection, frequency of training, etc. I am sure you get the idea by now. I have emphasized variety often times in this manual & this certainly applies to variety.

Why else do I like No Rules training? It keeps training fresh & entices the athlete to want more because they are choosing their favorite movements. We want to avoid this training method with easy movements or if the athlete only uses this for his / her strong areas. Try this for weak areas and challenging movements for best results! The total time of these training sessions often last 15 – 30 minutes.

These workouts lend themselves very well for combat athletes because they aid in the development of strength endurance & power endurance. To make things easier to understand, let’s jump in & talk shop.

I might decide to use the double kettlebell clean, squat & push press. This can also be done one arm at a time. I will choose a moderately heavy weight, and do 2, maybe 3 reps. Put the weights down, rest approximately 30 seconds and repeat the same exercise for a total of 10 minutes, maybe even 20 minutes! Every minute my goal is to perform 2 or 3 reps. Your rest will obviously have to stay short to ensure you complete 2 or 3 reps every minute.

After accomplishing your time goal, you can either finish the workout right then & there, or perform perhaps one or two more movements. An example here would be to go and do 5 non stop supersets of pull ups and dips for max reps. Or, I might perform 5 minutes of non stop sled rowing & pressing, alternating movements after doing 8 reps per set.

You can choose the reps to be 1 per set on your “main” exercise or up to 5 per set. I prefer lower reps here b/c I will often go for an extended time period. Another idea might be to keep doing pull ups and chin ups until I have completed a total of 100 reps in this movement. Finish right then & there or maybe follow this up with the farmer carry holding heavy dumbbells or pushing a heavy wheel barrow for 10 minutes w/some short rest to regain grip strength and catch your breath.

These workouts can be repeated for a few days or you might want to follow “No Rules” workouts for 5 days in a row, creating a new workout every day. Make sure each workout is short in duration to keep you mentally & physically feeling the urge to do more. A long work out is not a better workout. We want a healthy combination of quality & quantity.

As you can see, “No Rules” strength training can be very creative and can be done in a large variety of ways. Setting rules for a workout can cause mental limitations that lead to physical limitations. I spoke to a college strength coach and he told me about how he had some of his football players perform 50 sets of 2 reps of the hang clean using a heavy weight. This had to be done in 50 minutes (1 set per minute)! They were not done just yet though! After that they would perform 3 sets of sled pushing using a heavy weight, somewhere around 260 lbs. This weight was chosen b/c it was the average weight of a D 1 lineman! Talk about a tough workout! I don’t think you’ll find such a program in the popular personal training certifications!

Do you need to do 50 sets? No, but, you can create your own crazy workouts that are fun and challenging and will surely lead to gains in performance! I remember that when I would travel to my Grandparent’s & spend 1 month with them during the summer, there was no gym in site.

Every other day I went to the playground & did anywhere from 15 – 20 sets of pull ups and chin ups. I returned home after that month and was strong as all heck on all my pulling movements. In high school I was able to crank out 30 pull ups in perfect form even when I weighed 160 lbs.

Create a few of these ‘No Rules’ workouts and do this at least once every other week. Make sure that they are different in nature. Perhaps one workout revolves around Russian Kettlebells, another workout might revolve around sled training and another revolves around bodyweight exercises. I like to leave room for my athletes to be creative enough to do some training on their own as opposed to having me dictate every single workout and exercise selection for them.

As a coach, we do not want to run our athletes into the ground because this will make training a tedious task for them. Make it enjoyable, and this means finding the right balance between difficulty, duration and exercise selection so that each workout is fun for them. Remember, we want longevity with our athletes. We want them to come back and improve on a regular basis!

Training Like a Farm Boy

Training like a farm boy may not be the proper title, but maybe it is. We can also call this Underground or Gladiator training. This type of training builds serious strength, power, endurance & mental toughness! A lot of these ideas have come from watching The World’s Strongest Man competition as well as strength coaches such as Joe DeFranco of NJ & Larry Jurdanis, a strength coach in Canada who uses this style of training year round for his athletes with phenomenal results!

This style of training is great for adding confidence in the grappler, or any athlete for that matter. I encounter a lot of athletes who are very talented but lack the confidence because they know they are not physically strong and can not go toe to toe with that opponent who comes out bull dozing with his furious strength.

Moving heavy objects and straining yourself under tough conditions can have a dramatic increase in an athlete’s confidence. It teaches them not to give up during the struggle, and to commit to the task at hand.

The best part is that most of this equipment can be purchased from Home Depot or you can make them yourself. The pulling sleds I own were welded by a few guys from my Dad's work. Most sleds cost over \$ 100. Mine were made from scrap metal but they work just the same and produce the same results! You can always improvise, as this training is not supposed to be pretty. Making sure your equipment looks cool is the last thing anyone should care about.

Here is a list of equipment you can choose from. Once again, you can buy all, some, or none of this equipment. It all depends on your goals.

1. Wheel Barrow
2. Sledge Hammer (10 – 20 lbs)
3. Pulling Sled (welded together or improvise by using an old snow sleigh or a tire)
4. 2" Heavy Duty Rope – 10 - 25 ft. (the length will determine it's various uses)
5. tow straps 10' length (large eyes for hands to slip through)
6. Pea Gravel
7. Duct tape
8. Contractor Bags
9. Army Navy Duffel Bag
10. 2 Buckets
11. Old Car or Truck Tire
12. Tree Logs
13. Stones
14. Kegs filled with water

Now, a lot of this stuff can be purchased for dirt cheap or often times for free. Junk yards give tires away so they don't need to pay recycling fees. To make a tire heavier get the wheel that comes with it! You then loop a chain through the wheel and attach the rope to the chain. Having a chain will ensure that there is no breaking of the rope as it drags across the pavement. The more dragging you do, eventually your rope will tear if you

don't have a chain. Having a chain around the wheel & tire will give your modified dragging sled longevity.

My first sled was purchased from Westside Barbell, my others were made by my Dad's employees and I recently snagged a sled from elitefts.com.

A 50 lb bag of pea gravel costs about \$2 or 3. A 10 - 25 ft. rope from Home Depot will cost about \$ 10.

You can get behind a car while it is in neutral and push it across a parking lot! Once I saw this I gave it a shot myself & had one hell of a full body workout. Your upper back, shoulders and triceps get a brutal workout as do your legs. This built up the legs and shoulders and triceps tremendously to say the least & is great for full body training! You can start by using a smaller car and then build up to using a truck. If it's too hard, you & a partner can push the vehicle together. Just push it for a longer distance or time, and eventually do some solo pushing.

Carrying a sand bag up & down stadium stairs for one minute is an awesome overall strength & conditioning exercise. The sand bag can either be increased in weight using a smaller sand bag or bag of pea gravel, or by adding chains (chains are a great way to make a no spill sand bag). Or, carry the sand bag for longer periods of time or for further distance.

Pushing a heavy wheel barrow up a slight hill or even a steep hill for 1 minute or longer will work your entire body. The balancing of the wheel barrow will put extra work on your abs, obliques, legs shoulders, upper back and grip! You can load your wheel barrow with Olympic plates or any heavy objects that will test your will and fortitude!

The truly insane will load their wheel barrow with sandbags and kettlebells. Get to the bottom of the hill, perform 2 movements with high intensity, then push that wheel barrow up hill at high speed! Repeat for time or desired reps up / down the hill.

Buckets filled with sand or cement are awesome for grip. I take foam or a small hand towel and tape them around the handles to make my gripping surface larger, this makes my hands and grip work that much harder. Carry one in each hand or carry one at a time to work the opposite side of your body. Carrying one bucket is also great if you need to address weak sides of your body. We also use buckets or sand bags for rotational work.

Standing next to an object like a picnic table or a barrel turned upside down, I rotate my body and pick up the bag or bucket while lifting it to the other side onto the object. I have also done this rotational movement using a kettlebell.

Using a sledge hammer must be done safely! Make sure your hands will not slip off the handle and no one else should be standing close to you while training. Also, make sure you hit the hammer on a large surface, such as a tree stump or a large tractor tire. Be ready for the hammer to bounce back slightly so do not relax after slamming the hammer down. Use the sledge hammer with overhead swings, swings from each side as well as 1 handed swings. The 1 handed swings will increase the emphasis on grip and is a great form of uni lateral training. Med ball slams from an overhead position are a great way to simulate over head sledge hammer swings.

Farm boy style training should be creative & fun. It's a great way to break away from the regular weight training that most people do. The movements also force the entire body to work together because you are involving so many movements at once: pushing, rotating, pulling, balancing, level changes, etc. Spending 10 – 20 minutes on these training methods will make you much stronger in a short period of time. So stop playing it safely, get out of the weight room, and get out to a field and tear it up! There are sample programs in the workout section as well, just to give you an idea.

Chapter 7

CREATING YOUR UNDERGROUND DUNGEON

This is going to be great fun! This is the time where you get to create your own training area, whether it is a room, a basement, a garage or a section of your house this is where you let your own world be created!

To determine the space you need, you want a non – cluttered, open area. Choose an area that will be free of distractions as well as a place that you can train in year round. So if you do not have heat in your garage and you have bitter winters, you can forget that idea! Trust me, I tried using those little space heaters and they do not work well enough to heat a small room that is below 30 degrees!

It was mid December and my garage must have been low 30's! Steam was rising off of my face and eventually I got very sick! You also want an area that has a high enough ceiling for you to do chin ups and pull ups & overhead presses with out hitting your head or the dumbbells on the ceiling.

When I first made my gym, I moved stuff from my Dad's garage and squeezed everything into an open space in what was once a crowded and messy garage. Regardless, I was overly excited to start something that I could call my own. I was tired of training at gyms that played lousy music and the members talked more than they trained. I need my own world. A place where limits were endless and sweating was a good thing. Loud music was something I wanted so I bought a stereo from Best Buy that ran me 65 \$. You may already have a CD player so bring that into your training area.

I bought a few motivational posters of wrestlers, mma fighters, Olympic athletes and hung them up. The equipment I have is more than what you will need, but never the less, I snagged plenty of bargains by looking in the right places. And you are going to do the same!

Let's take a look at some of the equipment I recommend and then, it's all up to you. If you want to purchase the stuff, go for it. Or, you can simply make your entire strength and conditioning routine revolve around the body weight calisthenics shown in the training manual & our various DVD's.

One thing I would like to see you purchase is a **power rack**. The best racks are purchased from www.Elitefts.com – they can customize it for your garage or basement height. You'll need a kick ass Olympic bar and the texas power bar is perfect as an all around bar, snag it from elitefts.com as well. Get your Olympic plates off of e bay or garage sales. The rest of your equipment will pretty much be home made unless you pick up kettlebells and dumbbells.

Come to think of it, I have two pairs of dumbbells that a welder made himself. He used heavy duty piping and seriously old standard plates. I have a pair of 90 and 130 lb dumbbells. They're beauties.

If you still plan on buying equipment, here is the next thing you want to look at would be the purchase of a **chin / dip tower**. But, most power racks already have a pull up bar, some power racks also come with an optional attachment of a dip bar. We use the dip bar for leg raises and dips, and although this is only two movements, they have been valuable movements for us.

Purchasing a dip – pull up bar may not be necessary if you have good parks near by. This would probably be number one on my list of things to get, but you can always find parallel bars at a playground and monkey bars or rings for pull ups at the playground as well.

Don't want the power rack or the dip bar/ get the door mounted pull up bars that costs \$ 20. Don't want any of this? Train outdoors year round and use sandbags, and stones! You can get strong off of any tool!

Can you build your own chin – dip equipment? I did see a guy who built his pull up & dip stations in his back yard! He installed pressure treated wood into the ground. The wood looked like thick rail road ties and was probably purchased from Home Depot. Then, he drilled a bar in between the wooden beams for pull ups. The dip apparatus looked like a set of gymnastic parallel bars. There were 4 upright beams of wood in the ground - then 2 bars for the dips – the dip bar was a bit longer, looked more like gymnastics parallel bars. These bars looked like pipes from the plumbing section at Home Depot. If your or your family members are handy, then make it yourself!!

Not a whole lot needed to get started. A power rack is a bit pricey, but if you are focusing on getting stronger, then you'll need the rack for all your squats, deadlifts, benching, and all the specialized movements you can perform off of the pins as well.

Now, I know I gave you the typical strength training equipment – now let me emphasize some stuff that can be used and purchased for a low price or FREE. In fact, I saved the best for last because you don't even have to purchase a power rack or any dumbbells or barbells. You can get a sand bag (or a few sand bags) and have yourself the best portable gym in town! I call this equipment the **Underground Training List**:

1. **Sand bags** – 50 – 60 lbs minimum, wrap them in 2 contractor bags, tape it up, then put them in a duffle bag – purchase this from an army navy store – my bag costed me \$ 18, and the pea gravel was maybe \$ 2 or \$ 3. Use a lighter sand bag if necessary. I prefer to use pea gravel instead of sand in case they spill.
2. **Buckets** – 2 heavy duty buckets, load them with sand for farmers carry or farmers walk – wrap foam and tape it around the handles to make the handles larger, which makes gripping them tougher. Combat athletes needs to work on finger and grip strength!
3. **Sledge Hammer** – go to Home Depot and buy a hammer or two. Buy a lighter one, and in a few weeks start using the heavier hammer. Make sure there are no people or animals, etc near by. I use the sledge hammer by hitting overhead, or by bringing the hammer around the body from the side similar to baseball swings.

- Hitting a solid object such a large tire or log of wood is great. You do not want to hit small objects, b/c if you miss, watch out! Also, change your grip. Make sure you work your non dominant side equally to your strong side or slightly more.
4. **Wheel barrow** – load them with weights or sand bags – a wheel barrow is not too expensive compared with buying a pulling sled which can run you close to \$150. Wear a pair of work gloves when pushing or pulling the wheel barrow. Pushing up hill is the best & the toughest. Don't take the easy way out, go out there and make it tough!
 5. **Large Tires** – these can be FREE from a junk yard – get a large tire – get a chain and rope from Home Depot – wrap the chain around the tire – and then wrap the rope around the chain (the chain is dragging on the ground and will not break) – loop the rope around your weight lifting belt and drag it like a sled. BIG TIRES can be used for tire flipping and are awesome for developing the entire body!
 6. **Smaller Tires** – These can be used for dragging instead of a sled, and you will see photos of these in later chapters.
 7. **Logs** – Just look for a crew cutting down trees and snag yourself a 4, 5 and 6 ft. log. These logs are killer and can be used in countless ways!
 8. **Ropes** – Just go to Home Depot and snag a 15 foot tow rope. I then used a 2foot chain and choked it around a tree branch. I bought a heavy duty clip from Home Depot as well to connect the rope and chain together
 9. **Stones** – Sometimes called river rocks, you find these at parks, back yards and just laying around. These are killer for presses, rows, deadlifts and squats!

This is why I like to improvise. Saves you money first of all, and the Underground training will make you stronger than someone who sticks to weight training only.

Here are a few places where you can purchase your equipment. Shop around, **check for quality first, best price second!** Too many people want to save ten dollars on equipment and end up buying a lesser quality item that ultimately can put the athlete at risk for injury.

1. www.performbetter.com (climbing ropes)
2. www.Elitefts.com (racks, bars, sleds, jump stretch bands, educational info)
3. www.IronWoodyFitness.com (kettlebells, bands)
4. www.KettlebellConcepts.com (kettlebells)
5. Sears – pull up / dip towers, Olympic plates
6. E Bay – canvas bags, weights, who knows what else!
7. Home Depot (Underground implements)

Dumbbells should not be purchased online so you can avoid paying high shipping due to freight charges. E Bay sometimes has good sales on the chin / dip unit and often times companies will ship them for free. If you purchase the unit from a store you can always try it out first to check the sturdiness.

Then again, an even better option would be to print out a photo of the chin / dip unit, then have a welder build you one out of solid steel or build it with the wood and bars that I mentioned before. Be sure to have the welder make it high / low enough to fit the height limitations of your home. As I mentioned earlier, shop around and do research. Do not rush and buy cheap equipment that will injure you in the short or long run.

With all the equipment I have amassed in a two car garage through the years, one thing we tend to do most often is train outdoors at parks and playgrounds. We take sleds and work them for 10 – 12 minutes, then work the playground with various pull ups, picnic table movements (squats, presses, reverse lunges), then sandbag work. After the outdoor training we head back to the gym and use the kettlebells and / or barbells. The fresh air gives off great energy, even if the “fresh air” is hot and humid in the mid 90’s!

CHAPTER 8

Underground Conditioning Methods / Energy System Training

The more I research, analyze and get on the mat myself, the more I realize that conditioning is perhaps one of the most important factors, aside from technical skills, to winning matches and fights. Strength, power and speed help undoubtedly. But, once an athlete becomes tired, his / her performance drops dramatically. Being tired affects technique, execution and even strategic plans for fighting / grappling. The hands will drop as the shoulders fatigue and breathing becomes heavier. The legs may become rubbery and wobbly and the fighter's defense becomes little to none. The fighter is now ready to just get things done and over with as opposed to winning their fight.

Being in top physical shape is a must if you want to climb to the top. It will also promote mental toughness. I am one who firmly believes that mental toughness can improve as physical training pushes you past limits on a regular basis. When you're out of shape those little "quitter" voices in your head tend to creep in and start talking to you. Train beyond what you'll experience in a fight or match regularly and you'll be on the road to victory.

High Octane Cardio is a great way to prep your self whether it is in season or off season. This includes bouts of moderate to high intensity exercise with bouts of anaerobic exercise. Wrestling, grappling and mma bouts have an up & down energy exertion. There are times in a match where the intensity is great, other times when the intensity is a bit lower. I start my athletes doing HOC for 5 minutes or less depending on their current fitness level. In time, many have worked up to doing 20 minutes of HOC! This challenged my toughest athletes physically & mentally!

Refer to my DVD's such as Ancient Training Methods, and you'll see us using HOC with sand bags and running coupled with some body weight training for a short sample of HOC. Let me explain a few ways to use HOC though. Go to an empty basketball court.

Place a pair of DB's on each side, or, perhaps just place one pair on one side, and the other side of the basketball court will include a BW exercise or a plyo move. You can also place a sandbag on each side. The implement can vary as always.

Run from one side of the court to the first station, perform 20 seconds of explosive clean & press combo lifts with the DB's, run back to the other side, perform 20 seconds worth of squat jumps, run to the other side, perform 20 seconds of bent over DB rows (use both DB's), run back to the other side, perform 20 seconds of push ups, run to the other side and perform 20 squats holding the DB's either down at your sides or on your shoulders – try varying the movement you do when traveling across the court – this works the body to a greater extent, and will develop better coordination and body awareness, as well as improve your joint strength & stability.

You can also incorporate HOC into your practice sessions. If you're gym has dumbbells, kettlebells or med balls laying around than even better. As always, body weight training will surely suffice if you have no equipment. Remember, NO EXCUSES! After doing drills for 1 - 2 minutes, stop and get some strength training done for 1 or 2 minutes. Maybe you just drilled takedowns for 5 minutes with your partner, alternating each shot. Then, you both perform 15 push ups, 15 BW squats, 5 pull ups, 5 dips and 10 v ups, then begin drilling again.

The other sample would be to drill striking and kicking on the heavy bag for 2 minutes, then perform five 1 arm snatches with a KB and 10 KB squats, return to the bag and repeat. HOC is a great way for you to experiment and use your own creativity. Switch off from strength to aerobic / anaerobic type exercises every 1 – 3 minutes. Train your body to adapt to the experience you will encounter while competing. Time can last 5 minutes total to 20 or 30 minutes total! Progress slowly & safely.

COMBO LIFTING is a great way to get the body working as a unit. In wrestling, judo, grappling, MMA or any sport for that matter, we never isolate one area of the body. Combat involves all muscles! So, why not train your body in such a way? Combo lifts are

when you combine at least 2 exercises together. An example I use often is the DB clean & press – doing 10 DB cleans and then 10 presses is NOT a combo lift – the combo is when you link the moves together.

Here are some of my favorite combo lifts:

1. DB curl & press
2. DB squat, curl & press
3. Romanian Dead Lift (RDL) & bent over barbell row
4. Barbell or DB hang clean & press
5. Parallel bar dip & leg raise
6. DB lunge & curl
7. DB lunge & press
8. Squat, push, jump & pull (squat thrust combined w/ a pull up)
9. Sandbag thruster
10. Sandbag burpee + snatch
11. Sandbag clean and press

There are many others, you can create them on your own or do some research. A combo lift will get your heart rate elevated and can be used with heavy weights or light weights. Some combos lend themselves to heavy weights & vice versa. You can do a workout that is only combo lifts (good for max repetition day) or you can include one or two of them into your supplementary lifts after doing a max effort exercise. The possibilities are endless!

Last but not least is a form of combo lifting sometimes called a “MATRIX” or “COMPLEX”. This is where you use a barbell, kettlebell, sandbag or dumbbell and perform several exercises for time, sets, total reps or some other form or a set (use your imagination here). Lighter weights can be used, sometimes moderate weights. Once again, the weight chosen and time spent moving all depends on your goals.

BARBELL COMPLEX ROUTINE

1. Stiff Leg Deadlift (RDL) x 6 reps
2. Front Squat x 6 reps (clean position)
3. Bent Over Barbell Row x 6 reps
4. Barbell Clean from floor x 6 reps
5. Standing Push Press x 6 reps
6. Shrugs x 6 reps

Each of the above exercises are done non stop, no letting go of the bar. As you can imagine, such a complex will fry your grip quickly so start with light weights. You can add more exercises to the above complex such as high pulls and bent knee deads.

Your conditioning will improve when doing complexes big time as will your lactate tolerance. They are great if done first or at the end of a workout. Another way is to perform the above complex for 6 reps or more (perhaps 8 or 10 reps) but doing the complex for a total of 3 minutes, eventually building up to a 5 or 6 minute non stop complex!

TWO DUMBBELL COMPLEX ROUTINE

1. Double Hammer Curls x 8 reps
2. Standing Push Press x 8 reps
3. Walking lunges x 8 reps
4. Bent Over Laterals x 8
5. Squats (hold DB's on shoulders) x 8
6. Bent Over Rows x 8
7. RDL's x 8
8. Double High Pulls x 8

Once again, repeat the complex for a certain number of total sets or for a total time, 3 – 6 minutes, maybe more if you are feeling insanely strong! I love doing these at the end of a workout because they place the body under a great deal of stress forcing the entire body to work. This style of training is very effective for those of us who wrestle or compete in any form of MMA.

SINGLE DUMBBELL COMPLEX ROUTINE

If you only have one dumbbell, then no worries, you can do a great complex using one dumbbell (or one kettlebell). Perform the exercise for your weaker side first (most of us are dominant right side so begin left, then go right side, then the next exercise). Perform all the exercises below for 5 reps per arm / leg.

1. 1 arm snatch
2. 2 hand squat (hold dumbbell under chin)
3. 2 hand reverse lunge (hold dumbbell under chin)
4. 1 arm row
5. 1 arm high pull
6. 1 arm clean and press
7. 1 arm swings

We have done a complex with one kettlebell following the same method as above, but sometimes add in the dreaded Turkish get up!

Here is a sample Underground strength / conditioning work out that we do often. I set everything up in the backyard and then we get started.

Prior to this work out we warm up with the following circuit, repeated 3 – 4 times:

1. jog 1 lap
2. 10 push ups

3. 10 squats
4. 10 lunges

The Backyard Underground Workout: Repeat 3 – 5 x depending on the level of the athlete.

1. Rope climb (15 ft rope) – one ascent, come down under control!! Hand over hand, no sliding down!
2. log carry and squat – walk 25 ft, perform 3 – 5 reps of log squats, walk back 25 ft, perform 3 – 5 reps of squat again.
3. Overhead sledge hammer swings x 20, alternate top hand at 10 reps
4. Sprint 1 lap around yard in each direction (lasts approx. 20 seconds)

There is no resting with the backyard underground workout. This is excellent for what I call “loaded conditioning”. This is what happens during combat, you constantly push, pull and move against another person (a weighted object) – so, why not train in such a fashion using complexes and circuits?

When we first started utilizing this backyard workout, we didn’t count sets, we went for time. Our first week was 8 minutes, the next week was 12 minutes, the third was 16 minutes and finally we hit 20 minutes. The 5th week we went back down to 10 minutes, then 15 minutes the next week, 20 minutes the next time.

Our wrestlers were going through these workouts with furious intensity and their opponents were paying the price! They did not get tired after a few weeks of these backyard workouts!

You can devote an entire day to your energy system training. If you have ever seen Martin Rooney’s DVD, ‘Training for Warriors’, you’ll notice he devoted two full days to energy system training.

No matter how much training on the mat / in the ring you do, you can still improve your overall conditioning with specialized training methods. On the mat or in the ring you might think you're pushing yourself, but what happens when you are on the clock when training and must get a certain amount of work? Now we can really elevate the intensity of your training and get you to push the limits greater!

I am not training in a high tech environment. I don't have a large facility, I have a 2 car garage and the outdoors. I don't let these situations hamper my training and neither should you. I'm sure you've seen some of the best fighters come from poor facilities. Look at Thailand and their Thai fighters. Do they have fancy gyms? They have backyard boxing rings, outdoors, high temps and heavy humidity! Yet they are deadly fighters! Don't let your location affect your training!

Here are some more energy system workouts you can follow in your own home:
All of these, as always, should be performed only after a properly executed warm up.

Underground Energy System Workouts

Five rounds of the below circuit with prescribed rep ranges

- 1A) Thick bar deads (with extended range of motion) x 5 reps
- 1B) Med ball push ups x 10 reps
- 1C) Double Kettlebell thruster, clean and press x 5 reps
- 1D) 2 hand kettlebell front squat x 10 reps
- 1E) sprint x 100 yards (I head out my garage and sprint down two houses, then sprint back)

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We can completely flip the above workout and work in more sprint intervals, making sprints the focus of the energy system training. Perform 5 rounds of the workout below:

- 1A) Sprint x 100 yds
- 1B) Deadlift variation x 5 reps
- 1C) Sprint x 100 yds
- 1D) kettlebell burpee, clean and press x 5
- 1E) Sprint x 100 yds
- 1F) pull up variation x 5 reps
- 1G) Sprint x 100 yds

The above energy system workouts will test your mental toughness big time. They will also send your conditioning through the roof. Don't allow yourself to lose another match due to poor conditioning.

Sometimes you need to focus on upper body or lower body only conditioning workouts to improve muscular endurance. Lack of muscular endurance in either area can negatively impact your performance.

You may find your shoulders and arms giving out on you as you have an opponent in your guard. Your grip gives out on you and you can not create space to shift your hips away to escape.

Your legs get so fatigued that your kicks lose almost all power, your stance becomes weak and prone to leg kicks and takedowns. So as we can see, we need to work specific areas to improve conditioning beyond just full body conditioning.

Let's look at some conditioning workouts for each area of the body.

Upper body conditioning workout # 1: all movements performed as a circuit, 4 – 5 rounds

- 1A) pull ups with 10 second isometric hold at top x max reps

- 1B) push ups on med ball x 10 reps
- 1C) barbell hang cleans x 5 reps
- 1D) barbell push press x 5 reps
- 1E) bent over barbell row x 5 reps
- 1F) barbell high pulls x 5 reps

Upper body conditioning workout # 2 @ playground, 4 – 5 rounds

- 1A) pull ups with towel or Gi with 10 second isometric hold at top x max reps
- 1B) hand walking on parallel bars (walk from end to end of bars)
- 1C) parallel bar dips x 10
- 1D) recline rows on parallel bars x 10
- 1E) plyo push ups off ground x 5

Upper Body Conditioning # 3: Bodyweight Only

- 1A) rotational push ups (lean side to side on each rep, throw opposite leg behind body) x 10 reps
- 1B) hindu push ups x 10 reps
- 1C) cobra push ups x 10 reps (perform a hindu push up, then reverse the motion)
- 1D) chin ups x 10 reps
- 1E) pull ups x 10 reps
- 1F) recline rows x 10 reps

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Lower Body Conditioning Workouts

Workout # 1: Bodyweight Only

- 1A) squat jumps x 10

- 1B) Lunge Jumps x 10
- 1C) hindu squats x 10
- 1D) sumo squats x 10
- 1E) lateral lunges x 10
- 1F) squat jumps x 10

Workout # 2: using one kettlebell or one dumbbell

- 1A) 2 hand front squat x 10
- 1B) 2 hand reverse lunge x 10
- 1C) 2 hand forwards lunge x 10
- 1D) 1 arm swings x 10 left / right
- 1E) 2 hand split squat x 10 left / right

Workout # 3: using sandbag

- 1A) zercher squat x 10
- 1B) zercher sumo squat x 10
- 1C) zercher good morning x 10
- 1D) walking lunges x 10 left / right
- 1E) shoulder squat x 5 left / right
- 1F) shoulder lunge x 5 left / right

Workout # 4: sleds only, begin with 10 minutes non stop. Progress to 15, and eventually 20 minutes non stop

**Find an empty field and perform each drag for the length of this field, should be approximately 50 yards in length

- 1A) forwards drag
- 1B) lateral drag (lead left one way, lead right all the way back)

1C) backwards drag

1D) forwards run

I performed this at Martin Rooney's combat seminar and it was about 6 minutes in duration. Normally Martin utilizes this method with his combat athletes for 15 – 30 minutes! It was pretty brutal so I worked my tail off on this program once spring time came around and I could get out and work the sled regularly. This was amazing at how quickly the lower body improved and became adept at fighting off the lactic acid. Definitely give this sled workout a go and perform it regularly!

Chapter 9

SECRET TRAINING FILES

Let's take an inside look at how some of my athletes are trained and how I have trained myself. Keep in the mind, these are sample workouts and they should not be blindly followed without your own needs analysis.

We utilize programs that attack weak areas, using movements that are pain free or do not impose an awkward demand in a negative manner to their own body. Some movements are tweaked for individual athletes, which you may have to do as well.

As for my own training, I've been training for well over half my life. I have become very keyed in and in tune with my body. I understand what it needs on a day to day basis and I listen carefully and train accordingly. I no longer have a set plan with specific protocols to follow. A few reasons for this:

1. I want to have FUN in my training, and following rules or plans doesn't make things very fun to me
2. The plan will always change because my body always changes due to the infinite stressors I experience
3. My training changes according to the weather. Nice weather and warmer temps will keep me training outdoors more often. Winter time has me in the gym more often.

Sample Underground Workouts with Zach Even - Esh

Workout 1

Warm up: two rounds of: face pulls, stability ball push ups, glute ham raises, reverse hypers

1A) thick bar deadlift with 35 lb plates for extra range of motion (ROM) 6 x 3 – 6 reps

1B) flat bar bench press 6 x 3 – 6 reps

1C) double kettlebell high pulls 6 x 6 reps

rest 1 – 2 minutes after the circuit

2) sprints up slight hill (length of 4 houses, approx. 250 ft.) – sprint up, walk down: 5 sets

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Workout 2

Playground Workout: 20 minutes with as little rest as possible

1A) pistol squats x 3 reps left / right

1B) parallel grip pull ups x 5 – 10 reps

1C) close grip push ups on ground x 8 – 12 reps

1D) thick bar chin ups x 5 – 10 reps

1E) tricep extensions with body x 10 – 12 reps

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Workout 3

Playground workout: 5 rounds, rest 1 minute after each round

1A) 1 arm picnic table military press x 5 left / right

1B) 2 arm picnic table military press x 10

1C) picnic table squat x 10

1D) pull ups x 5 – 10

1E) hanging leg raise or hanging windshield wipers x 8 – 12

1F) tricep extensions with body

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Workout 4

The Backyard Workout

Warm up: jog 2 laps around yard, 10 push ups, 10 squats, 10 lunges, repeat 4 times

1A) log carry 1 lap + log squat x 10 reps

1B) overhead sledge hammer swings x 20 (switch top hand at 10 reps)

1C) rope climb x 15 ft.

1A – C for 10 minutes non stop

2A) sandbag walking lunges across yard x 4 sets

2B) sandbag clean and press 4 x 10 reps

2C) sandbag bent over row 4 x 10 reps

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Workout 5

Field Training

1) sled assault x 12 minutes non stop: forwards drag x 150 ft., sled rowing x 6 – 10 reps, backwards drag x 75 ft., forward sled sprint x 25 ft. – repeat until 12 minutes time ends

2) truck push 3 x 150 ft

3A) pull ups on basketball rim 5 x 5 – 10 reps

3B) steep hill sprint 5 x approx 7 seconds to reach top of hill

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Workout 6

1A) farmer walks with farmer walk handles 5 x to side walk and back (approx. 50 ft)

1B) pull up variations 5 x 5 – 12 reps

2A) flat dumbbell bench press 5 x 3 – 8 reps

- 2B) double kettlebell bent over rows 5 x 6 – 10 reps
- 3A) 2 hand kettlebell swings x 10
- 3B) 2 hand Kettlebell squat x 10
- 3C) 2 hand Kettlebell lunges (front or back) x 10 (5 left / right)
- 4A) 45 degree back extension with 40 lb D Ball 4 x 6 – 10
- 4B) any ab movement 4 x 15
- 4C) hex dumbbell holds for grip 4 x max time

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Workout 7

- 1) 5 minute kettlebell snatch test

rest 5 minutes

- 2) 100 push ups: broken down into sets of 25 – 40 reps
- 3) 100 squats 2 x 50 reps

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Workout 8

- 1A) safety bar squats 6 x 3 – 10 reps
- 1B) glute ham raise 6 x 6 reps
- 1C) 2 hand kettlebell swings 6 x 6 reps
- 2A) sandbag lunges (forward or backwards) 3 x 12 reps (6 left / right)
- 2B) 45 degree back extensions 3 x 10 w/ 40 lb D Ball
- 3A) barbell cheat curls 3 x 5 reps
- 3B) tricep extensions with jump stretch bands 3 x 15 – 25 reps
- 3C) ab movement for 15 reps

Workout 9

- 1A) thick bar flat bench 5 x 5 reps
- 1B) double kettlebell front squat 5 x 5 reps
- 2A) 1 arm kettlebell military press 5 x 3 reps
- 2B) pull ups 5 x 5 reps
- 3A) double kettlebell cleans 3 x 10
- 3B) double kettlebell bent over rows 3 x 10
- 4) grip work:
 - wrist roller 2 sets
 - captains of crush # 1 x 2 sets
 - hex dumbbell holds x 2 sets

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Workout 10

- 1A) deadlift 6 x 1 – 5 reps
- 1B) pull up variations 6 x 6 reps
- 1C) 2 hand kettlebell swings 6 x 6 reps
- 2A) incline dumbbell benches 4 x 3 – 8 reps
- 2B) sandbag shouldering 4 x 8 reps (4 ea. side)
- 3A) 1 arm kettlebell clean 3 x 6 left / right
- 3B) recline rows on blast straps 3 x 10 – 15 reps
- 4A) glute ham raises 2 x 10
- 4B) dumbbell hammer curls 2 x 6
- 4C) any ab movement x 15 reps
- 4D) hex dumbbell holds

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Workout 11

1A) double kettlebell front squat 4 x 5

1B) blast strap push ups 4 x 12 – 15

1C) farmer walk with farmer handles 4 x 50 ft.

2A) 45 degree back extension + 40 lb d ball 4 x 10

2B) heavy dumbbell hammer cheat curls 4 x 6

3A) weighted parallel bar dips 4 x 5 – 8

3B) weighted abdominal movement 4 x 10 – 15

5) grip circuit; wrist roller, captains of crush grippers, rolling thunder holds for time

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Workouts for Clients: These athletes include High School Wrestlers, Football Players, Law Enforcement Personnel and Adult Grapplers

These workouts are taken from various times of the year. A few notes on our organization of workouts for our athletes:

- The first 3 months are often full body workouts, performed 3 x week on non consecutive days
- After the first 3 months we determine if we need more volume for certain movements, and if we need to perform upper / lower body split routines
- Pre season training gets an increase in energy system / metabolic training for wrestlers
- In season for wrestlers becomes 1 x week training for short / brief, strength focused workouts, lasting 20 – 25 minutes only
- Football players begin the same way, 3 months of full body, then analyze and experiment to see where to afterwards

- Post season is focused on reestablishing strength and fitness levels, healing injuries and setting goals for each month and the upcoming season
- In season for football is also shorter training, approx 30 minutes each workout, full body workouts.
- Grapplers and Law Enforcement go through a wide array of workouts, similar, or the same as my own. Mostly full body workouts, but sometimes focus on upper / lower body only workouts. Workouts depend on day to day energy levels, existing injuries and how far out from competition they might be.
- Law Enforcement also utilize these mixed and varied workouts, and we go according to their stress levels, energy levels (how much sleep they have gotten lately, nutrition, etc)

Wrestlers

Off Season Workout 1:

- 1A) Trap Bar DL 5 x 3 – 6 reps
- 1B) pull ups , mixed grips 5 x 8 – 15 reps
- 2A) Flat DB Bench (alternating arms) 4 x 6 – 8 reps
- 2B) bent over barbell rows 4 x 6 – 8 reps
- 3A) reverse dumbbell lunges 3 x 12
- 3B) abdominal movement 3 x 15 reps
- 6) 2 – 3 circuits: back extensions, push ups, grip training

Off Season Workout 2:

- 1A) Double Kettlebell clean and press 5 x 3 – 5 reps
- 1B) Pull Up variations 5 x max reps
- 2A) Double Kettlebell front squat 4 x 5 – 10 reps
- 2B) 2 hand Kettlebell swings 4 x 8 – 12 reps

3A) core and grip circuit 4 sets

Off Season Workout 3:

1A) safety squat on box 6 x 3 – 6 reps

1B) glute ham raise 6 x 6 – 10 reps

2A) 1 arm DB row 5 x 6 – 10 reps

2B) thick bar bench press 5 x 4 – 8 reps

3) 1 arm kettlebell snatch 4 x 5 reps (all 4 steps performed non stop)

4) core and grip circuit x 3 sets

Off Season Workout 4:

1A) sandbag squats 5 x 6 reps (2 reps on ea. shoulder, 2 reps in zercher position)

1B) thick barbell shrugs 5 x 6 – 8 reps

2A) recline thick rope pulls, w/iso hold 4 x 3 reps (5 sec. iso hold at top)

2B) 1 arm clean and press (ladder up) 4 x 3, 4, 5 and 6 reps

2C) band face pulls 4 x 15 reps

3A) sandbag shouldering 3 x 6 reps

3B) 2 hand kettlebell swings 3 x 8 reps

4) 2 rounds of grip and core training done as circuit

Playground Workout for Wrestlers: 1 A – D x 5 rounds

1A) picnic table military press x 8 – 12 reps

1B) pull ups with rolling thunder handles x 3 – 5 reps

1C) sandbag zercher or bear hug carry around playground

1D) hard pummeling / sumo drills for 20 seconds

2) sled drags forwards, backwards, sideways for 12 minutes non stop

In Season Workout:

- 1A) Trap bar deadlift 5 x 3 – 5 reps
- 1B) weighted pull ups 5 x 3 – 5 reps
- 2A) 1 arm DB rows 3 x 5 – 8 reps
- 2B) 45 degree weighted back extension 3 x 6 – 8 reps
- 2C) any ab movement 3 x 12 – 15 reps

Notes on Training Wrestlers / Combat Athletes:

Training wrestlers is great fun. They have immense work ethic, and they are always pushing themselves harder and harder. This is great to find in an athlete, but you must learn, as a Coach, to help them channel the energy. This is an easy way to amass injuries as well as a quick road to overtraining.

For the most part, wrestlers, like the majority of combat athletes, do not listen to their own body, instead they listen to the voice inside their head which always tells them to train harder and longer. If we're training for improved performance, harder and longer do not equate to better results. This is where smarter training factors in.

Look at the physical traits a combat athlete needs, then train for those traits. Especially in high school, with all the wrestling these kids do, we don't dedicate days for energy system work / conditioning. Our focus is on strength and power development and the traits that fall between strength and power.

At the higher levels, combat athletes must perform energy system work as they become more advanced. But at the younger ages, the conditioning is not the focus, especially when they are wrestling 5 – 6 days a week for almost 2 hours!

Law Enforcement Training

Workout 1

- 1A) thick bar deadlift 5 x 2 – 6 reps
- 1B) feet elevated push ups 5 x 15 – 25 reps per set
- 2A) sandbag shouldering 4 x 6 reps
- 2B) lunge variations with sandbag 4 x 10 reps
- 3A) weighted pull ups 4 x 3 – 6 reps
- 3B) kettlebell snatches 4 x 5 reps left / right
- 4) 3 – 4 circuits of grip and core training

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Workout 2

- 1A) thick bar benching 6 x 3 – 8 reps
- 1B) sandbag squats (bag placed in various positions on body ea. set) 6 x 5 – 10 reps
- 2A) bent over barbell rows 4 x 6 – 8
- 2B) 2 hand kettlebell lunges (any direction) 4 x 10
- 3) barbell complex: 2 – 3 sets x 6 reps ea.
 - bent knee DL
 - hang clean
 - high pull
 - push press
 - bent over row
 - shrugs
- 5) ab circuit 5 movements x 10 reps each

Workout 3

Playground Training with Odd Objects

- 1A) sandbag clean and press 3 x 10
- 1B) pull up variations 3 x max reps
- 1C) hand walking into dips x 10 into leg raises on parallel bars x 10 for 3 sets
- 2A) kettlebell cross carries x 30 ft. ea. direction
- 2B) sandbag zercher carry x 60 ft
- 3A) 2 hand kettlebell walking swings x 60 ft. 3 x (20 push ups then turn around)
- 3B) push ups x 20
- 4A) sumo drills / hard pummeling 4 x 20 seconds
- 4B) sprint around baseball diamond 4 x

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Football Athletes

Notes:

Our Football players often come to us with existing injuries, so we individualize the warm ups a lot. We still use the basic calisthenics and bands but also work on some mobility drills for hips which tend to be a problem area.

Generally, Football players are the most regular visitors to the high school weight room, by choice and by Football Coach's rules. More so than ever, communication is key here! Sometimes our football athletes are forced into the weight room literally 2 or 3 hours before they train with me. This means I might have to completely change what was planned on the fly.

Football is a team sport so don't expect to have them only train under your guidance. I personally don't feel this is the right thing to do because their training together builds a necessary cohesiveness for their team, critical to success on the field!

Combat athletes tend to bond together, Football players, Grapplers, MMA fighters, we all tend to hang with the people on our "team". Although MMA, Grappling, etc is completely individual during the match / fight, our training team is a key part to our success.

Back to the Football crew: They often times have poor relative body strength and horrible overall fitness levels. Get them on a sled and they might be sweating bullets in 1 minute with barely any weight. Push the pace of your workout too much and they'll be looking to lose their cookies! Especially the heavier football players and the D Line, these guys seem to be in the worst shape. So focus on getting them in shape through shorter sessions, but perhaps more frequently.

Bodyweight training can become part of their extra workouts, as should the sled and other basics such as:

- sandbag carries
- farmer walks
- truck / car pushing
- rope training: tug of war, battle ropes, hand over pulls with rope attached to sled

Workout 1

- 1) Box Squat 6 x 3 – 6 reps
- 2A) keg lunges 3 x 12 reps
- 2B) 2 hand Kb swings 3 x 8 – 12 reps
- 3A) 45 degree back extensions with added weight or jump stretch bands 4 x 8 - 10
- 3B) 1 arm Kb cleans 4 x 3 – 6
- 4) 3 – 4 rounds of ab and grip work

Workout 2

- 1A) thick bar floor press 6 x 3 – 6 reps
- 1B) 1 arm DB rows 6 x 5 – 10 reps
- 1C) ab movement 6 x 10 reps
- 2A) incline DB bench 4 x 5 – 8 reps
- 2B) bent over barbell row 4 x 6 – 12 reps
- 2C) dumbbell shrugs 4 x 6 – 8 reps
- 2) 3 rounds of core, arms and grip

Workout 3

- 1A) sandbag shouldering 3 x 10
- 1B) 2 hand kettlebell lunges 3 x 12
- 2A) feet elevated push ups 3 x 15 – 30 reps
- 2B) recline rows on blast straps 3 x max reps
 - 3) sled training x 12 minutes (mixture of all drags, rows and presses)
 - 4A) picnic table military press (1 or 2 arm) 3 x max reps
 - 4B) pull ups on monkey bars 3 x max reps
 - 4C) hanging leg raises 3 x max reps

CHAPTER 10

The Underground Workouts

Here are just a few workouts for you to follow. I will tell you this much though, that NO program is the end all be all secret recipe for success. EVERY PROGRAM is flawed and has holes in it! The key is to keep trying to improve upon your training methods.

Movements often remain staples in our workouts. By this I mean we find movements that bring a lot of results, but, we must constantly vary how we utilize these movements.

How can you vary the use of the same movements and still reap great rewards through long time periods? Below is a list of some of the methods you can utilize:

- change the % of your 1 RM used for the movement
- shift the focus from strength to power (lessening the % used)
- vary grips, placement of hands and feet
- vary the bar used
- change rep tempo
- add chains and / or bands

For example, if you want to keep getting the most out of barbell squats, you can change the following aspects:

- box or no box
- chains and or bands
- straight bar, safety squat bar, sandbag, keg, log, kettlebells (bar or implement changes)
- stagger the feet, change width of stance, elevate one foot
- perform isometric holds in certain positions
- move slowly / quickly

These workouts are sample programs to follow. They may prove too difficult / easy for you, so individualize as you experiment with them to meet your own needs and to match your level of physical preparedness.

There are other programs as well though. Programs that I hope you are creative enough and dedicated enough to construct on your own. I emphasize to you though, never follow a workout program blindly. Look at what / why you are doing the movements and the program. Do they relate to your sport needs? Do they match your level of preparedness? Do they focus on attacking weak areas?

In addition, do your own research and learn about proper strength training methods & philosophies. Create your own philosophy through trial and error. This will require time on your part as well as trial & error but this is great fun I tell you! The research, the mistakes, the successful findings, this is all good times and honestly it's no fun to get on the fast track to doing things correctly right away.

Let's take a look at some more sample programs that you can either follow, tweak for your individual needs, or pick apart and examine!

BODYWEIGHT ONLY WORKOUT (beginner)

Warm up:

- Jump rope 2 minutes
- Skipping 30 sec.
- Galloping 30 sec.
- Hop on each foot in different directions 30 sec. Ea. foot
- Walking lunges 1 minute
- Push ups x 30 sec

- Recline pull ups x 30 sec

Work out

1. pull ups (vary grips) 3 sets 5 – 10 reps (increase reps as you get stronger)
2. push ups 3 sets max reps
3. bodyweight squats 3 x 20 – 30 reps
4. bodyweight lunges 3 x 10 reps each leg
5. parallel bar dips 2 x 3 – 10 reps
6. leg raises off floor 3 x 12 reps

Intermediate Bodyweight Work Out

Warm up:

- Jump rope 2 minutes
- 20 push ups (10 w/ hands shoulder width apart, 10 w/ hands close together)
- walking lunges 1 minute
- recline rows x 10 reps

1A) push ups (feet elevated or hand stand push ups) 3 x max reps

1B) pull ups (change grip every set) 3 x max reps (add weight if you can do more than 8 bodyweight reps)

2A) parallel bar dips 3 x max reps (add weight if you can do more than 10 bodyweight reps)

2B) leg raises while upright on dip bar 3 x 10 – 15 reps

3A) squat jumps 3 x 15 seconds (rest 1 minute between sets)

3B) walking lunges 3 x 30 seconds

5A) back bridge 2 x 1 minute

5B) back bridge push ups 2 x 30 seconds

Bodyweight training can be brutal if you push the limits and find ways to increase tension or load on the body. Adding weight via weight belts, weighted back packs, ankle weights, etc is excellent for increasing intensity.

I spend a lot of time in spring and summer training at various playgrounds at schools and parks. My new athletes start with a lot of bodyweight training because of how easy it is to progress / regress the movements according to their level of physical preparation.

Even when you become an advanced lifter / athlete, I highly suggest keeping some bodyweight movements in your program, especially during the warm up phase of each workout.

Couplet Workouts: This is basically when you pair two movements together for various set / rep schemes. This is an excellent way to increase intensity, save time and improve conditioning. I'm not a big fan of straight sets on movements, even if we're only utilizing less intensive movements for active recovery, I like seeing workouts with couplets.

Warm up:

- light sumo drill with partner x 1 minute
- butt kicks while jogging (kick your heels to your butt) 1 minute
- jogging, skipping, galloping mixed in x 2 minutes

Couplet Workout 1:

1A) feet elevated push ups (+ weighted back pack) 4 x max reps

1B) chin ups (mix grips every set) 4 x max reps

2A) DB clean & press combo 4 x 8

2B) plyo push ups 4 x 5

- 3A) 1 arm DB or KB high pulls 3 x 5 left / right
3B) recline rows isometric hold 3 x 45 seconds

- 4A) pistol squats 2 x max reps left / right
4B) body weight squats 2 x 30 seconds (rep tempo as fast as possible!)

Couplet # 2

Warm up:

- DB Curl & press 1 x 15 reps
- V ups x 15
- Body weight squats 1 minute

Workout

- 1A) pistol squats 3 x max reps ea. leg
1B) 1 arm KB / DB high pulls 3 x 8 ea. arm
- 2A) Renegade row + push up with kettlebells or dumbbells 3 x 6 – 8 left / right
2B) lunge and curl combo 3 x 12
- 3A) KB or DB squat & overhead press combo 3 x 8
3B) 2 hand KB / DB swings 3 x 10
- 4A) partner sit up & medicine ball throw 2 x 10
4B) V Ups w/med ball 2 x 10

Circuit Training

Warm up:

- Push ups x 10
- Pull ups x 10
- Leg raises off dip bar x 10
- Band pull aparts x 20
- Jump rope x 1 minute

This circuit is to be done non stop, as are all circuits. In the beginning, do one circuit and then see how you feel. If it was too easy, repeat the circuit again but change the order of the exercises, add some more weight to one or more of the movements as well. Next time you perform this circuit you will be more in tune to your physical needs and you can go slightly heavier on the movements that were too easy, or find another way to add intensity to the circuit.

At the most you should 5 circuits here, if you can do more, you may not be pushing the intensity high enough. If you create your own circuit, make sure you include all the various human movements as opposed to focusing on all pushing or all pulling movements for example.

This simple, yet highly effective plan was also influenced to me by my good friend Alwyn Cosgrove, author of many fitness and sports training books, but in particular, this comes from ‘The New Rules of Lifting’.

The movements of the human body, or as stated in Alwyn’s book, “The Big Six”, in general are:

1. Squat
2. Bend (Deadlift)
3. Lunge
4. Push

5. Pull
6. Twist

This makes sense to me. As humans, athletes or not, we find ourselves going through these movements on a daily basis. The squat / bend can fit into one category as well. I see these movements in the following light:

- Squat
- Push
- Pull
- Rotate
- Level change

Make sure your circuits, and workouts, follow the above principles to ensure complete and effective training of your body. This basic break down truly makes planning workouts and circuits much easier than what people make it out to be.

You can create a circuit of 5 - 6 exercises in a row with a partner, then each of you do speed drilling or live wrestling for 2 minutes. If you don't have a wrestling background, perform the sumo drill, or tug of war for 30 seconds. Change your training often and you will be soaring by leaps and bounds! The best work out is often the one you are NOT doing! Let's take a look at one sample circuit, where we alternate from upper and lower body movements.

1. pull ups x 10
2. sandbag zercher squats x 10
3. parallel bar dips x 10
4. reverse lunges x 10
5. v ups x 10
6. close grip push ups x 10
7. sandbag zercher good morning x 10
8. sandbag clean and press x 10

The way we ended the above circuit is with a full body movement. You can create circuits with a specific pattern, such as above, alternating with upper and lower body, or, look below for more circuit patterns:

- upper body / lower body alternated each movement
- lower body / full body movement alternated each movement
- 2 lower body movements in a row / 2 upper body movements in a row
- 5 lower body movements in a row / 5 upper body movements in a row

HAVE FUN with these and all workouts! I always recommend getting at least one partner if not two of them. You can challenge one another to greater heights and will feed off of each other's energy.

The “No Rules” Workout

“No Rules Training” really hit me hard when I was a young kid, only 13 or 14, training at the Metuchen YMCA. Back then, the gym was a real dungeon. I mean a REAL dungeon! We're talking about free weights everywhere, tons of rusty York Olympic plates, old school round head dumbbells and no machines!

I used to watch this guy called George train, and he would only do 2 or 3 movements each workout, but he spent some 30 minutes to one hour on each movement, performing endless sets with heavy weights. These movements were ALL basic though. Flat barbell or dumbbell benching, weighted dips, Romanian Dead Lifts, lying tricep extensions and more mass building movements. It wasn't odd for me to finish a workout and see George still doing the same movement when I was finished.

The funny thing was that George was the biggest, strongest guy in the gym. Yet the rest of us did all the garbage training you would find in bodybuilding magazines. None of us

came close to his strength levels or his brute looking physique. It goes to show you that when you want results, following the “book” doesn’t always lead you to the best results!

The “No Rules” Workouts

1

1. Pull ups 15 sets total, each set is going to be almost max reps (leave 1 or 2 reps in the tank) – rest 60 s between sets
2. Hindu push ups – continue until reaching 200 reps

2

1. Russian Kettlebell, double clean, front squat & press, 10 sets of 3, resting 30 seconds between sets
2. Sled Press , Sled Row – do 6 reps of one exercise and then alternate – continue for a total of 10 minutes, no rest at all

3

1. Barbell clean and push press into a barbell back squat 10 x 5 reps, rest 60 s between sets
2. Romanian Deadlift 5 x 5 reps

4

1. 1 arm military push press with DB or KB 10 x 3 reps left / right
2. weighted pull ups (use 70 % of your 1 RM) 10 x 4 – 6 reps per set

5

1. weighted parallel bar dips (use 80 – 90 % of your 1 RM) 8 x 2 – 5 reps per set
2. t bar or bent over barbell rows 10 x 6 – 8 reps

6

1. bent knee DL 10 x 3 reps
- 2A. barbell cheat curls 8 x 5 reps
- 2B. lying tricep extensions with straight or e z curl bar 8 x 5 reps

Hard Core Energy System Training

Here we will incorporate sprint work with strength training. You can be very creative here by mixing in various training tools, implements and methods for your conditioning work here. You can use dumbbells, kettlebells, sandbags or even stones to achieve your goals during your energy system training.

You may not be able to sprint during your training at all times, so progress from walking / jogging to predominantly sprinting during these workouts. These will very likely be the toughest workouts you endure, so be ready for them mentally and physically!

WARM UP:

- butt kicks 30 seconds
- skipping 30 sec.
- Hopping each foot 30 sec.
- Galloping 30 sec.
- Push ups x 10
- Pull ups x 10
- Lunges x 10
- Squats x 10

1: (Best performed at a track)

1. sprint the 40 yd. Dash – followed immediately by 20 push ups, 10 snatches (with any training tool)
2. Sprint the 40 yd Dash – immediately followed by 10 squat jumps, 10 military press (with any training tool)
3. 5 Long Jumps – immediately followed by sprinting remainder of 40 yd dash, followed by 10 thrusters (using any training tool)

Using incomplete recoveries upon completion of all three steps above, repeat # 1 -3 non stop for a total of 5 rounds.

2: (Basketball Court)

1. sprint around entire court x 1 lap
2. 10 push ups, 10 squats, 10 knee tucks on ground
3. sprint around court x 2 laps
4. 10 lunge jumps, 10 plyo push ups, 10 knee tucks on ground
5. sprint around court x 3 laps
6. 10 hindu push ups, 10 hindu squats
7. sprint around court x 2 laps
8. v ups x 10, rotational push ups x 10, squats x 10
9. sprint around court x 1 lap
10. staggered hand push ups x 10, v ups x 10, split squats x 10

The above workout is another variation of energy system training, sometimes called HOC / High Octane Cardio. This is brutal training, and is simply a mix of intense sprints intermitted with bouts of resistance training. This training will skyrocket your conditioning and is a must for any serious combat athlete.

Repeat the above workouts by using various movement patterns (skipping, hopping, jogging, sprint / jog intervals, etc) and various strength exercises. If you are at a basketball court with a playground you can do pull ups on the monkey bars each trip across, or do presses, snatches, squats, lunges, etc. with the sand bags, or do a sand bag pick up and then squat down with it for a few reps.

Creativity once again is key. Jumping rope for 1 minute & then performing strength work with dumbbells, barbells, sandbags or kettlebells will be a real killer as well! The jumping rope variation is great if you want to perform the energy system work at home / indoors.

Other Conditioning Options

Sometimes we incorporate “suicide sprints”. Sometimes we run four ¼ mile sprints with incomplete recoveries. Longer rest periods are utilized to allow the nervous system to recover, which is great for power development if that is your goal. For conditioning purposes, we utilize incomplete recoveries. This can be done by checking heart rate after the intense activity, and then waiting for your heart rate to drop 20 – 30 bpm, or, simply go by feel. Once you feel slightly recovered, hit those sprints or circuits again!

Explosive / Speed Focused Workouts

The workouts below will focus on power and power endurance. Once again, going back to the beginning of our manual, you may recall I stated strength being a key factor in contributing to an individual’s power. This simply means that stronger athletes generally can generate more power, or have the aptitude to do so if trained properly.

The workouts below can be done in whole, or in part. If done in part, utilize the power movements first in the workout when the nervous system is fresh and can full exert itself.

Warm Ups: Always warm up with movement, prehab / rehab & light calisthenics for 5 - 10 minutes. Only you know what needs to be done for your own body to be physically and mentally prepared to train. The warm up should never be skipped as it increase chances of injury greatly.

- push ups
- body weight (BW) squats
- walking lunges
- skipping forwards & backwards
- jumping rope

The Power Movements

1) Squat - Push - Jump - Pull: perform 3 sets of 1 minute each, build up to doing 3 sets for up to 3 minutes non stop each set.

Description: Standing under a pull up bar or a set of monkey bars, perform a deep squat thrust (low squat and then kick legs back w/hands on floor which will simulate the push up position) and immediately drop into a push up, perform a push up and explosively jump your feet forward, do an explosive pull up with a complete concentric & eccentric motion and perform another squat, push up, explosive forward jump & pull up until your target reps or time has been achieved.

The **alternative** would be that for the pull up phase, you jump to the top of the pull up, and then lower under control.

2) Left to Right or Front to Back Plyo Push Up: Perform anywhere between 3 - 6 total sets, reps can range between 5 – 10 total reps.

Description: On an open mat or on soft grass or sand, perform an explosive push up in which your entire body (hands & feet) comes off the floor surface & simultaneously moving to your right. Perform 3 - 5 reps traveling to your right and another 3 - 5 reps

traveling to your left. You can also do the plyometric push ups where you are traveling forwards for a few reps & then backwards. Make sure you are exploding upward and laterally by exerting as much pushing power as possible! You do not want to have your feet dragging on the floor, we want your entire body air born!

3) Split Squat Jumps: 3 - 4 sets performed for 5 - 10 reps or 10 - 15 seconds.

Description: Begin in the bottom of a lunge position while keeping your torso upright. Explosively press off your front leg (this is the power leg) as high as possible & switch leg positions in mid air. Land softly into a deep lunge & blast off the ground again!

4) High Bar Muscle Up: 5 sets of 1 - 5 reps

Description: Using a pull up bar (Gymnastics high bar is best), perform a pull up explosively, when your chest fully clears the bar immediately press your body upward with your arms. The exercise is complete when you are holding yourself upright with your body fully upright and the bar will be against your upper quads. This movement is inspired by Gymnasts as they begin a high bar routine, this is how they get into position.

5) Power Pull & Squat: 5 – 8 sets x 1 rep per set

Description: In a dead hang position from a pull up bar, explosively pull yourself up so your head clears the bar. Once your head clears the bar release yourself from the bar & land in a deep squat, immediately perform 1 jump squat upon landing. You want to gain as much height as possible from your pull up so your pull must be very powerful. This is why only 1 repetition is done per set.

6) One Arm Plyo Push Up Against Wall: 3 - 5 sets of 6 - 12 reps per arm

Description: One hand against wall, lean slightly away (the further away the more advanced the exercise) - perform a one arm push up and explosively push away from the wall so your hand is no longer touching the wall, switch hands on each repetition. Performing the push up against the wall at a slight angle allows you to perform this exercise one handed. You can also press & land on the same hand 6 - 12 reps in a row and then switch to the other side & complete reps for the other arm.

7) Kneeling Jumps: 5 - 10 sets , 1 repetition per set

Description: Begin by kneeling and sitting slightly back, glutes resting on calves. Quickly thrust your hips forward while simultaneously jumping upward & landing on feet, or jumping forwards & landing on feet. You'll need to swing your arms upward to help with the speed. You can intensify this movement by holding a light medicine ball in your hands as well. I have also heard of highly advanced lifters performing this with a bar on their back, but, this seriously increase potential for injury!

Plyometrics are extremely stressful on the central nervous system and should not be done excessively. Knowing the long hours combat athletes / martial artists put into their training, it is advisable to do only parts of this program no more than once per week on non consecutive days.

This program is not only for combat athletes / martial artists as all sports require power & explosiveness. Being strong is great but if you can not exert speed behind your strength than your chances of success are substantially decreased.

Some of these exercises were inspired by my college Gymnastics instructor who was also a 2 time All American wrestler. I watched him perform hand stand push ups on the parallel bars with ease & countless pull up & muscle up variations on the rings. We performed endless conditioning exercises for his class, many of which were plyometric in nature. Back then I was a bodybuilder and never heard or knew about plyos.

The shock came to me when he had us do the lateral plyo push ups from one end of the mat and back. I barely made it across one end before my muscles shut down on me! I could not even perform one push up let alone a plyo push up after getting to one side of the mat. My chest felt like it was glued to the mat & my arms had not one ounce of strength or power left in them. I was so angry & embarrassed that I began doing them on my own at home!

Here I was, the biggest, most muscular guy in class & I could not complete this push up challenge! Needless to say that was a very motivating day for me & I have never forgotten that class & all of the creative conditioning drills we performed.

This class also showed me that you can create an entire workout or conditioning program through bodyweight / gymnastic type movements. In fact, you can create a training facility with gymnastics equipment!

Let's have a look at some more highly effective (yet brutal) training programs that you can utilize in whole or in part.

FARM BOY TRAINING PROGRAM

Workout # 1:

1. **Wheel barrow carry:** Load the wheel barrow as heavy as you can handle safely. Walk forwards in straight line, preferably up a slight incline, 3 - 5 sets, 1 - 2 minutes each set (increase difficulty by pushing the wheel barrow up hill).
2. **Sled Pull:** attach a 50 ft. thick rope to a pulling sled, using 50% or more of your bodyweight, pull in a hand over hand fashion until the sled reaches your feet. Your body should be positioned in an athletic stance to help you avoid being pulled forward. Perform a total of 3 – 5 sets with incomplete recoveries.
3. **Sand bag Carry:** use a sand bag that is 50 % of bodyweight or heavier. Squat down, clean the weight explosively, and carry in a straight line. Perform 3 – 5 sets, 1 minute each set
4. **Uphill Sprints:** 3 – 5 sets for 10 - 15 seconds – you can increase intensity here by placing a sandbag at the top or bottom of the hill and perform an exercise before / after the sprint.

Workout # 2:

1. **Sand bag or tire rotational throw:** Standing next to a fairly light sand bag, squat down and rotate, grabbing the sand bag, explosively lift, rotate and throw the bag sideways. Jog to the sand bag, and repeat 5 more time in the same direction. After 5 repetitions, repeat the same procedure

for the other side. Continue in this fashion going from 5 reps, to 4, then 3, then 2, then 1 repetition. This reverse ladder fashion of repetitions can be done with higher or lower reps, as well as starting at 1 repetition, increasing to a 5 rep max, and then back down to 1 rep (totaling 9 sets this way!)

You can use other implements for throwing as well here: heavy med balls, kettlebells, smaller tires, 25 lb Olympic plates.

2. **Sand Bag over head carry:** Clean & press the sand bag over head, lock arms out fully, slightly lean forward, and slowly walk forwards for 1 minute. Repeat for 3 – 5 sets.
3. **Reverse tire drag:** using a heavy tire, get a chain looped around the tire or drill an eye hook into the tire, connect a heavy duty tow strap to the chain, and loop the tow strap around your weight belt. Drag the tire while walking backwards for 3 – 5 sets, 1 minute each set

Workout # 3:

1. **Olympic plate relay:** Have a pile of Olympic plates (minimum 10) piled at one end of the gym, back yard, field, etc. Picking up one plate at a time, using both hands holding the plate in front of you (arms at 90 degree angle or held tight against body), carry the plate to the opposite end one at a time, minimum 40 ft. away. Jog or sprint back to the pile of Olympic plates, and repeat the process until all the Olympic plates have traveled across the designated area. Rest 1 minute, then repeat again for a total of 4 – 5 sets. This can also be done with sandbags, stones or logs, or a mixture of all these implements.
2. **Walking Lunges** (done using bodyweight, holding DB's, or a plate in front of body: perform 3 – 4 sets for a prescribed distance or for 1 – 2 minutes.

Workout # 4

1. **Car / Truck Pushing / Pulling:** get behind a car or truck in an open parking lot. Place your hands on the back bumper & fully extend your arms. Push the vehicle for times ranging anywhere from 30 seconds to 2 minutes. Keeping your arms locked will hit the shoulders and triceps big time. Of course, your legs will get hammered as well since your going to be pushing the truck mainly with

your legs! Work up to 5 sets of 1 minute. Another variation is using a heavy duty shoulder harness and then dragging your car forwards.

2. **Sledge Hammer or Wood Chopping:** Using a sledge hammer, hit an object that is sturdy on the ground from an overhead position x 10 reps, then from your right side x 10 and then from your left side x 10, or vice versa depending on your weaker side (always do the side swings with your weaker side first). Perform the chops or hits for reps ranging between 10 – 30 per movement, or go for a total time of 3 – 5 minutes non stop.

NOTES / GUIDELINES:

- As always, perform a warm up prior to training.
- Adjust training intensity & work loads according to your own ability level.
- The exercises, as always, can be arranged in any order, or can be added to a regular weight training day.
- Make sure the equipment being used is in good working condition to ensure safety.
- Perform these workouts with less sets, lighter weights, etc. for extra GPP work.
- Getting out of the weight room and moving objects in such a fashion adds variety and improves overall physical preparedness for any sport.
- This type of training will also greatly improve mental toughness.

Where to purchase equipment:

- Home depot can be your best friend. Purchase rope, chains, and wheel barrow from Home Depot.
- Get a tire for free from a junk yard. If you have a pulling, use that instead.
- Sand bags can also be purchased from Home Depot or another hardware store. Wrap the sand bag in 2 heavy duty contractor bags, then tape the bag up. Go to an Army Navy Store for a duffel bag, and place the sand bag inside.

After you have been training for a few months, and you have been incorporating the methods outlined in this book, you can progress through the workouts below, which will last a few months. This workout incorporates movements shown in our manual as well as all the articles at <http://UndergroundStrengthCoach.com>

I did not want to only include exercises you have seen, forcing you to do some research and take your training to a new level is a part of training Underground. This 14 week plan has tons of variety and once again, is only ONE way you can train.

The work out below can give you a specific progression to follow from day one if you prefer to have everything written out in stone. I emphasize creativity and individualizing programs so I am not one who believes in having programs written in stone. Especially due to the nature of the human organism, which is constantly in a state of flux from day to day.

Still, for some of you who like to have things written in stone, this is for you. Or, for the athletic coach who wants to give his entire team a program to follow on their own, this makes it easy for you. Simply give them the program and have them partner up in groups of 2 or 3. The partner aspect keeps the athletes consistent and less likely to skip a work out.

14 WEEK UNDERGROUND STRENGTH & CONDITIONING PROGRAM

(Weeks 1 - 2) Workout 1 / Body Weight (perform 3 x week for 2 weeks, keep switching the order of the exercises every workout, train on non consecutive days) - perform this program for 2 weeks (6 times)

1. BW squats 3 x 15 - 30 reps
2. floor Push ups 3 x 2 - 3 reps short of max reps
3. Recline Pull up 3 x 2 - 3 reps short of max reps
4. hanging knee up (hold onto chin up bar or monkey bars) 3 x max reps
5. BW alternate lunges 3 x 10 - 12 per leg

(Weeks 3 - 4) Workout 2 (follow same parameters as above for 2 weeks, equaling 6 workouts total)

1. BW Walking lunges 3 x 1 minute
2. staggered grip push ups 2 x max reps
3. pull up 5 x max reps per set
4. one leg squat, back foot elevated on bench 3 x 10 - 15 per leg
5. hanging knee up 3 x max reps
6. farmer's carry holding DB's or sandbags 3 x 1 minute

(Week 5 - 6) Workout 3 / Free Weights and BW (do 4 total workouts, twice ea. week - take 3 days off in between ea. workout, switching the order of exercises each time)

On off days, perform extra general physical preparedness (GPP) 2 x week: GPP workouts should be relatively short, 15 - 20 minutes

1. Pull ups - vary grip 6 x 5 reps
2. barbell bench press (medium grip) 6 x 5 reps
3. DB step up onto bench 3 x 10 per leg
4. 1 arm dumbbell snatch 5 x 5 reps
5. knee tucks off bench 3 x 12 - 15
6. wheel barrow (load w/any resistance - weights) push 3 x 1 minute (loading the wheel barrow w/olympic plates makes it easy to track the loads as opposed to throwing in sand or rocks)

(Weeks 7 - 8) Workout 4 / Free Weight & BW combo (follow same parameters as workout # 3)

- 1A. dead lift w/trap bar 5 x 5 reps (pyramid up in weight)
- 1B. pull ups 5 x 5
2. barbell reverse lunge 3 x 12
- 3A. Flat DB chest press 4 x 6 – 8

- 3B. plyo push ups 4 x 5 reps
4. 1 arm DB row 3 x 10
5. stability ball crunch (hold DB overhead for resistance) 3 x 12

(Week 9) Workout 5 / Outdoor Training (perform 3 total workouts, varying exercise order each time)

1. walking sandbag lunges 2 x 1 minute
2. forwards sled dragging - 6 minutes non stop
3. sand bag lift and carry - squat down, explosively lift sand bag, catch it w/both arms underneath (90 degree bend in elbows - similar to curling) - 3 x 1 minute each
4. monkey bars - hand walking and pull up combos (walk both hands to the same bar, do 1 pull up, walk both hands to next bar, 1 pull up - repeat for max reps) - do these traveling forwards or sideways on monkey bars
5. hands elevated push ups (hands on park bench) 3 x 10 immediately followed by bench dips 3 x 10
6. hanging leg raises while holding onto monkey bars 3 x max reps

(Week 10 - 13) Workout 6 – Heavy Training for Lower Body! (first exercise you progress up to a weight allowing you to complete 3 - 5 quality reps)

1. barbell squat or dead lift (any style - bar) 5 x 3 - 5 reps
2. barbell / DB reverse lunge 3 x 10
3. RDL w/ barbell or DB's 4 x 6 - 10
4. split squat plyos 3 x 30 seconds ea.
5. dip bar leg raises 3 x 10 - 15
6. DB farmer carry (zig zag) 2 sets holding 2 DB's, 2 sets holding 1 DB (focus on obliques) 45 sec. - 1 minute per set

Workout 7 – Heavy Training for Upper Body (follow same parameters as workout 6)

- 1A. medium / close grip barbell bench 5 x 3 - 5
- 1B. immediately followed by plyo push up 5 x 3 - 6 reps
- 2A. bent over barbell row or 1 arm DB row 4 x 6 - 8
- 2B. blast strap push ups 4 x 12 - 20
- 3A. weighted pull ups - vary grip ea. set 5 x 3 – 5 reps
- 3B. back extension (using resistance) 5 x 6 reps
- 4. standing rope crunch (use pulley machine or jump stretch band looped over a power rack / chin up bar) 3 x 1 minute ea.

Workout 8 - Max Repetition Day

perform 3 sets per exercise, light weights, 1 or 2 reps short of muscular fatigue. rest is 1 minute between sets - repetitions should be above 20 and as high as 50

- 1. sandbag / DB reverse lunges
- 2. 2 hand Kb swings
- 3. blast strap push ups
- 4. recline pull ups
- 5. barbell hang clean & press
- 6. parallel bar dips
- 7. abdominal circuit: pick 3 movements and perform 15 reps of ea.

(Week 14) Combo Lifting Workout

- 1. DB / KB Squat and overhead press 5 x 5 reps
- 2. 1 leg squat - back foot elevated and DB curl 3 x 10

3. parallel bar dip and leg raise 3 x 12
4. RDL w/ bent over barbell row 3 x 8
5. Renegade Man maker (use russian kettlebells or DB's) 3 x 6

Once you've gone through the entire 14 week Underground Strength & Conditioning Program you can start to stray away from workouts that have been mapped out for you, and begin individualizing according to your needs and goals.

Keys to remember when planning your own workouts:

1. Warm up properly first
2. use compound movements for the most part, isolation movements for weak areas, prehab / rehab
3. Attack weak areas
4. Listen to your body
5. Always deload / take time off to allow the body appropriate rest and recovery
6. There must be variations regarding intensity and workload to enhance performance
7. Question why you are performing certain movements and programs
8. Always look to improve your methods
9. Nothing works forever, be prepared to change!

In The End.....

Wow! What the heck do you do with all this information? There is so much variety here with regards to organizing workouts, examples of workouts, different training tools, different rep speeds and a bunch of more!

My friend and team member at Elitefts.com, Buddy Morris has stated this so often, "Every program has flaws, no program is perfect." Almost everything works, but, nothing works forever! Use full body or upper / lower body splits. Work weak areas and keep

training fun. Listen to your body and train accordingly, this seems to be working better and better as opposed to planned heavy / light / easy / hard days.

Training might be a science, but, what if the things you do are working excellently, but nothing about it is published in a scientific journal? Do you stop doing what works? No way! Keep doing what works for you, keep an open mind and continue learning.

This manual is one of many answers, it is not the end all be all of answers or training methods. Have fun with your training first and foremost. Your joy will lead to creativity and intensity which in turn lead to results.

Training 'Underground' is an attitude and it can be done anywhere. Stay connected with us at The Underground, we're there to learn from one another and spread our knowledge.

Until the next time,

Thank you for taking this Underground journey with me! I look forward to seeing you at The Underground or meeting you in person one day!

Strength and Honor,

Coach Zach Even – Esh

The Underground Strength Coach

Underground Strength Coach

Exercise Index

Underground Bodyweight Movements

Push Up Variations

Not enough people can do a perfect push up. This is one of the ultimate bodyweight movements as well as the most versatile. Not only can you perform countless bodyweight only variations, but you can also add bands, weighted backpacks, place chains on your back and more.

Stay on the balls of your feet, keep your posture perfect with a neutral or slightly upward head position. Your core should not sag or lift in the air. There are no rules for set – rep variations here. Sometimes I do sets in the 50 – 100 range, other time I do low rep sets with tougher movements such as feet elevated backpack push ups or handstand push ups. You can place the more challenging variations in front of your workout or the high rep variations during circuits or at the end of your workout.

There are many arguments about when you can move on to movements such as the bench press after you can do x reps of push ups, but, to improve at push ups, you must get stronger, so using the loaded movements for pressing in various planes of motion are key to helping you crank out boat loads of push ups!

Traditional Push Ups



Staggered Hands



Feet Elevated



Feet elevated at the park



Elevating your feet places more stress on the upper body. The higher your feet are placed the harder the push ups become. Sometimes we place our feet on top of picnic tables to intensify this movement.

You can perform 5 push ups on the park bench, then walk over and get your feet on the picnic table for 5 more reps, walk over and get your feet on the other bench for 5 more reps, and then back to the picnic table for 5 more reps, and finally 5 more reps on the bench you started on. The more you walk around on your hands the more your upper body and core works. This is an excellent way to work on muscular endurance in the upper body.

Close grip push ups



Close grip will focus on the triceps. These are your next step towards challenging yourself through the many variations of push ups.

Reverse Grip Push Ups

These are excellent for the triceps as well. Once again, this is another variation to keep the body off guard. These are best used with push up bars or on a bench for the comfort of your wrists.



Rotational Push Ups

Leaning to one side, throw your leg over your other leg to the same side you are leaning to. These are great for placing unequal stress on the upper body, helping prepare you for true life physical movement, where loads are often stressing the body in awkward manners.



Stability Ball Push Ups

We use this movement often for warm ups. The squeezing of the ball while pushing is great for upper back work and core strength. Make this movement harder by elevating your feet!



One Hand Med Ball Push Off



Keeping one hand on the med ball, push so your hand comes off the floor. Land softly and repeat for moderate reps. This is a great way to incorporate some plyometric work for the upper body while working the body through an uneven loading movement.

Medicine Ball Walkovers



Move laterally by performing a push up with one hand on the ball at all times. The switching of hands and dropping down places greater stress on the body due to the depth landing. Start with a slow tempo and eventually move rapidly turning this into a plyo push up traveling left to right.

One Hand Push Ups

This is one of the most challenging push up variations. Keep your legs wide and flex your entire body. No part of your body should be relaxed. Squeeze your hand tightly on the floor and lower yourself slowly. Once your chest touches the floor, drive away from the floor aggressively. To make this easier, elevate your hand on a bench, eventually progressing to the floor level.



Suspended Chain Push Ups

Suspended chain push ups or blast strap push ups will be a true test of core and upper back strength. If your upper back is too weak you'll find yourself struggling to bend your elbows and your upper back will collapse. If this is the case, get your upper back stronger with shrugs, bent over rowing movements, face pulls and pull aparts. Come back when you can perform this movement with perfect form.



Blast Strap Push Ups at The Park



Plyometric Push Ups

Your goal here is to get your hands as far away from the floor as possible. Reps here stay low to moderate and hand contact with the ground should be kept to a minimum. Your goal is power and speed development in the upper body.



Hindu Push Ups





Hindu push ups are excellent for developing muscular endurance through the upper body as well as some flexibility in the upper body. These are a great alternative to traditional push ups. Variations can also be done on the finger tips, knuckles, or with one arm / one leg.

Extended Range of Motion Push Ups





When looking for a movement to work on flexibility as well as muscular endurance, these extended ROM push ups are great. You can place your hands between two chairs, use push up bars, blocks of wood, parallel bars, kettlebells or dumbbells. All of these extra tools also allow some freedom of the hands, so you can also use neutral or reverse grip as well.



Chins / Pull Ups

Chins and pull ups are one of the best upper body movements you can possibly do. Not to mention all their variations, in addition, this is a very challenging movement. I firmly believe not enough people can perform this movement, when they really should be able to.

This is often a problem due to only training the “beach muscles”. If your weakness is pull / chin ups, then make this movement part of your warm up, even if it’s doing sets of 1 rep at a time.

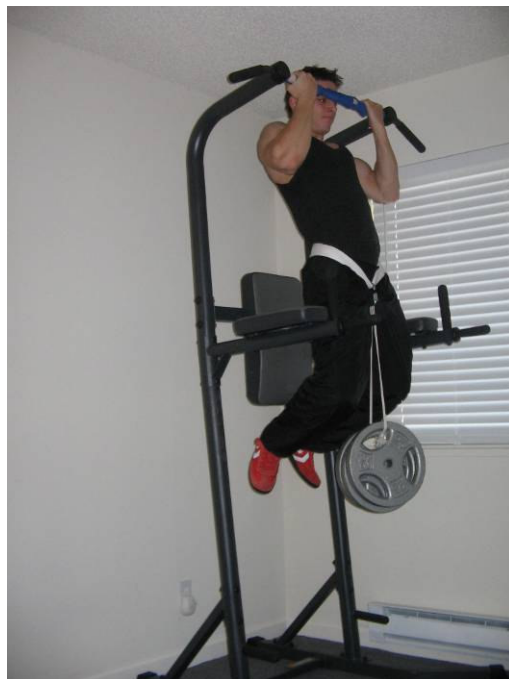
When I had no gym during vacations in Israel I went to a playground and did 15 – 20 sets of various pull ups every other day. The result was I was cranking out endless sets of 20 + reps and could easily hit 25 – 30 reps on my first few sets before fatigue would set in.







Weighted Chins



Rolling Thunder Chin / Pull Ups



Rope Pulls (vertical and recline)



If vertical pulling is too difficult for you, begin with recline pulls. Progress to weighted backpack recline pulls and eventually to vertical pulls.



Recline Body Rows



Variations of the recline row using a barbell would be to elevate your feet on a bench or chair, and to use a thick bar or wrap a towel around the barbell making it a thick handle.

Pole Climbing



Some playgrounds have vertical bars for climbing which is similar to rope climbing. If not, use the poles of the swing sets. Try climbing without your legs. These are excellent for developing upper body pulling strength and grip strength!

Parallel Bar Dips





Dips are an excellent upper body pushing movement, but, you should use this movement with lower overall volume to avoid future shoulder problems. This is not an absolute rule, as some people can perform heavy weighted dips regularly for years on end with no signs of shoulder problems. I am not one of those people.

I use this movement sometimes with bodyweight only, other times I load up to heavy weights strapped onto a weight belt using a heavy dumbbell, kettlebell or Olympic plates. The depth of this movement will depend on your shoulder flexibility. I personally do not go below 90 degrees on this exercise.

Dip Bar Leg Raises



Dip – Leg Raise Combo



I learned this move from my College Gymnastics instructor. The core and hips get worked intensely here, and your upper body works simply by holding yourself upright. If you want to make this movement even more economical then you can perform the dip – leg raise combo. This is another great movement for developing upper body muscular endurance.

If you have access to parallel bars you can perform hand walking to one end of the bars, then perform the leg raise or the dip – leg raise combo, turn around and repeat. This is truly a test of upper body muscular endurance.

Hand Walking



Stair Climbing on Hands



Dan Gable used to have his wrestlers perform these hand walks up stadium stairs for endless repetitions. Imagine how strong your shoulders and arms would become if you walked on your hands 5 % as much as you walk on your legs!



Squat

Squats are the basic lower body movement that everyone must master. Avoid rounding the back and stay on your heels (unless performing hindu squats). This movement is a prerequisite before you can perform loaded movements such as deadlifts, bent over barbell rows, RDL's and any other bent over type movement.



Pistol Squat







If you're like me and don't have the flexibility to perform pistols on the round, then elevate the working leg. This is NOT an excuse though, as this shows my own weakness, which is hamstring and upper back flexibility, and now I know what must be worked on! This is a time when I use static stretching, but it is incorporated at times when I am relaxing, not training.

In addition, I performing walking leg kicks, where I kick my leg upward higher on each step. Remember, animals do not static stretch, humans are the only species who static stretch. Animals rarely get injured, yet humans are always injured. This doesn't mean completely exclude static stretching, but, this is a strong point proving that we must do much more to improve flexibility. Kettlebell swings with feet elevated on high blocks are great for flexibility as well.

Sumo Squats



Take a wide stance and drop down as low as possible. These are great for strengthening the inner thigh as well as improving flexibility.

Forward Lunges



Lunges should be a staple in any athlete's overall program. I often emphasize unilateral training and moving because in life and through action of sport and work related activities we always load one side of the body unevenly.

Do not neglect the various lunges you can perform with bodyweight!

Reverse Lunges



Split Squats (back foot elevated)



Squat – Push - Pull



The squat – push – pull combo is KING for conditioning! I like to perform these at the park right under the monkey bars! Rather than counting reps I go for time on these. Try 3 minutes non stop on a regular basis and watch your conditioning skyrocket!

Knee Tucks



A simple, yet very basic and effective core movement are seated knee tucks. Increase intensity by wearing ankle weights or holding a weight in your hands.

Full Body Leg Raise



We've all seen Rocky perform this movement and it is a brutal one for the core and even the upper body! Perform this movement slowly and try not to allow your mid and low back to touch the bench. Yes, you can even do these on a picnic table and pretend to be Rocky! Visualization becomes reality!

Hanging Windshield Wipers



This movement is by far one of the best core training movements. Bring your knees to your elbows, keep a slight bend in the knees, and slowly bring your legs side to side. These can also be performed lying on your back and you can hold onto a pole or stable object while performing these lying on your back. Once again, adding ankle weights or squeezing a med ball between the feet increases intensity big time!

Knees to Elbows



Forget about those wimpy leg raises where your legs only raise to parallel with the ground. Double the intensity by bringing your knees to your elbows and lower under control. I've seen my homeboys from The Diesel Crew squeeze a sandbag between their legs for added intensity!

Body Extensions



Sometimes called bodyweight tricep extensions, this movement will also stress the core. It is not a major movement in our arsenal, but certainly one that has benefit. It's always a great way to work the core a little extra and often times the triceps are so weak they inhibit the pushing strength of an athlete. If you're training an athlete who routinely throws an object or pushes opponents, use this movement. Make it harder by elevating the feet and then you're going to feel the true test of this movement!

Body Extensions with Rope



Using the rope is just another method for incorporating grip work into this movement. If you've ever seen Karl Gotch using a rope, he has the person start in a recline row position and explosively pull themselves upward. At the top, they turn their body quickly and are now in this tricep extension position. This is called the Rope Muscle Up. This is harder when a partner holds your ankles and you perform the row into the extension.

Underground Russian Kettlebell Training

Kettlebells are just a tool, right? Yes, this is a true statement. Ask someone the benefit to using a kettlebell and they also talk about the thick handle and how it strengthens grip. This is such a small benefit to using the kettlebells. The benefits are far greater than grip training.

Here are some of the reasons why I use Kettlebells so often:

- You can use 1 kettlebell and perform endless movements for the entire body.
- It is easy to transport and can be used anywhere. I frequently take one kettlebell to the park and get killer workouts using only a playground and one kettlebell.
- The awkward nature of the kettlebell stresses the body in a manner that barbells and dumbbells do not and can not.
- The ease of incorporating Olympic type lifts and strength type lifts using the same kettlebell make this a very economic and efficient training tool.
- Various physical traits can be trained in one workout using the same kettlebell. You can train strength, strength endurance, power, power endurance, flexibility, muscular endurance and overall conditioning.
- You can throw, carry, toss & catch and perform basic movements with the kettlebell.
- You can easily combine towels, ropes and more with kettlebells to intensify your workout.

If we speak of the benefits we must also speak of the downfalls.

- They can be very expensive. The less expensive models are often not shaped effectively.
- You have a fixed weight. Some movements require you to use lighter weights at first, such as the windmill and Turkish get up. So eventually you end up

purchasing more and more kettlebells, which can become costly if you are on a budget.

The kettlebell is a very effective tool, but, I don't believe in using any tool or method exclusively. They are also great fun to use which makes them highly addictive. You can't just walk by a kettlebell without throwing that bad boy around!

1 Hand Swings



Swings are the basic move that must be mastered, not just learned, before moving on to other kettlebell movements. Start with the two hand swing and progress to the one hand swing and then onto the hand to hand swing variations. These are one of the best moves for developing the posterior chain and hip power. The one hand swing can be performed with heavy weights (see below) to place extra stress on the grip and hands!



Hand to Hand Swings



This is an excellent movement for developing hand and grip endurance as well as a great conditioning movement. High reps or extended time works great for H2H drills. Your posterior chain will be on fire once you start doing this movement for 2 minutes plus!



2 Hand Swings





Walking Swings



Walking swings are another great method to work the posterior chain in addition to conditioning. Simply perform a swing, once the bell is at face level and weightless for a brief moment, take two steps forward. Repeat for distance and alternate the lead foot on each rep. We usually perform these across the back yard and then add a bodyweight movement right after such as a squat, lunge or push up variation.

1 Hand Clean





Double Cleans





Performing one and two handed cleans are a great way for developing lower body power.

This movement is often undervalued and viewed simply as a method for getting the kettlebell into the rack position to perform another movement. We use this movement with heavy weights and really focus on driving through with the hips to get the weight up. Performing double cleans really makes the lower body work extra and I have found this to be a great way to teach individuals how to be aggressive and explosive with a weight! You simply can't clean heavy weights moving slowly.

See Saw Cleans



The see saw clean is excellent for combat athletes because this movement helps them relate to all the hand fighting that they engage in. Start with both kettlebells in the rack position, lower one bell and then aggressively perform the clean in see saw fashion, one goes up while one goes down. This will get your wind going big time. Start light to learn the technique and then progress to heavier bells.



1 Hand Clean & Press



The 1 hand clean and press is one of the best full body movements you can perform. This movement works strength, conditioning, muscular endurance and toughness. Performing the double clean and press is when you really turn up the intensity!



Notice the sandbag in the background. I routinely train myself and others at parks and playgrounds using 1 or 2 kettlebells, 1 sandbag and bodyweight. When you mix these three tools into a circuit you need to get the bucket ready!

Bottoms Up Clean and Press





The bottoms up clean and press is ALL about the crush grip. You must crush that handle to avoid allowing the bell to drop down and smash your wrist. The rest of your body MUST stay tight. This helps transfer strength throughout the entire movement making this a full body movement, not just an upper body pushing movement. I've used this technique for heavy 1 arm stone presses and it always works. Tense your entire body for greater strength!

1 Hand Snatch





The key to performing a snatch correctly is the punch technique. Once you pull the kettlebell upward aggressively, punch your hand through the handle. If you grip the handle too tightly, the bell will flip when your arm is overhead and crash into your forearm. The punch portion is performed so quickly that it is pretty much blind to the onlooker. Don't think, just do it! Pull and punch!

After training for the TSC (Tactical Strength Challenge) I developed some impingement in my shoulder area, since then I have lowered my volume with the snatch and usually perform sets in the 5 – 10 rep range, as opposed to snatches for 5 minutes at a time.

Military Press (see saw style)



1 arm Military Press







1 arm military press with bands



As you can see, we perform the military press with many variations. Single arm, doubles, with bands, alternating and see saw style to name a few. The military press is one of the best ground based movements and is viewed as a full body movement.

Single arm variations also stress the opposite side of the body, working your obliques, legs and back especially hard. You can perform these with strict form or with a slight leg push. If you favor Olympic lifts you can perform the jerk or the split jerk. Use a heavy bell for strength or a lighter bell for speed and power.

This is a great movement for the entire body but as always, you must create balance. So perform plenty of overhead pulling to maintain as much balance as possible. This balance also helps minimize overuse injuries.

Renegade Man Maker





This movement will kick our butt after only a few reps! When you can perform 10 reps you'll notice a big jump in your conditioning. If you want to make this movement for brutal, add a squat after you clean the weights, then go into the press!

1 Arm Row



Double bent over row





Two handed row (hands on round portion of kettlebell)





You must do plenty of rowing to really strengthen your body. Too many people undertrain the posterior chain. Using kettlebells you can row with one arm, two arms, grab the bell itself and squeeze, row inside the legs or outside the legs or even row holding onto two kettlebells at once!

The bent over row also works the lower body as it must stabilize and hold you in proper position. The lower back works hard here as well by holding you from falling towards the ground. You'll see more rowing variations later on by simply adding towels or ropes!

Double Front Squat



This is a very challenging movement, so it is best to start by holding one kettlebell in two hands, then progress to one kettlebell in the rack position and eventually to the double front squat. You must pull the bells against you tightly as you squat down to make sure they do not fall forward as you get lower. This movement also stresses the abdominals greatly, just another added benefit to this great movement.

1 Handed Squat



Keeping your elbow in tight allows you to drop low in this movement. I actually used variations of the front squat to improve my flexibility after ACL reconstruction. The deep squat position was great for squatting pain free as well. The range of motion I was able to acquire here also woke up my glutes and hams which had weakened tremendously after surgery! Still, I use barbells, sandbags, kegs and more for other squatting variations.

2 Handed Zercher Squat



This is the simplest squatting variation one can start with. We use the zercher squat for our beginners or during circuits.

1 Handed Lunge



This style of lunge is considered an “off set” lunge because you have weight on one side of your body throwing off the perfect balance if you were using same weight or a barbell.

Make sure you perform equal reps with both legs and switch the side the kettlebells is held on for equal loading on each leg. Off set training is great for developing strength and stability on the non weighted side as well.

2 handed Lunges



The two handed zercher lunge is great for beginners. We can work the lower body while also working the upper back, shoulders and biceps. Why not take advantage of the economic value of such a movement when you can? This is also a great lunge variation to use when performing circuit training.

Walking Lunges



We love using walking lunges when training groups and / or outdoors. We lunge for distance most of the time as opposed to counting reps. This style of lunges never allows the legs to rest. We simply lunge into a lunge and keep repeating until reaching the finish line. Most people lunge and then bring both feet together and rest for a moment at the top. This is too easy and takes away from the true value of walking lunges!

Farmer Walks





1 Handed Farmer Walks



Heavy farmer walks are one of the best full body movements one can perform! Unfortunately, most of us do not have pairs of the 106 lb kettlebells. But, once you reach your heaviest kettlebells and they feel too light, it's time to start using farmer walk handles to step it up with serious iron. You can perform these in a straight line, weaving between cones and by using 1 or 2 kettlebells at a time.

Cross Carry Variations

Rack & Overhead

Cross carry farmer walks really stress the back in a way that the traditional farmer walk simply can not and does not. The overhead and farmer position will be the toughest and will stress the back diagonally. Walk equal distances with each cross carry walk. For example, if you walk 50 ft. with the right arm overhead, walk the same distance with the left arm overhead.



Farmer & Overhead



Rack Walk



Hand over hand pulls with kettlebells



In the photo above you see the pulling being performed with 2” tow straps, 30’ in length.

We simply looped three tow straps together, pulled hand over hand quickly, and then jogged backwards and repeated. For our wrestlers we would perform this movement for up to 6 minutes working on pulling endurance. This movement can also be done with a thick rope and / or a sled.

Rope Swings



Rope Rows



Attaching a rope to your kettlebells simply intensifies the grip factor. If you use a thinner rope you can simply double it up to give yourself a thick rope.

Rope – Kettlebell Curls





Hand over hand vertical pulls





Hand over hand vertical pulls are another method for strengthening the biceps, grip and hands. To increase the range of motion you can stand on a picnic table and perform the movement as the rope and bell hang from the ground. You can keep your hands close together, touching one another as you go hand over hand, or you can just pull and not worry about the distance of your hands. The Diesel Crew showed me this same movement using a jump stretch band which is another challenging variation you should try!

Squat – High Pull Combo





An excellent full body movement, and can be done with one or two kettlebells. I found that one kettlebell simply wasn't intense enough so doubling up always solves that problem. But, you, or your clients may be challenged using only one kettlebell with two or one hand.

You can perform these vertically, or in an arch, where you allow the bells to go behind the legs. This arch motion allows for some extra hip and hamstring involvement. Other variations are from the ground or dead hang to work on your starting strength.

Sled Training with Kettlebells

Training at the park or in fields forces you to become creative. It also forces you to be as economic as possible. You may not be able to carry 45 lb plates along with sleds, kettlebells, sandbags, ropes and weighted backpacks.

Instead, you can load your sleds with the kettlebell(s). This method also allows you to integrate sled training with kettlebells. This mixture allows you the versatility of working various strengths. The sled might be used for lower body conditioning for 1 – 2 minutes and the kettlebells can then be used for upper body strength (1 arm military press) or full body power (snatches).

If you are short on time or train groups, this method of mixing sleds and kettlebells will prove to be invaluable!



Forward Drags



Forward drags are key for developing the hamstring and glutes. This movement is impossible to perform incorrectly, and at the same time it is one of the most effective lower body strength movements!

Backwards Drags



Backward drags are great for developing strength and lactate tolerance in the quads.



Sleds & Swings - Drag the sled for distance, stop and swing for reps!



If your focus is lower body conditioning, you can drag the sled in various directions for distance or time, stop and remove the kettlebell and perform any variation of the swing.



Sleds followed by Clean & Press



This combo is great. We work the entire body in a very short time period. The sleds attack the lower body and the clean and press is a full body movement.



Prowler Loaded with Kettlebells
Bear Crawl



At first I was pretty skeptical about this and figured I could just push my truck or use my sled for these movements. I was wrong! The prowler offers numerous angles for pushing and pulling PLUS attachments for straps. I loaded the front and the bars with kettlebells for easy integration of prowler and kettlebell work. This combo is brutal!



The bear crawl has quickly become one of my favorite movements with the prowler. The low positioning really hammers away at the quads unlike the sled. It is also great for improving hip strength and hip flexibility.

Upright Prowler Pushing



Pushing the prowler upright allows you to resemble the stand up portion of many combative activities. The upper back will work heavily along with the legs to push the prowler. We push for distance, grab one or two of the kettlebells and perform 1 or 2 kettlebell movements, then push or backwards drag the prowler back to the starting position.

If you don't load your sled or prowler with kettlebells, then place an odd object at the end of the area. You can work partners in this situation, where one works on 1 or 2 movements while you work the sled or prowler. Once you arrive at the end point, you both switch places.

If you train large groups and have limited equipment then this would be the most effective way to train instead of having lines with people waiting to train.

Underground Sandbag Training

Swings



The sandbag swing is a great way to attack the posterior chain and aggressively work your grip. The speed of this movement will test your grip after a few short reps! Stay tough and perform these for sets of 8 – 15 reps.

Extended Range Hand Over Hand Pulls with Rope



This is a very intense way of strengthening your grip, biceps and back. The higher you allow the bag to hang, the more you will pull. If you have a short distance to pull simply add more reps.

Extended Range of Motion Rope Deadlifts



Perform these in the same manner as you would an RDL. The ropes add more work to your grip while standing on the table allow for a greater range of motion. If you have a short rope then standing on a table may not be necessary. At the top of the movement you can add a slight upright row to give the pulling muscles more work.



Sandbag Rope Curls



Do not underestimate this movement thinking it's all about the biceps. Put some body into this movement and you'll work almost every muscle in the upper body. Still, these are to be done at the end of a workout since they are not considered a core lift or a full body movement.





Military Press



Once again, you see the military press, only with a different implement. Too many people spend their time pressing from a seated or lying position. Ground based movements will

always work the body harder! You'll have to wrestle this bag up to get situated so be ready to work hard from the start of this movement!





Shoulder to Shoulder Press (lift off ground)



As mentioned previously, lifting the bag up to get situated for the press is a task in itself. During this lift off is when so many smaller muscles get worked as you twist and turn and adjust your body. These are muscles that rarely get worked otherwise or from your more traditional movements.

Lift to Shoulder



Shoulder to Shoulder Press



This movement is a great way to change the angle of overhead pressing. The neutral direction of your palms is also less strenuous on the shoulder joint.

Continue Pressing from Shoulder to Shoulder



Shouldering the Sandbag (start low)



In the above photo you can see the round back. This is a time when the back is engaged and working hard as opposed to relaxing and bearing the load on the spine. When you see round backs during dead lifts and bent over rows this is a sign of weakness in the back. Lifting sandbags off the ground helps your back become stronger through the arched and rounded positions which is sometimes a common position for combat athletes.

Rip the bag up onto your shoulder in one motion



Zercher Squat



The zercher position works the back, shoulders and biceps heavily. I have also found this to be a very effective way to introduce loaded squats to someone. For a serious challenge we walk 20 ft. then squat 3 reps, we continue “loaded conditioning” this for distance or time.

Zercher Lunge



Once again, an excellent manner for working the legs and upper body simultaneously.



Lifting The Bag To The Shoulder Position



Shoulder Squats



This is an excellent method of off set training. Be sure to perform equal reps on both sides. You can also perform extra reps in the zercher position after working the bag on both sides for a real challenge!



Shoulder Lunges





Shoulder Step Ups



Shoulder lunges and step ups are great unilateral leg movements. The off set positioning of the sandbag make this movement more effective as it stresses the obliques heavily as well.



Bent Over Rows





Notice The Uneven Grip! Grab The Bag Any Which Way You Can!



Notice the awkward and uneven hand positions as I grab the bag to keep it from falling. The bag may not be as heavy as a barbell while rowing but the awkward nature stresses the body differently and is always an effective variation that the body can certainly benefit from.

Wrestling the Bag to Start The Thruster





Begin the Thruster with a deep front squat



Explode Up and Flow into the Military Press



Flow back down into a deep front squat



The thruster is an awesome lower and upper body combo movement. This movement can be used for strength, muscular endurance and / or full body conditioning.

Shouldering the bag



Ripping The Bag onto The Shoulder



Sandbag shouldering is one of the most basic yet most effective movements you can perform with a sandbag. You can start each rep from the ground to work on starting

strength or simply perform a half squat on each rep and then rip the bag up. Perform equal reps to both shoulders.



The Zercher RDL





Zercher RDL's are great for developing the posterior chain while working on isometric strength for the upper body.

Sandbag Rotational Lifts







Stand next to a picnic table, a high bench or a barrel. Using a rotational motion, grab the bag and rip it onto the table. You can, as always, start from the ground or reverse the motion as the bag almost touches the ground. All variations are good and the body should be exposed to the different methods for the greatest effect.

Weighted Back Pack Training

Strength training can become very intense when you add 20 – 50 lbs on your back! Use a heavy duty backpack if possible, load it up with some magazines, or sand, or pea gravel and perform a bodyweight workout with the bag.

The bag can be placed in front of the body and in back to create different stressors and to work the body more effectively. Suddenly what was once a simple bodyweight workout has now become a real torture session!

Squats





Push Ups





rope pull ups w/backpack



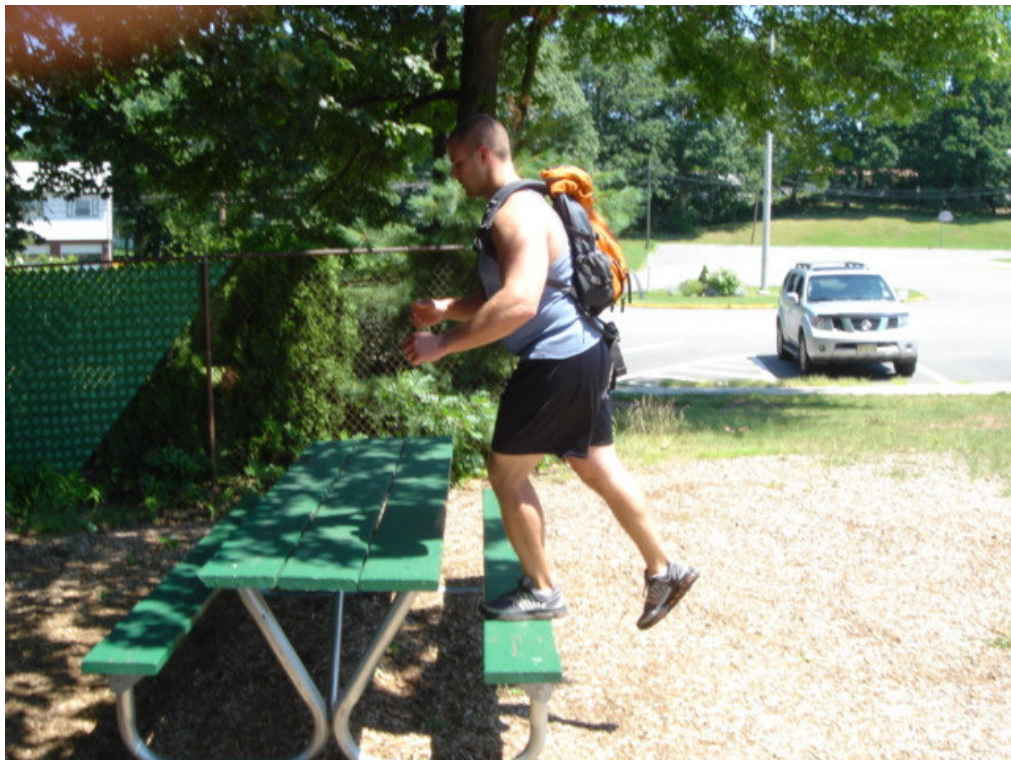


Lunges





Step Ups





Underground Keg Lifting



Keg Training is one of the most versatile and brutal forms of training you can utilize, especially if you are a strength or combat athlete.

The odd nature of this Underground tool forces your entire body to work in ways it has never had to work before. This is also the way you want to get REAL core training in. The water sloshing around in the keg will make every movement highly unstable. You will have to ground yourself, or shall I say, GLUE yourself to the ground to make sure you are not getting thrown around by the keg! Your entire core will be working overtime here, especially during overhead and squatting movements.

Before you can get started, there are two things you must know and do before you can start:

1. Where do you get your empty keg?
2. How do you empty the beer and then fill your keg with water?

Let's answer these two questions so you can get started quickly and easily.

The best place to find your keg is at a local shot and beer joint, or at a liquor store. They will ask for \$ 10 – 20 because these kegs get recycled and that's what they get for each keg. Be friendly and explain to them what you will be using the keg for. Otherwise, these people will think you're up to no good and send you away.

If this proves no luck, then head over to the local university and stop by a frat house, they'll gladly give up a few kegs for money because these students are almost always broke!

Once you get your keg it's time to get the remaining beer and air pressure out for safety. I used a keg tap, which I had to rent from the liquor store for \$ 5. I took the kegs around the back of the store, lay them on their side, got the remaining air pressure and beer out and then returned the keg tap.

I filled them with water in a simple, yet slow manner. I wedged a flat head screw driver in the ball of the keg and slowly ran water into the keg with a hose. See the pics below:

Once you wedge an opening, slowly run the hose into the keg.



Every week I added a little more water as I became stronger each time. I have seen members of Underground Strength Coach unscrew the top and actually lighten the load as well.

Bear Hug Squat





This is an excellent movement for working static strength in the upper body, especially the back (notice the round back) and strengthening the legs.

Wrestlers performing Military Presses



Using kegs outdoors is always the safest method, especially for beginners who are just starting to use the keg. Keep a “safety circle” around them in case they need to drop the keg and let it go.

Keg Shoveling (swing between the legs and rotate the keg over each shoulder)





Keg shoveling is a great way to work on rotational power. It's the same motion as if you were shoveling dirt or snow and throwing it over your shoulder. The water makes the downward phase tougher so be sure to keep your feet grounded. We sometimes mix in the keg snatch with this movement. We'll shovel to one side, perform a snatch, shovel to the opposite side, perform a snatch, and keep repeating for time or reps.

Zercher Squats



Zercher Lunges



Zercher Lunge



Like all zercher holds, we perform this so we can work the upper body and the lower body simultaneously.

Shoulder Squat





Once again, another off set movement. As you squat down the keg will try to pull you to the weighted side. Resist with your obliques and legs and then repeat for equal reps on each side.

Cleaning The Keg





Moving into the overhead press





Locking Out The Keg



Notice the rotational component involved in starting the movement. Once you perform the overhead press you can continue performing reps in the clean and press or only the press. I prefer the clean and press to work the entire body more intensely.

Frequently Asked Questions

I've received a ton of questions through my newsletters, websites and through the Q 7 A at Elitefts.com

Many of these questions are recurring, so I wanted to put them out there for you to have at your finger tips 24 – 7!

Question: What is the best way for developing a program? Should I perform full body workouts or split them into upper and lower body workouts?

Answer: I know you want hard specifics here but there truly is no better way. I've gotten great results from both! On the flip side, I've had athletes who didn't respond well to one of the programs.

When I see the response is low (not gaining strength fast enough, putting on lean muscle, improving speed and performance, etc) we switch to the program they are NOT currently doing. How do we know when to switch. First time around, my clients spend 3 months performing full body workouts 2 – 3 x week. If it's not working, we use the upper / lower body split and change set – rep patterns a bit, and increase volume per movement slightly as well.

We will not change a lot of things though, we change one thing (the program split) and see if that helps. If not, we change sets / reps. The variables you can change go on and on. This is when you want a training log. You can see where you've been and where you're going and you can use these logs as indicators.

If I can only train an athlete twice a week we pretty much always use full body workouts, unless I KNOW they are following my guidelines on their own when working out. This tends to be, more often than not, my Football athletes.

In the end, it is critical to remember that all training method and programs have their place and time. What often works is the workout that you are NOT doing. So variety is a key factor in progress, but not so much variety where your body never gets a chance to respond to a movement or method.

For example, Dave Tate told me that when they all train at the original Westside Barbell Club, it was so damn small, and there were no options for variety, he said this is when they were all constantly getting stronger. They knew that on leg day, all they could do was box squats, reverse hypers and glute ham raises. There were no fancy options available to them. So sometimes, having less equates to more!

Question: I am in my 40's and have really become interested in Underground training. Can I jump right and get started or do I need to have a background in this style of training first?

Answer: Underground training does NOT discriminate! In addition, all workouts and exercise regimes allow for flexibility, you just need to be smart enough and disciplined enough to listen to your body.

There certainly needs to be a foundation of strength when performing heavy tire flips, heavy sandbag work, etc. But, you can also build that foundation simply by using lighter tires, sandbags and other implements.

Scientific studies certainly have spoken often about the body losing athletic / physical ability starting at the age of 30 but so many athletes have proven this to be something NOT to hold anyone back.

If you've been out of the game for a while, utilize the full body training program 2 – 3 x week, and then add some lighter intensity days (similar to the high low method) for short 10 – 15 recovery / GPP type workouts.

I don't believe age should hold anyone back, so in a nutshell I'm telling you to go for it!

Question: I don't have the time to train 1 hour a day 3 times a week. How do you suggest I go about creating a program on my time crunched schedule? I know I need to do something but I seriously just work too much and I want to spend more time with my family. Thanks for your help!

Answer: I rarely train hour now that I'm such a busy guy! On average, my workouts last 30 minutes. I get in there and get busy, no fooling around and very little rest! Sometimes I am done in 15 – 20 minutes, especially when I use kettlebells or perform a workout that is with 3 movements and done in circuit fashion.

The key is to still challenge the body, so I personally use heavy weights most of the time during these shorter workouts.

You can also follow the EDT method by Charles Staley and use an upper body and lower body movement. You can choose a time for 10 minutes and perform two different 10 minute EDT rounds, or go for 15 minutes using two movement.

When short on time, do not waste time on smaller movements. Use full body movements like deadlifts, clean and presses, snatches, sandbag shouldering, pull ups, dips, etc.

You'll see in my training system for busy men, www.REALManFitness.com, this is exactly what I espouse. We all have time constraints and busy schedules, but you can get serious ass kicking workouts in 15 minutes, trust me!

Question: You often talk about incorporating gymnastics movements into workouts, can you give any specifics of how, where and when you would use these movements?

Answer: I've been fascinated with Gymnastics and the power of what these movements can do for the body since being exposed to it as an Undergrad.

I use Gymnastics movements on the grass and every single time I hold seminars for grapplers we incorporate them. We perform tons of rolling movements (forwards / backwards / shoulder rolls, dive rolls, no handed rolls, straddle and pike rolls) and endless variations of cartwheels and round offs.

Other movements that have been borrowed from Gymnastics are many of the movements performed at the playground such as parallel bar hand walking, leg raises on dip bars, muscle ups on high pull up bars, pull ups and inverted hangs, stretches on rings.

If you have access to a soft surface and open room, you should definitely utilize these movements. I prefer using all the cartwheel and rolling movements during warm ups, but if you're training on the mat, you can intersperse these movements through out your actual technical or bodyweight / calisthenics training.

Question: What are your thoughts on long distance running for conditioning purposes?

Answer: Usually, any distance over 1 mile performed non stop is considered distance running. I used to run 3 – 4 miles every other night when I was in high school preparing for wrestling. Still, I was not the best conditioned athlete. I was very good at running distances though! The carry over was not very great though, and I did not have a clue regarding appropriate energy system training back then.

I also found the long distances to hammer away at my knees and shins, even as a lighter, younger athlete. Now I prefer to use sprints interspersed with strength training for conditioning purposes. This has given me greater carry over to conditioning as a combat athlete. I also like extended time under tension (aka Loaded Conditioning) methods with free weights of any sort for conditioning.

For example, 5 minutes of non stop kettlebell training, 15 minutes of non stop sled drags or sled training, the carry and train method utilizing odd objects and other variations of

this style of training. Hill sprints are great also, but, I found that results were better on myself and my athletes when we did more than just sprints. Hill sprints followed by a sandbag or kettlebell combo left at the top of the hill for 5 – 10 reps, followed by a bodyweight drill for 5 – 10 reps, walk down the hill and repeat was working way better than just hill sprint, walk down and repeat.

On the flip side, performing a distance run here and there is always a good change of pace physically and mentally. Regarding the physical benefits, the carry over for distance seems best kept for distance runners!

Question: Is ‘Underground’ training just for men, or can women use these methods as well? I am a personal trainer and have a lot of female clients who have begun using sledge hammers, sandbags and tires for dragging. Are there any possible concerns I should have for women?

Answer: This is great news to hear! Remember, ‘Underground’ training, just like all other forms of fitness, does not discriminate against sex, race, age, etc! This training is great especially for boot camps and group workouts. The physical demands of ‘Underground’ always brings the groups closer together and that is a great thing for your clients AND your business.

Like any method, individualize the intensity for the movements and the programs and you’ll be on the right track. Any program that becomes too hard, too soon can easily and quickly deter others from continuing the program. It’s not about kicking someone’s ass when you train. It’s about making it fun, challenging and exhilarating so the person continues to train. Always look to achieve longevity with an exercise program for others, even if they don’t train with you any more!

Question: How do you evaluate your clients before they begin training with you?

Answer: Our evaluation starts by going through a variety of bodyweight movements to see if they can perform the movements correctly. I also look at how they move from the moment they begin walking towards me.

We use the basic movements like squats, push ups, pull ups and the plank (ab hold). With squats it's a great way to see if the posterior chain has tightness. As they squat down I look for a variety of indicators:

- Do their heels stay on the floor?
- Does their lower / upper back round out on the descent?
- Do their knees buck inward on the way up /down?

With push ups, we look to see if the upper back crumbles as they lower themselves down. Can they perform a full push up? If not, can they perform a correct push up with hands elevated? Does their core sink down as they perform the descent?

On pull ups it's easy to see if one side is working harder than the other. Often times you'll see one shoulder raising much higher than the other. If pull ups can not be performed we try recline pull ups. We look for the ability to hold the shoulders in a retracted position for a few reps. Can they perform a recline pull up?

In addition, the evaluation is on going during every work out. This allows you to consistently be aware of weak areas and how / what you can do to improve them. This is why communication is so critical with your clients. Listening to them gives you greater insight into what they feel is lacking as well.

Aside from the physical portion of the evaluation, we use a medical history questionnaire to see any existing and preexisting injuries. We make sure to address these issues (if there are any) as well as issues that arise throughout the training. As athletes, we all open ourselves up to injury because we are active.

Question: Why don't you like the Olympic lifts? Some of the best athletes in the world perform the O lifts on a regular basis and say all athletes should use them.

Answer: Actually, I like the O lifts a lot, it all depends on the scenario though. For young athletes or clients with out a solid foundation of physical preparation, I don't use the barbell O lifts. If we incorporate any O lifts it is the variations using a dumbbell or a kettlebell.

I like the O lifts with the barbells for myself, although I am not an expert with them, I still find them to be great full body movements. I have not only found them to improve power, but also a great way for developing muscle mass, especially in the upper back, shoulders, arms and forearms.

Often times, when I am time crunches, I perform the power clean and push press for 10 – 15 minutes non stop with moderate or heavy weights. This is a killer 10 – 15 minutes!

I also like to use some hang cleans, high pulls and jump shrugs with very light weight for warm ups for myself and clients as well. What I am against is seeing anyone utilizing these movements with shitty form. I see this VERY often with high school athletes. The form is often atrocious and dangerous!

Often this is due to lack of proper coaching, and lack of physical preparation. There is a time and place for everything!

Question: I want to start running out door boot camps for my training business and I think 'Underground' methods would be perfect. Have you ever done this and if so, can you give me any pointers to get started?

Answer: I have done many 'Underground' boot camps and they always rock the house! The boot camps I have done were hosted by local high schools, so, the township covered the insurance and liability aspects.

If you plan on utilizing a local park, you need to contact the parks and rec. department and make sure you are allowed to hold boot camps. You'll need insurance and they will very likely take a certain % of your profit per camp or a flat fee.

I would bring sleds and sandbags to the camps, but you can also bring tires instead of sleds. This way you don't have to worry about bring Olympic plates for loading the sleds. If you use kettlebells, they can be used for loading sleds.

Organize group and team training through out the camp, this is why people go to the camps. They love the unity and togetherness they experience because it heightens the experiences they go through making it a much better experience than a traditional gym setting.

We would also take daily walks / jogs to surrounding playgrounds and go through circuits at the playground. In addition, we would use the surrounding picnic tables for added stations to the circuit.

As far as length of camps go, you can do a camp every 4 weeks, or have each camp last 4 weeks, then take a week off. This puts your campers in a position of needing to train independently during your week off.

Mornings seem to work best for boot camps, but evenings (right after typical work hours are also good). Friday afternoons / evenings have proven to be the least attended. Three times a week is key for campers, I wouldn't offer anything less. Still, you'll find some people don't attend all 12 sessions in your 4 week period!

Quesiton: Can I do bodyweight only movements and still gain the strength and muscle that someone else has who uses free weights?

Answer: Great question! Bodyweight movements are awesome, no doubt about it. The variations are endless and you can obviously train any where, any time and any place. For some, bodyweight is suffice for causing an effect with regards to muscle growth and strength improvements. But, once you are cranking out over 100 push ups, 20 pull ups and 100 squats in a row, your body needs more resistance to improve in strength.

This is where weighted bodyweight movements come into play or the use of free weights. Granted, there are movements like the pistol, 1 arm push up and the handstand push up which are very challenging and can actually be considered max effort work.

Some people can easily do these movements though. Regardless, bodyweight training is great, especially for muscular endurance or circuit training.

Partner bodyweight movements can become VERY challenging and may be exactly what you need. Partner zercher squats, push ups with a partner sitting on your back or pressing down on you, 1 leg squats, pull ups with a partner holding your ankles or pulling you down with hands on your shoulders. Partner bodyweight training can kick your ass.

But, if you're looking to get very strong and increase muscle, it's wise to incorporate other means of training in addition to bodyweight training. We can't argue with bodyweight training, looking at gymnasts we see that they are jacked, ripped and can often times out lift athletes who have been training with weights for years!

Question: Due to my schedule, I only have 2 days out of the week to train. I am a college wrestler. How can I organize my training to be most effective during the season?

I am incorporating some o lifting, and also max effort and dynamic effort with the squat / deadlift and upper body pressing.

Answer: The best way, as always, to see if a program works well for YOU is that YOU test it yourself. Every program effects individuals differently so it's almost impossible to state what will work for you.

Always remember to look at your sport and what it entails to ensure you work weak areas and not to over work movements and physical traits that are already getting worked.

During wrestling practice, you're working almost every physical trait possible! All your takedowns and lifts are dynamic effort training, the extended time performing these practices become your conditioning, muscular endurance and power endurance training. Every time you lift your opponent during takedowns is the same as deadlifting or squatting explosively, which can equal over 100 lifts in the course of a practice, sometimes more than 200!

Now, with 2 sessions available for training, you have a few options:

1. Full Body workouts
2. Upper / Lower Body Split

Since you are already performing muscular endurance work and conditioning via your practices, we want to limit the amount of that type of work during the lifting times.

The focus will be on strength and power coupled with always existent prehab / rehab work. During the season, I prefer to use the methodologies of the high low method. So if you've had a lighter day of practice that had minimal or no live wrestling, I would suggest NOT lifting that day, which allows you to have a "low" day and is key to recovery.

Combative sports are so damaging mentally and physically that it is key to take advantage of any down time you have. If you've had a more intense day of practice, try to separate your lifting and wrestling time by 4 hours at the least. Then use a few basic lifts, maybe 2 or 3, not including your prehab / rehab and get the job done and get out!

Movements like the power clean & push press, weighted pull up, kettlebell / dumbbell snatch, barbell row, and sandbag shouldering are great compound movements to use!

If wrestling and lifting can not be separated, then wrestling should be placed first followed by the strength training. If you find your body can not handle the practices plus two workouts a week of strength training, then only use 1 day of strength training. Trust me, it will be suffice coupled with all your wrestling. If that 1 day is still too intense, then choose one compound lift for the workout, and finish in 10 – 15 minutes.

Pay close attention to the signs your body is giving you and deload towards the end of the year to ensure you're fresh for the all important final tournament of the year!

Question: I am a local trainer and lately I have been getting a lot of requests from parents to train their youngest kids. These kids are in elementary and middle school and I am clueless as what to do with them. I am used to all the strength training I do with my high school and adult athletes. Can you help me out here?

Answer: This is a great question and one of critical importance. In the eastern Bloc countries, the best Coaches work with the youngest athletes, NOT the other way around.

These countries understand the importance of young athletes receiving appropriate physical and psychological training. In the USA, I still see the opposite. I get e mails a few times a month asking me train their 7 year old or 8 year old to give him the extra edge. Or the e mail asks if they can have their kid do “extra” training a week before a big competition for the extra edge!

This is pure insanity! Young kids, and adult, should be playing much more than they do today. They should also be exposed to a ton of different stimuli. Playgrounds, gymnastics, soccer, wrestling, swimming – these are excellent activities for youngsters to be involved in and they expose him / her to such variety with regards to physical stimuli

that their bodies become much more receptive to learning athletic skills as they enter adolescence.

Even adults should expose themselves to various physical activities unless they are competing at the highest level of a specific sport, then they will be specializing. Even so, I have read about the old Soviet Union wrestling team playing soccer and full court basketball prior to practice and prior to large scale international events!

The sports served as a special means of conditioning. All the running, agility, jumping and constant movement served as a great form of physical preparation for wrestling. In addition, I always emphasize, no matter what sport you are involved in, or if you are simply a strength fanatic, you **MUST** be in shape.

You should be able to play soccer, volleyball, basketball, etc. Maybe you're not the best skilled athlete for these sports but you should be able to perform the various movements and skills involved: running, deceleration, agility, jumping, etc.

If I was to create a 'kids gym' it would have playground apparatuses everywhere, mats all over the place for gymnastics skills, a traversing wall for climbing, various balls for games to play plus throwing, kicking, catching and hitting skills.

Today I see gyms with mini sized treadmills, leg presses and other nonsense for kids. This is **NOT** fitness! Fitness is all about moving. So if you're sitting down, you're **NOT** moving and this is **NOT** the way kids should be "trained".

Question: When working with athletes there are many different methods and tools that you can use to enhance performance. Exs: sled dragging, sand bags, bodyweight exercises, the westside methods and sledgehammers etc. My question is how do you combine these into one program. Do you use certain tools for a certain period and then drop them for a new method or do you combine them all at the same time. Thanks

Answer: If I was to use all of these methods at once it would be what I coin “Everything but the kitchen sink”. You simply can not use all these methods in one workout and have an effective workout.

I actually prefer to use about 4 – 6 movements per workout and really work hard on these movements. Sometimes it’s only 3 movements! One way to utilize various methods without making it overkill is by looking at the general protocol I use during a workout.

- 1) Warm up with bodyweight, bands, mobility work
- 2) Begin the workout and utilize basic lifts with free weights or odd objects: sandbag squat, barbell military press, kettlebell swings, weighted pull ups or rope climbing and then finish with some conditioning using sledge hammer work, sprints and some bodyweight circuits.

I don’t feel the need to use all the tools and methods. The body adapts quickly, so putting some of these methods or tools on the back burner for a few weeks, or even a few months can often prove beneficial.

So maybe for 3 months you follow Westside / conjugate style training with upper / lower body splits and changing between ME and DE work. The next 3 months might be full body workouts where you incorporate the concurrent method utilizing strength, speed and some conditioning or RE work as well.

All tools and methods have their place in your program. But give each method or program ample time to work for you. It’s fine to use methods for more than 3 months as well, that was just an example.

Question: How do you combine your wrestling / grappling with your strength and conditioning workouts? I am going to BJJ 4 x week and trying to train the other 2 days with Sundays off. Is this a good way to split up my training?

Answer: This is a great question and one which comes up often. The program you outlined has you training 6 days a week. This is a pretty heavy duty schedule, and can work if you have plenty of free time.

If you can, I would like to see you optimize your days off by possibly having a day where you train in BJJ and strength work. On this day, focus on strength and power because your live rolling will be conditioning work as well as the fast paced drilling.

This will now give you two full days of rest, which is twice as much as what you had before. Rest is a GOOD thing and the world of combat athletes, as I always say, is behind the times when it comes to proper strength and conditioning methods!

The day (s) you perform two a day training sessions you should optimally have 4 hours between each training session if possible. If not, prioritize your weakness. If BJJ is your weakness, then BJJ comes first followed by a short strength / power focused workout.

Personally, I am so friggin' busy I can only fit in one training session per day, a few times per week. In addition, wrestling and BJJ kick my ass plenty so after a session on the mat I am pretty busted up and physically not ready to go through another brutal training session that day. This is all a matter of age and physical preparedness.

The individual who can eat, sleep and train with no commitments other than the three mentioned has more freedom to train as often as he / she wants. I hope you look into getting that extra day of rest, this is truly when your body makes progress and reaps the rewards of your training!

In The End....

You might be wondering how to go about implementing all these crazy ideas, or you might be feeling ready to rock n' roll and on track. As you can see, my methods on training are not fancy, they are basic, to the point, very aggressive and require listening to your body.

The methods are based on what I have experienced to work while in the trenches as well as through countless hours of speaking with the best in the world. The information is in your hands now and it's up to you where you go from here my friend.

The great thing about training 'Underground' is that it is a universal method, usable anywhere, for any one, any time and any place! I am asking you to do one thing with the information you learn here. That one thing is to "Pay it forward."

The world needs your help to get them feeling good and looking good. Being fit is the best gift any person can have because it is a gift that gives to everyone in their life. Their health allows them to live a beautiful life while sharing with others. I'm asking you to do your part and not keep any of this a secret.

I'd like to genuinely thank you for taking the time to invest and read this manual. I hope you have greatly enjoyed this manual and that you take it with you when ever you travel. That's always one of the greatest things about books, is that they can go with you any where in the world!

If you feel you've gotten all you can out of this manual then by all means, PASS IT ON! Books are not meant for keeping on shelves, they are meant for reading. Your passing this manual on to another is one way of "Paying it forward."

If this manual was a gift given to you by someone else then do your part and take action to improve your health. Regardless of who you are, how old or how young, where you live and what your circumstances are, raise the bar and become your best ever!

Being extraordinary should be the only way to go!

I look forward to seeing you at UndergroundStrengthCoach.com and hearing your success stories as well.

To you success,

Zach Even – Esh

The Underground Strength Coach