

**STRENGTH:** A LONGEVITY APPROACH BY MATT WENNING

# POWER

MAY/JUNE 2016

## BRETT GIBBS

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WORLD CHAMPION

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WITH MIKE TUCHSCHERER

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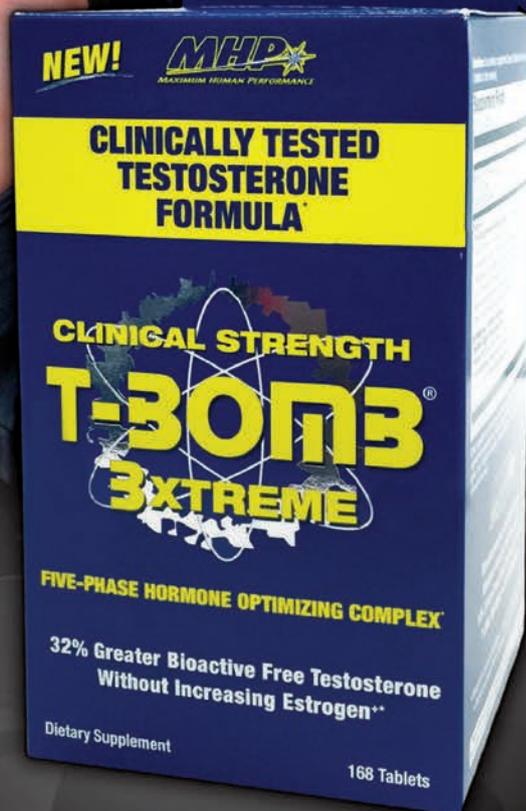
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# POWER

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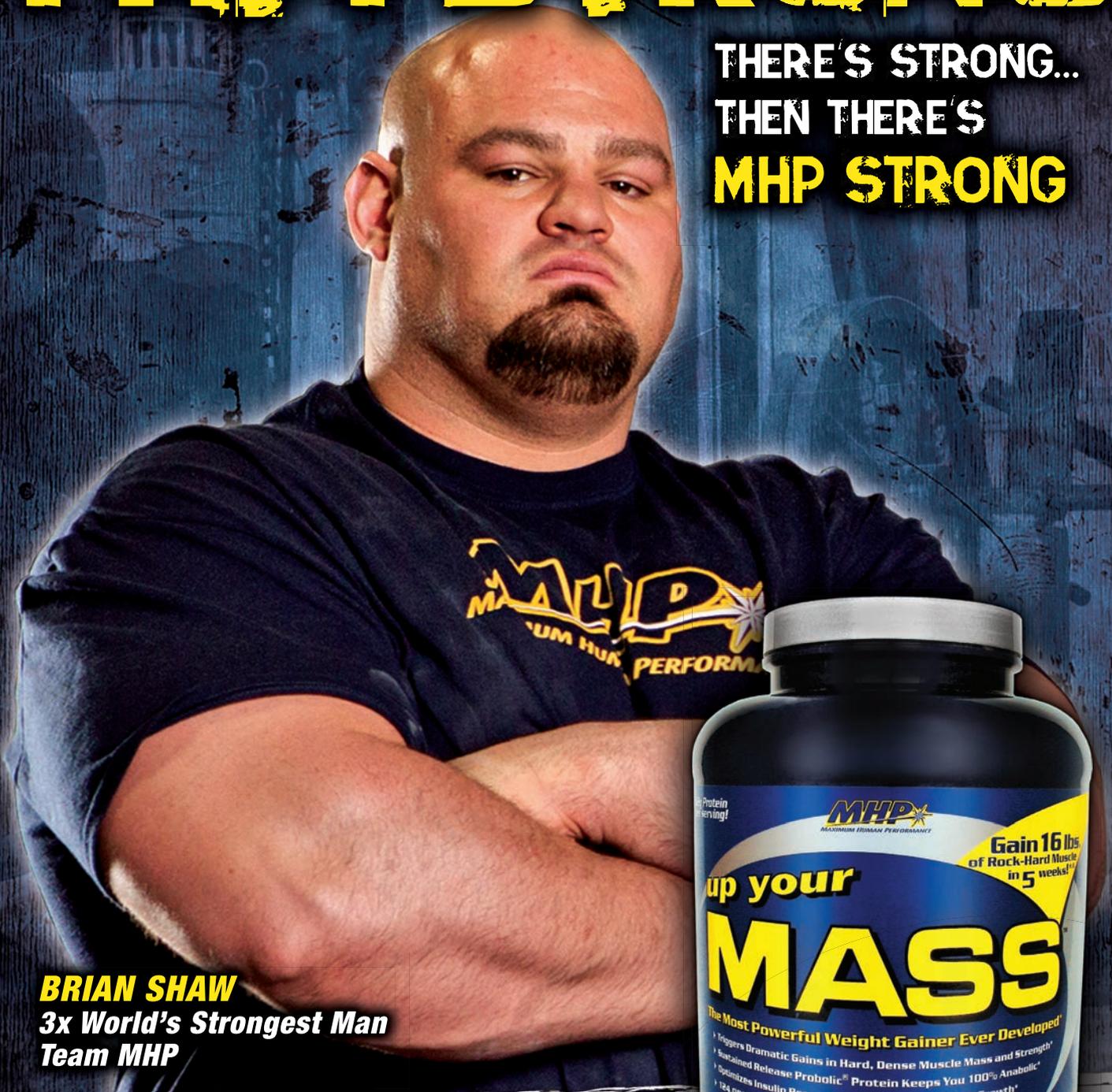


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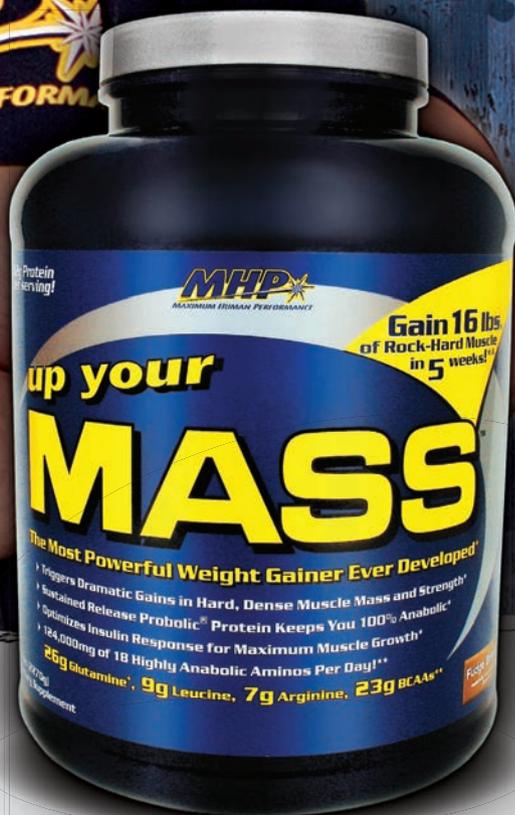
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## FEATURES



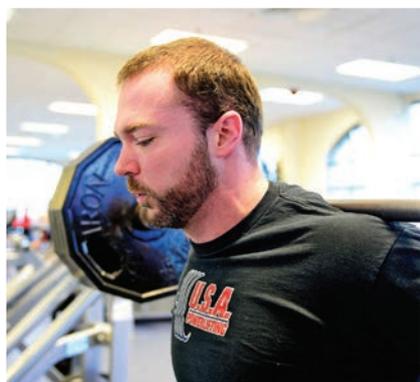
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## Going Raw with Brett Gibbs

Gibbs is a two time IPF world champion with best lifts of 628 lbs. (squat), 454 lbs. (bench), and 705.5 lbs. (deadlift). All of these lifts are at only 181 lbs...and RAW!

Hani Jazayrli sits down with the New Zealander to find out how he got so strong and what his training consists of.



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## Training For Durability

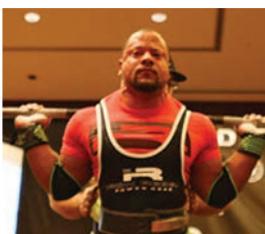
Powerlifting is getting more and more competitive. So, how do you compete with these new lifters? The same way we always have – focus on what you have control over, and get as strong as you possibly can. Mike Tuchscherer gives us a glimpse into the training template that has allowed him to stay competitive.



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## Strength: A Longevity Approach

Matt Wenning has been in the iron game for over twenty-three years, and he's sharing some of the tips that he has learned along the way. He hopes that in sharing this article, he can keep you from hitting plateaus. At thirty-six years old, and with a 2205 lbs. raw total with no wraps, he's still getting stronger and smarter by following these rules.



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## Maliek Derstine: You Get What You Give

At twenty-seven years old, Maliek has already been competing for a solid ten years in powerlifting and has been breaking records at every meet. He set four new All Time Total World Records in 2015. He has a 10x bodyweight total of 1950 lbs. raw with knee wraps. He also totaled 1901 lbs. raw without knee wraps, and most recently, he squatted 780 lbs. to best World Record squatter, Tom Kallas, in exhibition. John Greaves sits down with this powerhouse to discuss his life and training.

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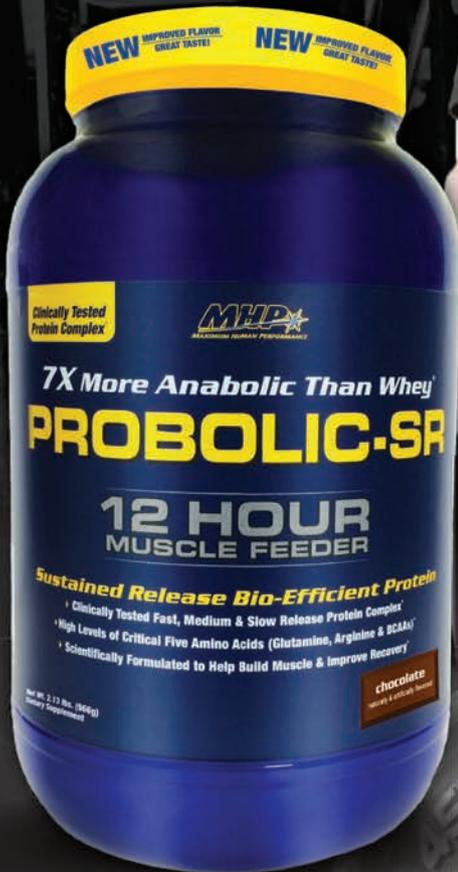


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# DOING WHAT SHE LOVES

## An Interview With #1 Ranked Super Heavyweight Samantha Coleman

BY JOHN GREAVES III

In our culture, female strength is growing in popularity. Amanda Bingson recently graced the cover of ESPN's Body Issue. Wonder Woman is set to hit the big screen next year for the first time. The time when women were expected to sit quietly as men dared mighty feats seems long gone. Thanks to a sometimes much maligned sport that starts with a C and rhymes with ossfit, women are discovering that strong and feminine aren't necessarily polar opposites. Enter Samantha Coleman - a humble, funny woman born in the same Georgia foothills that spawned the legendary Paul Anderson. While she can't claim legendary status just yet, Samantha is making her mark as only the second woman to total over 1400 lbs. raw in competition.

I interviewed Samantha in between watching the squat, bench, and deadlift portions of the SPF [Southern Powerlifting Federation] Gritmas Classic where she was running the live feed.

**Samantha, how are you doing?**

I'm doing good.

**I appreciate you letting me do this interview with you.**

It's my pleasure.

**Let's begin with the most important question...you have an amazing number of pictures of yourself on the toilet. Why?**

Well, it's my office! No, when



I was growing up and even now, I've always loved bathrooms. I don't know why; it's my sanctuary.

**Well, you're probably not going to get bothered in there.**

When I'm at work, I call it my office. It's kind of one of those off limit places, but I like to make it open. Not in a distasteful way but...

**Well it's where everybody goes . . .**

Yeah, it's like I'm about to take a picture in the bathroom. Plus, that's where I have

time to post stuff.

**What do you really do for living?**

Right now, I'm a collector. I hate saying "bill collector" because it has a negative connotation but...

**I was hoping that you would say something like bounty hunter. That would have been awesome!**

Well, I did do something like that but, no, it turns out that I'm really good at helping people come up with solutions to their problems.

**Is it that the job gives you some flex-**

**ibility for your powerlifting career?**

Right. I've learned that it might not be exactly what I want to do, but it may provide me with the opportunities that I want later on down the road.

**You have a background in law enforcement, right?**

Yes. The guy who hired me for my very first job said that he hired me for my size. Not that he knew I was strong, but he noticed the way I carried myself - you could tell that I was strong. So, that was why he hired me.

**Ok well, enough fun. It's time for me to get to work. How old are you, and how long have you been training for strength sports and competing in powerlifting?**

I'm thirty-five, and I've been strength training since I was about thirty-two.

**What weight classes and federations do you compete in?**

I compete in the super heavyweight class which is anything over 198 lbs.

**What are your best lifts? Competition and in the gym?**

**Competition**

- Squat w/wraps - 578.5 lbs.
- Squat w/sleeves - 535 lbs.
- Bench - 356.5 lbs.
- Deadlift - 527 lbs.
- Total - 1420.5 lbs.

**Gym**

- Squat - 585 lbs.
- Bench - 356.5 lbs.
- Deadlift - 540 lbs.

**You grew up in the gym with your dad who was a football coach and personal trainer. Who did he coach for? Did he coach at the high school or college level?**

He coached at the high school level. He coached football, but I'm sure he coached more sports than this - he also coached track.

**You were a track athlete. Is that**



**how you got into it [having a dad who coached track]?**

Yes, that is how I got into track. I did discus and shot put, and in college, I added the hammer to it.

**What were some of your numbers in track?**

In discus, in high school, I think it was 131 or 132 feet or something like that - I was a state champion during my senior year. In regards to shot put, I got up to 36 or 37 feet. It wasn't really something I enjoyed doing too much. I was built to shot put, but I loved the discus. I didn't pick up the hammer until I was in college at the University of Georgia. I don't remem-

ber my numbers - everything was in meters back then. It might've been close to forty meters, or it could've been a little more, give or take. I know that I'm still on their website in the Top Ten. I don't even know how I'm still there, but I am. That was something I just picked up like, "Oh, this is fun". My coach there was Don Babbitt - he's a world renowned Olympic throws coach, and he's extremely meticulous. He wanted me to be exclusively hammer throw. He saw the potential in me, but I was stubborn. I didn't really flourish that much in college. I tried to, but I ended up transferring to Clayton State University. They were just starting a track program, and



it was fun to be part of a program that was just beginning. I like being a part of new things, and I kind of get the chance to help build it. So, I did the hammer, discus, and shot put for them, and up until recently, I held their records until another remarkable young lady took them. Then I went through what I like to call my twenties and didn't return to any kind of athletics until recently.

**Hammer thrower, Amanda Bingson, was selected as one of the ESPN cover models for the 2015 Body Issue. I realize that we're still talking about a naked picture of a woman. However, given that she's not the stereotypical size two fitness model, do you think this indicates greater acceptance of female athletes based upon accomplishments rather than how much skin they show on Instagram?**

I think this demonstrates that popular media sources are starting to understand the power they have to influence the world around them. With that power comes a responsibility to showcase a more accurate representation of an athlete's form as it pertains to their sport. In other words, strength female athletes who are strong will look strong. I told

someone the other day that I want to leave a legacy, not a good butt picture, but I definitely wouldn't mind both if I could swing it! I'm a big fan of Amanda!

**Piggybacking off of that, in powerlifting, some have been critical of the fact that oftentimes, less accomplished female powerlifters get more recognition because they may look good in a bikini, or they may post certain pictures on Instagram. On the other hand, some of the less aesthetic counterparts, who may have accomplished more, are ignored. Do you care to comment on that?**

In general, female powerlifters who are accepted as attractive get more attention than a female powerlifter who is my size. However, that is not to say that they don't have a right to use that to their advantage, nor does it detract from their accomplishments as a female powerlifter, if they have any [accomplishments] to speak of. Shana Miller (formerly Ratcliff), Hannah Johnson, and Gillian Ward are all absolutely beautiful women who work hard, give back to their community, and have earned every single sponsorship or powerlifting achievement they have! If a woman

can push her image to overshadow her accomplishments as a lifter, then that's what she should do if it makes her happy.

**With your track and field background, have you ever tried the Highland Games?**

Yes, I have. I did very well. I was late for my very first Highland Game. I was doing the heavyweight throw for distance, and I almost broke the world record!

**That seems like a pretty good way to start!**

I think it's been expanded since then because that was almost a decade ago, but that allowed me to take three more attempts. That's how it worked, at least back then. They let you take more attempts if you win your event. So I've only competed in three [Highland Games], and I won all of the Games I've competed in.

**So, you had a chance to turn pro in that, right? It's not like powerlifting - I mean, they pay for you to travel and everything.**

I don't know if that's available for women. It might be now, but back then, it was kind of hard to get women to do it. It's a lot more prominent on the West Coast. It's something I would love to do again though.

**You're friends with Becca Swanson. Who are some other powerlifters from the seventies and eighties, arguably powerlifting's Golden Era that you've met and interacted with?**

Well, when I got into powerlifting, I went as far back as Becca Swanson and Laura Phelps. I mean, Laura Phelps is young, but she was one [Golden Era powerlifter]. Jill Mills - she's probably the one I looked to for correct advice. I just wanted to emulate her - she's well-rounded, very real, and she has a great work ethic. Again, I didn't start learning names in powerlifting until recently. I'd just see somebody and admire them without a name.

**One man in your life, your husband and coach, Kyle, is also a pretty strong powerlifter. Do you all have a**

**friendly competition to see who will total more in meets?**

Oh! All of the time!

**Who's winning so far?**

Well, he is. We're evenly matched on the bench. He has quite a few joint issues, so I take advantage of that [laughter].

**Let's talk about how your training is structured. Kyle does your programming and Nathan King, owner of GritHouse Gym, handles nutrition for you both. Is that right?**

Yes.

**How do the two of them work together? Do you all pick a goal together, and then they put together a training and nutrition plan for the month? For instance, currently, you're trying to lose fat, so are you making your strength training work around the nutrition?**

Nathan gives me a meal plan that he thinks will work for me. We found I can handle less calories when I follow a nutrition plan that includes more protein and less carbs. However, I do better with more protein, more fat. He will add things or take things away as he thinks I need it. If my weight loss is slowing down, we might take something away. Lately, I've been tired before lifting, especially when it comes to squats and deadlifts. So, we've added in something like a banana, for example. We adjust it as we go along.

**How's the weight loss going? I know that you had what seemed to be some unscientific information posted on Facebook about using farting to burn fat. I hope that experiment is over, or that you'll at least on hold for the duration of this interview.**

I'll refrain [laughter].

**I mean, I'm not trying to hold you back...but I'm trying to hold you back.**

It's going pretty well [the weight loss]. Since my APC [American Powerlifting Committee] meet, which was about two months ago, I've lost thirty-two pounds to be exact. I haven't weighed myself in about a week, but my measurements



are the least they've been since I started training at the Grit House. That's more or less what we're going by. The hardest adjustment hasn't been strength - it's been leverages. In regards to the squat, I have a much narrower stance now [due to the weight loss]. As for the bench, I have a much higher arch - I touch at a different spot. Deadlifting just feels better altogether. So, deadlifts are just coming into place nicely, but regarding the other two lifts, I have to make adjustments. Nothing that's impossible to overcome though.

**Strength athletes don't normally try to lose weight unless they're about to retire, or they want to compete in a different weight class. So, which is it for you?**

I want to be healthier, and I'm definitely not trying to go to a different weight class. I plan to always be super heavyweight. The weight loss is really just to improve the quality of my day-to-day life. During my last meet, I could really see how I didn't have the conditioning for the end of the meet - I just wasn't in good shape. As long as I can get my conditioning and nutrition in line, then the weight loss is just a plus. Yes, it makes the fat come off, however, it's really just to improve my athletic performance.

**It seems now that raw lifting is becoming more popular. A lot of powerlifters are starting to use body-**

**building in the off-season. Is this the approach you guys are taking?**

That's what we did this time. Last year, I finished school and my goal was just to compete. I think we threw one or two extra meets in, and that kind of slowed down the conditioning work that I wanted to get in. We learned a lot from that, and we now know the importance of conditioning for me. It's just that I want to be a more well-rounded athlete. I used to play softball and basketball in addition to track, and not that I'll ever get to that again, but I would like to do strongman, which does require a lot of conditioning.

**Well, you recently did your first strongman competition. You're planning on doing another one in March. Do you plan to become a multi-sport athlete, or is it just a way for you to get a break from powerlifting?**

For one thing, it's just good conditioning. It makes me move more - I feel more like a well-rounded athlete by doing multiple sports. In a way, the training for strength sports is primarily powerlifting-based, so it allows me to do both [powerlifting and strongman], but it also allows me to change it up, and to see what I can do.

**That makes sense. What are your favorite assistance exercises for the competition lifts? Let's start with the squat.**

I recently discovered pause squatting

because I like to pause squat anyway in competition.

**What a show off!**

It's not a great habit in competition, but it's a wonderful tool to use whenever you're training. I just like doing it. I feel like I could take a break at the bottom of a squat.

**So, it makes you feel more explosive coming out of the hole?**

Exactly.

**What about the bench?**

I love playing around with dumbbells. They're kind of fun, and they help me work on my weaknesses. For example, my left side was really weak. There were some other issues – for instance, I wasn't keeping my elbows tucked in, but doing dumbbell work brought these weaknesses to the surface. It's all about stability.

**What about upper back work? Do you like doing that?**

Well, actually, I've done a little bit with Nathan, and that's kind of new. I've never really done anything other than deadlifts to do upper back work.

**I know that you recently started pulling sumo. Is that to support your conventional deadlift, or are you making a permanent switch?**

Actually, I started out lifting conventional. Then when I started competing, I switched to sumo because I thought it would take some pressure off of my back. Now, I'm switching back to conventional, but I've never really pulled heavy with it. I do plan on sticking with conventional because it feels more natural.

**So, you're still trying to figure out what's best for you. What assistance exercises are you doing as you work through this process?**

It's harder for me, but it's easier for Kyle [to coach] because he pulls conventional so he knows exactly what to do. We've been doing deficit pulls, which I do very well. Since I pull rather high hip, I do stiff-legged deficit pulls. We have thought about getting some help from Steve Goggins because he's a great deadlifter, and I think there's a lot that I can learn from him. Last night, we did rack pulls below the knees. This is my

weak point when it comes to conventional deadlifting.

**Do you deload after meets, or are you one of those people who has to get right back into the gym?**

Oh no! I have taken a week off.

**Completely from the gym?**

Yes and no. We've played around with taking a break. Usually I'm so busy that I don't have a whole lot of time, but I still try to stay busy. I'll try to do a lot of stretching – I'll try to get massages during that time because it makes it worse going back to the gym if I don't do anything.

**What about during training? What things do you like to do to improve recovery between sessions?**

Massages have helped me a lot. I have a lot of pinched nerves. I always have one in my left leg – I have a few in my upper back, which can make it difficult to lift. I find that it hurts the most in the bench press, but chiropractic helps a little bit. I find that deep tissue massage is just better. It helps me recover more quickly.

**Where is the one place that you want to compete in geographically?**

I'd love to compete in Australia. It looks beautiful. I don't know if I would do well, but I'd love to make the trip.

**You and your husband do some online coaching. Is this something you both want to do full-time?**

That would be awesome. I've always wanted to coach high school athletes in softball, basketball, and track. Basically, I'd love to coach the sports that I did.

**The last two questions are a little more personal. I saw you get really emotional when you found out that a little girl was inspired by seeing you in your strongman competition. Is being a role model part of your motivation for competing?**

It's probably ninety-nine percent of it. When I say ninety-nine, of course, one percent of it is my husband and I. More or less, it's because I picture myself as being that little girl and wanting to have [a strong female role model] when I was younger. I didn't always have that, so the fact that I can be that for someone, especially a young girl, it's the reason

why I do it.

**For Thanksgiving, you smashed three pumpkins during a Facebook video in order to bring awareness to the problems of drug addiction and mental illness. Do you care to elaborate on why those issues mean so much to you?**

Those are things that I've been through. December 24, 2009 was the last time I used drugs, and from about 2005 to 2009, I just didn't celebrate holidays. I just couldn't tell you what days the holidays were on. Even thereafter, I really didn't [celebrate] because my life seemed to be one tragedy after another. Even after I got clean, it just seemed to be a far-fetched dream to be normal and want to celebrate. The other day, I was asked at work, "If you could do anything in the world, what would you do?" and I said, "I'm doing it". Before, I never would have answered that question in that way. We didn't get to carve the pumpkin, but we got to be together. We got to buy the pumpkin, and even though my husband was very ill, we were together. So, it didn't matter if I got to carve them like I nagged him about doing – it didn't matter. What mattered was that we were there, and so I decided to smash them.

**Sam, you're an amazing role model and athlete. It has been a pleasure talking to you. Where can people follow your training or go to learn more about you?**

We can be found on Facebook as Samantha Joelle DiBois Coleman or Kyle Coleman. I also have a fan page where people can follow my training: <https://www.facebook.com/SamanthaDiBois-Coleman/>

We just created a Facebook group designed to have more interaction with the public. We are training several athletes in a private group and have found this to be the best platform to do so: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1666377610280019/>

Instagram: @colemanstrong

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# Going Raw with **BRETT GIBBS**

BY HANI JAZAYRLI

**HANI:** Brett, thanks for doing this interview. I know the readers of POWER Magazine are excited to hear about you.

**BRETT:** It's an awesome opportunity. I'm honored and excited to give all of you an insight into my life of powerlifting.

**Hani:** Let's pretend for a minute that the majority of our readers don't know who you are. Describe the last two years of your powerlifting achievements so that we can have some context.

**BRETT:** Nothing short of life changing! It has been an amazing two years. 2014 was the year that I truly embraced raw lifting and set goals to achieve.

I remember texting a friend who wished me well before heading to the IPF Junior World Championships in South Africa in June of 2014. He was asking about my goals for the meet, and I said to him, with complete confidence, that I wanted the Open Squat and Total World Record along with the Junior Deadlift World Record – this is exactly what I did. I received the Best Junior Overall Lifter, which is something I never could have imagined, especially after finishing eleventh in 2011 at the Worlds in Canada [when I was] down a weight class.

I came to 2015 as an open age lifter, setting goals to win the World Championships in Finland and to chase the elusive 800kg total. I had a great first meet of the year in Australia, further increasing my numbers to total 785kg, just three months before Worlds. I had a disappointing day in Finland, finishing second to Jose Castillo who later failed his drug test. I got promoted to first, though it still felt like second to me, even though I was playing by the rules.

Finland left me in a position where I needed to rethink everything and clean up my technical efficiency. I teamed up with a good friend of mine, JP Cauchi (@5strong) and set a goal to compete at one more event for the year in Perth, Australia. I had a great training cycle and went 9/9 to total 800.5kg with the single lifts being: Squat - 285kg; Bench - 205.5kg, and Deadlift -310kg. The squat, bench press, and total were all World Records.





It has been a very satisfying two years of powerlifting in the IPF.

**HANI:** With that context in mind, in one sentence, tell me what it takes to make a world champion.

**BRETT:** I am obsessed with my goals; I don't let anything stop me from doing what I need to get done.

**HANI:** Do you have your eyes on any particular records with the upcoming IPF Classic World Championship? I'll be honest - I'm expecting to see a stellar performance!

**BRETT:** I don't really look at the records anymore. I'm looking into untouched drug free numbers. The building phase that I have been doing lately has the World Championships in mind. Yes, I plan to go for a total of 855kg, which consists of a 305kg squat, 229kg bench, and 330kg deadlift. Some of you may be thinking that this is a crazy increase. In my last peaking cycle, which was in December of 2015, I did a mock meet in the gym where I was

"I LOVE RAW LIFTING. IT'S REAL. I CAN SPEAK CONFIDENTLY ABOUT WHAT I DO - I CAN ACTUALLY TELL SOMEONE WHAT I CAN SQUAT AND BENCH, AND I DON'T HAVE TO FOLLOW IT UP WITH A BLURB ABOUT EQUIPMENT"

around 86kg bodyweight. I hit a 300kg squat, 207.5kg bench, and 320kg deadlift, all on competition gear. I think big.

**HANI:** Among your laundry list of achievements, which one do you consider to be your proudest and most

dearly held?

**BRETT:** That's a great question, and it's so hard to answer. For me, there was something special about winning that title in 2014 in South Africa. I had so much support - I blew everyone in my class away and exceeded what I thought I would do.

**HANI:** How long have you been participating in powerlifting, raw and otherwise?

**BRETT:** I have a folder at home in New Zealand where I have almost every certificate from the competitions. I remember that my first competition was in June of 2008 at Powerhouse Gym in Wellington. I lifted raw, and I was hooked from that day on.

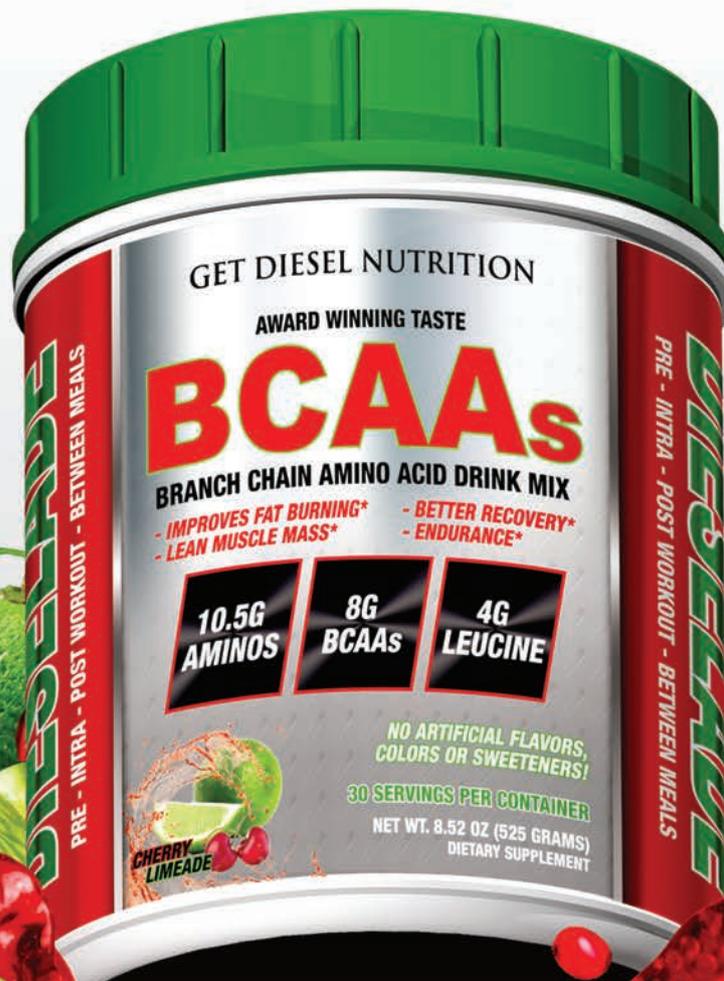
**HANI:** A lot of people might not be aware that you crossed over from equipped lifting [to raw] not that long ago. What made you decide to make the switch?

**BRETT:** I'd had enough of the long sessions, buying gear, telling people

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about the gear, people seeing videos of my squatting 300+kg etc.- it's just all crap. I was so thrown off of it by the time raw had really started to make its way in. I set a goal very early on, which was to get the 83kg Junior Squat World Record (355kg). This is the real reason that I went to my last equipped meet in 2014 where I was successful in achieving that mentioned goal. I love raw lifting. It's real. I can speak confidently about what I do - I can actually tell someone what I can squat and bench, and I don't have to follow it up with a blurb about equipment [laughter].

**HANI:** Do you come from any kind of team sport or traditional athletic background?

**"I ENJOY THE STRESS TAKEN AWAY FROM MYSELF WHEN IT COMES TO MY OWN LIFTING. WHEN I RUN MY OWN NUMBERS, I CAN GET CAUGHT UP IN THINKING THINGS LIKE, "WAS THAT FAST ENOUGH?" OR "NO, I AM TOO SORE TODAY TO HIT THAT" AND OTHER SIMILAR THOUGHTS"**

**BRETT:** I have played many sports. The team sports I have played are rugby and soccer. Individual sports/hobbies that I have also played are golf (2 handicap), surfing, skateboarding, and skiing - those are some that I can think of. I still love to play any of those individual sports/hobbies when I get a chance.

**HANI:** What got you into powerlifting in the first place?

**BRETT:** So, as you saw above, I was into skateboarding. Mostly skating in a bowl, doing jumps, and carving up - just like I was surfing on concrete. One day, I was showing off a new move where I would jump over the spine of the half pipe; I fell back and shattered my right humerus bone (bicep bone).

After breaking it again two months later while throwing a javelin at school – yes, you read that correctly – I was referred to a physio who sent me to the gym in order to grow some muscle. After one year of ‘bro’ training, some powerlifters spotted me and asked me to train with them, which is exactly what I did. It all took off from there. A big shout out to Bevan, Spike, and Tony – the original Wai Weight crew.

**HANI:** What do you do for work? I know I’ve seen that you’re now a part of a business with Gold Signature Coaching, but I’m not quite sure aside from that.

**BRETT:** I left New Zealand towards the end of 2015, where I worked as a personal banker at the Bank of New Zealand for three years. The reason that I left NZ and moved to Canada was to start Gold Signature Coaching. I had to be in the country to get the company started, which is what I did. Gold Signature coaching is my only job as of right now.

**HANI:** On the note of Gold Signature Coaching, what sets your team apart from the other options that are available for the many novice, intermediate, and advanced powerlifters out there seeking guidance?

**BRETT:** Josh Hancott and I are the founders of the company. We were discussing this many months before launching in late 2015. We had a vision that two world champions in the IPF could work together to help other powerlifters achieve their goals. No other online powerlifting business can say that they have two world champions from the IPF handling their program. With almost ten years of experience in lifting myself, I have learned a lot along the way. Right now, GSC is focused on powerlifting – this is not the end for us though. We are looking to expand into nutrition, contest prep, and rehabilitation as a part of the value with working under GSC. Again, I don’t know of any other company doing this right now. We are the future of online coaching in the industry.

**HANI:** Do you do your own coaching or do you have someone keep an eye on you from the outside? Why do you opt for one over the other?

**BRETT:** I go through phases. Most of the time, I run my own programs, which

I either create [myself] or I create a spilt and train it intuitively. I have a good friend, JP Cauchi, who I always discuss numbers and movements with. He is a genius as well as a 100% top bloke. I worked with him for my competition peak leading into The Arnold.

I enjoy the stress taken away from myself when it comes to my own lifting. When I run my own numbers, I can get caught up in thinking things like, “Was that fast enough?” or “No, I am too sore today to hit that” and other similar

thoughts. When I work with JP, I get the numbers, and I get it done. I would never let him down by not getting the job done.

**HANI:** If you could give one detailed piece of training advice that is specific to all of the lifters out there, what would it be?

**BRETT:** I see so many people trying to overthink everything these days. Do not get caught up in the minute details. Progress is made with passion and the mentality that no matter what, if you



work hard, you will get better.

**HANI:** Do you feel that your mentality and motivation level play a big role in your success?

**BRETT:** 100%. If you have the best program - the best "genetics" along with a weak mentality - you will not be any good. My mentality towards my lifting is one of the main reasons that I am lifting what I lift now.

**HANI:** How do you approach each of your training sessions from a mental standpoint?

**BRETT:** I need to always have a goal in mind. If I have the program written for a set period, I just approach each workout for what it is. I will always

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WAY UP TO THE TOP  
OF THE TEMPLE"

know what I need to achieve that day well before I get to the gym so I can visualize how I can get it done!

**HANI:** How do you keep yourself motivated?

**BRETT:** I have never lacked motivation, and I most certainly don't look to others for it. I set my goals so high, and I am still so far away from being close to them. It is these goals that I am always striving for that have kept me pushing well past what others originally thought I was capable of.

**HANI:** Let's talk more specifically about your training. Without giving away your secrets, tell us what a standard week looks like. Don't



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**spare us any details here!**

**BRETT:** Well, as we all know, with many years of training under one's belt, each year looks so much different than the previous [one]. Right now, being at the higher end of the talent in the 83kg class, I am training quite specifically to what we do in powerlifting.

Let's have a look at my last prep for the Arnold Pro Raw challenge:

**Monday** - high bar squats and board press

**Tuesday** - competition squats and Spoto press

**Wednesday** - competition bench press and light deadlifts

**Thursday** - front squats and "feet up" bench press

**Friday** - incline press and dumbbell press with triceps pumps

**Saturday** - competition squats, deadlifts, and glutes

**Sunday** - OFF

**HANI:** How do you feel about assistance lifts? What are your favorites?

**BRETT:** I am all for assistance lifts. I look at the selection of assistance lifts a bit like a temple. You imagine that the bottom of the temple has every exercise we could possibly think of, and right at the top is just the squat, bench, and deadlift. So, as we move from the bottom to the top, the movements become more specific to the movements at the top. I see beginner lifters needing to spend a lot of time at the bottom, and as we build the base work and start to get stronger and stronger, we slowly move our way up to the top of the temple.

My favorite assistance exercises are front squats, dumbbell presses, close grip pressing, and any rowing movement.

**HANI:** What do you do to prevent stalling on the big three lifts?

**BRETT:** Why would I stall if I am not at the desired destination? I put in more and more effort and reset mini targets to hit. I don't really change anything as far as programming - I just change my mindset towards the number on the bar.

**HANI:** If at all, how does your training change as you get closer to a competition?

**BRETT:** Well, I'm either running a

**"THE FUTURE HOLDS MANY WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP WINS FOR ME, COUNTLESS WORLD RECORDS AND NUMBERS NEVER THOUGHT POSSIBLE AT SUB 100KG BODYWEIGHT. I WILL GO DOWN AS ONE OF THE GREATEST IN IPF HISTORY. I WANT TO BUILD GSC EVERY SINGLE YEAR SO THAT WE CAN REALLY BE IN A POSITION TO START GIVING BACK"**

peaking cycle, or I am training off-season. As we set out a peaking block, we are always seeing basic things like high volume, a set frequency, and lower intensity. As we get closer to a meet, the frequency remains the same.

**HANI:** Have you been through any serious injuries? What did you do to get through them?

**BRETT:** I have actually been very lucky. I had a partial pec, bicep, and triceps tear all at once which was caused by poor scapula position due to internal rotation on my right shoulder. I saw a physio straight away, had scans done, and I was prescribed external rotation exercises, scapular positioning drills, and had to have six weeks off of the bench press. It was really the best thing that ever happened to me - I learned so much, and I really look after my shoulders now.

**HANI:** What do you do in terms of your nutrition? Do you follow an "IIFYM" [If It Fits Your Macros] protocol? Or do you follow something stricter or perhaps something less strict?

**BRETT:** I follow the "Wing'N'It" diet. This basically consists of chicken

wings with "double ugly" sauce. It really is a game changer and has proven to deliver in the gym. But seriously, I have only followed any sort of diet for a period of time when I worked with Joey Zinghini - we counted macros accordingly, monitored body weight daily and had monthly photo updates. I felt that the benefits from this diet were not enough to continue doing it, but maybe it is something that I will do if I really need to be careful with my weight.

**HANI:** What does the future hold for you?

**BRETT:** The future holds many world championship wins for me, countless world records and numbers never thought possible at sub 100kg bodyweight. I will go down as one of the greatest in IPF history. I want to build GSC every single year so that we can really be in a position to start giving back. Eventually, I want to join forces with the IPF in order to help expand their reach and grow the sport of powerlifting so that we don't have world champions paying out of their own pocket to go and defend their titles.

**HANI:** Now, onto something a little more light-hearted. What would your perfect weekend look like?

**BRETT:** Blue sky, good friends, and a few drinks is always a good place to start. I love getting out and being active when the sun is shining. Playing a round of golf, going for a surf, and shooting some fish all come to mind when I think about the perfect weekend! This would have to take place in Hawaii.

**HANI:** How about your favorite food?

**BRETT:** Chicken wings. I love them. I wish I could eat them every day!

**HANI:** Where can we find you online?

**BRETT:** Instagram and YouTube are the main platforms that I use to show my lifting through.

**Instagram** - bg\_waiweight

**YouTube** - just search Brett Gibbs and subscribe to my channel

**Facebook** - Brett Gibbs Powerlifting

**HANI:** A big thanks from all of us at POWER Magazine for taking the time to do this interview. Good luck in your upcoming competitive year! **PM**



# TRAINING FOR DURABILITY WITH MIKE TUCHSCHERER



**P**owerlifting is getting more and more competitive. This fact is so obvious that even the local village idiot can see it. Now, there are more competitors than ever, and they're competing at higher and higher levels. Plus, with the increasing ease-of-access to good coaching and solid training information, everyone is raising their game. So, how do you compete [with these new lifters]? The same way we always have – focus on what you have control over and get as strong as you possibly can.

I've written before about how I struggled [at the beginning of my powerlifting career] around mid-year in 2014. I trained myself until I'd developed a hamstring tendinopathy that prevented me from doing much squatting or deadlifting. It took me a long time to get that under control. In the latter half of 2014, my son was born. Then, in early 2015, we moved back to Colorado from Italy. If you think that getting settled into a new city is tough – try [moving to] a new continent!

Due to all of that, we were well into 2015, and it was time for me to get my training together. All of these previous life events aren't really excuses. I don't owe powerlifting any excuses and nobody would even care if they were. However, they are all things that happened, and as a result, my strength was down quite a bit. I still wasn't fully healthy either, but I was improving.



My first competition in 2015 was the IPF Raw World Championships. Not exactly what you want for a relatively untrained contest, but I still managed to place fourth overall. That total - it was my worst total since I'd hung up my bench shirt. I'd come a long way from being so untrained in late 2014/early 2015, but I still had a long way to go.

The training was working though, so I kept most of it the same as I prepared for the next competition - USAPL Raw Nationals in October 2015, and it kept working. With the additional time, things were going really well as this competition closed in. I was even hoping to take a shot at some world record lifts. Then, about two weeks out from the competition, I sprained a ligament in my back. I was able to get in shape in time to compete, which is a blessing in itself, but I lost a lot off the top of my lifts, especially in regards to my squat and deadlift. My total was much better than the total at the Raw World Championship a few months prior, but it still wasn't where it needed to be in order to reach the top levels in today's much more competitive powerlifting scene.

#### **My Training Template throughout mid-2015:**

##### **Monday**

**Competition Squat:** Single (up to 8 or 9 RPE [Rate of Perceived Exertion]), then volume work (65-85% for 6-9 sets)

Competition Bench: Single (up to 8 or 9 RPE), then volume work (80-95% for 6-9 sets)

Military Press: 5-6 sets of 8-12 reps (7-8 RPE)

##### **Tuesday**

**Competition Deadlift:** Single (up to 8 or 9 RPE), then volume work (65-85% for 6-9 sets)

**3ct [count] Pause Bench:** Single at 8 RPE followed by 3-4 sets of 3-5 reps (up to 9 RPE)

**Split Squats:** 5-6 sets of 8-12 reps (7-8 RPE)

##### **Thursday**

**2ct Pause Squat:** Single at 8 RPE followed by 3-4 sets of 3-5 reps (up to 9 RPE)



**Bench Press:** 4-5 sets of 8-12 reps (up to 10 RPE)

**Feet Up Bench:** 4-5 sets of 5-8 reps (up to 8 RPE)

##### **Friday**

**2" Deficit Deadlift:** Single at 8 RPE followed by 3-4 sets of 3-5 reps (up to 9 RPE)

**2Board Press:** Single at 8 RPE followed by 3-4 sets of 3-5 reps (up to 9 RPE)

**Snatch Grip SLDL:** 3-4 sets of 10-12 reps (8 or 9 RPE)

*\*\*\*For more information on RPE-based training, see articles.Reactive-TrainingSystems.com*

*\*\*\*This is only an example. The exercises changed slightly, as did the volumes and intensities.*

After USAPL Raw Nationals last October, I took some time to get myself healthy and more durable. During the last training block and at the competition, my hamstring injury started flaring up again. Also, the back sprain needed to be dealt with in a more long-term way. I needed to be able to tolerate the heavy training. Doing what I needed to do resulted in a notable strength

reduction, though not terrible. Besides, this is a small price to pay to be able to tolerate the workloads required to produce outstanding results.

Since my late-2015 restoration and hypertrophy blocks, I've been back to training very similarly to the previous template. The main difference is that instead of all of the volume work being concentrated into a single session, it's now distributed throughout the training week. This has left me feeling fresher, and it has still provided me with a very good return on my training investment. I've had no injuries so far, and this is the healthiest I've felt in a long time. Only time will tell if this change in mentality and methodology will result in PR's [Personal Records] or not.

This may seem like a bit of a long-winded history, but there are some key takeaways for you to apply to your own training:

- Be proactive and assertive in any injury recovery process. Do what you can to maintain [your strength], even though the tendency is to feel sorry for yourself. Hindsight is 20/20, so benefit from mine. If you get hurt, find something to do that helps you maintain your strength and size. Even if it's just

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a little bit, it will result in less work that you will have to do after you heal up in order to make up lost ground.

- Do what you can to maintain durability. This is so overlooked with all kinds of lifters trying so hard to figure out how to be bad asses that they forget to figure out how to stick around long enough for “bad assery” to happen. I personally overlooked this for a long time because I never had an issue. There is a lot that happens in life that isn’t trained through powerlifting. Make sure you’re doing some pulling movements for the upper body (no, deadlifts probably aren’t enough). Make sure you’re doing some rotational movements and some single leg stuff, too. Maintain your athleticism for as long as you can. It helps you tolerate the workloads required to be a really good powerlifter.

- Put in some volume work. Progress always picks up when you’re pushing down plenty of volume at an appropriate intensity. It’s excellent practice to improve your technique. It is the foundation of building muscle mass.

It even improves your strength on its own just by virtue of the fact that you’re practicing producing high force output. It doesn’t have to be bone-grindingly hard to be effective. In fact, if each set is a bit lower in RPE, then it’s easier to recover from. This means that you will be able to tolerate even more volume!

- Use RPE to adjust your training. This helps you match the pace that your body is at right now. This is especially important when you are getting strong at a rapid pace. What often happens on a fixed percentage program is that the lifter gets stronger than the program expected him or her to get. As a result, the program gets too easy in order for the lifter to see continued rapid results. With an RPE based program, the adjustment happens automatically.

- Progress is made over months and lost in weeks. Be diligent and don’t lose focus. Sometimes, your motivation to train will decline. Everybody deals with it from time to time. The key is to keep training even when you feel crappy and just want to watch Netflix and

eat pizza. If you do really need to take some time off, continue to do something so that you aren’t just regressing at break-neck speed.

- Taking a period of training time to focus on improving your durability is smart. Doing the same thing for hypertrophy sets you up for future progress. Again, this is something I neglected for a while, and it was to my detriment. Now, this is a much more significant portion of the training programs that I write for myself, as well as my lifters. We’re seeing improvements already, and we expect the trend will continue.

You never know what the future holds, but there are plenty of good things in store. These strategies are working for me. They have worked for several of our lifters, including Liz Craven (who has the highest Wilks score in all of Powerlifting Australia) and Laddie Gibson (who won the world championship, then improved his total by 40kg for his very next competition – as a Masters lifter). I hope that you too can take something away from it and improve your training results this year! **PM**

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# STRENGTH

## A Longevity Approach

BY MATT WENNING

M.S. SPORTS BIOMECHANICS  
MULTIPLE WORLD RECORD LIFTER

**I**n my 23 years of training weights, I have learned a lot about discipline, desire, drive, and a willingness to succeed in not only lifting, but in life. As many may find it hard to believe, I was not the strongest kid in school – actually, I was far from it. My first few years of development in the weight room were tough due to my multiple leg fractures as a child. These ended up being a blessing in disguise.

I learned early on that I was going to have to work harder, and more importantly, work smarter than others if I wanted to succeed. I realized at the age of 14–15 that I was going to have to last a long time since I wasn't a lifting star right out of the gate. The only way I was going to reach my goals in lifting was if I was willing to work many years perfecting my craft.

Let's face it – not one of us is going to be making a million dollars powerlifting, nor become famous to the average person, so training like a dumbass (which seems popular these days) is probably not in your best interest. The lifter that walks away with the biggest numbers and the fewest amounts of injuries is the winner.

There are some big tips that I've learned along the way. In sharing this article, I'm hoping that I can keep you from hitting plateaus. At 36 years old, and with a 2205 raw total with no wraps, I'm still getting stronger and smarter by following these rules.

### **RULE 1: Train Smarter, Not Harder**

Do what it takes to get better – not an ounce more. Most times, in my past personal programs, I left a training session feeling beat up and sore for days, if not weeks. Being sore and beat up is not a good indicator of a good workout – making progress in tri-monthly waves is. We all want to achieve our personal bests or some other record, but timing may be crucial to your success in the long term. This means that you need to be cautious in taking over your best meet maxes in the gym – even if you feel awesome that day. No one cares what you do in the gym.

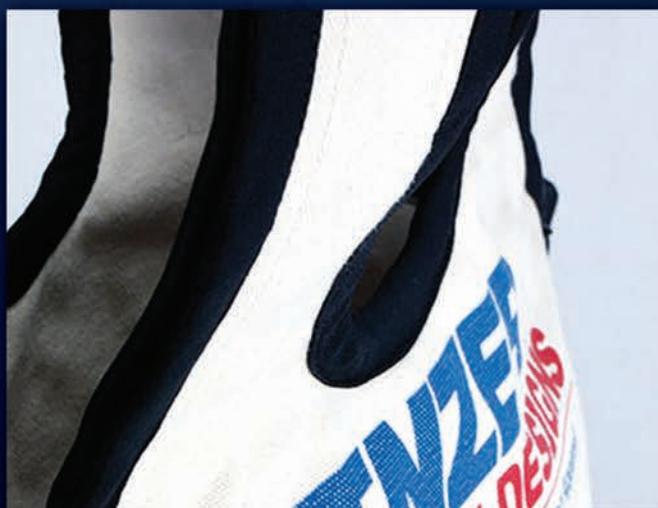


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Bench set up with 3 chains so one link will be on the ground at lockout.



In order to bench 611 lbs. like I did in this last meet, I actually did less work than previous years to get there. One of the key ingredients was to have my speed work lighter and not heavier. To bench 611 lbs., I only used 185-200 lbs. [when training] in weight (plus bands and or chains). When I benched 606 lbs. the previous year, I had my weight over 225 lbs. As you can see, I got stronger by doing less and maybe that's what you need too.

Optimal programs should keep the body guessing at all times, and they should be filled with tons of different exercises to stimulate new growth. This may also mean that certain bars and positions will inhibit you from lifting your max weight (which is a good thing). I use positions and bars etc. that actually make me train at a deficit because the only day I want to feel awesome is on competition day. This leads me into my next rule...

**“OPTIMAL PROGRAMS SHOULD KEEP THE BODY GUESSING AT ALL TIMES, AND THEY SHOULD BE FILLED WITH TONS OF DIFFERENT EXERCISES TO STIMULATE NEW GROWTH. THIS MAY ALSO MEAN THAT CERTAIN BARS AND POSITIONS WILL INHIBIT YOU FROM LIFTING YOUR MAX WEIGHT (WHICH IS A GOOD THING)”**

**RULE 2: Attack Your Weak Points - STOP DOING SH\*T YOU'RE GOOD AT!**

Weak points are the key to a person's long-term success. This means that if you have a weak lower back, eventually, the lower back will limit your progress. This is the issue with using programs that attack only the major lifts and do not include any accessories or have limited accessory work. The strengths will overpower the multi-joint movement and hide the weak points until something is so imbalanced that it breaks. For most lifters, this is a quadriceps to posterior chain imbalance of some sort (lower body).

I look at this obstacle like a chain - a chain is only as strong as its weakest link. It doesn't matter if a few links can hold 10,000 lbs. - if the last link holds 100 lbs. then the chain holds 100 lbs.

**THE SQUAT:** I can work on my quads until I'm blue in the face, but if

my back cannot hold the weight that I attempt to lift, the lift will not be performed. At my last meet, I squatted 865 lbs. in a belt! In order to achieve this feat, I had to do tons of work for my lower back and hamstrings to balance out my anterior chain (quads).

**THE BENCH:** When I first started learning to bench on my own, as most of us do, I trained as if the bench press was a pectoral and shoulder builder more so than arms. This led my form down a sh\*tty path and caused me to experience constant shoulder pain. As I learned later on in my career when I was working with the legend George Halbert (twelve times world record holder in the bench), my technique was terrible.

At 20 years old, he explained to me that my triceps were garbage, and that I needed to bring them up to par with the rest of my upper body. Instead of taking that information with a grain of salt, I was tired of being stuck at a 500 lb. bench, so I decided to give his ideas a try (since at that time, he was benching well over 600 lbs. raw at 230 lbs.



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bodyweight). So I switched my training protocol for upper body to be predominantly triceps and upper back work. After applying this system, in about twelve to fifteen months, I was in the 545 lb. range. Then, four to five years later, [I made] a steady progression to the 600 lb. range. What's my point?

My point is that my limitation was my triceps, and it was screwing my form royally. Once I addressed this weak point, the lift started to move upward (keeping in mind that I was stuck at the 500 lb. range for two years). If I back off of my dominant triceps training, my pecs will take over in a matter of weeks - even at this stage of my career. So even though I was taught to use pecs and to do tons of front raises in order to build the bench, I learned and evolved, as did my numbers.

**RULE 3: Be Adjustable With Your Training**

Programs are not meant to be set in

**"PROGRAMS ARE NOT MEANT TO BE SET IN STONE - THEY ARE JUST GUIDELINES. THIS MEANS THAT IF YOU AREN'T LOOKING AT THE BIG PICTURE THEN YOU COULD ACTUALLY BE MAKING YOURSELF WORSE, NOT BETTER, BY DESTROYING YOUR BODY IN THE GYM"**

stone - they are just guidelines. This means that if you aren't looking at the big picture then you could actually be making yourself worse, not better, by destroying your body in the gym.

That's why I base most of my weeks of training on RPE (Rate of Perceived Exertion) versus a certain number that I have to hit. As my business grows, contracts come up for the military, and more clients need my help - I only have so much energy in the day. It's all based on what energy you have left without over-stressing the body.

This means that if your job, family life, etc. are stressful, chances are your lifting is suffering immensely. If you're completely destroyed after work then adjust your training! If your wife caught you looking at porn, then maybe back off the bench a little bit (not that I'm into that or anything!). My point is that the less stressful environments you are associated with then the better your training can be.

I have seen many people quit, retire, or lose interest [in lifting] because they can't seem to figure out that strength is not linear short-term, only long-term. What does this mean? It means that every week will not be personal bests

- each week will be filled with its own challenges and setbacks. The key is consistency.

**RULE 4: Have An Off-Season And "Down Weeks" To Recover Mentally And Physically**

This is a massive mistake that I see lifters making. They are in constant training mode for a competition, never letting the body get a mental or physical break from the toxic loading of heavy weights. This may get you accustomed to competitions and help you stay accustomed to big weights, but long-term, it's a recipe for a short career.

IT'S NOT WHAT YOU CAN DO, RATHER IT'S WHAT YOU CAN RECOVER FROM. WHEN I GET DONE WITH A MEET, THE FIRST WEEK [AFTERWARDS] IS A NICE, CALMING BREAK FROM THE GYM. THIS IS MOSTLY FOR MY SANITY, BUT IT ALSO HAS ANOTHER BENEFIT"

It's not what you can do, rather it's what you can recover from. When I get done with a meet, the first week [afterwards] is a nice, calming break from the gym. This is mostly for my sanity, but it also has another benefit. The benefit is that it makes me hungry to train again. I could start back to training in a few days after competition, but I have always found that six to ten weeks into the next cycle, I'm fried. So I make sure that I include "down time" into my training after a meet.

After my week or so off, I start the cycle back up with one thing in mind - conditioning. It may sound crazy

to the beginner, but eventually, your conditioning will either help or hurt your progress with big weights. As most lifters train for bigger lifts closer to competition, the intensity and volume increases (especially as accessory work starts to fall). In the short term, this helps peak the body into massive strength gains, but for long periods of time, it actually causes one to become weaker and lose one's base of training.

As a lifter or any competitor, you cannot keep specialized training for too long in your cycle without going back to generalized athletic training. This means that you can't think that you can stay peaked all year round - wave your training.

**RULE 5: Injuries Are Indicators - Not A Part Of The Process**

How many lifters do you see that

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are constantly injured or retire early? They may have been the coolest things since the first Cadillac, but in a flash, they are out of the game. If someone is getting constantly hurt, it's usually a sign of overtraining, over reaching, or stupidity.

Anytime I've ever had a small pull or injury (which is fewer than I can count on hand), it's usually because I was doing something wrong or not listening to what my body was telling me. Being tough and working through the pain or problem was not worth the two to four weeks I had to go easy because I wanted that last rep or last set. My point is that you need to start to slowly figure out when to put on the brakes.

The body is very good at telling you when it's had too much - if you're smart enough to listen.

#### **Pec pulls, strains, tears, and shoulder pain:**

This usually means that you're not

setting your lats back and using your triceps to do your pressing movements. When you are tired, or when you're using a heavy weight, you're allowing your shoulder to dominate the movement.

#### **Knee pain or injury, lower back pain or injury:**

[This is] usually caused by weak or non-engaged hamstrings - this is common since most people (including lifters) have distinct quadriceps dominance over the hamstring complex. An easy way to fix this long term is to ensure that 60-70% of your lower body training is posterior chain dominant.

If I had to do it all over again, I would have trained the balls off of my hamstrings, upper back, and triceps before I even learned any of the major lifts. I do this with my clients, as well as beginning lifters, and their form is perfect in a matter of months without even practicing the lift religiously. It's

all because the muscles are working properly and are tying into motor patterns before the lifts are developed. This is also a great way to build a proper posture base.

I hope this article has allowed you to analyze your training or [your current] program and make some adjustments for the better. Remember a few key statements:

- 1)** It's not what you can do - it's what you can recover from.
- 2)** Injury/pain is an indicator that something is not correct with your posture or the movement.
- 3)** You have to be in good shape in order to train hard, so make sure that some of your year is concentrated on just being a good athlete.
- 4)** Strength is not a short-term linear process; it's a long-term wave. **PM**

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# MALIEK DERSTINE

## You Get What You Give

BY JOHN GREAVES III

**I**n Marvel Comics, the mutant Wolverine is 5'3" tall and weighs about 195 lbs., minus the adamantium. Enemies frequently underestimate his power because of his stature. Maliek Derstine is 5'3" and weighs about 195 lbs. between meets, but his fellow competitors at 181 lbs. have learned not to underestimate him due to his size. At twenty-seven years old, Maliek has already been competing for a solid ten years in powerlifting, and has been breaking records at every meet. He set four new All Time Total World Records in 2015. First, he did so with a 10x bodyweight total of 1950 lbs. raw with knee wraps at the IPL Worlds in September of 2015. Then, he totaled 1901 lbs. raw without knee wraps at the USPA American Cup during the LA Fit Expo. In March, in the renowned Animal Cage, he squatted 780 lbs. to best World Record squatter, Tom Kallas, in exhibition. I was able to drag him out of bed the next morning, hoping to find out more about his training and the secret to his incredible lifts.

**You're about 5'3 tall, and you usually weigh 180 lbs. Now, you float at about 195 lbs. When you were staying at 180 lbs., was that part of a conscious decision to stay at the top of the 181 lbs. class, or did you just not feel a need to cut down to 165 lbs.?**

I decided that I wanted to grow into the 181 lbs. class and not cut the weight. In the two hour weigh-ins, I was constantly weighing in around 174 lbs. while competing in the 165 lbs./75kg and 163 lb./74kg class. It was in 2013 that I noticed diminishing returns of performance in that weight division. I let my body grow into the next class; initially, I hovered around 180-185 lbs. I'm currently about 195 lbs. and cutting to 181 lbs. I casually grew up into that [weight class]. I take my time cutting back down to the class.

**You're at the point where you're already the number one in the world. Do you feel that you're**

**still adding strength because of increased neural capacity and just getting more and more efficient at lifting the weight? Or, now that you are putting on weight, do you feel that you're also adding muscle?**

I think it's a good combination of the two. When I was younger, whenever I would go up a class, I noticed it'd be about twenty-four to thirty-six months before I'd hit my stride in that class. I'm just now at the twenty-four month mark of truly being an '81 and maxing out the class. So, I think that what I'm seeing now is more of a neural capability as opposed to the size increase from going to a '65 to a full-blown '81. What you're seeing now is where the true potential is - it's slowly progressing to where it can truly be.

**Okay...your squat improved as your trunk got bigger. Was packing mass onto your abs and obliques a specific goal?**

I think when you examine the musculature traits of a powerlifter,

you will find that the thoracic region of the body will ultimately become more pronounced. This could both be intentional or unintentional in nature. In the act of squatting and deadlifting, the abdominal region is paramount in stability. If an athlete only performs squats and/or deadlifts, the ability to generate maximum stability (aka. maximum contraction via maximum motor unit recruitment) will be non-existent. In theory, this will create an imbalance that will present itself upon maximum barbell loadings at some point in time. Understanding abdominal/ thoracic form and function is imperative when trying to stabilize maximum barbell loads and must be trained accordingly. The thoracic region also includes musculature of the low back, if one is trying to use this as a reference. In

regards to myself exclusively, my thoracic region is specifically trained in the aforementioned area. As a rule of thumb, an athlete needs to address time under tension/contraction in accordance to diaphragm pressure and abdominal function. The transverse/ rectus abdominus need to be exclusively targeted, as well as the obliques, in order to precisely train the thoracic region to endure maximum loadings. In my opinion, a stronger thoracic region is the lifeline in preventing spinal injury.

**So, give me an example of a “go to” exercise for your thoracic region, and when you like to do it.**

Standing banded crunches for sets to failure every day.

**What about obliques and low back?**

Russian side bends on the GHR [Glute Ham Raise]. Also, low back reverse hypers twice a week. The reps will vary since it is best to do sets to failure. I do something for my core every day.

**Just the way you’re explaining things now sounds pretty methodical. “I’m here to work; I’m just going to work.” I saw how focused you were yesterday when you were getting ready to squat in The Animal Cage. So, what’s going through your mind before, during and after a big lift?**

What you saw is what it is all of the time. I’m kind of focused, but I’m not too amped up. You don’t want to get too crazy, you just want to be focused in order to hit the task. In a squat, all I’ve got to do is go down and come back up. So, if you approach it the same way every single time then the result should be the same way every single time. During the lift, you’re making sure you’re pushing on your belt, keeping your abdomen tight, and sitting back on your heels as you go down. You’re also ensuring that your chest and trunk are staying vertical, and that when you actually get into the hole, in the squat for instance, that you’re maintaining your posture. Then, you stand back up.

**What cues do you use for benching? Do you like to pull the bar apart/bend the bar?**

I like to try to set my shoulder blades down and into the bench as hard as possible. It’s almost like a reverse slingshot – so, pull with your lats, and push with your arms and chest. In USPA, you can bench with your heels up. I’m a heels flat bencher – I’m never going to change that. I keep my head down. So, pretty much, I haven’t really changed my technique on bench at all. It’s a methodical approach – do the same thing every time, and then the results should be nearly the same every time.

**Speaking of technique, you compete successfully in both gear and raw which has to require certain technical adjustments. How do you decide whether you’re going to compete raw or equipped at a particular meet? Do you have a set number of times a year that you like**



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**to compete in both?**

When I got out of the IPF, my intentions were to lift in both. Last year, I did a raw meet back in Chicago. In my first USPA event, I hit 1818 lbs. The only reason I did that was because I saw the record and I was like, "I think I can go ten times bodyweight" since I was already near ten times bodyweight with my training numbers. I just never put them [the numbers] on the board in a meet. So, I trained in order to make sure that I knew I could hit what I wanted to hit, and I planned accordingly. I went down to Steve Goggins' meet, the Georgia State Meet, as a guest lifter last June in hopes of totaling 1900 lbs./862.5kg. Unfortunately, I was unsuccessful. That contest taught me a lot as an athlete. I left there thinking, "If I just train a little bit more; 1900, 1950, maybe 2000 could possibly be there raw." I will continue to compete raw until I'm at the point where I feel the need to put equipment back on. I'm not against either; it's just not where I'm focused right now. There are some numerical goals I want

- IMPROVED RESULTS
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- NO SHOULDER PAIN
- MINIMIZE INJURY

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to hit in each respective division.

**You discovered powerlifting through football, right? What other sports are in your athletic background?**

Track and field. I was a sprinter - they tried to get me to throw, but I just wasn't really interested. I didn't want to throw shot. I dabbled with wrestling a little bit, and it was boring, so I just went back into the gym to lift weights. I also played football. At the time, powerlifting was always a priority. That was right around thirteen years old, and I stuck with it. One of the things I liked about powerlifting is that it is the only sport where you really get out of it what you put into it. I unequivocally tell people this all the time. In other sports like football - let's say you're a running back; you're dependent on your offensive line, your quarterback, and your receivers. You could be the best athlete, and no one would ever know it. Same thing with running relays in track and field, or even wrestling. It is an individual sport - you could run the fastest split, or get a number of pins and wins, but if you're the only good man/woman on your team, your team could suck, and no one's going to know your name. In powerlifting, there's always more to do as long as you keep on putting the work in. So, every time you get better, that's what you do - you just work a little harder and get better. That's what kind of kept me motivated. I would tell myself I can do more.

**What are some of your best gym and competition numbers?**

**COMPETITION LIFTS**

Squat 716 lbs. sleeves/749 lbs. in wraps  
Bench 523 lbs.  
Deadlift 678 lbs.  
Total 1901 lbs. sleeves/1951 lbs. wraps

**GYM LIFTS**

Squat 780 lbs.  
Bench 530 lbs.  
Deadlift 606 lbs. x 3

**I'm going to quote you: "Many powerlifters will train daily. Many will quote various training methods and theories. But, how many will**



**tell you why they love powerlifting, or why it's important to them? Some are fueled by winning or by championship titles. Here's something to ponder when training: powerlifting has to be less about winning or losing; but moreover, [it's about] the personal journey one chooses to take. One has to be motivated by self-improvement,**

**"I'VE COME TO REALIZE THAT, AS AN ATHLETE, THE ONLY THING YOU CAN CONTROL IS PERSONAL PREPARATION AND INDIVIDUAL PERFORMANCE"**

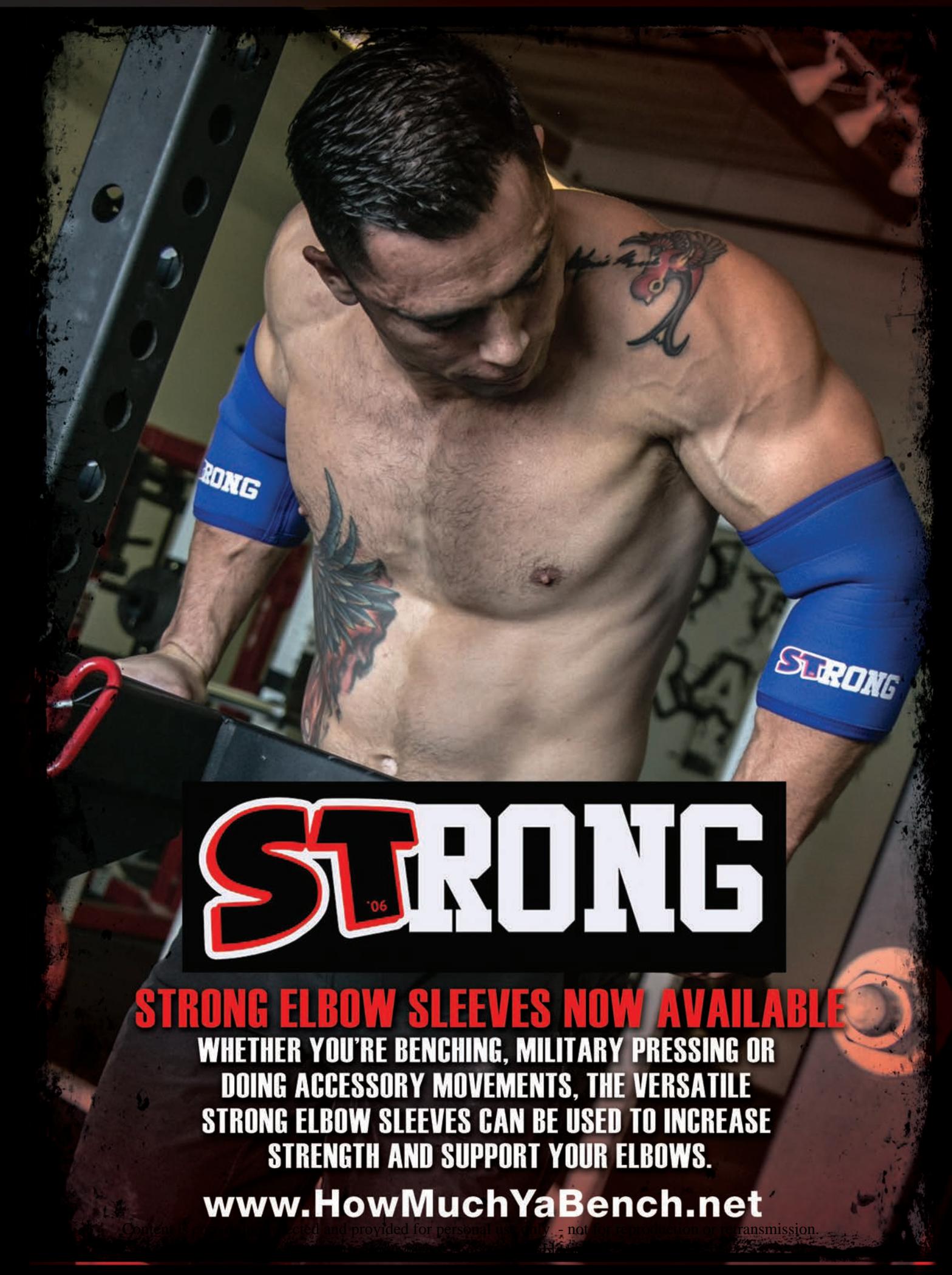
**and [one has to] appreciate work and truly strive for improvement. Choose the venue, create a plan, and enjoy the journey. That is success." That's a very Eastern way of looking at this sport.**

I think this is the current state of powerlifting. As I mature in the sport, my goals in powerlifting are personal

to myself and the few people I discuss them with. I've come to realize that, as an athlete, the only thing you can control is personal preparation and individual performance. I notice that people want to look at different people's achievements and say, "Yeah, they did that there, but they couldn't do that here. Or, they wore two and a half meter wraps instead of two meter wraps, or they didn't hold their press too long, or what have you."

**Do you have a mental timeline for how long you want to compete in powerlifting, or do you plan to just compete for as long as you can?**

I do have personal goals in regards to powerlifting as a whole. As far as a mental timeline, I feel it is impossible to transpose a duration of time to when a goal will be achieved. I believe that an athlete's success in powerlifting lies in their ability to display constant improvement until it is no longer feasible. One of the things I look at is Michael Soong's list, and that is what I think is the best historical measure of feats of strength in the weight classes over the last number of decades. So, if you really want to have a world record...you can say I lifted in



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XYZ federation and got a world record, but where does that record put you on that list?

There are a few things that a lot of the greats of powerlifting possess - the most important of these being longevity. When you look at the likes of Steve Goggins, Gene Bell, Ed Coan, Tony Conyers, Lamar Gant, and Ausby Alexander - they displayed a high level of proficiency over an extensive period of time. On a side note, many do not realize that they had to beat world record holders, and in some instances, they had to beat multi-time world champions of their respective era in order to even reach the heights they are currently recognized for. As for me, I will continue to compete until it is no longer fun.

**You've described your training philosophy as pulling a little bit from Eastern Bloc, Westside, and linear progression. You also said that you prefer to alternate submaximal and conditioning phases in four week blocks until you have a meet coming up. How did you arrive at this strategy?**

So, I think submax training like the Sheiko system and other things like that, as well as periodization methods, work really good for equipped lifters because you're not really trying to tap out your true raw strength at all. You're basically going to have to transition to assistive equipment and the whole phase starts over again. What I started looking at, more from a strength athlete perspective, is if you take the best athletes, like Steve Goggins, Gene Bell, Eddie Coan, Lamar Gant, and Ausby - I could go on and on - if you look at the things that made them successful and take a piece from what every one of them did, you'll learn that they trained very similarly. So, what I was curious about was how would I apply that to myself? I started realizing that a lot of their methods were pretty simplistic, and they always had a plan. I think that competing raw helped me evolve my training immensely because I don't have the aid of assistive equipment, with the premise hinging on efficacy and efficiency. If you always stay in condition, you'll never be out of condition. If you always know where you're at, say at



a certain loading range, your training should be dependent on getting better in that range of loading. Your body is going to adapt quite noticeably. I write my training in three to five week macro blocks. The blocks vary in loading and intensity depending on whether I'm training for a meet or not. It'll be a little bit of submax [training] at certain times of the year, and then getting ready for meets, it'll be more of a maximal effort method. In between, it's kind of just transitioning all of the time. You can learn how to be efficient for yourself. The act of training should

**"I'M REALLY BIG ON BODY RESTORATION AND HEALTH, OR ELSE I WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO TRAIN THE WAY I DO. IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE"**

always evolve because your strength curve is going to evolve. You're going to learn more, and as an athlete, you should come up with different ideas.

**You seem to be constantly learning. You have a post on Instagram where you said you were reading**

**Yuri and Natalia Verkhoshansky's "Special Strength Training Manual for Coaches". What are some of your other favorite reads in strength training?**

"The Science and Practice of Strength Training" by Vladimir M. Zatsiorsky and William J. Kraemer is another favorite of mine. I read through that in a week. I also have literature on Sheiko's earlier work that I know has been floating around for years. I read anything I can find really, but those two are definitely my favorite reads. In fact, I recommend that everyone read them.

**Well, you work at an oncology unit in Buckingham, Pennsylvania...**

I've been in the medical field since the age of eighteen years old, as an aide to dementia patients, a coach for adolescents on the side, and now as a nurse.

**Working with cancer patients has to be stressful. Is lifting weights one way that you deal with the emotions from the job?**

I don't really consider my job stressful. At an early age, I developed a passion for helping people in need. Helping and caring for people is something that I feel is important, whether it is something I get paid for or not.

**What does a training week look like within your system? Do you have specific squat, bench and deadlift days, or do they change according to how you feel?**

If you look at a monthly training plan, day one would be an accessory day, whether it be upper or lower [body], mostly non-barbell stuff. On day two, [I train] the opposing lower or upper split. This could be working the main pressing movement or the squat and pull movements. While on day three, [I do] the opposing upper or lower accessory split, and on day four, the other opposing main movement [is done], working the main pressing movement or the squat and pull movements.

**Is there a day off in between those days?**

If we're taking day one from Sunday, then Sunday would be day one, and Monday is day two. Tuesday would be an "off" day, and Wednesday would be day three. Thursday is also an "off" day. Friday would be the fourth day, and then Saturday would be another planned day of rest.

**Let's talk about your "go to" squat assistance exercises. Last night, you went over to EliteFTS and did lower body accessories. What did you do?**

I did leg press for five sets of twenty, single leg press for five sets of twenty, one legged squats for five sets of twenty, non-single leg curls, and extensions supersetted for sets of twenty. I also did single leg curls and extensions supersetted for sets of twenty and then some back extensions, again, sets of twenty. Accessory loading is typical while the exercise selection will vary based on need.

**Since you claim that you don't have a healing factor, what do you like to do for recovery?**

I'm really big on body restoration and health, or else I wouldn't be able to train the way I do. It would be impossible. I have two different chiropractors and a masseuse that I see on a bi-weekly schedule all year long. My masseuse performs myofascial, Graston work, and TRT, which also aid in my recovery.

**Have you had any major injuries?**

No, I've never had a major injury. I had a little bit of a glute issue a little while back in the off season which

I think was kind of a freak thing. It wasn't major; I think it was kind of a minor strain, but other than that, nothing severe at all. For which I'm very thankful . . .

**And there's the healing factor I talked about! Case closed!**

That's also why I write my training cycles the way I do. If your body is always prepared, you can hit a single whenever you want. Before squatting in The Cage, it might make it a little bit crazier when people find this out, but I didn't have a back squat of any significant weight. I did a set of five - off of 780 lbs., it might have been 65% [of my 1 rep max] - all of the other stuff was accessory work. So, I really just came in with 25 days' notice; I just went through my normal conditioning phase and I was like, "Let's see what I have". I did a seminar on this, and I learned that you should be able to be ready for a competition every five to six weeks. So, in one block of training, you could go hit some singles. **PM**

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Ewa Januskiewicz

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# “These Chicks Can Kick Your Ass... And You May Like it”

## Meet Ewa Januszkiewicz and Ariel Stevens

### How old are you, where are you from, and what are you wearing?

**Ewa:** I'm 24 years old. I was born in Poland, but I was raised in Connecticut.

Right now, I am wearing Virus leggings and my Juggernaut “Become UNSTPBL” crop top. I'm definitely wearing some high socks, too. You never know when you'll be deadlifting or I'm just wearing them because Connecticut is that cold right now.

**Ariel:** I am 25 years old. I am from Woodland, CA but I am currently living in Fort Mill, SC. I am wearing Lululemon sweatpants and a Juggernaut Crop Top.

### Where do you train?

**Ewa:** I train at Gleason Performance Training in Derby, CT. We're a USAPL silver training center, so it's the perfect atmosphere for every lifting session. There is a certain aggression and focus that surrounds powerlifting, and our gym is all about the powerlifters for once. None of that, “Don't slam the weights, no chalk, no fun” sh\*t.

**Ariel:** I train at MuscleDriver USA in Fort Mill, SC.

### Do you lift with other girls or all guys?

**Ewa:** I lift with both guys and girls. Although the original “garage crew” that I began this whole journey with was predominantly guys, our new facility has a good mixture of men and women. Actually, the men might even be outnumbered soon! I find myself getting influenced by the guys' competitiveness while I'm training. This is great because it forces me to push myself. On the other hand, there is nothing like training with people who have an equal amount of passion in the sport like you do, and that's what I love about lifting with the girls. I gain so much from training in a mixed setting. We all feed off of one another in such a positive way. It re-



Ariel Stevens

ally makes you look forward to the next training session.

**Ariel:** I am fortunate to lift with a great mix of guys and girls. Everyone at MDUSA is a great training partner.

### What do you do for work?

**Ewa:** I'm an image processing associate for a local molecular neuroimaging

company. I basically analyze biomedical images for clinical research projects. I graduated from Smith with a degree in Neuroscience, so I'm glad that I've been able to shift my career towards the medical field and finally utilize my degree. Before this job, I was a high school physics teacher.



**Ariel:** Weightlifting is my main priority. However, I also do online programming, nanny and JTS Customer Service to supplement my training.

**How did you get involved in powerlifting/weightlifting?**

**Ewa:** As a collegiate soccer player, I suffered two ACL tears. After both surgeries, my coach, Ryan Gleason, helped me with the rehab process. After seeing me get back to squatting and deadlifting, he just sort of said, "You are good

at this. This is what you're going to do. You don't have a choice". Being given that sort of confidence and reassurance just sticks with you. He really single-handedly introduced me to lifting. After I had my first meet, I instantly became addicted. I kept chasing the rush you get from individual competition. There is nothing like having only yourself and your strength to depend on. I think it's incredibly powerful and exciting to push your body to both its mental and physi-

cal limits.

**Ariel:** I got involved in weightlifting through CrossFit. Before my senior year of college, I started CrossFit in order to stay in shape for my college swim career. I fell in love with weightlifting and decided to start training for it after the last swim meet of my career.

**What do your "normal" friends think of how much you can lift?**

**Ewa:** My "normal" friends literally think that I'm crazy! They value my dedication, and they understand my restraints when I'm cutting weight or can't hang out with them because I need to train. They definitely find my passion a bit "out there". The funny thing is that it fits me perfectly; I've never been the normal kid. I've always been the quirky, weird, risky kid. Regardless, they support me 100%. I get signs and posters made for big meets, and during the World Championships in Johannesburg, my coach even had everyone over for a viewing party. The support has been overwhelming, and I'm extremely appreciative.

**Ariel:** All of my "normal" friends think I can lift anything and everything. Although they don't always understand the sport, they're extremely supportive and are some of my biggest fans.

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

**Ewa:** Not really. There are so many other amazing lifters out there that are also female, attractive, funny, smart, and strong, that I never really feel like all eyes are just on me.

**Ariel:** Weightlifting has a growing number of competitors, both male and female. I do take pride in being strong and feminine. I like to debunk the myth that all weightlifters are big and masculine. I always wear makeup, match my singlet with my lifting accessories (wrist wraps, knee sleeves, sports bra, etc.) and braid my hair when I compete.

**Are you married? Dating? Single?**

**Ewa:** You know what they say, right? Powerlifters only date other powerlifters?

**Ariel:** I currently have a boyfriend.

**Do you remember the first time you out-lifted a boy? How did it make you feel?**

**Ewa:** I don't remember the first time per se, but I do remember the harass-

ment that a bunch of the guys had to endure because I was out-lifting them at a much lower bodyweight. I felt so bad! I really just wanted everyone to get stronger and have fun while doing it! Just recently, this dude yelled out after me, "I'm stronger than you, and I will always be stronger than you!" (Spoiler: he's not). I definitely value anyone who is working hard to be a strong badass. At the same time, it's pretty comedic to me to see those types of dudes' insecurities towards strong, dominant females. But for sure, every time I out-lift a guy, I definitely feel like a total badass.

**Ariel:** The first time I out-lifted a boy was in high school. I took a strength and conditioning class and was able to out-squat a few of the boys. At the time, girls thought I was too muscular and didn't find my physique appealing. It made me feel insecure. However, I now think my muscles are awesome and I have never been more confident.

**Do you wear makeup to the gym?**

**Ewa:** Of course, I do! If you look good, you feel good. If you feel good, you lift well. So yes, I definitely wear makeup

to the gym. An impromptu photo shoot in the locker room? I'm down. Bathroom mirror selfies? Sure, ladies and gents. I don't pass judgement. If someone comes straight from work with a face full of makeup, or if they put it on specifically so that they can take videos for YouTube and Instagram, then so be it. I respect them all the same. Besides, at least they got their ass up to go train.

**Ariel:** I always wear a light foundation and some mascara during training.

**What do you have to say to women who don't lift weights because they think they will get too big?**

**Ewa:** I usually ask them if they actually care. Then I explain the science behind weight lifting. I tell them that there is a lifting program out there for everyone. There's a misconception out there that you won't bulk up. The fact of the matter is that, yes, you will gain muscle. That's kind of the point. You control how much you lift, and if it's not your ultimate goal to be a competitive lifter, and if building muscle doesn't necessarily appeal to you, then you can choose to do it less frequently. I tell women

all of the time that they need to figure out their goal first. Your training will be variable based on those goals. I follow one simple rule in life: do whatever makes you happy! If that means you lift heavy ass weights because you want to compete, then awesome. You will have to come to terms with the fact that your body composition will change, and you will add muscle mass to your frame. If it means that you lift lighter weights just to maintain your health, then great! As long as what you're doing is providing you with happiness, then who gives a sh\*t what other people think about it. Lifting weights doesn't equate to losing your femininity. Besides, there is something to be said for a woman who takes pride in her physical prowess. Everyone knows that strong is sexy.

**Ariel:** "Get over it!" This is one of the most annoying things that I heard all through college from some teammates on my swim team and it is something I continue to hear from women. It's the furthest thing from the truth. Weightlifting makes you leaner, stronger and healthier – ESPECIALLY being a female.



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**How has powerlifting/weightlifting helped you?**

**Ewa:** I don't think I can put a limit on this one. Powerlifting has impacted me in every aspect of my life. It has helped me build multifaceted strength: mental, physical, and emotional. It's shown me that I can take everything I've learned as a lifter and apply it to my real life, from dealing with pain and loss, to valuing patience and dedication. The most important thing that powerlifting has taught me though, is that life is short - you're not everyone's cup of tea, and ultimately, if it's not making you happy, it's not worth it.

When asked this question, I get a bit emotional because as I reflect on it, I truly realize the impact that lifting has had on my life. I battle with an autoimmune disease (SLE - Systemic Lupus Erythematosus) that impacts my joints, muscles, lungs, heart, and essentially every other organ system. In college, during a time of high stress, poor eating habits, and

constant partying, I was chronically sick. I mention this because powerlifting basically saved my life - I got my diet in order, and I was able to wean myself off of toxic medications with the help of my medical team. For the first time, I focused on my health and well-being. I still have occasional flare-ups but I'm happy to say that I'm in remission.

**Ariel:** It has made me more confident than I have ever been. I am more appreciative of my good health. It has empowered me as a woman.

**What is your favorite lift?**

**Ewa:** Man, that's so tough! Right now, it's a huge battle for me between the squat and the deadlift. I would say that in training, it's the squat. In competition, definitely the deadlift!

**Ariel:** The Clean / Jerk

**Tell us about your current best lifts.**

**Ewa:** I'm currently pulling 402 lbs., benching 170 lbs., and squatting 336 lbs. in the gym at 140 lbs. bodyweight. My best competition lifts: 413 lbs., 165 lbs., and 314 lbs. I'm currently preparing for the Arnold Pro Raw Challenge. Now

that I'm in the open class, it's a whole new ballgame. The competition is on an entirely different level.

**Ariel:**

- Snatch - 95kg
- Clean / Jerk - 118kg
- Clean - 123kg
- Back Squat - 155kg
- Front Squat - 140kg

**What are some of your goals?**

**Ewa:** First and foremost, my goal is to become the best version of me that I can possibly be. It is always you versus you. Every time I hit the platform, I want to do better than even I know I can do. Aside from that, I have one big goal: to achieve a 1000 lbs. raw total in the 63kg class. This breaks down into my "big three" goals: 200 lbs. bench, 350 lbs. squat, and 450 lbs. deadlift. The minor things come after that - to place consistently, rank among the best, inspire others, continue qualifying for national and international level competitions, and set American records.

**Ariel:** I want to break American Records and make an Olympic Team. **PM**

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# Super Training Corner

**S**kwaats! It's time to get under the bar with some real weight. Team ST tackled this session towards the end of our training cycle. This skwaat day was performed about four weeks out from March Madness in Dublin, CA. The weight percentages and volume allowed the team to handle some near maximal weights for multiple sets. Rest is a critical factor during the main movement but keep in mind that in four weeks, time between sets will have to be better negotiated in the meet.

## **SKWAATS:**

90% 3x1 reps

## **STIFF LEG AXLE-BAR DEADLIFTS** (or standard bar):

45% 4x8 reps

## **REVERSE HYPEREXTENSIONS** (bodyweight while hanging off of a bench if unavailable):

3 sets x 20 reps

## **BARBELL ROWS:**

5 sets x 10 reps

## **LEG EXTENSIONS** (single leg):

3 sets x 15 reps

## **AB WHEEL:**

3 sets x 20 reps

After smashing skwaats, we moved onto accessory work which included several main movements, but we used sub-maximal weight percentages. Accessory work is a great opportunity to become an athlete and decrease the time between sets. Make sure you stay focused on the goal to get STRonger. Check back next issue for another routine from Super Training Gym – "The STRongest Gym in the West!"



# Current Top 50 Rankings: Men, 198 lbs...

For these rankings, we're taking the top lifts out of raw, raw with wraps, single-ply, and multi-ply.

## SQUAT

Rank	Name	Federation	Date	Division	Squat
1	Kalle Rasanen	IPA	2015-10-24	Multi-Ply	970
2	Christian Haywood	XPC	2016-03-05	Multi-Ply	900
3	Mike Baker	RPS	2015-12-06	Multi-Ply	835
4	Ed Kinsey	UPA	2015-04-11	Multi-Ply	832
5	Matt Taylor	XPC	2016-03-04	Multi-Ply	825
6	Joseph Lindsey	SPF	2015-12-05	Multi-Ply	800
7	Amit Sapir	APA	2015-10-10	Raw	793
8	MarcAnthony Vandermolen	SPF	2015-12-05	Multi-Ply	785
9	Chris McGrail	APF	2015-12-12	Single-Ply	782
9	Ben Tittle	UPA	2015-03-27	Multi-Ply	782
11	Jeff Wampler	USPA	2015-05-16	Multi-Ply	777
12	Gary Orr	XPC	2016-03-04	Multi-Ply	775
13	Joel Shell	RPS	2015-12-12	Raw with Wraps	767
14	Jesse Norris	SPF	2015-11-07	Raw	766
15	Mario DAmico	RPS	2015-05-09	Multi-Ply	760
15	Lee Nash	RPS	2015-06-20	Multi-Ply	760
17	Shawn Buckley	IPL	2015-11-12	Single-Ply	756
18	Tim Hensley	UPA	2015-06-27	Multi-Ply	755
18	Jeff Cory	APF	2015-03-28	Multi-Ply	755
18	Matthew Taylor	APF	2015-04-11	Multi-Ply	755
18	Brandon Franklin	SPF	2015-06-13	Raw with Wraps	755
22	Brian Highnote	APF	2015-10-17	Multi-Ply	750
22	Brantly Thorton	SPF	2015-06-06	Raw with Wraps	750
24	Scott Kuderick	APF	2015-03-28	Multi-Ply	733
25	Matthew Wagner	RPS	2015-12-12	Raw with Wraps	730
26	Chamrong Huy	RPS	2015-12-06	Multi-Ply	725
27	Angelo Berardinelli	XPC	2016-03-05	Multi-Ply	720
28	Bill Carlough	UPA	2015-11-07	Multi-Ply	715
28	Nick Ramey	SPF	2016-03-26	Raw with Wraps	715
30	Fernando Candeloro	UPA	2015-11-14	Raw with Wraps	710
30	Brad Bishop	RPS	2015-04-18	Multi-Ply	710
30	John Hare	APA	2016-01-30	Multi-Ply	710
30	Mark VanAlstyne	RPS	2015-08-28	Multi-Ply	710
34	James Riggsby	USAPL	2015-04-11	Single-Ply	705
34	Jerry Saldana	SPF	2015-07-18	Single-Ply	705
36	Alex Ghossein	RPS	2015-11-22	Raw with Wraps	700
36	Mark VanAlstyne	HERC	2015-11-21	Single-Ply	700
36	David Shirley	SPF	2015-04-26	Multi-Ply	700
39	Josh Pfetzer	SPF	2015-12-05	Multi-Ply	690
40	Matthew Warr	APF	2015-10-10	Single-Ply	688
41	Matt Warr	GPC	2015-09-12	Multi-Ply	683
42	Zach Kuipers	USPA	2016-02-27	Raw with Wraps	677
43	Michael Lipinski	IPA	2015-10-24	Multi-Ply	675
43	Dallas Norris	RPS	2015-12-12	Raw with Wraps	675
45	Shane Brodie	USPA	2015-09-18	Single-Ply	672
45	Chris Ramos	GPC	2015-09-13	Raw with Wraps	672
45	Max Reichert	GPC	2015-09-18	Multi-Ply	672
45	Dayle Longford	USPA	2015-09-18	Single-Ply	672
49	Ben Puccio	RPS	2015-10-17	Raw	670
50	Damien Pezzuti	USPA	2015-05-02	Raw	666

## BENCH PRESS

Rank	Name	Federation	Date	Division	Squat
1	Tim Hensley	XPC	2016-03-06	Multi-Ply	720
1	Timothy Hensley	XPC	2016-03-06	Multi-Ply	720
3	Kalle Rasanen	IPA	2015-10-24	Multi-Ply	705
4	Mike Wolfey	RPS	2015-09-26	Multi-Ply	700
5	Michael Randall	WPC	2015-07-25	Single-Ply	661
6	Dan Dudgeon	USPA	2015-09-18	Single-Ply	617
7	Ed Kinsey	UPA	2015-04-11	Multi-Ply	606
8	Bill Ross	RPS	2015-08-29	Multi-Ply	600
8	Christian Haywood	XPC	2016-03-05	Multi-Ply	600
8	Ryan Marble	WABDL	2015-11-22	Single-Ply	600
8	Jeff Cory	APF	2015-03-28	Multi-Ply	600
12	Brian Wambolt	SPF	2015-11-22	Multi-Ply	585
12	Lee Nash	RPS	2015-06-20	Multi-Ply	585
12	Tony Coduto	WABDL	2015-04-11	Single-Ply	585
15	Dana Walker	USPA	2015-10-31	Multi-Ply	584
16	Matt Lamarque	WABDL	2015-08-29	Single-Ply	573
16	Keith Daniels	USPA	2015-09-13	Single-Ply	573
18	Jeff Johnston	WPC	2015-07-25	Multi-Ply	552
19	Jerry Saldana	SPF	2015-07-18	Single-Ply	540
20	Anhtony Pera	USPA	2015-04-18	Single-Ply	529
20	Max Reichert	GPC	2015-09-18	Multi-Ply	529
20	Richard Derengowski	APF	2015-07-18	Multi-Ply	529
23	Joseph Lindsey	SPF	2015-12-05	Multi-Ply	525
24	Kent Spires	WPC	2015-07-25	Raw	524
25	Tom Finn	UPA	2015-05-16	Raw	523
25	Mailek Derstine	USPA	2015-10-10	Raw	523
25	John Hare	GPC	2015-09-12	Multi-Ply	523
28	David Shirley	SPF	2015-04-26	Multi-Ply	520
29	Bill Carlough	UPA	2015-08-02	Multi-Ply	518
30	Josh Lentz	USPA	2015-08-29	Raw	507
30	Dayle Longford	USPA	2015-09-18	Single-Ply	507
30	Bill Carlough	USPA	2015-08-15	Single-Ply	507
33	David Lomeli	USPA	2015-10-03	Raw	501
33	Stefan Green	USPA	2016-02-13	Single-Ply	501
33	Brian Highnote	APF	2015-10-17	Multi-Ply	501
36	Pat Mackey	RPS	2015-12-12	Multi-Ply	500
36	Mario DAmico	RPS	2015-05-09	Multi-Ply	500
38	Andrei Oudovikine	RPS	2015-09-19	Single-Ply	497
39	Gary Orr	XPC	2016-03-04	Multi-Ply	495
40	Vincent Stepchuk	APF	2015-04-11	Multi-Ply	485
40	Chase Carter	RPS	2015-05-16	Single-Ply	485
40	James Riggsby	USAPL	2015-04-11	Single-Ply	485
40	Mike Baker	RPS	2015-12-06	Multi-Ply	485
40	Dan Swift	WABDL	2015-04-11	Single-Ply	485
40	Dan Dudgeon	USPA	2015-06-13	Raw	485
46	Brad Bishop	RPS	2015-04-18	Multi-Ply	480
46	Chamrong Huy	RPS	2015-12-06	Multi-Ply	480
48	Garrett Griffin	USPA	2015-07-11	Raw	479
48	Kevin Costa	USPA	2015-08-01	Multi-Ply	479
50	Matt Taylor	XPC	2016-03-04	Multi-Ply	475
50	Gark Knurek	UPA	2015-08-22	Raw	475

# Free For All! (Raw, Single-Ply or Multi-Ply)

## DEADLIFT

Rank	Name	Federation	Date	Division	Squat
1	Jesse Norris	SPF	2015-11-07	Raw	826
2	Mike Baker	RPS	2015-12-06	Multi-Ply	755
3	David Hansen	UPA	2015-03-27	Multi-Ply	744
4	Nick Ramey	SPF	2016-03-26	Raw	740
5	Timothy Paynter	USPA	2015-10-24	Raw	738
5	Jeremy Avilla	USPA	2015-10-18	Raw	738
5	Brett Chrisman	USPA	2016-02-20	Raw	738
5	Tim Paynter	USPA	2015-10-24	Raw	738
9	Christian Haywood	XPC	2016-03-05	Multi-Ply	730
10	Trevor Jaffe	USPA	2015-06-06	Raw	727
11	Shawn Buckley	IPL	2015-11-12	Single-Ply	717
12	Chris McGrail	APF	2015-12-12	Single-Ply	716
13	Jeremy Avila	USPA	2015-05-30	Raw	710
13	Fahrudin Kostjerevac	USPA	2015-10-17	Raw	710
15	Chris Dunn	IPL	2015-11-01	Raw	705
15	Derrington Wright	USAPL	2015-10-15	Raw	705
15	Danny Walls	USPA	2016-02-20	Raw	705
15	John Petruzzi	USPF	2016-01-09	Raw	705
19	Ben Pollack	USAPL	2015-10-15	Raw	701
20	Alex Ghossein	RPS	2015-11-22	Raw	700
20	Michael Garozzo	RPS	2015-07-12	Raw	700
20	Brandon Franklin	SPF	2015-06-13	Raw	700
20	Kalle Rasanen	IPA	2015-10-24	Multi-Ply	700
20	Matt Tedona	RPS	2015-07-12	Raw	700
25	Dayle Longford	USPA	2015-09-18	Single-Ply	694
26	Matthew Crawford	RPS	2015-06-27	Raw	690
27	Freddie Kostjervace	USPA	2015-06-13	Raw	688
27	Temitope Adeyiga	USPA	2015-08-01	Raw	688
27	Jordan Glenn	USAPL	2015-04-11	Single-Ply	688
30	Terence Connor	RPS	2015-07-11	Raw	685
31	Adam Ferchen	USPA	2015-11-07	Raw	677
31	Zach Kuipers	USPA	2016-02-27	Raw	677
31	Damon Mayers	USPA	2015-10-31	Raw	677
34	Brantly Thorton	SPF	2015-06-06	Raw	675
34	Daniel Fecher	UPA	2015-09-19	Raw	675
34	Nick Troetti	IPA	2016-02-06	Raw	675
34	Johnny Do	RPS	2015-09-26	Raw	675
38	Taylor Sloan	USPA	2015-08-08	Raw	672
38	Carlos Moran	USPA	2015-08-29	Raw	672
38	Daniel Wade	IPL	2015-11-12	Raw	672
38	Tyler Oldham	RPS	2015-11-14	Raw	672
38	Chris Bartley	USPA	2015-06-06	Raw	672
43	Ben Puccio	RPS	2015-10-17	Raw	670
43	William Foster	SPF	2015-06-06	Multi-Ply	670
45	Josh Lentz	USPA	2015-08-29	Raw	666
45	Ryan King	USPA	2015-10-24	Raw	666
45	Ryan Romey	USPA	2015-08-22	Raw	666
48	Chamrong Huy	RPS	2015-12-06	Multi-Ply	665
48	Brad Bishop	RPS	2015-04-18	Multi-Ply	665
50	Daniel Fechner	USPA	2015-06-13	Raw	662

## TOTAL

Rank	Name	Federation	Date	Division	Squat
1	Kalle Rasanen	IPA	2015-10-24	Multi-Ply	2375
2	Christian Haywood	XPC	2016-03-05	Multi-Ply	2230
3	Mike Baker	RPS	2015-12-06	Multi-Ply	2075
4	Ed Kinsey	UPA	2015-04-11	Multi-Ply	2067
5	Tim Hensley	UPA	2015-06-27	Multi-Ply	2050
6	Jesse Norris	SPF	2015-11-07	Raw	2033
7	Lee Nash	RPS	2015-06-20	Multi-Ply	1960
7	Matt Taylor	XPC	2016-03-04	Multi-Ply	1960
9	Jeff Cory	APF	2015-03-28	Multi-Ply	1923
10	Shawn Buckley	IPL	2015-11-12	Single-Ply	1919
11	Joseph Lindsey	SPF	2015-12-05	Multi-Ply	1900
12	Brantly Thorton	SPF	2015-06-06	Raw with Wraps	1875
13	Dayle Longford	USPA	2015-09-18	Single-Ply	1873
14	Chamrong Huy	RPS	2015-12-06	Multi-Ply	1870
15	Nick Ramey	SPF	2016-03-26	Raw with Wraps	1860
16	Brad Bishop	RPS	2015-04-18	Multi-Ply	1855
16	Brandon Franklin	SPF	2015-06-13	Raw with Wraps	1855
18	Mario DAmico	RPS	2015-05-09	Multi-Ply	1845
19	Gary Orr	XPC	2016-03-04	Multi-Ply	1835
19	Brian Highnote	APF	2015-10-17	Multi-Ply	1835
19	Matthew Taylor	APF	2015-04-11	Multi-Ply	1835
19	Jerry Saldana	SPF	2015-07-18	Single-Ply	1835
23	Joel Shell	RPS	2015-12-12	Raw with Wraps	1832
24	David Shirley	SPF	2015-04-26	Multi-Ply	1830
25	James Rigsby	USAPL	2015-04-11	Single-Ply	1824
26	Josh Lentz	USPA	2015-08-29	Raw	1807
26	Brett Chrisman	USPA	2016-02-20	Raw	1807
26	Jordan Glenn	USAPL	2015-04-11	Single-Ply	1807
29	John Hare	GPC	2015-09-12	Multi-Ply	1802
30	Alex Ghossein	RPS	2015-11-22	Raw with Wraps	1800
30	Ben Puccio	RPS	2015-10-17	Raw	1800
32	Matthew Wagner	RPS	2015-12-12	Raw with Wraps	1795
33	Amit Sapir	APA	2015-10-10	Raw	1791
34	Zach Kuipers	USPA	2016-02-27	Raw with Wraps	1785
35	Matt Tedona	RPS	2015-07-12	Raw with Wraps	1775
36	Bill Carlough	UPA	2015-08-02	Multi-Ply	1769
37	Johnny Do	RPS	2015-09-26	Raw	1765
38	Carlos Moran	USPA	2015-08-29	Raw	1763
38	Ben Tittle	UPA	2015-03-27	Multi-Ply	1763
40	Nicholas Sattelberg	SPF	2015-04-18	Raw with Wraps	1760
40	Josh Pfetzer	SPF	2015-12-05	Multi-Ply	1760
42	Fernando Candeloro	UPA	2015-11-14	Raw with Wraps	1758
42	Tim Paynter	USPA	2015-10-24	Raw	1758
42	Timothy Paynter	USPA	2015-10-24	Raw	1758
42	Damien Pezzuti	USPA	2015-05-02	Raw	1758
46	Seth Lee	IPL	2015-11-12	Single-Ply	1747
47	John Petruzzi	USPF	2016-01-09	Raw	1746
48	PJ Ginn	APF	2015-12-13	Raw with Wraps	1730
48	David Lomeli	USPA	2015-10-03	Raw	1730
50	Stephen Harper	APF	2015-12-05	Single-Ply	1725
50	Ibn Mahama	USPA	2016-02-13	Raw with Wraps	1725

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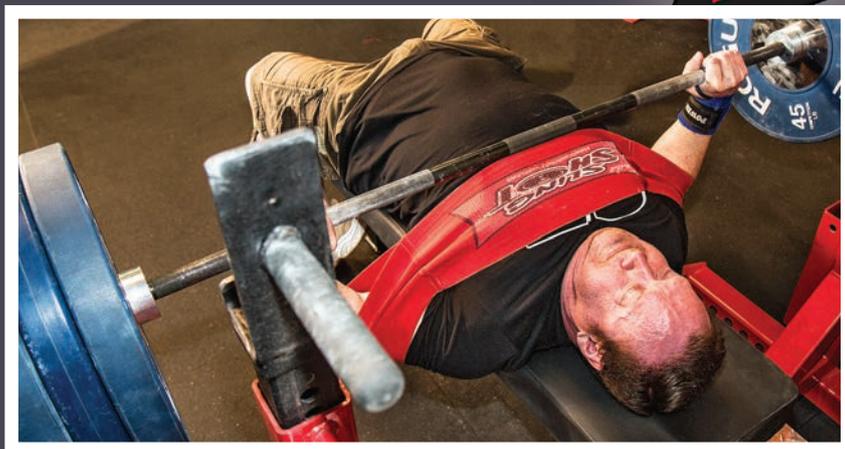


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# Current Top 30 Rankings: Women 132 lbs...

For these rankings, we're taking the top lifts out of raw, raw with wraps, single-ply, and multi-ply.

## SQUAT

Rank	Name	Federation	Date	Division	Squat
1	Heidi Howar	IPA	2015-10-24	Multi-Ply	505
2	Beth Thomas	XPC	2016-03-05	Multi-Ply	500
3	Janel Vegter	UPA	2015-05-16	Raw with Wraps	457
4	Leah Benoit	XPC	2016-03-05	Multi-Ply	440
5	Susan Salazar	SPF	2015-11-08	Raw with Wraps	429
6	Candace Puopolo	SPF	2015-04-11	Multi-Ply	420
6	Beth Poplin	XPC	2016-03-05	Multi-Ply	420
8	Ashley Falke	SPF	2015-04-11	Multi-Ply	415
9	Elen Stein	RPS	2015-09-19	Single-Ply	410
10	Kristin Vaziri	UPA	2015-03-27	Multi-Ply	407
10	Susan Salazar	USPA	2016-01-23	Raw	407
12	Nicole Gonzalez	USPA	2015-07-10	Raw	402
12	Rita Carlsson	APF	2016-02-06	Multi-Ply	402
14	Erin Stevenson	USAPL	2015-04-11	Single-Ply	391
14	Giovanna Ortega	USAPL	2015-04-11	Single-Ply	391
16	Elen Stein	RPS	2015-11-22	Raw with Wraps	390
17	Kimberly Johnson	USAPL	2015-04-11	Single-Ply	380
17	Estafany Gonzalez	THSWPA	2016-03-08	Single-Ply	380
17	Summer Harris	THSWPA	2016-03-08	Single-Ply	380
20	Cassy Carlton	THSWPA	2016-03-08	Single-Ply	375
20	April Botello	THSWPA	2016-03-08	Single-Ply	375
20	Heidi Howar	SPF	2015-04-11	Raw with Wraps	375
23	Ashley Cooper	RUPC	2016-01-31	Raw	374
24	Cecily Gonzalez	THSWPA	2016-03-08	Single-Ply	370
25	Maddie Graham	THSWPA	2016-03-08	Single-Ply	365
25	Gabby Martinez	THSWPA	2016-03-08	Single-Ply	365
25	Lorena Martinez	THSWPA	2016-03-08	Single-Ply	365
25	Doris Gutierrez	THSWPA	2016-03-08	Single-Ply	365
29	Steph Puddicombe	USAPL	2016-03-04	Single-Ply	363
29	Cortney Leih	USPA	2015-04-18	Raw with Wraps	363

## BENCH PRESS

Rank	Name	Federation	Date	Division	Bench
1	Beth Poplin	XPC	2016-03-05	Multi-Ply	320
2	Beth Thomas	XPC	2016-03-05	Multi-Ply	300
3	Heidi Howar	IPA	2015-10-24	Multi-Ply	290
4	Candace Puopolo	SPF	2015-04-11	Multi-Ply	280
5	Leah Benoit	XPC	2016-03-05	Multi-Ply	275
6	Ashley Cooper	RUPC	2016-01-31	Raw	253
7	Christina Schaeffer	SPF	2015-04-11	Multi-Ply	250
8	Susan Salazar	USPA	2016-01-23	Raw	248
9	Emily Liebert	USAPL	2015-04-11	Single-Ply	242
9	Tamara Smith	USPA	2015-08-15	Single-Ply	242
11	Kim Price	USPA	2015-09-18	Single-Ply	236
11	Kimberly Johnson	USAPL	2015-04-11	Single-Ply	236
13	Maddie Graham	THSWPA	2016-03-08	Single-Ply	235
14	Julia Goldstein	USPA	2015-08-15	Raw	231
15	Janel Vegter	UPA	2015-05-16	Raw	225
16	Blanca Rodriguez	SPF	2015-12-12	Raw	220
17	Carlee Pitcher	THSWPA	2016-03-08	Single-Ply	215
18	Erin Stevenson	USAPL	2015-04-11	Single-Ply	214
18	Steph Puddicombe	USAPL	2016-03-04	Single-Ply	214
20	Sarah Skinner	XPC	2016-03-05	Raw	210
20	Elen Stein	RPS	2015-09-19	Single-Ply	210
22	Breanna Johnson	USAPL	2015-04-11	Single-Ply	209
23	Giovanna Ortega	USAPL	2015-04-11	Single-Ply	203
23	Becky Rich	USPA	2015-05-02	Raw	203
25	Heidi Howar	SPF	2015-04-11	Raw	200
26	Krystin Krodle	USAPL	2015-04-11	Single-Ply	198
26	Jay'Sun Moore	USAPL	2015-04-11	Single-Ply	198
26	Lodrina Cherne	USAPL	2015-12-05	Single-Ply	198
26	Kayla Morelan	GPC	2015-09-13	Raw	198
26	Andrea White	USAPL	2015-10-15	Raw	198

# Free For All! (Raw, Single-Ply or Multi-Ply)

## DEADLIFT

Rank	Name	Federation	Date	Division	Deadlift
1	Susan Salazar	SPF	2015-11-08	Raw	485
1	Heidi Howar	IPA	2015-10-24	Multi-Ply	485
3	Suzanne Davis	USPA	2015-09-18	Single-Ply	457
4	Samantha Calhoun	SPF	2016-02-13	Raw	440
4	Ellen Stein	RPS	2015-09-19	Single-Ply	440
4	Ashley Cooper	RUPC	2016-01-31	Raw	440
7	Janel Vegter	UPA	2015-05-16	Raw	429
8	Nicole Gonzalez	USPA	2015-07-10	Raw	424
8	Suzanne Davis	USPA	2015-08-08	Raw	424
10	Ellen Stein	XPC	2016-03-05	Raw	415
11	Ashley Condray	USPA	2016-02-13	Raw	413
12	Andrea White	USAPL	2015-10-15	Raw	410
13	Jordanne Pantan	UPA	2015-04-19	Raw	407
14	Alora Griffiths	XPC	2016-03-04	Raw	405
14	Beth Poplin	XPC	2016-03-05	Multi-Ply	405
16	Meghan Pellatt	USAPL	2015-10-15	Raw	404
17	Amy Chatfield	USPA	2015-11-22	Raw	402
17	Amber Abweh	IPL	2015-11-12	Raw	402
19	Beth Thomas	XPC	2016-03-05	Multi-Ply	400
19	Heidi Howar	SPF	2015-04-11	Raw	400
19	Laura Rinke	RPS	2015-10-17	Raw	400
22	Candace Puopolo	SPF	2015-04-11	Multi-Ply	390
23	Leah Benoit	XPC	2016-03-05	Multi-Ply	385
23	Cecily Gonzalez	THSWPA	2016-03-08	Single-Ply	385
23	Kimberly Johnson	USAPL	2015-04-11	Single-Ply	385
23	Steph Puddicombe	USAPL	2016-03-04	Single-Ply	385
23	Amanda Meyer	SPF	2015-10-10	Raw	385
28	Lodrina Cherne	USAPL	2015-12-05	Single-Ply	380
28	Shawne Scott Suddreth	APF	2016-01-09	Raw	380
28	Mischa Tice	RAW	2015-05-30	Raw	380
28	Amanda Shay	USAPL	2015-10-15	Raw	380
28	Criselda Fajardo	USPA	2016-01-23	Raw	380
28	Lean Benoit	USPA	2015-05-30	Raw	380

## TOTAL

Rank	Name	Federation	Date	Division	Total
1	Heidi Howar	IPA	2015-10-24	Multi-Ply	1280
2	Beth Thomas	XPC	2016-03-05	Multi-Ply	1200
3	Susan Salazar	SPF	2015-11-08	Raw with Wraps	1157
4	Beth Poplin	XPC	2016-03-05	Multi-Ply	1145
5	Janel Vegter	UPA	2015-05-16	Raw with Wraps	1113
6	Susan Salazar	USPA	2016-01-23	Raw	1107
7	Leah Benoit	XPC	2016-03-05	Multi-Ply	1100
8	Candace Puopolo	SPF	2015-04-11	Multi-Ply	1090
9	Ashley Cooper	RUPC	2016-01-31	Raw	1069
10	Ellen Stein	RPS	2015-09-19	Single-Ply	1055
11	Nicole Gonzalez	USPA	2015-07-10	Raw	1019
12	Kimberly Johnson	USAPL	2015-04-11	Single-Ply	1003
13	Ellen Stein	SPF	2015-04-11	Raw with Wraps	980
14	Heidi Howar	SPF	2015-04-11	Raw with Wraps	975
15	Steph Puddicombe	USAPL	2016-03-04	Single-Ply	964
16	Giovanna Ortega	USAPL	2015-04-11	Single-Ply	959
17	Christina Schaeffer	SPF	2015-04-11	Multi-Ply	945
18	Emily Liebert	USAPL	2015-04-11	Single-Ply	942
18	Erin Stevenson	USAPL	2015-04-11	Single-Ply	942
20	Samantha Calhoun	SPF	2016-02-13	Raw	940
20	Maddie Graham	THSWPA	2016-03-08	Single-Ply	940
20	April Botello	THSWPA	2016-03-08	Single-Ply	940
23	Suzanne Davis	USPA	2015-08-08	Raw with Wraps	936
24	Cecily Gonzalez	THSWPA	2016-03-08	Single-Ply	930
25	Carlee Pitcher	THSWPA	2016-03-08	Single-Ply	920
26	Ashley Condray	USPA	2016-02-13	Raw with Wraps	914
27	Andrea White	USAPL	2015-10-15	Raw	911
28	Criselda Fajardo	USPA	2016-01-23	Raw	909
28	Kayla Morelan	GPC	2015-09-13	Raw with Wraps	909
30	Amanda Meyer	SPF	2015-10-10	Raw with Wraps	905



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## Ben Rice: [www.YouTube.com/user/Rev198](http://www.YouTube.com/user/Rev198)



### **Y**our training videos appear to take place in a basement. What is your current training area like, and how does it compare to your older videos at a public gym?

I train in my garage primarily, although I've moved three times since getting my equipment. So, I guess technically, I've had multiple garage gyms. My training is largely focused on the "big three lifts" so I don't have a whole lot of extraneous equipment. It forces me to be a bit more creative when specific accessories are needed. That being said, I've yet to run into a weakness that I can't address with a solid barbell, rack, bench, a bunch of bands, and some ingenuity.

In comparison to the public gyms I've trained at in the past, there are certainly pros and cons to both the garage and the bigger facilities. Training at home eliminates external distractions, commutes, working around the schedules of others, and having to wait my turn for limited equipment. However, it also means that I don't have a spotter or added external motivators that you tend to get by lifting heavy things in front of a group of people. The solo training calls for more internal motivation and more self-honesty, as making an ego driven weight selection may be setting you up for some time pinned under a heavy weight with no one to save you.

### **What are your best powerlifting competition lifts, and at what weight classes?**

I've generally competed as a raw 198 and 220 lbs. lifter in the past six years or so in various federations. Now, I am making the switch to the USAPL as a 205 lbs./93kg lifter for the 2016 USAPL Raw Nationals.

My best official competition lifts in each of those classes would be:

198:

661 squat w/wraps

365 bench

733 deadlift

1746 raw w/wraps total as a junior @195 lbs.

220:

705 squat w/wraps (UPA)

651 squat w/sleeves (USPA)

392 bench

751 deadlift

1835 raw w/wraps total @209 lbs.

1775 raw w/sleeves total @210 lbs.

I plan on surpassing all of these numbers as a USAPL Raw 205 lbs. lifter in the coming months.

### **Your channel is very insightful and encouraging to those who watch it. Do you believe that this meticulous mindset allows you to prevail?**

I often assert that the key to consistent growth is a willingness to be self-reflective and open to always learning more about the things that you are passionate about. The commentaries I share are about the internal process of struggle, growth, and improvement. There comes a critical point in the training process when things stop getting "easier". The better you become, the more you have to keep doing in order to continue improving. When you learn to accept that reality, you can shift your mindset from, "It gets easier" to the more realistic understanding that, "It won't get easier, but you can get better at dealing with it". That is what I try to share in my videos, and I firmly believe that this is why I've been able to progress and grow in some way for the duration of my lifting career so far.

### **What are your short and long-term strength training goals?**

I've been at this for well over a decade now (closing in on my seventeen year training anniversary) so short term is more like six to eight months at a time now. Long term is something like three to five year plans, but at the moment, I'm grinding away with the help of my coaches, Eric Bodhorn and Hani Zajayrli, from The Strength Athlete to put together my best possible showing at this year's USAPL Raw nationals. I absolutely plan to greatly surpass all of my previous best competition lifts at that meet in October, and most of my focus for the rest of this year is aimed specifically on that day. Down the road, I intend to put up an 800 lbs. raw deadlift as I've been flirting with that possibility for a few years already, along with a 700 lbs. squat in sleeves. Finally, I also plan on breaking my mental barrier and getting my bench into the 400s. However, talking about it does little in making it happen, so I'll get back to the grind and keep chipping away one block, one week, one rep at a time and always pursue growth and improvement in this pursuit that I've come to love. That's the ultimate goal - to find every opportunity I can to improve my craft and use the challenges and process to shape myself into a better lifter and a better person.

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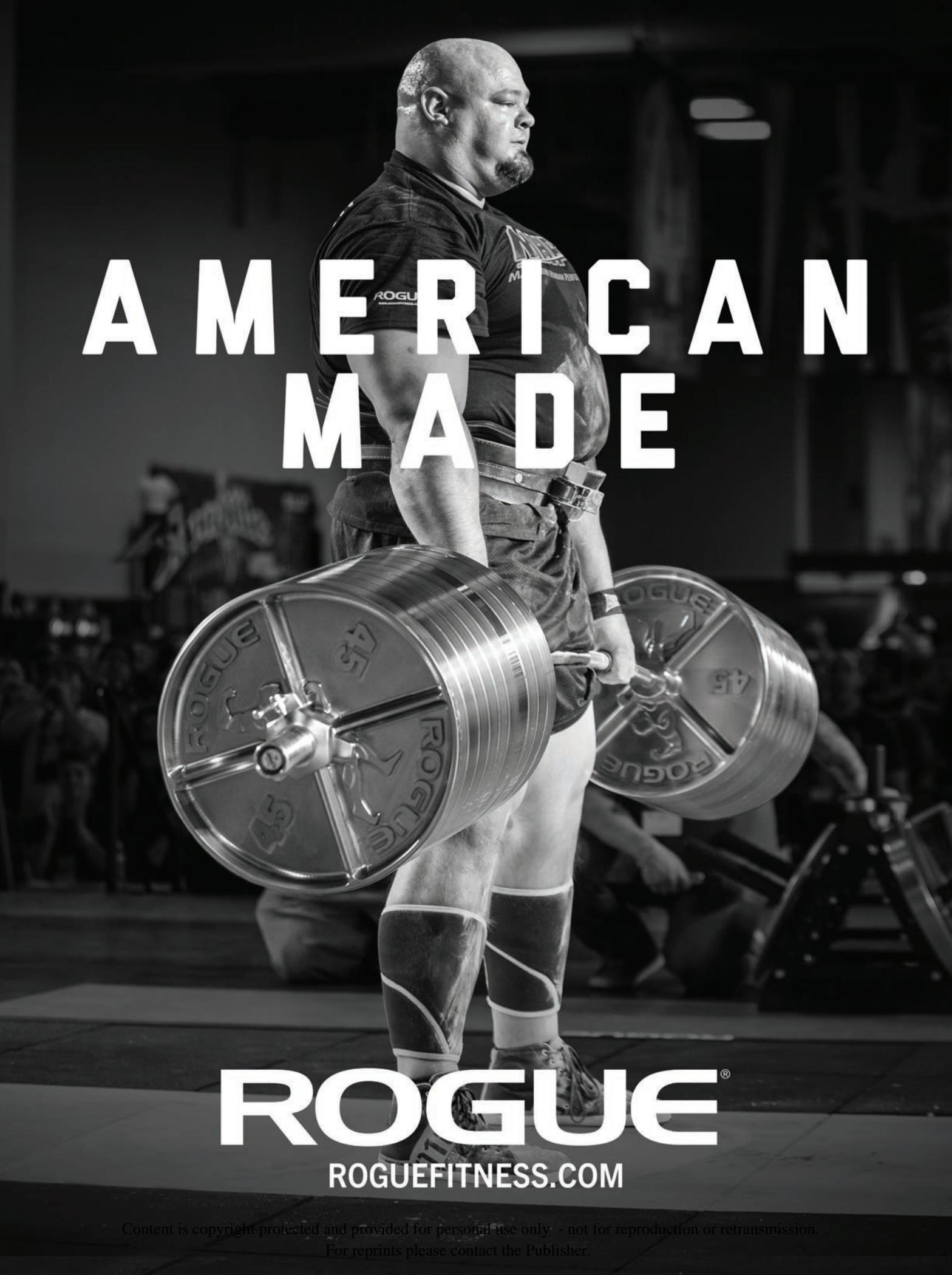
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