



THE *POWER-DOC*

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MARK HAS BEEN A CONTRIBUTOR FOR POWERLIFTER TODAY AND WE WANTED TO KNOW MORE ABOUT HIM

You're a powerlifter, a physical therapist (PT) and a chiropractor. Which came first?

Powerlifting. I started competing in 1990, but started training in 1986.

What's your age, height and weight?

I'm 47, 5'9" and walk around at mostly 198.

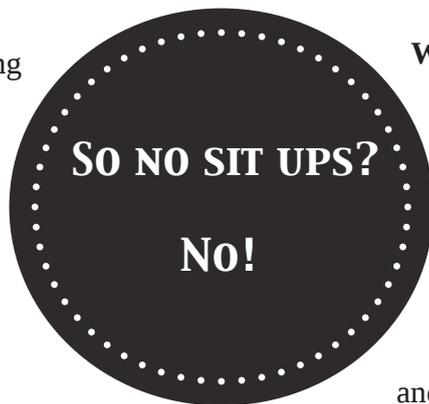
What are your best lifts in a meet recently?

In the last year, I squatted 750, benched 510, and deadlifted 600, all multi ply in 181's. I mostly compete in the IPA and XPC federations.

When did you become a chiropractor and PT?

I graduated from Chiropractic School in 1999 and Physical Therapy in 2005. I'm

more of a soft tissue therapist than a chiropractor and typically work twelve hours a day, thirteen if you count paper



work! I don't have any office help and I like it better that way.

Where do you train?

I've got a training area at the office that has a monolift, bench, deadlift bar, other bars, chains, kettlebells – you name it and I've got it. I train here two thirds of the time just for convenience. On Saturdays I train at Hercules Gym in Syracuse and that's usually bench day.

How many lifters are in the Hercules crew?

We've got 20-25 powerlifters including Marcus Morris and Rheta West. Most of the lifters are raw with lifters in all kinds of federations. We don't make judgments, just show up and lift!

What template or program do you generally train with?

My program is generally the Cube and a little Westside thrown in. One week is rep week, the next is speed week, and the third week is a max effort. I'll usually take a week after six weeks and rest or deload.

How are you connected with the Outlaw Forum?

I've been posting on there for years as "Powerdoc". It's a mostly multi ply, pro-drug and generally conservative forum. People can ask questions about injuries, etc.

Of all the powerlifters and strength athletes you treat in your practice, what are the most common injuries you see and what do you advise for injury prevention?

Most common are lower back injuries by far. My main athletes are elite runners and triathletes. I know, they're skinny and I'm not, but they have the same mentality as powerlifters. They'll run until their legs fall off and powerlifters will bench until their shoulders are trashed. The most common

runner injuries are lower body – groin, shins, knees, hams, hips, and these types of injuries are often shared by powerlifters. Back and shoulders are the most common powerlifting injury.

What do you generally advise powerlifters to do to prevent these types of injury?

I follow Stuart McGill's protocols which generally say to stop flexing the spine. You don't do sit ups or crunches, or anything doing flexion movements. Do isometric exercises like planks, bird dogs and "dead bugs". You move the arms and hips around a neutral, stable spine. A "dead bug" is laying on your back, arms and legs straight up with knees slightly bent, alternating arm and leg up or down. Basically one leg down, the reverse arm up, then alternate while holding your core static and stable. In all these exercises the core is held tight and stable while limbs move around that.

So no sit ups?

No! The spine should stay neutral even in every day things like picking up a laundry basket at home. I do it sumo style,

and when I pick up a pencil, it's golfer style – one hand on support like a golfer does with a golf club to pick up a ball. The spine stays neutral.

These core exercises provide enough strengthening to squat and deadlift heavy?

Like Blaine Sumner said in the first issue of this magazine, squatting and deadlifting provide almost all the core work a powerlifter needs. I don't flex the spine. Shoulder work is mostly soft tissue work. I use Active Release Technique and Graston. Graston involves using a tool to lightly scrape the fascia over the muscle to give the muscle underneath room to move.

What would be your ideal powerlifting warmup for most people?

Light rotator cuff work with a band, a couple sets of planks but not to failure. Walk on a treadmill for 5-10 minutes just to get the blood circulating. I don't stretch, before or after unless a muscle is really tight. Stretching elongates a muscle and prevents contraction when you need it doing the lift. I



like traction, hanging upside down and face down. You can buy those tables at garage sales, but if you have eye issues you shouldn't do those.

What happens when a patient walks in your office?

I might do adjustment but it's generally soft tissue work under physical therapy. Whatever the patient needs is what I do that will solve the problem.

Have you ever thought how we could make powerlifting a spectator sport and therefore more popular?

Even Olympic lifting is boring to watch! I think if powerlifting wants to get in the Olympics though, they've got to drop the squat. The squat is my best lift, but it's hard to judge, most people can't relate to it, and



DOWN TIME

VanAlstyne with his buddies

it really prolongs a meet. If there weren't squats there wouldn't be anything to discuss on the forums! This is controversial but I'd like to see powerlift meets starting with the bench, then squat, then deadlift like they used to do in the 70's. It makes more sense.

Any thoughts before this interview is over?

I'm all for the free market and appreciate how it works out in powerlifting with all its different federations and rules. The consumer (powerlifter) benefits by their freedom to choose what suits them. I'd like to thank Inzer for a long sponsorship and the Hercules Power Team for all their help.

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PLT



NICE OFFICE GYM



Interview by Jim Curley

