



Back from Discus Camp

There was a chance at Camp to have the bulk of our authors in one pic: Gary, Mike, Dave, and the editor...and the assorted psychos that go along with us to camp...but Dave hurt his back *bad* and had to scoot out before he got worse.

We love the guy, but he has 362 other days a year to get hurt and he picked the most important ones.



For the record, the gnome took your blessing and ran off...

The Gnome placed third overall, by the way. Notice, if you will, he is **RIGHT** handed, a proper way to throw, it is believed.



The Annual BO Games are reported fully at the Dan John Forum at the davedraper.com site.

Let's remember the mission here:

Our mission? To teach everyone:

1. The Body is One Piece
2. There are three kinds of strength training:
 - Putting weight overhead
 - Picking it off the ground
 - Carrying it for time or distance
3. All training is *complementary*.

So...whadda learn?

Editor

Since 1993, when Lindsay was not even one years old, I have trekked to Ohio for discus camp. When I first went there I had to use a card with a bunch of numbers to call long distance. I'm not exaggerating when I say that it might have been a series of 30 numbers.

When I first went to camp, literally, there was no internet as we know it. Since that time, I have learned how to do so many things with a computer, it simply amazes me.

So, it's been a long time. This year, my brother, Gary, came out and showed the young ones how we camp. Never miss a drill, never miss a chance to be coached, stay late and learn more.

I learned a lot, too. Here is my post on davedraper:

It's probably true for all sports:

The role of nerves, adrenal hit, crowds and competition MUST be considered in training programs. In the discus, the adrenals cause the athlete to lock out the legs and drive harder. So, in training, why worry about locking out the legs...EVER?

In sports, the speed of the game trumps so much of training, so the athlete needs to prepare at either shocking lower speeds or shockingly faster speeds. That "normal" speed of comp really doesn't seem to work.

Also, the Goblets Squat, the swing (done right!!!), the VO2 Max snatch, the Get Up and simple barbell moves might be enough for most of us for most things. I'm working daily on this new insight into Strength's role in performance, so it's still foggy, but I'm miles ahead of where I was months ago.

The discus training stuff is important for so many of you because the discus has multiple qualities but needs near Max levels of absolute strength in most of them. The deadlift...only needs ones

quality at Absolute max.

Many of us want to optimize several qualities...much more akin to a discus thrower (yes, different qualities, but still in the same pathway as several qualities)...than a powerlifter. The discus thrower and the bodybuilder probably share some of the same issues of balancing things ...fat loss and hypertrophy must be as hard as explosive power through relaxation inside optimal technique...and that is an insight from this year.

There is a lot more obviously, but I'm still kicking it around.

Last edition, I mentioned a shortened program that I have been playing with mixing the Program Minimum with the VO2 max, it is simple training. But, the great insight that I am running with also relates to simple stuff.

The other day in the backyard, I coached a young man, Aaron, who is new to throwing. His proud grandpa kept noting how narrow my feet are in turns and how little "room" I use. I pointed out: "This is a weedy field. It's wet. I'm turning in wet straw. It isn't the Olympic finals!"

In other words, keep it simple. In basketball, it is important to teach people to shoot free throws exhausted, but you need to teach the basics first. In throwing, it is important to teach a maximal effort throw, but you have to school the athletes in the basics first.

And, yes, I know you know it. But, do you do it?

Oly Training: 102

Duane Hansen

Duane returns with another gem:

Duane II

A few months ago I took some time to ponder the question "If you could only do one lift in the gym, what would it be?" This is a dumb question (in my opinion) and is better generalized as "What is the most important thing you should be doing in the gym?" The most important thing to do is usually fixing your weakest point. For me, the weakest point is most often found in the muscles between my shoulders and hips. Power for throwing and lifting is created in the lower body but the implement or barbell is held in the hands or on the shoulders. You need to be able to transfer the power from the lower body to the upper body. I find that I lose a lot of that power because the muscles in the middle of my body are inadequate for the task. So, if I can make those muscles stronger, everything else should improve, too.

Dan came up with the idea of a "chain link fence" recently and it makes a lot of sense to me. Here is his original idea:

...most people are so far off in their understanding of the entire abdominal and lower back area that most of our training dogma of the past few years is guaranteed to lead to injury. There is a phrase that has reached almost cliché status in the last year or so and I think it deserves some review: "First, stability; then, mobility."

A few years ago I stumbled on a simple idea about training: "Sport is motion; if you cannot move the way that you need to move, fix that first." I still believe this is true, assuming that you have not neglected the foundation of stability. Back to Dan:

...I think of the area from below the shoulders to the top of the hips like the athlete has a chain link fence wrapped around it. A few years ago on a road trip in Utah, I came across a car that had slid off the road and had been stopped and held up by a chain link fence. Now, certainly the 2000 pound car driving at 65 miles per hour had ruined the chain link fence beyond its original job description, but the car was still being held up. If you follow my image, you need those interlocking strands of steel, but you must be flexible enough to expand and contract. It's not "To Six-Pack or Not to Six-Pack," it's the idea of being solid, strong and flexible.

The only direct work that I was doing for my "core" (I really do despise that term) was Roman Chair situps with some weight on my chest every other day for 5 sets x 5 reps. I would also do a few sets of 10 in the frog kick during the day (pretty much as often as I wandered through the garage and into the house) but that was just to unkink my back. I relied on a steady diet of snatch, clean & jerk, squat and deadlift to keep my low back "strong enough".

Lately, I started doing other stuff in place of direct work for the abs and low back. It is giving me some variety without getting too far away from the real work that needs to be done (i.e., similar, but different). What I have been doing is this:

1. Cheat Curls
2. Tricep Pushdowns

The clever part here (if I do say so myself) is this: with the cheat curls I stand a 14" high block of wood between my feet. I lower the bar so that it rests on the board at the bottom of the movement just below my knees; then I cheat curl it up. The entire time I try to keep my knees passive (like I am doing an RDL) so the muscles on the back of my body are doing the heavy lifting. I start the motion by assuming a big chest and arched back position and I keep my arms straight as long as I can. After I curl the bar to the top, I lower it by first straightening the arms and then lowering it RDL-style to the block. The important part to keeping the biceps safe and solid is to make sure that you lower the weights deliberately and make it a point to lock out the elbows at the bottom. This is important: no one will care how you finish the top of a curl, but your elbows will let you know if you are cheating at the bottom. I am 100% behind cheating to get the weight up, but I will never start a rep with anything other than straight arms. One long day of tossing bales onto a rack with a vicious case of tendonitis in my elbows was all the teaching I needed on this point.

With the tricep pushdowns, I stand far enough away so that when my forearms are perpendicular to my body the cable

on the apparatus is straight up and down. I load it up to a ridiculous weight and cheat like hell to push the handle down; I lean into it a lot, but I keep the cable in front of my head. My triceps work hard, but feel it the most in my abs the next day.

I like this combination of lifts right now because it lets me think I am getting away with something (I am doing arm work!) when I am really hitting the muscles in my abs and low back the hardest. I am also holding the weight in my hands, so the elbows and wrists are forced to take up some of the load. These joints are often ignored until they start to hurt. Hopefully giving them something to do will keep them happier. I am also using a lot more weight than I possibly could if I was doing situps and back extensions with added weight. In general, using more weight is better and cheating a bit on non-classical lifts is not the worst thing to do, as long as you are distributing the stress to more muscles and not injuring yourself to do it.

This stuff (cheat curls and pushdowns) seems to be working well enough because my snatch and clean & jerk are moving up. It is difficult to prove a cause and effect relationship between assistance exercises and your results in the classical lifts, but I take a pragmatic approach to this and try not to over think it: As long as it seems to work, I will keep doing it. When it stops working (and we know that nothing works forever), I will find something else to do. *Once again, Duane makes the rest of us look like monkeys. Sure, smart monkeys...*

Beginning The Rotation: Three Keys to Success out of the Back

**M. Adam
Thielemann**

Adam has been a friend and throwing partner for, well, a long time. Adam's writing here opens the doors to the most important part of the throw.

Introduction:

As anyone within the throwing community can attest to the back of the ring is crucial to the development of rotational power throughout the throw. Ultimately, the goal of the rotational throw is to elongate the radius of whichever implement is being thrown, which in turn creates a massive stretch reflex—an easy, super fast and explosive finish to an otherwise aggressively controlled movement.

The back of the ring is a highly variable transition phase, which seeks to slightly separate—to create muscular tension—between one's lower and upper body. It is important to note that this goal must be achieved in a way that allows the rotational thrower to further accelerate his body by turning the right foot throughout the rest of the throw.

The ability to separate one's lower body from the abdominal and pectoral muscular systems effectively and consistently out of the back of the ring is by far the most difficult task a thrower will face. Every thrower knows the smallest variation in the beginning of a throw can drastically alter the position one finds him self in at the front of the ring. A variation in tempo or the rate which one begins his movement may cause several problems ranging from a

lack of separation to a failure to accelerate the implement throughout the throw or a drastic deceleration of the implement due to postural deviation. Therefore, control and consistency are of the utmost importance when beginning the throw.

Control and consistency are built in large part by throwing, (John Powell used to recommend his throwers take 10,000 throws a year) however there is a limit to throwing epiphany. Throwing so many repetitions trains the body to perform under the most stressful conditions; it builds sport specific strength and also increases the probability of hitting that big throw. What it does not do is guarantee one understands how to repeat a big throw, understand what the difference was, or guarantee one will perform on a consistent basis!

Technical discussion, as it is presented in this article, exists to increase one's understanding of the basic positions and kinetic movements, which, when employed, allow one to capitalize upon the specific sport strength he has painstakingly developed by throwing. The purpose of this article is to outline the function of the back of the ring and then to describe, in detail, three troubleshooting techniques one may use to enhance his understanding of the movement, at which point, this author hopes the techniques discussed may be integrated to help improve the thrower's consistency and efficiency in the ring.

Three Keys

Key #1: Feel your right foot turn to 90

As I mentioned in the introduction of this piece, the back of the ring is filled with pitfalls ranging from control,

balance, and tempo issues, matters of self-discipline as they can be improved only as one gains better kinesthetic awareness and throwing experience, all the way to technical defects such as faulty positioning. Because each thrower has a unique orientation in the ring one cannot point to a single stance and claim it is correct or faultless. What one can do is take a look at what advanced throwers do in transition from their point of double support into single-support (sprint phase).

A torqued position out of the back of the ring is obtainable only by beginning one's throwing movement with his lower body. This helps to create muscular tension within the lower body and then to a greater degree helps to separate the lower body from the upper body. Such a position requires one to accelerate his lower body by dropping his center of gravity.

By dropping one's center of gravity he is essentially activating both of his feet. For a right-handed thrower the left foot is a crucial pivot point from which he is able to start his sprint. While everyone accepts this left-leg post position as the most powerful of the throwing phases, the role of an active right foot, which develops the separation between the post and the trailing leg tends to be sorely overlooked.

Theoretically, one should lower his center of gravity by dropping his left hip down and to the left towards 8 o'clock. When one lowers his center of gravity thus, he actively grinds his feet into the cement. Since one must maintain an upright and torqued position to feel his right foot grind into the cement, he will have maintained good body posture when he can feel his feet working as a system. Coincidentally, this will achieve my second key to trouble-shooting the

back of the ring: maintaining tension of the hips.

When one's feet work as a system in the transition from the double support to single support they create a stretch reflex, which elongates the path of the right leg and increases the amount of time spent in rotation, which increases the stretch reflex and rotational velocity applied to the shot put/discus. In addition, by keeping one's right foot on the ground as long as possible, he will create a very smooth natural pickup, which will allow for an easier and more efficient movement.

If, on the other hand, you are having problems out of the back of the ring and you cannot feel your right foot turn then you have lost your balance and are probably failing to accelerate your lower body out of the back. This may be due to an overzealous upper body, an improper sitting technique, or a basic postural imbalance, all of which are a recipe for injury. Remember: easy goes far!

Key #2: Tension of the hips

Maintaining tension of the hips is crucial to developing one's post leg strength and then developing sprint speed out of the South African. John Powell loves to compare the left leg to a piston, which once compressed creates a muscular explosion. This explosion or left leg drive exists to increase one's lower/upper body separation as the upper body allows itself to relax while the hips rotate and set the feet down along a linear path. However, this very linear explosion cannot be without rotational direction, as the implement would decelerate when the right foot fails to turn. This means that the path of the right leg must reach out and pass the left side post on its way to the middle of the ring.

There are many ways to accomplish this linear/rotational sprint: Powell believes in maximizing the linear component by allowing his right leg to extend, whereas Mac Wilkins believes that a wide and/or sweeping motion of the right leg creates a greater degree of torque due to a longer rotational axis. Since the 70's coaches have argued this to the point where allegiance to a particular style has caused the positional understanding to be lost. Coincidentally moderately skilled throwers tend to have great difficulty reconciling their technique with the stylistic preferences he may encounter.

This confusion is compounded by the bad habits most young throwers develop in high school. Many young throwers are in a horrible rush to get out of the back of the ring—their left shoulder pulls directly backwards, which causes them to lose their control, consistency, and balance. They then have to pull a relaxed right leg around a weak left side post, which leads to a litany of problems. The result is particularly noticeable at the high school level where many strong and more athletic throwers succumb to their smaller, weaker, but more technically sound opponents. My advice for throwers reading this article: leave the stylistic debates to coaches and seek out the most powerful and replicable position you can find!

The easiest way to maintain tension of the hips is to have a strong starting stance, which can be easily replicated. One might try to bow his knees outward with a very slight bend and then gently thrust his hips upward as he stands taller in the backswing of his wind. This will achieve a feeling of tension in one's groin, which, when the back is properly executed, will maximize the distance between one's post and trail leg. This

will help one add a strong linear sprint to the rotational power one develops by turning his feet and sitting his hips.

Key #3: Keep Your Shoulders Level!

One should seek to throw from the ground up, which is why this key has fallen to the back of the pack. However, a stable upper body is vital to maintaining torque and orbit throughout the throw. In order to position oneself in the front of the ring with maximum separation, one must train his torso to relax and defer to the lower body. This helps to make the upper body's rotation as small as possible and eliminate all extraneous, potentially fatal movements. In doing so, it also succeeds in gradually developing separation, helps to keep weight over the right foot, and allows the lower body to accelerate the implement, which will rise as one aggressively drives off the left leg, along an elliptical path.

Late in Brian Oldfield's career his technique was analyzed by a biomechanist, who found that his torso seemed to stop moving when he reached the power position. While the biomechanist argued that an upper body which stops accelerating cannot accelerate anything, he failed to realize that the upper body accelerates very slowly around a fixed point until the trailing foot touches down and then the feet resume their work as a system. This system then accelerates the implement and upper body at a much greater rate of rotational velocity until the lower body collapses/reverses and the implement flies out. However, one's body can only work together if one maintains proper positioning. Otherwise, muscular tension will be lost and the body will fail to snap the implement at the finish.

As I stated in the first paragraph of this section, one should always work/troubleshoot the rotational throw from the ground up. This is because it is the only part of the body in contact with the ground and, as such, it actively controls the positioning of the rest of the body, the development of power and the rotational velocity of the implement. Despite the upper body's more passive role, one aims to relax so as to maximize separation, catch and then pull on the implement as long as possible, its importance cannot be underestimated in one's throwing development!

40 Day Workout

“Josh”

Josh is an online reader who is experimenting with the 40 Day Workout. Welcome Aboard.

Bench Press 2x5
Dead Lift 2x5
Bent Over Rows 2x5
Hanging Clean and Press 1x10 (your article says 20 to 50, but I am gasping for breath at 10)
Bench Knee Ups 1x5

I do this Monday through Friday and take the weekends off. If I miss a day I don't worry about it.

My first day using this workout was May 20, 2009
Weight: 166 lbs
Body Fat: 13.5% (according to scale)
Bench Press: 115 lbs
Dead Lift: 145 lbs
Bent Over Row: 85 lbs
Hanging Clean and Press: 65 lbs.

As of Last night, June 8, 2009
Weight: 170 lbs
Body Fat: 13.5% (again, according to the scale)
Bench Press: 135 lbs
Dead Lift: 165 lbs
Bent Over Row: 115 lbs
Hanging Clean and Press: 85 lbs

My fasting blood sugar has dropped 10 points to boot.

Been trying to add weight to the bar every week. I have yet to feel sore, but start feeling stiff towards the end of the week. By Monday I feel very strong. Diet is not what you call clean but have made an effort to add calories how ever I can. Breakfast consists of bacon, sausage, and cottage cheese. Lunch is frozen beef patties slathered with mayonnaise. Dinner is whatever my wife cooks. I try and eat a spoonful of peanut butter once or twice a day and drink a cheap protein powder mix with creatine after my workout. That's it.

40 workouts with 5 a week, gives me 8 weeks to use this workout. July 15 will complete my eight weeks. Hopefully this sort of progress with continue, so far it has worked so well I am already planning to repeat the 8 weeks with new exercises.

Published by Daniel John
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