

GET UP!

Volume II, Issue 7

Thanksgiving 2003

Let's be thankful...

Thanksgiving is my favorite holiday...so much so, that we celebrate "Practice Thanksgivings" at every opportunity. We like to be thankful...and eat a lot of turkey.

This year, we seem to have more to be thankful for...especially all the new friends. Our first writer, David Witt, has eaten a lot of meals with the Editorial Staff, but he was just an email a year ago.

Let's hope to meet a lot more people this year...

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*.

The Do It Yourself Core Blaster Blaster David Witt



*David ended up third in Kentucky's State Meet under the coaching of Marty Mayer and Pep Stidham (God rest his soul, he died young in his 40's of heart problems). Going to college that **didn't** have a track program, David has competed as an open and unattached thrower for years*

in and around the Kentucky area. Married to Pam with two

If you're like me, you've read some of the articles in "Get Up!" and thought to yourself "gee, I wish I had me one of those". The same thought went through my mind when I was looking at pictures of the Core Blaster, a device used to really work those core muscles in the abdominal region and spinal erectors that are oh so important for throwers.

So I went down to my local hardware store and bought the components to build my own core blaster. First I picked out a $\frac{3}{4}$ inch diameter flange that



was a foot long. Then, a t-joint plus two more flanges each about 6 inches long. Finally, I found a footer, to make the base of the core blaster.

I attached the t-joint and the footer to opposite ends of the longer flange. Then, I screwed the two smaller flanges into the two ends of the t-joint for the handle. This is what it looks like without weights.

Now I can slide $\frac{3}{4}$ inch weights down the large flange and I'm ready to work out.

I only had one 25 pound plate handy, so this is what it now looks like.

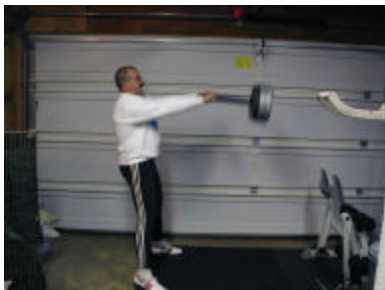
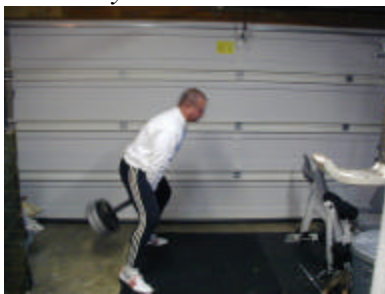
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I took it out in my garage and gave it a few swings. Even with only 25 pounds, I could feel the muscles that it works being put to the test. The core blaster will be a part of my workouts from now on, and it only cost me about \$15 for the hardware. Plates usually sell for 50 cents a pound, so for someone with no plates at all it would cost about \$65 dollars for the whole rig with 100 pounds of plates. Hmmm, I'll see if my Dad has some plates I can borrow. *The "inventor" of the Core Blaster, Todd Taylor" shows us the basics:*



Witt and Wisdom

The second in the series from David...he writes a lot of this newsletter. Maybe, he should get a raise. That's it, we will double what we pay him now!

Ok, we've read about the four seasons of training, and following the rhythms of nature to plan your yearly approach. Now, let's turn our attention to some smaller rhythms, the weekly approach to working out. I'm talking mostly weight workouts here, but I'm sure this can carry over to throwing workouts as well.

If you're like most people, you probably think about working out 3 times a week with the weights. Usually Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, because that was what most of us did in high school. Depending on your sport, and the season, you may have been doing the same exercises those three days, or, if you're a powerlifting influenced kinda person, you maybe did squats two days a week and deadlifts once a week. What ever you did, my assertion here is that it is fine to start with a cookie-cutter sorta plan to start out with, but to make the most progress to the best of your ability, you need to discover your own rhythms.

I don't know why, but I find that I do better on some lifts on certain days rather than others. I really like deadlifting on Wednesday, and doing back squats on Friday. Power Snatches on Monday, and Power Cleans on Friday. I can bench the most weight on Friday. So, I've set up my routine to take advantage of those days, and make sure that my heavy days for a particular exercise happens on those days when I am usually at my best for that exercise.

So right now, I'm doing Power Snatches on Monday, and Power Cleans on Friday. But, to avoid not practicing both movements on each day, on Monday I do clean high pulls after the Power Snatches and on Friday I do snatch high pulls after the Power Cleans. I make the power movements of that day the focus, and use the high pulls as an assistance exercise. This also helps with my motivation. Each day I have one lift that I look forward to really pushing myself to improve upon.

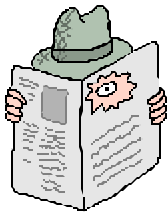
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Get out your training journal. You may find, like our esteemed editor, that you may thrive on deadstop front squats, one arm lifts, and overhead squats. But look more closely, you may find that once certain days those one arm lifts may be better than other days. Use that knowledge to your advantage, tailor your training in the one arm lifts around that day, and push yourself to new heights beyond your previous thoughts and faster than you thought it would take.

The Murray Institute for Lifelong Fitness...Top Secret Military Review



Aaron Hall

Aaron Hall has spent his last 8 years serving as a military medic both in the States and abroad. He has no exercise certifications or titles but travels the world looking for people knowledgeable in the iron game to learn from and to assist him in his growth as a lifter and military member.

First of all I must begin by saying a huge thank you to Dan John. If anyone is in the Salt Lake area I highly recommend contacting this man and training with him. Ever the gentleman he asks no money for is invaluable service, but somehow when you leave you just have to leave a piece of you with him. In my case it was my military duffle bag to replace "Judy" who had a few holes in her. Ok, enough touchy feely, on to the tough, err I mean, fun stuff.

Picture it, beautiful cloud free sky, and 50 degrees, training outdoors at the base of the mountain. It's times like these that make you think, "God must be a weightlifter." I arrived at Mr. John's home and we started things off with some sled drags. We began with two sets of two sprints as far and back as we wished but any loafing was frowned upon (rest assured I was the one loafing!) Next on the starter menu were the ever popular waiter walks. These were done while dragging the sled and we used kettlebells instead of dumbbells which really worked the chest and deltoid well. Since the weight hung

off the back of our forearms we constantly had to fight the weight to keep it from pulling the arm back.



After that I was introduced to juggernaut training. For the uninitiated this involves loading up a sled with rocks, dirt, twigs, and whatever is handy. Then when it's heavy you add the B.F.R. What is a B.F.R. you ask? A Big Freaking Rock. Dan, you're a nice guy and all but I really dislike that rock a great deal and I down right despise it when it's in that sled. This rock is an 85 lbs chunk of something that he brought out of a canyon. I didn't know hell had canyons but I guess they do and their full of very dense, heavy rocks! So now you're strapped to this sled, then you pick up two 24 kgs kettlebells and go for a stroll.

Now here are some words of wisdom, if you're trying to outdo your buddy with this one make sure you're pulling on grass and he's on dirt. I was drudging along on dirt when I hit a patch of grass and I felt like someone had taken about 100 lbs out of the sled. Much easier. After a few walks with this piece of, umm, I mean implement I learned some things. For starters, this is a great exercise! What is it great for? Everything! I was winded as all get out, my thighs were on fire, and my arms from the tops of my delts all the way down to my fingernails knew beyond the shadow of a doubt that they were intimately involved in this endeavor. Many military applications ran through my mind. I mean what could be more productive training than dragging a pack along with hanging onto weights to simulate gear or a litter? Oh yeah, and did I mention I was winded? I was winded.

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So after this torture was over, Dan had another pronunciation “exercise” I think he called it, we moved on to more challenging things. (!?) Next we threw a sand filled duffel bag, Judy, on and did some more farmers walks. Then it was on to the bear hug walk with the same. Yep, you guessed it, I’m still huffing and puffing but now I’m also having trouble standing still. Dan was nice enough to act winded when I was looking at him but behind my back I think he was just knocking off one handed push-ups to keep warm. It was then that things got weird. You remember that rock I was telling you about? Our next drill involved it and only it.

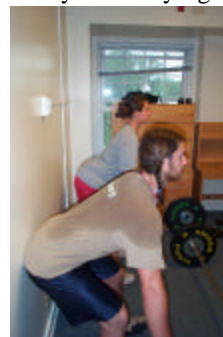
Pick up the rock and hold it out a little bit from your chest. Yes, it’s heavy and you could hurt your back holding like this, but don’t worry. When you start running with it that takes care of all of the danger of back injury. Ok so now I’m running with this thing and asking myself “Why?” Then a voice comes from over my shoulder, “Now stop and throw it.” At this point I’m not really thinking, just doing what I’m told (it’s the military in my) so I jump stop and chest pass the thing as far as I can. I was shocked! That thing sailed out of my hands and just kept going! It was a world-class waddling rock throw if ever I saw one! I’m not kidding folks it had to be at least three to four inches that sucker flew. It’s an 85 lbs rock people, what did you expect!?



By now I had already arrived at the conclusion that this bizarre drill could have some endurance merit. Or maybe Dan didn’t like all my bad jokes and realized that I can’t make them when I’m gasping for air. Did I mention I was winded? Oh, ok so you already know. I must have had a puzzled look on my face, or maybe just a pained one, but Obi John (hey, that name may stick!) answered my silent question with a word: “Caber.” Actually he said more than that

but I couldn’t hear him real well over my wheezing. It came clear then. That little rock waddle was a lot like throwing the caber. Highland games purist can now put this article up on the dart board and take aim. I didn’t say it was exactly like it, but similar. Highlanders, if you are still mad at me then you can all cheer at the fact that Dan made me do the waddle throw again. At this point Obi John is now warm enough to lift and I am looking around for a nice shallow grave. Unfortunately our two dogs could dig faster than Dan could coax me across the yard and into his garage gym. I think he was promising me water, or a quick death or something equally appealing.

Now it’s time to lift. We start going into his Romanian Deadlift/Snatch/Overhead Squat drill with a vengeance. I really like this drill. I can’t do it to save my life, but I really like the drill. If you are 72 inches tall or taller get down low enough to grip the bar just inside the collars. Now stand up with it however you wish. Now lower the bar just below the kneecaps. To lower the bar you slide it down your thighs while pushing your ass back with as little knee bend as possible. It’s like doing a good morning with the weight in dead lift position instead of across the shoulders. When the bar reaches the area just below your knees your hamstrings should feel really tight and you whole body feels like it’s in a position it really shouldn’t be in. If everything is as it should be your back should be very flat, you butt well behind your ankles, and your chin jutted forward as if you are trying to touch the opposite wall.



Next, and as quickly as possible, try to touch your chin to the ceiling. What you will find is that the bar will shoot up and you will be in a semi standing position. Don’t straighten out

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your knees! Keep them bent, it's very important. If you want to know why ask Dan, because I haven't a clue but he's been right about everything else so I'm taking it on faith. Once the bar has reached maximum height, which is around chest to abdominal level, pull yourself down below it into the bottom position of the overhead squat. Now if you are like me you probably power snatched the thing. That's ok; just add an overhead squat at the end. Then drop the bar and start over.

Points to remember are to push your butt as far back as possible and to actively pull the bar towards you as you go down so it slides down your thighs. This was something I was having trouble getting. However, thanks to Dan's gentle coaching methods (he was standing over me with a rake handle held high in a manner befitting a Feudal Shogun from ancient Japan) I have fixed this problem. No, he never hit me with the stick, although I made damn sure I didn't give him a reason to, and somewhere Sister Nicholas was smiling. After a few doubles of this it was time to call it quits. I didn't want to but I think Dan saw that I was starting to slow down. That is another lesson I've learned. With any new technique, once the "zip" is gone out of your movements it's time to pack it up for the day. Anything after that and you're not really practicing, you're just surviving.

So what did I learn that day? For starters Dan really is as good a coach as I had heard. Not to mention very gracious. I learned that GPP is a wonderful thing and something that I have been overlooking as of late but no more. I learned that there is something very useful to being able to recover quickly and I felt like the warm ups were training that very well. I learned that probably the most useful piece of equipment besides barbells and squat racks is a sled and some kettlebells. And above all else I learned that the devil is in the details when it comes to Olympic lifting. Thank you, Obi John, for a GREAT Saturday afternoon. We'll have to get together and do it again sometime after I am able to walk by any large stone without breaking into a cold sweat.

Aaron loaned me his kettlebells after our last work out at my home. He, for his part, showed me the basics of Kettlebells.

I will be buying a set, including a lighter one for my wife, Tiffini, this week, but my observations so far include:

- 1. If I do twenty one arm swings (Right for 20, Left for 20), I am always certain that I could...to save a life...do more. To save the Universe, I could do twice as many, but I am very happy to sit down and rest, thank you very much. It is the opposite of my life's training, obviously, as I usually throw things as far as I can or max on the lifts. But, this idea of strength endurance certainly has merits.*
- 2. I also note that I am sore...but I can't seem to put my finger on it, so to speak. I did the Windmill Variation with one bell above the head and the other touching the ground. My obliques really got on fire, but they are not sore today, but I am sore throughout my entire waist carriage.*
- 3. I must say that the K-bells certainly seem to get the whole CV system rolling, but I notice that I am "fresh," no real CNS burnout.*

Cons:

- 1. Well, Aaron is going to take them back.*
- 2. It is embarrassing to be that beat up with anything less than bodyweight.*
- 3. As Aaron pointed out: I need to learn the "catch" for the snatches and cleans.*

Notice to our readers!

Get the Winter 2003 edition of the Bigger Faster Stronger Journal. The editor is featured in a short essay.

Next month...teaching beginners!!!

Published by Daniel John

Daniel John, Editor

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