

GET UP!

Volume 1, Issue 4

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Gravity

Mike Rosenberg, the official conscience of GET UP! offers his first article this edition. We were talking on the telephone about the point of his article *which I had never even considered!!!* “Gravity,” Mike said, “has always been around and until an apple hit somebody on the head nobody noticed it.”

That is why we keep Mike around. Moreover, he also believes that writing for this newsletter is his ticket to riches.

Keep believing!

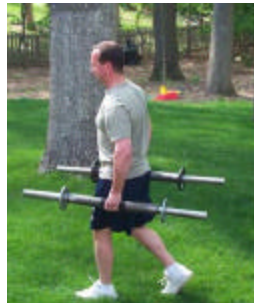
Let's not forget our mission:

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*.

Verbal Queues

Mike Rosenberg

Mike Rosenberg has jumped into Olympic Lifting, Highland Games and throwing as an adult. He is skilled at bringing resources together, usually large hunks of steel for throwing, lifting and carrying. This article walks us through something so obvious that most of us miss it!



How many times have you been to an event and listened to a coach bark a steady stream of instructions to an athlete while he or she is on the platform or when they are in the ring preparing to execute? If you have been to a competition, I bet you have seen it all too much. Coaches cry all the time: “Keep your chest up!” “Stay tight as you lift!” “Hips and bar together!” “Keep your arms long!” “Push through the shot!” ...on and on. What drives this article is something Brian Oldfield told me when attempting to fix my numerous stone throwing flaws. His words were, “You can’t think through a ballistic movement.” If you can’t think through a ballistic movement, what makes you think that barking out sagely advice while an athlete prepares to execute will do any

good. Brian further told me that you have to “let muscle memory take over and hope you did all those repetitions right” when you execute a ballistic movement.

Given the premise that ballistic movements operates largely on auto-pilot coupled with the desire of coaches to coach up until the last second before an athlete



executes, how can the coach best guide the athlete to focus on proper execution just prior to a lift or throw?

Why can’t a complex set of instructions or guidance be reduced to one or two words that mean the same thing to the athlete? Of course they can, but it is not an overnight process. The distillation of complex instructions has to start early on during training and eventually become a one or two word exclamation.

My favorite is the patented Dan John “One inch a second first pull fixer”. The exercise is basically executing the first pull of an Olympic weightlifting movement at the rate of one inch a second in order to gaining an understanding of your body position during the exercise. To start with, Dan tells me “First check – bar on your socks, wiggle your toes, keep your arms long, squeeze the grip, big chest and stay over the bar.” That is quite a bit of information to contend with and the bar hasn’t even left the ground. Next, I begin to lift at 1” per second. In the low hang he says, “Second check – wiggle your toes, big chest and stay over the bar.” I check myself and continue up to the high hang. Then he says again, “Third check – wiggle your toes, big chest and stay over the bar”. After passing the high hang he yells, “JUMP!” and I then jump with everything and perform a power snatch or power clean.

As repetition after repetition are performed the instructions begin to morph: The first few repetitions go like:

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First check – bar on your socks, wiggle your toes, keep your arms long, squeeze the grip, big chest and stay over the bar.

Second check – wiggle your toes, big chest and stay over the bar.

Third check – wiggle your toes, big chest and stay over the bar.

Jump

The next couple of reps sound like:

First check – bar on socks, wiggle toes, arms long, squeeze grip, big chest, over the bar.

Second check – wiggle toes, big chest, over the bar.

Third check – wiggle toes, big chest, over the bar.

Jump

The next couple of reps sound like:

Check – socks, toes, arms, grip, chest, over bar.

Check – toes, chest, bar.

Check – toes, chest, bar.

Jump

Oddly enough the last couple of reps become:

Check
Check
Check
Jump

Not only does the word “check” have a well define and specific meaning but its position in the string of verbal queues has a specific meaning too. I knew what to do at each command without having to hear a full drawn out description.



What is easier to tell an athlete on a lifting platform, “check” or a long litany of instructions? A single word can be **developed** over time to convey as much meaning to an athlete as a myriad of instructions. At John Powell’s throwing camp, this idea has been put into practice for many years with success. The queues “spanky”, “X” and the latest addition, “screw spring” have very specific means and expectations. Each queue conveys to the athlete a specific set of actions that are to be performed. Just as training muscle memory is important to ingrain a pattern of movement, distilled verbal queues are no different. The coach must systematically lead the athlete from a complex set of commands to a simple cue while conveying exactly the same information along the path. The coach must work at keeping the queue and the expected results consistent as to not confuse the athlete. It is a process that must be planned and practiced.

Stefan Fernholm...Squats!

“Stefan had James do a rep scheme of 5-3-7...the same as Stef. The key lift was wide stance squats...striving for great depth. Stefan was extremely flexible and spent much of his warm up trying to get his hip flexors more flexible. He would jam his upper thigh into a curb or step and then reach out as far as he could with the opposite leg to stretch the hip flexors. Stefan felt that the hip flexors made or broke one’s speed. Squats were always mixed with straight leg deadlifts...often done like a “superset” in the spandex brigade...so that he really pushed himself to go back and forth. I watched Stefan do 405 in the straight leg for 8’s. This was after a tough set of squats. Freaking impressive.

The greatest thing I picked up from Stef’s leg workouts was mixing the squats (and the straight legs) with either sprints or bounding or simple box jumps. His advice to an O lifter at the Upper Limit was to forget fancy periodizing in the squat and focus on simple heavy squats WITH serious jumping after the sets. The complicated cycling of weights held little for an athlete, he figured, unless squatting was part of your sport. You squatted to get strong...jump to get fast. These 5-3-7 sets were all over the place...he would stay with the same weight some days, or jump up a lot, or do a little pyramid. He would load a bar next to the squat rack to do straight leg deadlifts...then hop away after!”

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The "Old" San Jose State Lifting Program

While talking with John Powell, he reminded me that he learned the lifts from Richard Marks. Marks was a tremendous thrower and lifter "back in the day."

Reps are 5 sets of 5 or 5 sets of 3. After you finish Week 2, go back to Week 1 and repeat. Marks was a great believer in backing off about 12 weeks (in the weightroom, for throwers) before your key competition:

Week One

Monday

Power Clean
Snatch Grip Pulls
Squats

Wednesday

Military Press
Light Bent Arm Pullovers
Incline Press (Barbell or Dumbbells)
Triceps Work of any kind

Friday

Snatch
Shoulder Shrugs
Front Squats

Week Two

Monday

Incline Press (Barbells or Dumbbells)
Light Bent Arm Pullovers
Press Behind Neck
Lateral Raises

Wednesday

Squat
Snatch
Upright Rowing

Friday

Power Cleans
Bench Press
Straight Arm Flies
Triceps Work



A "Five by Five" Idea...

Marks and Powell also had another insight that is worth considering. Every internet lifting forum ultimately ends up discussing the "proper way" to do the classic five sets of five repetitions workout.

I have tried a bunch of ways, two warm up sets of five, then three "work" sets of five...all five as work sets (ouch!)...adding weight to each set... "waving" the weights up, down and up.

John told me about a very good idea. The lifter picks a weight that would be a good short term goal for five sets of five. In the gym, you try that weight for five sets.

For example:

Set One: 225 for 5
Set Two: 225 for 3
Set Three: 225 for 3
Set Four: 225 for 2
Set Five: 225 for 2

This is your "5 by 5" workout. The total reps were 15, ten shy of the 25...but, and this is the key, in the next workout, you strive for an additional rep or two on each set. Over a few weeks, you slowly inch your way up to the 25 full reps.

John's point was interesting... "if you get one more rep, aren't you stronger?" Yes, then he added: "...and you should throw farther."

Stone Put

1. Find a natural place for your hand. If you can find a groove for your thumb, that helps.
2. Left foot forward, right foot back. Assume the car push position, twist back to the X, twist and drive your right foot and PUNCH the stone.
3. Gather award.



"Sovell" Stone d'Inno se afferma: non c'è nulla che lo spaventi...



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Some "Rack" Work Ideas

Rack work, Functional Isometric Contraction, "Bottom Position" work, "Quarter Squats" and a bunch of other variations are a classic way to train yourself to get through a "sticking point." You can, however, quickly burn out. So, after you get excited about fixing your weak spots with some heavy, isolation work, take a moment to "think" through some of lessons I have learned.

Before reading this, pop over to <http://danjohn.org/ds.html> and read my interviews with Dick Smith, master of Functional Isometric Contractions. Dick was the one who really understood the rack work, in fact, to quote Dick "Hoffman NEVER understood the rack work." For example, Dick emphasized that you simply clear the bottom pin in rack work, you don't slam it into another pin to increase the load. The perfect weight is one that ALL YOU CAN DO is clear the weight off the rack and hold it for all you got.

Second, Dick was very clear that one quickly overtrains in the rack...but doesn't notice it at all. I found the same thing in 1991. I went on a serious imitation of Bill March's program and got very strong, then pulled my right trap. In fact, Paul Northway commented on my training about a week ago..."God, you jerked 315 off the rack without ANY warmups." I got seriously strong and badly overtrained mixing programs.

This stuff works!!!

Now, this year, after talking with Dick, I went into my Deadstop Front Squat program to cure my sticking point. I noted a few things:

1. Six singles MAX! In fact, I think it might be less now...a couple of warm ups (Dick wouldn't agree with this, but I don't just clear the bottom position, I stand right up, so the weight would actually be less)
2. I like two sets of five with 50% of the estimated max in the full motion before I start doing the deadstops. You know, 165 x 5 x 5 in the front squat to get ready. I tried them cold and it works, but I also noticed that my hips (the

psoas) killed me the next few days. Of course, I am a geezer, so you young bucks might not need it.

3. I would agree with some who argue that one day a week is good and you could do three if only doing one move in the rack. This is going to be an experiment of one...what works for you and your weak points. I liked three days a week for about two weeks then fell right off. Two at the most would work for me, I think.

4. Be sure to be honest about your weak point. I had Dave Turner look at my Clean recovery, not my front squat. Get the point where you slow or noticeably "gear change."



Brian Oldfield's Lifting Program from 1972

Sundays and Thursdays

Press off the Rack	Power Cleans
135 for 3	135 for 3
225 for 3	225 for 3
275 for 3	275 for 1
295 for 1	300 for 1
310 for 1	325 for 1
320 for 1	345 for 1
330 for 1	355 for 1
340 for 1	365 for 1
350 for 1	

Brian also threw "for max" three days a week.

Published by Daniel John

Daniel John, Editor

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