



Volume III, Issue 7

December 2004

## Happy Holidays

So much to talk about this month...I hope the best of the Holiday Blessings for all our readership first and foremost...but, with the New Year looming, it is time to look ahead for another season!

We have an amazing edition for you...two new authors and tons of things to think about while the gym dips below freezing.

### 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*.

## Lifting schemes for strength



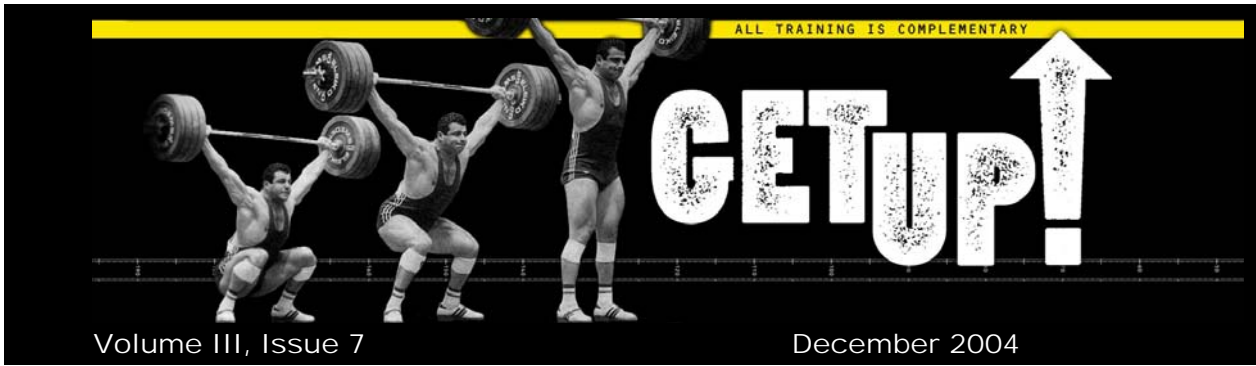
David Witt  
As a high school thrower, David ended up third in Kentucky's State Meet under the coaching of Marty Mayer

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 children, David teaches high school math.

On of the things that I see when I am lifting in the local gym is a lot of people that are lifting for one reason but are following a program that is better suited for another. A great many of them are following programs they got

out of the last "Muscle and Fitness" issue or some other bodybuilding magazine. This is great if they are competitive bodybuilders, but few of them are. Athletes trying to lift for greater strength need to follow a strength building program. In this article I want to provide some programs I've come across. I've used most of these, and gained strength on all of them. Everything works, but only for a little while. The body adapts, and progress slows. Most of us know that we need to keep changing our workouts to force the body to keep progressing. These strength routines may provide the variety you need to keep getting stronger.

One of my favorite strength building routines I found in "The Track and Field Coaching Manual", first edition, put out by TAC back in the early eighties. It was basically 5 sets of 5, although in college I used 4 sets of 5. What you do is pick a weight and try to get 4 sets of 5 with it, or 5 sets, whatever. When you can get that last set of 5 next time move the weight up. Five pounds for upper body and ten for lower is a good rule of thumb. The next weight you may only get sets of 5, 4, 3, 3. When you can get 4 sets of 5 with this new weight you are stronger and ready to move up again. This program was the staple of my freshman year in college. We lifted in high school, but when I found this program I thought that I finally understood what I was trying to do in the weight room. I "knew" how to lift

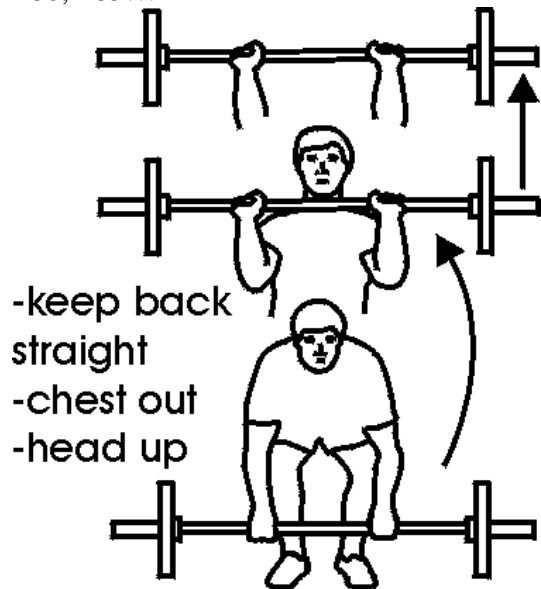


weights. My strength soared and I gained so much muscle my friends from high school asked if I was on steroids. This is what I'm doing on the bench even today.



My second program was inspired by my college roommate. We only had a Universal Machine my freshman year in college, but we made due. I watched Jim do military presses on that machine. He would warm up, then do one rep and keep moving the pin up on the stack and keep doing one rep. Within a couple of months he was lifting the entire stack on the military press. Jim was only about 160 pounds at the time, so it was awesome to watch him lifting that entire stack. I'm using this program now on my overhead presses. I lift my starting weight for 2 sets of 3, and then start increasing 5 pounds doing one rep each lift till I can't get a lift. So an example would be to lift 100 pounds for 2 sets of 3, then 105, 110, 115, 120, each for one and continuing till you can't get another. A twist I added to this program is I move up my starting weight 5 pounds when I get the two sets of three with a lower

weight. So when I started this program I was doing 2 sets of 3 with 138 pounds. This week I'm set to do 2 sets with 170 pounds to start out, then one with 175, 180, 185...



My third program is what I'm doing right now. This is the time of year to gain strength for next year. What I am doing right now is basically a pyramid. I do three sets, first set 8 reps. Then, add 25 pounds for the second set and do 5 reps. Add another 25 pounds for the third set for 3 reps so that now you are 50 pounds heavier than the 1<sup>st</sup> set. So if you start at 250 in the squat for the first set, you will do 275 for the second, and 300 for 3 for the 3<sup>rd</sup>. In 10 weeks you could be doing your first set with what you did your last set the first week. In other words, 300 for 8, 325 for 5, and 350 for 3. If you can keep improving over 10 weeks you will be doing 8 reps



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with what you were doing 3 reps with at the start of the program. That's only two and a half months, I think I can do it. Actually, I've already made that jump. I find this is best used for squats and deadlifts.

As I said before, everything works, but only for a little while. The body adapts and progress slows. To maximize performance, you must keep your body guessing by changing the stimulus. Having lots of options program-wise is the first step towards reaching your potential.

### Leave Your Excuses at Home Keep your Training on Track When you Travel

Travis Speegle



*Travis Speegle, author of "STOP WORKING OUT!", has been effectively coaching individuals and companies alike to realize their own unique success since 1989. For more information visit <http://www.stopworkingout.com>*

Traveling can be challenging in it's own right, but athletes often find themselves with the additional strain of continuing to train while on the road. After all,

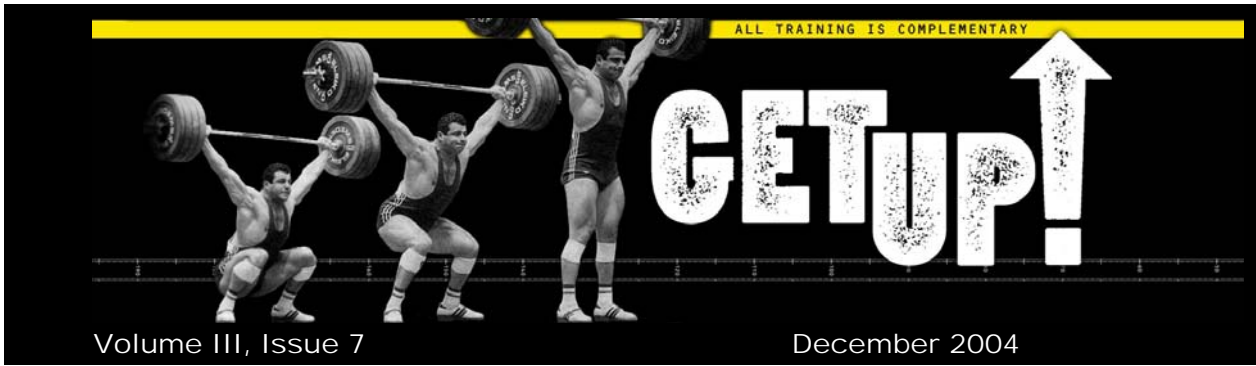
you've invested so much time and energy to get where you are, you definitely don't want to start sliding backward just because of some vacation, or even worse a business trip.

Last week I found myself, on a business trip, back in this same situation. Having just started training the Olympic Lifts, I didn't want to loose any momentum.

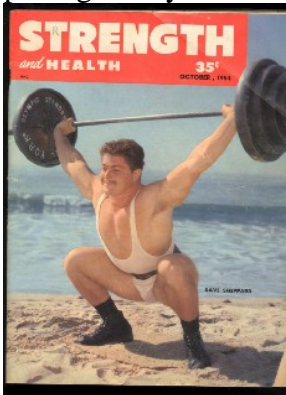
When I got into town, I headed down to check out the neighborhood gym. It was one of those fancy little downtown joints that had all the latest high tech machines and cardio stuff. I asked if they had someplace I could train the lifts, she looked at me like I was crazy, and said "uhh... we don't have those kind of weights". Twenty bucks to get in and they don't have a single Olympic bar in the place! Not for me, thanks.

Heading back to my room, I wasn't sure what had me so frustrated. Was it that they wanted 20 bucks for a workout? The girl that looked at me like I was nuts? Or just that I wasn't going to have it my way?

Back in my hotel room, I noticed the rod that was holding the shower curtain. It at least looks like a bar, I could use that to groove my overhead squat. Dan John had introduced me to the Tabata drill (8, 20 second sets, separated by 10 seconds rest - 4 minutes total) at Staley's boot camp the week prior.



I pulled that shower curtain rod off the wall, set my clock, put the shower rod over my head and started squatting. Without any added weight, I really didn't think this would beat me up too much. I was wrong! Four unbelievably long minutes, and a whole bunch of reps, later it was all I could do to keep from puking on myself.



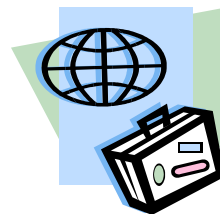
The next morning, I was so sore I almost couldn't make it up the stairs. It was that great kind of sore, when your muscles are telling you that you've done something extraordinary, without the joints jumping in to remind you how old you really are.

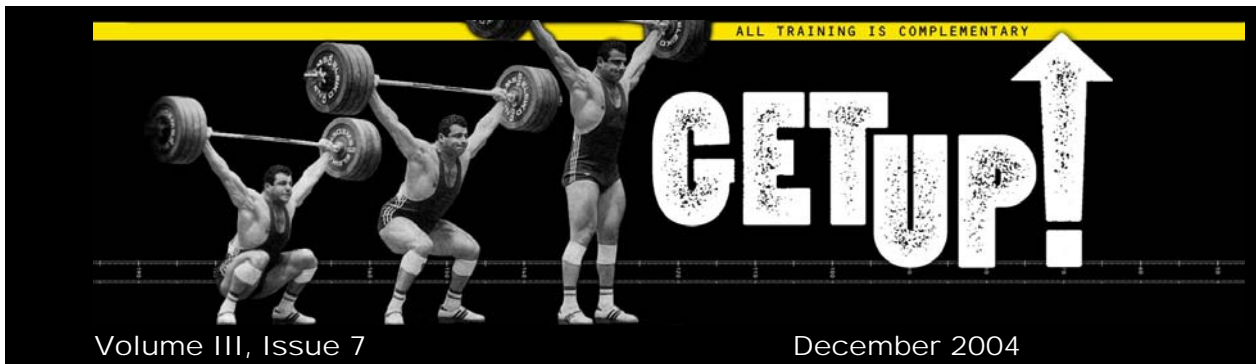
I could have paid my 20 bucks and managed some sort of "workout" at that gym. But it would have been just that, a way to work out my excess energy. By choosing to do something different, not only did I get a great training session in, but I also realized a few things:

1. With a little creativity, training tools are all around you. Use what you've got and get to work. If you can get into a training mindset, you will have an effective session.
2. Believe that whatever you do will continue to move you toward your objective. A couple of days of a dramatically different activity can do a great deal to accelerate progress.
3. Change becomes much less stressful when you know that you can make things work with what you've got. Keep looking for new methods and ideas that you can add to your "bag of tricks".
4. Keep it simple. Thinking too much can become a tremendous block to your progress.

Think about a few of these things the next time you're away from home. It's easy to keep making progress toward your objectives when faced with changes in the normal routine.

Pack your purpose, drive, and motivation. Leave your excuses at home!





Interview with Stefan Jakobsson

**A special thanks to Hakan Millroth who interviewed Stefan and provided us with this excellent transcription. Hakan is NOT a native English speaker, so we certainly appreciate the extra effort he gave for our Get Up community.**

*Stefan Jakobsson is probably the most merited Masters weightlifter ever. He has set 68 Masters world records and won 14 straight World Masters Championships. Now 57 years old, he has been competing in weightlifting for 40 years. As a Masters lifter he is undefeated since 1990.*



*What are your best competition lifts?*

150kg + 180.5kg in the 82kg class in 1976 and 153.5 + 192.5kg in the 90kg class in 1977.

*Best competition?*

6th place in the 1976 Olympics. The Russian Shari won the Olympics, but I beat him 18 years later, at the World Masters in Australia.

*What are your goals for 2005?*

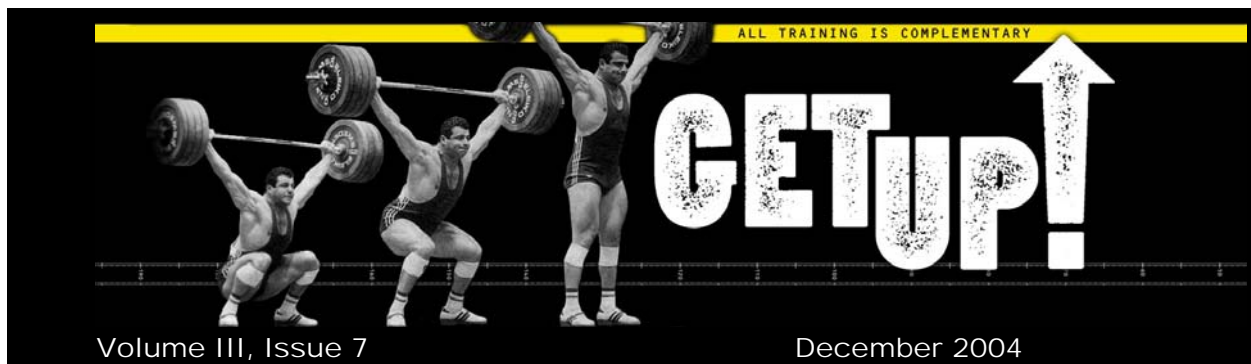
A: First, qualifying for the Swedish National Championships in the 94 kilos, meaning I need to do 117.5kg + 147.5kg in January. That will be tough, since I am currently having problems with a shoulder injury. Secondly, winning the World Masters and setting new world records while doing so.

*Do you have any long-term goals, beyond 2005?*

Sure. Winning the World Masters and setting new world records in every remaining age category. Beating Santana's 480 Sinclair points record and be the first lifter ever to reach 500 Sinclair points. I guess the main challenge in reaching this goal will be to stay alive long enough! Lastly, beating Laurence McConnell in every competition I meet him.

*How often do you compete?*

Eight to ten times a year. However, most of those competitions I don't take too seriously, it's mostly for helping my club in the national league. I do three or four important competitions per year, the National Championships, the European



Masters, the World Masters and maybe one more.

*How do you train?*

I always train three days per week. I have tried to train more often, but it burns me out mentally.

I like to follow a three to four month training preparation before an important meet. I start really light and slowly increase the weights over these four months.

For the first month I don't do any Olympic lifts at all. I do back squats all three days, one day 4 set of fives, one day four doubles, and one day four triples. The session with fives is by far the toughest on the body. I do pulls all three days, alternating snatch pulls and clean pulls, 4-5 sets of 2-3 reps after a few progressively heavier warm-up sets. When I do clean pulls I normally finishes off with heavy deadlifts. I also do push presses, strict presses, RDLs and shrugs.

These days I don't do any other assistance exercises. I check every now and then that I can do a triceps pushdown with the entire stack of weights. As long as I can do that there is no need to train triceps.

*Is triceps strength that important for a weightlifter anyway?*

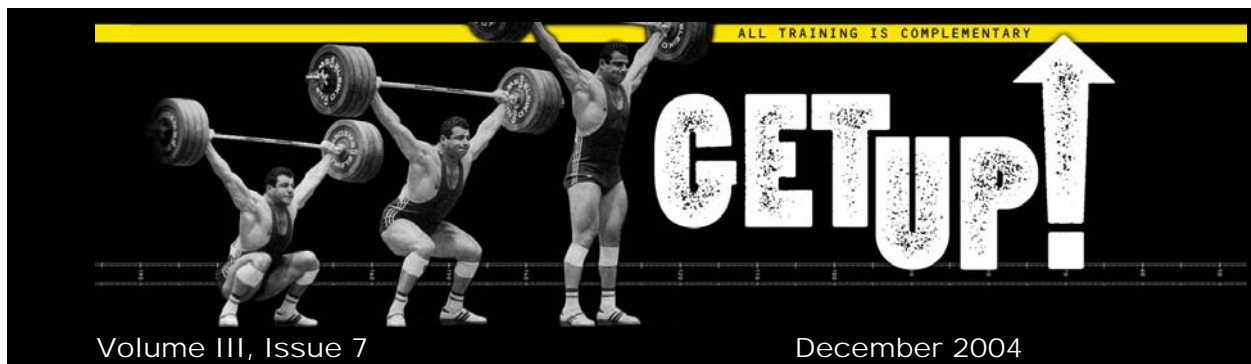
Yes, it is important for the pulling strength. When I was younger, in the seventies and eighties, I used to do a lots more a lot more assistance exercises: rows, hyper extensions, ab work, bench presses, incline presses, triceps work, and so forth. I didn't lift more in the Olympic lifts from that, so I don't do it anymore.



*No ab work now?*

No, I get all the ab strength I need from front squats. From the second month, I replace the day of back squat doubles with front squats, one week 4x4, next week 4x3, next 4x5, on so on. I also start doing snatches this month, every other session. I mostly do doubles and singles in the Olympic lifts these days. I used to do mostly triples and doubles, but now that burns me out and is too hard on the shoulders.

When there is one month left to the competition I start doing cleans and jerks. I alternate snatches and C&J's, never doing both in the same session. I also stop doing back squats and do front squats twice a week.



*How heavy do you go on push presses and strict presses?*

A: Triples and doubles. Sometimes four or five reps in the strict press, but mostly for warming up. I set goals for every month in every assistance exercise. For example, I know I need to push press 130kg in the last month before competition if the goal is to clean and jerk 150kg in the competition. I know exactly what I need to do for a triple and double in the back squat each month to reach the goal I have set for the competition. I have this type of goals for every exercise every month.

*You go all out with max doubles and triples in the squat?*

A: No, not really. I have a rep or two left. For example, right now I do a double with 190kg in the back squat. I could do a triple if I pushed it but that would be foolish. Too dangerous.

*Do you do any max attempts in training in the Olympic lifts?*

A: Not true all-out maxes. I never go above 115kg in the snatch, 140kg in the clean, and 130kg in the jerk in training. If I can do that I know I can do at least 120+150 in competition.

*How is your training different now than when you were in your 20s and 30s?*

A: Then I trained four days a week. I did mostly triples and doubles in the Olympic lifts. And I did much more assistance exercises.

*Not more than four days a week?*

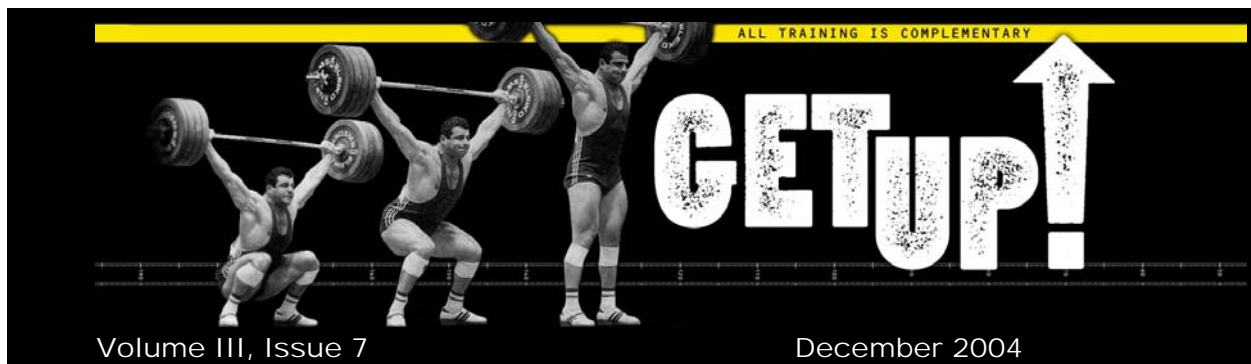
A: No, I experimented with five days a week but it didn't make me lift more so there was no point. Also those two-week training camps [with the National team] with training every day just burned me out mentally.

*What would you change in that way of training if you could do it all over gain?*

A: First, I wouldn't do all those muscle-building exercises, rows, bench presses, inclines, etc. Just a waste of time and energy, basically. Secondly, I would try to get two afternoons a week away from the day job. Not for training more, but for avoiding being away from the family four nights a week training, year in and year out.

*Do you ever skip a training session?*

A: No. I have actually tried to learn to be less strict about that. Nowadays, I can actually postpone a session for a day if there is something else I really need to do. But basically I'm addicted to training.



*Did you ever finish your career and then resumed it later as a Masters lifter?*

No. When training for the 1980 Olympics I was forced to have surgery in both knees. I couldn't train seriously for almost four years. However, I always planned to come back and compete with the best although I was in my late thirties. And I did, although with less success than I had hoped for. I found out about Masters competitions when I was 42 and that was a great boost for my motivation.

*What do you consider your greatest lifts as a Masters lifter?*

A: Probably 140+170 in the 90kg class when I was 48. Or 137.5+167.5 in the 94kg class when I was 51.

*What is your normal bodyweight in training today?*

A: 97kg. Suits me fine because I can lift in both the 94kg and the 105kg class.

*How tall are you?*

1.71m (5'7").

*What do you think of the Bulgarian school of training mostly the Olympic lifts and front squats and doing max or almost max singles all the time?*

A: I didn't work for me. I once experimented with doing no back squats for a year, only front squats. I didn't work, I lost too much leg strength. I also tried doing very heavy singles very frequently. I just burned out. I think you need to do lots of pulls and lots of back squats as a weightlifter. And a certain amount of upper body strengthening as well.

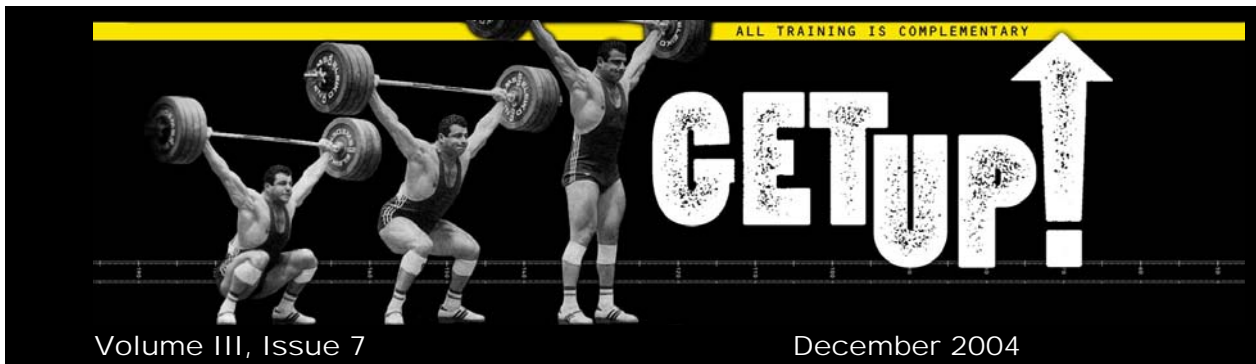
*Would you recommend a young aspiring weightlifter to do presses and other upper-body work?*

Yes, absolutely. Today's kids needs to do even more strength work than lifters from my generation. I got strong by working every summer on a farm starting when I was twelve. If you sit in front of a computer instead when you are young you need to compensate for that by doing more basic strength exercises.

*Have you lifting technique changed over the years?*

A: Yes, it has improved. I always had two serious technical flaws. I had to save my snatches by running forward and I missed jerks forward. I could never figure out what the problem was. When I was in my late forties a guy in the gym suggested I started lower with the hips in the snatch pull. Suddenly my snatches improved a lot, technically. At about the





same time someone pointed out that I dropped my elbows just a little bit in the jerk dip. After fixing that I started jerking straight up. I just wish I could have fixed those technique flaws 25 years earlier!

*Who are the most impressive lifters you have seen?*

Blagoev and Vardanian, both had fantastic technique. I met Blagoev in a small competition in 1974 or 1975 when he was an unknown 18 year-old. We both did around 140+170. I was very impressed by him then. Not long after, maybe a year, he snatched 170. Amazing talent.

*Has it been harder to avoid injuries, as you get older?*

A: No, it is just a matter of common sense, progressing slowly towards heavier weight over several months before each important competition. After an important competition, I take one week off, then start with light weights again. Actually, almost all my injuries have been caused by technique errors. Injuring shoulders and wrists by saving forward snatches and jerks. Improper knee positioning in cleans and squats. Those sorts of things. The one exception is power jerks, which is an exercise that caused me severe knee damage.

*You have had a lot of knee injuries over the years, I understand.*

I have had knee surgery nine or ten times ... I have lost count.

*What nutritional supplements do you use?*

I replace dinner with a protein shake if I need to loose weight. I have found that Glucosamine is great for my knees and back. Otherwise, I don't take anything these days. At various times I have taken all the vitamin, mineral, and creatine supplements you can think of. But I found that they didn't make me lift more, so now I don't take them. I think most of this stuff is a waste of money.

*Excellent stuff!!!*

No room for the Editor?

*I'm working on some ideas. One is basically a way to look across the training spectrum and pick and choose what lifts to do...or not to do. It is all based on careful...scientific!...observations I have made the past few decades.*

*Okay, not scientific...*

Published by Daniel John

Daniel John, Editor

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