

Volume Four

Volume Four? I am amazed people kept reading this after the first issue, yet “subscriptions” are way up. In fact, I get more emails about past issues than current issues.

I want to keep this alive. The goal from the beginning was to offer the world (and, really, with wireless internet, other planets are now receiving Get Up...makes you wonder if they have changed their training on Alpha Centauri) a place to write down ideas about training and let others mull them through a little.

I’ve been to a lot of funerals and weddings since we began and I keep thinking that wisdom is something that we seem to need to keep relearning. Maybe Get Up isn’t Socrates or Job, but I have found that our authors have almost always put a little bit of life lessons into what they write.

There are few lessons in life that aren’t mirrored on the field of play. Let’s keep learning from each other...

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 Gary Column

The Editor’s Brother, Gary John, is a third year discus thrower and coach in San Mateo, California. He is a young 56 year old learning to be a thrower. He asks “those questions,” the questions that we (well, the Editorial Board) assume everyone knows the answer.

The Los Gatos all-comers meets were supposed to start last Thursday, so I fought rush hour traffic to

compete. Upon arrival, it turned out the new track was still being worked on and the meet was cancelled. I had hoped to throw the shotput, along with the discus. I’ve just taken up the shot to do the weight pentathlon and was curious about my form. It is very hard to coach yourself and I was hoping to get some tips.

Since I was already there, I figured I might as well throw. When I got to the ring, Ron McKee, the Los Gatos weight coach was throwing by himself. I met Ron back in the summer of 2003 when I first took up the discus. He has always been friendly and encouraging. I asked if he minded me throwing and could he check out my form. I get into my full glide and throw. He tells me I look fine, then he shows me a real simple “shuffle backwards and let it fly” style. My next throw is five feet longer.



And so it went, just two guys throwing. He figured, for someone my age (56), just keep it simple, and then explode out of the power position. Then, both of us were trying to throw as

GETUP!

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July 2005

relaxed as possible. Again, the shot was going farther.

After we finished, we just sat and talked about training, injuries, motivation, whatever. Ron is one of the top master's Highland Games athletes and was ranked in the top ten for the shotput in 1990 and 1991. He has thrown in the mid-60's and is an 800 lb. squatter. I always tease him about being in the Brian Oldfield shotput video from 1986. For him, it is hard not to throw as far as he has in the past. I let him know that's why I won't train for the 400 or 800 meter races. I couldn't bear running a middle school girl's time and be listed in the top two or three in my age group. For me, throwing is a hobby, for Ron, it is his passion.

Since that evening, I've purchased an 18 lb. shotput and worked on what Ron had taught. I'm keeping it simple and throwing far. Even with the discus, I'm working on getting into the power position, and then explode. Just keep it simple.

Good stuff here, Gary. Once again, we 'rediscover' the gold mine that exists in literally thousands of throwers and lifters from the past willing to share what they know. Of course, they usually aren't "certified," nor do they wear spandex and charge nothing, so they can't be trusted...

How the Weight Helps the Hammer

Todd "Ironman" Taylor

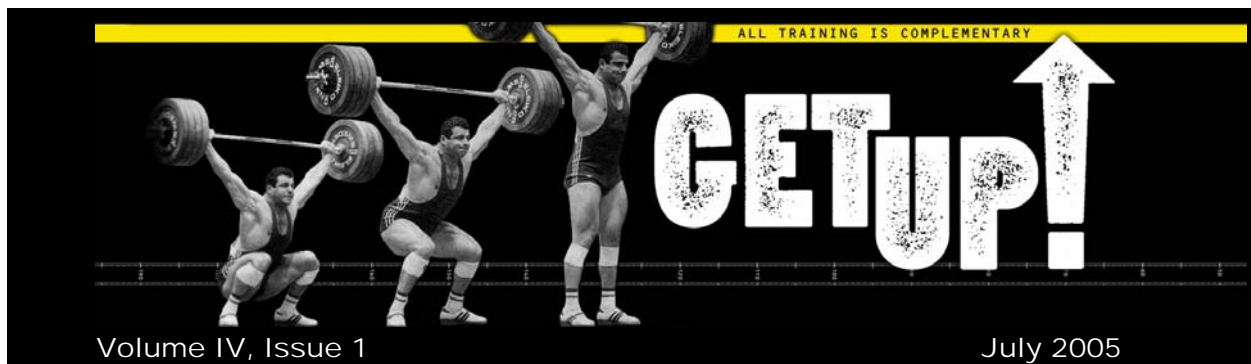
At first glance, you're probably thinking the first "H" word should be "harm" and not "help" because that's usually what

you hear. Well....that's because the way athletes "usually" throw the weight, it ingrains bad hammer technique habits—grip it & rip it, get it out there, maximum testosterone yelling effort, off balance, struggling to save the throw, etc.!!



Todd with grandchild. Early learning curve...

Generally, bad weight technique derives from two sources—1) the big, powerful shotputters looking for another scoring event at the indoor meets (say like a Dan Taylor, Ohio State type), and/or 2) throwers who tend to drag or muscle the hammer. Under the first category, I don't impugn the big guys (& gals) but simply mean the big, strong, powerful athletes that can use their physical assets to their advantage and get away with less technique than the rest of us mere mortals. Many of them can throw incredibly far with just one or two turns because they can internalize and maximize some key throw variables like the height, angle and speed of the implement at release—yep they can really grip it and rip it. Not always



pretty—maybe the PGA golfer John Daly as an analogy—but their body mass, strength and leverage means they don't have the counterbalance concerns of smaller and lighter throwers. [Everybody loves the “long ball”, regardless of how it gets out there!]

Weight and Hammer Differences

Technique flaws in the weight often stem from the difference in the weight and hammer implements—basically twice (2.5 for women) the weight and mass with one-third the radius. The heavier and shorter ball: 1) gets moving very quickly, and 2) takes more counterbalance to keep from pulling you off balance (or out of the ring). This leads us to two of the biggest technique problems in both the hammer and weight—1) being left-sided (bodyweight distribution) and/or 2) leading the ball into the turns with the left side (dragging).

Why Good Discus Throwers Struggle with the Weight

Pretty simple when you stop and think about it. The discus is a “left-sided” event (load up the left out of the back of the circle and get it down quickly at the front), requires great body torsion (hips leading), and implement separation (discus trailing). If I have to pick up that right foot early out of the back of the ring with a 2k discus, then I really better pick it up early with nearly a 16k!!! Wrong thinking. In the hammer & weight, the left side is merely the turning

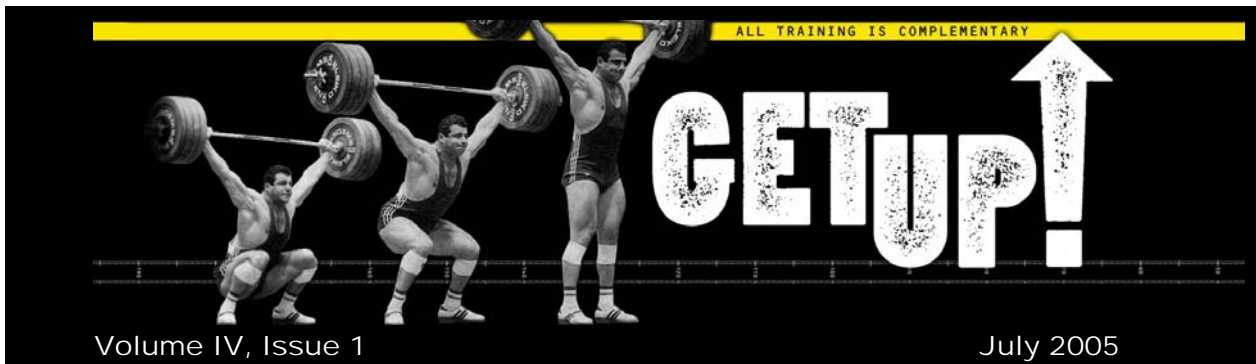
axis with weight evenly distributed between both feet. The right side is used to both create “ground upward force” and counter the outward pulling force of the ball by placing the hips behind the heels.

Posture and Weight Distribution

You cannot “pike” (bend at the waist in the entry and turns with a heavy weight. Maintain a $\frac{3}{4}$ or $\frac{7}{8}$ front squat position with chest up, center of gravity going from head-chest-hips-heels, and weight evenly distributed between your right and left sides (legs & feet).

Ball Pulls You into the Turn

The weight quickly generates its own speed and energy. Be patient to let the ball go by your left side and “pull you” into the turn, rather than you pulling the ball into the turn with your left side—other terminology is “send it by” (Ken Norlen), “put the ball by you” (Togher/Deal) and “poosh...left” (Sedykh). “Chase the ball” (Deal) or “step to it” (Norlen) with the right foot and get it down quickly; but don't just lift up the right super early like a discus throw out of the back. Rather you almost want to have the feeling of the right foot being pulled off the ground by the outward pull of the ball toward the sector, then engage the hip flexor muscles to drive the right foot quickly toward the ball. Pulling, dragging or leading the ball is usually done with a leaning shoulder and/or hip that puts too



much weight on the left side and causes you to over rotate and/or get bent over; plus, moving with the ball is easier and more efficient than trying to muscle or drag behind you.

Make the Right Side Active

Whether using a lag, sling, or wind start/entry, as the ball reaches your right knee, turn the ball of the right foot and right knee close toward the left knee—this sort of wraps you up like a pretzel in the legs, so you make a quick, straight step toward the sector rather than a looping discus-like leg sweep around the left hip. You have to think in terms of walking backwards toward the front of the circle. If you are patient, the ball will pull your hips around to very quickly catch up with your shoulders, so you can also step quickly.

Sit (like down in a chair) your hips against the ball as it moves through the middle of your legs and to the left....continue to do this with each turn. When the right foot is down, grind the ball of it into the ground and feel the weight sling down toward the back of the circle as you gradually sit your hips against the ball. This is the “ying & yang” of the weight/hammer—the more you sit, the faster it goes around you back toward the sector; the faster it goes, the more it weighs (outward pull it has) and thus you have to sit back against it even more.

Stay Long

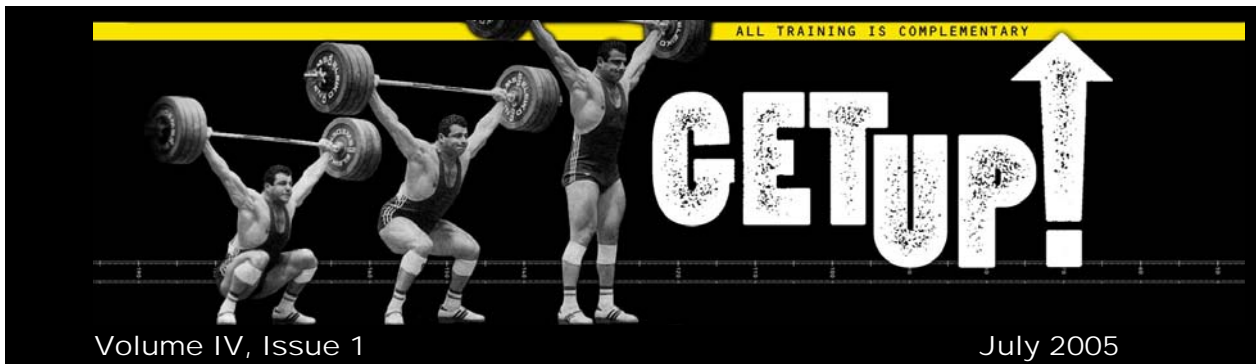
The heavier ball and shorter radius of the weight seems to make people want to bend their arms or hug the ball. Even with the weight throw centrifugal force is at work, so you need to add long radius to the other key throwing variables of height, angle, speed at release. Relax the traps and let the rhomboids (upper back) and lats (wide part of the back) do the work of holding onto the weight. Resist the temptation to bend your arms if you happen to overrotate or feel a little off balance; rather, just bend your knees—this puts your hips behind you to counter the ball and “self-right” you like the keel on a sailboat.

Stay in the Center

Posture has three dimensions—up/down, front/back, side-to-side. Resist the temptation to pull or drag the ball with the left side. Instead, stay balanced in the center and “push” the ball with the right side on around the left side (“poosh” says Sedykh). Try to get the feeling of pushing the ball from 180 to 180 and sit against (hips back behind your heels) as it the ball comes through 0 in the back of the circle. You can’t accelerate the ball from 0 to 180; instead, ride the momentum out toward 180.

Use the Ball’s Energy to Finish

A big fault, even if you do the other things correctly, is pulling the ball with



the left side at the finish/release. Too often, this just ends up decreasing the ball speed you worked so hard to build up! Here's why—when you pull the ball from the top of your last turn hard down to the bottom of the orbit at the back of the ring, you shorten your arms (the ball feels faster) and sacrifice the key variable of long radius. Also, the left side pull/drag tends to end up in an “over the shoulder sack of potatoes” finish/release. Just like in the discus power position at the front of the ring where the good throwers use the right side drive to take the discus down through the bottom of the orbit and back out to the top of the orbit at the front of ring (with the discus just along for the ride); let the weight come down from the top of the orbit on the last turn and lift it up around the left side (using the legs and arms) out toward the sector at 180.

Weight Drills to Help the Hammer Walkarounds. Just start turning. The faster you go, the heavier the ball becomes (stronger the outward pull) and the more you have to shift your weight (hips) against the ball to counter balance. Feel the weight pull your arms out long.

Send the ball by. Let the weight pull you into the turn (put it by you) for multiple turns from a sling start.

Push the ball/right side drive. From walkaround, begin a series of turns by stomping the right foot down at 180 and

instantly grind the ball of right foot into the ground while simultaneously pushing with the right hand—feel it sling down around to the back of the circle while sitting against the ball.

Weight on a long wire. Do slow walkarounds into turns with an active right side, good counterbalance, feeling the long sweep of the implement from 180 to 180.

The Superweight

For those of you crazy (yup...that's me) to throw the 56 lb. superweight, it is even more important to let the ball pull you into the turns. Otherwise, it will kick your butt big time. You cannot effectively muscle a 56-lb. object in motion around you. Accelerate the ball by accentuating the counterbalance at both 0 and 180

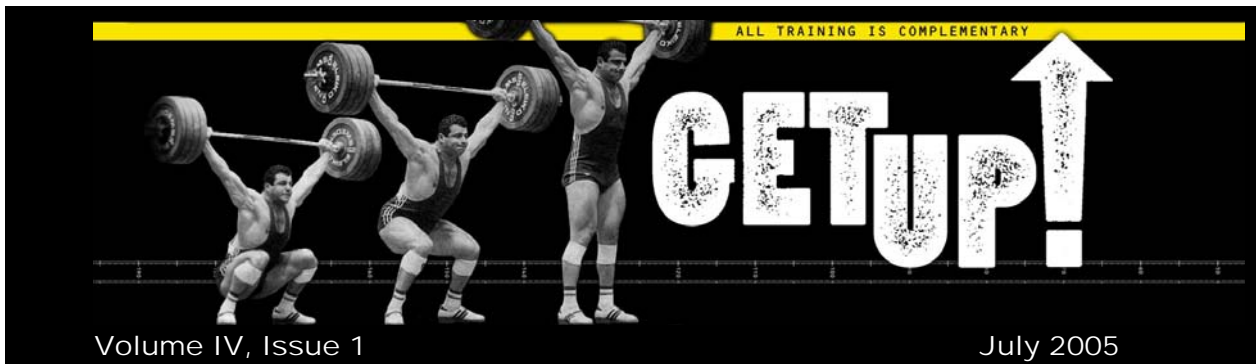
As always, Todd, great stuff. I'm about to get about seventy emails asking me for more stuff from you. We are willing to DOUBLE your pay for your next article...interested?

First Discus Camp Review

Discus Camp '05

Mike Schallmo
Homewood-Flossmoor
High School
Class of 2006

When my flight landed at Columbus Airport, I was anxious to get out and start learning again.

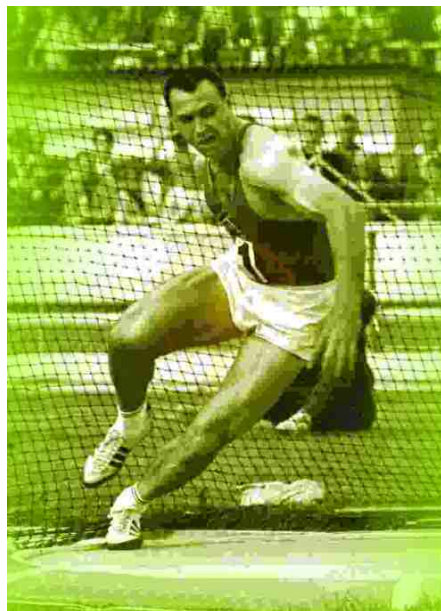


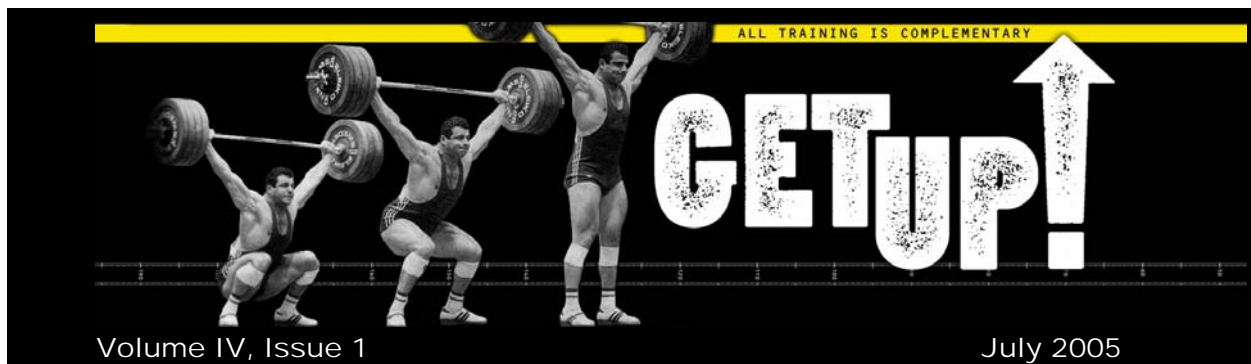
Unfortunately, the airline didn't get one of my bags (the one with my shot, discs, and shoes) on the plane so I thought the entire week was going to be pointless for me. After several hours, thankfully, the bag found its way to Denison and all was well again.

DAY I: The first day (Sunday) was just as it was the previous year (and I am guessing years past as well): John made numerous trips to-and-from the airport while Bill got all the campers situated with their rooms. Brian was selling and autographing t-shirts by the door, but business looked slow. Those "Powell" shirts, on the other hand, were going like mad. By about 5:30pm, most of the campers had checked in so we all went to have dinner. The Denison cafeteria puts those myths about bad food to rest, just make sure you get in before the "Be Wise" kids or you will be waiting a LONG time. After dinner, our first session; the objective: PENDULATION!!! Dan coached this and many other drills we did while Holly, Amy, and Stephanie demonstrated and helped check form. I was surprised that even after doing hundreds and hundreds of repetitions during the previous camp and throwing season, I was having a little trouble with the movements. After a few slips, I started getting the hang of it again, as did most of the other campers. It just goes to show that you never stop

learning and practice is always helpful! Session one came to a close and the camp retired into the dorm where we looked at some pictures John took of the workout and had a quick meeting about what would be happening the rest of the week.

Before I go on, I want to say how happy I was to learn we were staying in the air-conditioned dorms. When I came the year before, we stayed in dorms that were not air conditioned and all we had were fans, which, by the second or third day were just about useless against the heat and humidity. It may not seem like much, but when it's 95° outside and you are sweaty from a workout, you don't want to walk into a 95° room, let alone sleep in one.





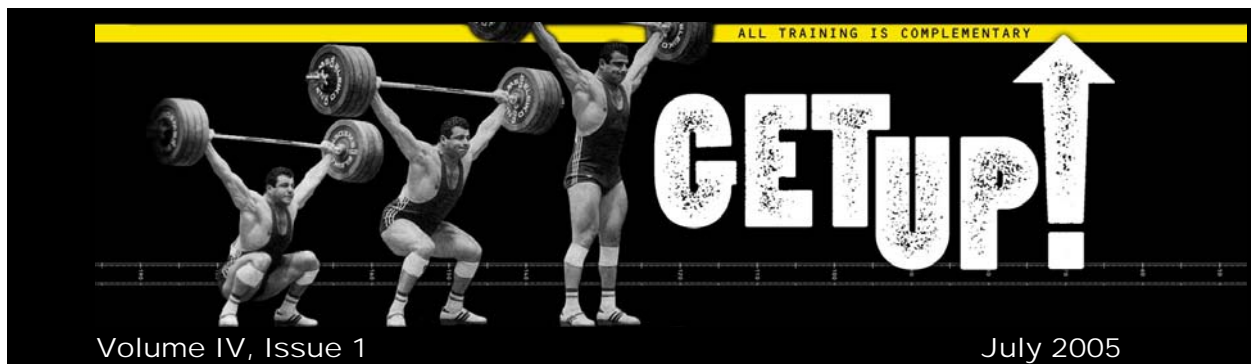
DAY II: I am reminded of a Dan John joke involving a lumberjack and 4 pizzas. It can't really be written, so if you see him, ask him about it.

I still remember the sighs of disbelief from the campers when Bill told them that they had to be up by 6:45am. Luckily, John came prepared with assistants who banged on everyone's doors to get people going in the morning. After almost missing a morning session the year before, I made sure I brought my alarm clock. It also proved to be helpful in waking me up from many needed naps. Everyone gathered by the front walkway and Dan and John gave us a Fibonacci (or something along those lines) number of Nickerson and pedulation reps to do in our groups of 3. These were by far tougher than the night before; mostly because no one was fully awake or energized (John's stereo seemed to do wonders in waking everybody up however). After around 20 or so Nickerson's, we went up to the cafeteria for breakfast. When I get my plate of eggs, pancakes, and sausage, I sat down at a table with Tom (throws coach from a high school in Wyoming) and Brian (camper from 15 years ago, state champ discus thrower, yadda yadda yadda). We talked about throwing and camp, but stopped every few seconds and listened to one of many funny stories coming from the Big O at another table. If you

come to camp and sit by him for more than a minute, you will be laughing hysterically with some of the stories he has.



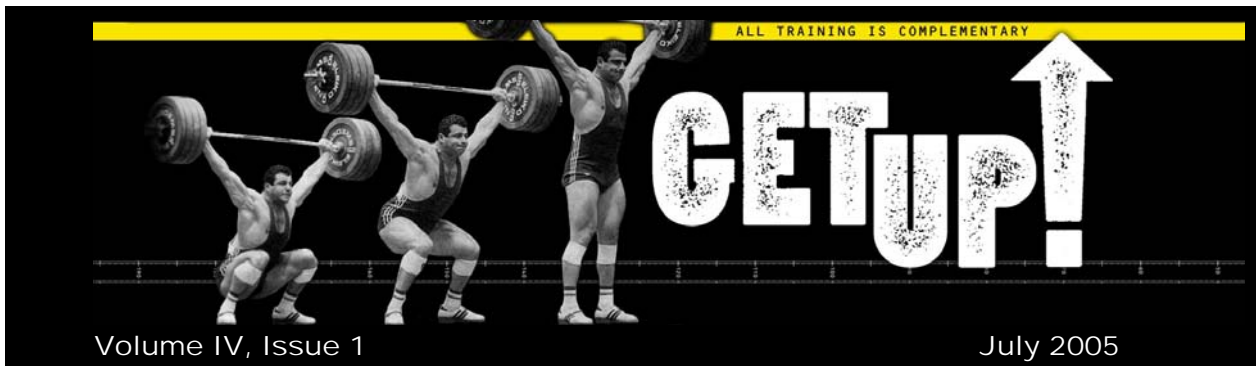
After breakfast, we rested for a little while and then got ready for our first session at the field (or as Dan calls it, "Death Valley") ((Editor: "Valley of Death")) John had Brian (not Brian O) march us down to the field doing step-and-turns for about 100yds. When we got to the field, we circled up and Dan started teaching us "Stretch, X, Spanky, 1-2-3-Point", the fundamental technique for spinning. We split up into groups and cycled through the stations until lunch time. After lunch, another little break, then back down to the field. I was kind of disappointed when I didn't see the farmer bars or the sled, but rather a 20' piece of PVC pipe – something which proved to be pretty difficult



anyways. “Pendulate”, “Turn the right foot”, “Hold the X” was all you could hear from Dan, John, Bill, and Brian. If I didn’t know any better, I’d say they placed a pretty good deal of importance on those things. After the afternoon session, we had a barbeque. After we ate, some campers started a volleyball game while Brian and I went out to the field and tried to work on some of the things Bill and John were trying to teach us. Brian O came out as well and told us we needed to jam our right foot more and go from high in the back to low in the middle and then explode up in the front. After everyone got back, John was satisfied with our progress and didn’t call for an evening session. The lights went out pretty quick that night as everyone was pretty tired and wanted to get as much sleep as possible for the next day.

DAY III: Just as day 2 started, we met out in front of the dorms and did pendulation and Nickerson’s until breakfast. The weather outlook for the day called for thunderstorms, but they didn’t come and it remained hot and humid all day. On the bright side (no pun intended), Dan got out the sled and farmer bars for the first time. We pulled an unloaded sled (about 55# I think) while carrying two 55# farmer bars for a distance of about 100 feet, then turned around and came back. Then we had to do the walk for as long as we could. As

simple and easy as Dan’s carries look, they are extremely difficult and require more than brute strength. You must have cardiovascular and muscular endurance as well as mental focus – having to force you body to do what you mind wants. Just doing one of these carries was enough to drain my body for a few hours, but luckily lunch was next. After lunch we took a short break and then went swimming. Well for me, I fell asleep and got to the pool about a half hour late. But after swimming for a little while, I felt 100% better. The afternoon session focused still on “1-2-3-point” and pendulation, but Dan added a new twist to the routine. To teach us to lift the right leg and not simply sweep it, Dan had us spin inside hoola-hoops. Seemed easy enough, but I had learned from the farmer walk that when one of Dan’s drills looks easy, it is going to be very hard. Hard it was, because now you had to stay within a much smaller circle and if you didn’t lift your right foot before you turned, the hoop flipped up. Yet another household item that can make you a better thrower! And who did Dan put in charge of this station? Brian. And why? Because Brian had no idea how to do it. According to Dan, if you make someone coach something, they will become an expert at it. Kind of a funny idea, but it makes sense if you think about it. So if Dan makes you coach a station, you know you have

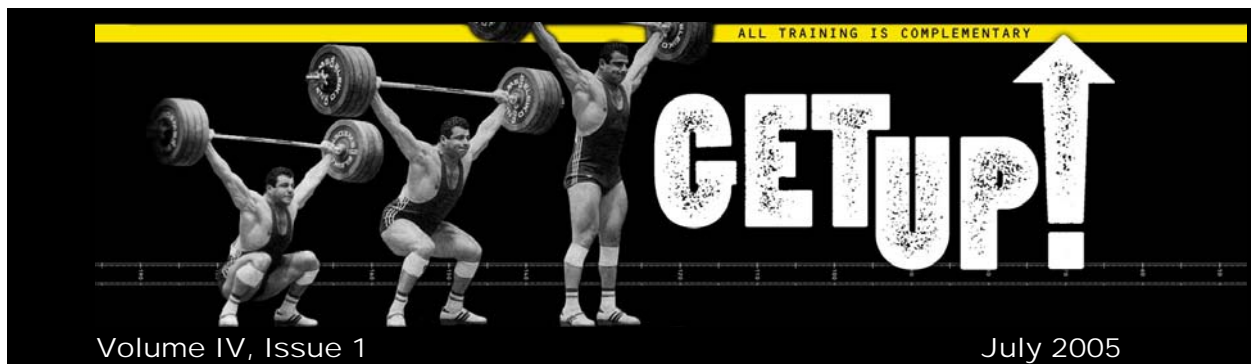


something that needs work. After dinner that night we did more Nickerson's and "1-2-3-point" drills out in front of the dorm before retiring for the night.



DAY IV: Oh man, this one was a scorcher. Though it was supposed to be sunny all day, which it was, it was also supposed to be very hot, which it was. Even at 6:45am it was close to 80°, and it only got hotter. The morning session brought with it a new drill: the grenade throw. It was a regular throw, but instead of releasing the power ball like a disc, you threw it up sideways over your head like a grenade. In order to go to breakfast you had to get the ball in the trash can. Well, after about 100 attempts with only 2 people getting it in, John made us have to at least hit the can to go. Luckily I didn't have too bad of aim and I was able to get it in the can quickly and get down to breakfast. The mid-morning session was probably the hardest so far that week. We had to do the hoola-hoop spins and grenade throws, and Brian O was teaching some

new steps to the shot. But the hardest station would again have to be Dan's. This time we were going up the hill with the sled and bars as far as we could. No one had gotten to the top except me, and once I got there, Annie (another camper), who was walking next to me, told me I was standing in the middle of poison oak. I looked around dumbly, having never seen poison oak before. I switched the sled around and came down the hill and went to wash my hands off. After that carry, my legs and arms were burned out, but once again, lunch was next and I refueled and recharged. I talked to Dan a little bit about the carries and how hard they were for as simple as they looked. After lunch we watched "The Soul is Greater than the World" starring Ricky Bruch. A very good movie that also has some tips from John himself in it. Go out and buy it if you can find it (contact John if interested). After the movie we had our regular afternoon session. This time, in place of the sled/farmer walk up the hill, Bill had brought out the "X" sticks. These highly complex devices teach the "X" position and to hold that position all through the spin. If you break the X, the bars (one on your shoulders, one on your waist) become parallel and you know you are not in the right position. Then Bill replaced the small bar on my shoulders with the massive 20' PVC pipe. "Now try to hold the X" he told me. "Easy" I

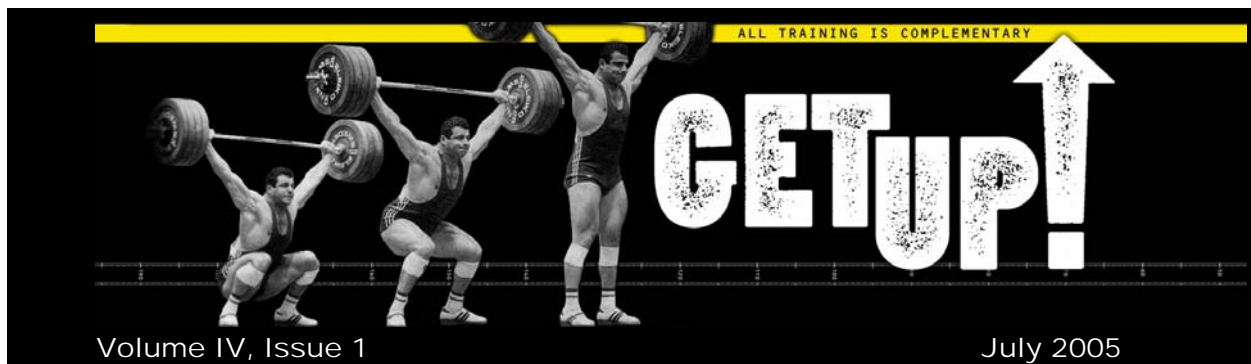


thought. Once again, I found myself confused as to how something so simple can be so hard to maneuver. I know the X and I know the positions I need to be in, and yet with that bar, everything was 100 times harder to do. I started getting the hang of it, as well as the “grenade throw” technique. I kept trying to figure out how this could be a useful drill, I mean you don’t throw a disc like a grenade. Or do you??? Yet another drill that changed my way of thinking about the discus. We finished up at the field at went to dinner, then back to the dorm for the evening session. Boys vs. girls doing grenade throws into the trash can. One person had to use the 20# weight while throwing the ball. If there was one thing that I could actually feel teaching me, it was the training weights. They force you to stay stretched, pivot, pendulate, all of that. If you don’t, you will fall or come off balance. They really are great tools, especially when coupled with the wisdom of John, Brian, Dan, and Bill. It ended up that there was no competition, and that Dan and John were just having a little fun with our heads. After the session, we cleaned up and went over to the Bander Snatch for pizza and a movie. After that, it was time for sleep.

DAY V: I am reminded of yet another Dan John joke involving Julius Caesar and 5 pizzas. I could write it, but it wouldn’t make much sense.

When you ask him about the lumberjack, ask him about Julius Caesar.

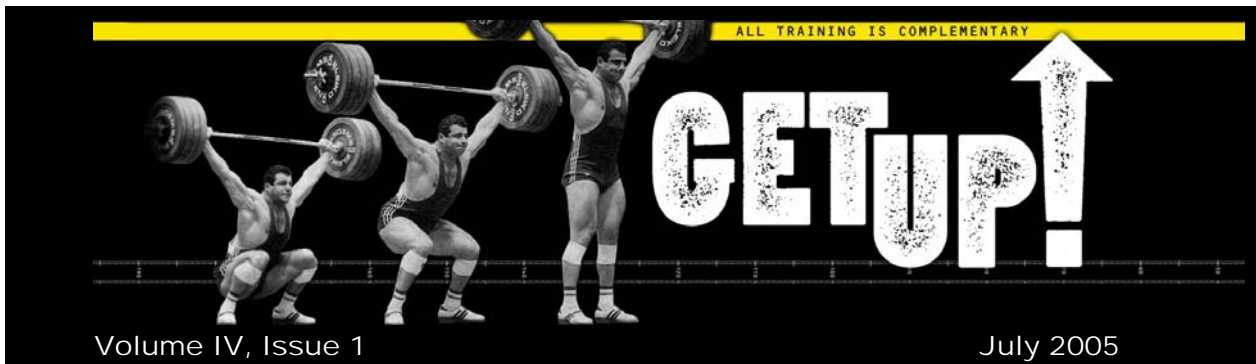
The assistants were a little late banging on doors, so the morning session started a little later. We continued with the grenade throws and again had to hit the can to go to breakfast. After breakfast, we watched the 1987 TAC Discus Championships. It was pretty cool seeing John throwing, because the only clips I have seen of him were in slow motion. After the movie, a session. Instead of a grenade throw station though, we did the 4-step approach, minus the first 3 steps. In laymen’s terms, we did Nickerson’s for time. The station next to the ring was the 20# weight for distance. Slow and smooth will make the weight go farther than if you simply try to muscle it. I learned that after about 3 attempts that went way to the left, then one final attempt that was slow, smooth, and well over the distance line. Dan got us to get our butts ahead of the weight and to get under it. Accelerate it down, not up, and then simply guide it. That’s it. No muscling required. Dan put me in charge of the farmer bar/sled station. At this station, we had to walk with the bars and sled around a course of 3 cones as many times as we could. Once again, the carry looked simple and even pretty easy, but after the first lap or so, my forearms were burning and I was getting pretty winded. I made two full laps and



rounded the cone, no one else was able to round the cone, and some only managed a portion of a lap. Just goes to show that, yet again, such a simple carry can be such a hard workout. After lunch, we went to the pool again. Our afternoon session was the 4 stations down at the field: shot with the Big O, Nickerson's in the ring with John, X-ing with Bill, and spinning in the hoops and pedulation with Dan and Brian. After dinner, a few people walked with Dan down to the ring. He then introduced me to the 4K. I had thrown it before, but never for distance. He told us that instead of trying to focus on the many things that must be done to throw properly (right foot turning, smooth left arm, etc.), we should only focus on one thing for each throw; i.e. only focusing on turning the right foot. That actually helped me a lot, because now instead of worrying about a number of things having to flow together, I only had to think about doing one thing. Dan also got me to start throwing without a reverse, saying it was something I should add to my "quiver". He said every thrower should be able to throw and win without a reverse. Throwing without reversing also helped me get my left foot down harder in the front and block better. Thanks Dan! That night we had a short meeting about the shuttle to the airport and then some of the campers stayed up and watched movies. We also said goodbye to Jake

M, a.k.a. "Yo-Yo man" who had to leave a day early so he could go to a yo-yo competition.

DAY VI: The last day of camp. I *thought* I got up late because it was about 6:45am and I was not ready yet. When I walked upstairs though, I didn't see anyone except John and Lindsay (Dan's daughter). John had me set the speakers up, and he blasted Celtic music until everyone was up. We had a very brief morning session, only doing rotations until we got the ball in the bucket, and then going to breakfast. After our last breakfast at camp, we walked back up to the dorms and grabbed our own implements. After throwing my power ball (which was fully filled with sand, about 12lbs.) all week, the discus felt like nothing at all, at the shot felt so small. I took a few throws in the shot, and finally figured out what Oldfield had been trying to teach us about "climbing the ladder". I had previously been having problems getting the shot up in the air, but after some work with him, I started getting it up more (though I still have a lot of work to do). I then headed over to the ring to throw discus before I had to leave. Because the disc felt so light, I kept trying to muscle it and basically threw out all I had learned that week. Then after a few words from Dan, I started focusing more on my feet and less on my arms. You know, if I didn't



know any better, I'd say he knew what he was talking about. The disc straightened out and flattened out too, and it even went farther with less effort. After a few hard throws at the ring, I threw up the hill and by then it was 11:00 and time to get ready to leave.

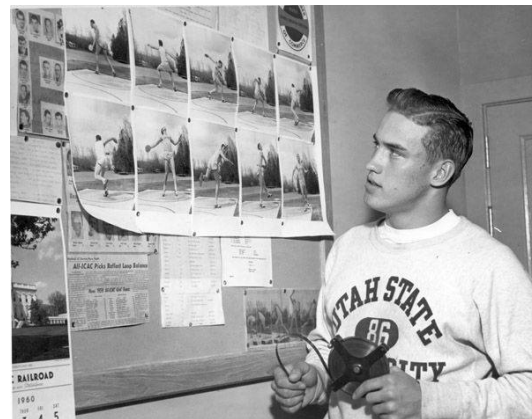
The main drills at camp are:

1. Nickerson's
2. 1-2-3-Pont (1/2 Nickerson's)
3. South African's (Pedulation)

In the shot put, Brian O stressed getting low in the ring as one of the most important parts of the throw, next to quick feet and jumping at the front. We did drills like 1-2-3-sprint for the shot, which teaches the thrower that it isn't 1-2-3 but 1-----2-3.

After a lot of drills and workouts, I myself felt I was better than when I first arrived. I still have a lot of work to do, but I have a lot of information from the world-class throwers at the camp. Aside from the many drills I learned, I also learned a lot about exercising. For instance, thrusters and carries deliver a total-body workout, regardless of how easy they may look. After talking to Dan and John, I also learned how important rest can be and that weights aren't necessarily the best for workouts. "Running, pull-ups, push-ups, dips, and ab work" said Powell. "You have to be able to handle your body weight" explained Brian O.

I definitely got a lot of information out of this camp, and it changed my whole way of thinking about throwing and training. Thanks to John, Brian O, Dan, and Bill for all of your help and coaching, much appreciated!



Dear Mike's English Teacher,

Ya done good.

Signed: The Editorial Board of Get Up!

Starting Over...Again

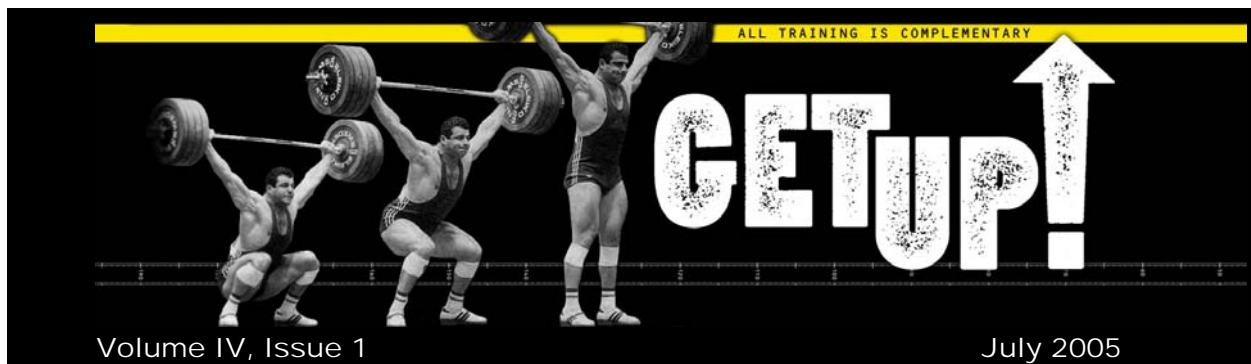
Earl Curry

Earl is a new author for Get Up who "wanted to give something back." Well, we think he did with this fine article...welcome aboard.

"Fat, old farts can't jump." That should really be the title of this article. At 45, I guess you can say I'm having my midlife crisis or a second childhood. Some might say I'm trying to correct some of the mistakes and/or opportunities lost, from years gone by. Maybe so, but at least I'm having fun trying.

"You're going to do what?" "What's a discus?"

"Aren't you a little old for that?" Those are just a



few of the responses I got. So I rarely tell anyone what I'm doing now. My wife, Valerie, supports me 100%. She bought me a 2k discus for Christmas. It about killed me not being able to throw for 3 months while the snow melted off the Ohio tundra.

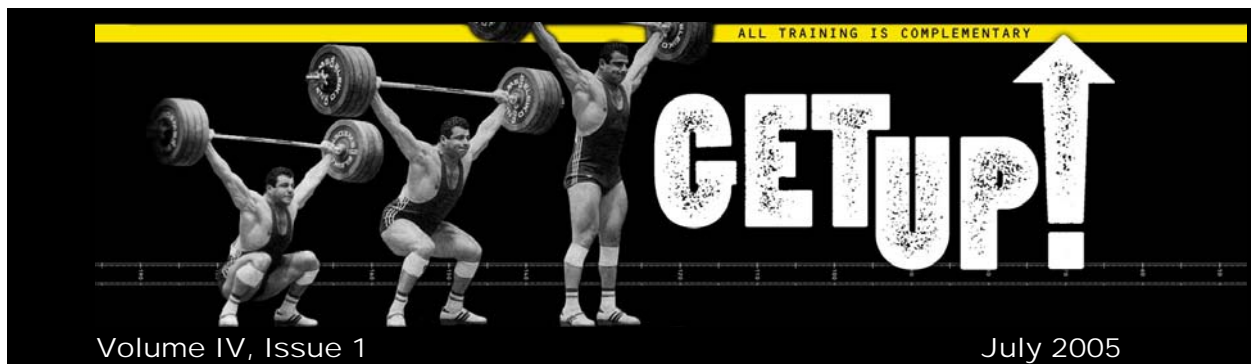
Practice fields are few and far between. The only place I can find to throw is in a local park off the walking path into a large field. The path just happens to be a perfect 8 feet across. How lucky can a discus thrower be? People walking their dogs and pushing the kids in their strollers, think I'm nuts. I love it.

On June 17, 2004 I had RNY Gastric Bypass Surgery at the age of 44. I weighed in at 358 very large pounds. Not really my heaviest weight ever, since I've weighed as much as 397 pounds (when I could find a scale that went up high enough to weigh me). I'm sure I weighed over 400 from time to time. I just couldn't find a scale that went high enough to find out for sure.

I was always a big boy, weighing 150 pounds in kindergarten. I was already taller than my teacher in the second grade and had a mustache by the sixth grade. By my freshman year in High School I was 350, not so lean and mean pounds. I was what I call an active fat person. I lifted weights, played football and competed in Track and Field, throwing the shot put and discus. I was pretty fast for a fat kid. I could run a 40 yard dash in 5.0 seconds.

My track stats were average, not impressive by any standards. I threw the shot 45 feet and the discus 120 + feet. I was a Bubba. You know, one of those huge boys they give a shot to and tell them to throw it...in that direction...as far as you can. No real coaching or training. I remember another team's coach telling me how explosive I was and I had a lot of potential. He even gave me some copies of a coaching journal on how to throw properly. We didn't have the internet back then with mpegs and throwing sites. If I had only knew then what I know now...wow. I used a clumsy glide for the shot and a standing throw for the discus. With my limited knowledge I even ended up coaching my fellow throwers, like I knew what I was doing...not. (Our track coach was an old distance runner and didn't have a clue about throwing.)

Even at the tender age of 14, doctors told me I had high blood pressure and an enlarged heart (found out during testing in 2003 that that was not true). Every time I visited a doctor, I was warned I was going to die young. I basically turned to booze and drugs for a number of years, since I thought my life was going to be short lived anyway, I thought...let's party. I woke up around the age of 28 and thought "Crap, look at all the years I've wasted." It took about another 10 years to build myself up, self esteem wise, career wise, and financially. Then I hit 40 and all those years of high blood pressure and being overweight started to take its toll. I developed type-2 diabetes, increased high blood pressure, pulmonary hypertension, sleep apnea and high cholesterol. I had continued to lift weights all



those years setting a few powerlifting state records and winning the Masters Nationals Bench Press competition. I had a lot of muscle and strength, but I had a ton of fat too and was grossly out of shape.

My wake up call came in September 2003 when he was walking out to get the mail. I couldn't catch my breath and had this pressure on my chest. I thought I was having a heart attack. I was 43 and thought I was going to die young like my father had. While not a heart attack, I had suffered a pulmonary embolism – a sudden blockage in a lung artery, usually due to a blood clot that travels to the lung from the leg (I had accidentally kicked a fence post while cutting the grass). I recovered but was told I needed to lose weight or I was going to die.

At that point, the decision for me to have weight loss surgery was a no-brainer. I already knew everything I needed to know about the Bariatric Surgery Program at OSU Medical Center because I had researched it with my wife Valerie, the year before. Valerie had the surgery and had lost 125 pounds. In June 2004, I had the surgery and never looked back. Contrary to what many think, surgery is not the easy way out. It's just a tool that helps an obese person shed excessive weight.

I honestly believe that having the surgery has doubled my life span. Another plus for me is I've been off all the medications I used to take prior to surgery. My blood sugar and blood pressure levels are lower now than when I was on the

medications. I'm finally off the pill bandwagon and am feeling good.

Ok...fast forward a few months I've lost 71 pounds, down to 287 as of November 1, 2004. I've been training hard since the surgery and doing things I never dreamed I'd be able to do again, like jump rope, dancing with my wife and even jogging a little. I had bought a discus for my daughter who went out for track back in the spring and had a lot of fun teaching her to throw. During my surgery recovery, I discovered The Lifting and Throwing Website by Dan John at <http://danjohn.org/coach>. I was inspired to get into shape and compete in a master's track meet. I set my goal for a meet sometime in the Spring/Summer 2005.

First, I needed to evaluate my strengths and weaknesses. Strengths are that I'm tall with long limbs, a plus for discus throwers. I'm fairly strong for my age, but had lost much of my strength after surgery. My weaknesses are I've slowed down over the years and lost my explosive power and almost all of my leg strength. I literally can't jump anymore. I tried a plyometric basic of jumping on a step...a 3" step...I couldn't do it. Fat, bald guys just can't fly I guess. (I shaved my head to make me more aerodynamic and lighter on my feet...didn't help.) I have some ankle and foot injuries that have built up over the years that might downright handicap me, but not if I have anything to say about it.



My biggest weakness might be the fact the weight loss has opened up so many new doors for me. I'm overwhelmed by all the possibilities sometimes. I have too many goals that conflict with one another. That is not good. I need to continue to lose fat since I'm only half way toward my goal weight. But I have to make sure I'm not losing muscle at the same time. So I have to eat a little more, lose fat a little slower so as not to lose what muscle mass I already have. I've become stronger every week, but that progress is slowing down. And without eating enough protein and carbs sometimes it seems impossible to get any stronger while dieting. When you first have gastric bypass you're basically living on less than 300 calories a day. I lost a lot of muscle and strength the first 6 months after surgery.

My training had to change drastically. Since surgery, actually for 6 months before surgery, I've been bodybuilding. Training 4 to 6 days a week, sometimes 2 or 3 times a day, walking sometimes 2 hours a day, trying to lose fat, burn calories and sculpt muscle mass. Not good for strength or athleticism. I am a big believer in Westside style training. Basically that's having a speed training day and a separate maximum effort training day 72 hours later. I benched 400 pounds for the first time after taking up Westside style training. I used Westside style training during my powerlifting days, but got away from it the last couple of years because of injuries and health issues. I'm not going to powerlift totally,

but think some of the exercises and the Westside techniques have a lot of merit in building a powerful, explosive athlete.

After reading Dan John's newsletter "Get Up!" I decided to include some Olympic lifting to help increase my athleticism and explosiveness. I had wanted to be an Olympic lifter back in my teenage years, but could not find a coach or a proper training environment. I grew up in the 70's with the Universal Gym in the middle of our Football team locker room. What were they thinking? But then again, back in those days they were just coming around to believing lifting weights wouldn't make you slow and muscle bound.

I started by adding the power clean and power snatch to the start of my workouts. I alternated one each workout and used them as a full body warm up. I'm basically looking for speed, explosiveness and form at first.

After a few weeks I added the Overhead Squat. Man, talk about an ego buster. I thought an empty bar was going to kill me. I quickly discovered another weakness, lack of flexibility. My body is kind of tore up from years of heavy lifting and from the punishment of walking around at nearly 400 pounds. I have almost no flexibility in my shoulders. Pushing the bar back in overhead squats to balance myself was painful. Plus the knee pain going down was killing me. But I stuck it out and after a couple of weeks I was using a whole 85 pounds in my warm-ups for reps (stop laughing). It will get



better. I hate this exercise, so it must be good for me. Right, Dan? (I think this exercise is Dan's little joke on us all...stop laughing Dan.)

I also started doing the Romanian deadlift with a snatch grip with my toes on a 25# plate and not worrying about lowering the weight so much as pushing my butt back and letting the weight take care of itself. I've done Romanians for years, but didn't realize how much I was doing them incorrectly. I can really feel these in the hamstrings and glutes.

I figure I have to get in some kind of athletic shape before I can really start getting into the serious throwing drills. I can do a sloppy full turn now, but a lot of the drills I physically can't do at this point. I need to increase my core strength, flexibility, leg drive and explosiveness. I started doing some simple plyometrics like skipping rope and jumping onto a 3" step (gotta start somewhere). I included some medicine ball drills also, like Hungarian swings, twisting sit-ups, Russian twists and rotation work.

I'm still walking but not going to the long distance slow walking. I'm turning the incline on the treadmill up and doing intervals, trying to increase my speed and intensity. I like doing some of the strongman training too, farmers walks up and down the driveway with a pair of heavy dumbbells (my neighbors think I'm nuts) and thick bar training are coming along nicely.

Trying to get throwing in with a wife, two teenage daughters and a full time job isn't easy. Every day life does sometimes get in the way of training. But I'm committed to competing again. I try to break some personal record every time I train. (Even if I have to do something new...just so I can say it's a record.)

Right now, it's early June 2005, I lift on an 8 day rotation (old muscles don't recover like they used too). I use a lot of Westside Barbell methods, lots of chains and bands, but I like to start every workout with one of the following: Power Snatch, Power Cleans or Overhead Squats, to get a general overall body warm-up and work on my speed and power.

Day 1 - Heavy Squat Day, Cardio

Day 2 - Throwing, Cardio, Drills

Day 3 - Heavy Bench Day, Cardio

Day 4 - Throwing, Cardio, Drills

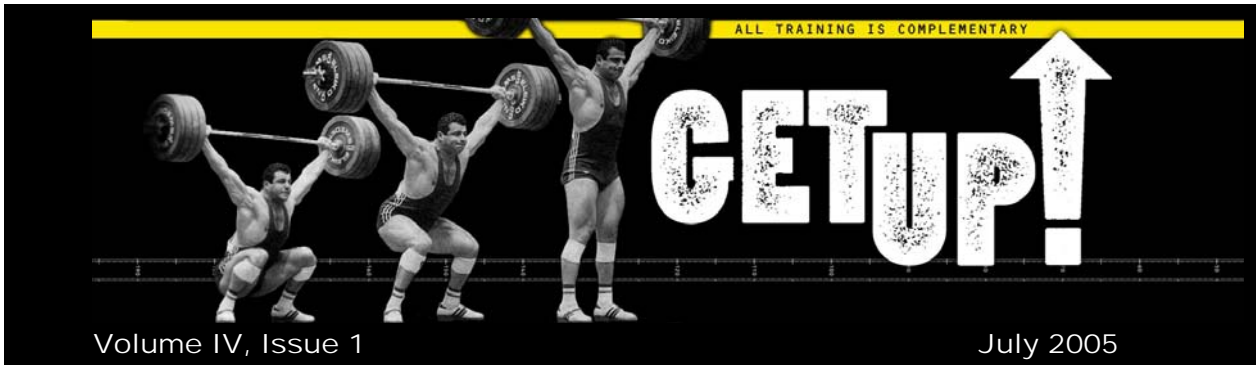
Day 5 - Speed Bench Day, Cardio

Day 6 - Throwing, Cardio, Drills

Day 7 - Speed Squat Day, Cardio

Day 8 - Throwing, Cardio, Drills

I have what my wife and I like to call "Slug day" whenever I feel beat up and just too tired to do anything. I basically don't do anything training related. This isn't being lazy. I can tell, from years of training experience, when I need to rest



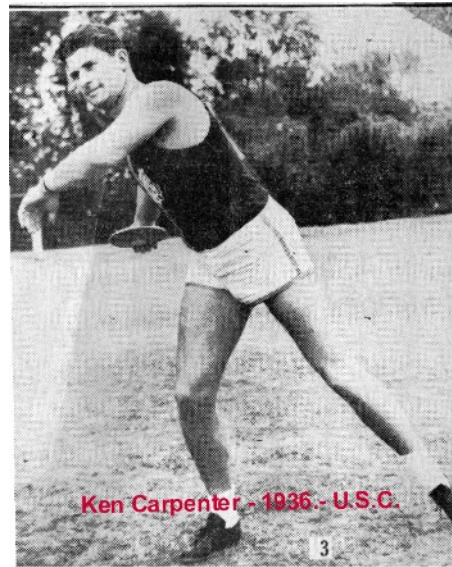
for a day or two. Sometimes I'm forced to take "it's all about Val" days off too, but she's so cute I can't say no (well, not without sleeping on the couch for a few nights).

My throwing and cardio days actually help me recover from the heavy lifting. (Dan...is it normal to huff and puff while throwing? I feel like I'm doing wind sprints sometimes while I'm throwing.) Cardio for me is walking for 45 minutes to an hour, sometimes around the block, sometime up a steep incline on a treadmill. I just can't run anymore with my foot and ankle issues. I'd love to be able to sprint again. Maybe someday it will happen. (Even old farts need to dream.)

I have my first Master's Track Meet scheduled for July 9, 2005 in Dayton, Ohio. I'm not at Dan's level "yet", but I'm gradually getting better. As John Powell said "Inch by inch, it's a cinch, but yard by yard it's hard."

Oh yeah, I almost forgot, I tried jumping on that 3 "step again the other day...nailed it. I'm up to an 8 inch step now. (stop laughing)

Welcome aboard. This is simply brilliant!!!



Ken Carpenter

- No weights...pull-ups and pushups.
- Grass rings
- Three sports
- No drugs
- Middle of "The Great Depression"
- "Old" Style

174 with the Real 2 Kilo Discus.

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