



## A Very Special Edition

As a Christmas Bonus to all of you, we have a second edition this month. Basically, our old friend, Todd Taylor, sent in his review of a LIFETIME in sports and it deserves center stage. We have done this before at Get Up, Rande offered a graph filled account of his return to the hammer and the swings and challenges of balancing all this...and life, and Mike P wrote...perhaps the most popular article of all-time...his cathartic review of preparing for the Olympic Trials...trials and triumphs, if you will.

It's what this newsletter is made for...regular people struggling to balance a boatload of life and living...while trying to improve as athletes. Hats off to all of you!

Let's remember the mission here:

### Our mission? To teach everyone:

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

## The Ironman—What Works!!

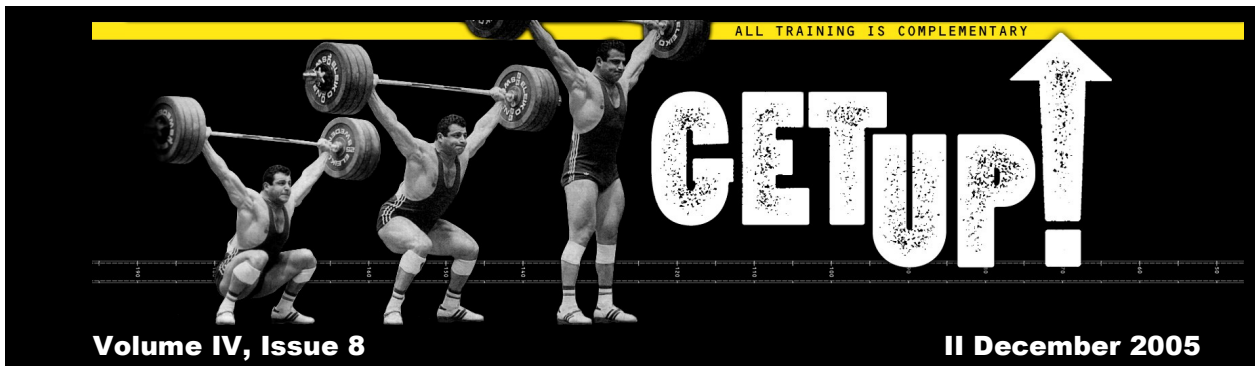
Todd "Ironman" Taylor  
*Insights from 50 years of Training & Competition*

The "Ironman" is a college nickname from "old school" days when moving iron around in a gym was not looked upon favorably by football coaches. Weight training was the key to my initial success as an athlete in high school. As an 8th grader, I was an all-city running back and champion in the

50 yd. dash at a whopping 5'0" short and 102 lb. light!!



Although my FBI agent Dad felt that most people who ran gyms in those days were probably ex-convicts who had learned it in prison, he let me join a gym. I put on 20 lbs of muscle that summer and then continued to do so each summer through high school just lifting in the summer, as I was a 3-sport athlete (football, basketball, track). I was a sprinter and jumper in track. But a Reggie Bush I was not in football—super quick but couldn't cutback instinctively to save my life. My junior year when my friends played varsity football, I was relegated to the Junior Varsity to learn how to play guard. Crushing for the ego—especially on Friday nights when they were on the



field and I was in the stands—but a blessing in disguise.

Playing an offensive guard, I quickly learned what leverage strength was all about and the application of the old saying, “It’s not the size of the dog in the fight but the size of the fight in the dog!” My senior year in high school I was only 5’9” 175 lb, but looking back now, I was probably only 5% body fat and the strongest player on the team. In one season, I had gone from junior varsity to varsity starter, all-league, all-state, All-American.

I was also fortunate win a National Football Foundation Scholar-Athlete award. In presenting the award, my high school coach said, “...and if he was just a little bigger, he could play college football!” I took that as a challenge and became a one-sport athlete the rest of my senior year by hitting the weight room that following week and lifting all winter, spring, and summer. I ended up playing in the state high school all-star game and then on a championship team for a Division III college. That HS senior year plunge into the weight room opened up my eyes as I got exposed to the Olympic lifts. In college, I was also an okay hammer thrower on the track team using the old “drag” technique that was really meant for big & strong guys.

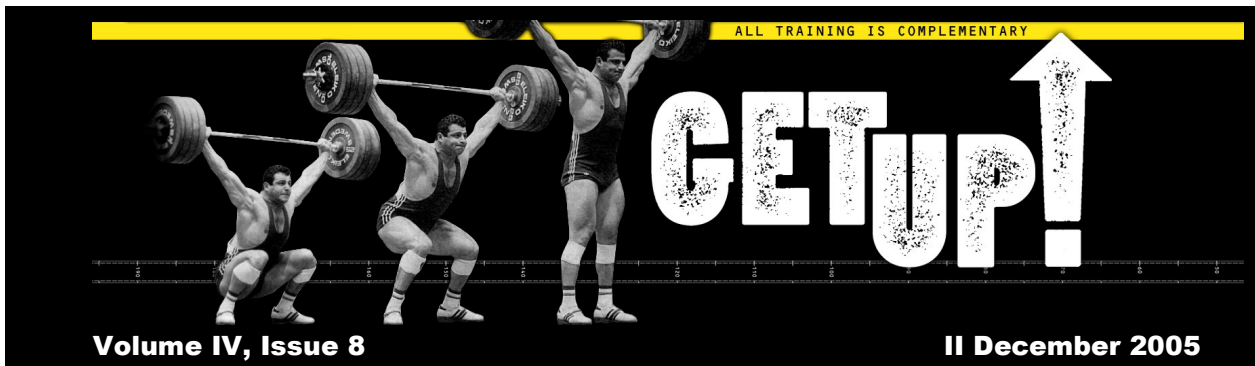
Out of college, I was going to graduate school full-time, working full-time, coaching part-time, and eating full-time like I was still at the training table.

So...I became a road runner or jogger in my 20’s. I then ran occasionally and played a lot of tournament handball and racquetball in my 30’s. I also mixed in some backpacking and alpine & rock climbing. In my 40’s I dropped the running and became a cyclist. However, all through these periods I always did some form of weight training. (Today, one would say that I was cross training.) In my 50’s, I went back into weight room, put on 40 lbs. and returned to track & field as a thrower. I also became a Level II USATF Throws Coach and have coached several conference champions and All-Americans at the junior college level as well as youth in Junior Olympics

I am now 59, train harder and smarter than many of the young athletes I coach, and continue to make improvements, despite fighting the effects of the aging process. Last season, I earned four USATF national championships, two silver medals at the World Masters Games and set an age-group American Record in the outdoor weight throw.

You faithful readers of *Get Up!* are so blessed to get the insights of Dan John and the contributing writers who have only two goals: 1) give you information that will help you succeed, and 2) inspire you to push yourself to new limits.

I only shared my personal history above so you have a better idea of my background and credentials to be saying anything to you. Now, I will share a



bakers dozen worth of insights from my 50 years of training and competition. This is my compilation of *stuff that works* because I have experienced it; not because some muscle head magazine or internet site said so.

### 1. Discipline

The root word of discipline is “disciple” or one who is a follower. In spiritual terms, it is an individual who believes in the doctrine and puts it into practice into his/her life. It becomes part of their very fabric and existence. In athletic terms, it really is the first fundamental of success that separates the “wannabe’s” from the “doer’s” and “achievers”. Dan John talks about the great value of simply “showing up”. Discipline is showing up on a regular basis whether you feel like it or not, have outside competing interests, etc.

Lots of athletes have good intentions and plans but no consistent follow-through. You can have the latest, greatest, superduper, periodized training programs that you have painstakingly researched and meticulously tailored to yourself; but it’s just wasted effort and hype if you do not dedicate the time to implement it. Discipline means you place a *priority* on a training program or its components, *set aside the time*, and faithfully *just do it!!* It takes more than 2 or 3 weeks for something to stick with you so you stick with it—it takes 5 to 6 weeks.

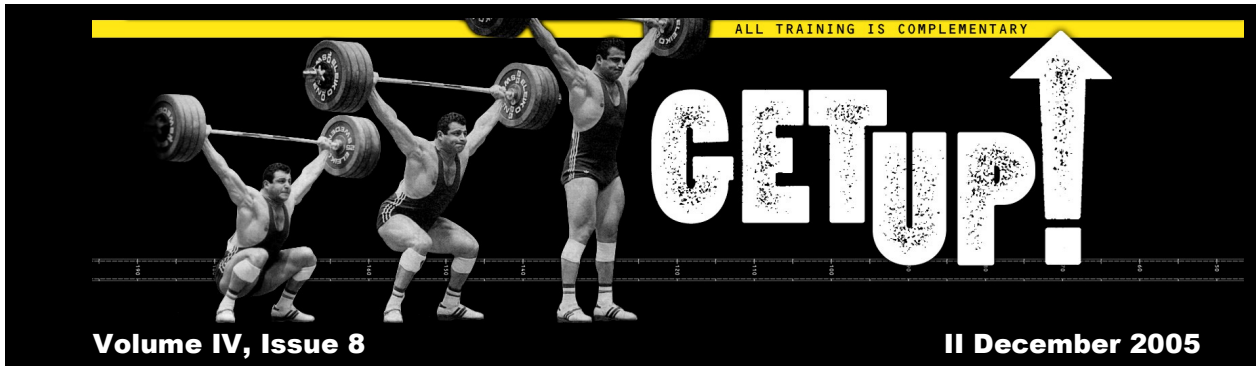
Discipline is part of my internal fiber and it is also an acquired trait through

my law enforcement background. The practical application is that I will get up at 4:30am yesterday to get in a workout in my 25° garage gym because that’s the time I have available. When I don’t feel motivated, I name a competitor and say “He’s probably in bed now, he’s not working out....you have a competitive advantage!”



### 2. Goals/Passion

A goal is a desired state or condition to attain that can be either near term or far



off. A goal can be stated as something you would eventually like to achieve and then you can have some subordinate goals that are more realistic to achieve in the short term based upon your skills and abilities. Adam Nelson didn't just make the switch at Darmouth from defensive tackle to shot putter and set the Olympics and World Champion as is his goal.

Setting a goal is a lot like planning a trip to a destination—varying modes of transportation, time frames, activities & stops along the way. In athletic terms, there are also a series of strategies and training plans to get you there. You want a goal to be *realistic and attainable*, but it should also be *inspiring* and gratifying enough when attained to *stretch yourself* mentally, emotionally, and physically. And that's where "passion" comes into play. If you are really passionate about something, the discipline comes easier in applying yourself to the activities required to get you there.

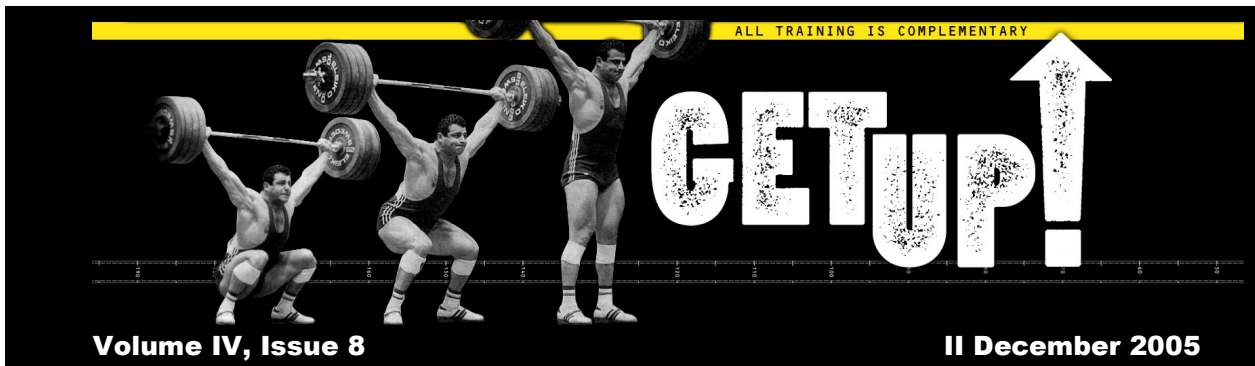
Goals work much better when they have a *time frame* and *measurable objectives* associated with them. My two year goal in my Masters throwing comeback was a medal at the 1998 World Masters Games. In early 1997, my early goal was to place in the top 10 in the U.S.; later as I improved and closed in on that goal, it was to be competitive at the National Championships. You need to keep moving the goal to challenge yourself.

Measurable objectives mean things such as strength increase in a specific lift, distance thrown in an event, improvement in specific aspects of technique. Another key dimension to goal setting is to have *balance in your life*—spiritual, family, school or livelihood, relationships, etc.—so that your goal does not become so all consuming that you burn out in other areas of your life.

### 3. Commitment

Often confused with but not the same as discipline, commitment means that you have bought into your goal; you are mentally and emotionally invested in it. You can be disciplined for periods of time, but when the pressure of life and time constraints infringe upon you, you waver and your goal simply does not have the same priority in your life. Commitment sustains you in the roller coaster ride of a season, school, career, family, life etc. You may have to adjust or delay the goal, but you still have not only the desire but the *willingness to see it through*. You simply will it to be. This is also what carries you past the plateaus in technique and performance...you will yourself to get there (along with requisite training volume and workload). Ask yourself, how critically important is the "other stuff" that sucks your energy and time away from the activities of your training plan supporting your goal? The mirror of self examination is a great measuring instrument; you'll find out real quick whether you are a doer or a





dreamer. Commitment in a relationship or marriage means you esteem the other person and do whatever is necessary to maintain it. No matter what or whatever comes against you, that person is “your only best one.” It’s not just “working” at a relationship; to the contrary it’s a real joy and pleasure to be doing things with that person. A competitive goal has to be the same way. Commitment gives you staying or sticking power; you cling to the goal and requisite training regimen—***no matter what!***

A quick story will illustrate the point. George Matthews, Chair for USATF Masters Track & Field, had been a successful competitor. He sold his business in Seattle and retired to San Diego; he helped Tom Myers with Club Thor and throwers meets, working with young throwers, etc. But missing their grandkids back in the Northwest, George and Kate moved to just north of Coeur d’Alene, ID. A high school is in town, but no facilities for throwing the hammer. So George finds some acreage, clears it and installs a ring; now he’s looking at erecting a steel building for winter training. This past summer George won a Gold Medal at the World Championship in Spain and set a world record. That’s commitment! Oh, by the way, he did all this while “un-retiring” and going back into another business at 60 something!!

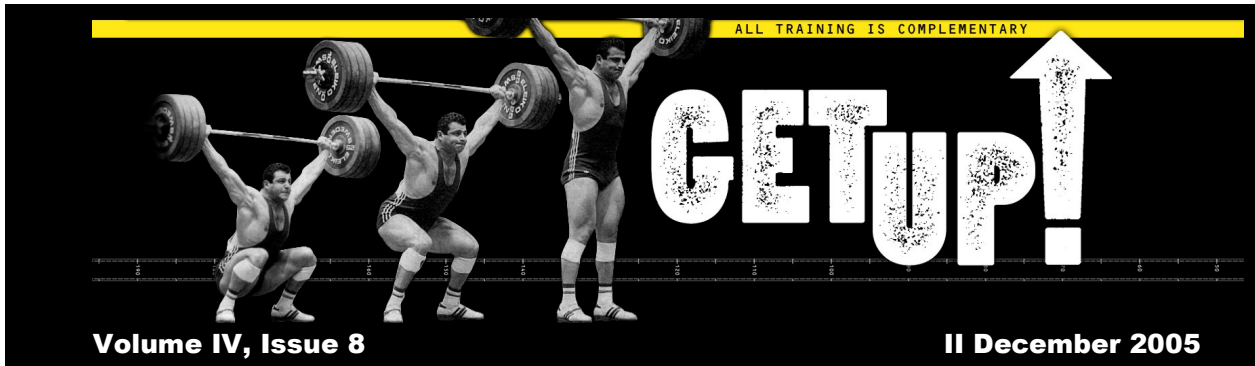
#### 4. Flexibility

Now that you think I am some sort of automaton robot marching blindly

toward my seasonal goals with all this commitment and discipline, I want to share perhaps the most difficult advice that relates to these. Plans are plans; not commandments written in stone. I’ll address several dimensions of flexibility. First, you need to look at the ***time*** you have ***available*** for training and/or time you are ***willing to allocate***. Forget the perfect plan, scheme and routine. For example, my only available weekday lifting time for a full workout is Wed/Fri before 6:00am. Also, when lifting in a heavy/light and upper/lower body pattern four-day per week workout, I modify it to be a Wed/Sat upper and Fri/Sun lower with the first day heavy and second day light. ***Realistically modify*** routines and workout plans.

Second, don’t blow off a workout(s) simply because of a schedule change or something that comes up; instead ***alter the workout*** to get some sort of training effect. Whether that be a reduced number of sets, getting in some circuits or “tabata” sets, doing drills on your patio or sidewalk, etc.

Third, be flexible in ***adapting workout plans to fit you***. For example, in my garage gym a Bulgarian split squat is not a great choice because my flat bench slides on the rubber mats if I place my off leg on it. So, a reasonable alternative would be to increase the amount of weight and still get the quadriceps emphasis by doing a one-leg lunge position squat. Although free weights are always preferable to



machines, if you are pressed for time at the end of a workout you can fit in a superset of biceps/triceps or chest press/lat pulldown on a cable/plate stack machine.

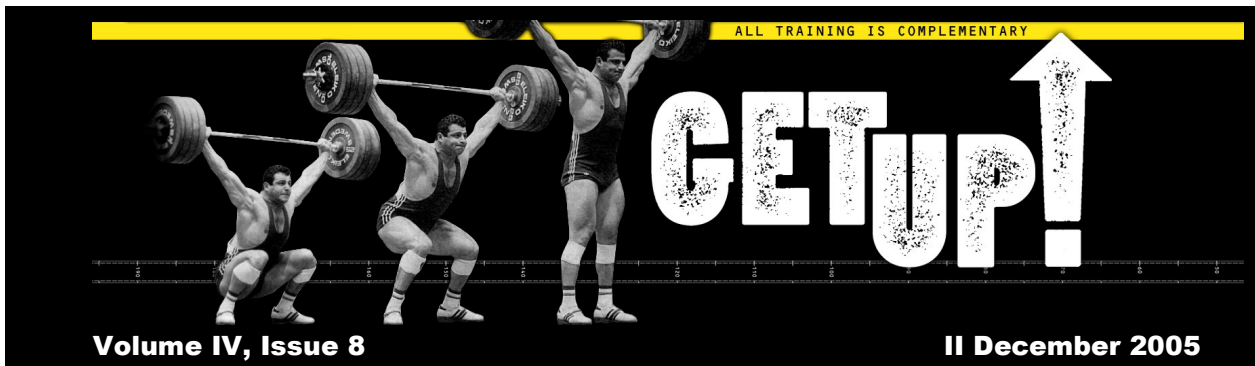
Fourth, if you are coming down with a cold or are really tired, then you should stop and reflect if you are over training or need to back off a little. There is a good reason why “active rest” periods are built into training plans. Sure you can work through some sniffles and in some cases working up a good sweat will do you some good; but *listen to your body* and *know when to back off* your workouts when you are ill.

Fifth, *in competitions* you need to be able to stay focused on your lifting or throwing and not be distracted by failed lifts, a poor official, implements that don't make weigh-in, etc. If you are so focused on the perfect competition (for you) that a competitor's great lift or mark gets you rattled, you are not a very good competitor. Your plan may have been to get out front early with a big lift or mark, but if the other guy beats you to it then you have to adjust and not let it psyche you out. You have to have confidence in your training and technique that got you there; everyone else has to adapt to the same conditions. Sixth, you need flexibility in your muscles, joints, and ligaments to be a good athlete. If you want to work some flexibility exercises into your routines or pre-season workouts, that's great. But honestly, I think you will get all the *body*

*flexibility* you will need for lifting and throwing *from* the *Olympic lifts* and its variants and doing *functional strength exercises* along the neuromuscular pathways of your event(s). As a hammer & weight thrower, I rely on plate twists, pud throws, rotational snatches, whip snatches, etc. I really only need to have flexibility to get into and hold key positions in the throw; not be a gymnast who can do the splits and shake hands with himself behind his back.

#### 5. Journal/Training Log

Dan John has talked a lot about the importance of keeping a journal/training log and periodically “mining” it for nuggets of insight and wisdom. I don't keep a detailed journal, but I do start the indoor and outdoor throwing seasons with a periodized training plan (more on that under periodization). I have my weight training workout exercises for each day written in a 5”x 8” spiral bound notebook. This way I tend to treat my workouts just like I would the activities at work on my daily planner/calendar. In other words, *it's on paper and I am committed to it*. If I am going to raise my starting poundage, I indicate it with an upward arrow notation at the end of the previous workout for that day/emphasis. I record the weight lifted and reps. I also record my auxiliary exercises such as pud throws, core strength circuits, etc. And I will record any throwing activities of the day. If my lifting numbers are down, I will try to reflect why and note the reason, e.g.,



“seminar yesterday, home late, little sleep”; “lost focus”; “rt. rear delt” (means strained or tweaked during the set).

When I am throwing, I really try not to focus on distance. Instead, I try to recall (at the time) my best throws of that day and what the things were I felt I was doing well that contributed to that throw. Over time, you can see consistent patterns emerge. After meets for which I am peaking, I will go back over the completed training plan of lifting, auxiliary exercises, drills, throwing, etc. and determine how well it served me. This helps me make adjustments in developing the next training modules.

#### 6. **Knowledge**

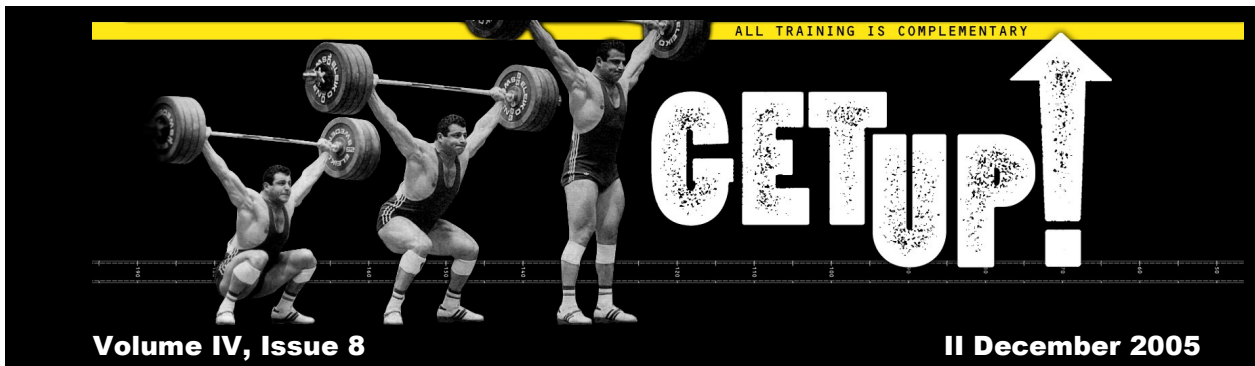
Be a student of your sport(s) and event(s). *Become a sponge* or vacuum cleaner and suck up as much “good” information as you can get from: 1) traditional learning resources (that we never had “back in the day”) such as articles, books, DVD’s, websites, etc., 2) coaches, 3) clinics, 4) technically sound competitors in competitions. Good technique is based upon science (physics and biomechanics) not trial and error. [Yes, this is your license to forget what most of the pin-head & pencil-neck “personal trainers” tell you in a gym or skinny never-thrown-anything throws coach tells you about the throws.] Knowledge basically means “know how” or knowing the correct way to do something.

Learn from people and programs that know what they are talking about. For example, if Louie Simmons and the Westside Barbell Club guys with a bazillion 500+ lb. benchers say something about training and technique for a big bench, you can be pretty safe they know what they are talking about. If a Tony Ciarelli who has produced a bazillion Olympic lifting and high school throwing champions in California says something, he’s not blowing smoke. If you can, go sit at the feet of a master (or their clinic/seminar) and let him open up the world to you.

Lance Deal won the Silver Medal at the 1996 Olympics and was honored as the Sportsman of the Year in Oregon at a huge banquet. I boldly walked up to him at the end of the banquet and said, “I haven’t thrown a hammer in 30 years, but I want to win a medal at the World Masters Games in two years...would you help me!?!?” He graciously said yes and thus began a marvelous journey. Sometimes you just have to want something bad enough.

#### 7. **Understanding**

Understanding is that little “*a-h—a— a!!*” *internal light bulb* that goes on after you are able to internalize the “how to” knowledge with experiential knowledge. You have thoughtfully applied it for yourself and you now can see what works & doesn’t work for you based upon your physical attributes, training age, etc. Understanding is “you know that you know”; you’ve been there



and done that—some bad & some good. Most importantly, you know *what stuff works for you* for different training objectives.

Understanding is closely related to “wisdom” which is making good decisions in how to use your knowledge and understanding. You gain more wisdom and insight as you compete and train more and gain more exposure to ideas and concepts from others with knowledge and understanding. Then, like Coach Mac (Bob McKay) frequently says you will “**train smarter, not harder**”. That means being both efficient and effective in the use of your training time.

I really didn’t mislead you by making you read all this preliminary stuff before I got to “stuff that works”. If you don’t get this stuff, you’re really wasting your time trying to mine nuggets of the material that follows. If you, my friend, “don’t get it” you’d better take a good long look at that “mirror of self-examination.” I know you—you’re the chronic poster on internet discussion forums or the one always looking for the easy answer or quick fix. Newsflash to you—if it’s easy, quick, short, etc., it’s stuff that doesn’t work. Sure, be a seeker (seek, ask, knock), but then put it into practice, try it, be a doer!

#### 8. Drills/Auxiliary Lifts

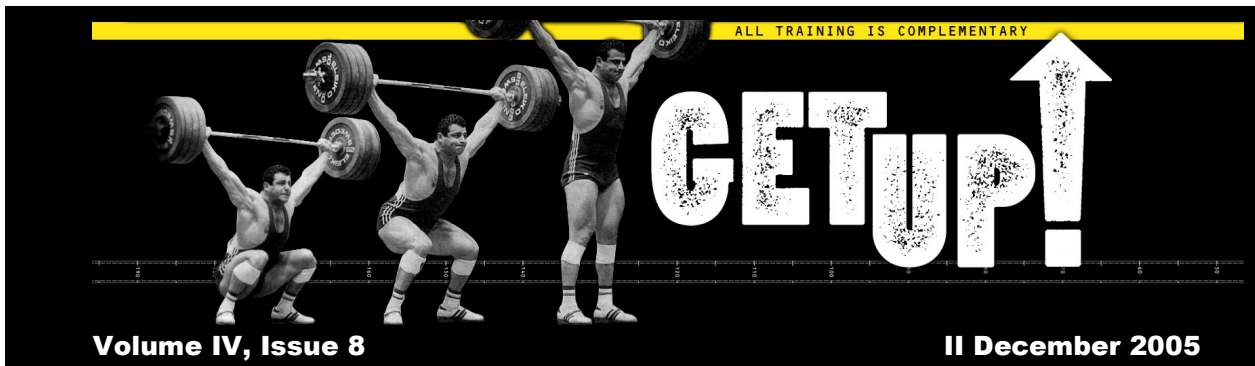
I have put both of these together because they basically serve the same purpose—**groove the neuromuscular pathways, movement patterns, rhythm, balance**

**and timing.** You should not spend most of your practice time trying to bomb PR’s or doing full throws and complete Olympic lifts. World Champion shot putter, Adam Nelson, recently stated that he only takes 6-12 full throws at practice. The remainder of his time he’s “focused on finding my rhythm and timing...I’m thinking things through, feeling for positions and such.”

Drills can be incredibly boring, but in time you should get the positive feedback of improved performance in your throw. Quite frankly, it takes a lot of concentration to isolate and focus on an aspect of your technique. The **repeated motions establish patterns and physical aspects requisite to the technique**—you start doing stuff without having to think about it or “cue” yourself.

I remember from my tournament racquetball days a player who drove me nuts because he wasn’t a very good athlete and only had two decent shots in his repertoire. But he had figured out that most players had trouble retuning a high backhand in the back corner and a side-to-front wall “kill” shot. So, through repetition in practice he grooved those shots and became a real nemesis at tournaments mixing up high lobs, ceiling shots, and kills. The lesson here is that if you use drills to work on the weak points in your technique, you can substantially improve your technique—**maximize and leverage your strengths,** but





**minimize and improve your weaknesses.**

You can buy books and DVD's on improving your bench press or clean and jerk. Most of what you'll get is partial movement of the whole lift and assistance or auxiliary lifts. The "big boy" benchers do a lot of lat and upper back, shoulder, and triceps work. You want a big clean or clean and jerk—deadlifts, RDLs, good mornings, partial pulls (low, med, high), shoulder shrugs, push presses, front squats, overhead squats, etc. The good Olympic lifters also do a lot of reps with PVC plastic pipe, thick wood doweling, and empty bars. Guess what, throwers, the better your Olympic lifting technique, the more you'll lift, the stronger you'll be, and more explosive and farther will be your throws!!

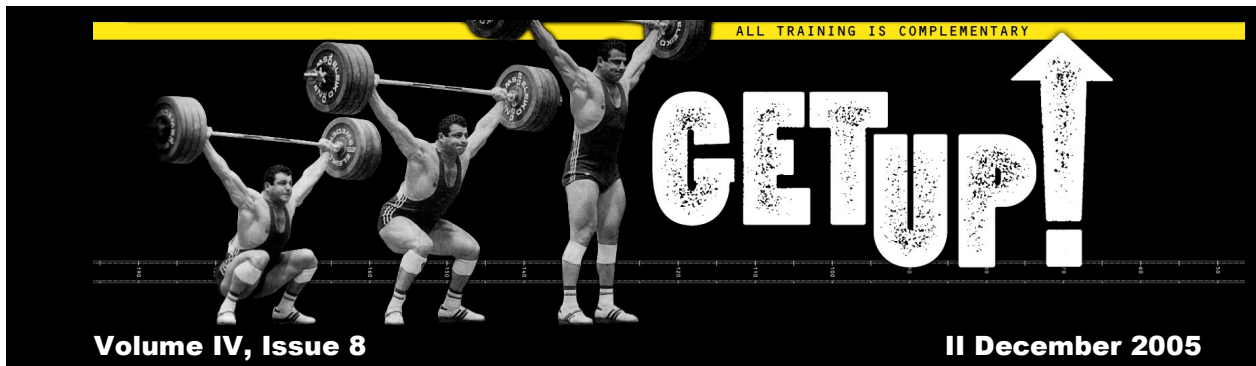
Okay, so my Olympic lifting technique sucks compared to many, but I still work at it. I'll compare my close grip hang snatch to anybody for explosiveness and bar speed—see that's the carry over to my event (hammer & weight), but I still do cleans for overall strength and lower chain development. Olympic variants and auxiliary lifts are stuff that work.

Because I am not a competitive Olympic lifter, I **try to mimic throwing mechanics and motion** as much as I can. For example, I like a barbell row from a Romanian deadlift position with my butt behind my heels, because that's what I do when I am countering the

outward pull of a hammer or weight in the throw. Tight trapezius and shoulder girdle muscles in a hammer throw can shorten your radius (a key distance variable in addition to release speed, angle and height). So, I let the traps relax and concentrate on the pulling motion being a continuation (or summation) of forces generated in my hang or full snatch. But at the same time I will do heavy barbell shrugs to strengthen my traps. Also in the snatch, I finish in a split-leg catch with the right foot out front because it mimics the "catch" of the hammer or weight as you step to the high orbit of the ball in your turn to the front of the circle.

#### **9. Nutrition**

Yes, your mother was right—eat your broccoli. Yup, Dan John is right—**meat, leaves and berries!** My body craves protein and I keep it in the recommended strength athlete range of 1.5 to 2.0 grams per day per kilogram of body weight. Fortunately, I do not really have a sweet tooth or crave starches—I am fine without bread or potatoes. I try to get most of my carbohydrates from fresh (or fresh frozen) vegetables. When I do splurge and have a donut or cinnamon roll, the upset stomach from the glycemic sugar shock reminds me why I don't eat that stuff. My weakness—like Adam Nelson—is a big bowl of ice cream late at night. But I keep that to a small bowl that is low-fat and sugar-free. For breakfast I make a protein shake with frozen or fresh berries (great



antioxidant), banana (potassium), milk, protein powder, green tea (energy & metabolism), and dry oatmeal (fiber). Just put it all in a blender and slurp it down in the car on the way to work; yuk, you say but it works for me. I also mix two additional protein drinks (without banana & oatmeal) for mid-morning and afternoon snacks. Ideally, you should get most of your protein from whole food, but slamming down protein drinks is always convenient and insures that my body gets fueled up every 3 hours. I also take to work about a handful each of raw almonds and pistachios for munchies. I keep a 32oz. water bottle at my desk and try to drink two of them during the day.

For lunch, I eat a whole can of soup and increase the protein intake by adding a half-dozen mini-meatballs (kept in the freezer in plastic baggie). Dinner is usually a chicken or meat entrée with green salad and other fresh vegetables or rice. We like our Pacific Northwest salmon spring through fall as well. I make a killer no bean chili and my wife makes a killer beef stew and chicken & steak tacos and fajitas. On the weekend, I am more flexible and treat myself to a cinnamon raisin bagel or pancakes and bacon. My stopgap “nothing else to eat” meal is scrambled eggs, whole grain toast and milk.

Nutritional Supplements:

- Multivitamin
- Fish Oil/Vitamin E
- Glucosamine/Chondroitin (joints/ligaments)

- Saw Palmetto (old guy prostate insurance)

Pre-Workout/Competition Drink:

- *Accelerade* (4:1 carb to protein ratio)
- 10g BCCA's
- 10g L-Glutamine
- *Lift Off* (Taurine, Ginseng, Ginkgo Biloba)

During Workout:

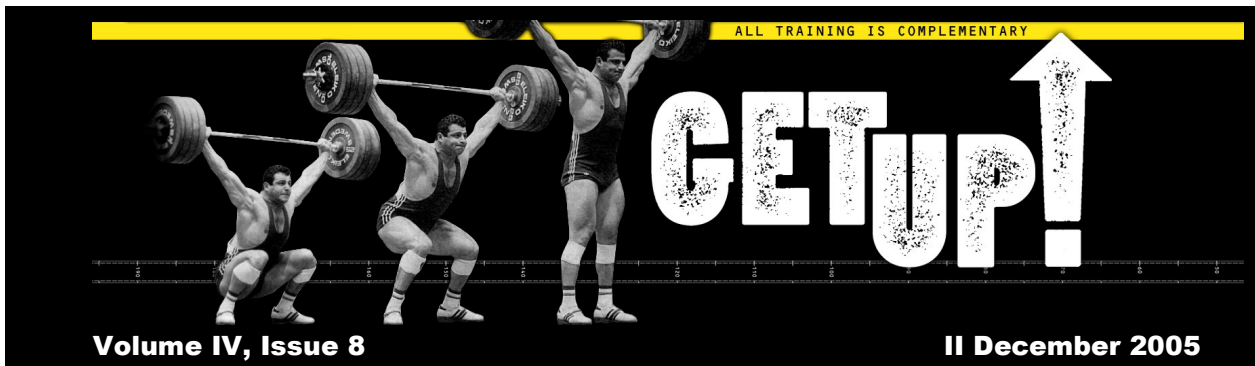
- 24 oz. water

Post-Workout Drink

- *Bulk & Muscle* (Herbalife—26g carbs/30 gram protein)

**I take stuff where I have seen actual applied research findings independent of product advertising claims; and then done my own trials.** For example, research has shown that 500-600mg of the Omega-3 fatty acids EPA & DHA are the equivalent of 3 fish servings per week. This intake has been shown to 1) increase the amount of “good” arterial cleansing HDL cholesterol while 2) reducing the risks of: heart disease, sudden cardiac death, prostate and colon cancer, stroke, asthma, arthritis, dementia and Alzheimer's. So, take your fish oil like the Ironman and you'll live long, active and healthy, even if you're not still setting AR's in your 90's like us!!

For another example, in my pre-workout cocktail both my body and mind are ready to go for a sustained and intense workout. The BCCA stuff (branched chain amino acids) comes



from Mario Pasquale, PhD, that I found in Charles Poliquin's writings. [Be a good fruit inspector—check out the fruit of their labors; clients like Jud Logan and Adam Nelson and other Olympians tell you the guy knows his stuff.] Don't try routines, programs and supplements because somebody has ghost written an article in a magazine. If you are a tested athlete trying to avoid banned substances, then check product offerings to **find nutritional supplement companies that don't also manufacture any of the banned crap stuff!!** Buy yourself a cost-effective 6 lb. container of whey protein (but check out the company) to meet your protein intake needs.

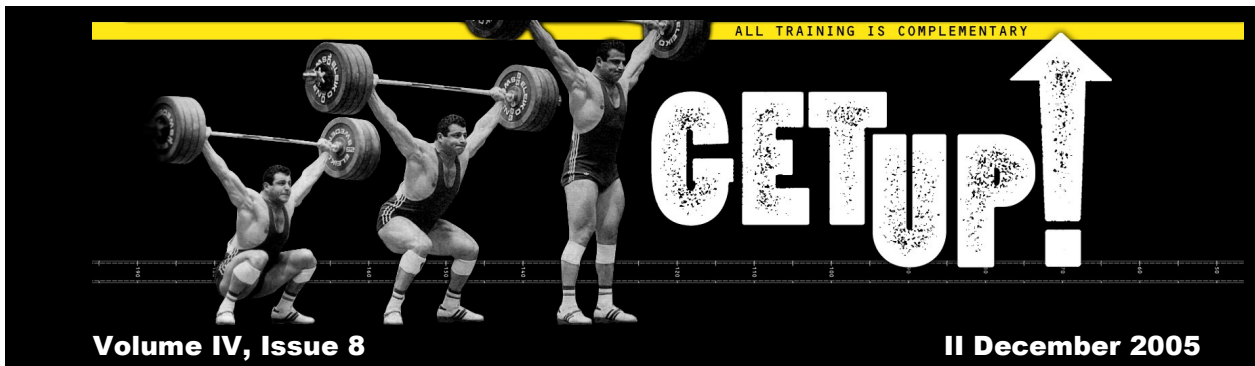
Nope, I don't take a latest & greatest creatine plus NO<sub>2</sub>/arginine cell volumizing, super duper pump up the muscles and eye bulging veins supplement! Yeah, I've taken creatine and it works, but I like to stay away from the bodybuilding hype products. **Save your money and use it for entry fees & travel to meets!** Bodybuilders are focused on hypertrophy and do a lot of sets to failure with minimal rest periods. Creatine supplementation helps them keep their ATP-Creatine level up (energy to fire the muscles) because of the excess from their supplementation. But for a performance athlete, you will get replenishment of this for your muscles with a 3-minute rest period between sets (that's the science). You want a pump? Try some tabata sets,

supersets, tri-sets (6,12,25 reps), decreasing set rest periods, etc. If you are a lifter and thrower, you want explosive power, not pretty, pumped up biceps and pecs. You can tell **the real power athletes** wearing a polo shirt just by looking at their obvious trap, shoulder, and upper back development; and in shorts, you can see good hamstring and glute development.

#### 10. **Periodization**

Here, we have some clear differences with your *Get Up* Senior Editor-in-Chief, Dan John. He does not believe in "peaking". Dan has a high base level of strength from years of training and is more of an instinctive or intuitive trainer selecting from the *Get Up* "the body is one piece" menu of 1) putting weight overhead, 2) picking it up off the ground, 3) carrying it for time or distance. I will have to agree that it is hard to document a direct correlation from a particular peaking effort and outstanding performance. However, I don't think he will disagree with the need to **build to a certain strength level, be able to maintain it, and be fresh for your biggest competitions.** That is periodization in a nutshell. But first let us back up.

The training session imposes increased resistance or progressive stress overload on the body and the body responds to the stress with the SAID Principle—Specific Adaptation to Imposed Demands. Huge workload volumes and a bazillion sets do not build strength, rather they fry



your central nervous system and get you over-trained. (Instead, use a 4-day Split—get in & lift hard; get out!!) The growth in muscles and your strength gains come while the body is recovering from the workout on your non-core lift workout days. If you are wiped out from a ton of lifting, drills, and throwing, then you are pedaling backward not making gains.

Periodization in training works for me and the older I get, the more I need it. Basically, instead of doing the same program of lifts, sets and reps over and over, you progressively build toward a peak power production to occur close to a major competition (in both lifting and throwing). Let's back up to a basic primer of strength and power development:

- **Hypertrophy**—increase in muscle size/fibers
- **Strength**—move increasingly heavier weights
- **Power**—rapidly move heavy weights
- **Peak Power**—rapidly move heaviest weights

Periodization creates **block/periods/cycles** of lifting that **emphasize different aspects of muscle, strength and power development** as a lifter. As a thrower, you want to develop that peak power production going into your biggest meet and maintain it while increasing your throwing and backing off lifting volume and intensity. If you

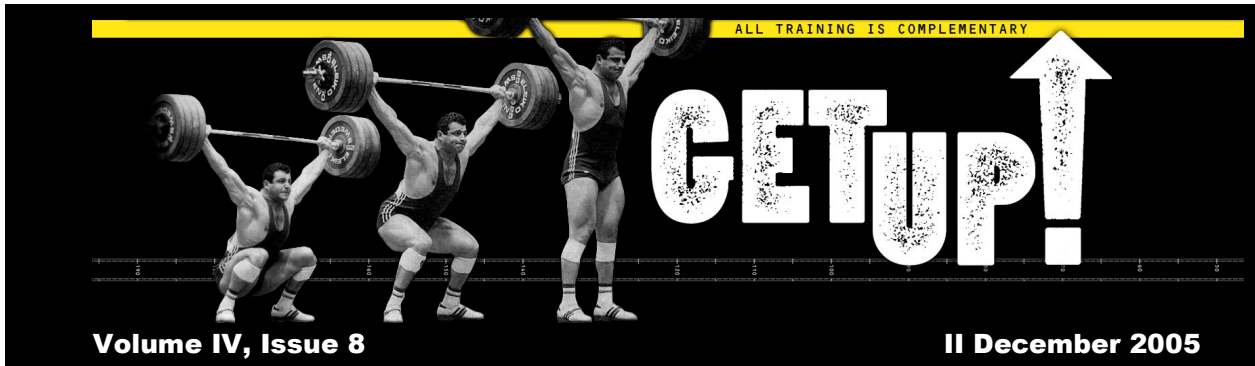
are working in the 12-rep range you are conditioning; 8-12 rep range is hypertrophy; 5-8 rep range is strength; 3-5 rep range is strength & power; and 1-2 reps is peak power.

Enough theory; here's how I apply periodization to the "core" lifts part of training after allowing 2 to 3 weeks total rest after my last big throwing meet of the season in early September.

- 3 weeks—weight/body circuits (conditioning)
- 4 weeks—German Body Comp (hypertrophy)
- 1 week—Active Rest
- 4 weeks—modified Westside Barbell Club (strength)
- 1 week—Active Rest
- 4 weeks—Olympic & Auxiliary 5x5 (power)
- 1 week—Active Rest
- 3 weeks—Olympic & Auxiliary 3x3 (peak power)
- Taper Week
- Indoor National Championships

Circuits and hypertrophy are 3 days per week, and then the gradual build up in heavy lifting is 4 days per week. I will take one week off after Indoor National Championships (weight & superweight events), then resume a 5x5 Olympic/Auxiliary lift followed by 3x3 that takes me up to the start of my outdoor competitive throwing season in June. During this pre-outdoor season build up, I will do more drills and heavy implement throwing.





During the competitive outdoor throwing season, I try to stay “**strong but fresh**” by **alternating weeks of strength and speed**. That means one week I will use the 5x5 format and then the following week I do a light week of quick and explosive lifts (squats, snatches, bench, etc.). This speed week is often in a tabata scheme mixed with a lot of functional strength work (more on this later). As a peaking format, I will move to 3x3 one month out from the Outdoor National Championships. I lift 4 days per week and throw 4 days per week unless I have a two-day weekend meet. My 5x5 and 3x3 lifting scheme looks similar to a Tony Ciarelli throwers program; and I add core and functional strength work to it:

**Wed/Sat Fri/Sun**

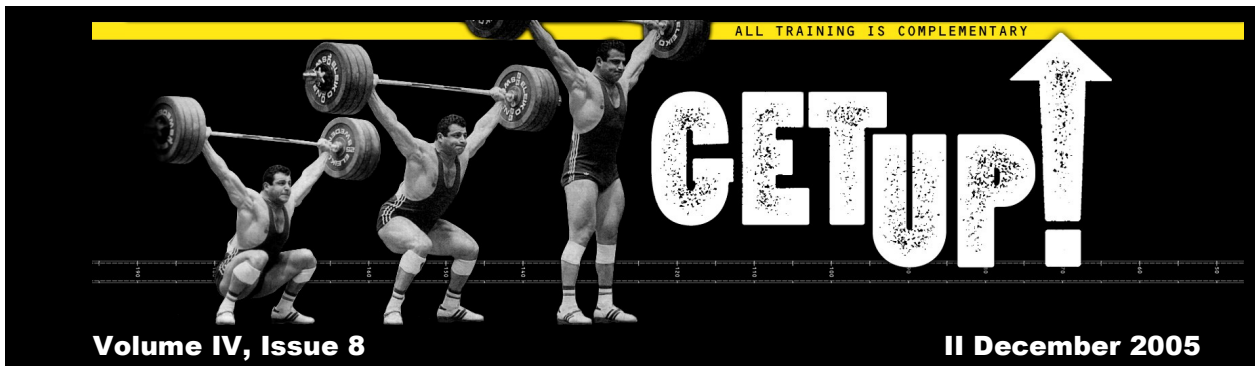
- Clean Snatch
- Clean Pull RDL
- Front Squat Step-Up
- Incline Bench Push Press

That’s a lot of work for a guy hitting age 60 and many of my friends think I’m nuts. But after all I am the “Ironman” and have been doing this stuff all my life. However, I have noticed a significant drop-off in strength and performance levels from 60-65 as the testosterone levels decline even more for the masters athlete. Check back with me in three years. But this stuff works—especially if you are younger than me. To explain why periodization works let us use some analogies with high performance auto racing. You can’t just

take your street auto out to the track and expect to perform well against track ready cars. If you dropped a big engine into your existing frame, suspension, gearing, etc., your car would be powerful but not necessarily fast and nimble under racing conditions. Racing teams spend lots of money fine tuning all the aspects of a race car during time trials, qualifying, preliminary races and events to get it into championship form for the big race(s). If you go hard and long all the time in the gym and field, you will fry your central nervous system, be over trained, and consistently under perform compared to your potential.

**11. Compound Lifts**

I doubt that most of you *Get Up* readers need a lecture on the value of compound lifts. However, if you are under time constraints, you should know what gives you the biggest bang for the time expended. Compound lifts are multi-muscle and multi-joint lifts such as the squat, deadlift and bench press that powerlifters compete in. You can add to those lifts lunge squats, step-ups, jump squats for legs; and presses, rows, pullups and pulldowns for upper body. The most important thing is to get a **full range of motion** (e.g., deep vs. parallel squat) and emphasize a **slow eccentric** portion (lowering) and **explosive concentric** (contraction) of the lift. Step-ups, lunge squats, and one-leg presses are good for quadriceps isolation; this combined with the rhythmic nature of the movement is why I like them for



transferability to the throws where you are moving from leg to leg. Romanian deadlifts (RDL) and good mornings are excellent for lower back and upper hamstring development, i.e., the “power zone.” Supersetting benches with rowing and pulling exercises works alternate muscle groups (pushing vs. pulling). Curls and triceps presses are fine when you are in a hypertrophy phase, but these are more isolation exercises. Push or jerk presses are technically an Olympic variant exercise, but they are great multi-muscle exercises for triceps and upper shoulder girdle. **More muscle groups worked in the same exercise time;** that’s why compound lifts are stuff that work.

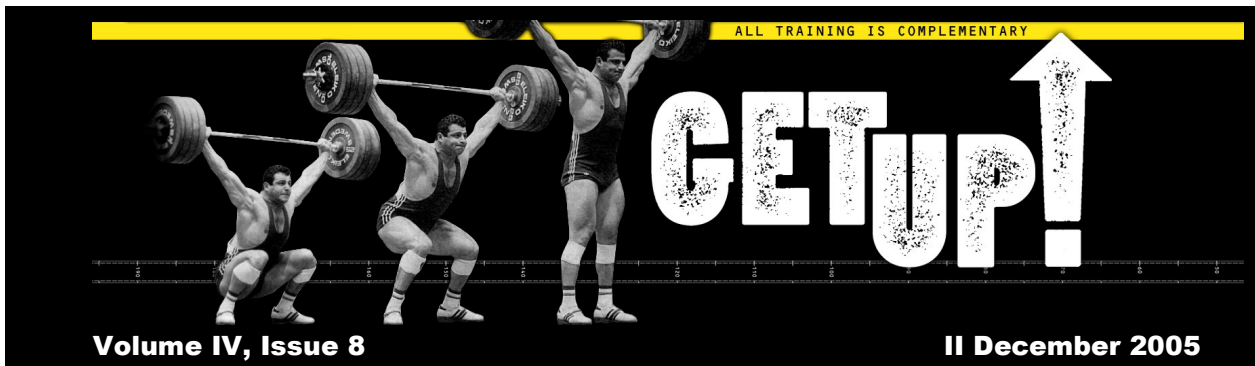
If you had to pick an abbreviated/time-constrained program, it would be deadlift, squat, bench or press. Do some warm-ups and go 8-6-6-4-4 for reps on your heavy day and 3x10-12 on a light day with each exercise 3 days per week; alternate the heavy and light days. You have plenty of time for throwing and drills and other stuff. When you want to peak, change the rep scheme to 6-4-4-2-2. Mix in some core and functional strength exercises on two other days.

### 12. Olympic Lifts

The **foundational lifts/exercises for the throws** involve the Olympic lifts and their variants (power & hang cleans and snatches & pulls) for one reason—these are **explosive** multi-joint movements engaging muscles, tendons, and

connective tissue that generate **high power output**. Olympic lifting movements help train and condition the body for developing maximum torso kinetic energy through a full-range of coordinated and continuous movements in the throwing events. Throwing is about “slow to fast” movements and powerful acceleration that pushes the limits of the “force-velocity curve”, i.e., huge acceleration in a very short time frame. “Power” is expressed as  $\text{Force} \times \text{Distance} \div \text{Time}$ ; thus, explosive power is often referred to as “speed-strength” because your choices to become more powerful are to be quicker or have more “limit” strength. Velocity (speed) is the *y-axis* and Force (strength) is the *x-axis* for the force-velocity curve. The training effects of Olympic lifts and their variants **increase both speed/quickness and strength**, thereby “pushing” the force velocity curve and the ability to generate maximum power on demand.

Yeah, I know I am preaching to the choir here, but those who would take the straight bodybuilding or powerlifting path to building strength in the throws need to know that the greatest transfer to the athletic movements in all of the throwing events comes from the Olympic lifts and their variants. Here is a practical illustration of the force-velocity curve (power output) at work. Patrick O’Shea in *Quantum Strength & Power Training* compared the actual power in wattage (distance moved and amount of time to lift the weight divided

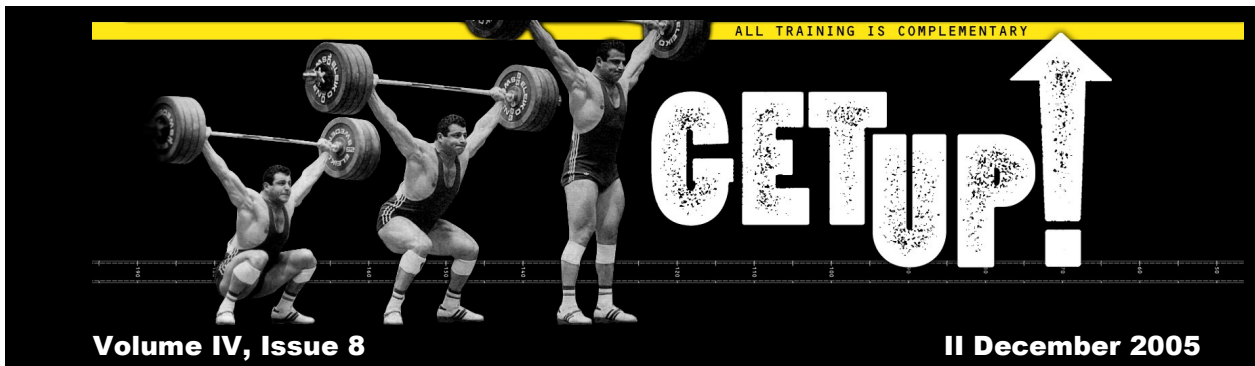


by body weight) for two former world record holders in the deadlift (Doyle Kenady) and clean movement of a clean & jerk (Alex Pisarenko). Kenady took 2 seconds to pull 405 kg .40m generating 5.67 watts for his 140 kg bodyweight. Weighing about 40 lb. less, Pisarenko pulled his 265 kg clean to a height of .90m generating 21.64 watts—**4 times the amount of power!**

“Why is that?” you ask. Good question and some important concepts to grasp so you can see the correlation between what some call the “quick” lifts and throwing in general. First, in the clean and the snatch, if done correctly, you initiate the movement of the bar by **generating a downward force** or push into the ground with your feet. Second, the really powerful Olympic-style lifters are able to **pull for a longer distance & time** before they get under the bar. The best throwers can generate force for the longest path before release. Third, the great amount of force generated with a heavy weight is what creates the **greatest stimulation** and development of the **fast-twitch fibers**—the type of muscle you need for explosive throwing movements. Finally, that explosive throwing movement occurs because of not only the power generated but through a **“summation of forces”**; in both the Olympic lift and the throw, the bar/implement is increasingly accelerated with each successive movement. So, that’s why this stuff works!

I will not take the time to rehash periodized training and lifting programs but generally you will move from general conditioning, general preparation, specific preparation, and competition (in-season) program. As one progresses toward the season, a starting point with the core lifts for “strength” cycles (off-season) would be 5x5 with the Olympic variant lifts being performed from the floor. A “strength and power” cycle(s) moves the reps down to the 3-rep range for 2-3 sets. [Since I start with a Westside Barbell Club protocol as a “strength” cycle, I max my “peak power” right here at the 3x3 format. I have an aversion to 1-2 reps, largely due to an unfixed small hernia; I am reluctant to go totally all out on 1-2 reps.] Generating peak power production generally occurs in the 1-2 rep sets with 3 to 5 minutes rest in between sets so your energy stores are fully replenished. Olympic lifters will tend to work a lot at this latter level, but throwers only “work up” to heavy volume and intensity for a cycle or two at most and **during the season can maintain strength levels at 85% 1RM for 3-5 reps in 2-3 sets.**

For variety and to work explosiveness, I like to see a progression over the entire pre-season and competitive season in the snatch, pull/clean done from the floor, boxes (below & just above knees), and hang positions. Here is a more detailed explanation of **alternating “strength”**



and “speed” weeks that I mentioned in the last section. In the strength week, do your core lifts in that strength maintenance range of 2-3 progressive overload sets of 3-5 reps (85% 1RM). During the speed week, take a 50-60% 1RM weight and do those core lifts in “Bulgarian” or “Tabata” sets. Angel Spassov got these from the Bulgarian Olympic lifters who would do as many reps as they could within 20-second sets. For the snatches, cleans, pulls—do them from the hang position. I really like the explosiveness in the Bulgarian’s with a “hip” snatch—starting with the bar at hips. In the early part of the season, most throwers lift and throw “through the meets” and then peak for one or two special meets (conference, region, etc.). The Bulgarian or tabata sets in a speed week are great for the “bigger meet” competitions during the season, i.e., you will keep some strength up but still be fresh for the meet.

### 13. Core and Functional Strength

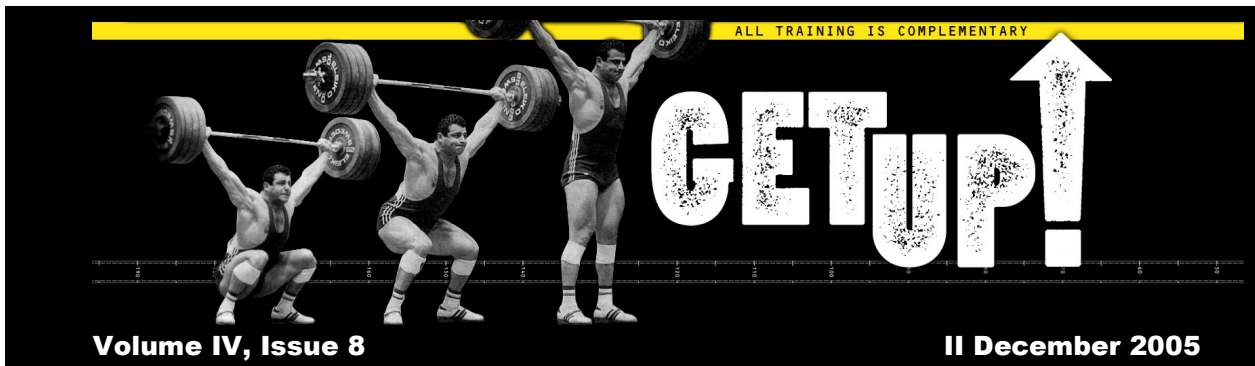
While they are two different concepts, I am going to link them together because anatomically and biomechanically they are. **Core strength** are the muscles that stabilize the body and link the upper and lower body—lower back, spinal erectors, abdominals, obliques, hip flexors. These **stabilizing muscles** allow the major muscles to do the heavy work, e.g., like the big base on a crane while its long arm lifts the load. In strength sports they are called the body’s “**power zone**”. This is an area that is a real revelation

for a lot of professional athletes when they go to elite off-season training centers like the Poliquin Performance Center (Charles Poliquin) or Athletes Performance (Mark Verstegen). Do yourself a favor and buy Verstegen’s book, *Core Performance Essentials*. I stick a 2 or 3 exercise circuit of core stability in my off lifting days or at the end of workouts. You can’t see 6-pack abs on me, but my obliques are bands of steel; I throw with my obliques not a 6-pack!

A couple of favorite exercises will help demonstrate. For a circuit using a **Swiss ball**, I will do **plate crunches**, **Russian twists** with a plate, and knee tucks (push up position with forefeet on ball and tuck your legs in toward chest). I also use a “**turn machine**” that allows me to stand and move from a power position to a full 180° turn with weight resistance. Another good exercise is taking an Olympic barbell, load a plate, put a towel in the corner, and insert the empty end; now from one hip, move the barbell upward and across to the other hip in an alternating twisting motion (a favorite of Pavel Tsatsouline).

Another favorite exercise is the “**core blaster**” you have heard mentioned in *Get Up* from time to time—I did an article on it way back in the archives. I “stole” this one from a Tibor Gecesk (Hungarian Olympic hammer thrower) clinic and handouts—his favorite exercise. I had a blacksmith friend of mine make me (and a few



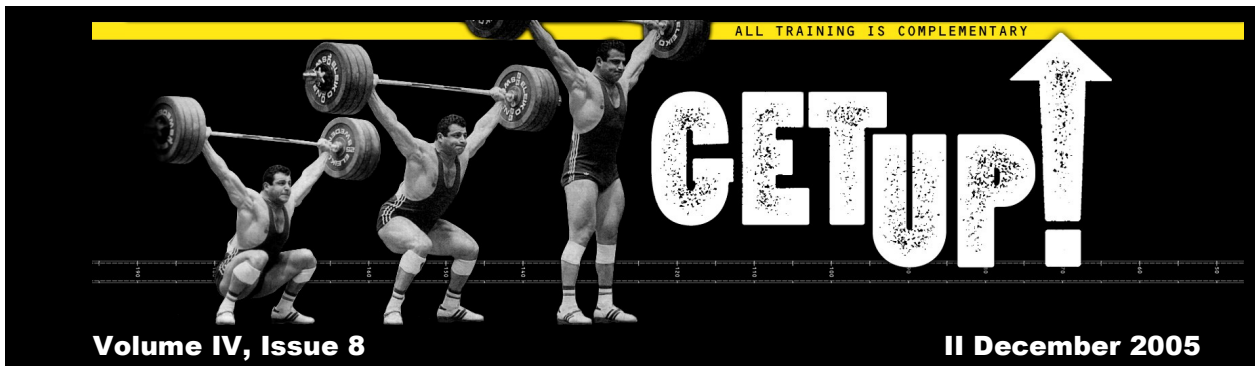


special friends) a device to swing a stack of barbell plates—a plate on the bottom welded to an 18” upright pipe (Olympic bar diameter) which has a hole drilled near the top for a removable rod. The rod serves as a handle for swinging the weights and is removed to slide plates on & off. The movement is like doing a repetitive forward pud throw as you grip the perpendicular rod at the top, get into that good three-quarter squat position, and start swinging the “core blaster” chest high and then down behind the knees. Keep the weight back on the heels and really use the hips to pop forward and generate the force from the ground up. You can also simulate this exercise with a dumbbell or Olympic plate. [Bert Sorin now mass produces a device like my crude one; you can get it at Sorinex Exercise Equipment.]



**Functional strength** is the interconnectivity of the muscles, tendons, & joints along the **pathways of motion being used in a throwing event**. Thus, when you do strongman type object throwing, heavy implements, plate twists, medicine balls, puds, cords, etc. you are strengthening the muscles in a motion or movement similar to how you throw. The actual throwing motions in throwing events (track & field or Scottish Highland) are **multi-directional and rotational** vs. the one plane of motion (up & down) of Olympic lifts. You just can beat a medicine ball for **repetitive motion with resistance along a throwing path**. As a hammer thrower, I also like **pud throws** (particularly the sling from top of one shoulder down through the bottom and out around into a release) and **plate twists** (180° to 180° and shoulder to shoulder) & winds and swings (pendulum). [I bought the Iron Grip plates that have grip holes in them.] Last year, I came up with a new one that Lance Deal likes—a **rotational snatch**. Take a triceps bar (with vertical grips inside a short oval bar used for “nose crushers”); hold it off the right hip and rotate into a heel-toe turn and hammer finish up over your head. It could also be done with an Olympic bar, but with the triceps bar the feel is closer to that of the weight or hammer.

Another take on the core and functional strength that embraces the *Get Up* “the body is one piece” mantra is to



look at all the cool old school type training with minimum equipment investments (check out this cool website to get a good feel [www.undergroundstrengthcoach.com](http://www.undergroundstrengthcoach.com)).

You will see a lot of killer **bodyweight** stuff, **sandbags**, **tire pounding** with sledge hammers, etc. Now we're talking some Get UP! stuff!! I have some different weight boulders I use in the field next to my house for all three *Get Up* principles—throwing overhead, clean & jerk, carrying for distance and time (waist high and overhead). One of the keys to an All-American shot putter I coached was similar to an even better one named John Godina—they both have “**farm boy strength**” meaning all that great leverage strength from throwing stuff around the farm at odd angles and heights. That's really what the essence of the *Get Up* principles and old school training are about. Don't get locked into one plane of motion movements lifting in the gym; get yourself doing things that build your core stability and the functional pathways of your throwing events.

### Epilogue

Most of the stuff I have written for *Get Up* and *Long & Strong Throwers Journal* you will find on my website at [www.ironmanthrows.com](http://www.ironmanthrows.com) along with other nuggets. I don't have a freakishly long right arm, but like Dan John I live and breathe this stuff experientially, not from books or DVD's. That's why I know this is stuff that works. Even

though Dan is frequently a presenter at various seminars and clinics, invariably like me, he gets more nuggets out of it than he presents—always a learner, open to new ideas and concepts, willing to share what stuff works.



Hopefully, you found something useful that may work for you. But, you gotta show up and work at it! Set goals, have discipline, be committed, gain knowledge & understanding, go compete and have fun. Try stuff, keep a training log and find out what stuff works for you. Then, you owe Dan John a *Get Up* article on “stuff that works”.

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