



It's an honor

Sometimes, I look over the past issues of Get Up and wonder how, honestly, we can top it. Olympians, Gold medal winners, top names in the field...

Greg Winslow's article on training Kyle is what it's all about here: To teach everyone. Great work on all three articles here.

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*.

Today's Problems...answered Dave Witt

David continues to impress time and again with his wise words. We will continue to hire him until we fire him.

I discovered something very important looking through my logs. (Dan knows how meticulous I am with my logs) I have decided I am weak in some areas/lifts and took the brave step of taking weight off the bar. Sometimes you have to move back to go forward.

So I'm doing 3 sets of 8, same weight on bar, all week long. Then the next week I go up a little, 5 pounds for upper body, 10 pounds for lower body. My upper body lifts was stalling out a lot faster than my lower body lifts. "What's the deal" I'm thinking to myself. Why aren't I benching 25 more pounds right now than I am? Why does this new weight I just moved up to seem so heavy, why can't I get 3 sets of 8? Well, looking back over the years, I noticed that I haven't done 3 sets of 8, or 3 sets of 10, whatever, very much over the last few years. Yeah, I could bench a good weight 10 times, but then I would lower the weight on the next set. I wasn't benching that good weight for 3 sets of 10. So why do I think I could do it now?

So what I've found is that my base is not very good and I am right where I should be in terms of weights used on the bar. It's depressing, but for a while I was beginning to wonder if I had some ailment that was holding me back. I was beginning to wonder if I was getting too old. Seriously, my self-doubt was becoming pandemic.

I guess the lesson learned is the solutions to today's dilemma can probably be found in your personal workout log. If you're not writing things down in your

workout, how do you know how you'll get better?

**Bury My Ashes In the
Chalk Bucket...
January-June 2009**

Alex Perez

*Alex. New Guy. A couple of articles now.
We like him...*

So, it's now July 1st and summer has officially arrived. BBQ's, pools, yard work, sun, and humidity. What have I learned? I've never been so happy for spring to arrive. Winter training is miserable, but as I've been taught, nothing of any value doesn't require will, determination, and suffering. On those cold days in New York in the garage, lifting, it's much better to have someone suffering right next to you. I've learned to be conservative in the gym. Don't go to crazy with what you're doing. Winter is a time of hibernation no matter what species you are. Only recently in evolutionary history do we continue with our daily tasks despite the cold season. Unless you're training for a specific sport season and/or have a facility that's nicely air conditioned and comfortable, don't look for too many improvements during the winter months. That's where spring comes in. So this is what I've noticed:

Warm up. Warm up. Warm up. Waking up in the winter I always feel like crap. My muscles are stiff and hard, I am fidgety and cramped when I walk in the gym. If I don't take some time and actually warm up, something bad is gonna happen.

Something I did notice I'd gained was muscle memory in a few lifts.

Looking through my journal I noticed the most frequent lifts I was doing was Front Squats, Presses, and Snatches. Although I really didn't see a huge improvement in my poundage with the lifts what I did see was my technique smooth out very well. But that technique improvement may be just enough to add 15-20 pounds to my lift right there, on a great day.

Be prepared for crappy days of training. I guess this applies no matter what the climate or location, but in the winter, walking in there, some days I just had nothing to give. Then I would try to lie to myself and fake a good day of training, making it light but pushing it hard creating one of those quasi-medium intensity days. Just throw in the towel I say, if you're honest with yourself and you truly have nothing to give, just go back inside and figure out what's wrong. Start fresh and go hard the next day.

My legs got fat. Simple as that. I tend to eat more in the winter. I'm not doing a lot of walking nor am I doing sprints or running up the mountain with the dog. My legs may have maintained strength, but lost a lot of definition.

So spring rolls around and training now becomes exciting. Sprints, sled drags, carries, etc. Now it's time to clean up the gym and train heavy and hard. In the back end of my journal I set up a table that had along the rows all the major lifts I perform (C&J, Press, DL, Squat, etc) and then the columns were all the weeks of spring, and for June 21st, I chose two lifts for a new RM test. All my other minor lifts and movements were documented in the pages as usual. I did a lot of hard work and a lot of variety with my lifts. A few things I noticed were:

Not having a squat rack and needing to Front Squat, may not be a bad

thing. It forced me to increase my Clean. Although I was limited to nothing lower than a set of 4 since my Clean wasn't as strong as what I could Squat for 3. But since I kept training like that, by the end of spring I met somewhere in the middle with a good balance. Now I have a Squat rack, but still carry that principle with me.

Something else interesting is kind of the opposite of what I spoke about before with muscle memory. During spring I really didn't Deadlift a lot. My goal was to prove complementary movements. I wanted to see how much I could improve my Deadlift without training it. Instead I used, Rack Pulls, Back Squats and Sled Drags. I added 25 pounds to the lift in 12 weeks. Now, that's not that much, but I wasn't exactly sure how I was going to do it, and in hindsight I would have done a few things differently. I'm sure if I did a lot more deadlifting and the other movements to complement, I could have added maybe 40. But, no rush, you live and learn.

I'm excited for the rest of summer, I'm pretty much gonna monkey around with lots of hiking, sprinting, etc. I have no set plan for the summer, I just make sure I keep going with Power Endurance type movements. I want to see how crazy I can get with Farmer Carries and try to do them as much as humanly possible in the next 80 days. It will be cool to see how all that grip and trap strength helps my Olympic lifts when I move back into them in the fall. In final words, if I had to sum up a lot of what I learned since I last wrote, it's this:

If you're going to obsess on something, obsess on quality, not quantity. At the end of the day it's your quality of work, and the intensity at which that work is

produced is what matters. Sure, you want those numbers to go up, but they won't go up unless your quality goes up first. Thank you for reading this. Alex

Drinking the Kool-Aid

"The sharp edge of a razor is difficult to pass over: thus the wise say the path to Salvation is hard." - Katha-Upanishad

Stop. Please, stop. Wait for me. I'm almost there; catching up to you guys. Off in the distance accelerating faster than I can, going the distance that I can't reach yet, are my mentors. The current is keeping me back. They have been swimming much longer than I have, and because of it, they have the experience I lack. They know how to fight the waves. Wait! I know I can swim just as well as you guys can, please give me a chance. I'm a much better swimmer than my peers, I'm ahead of them, I know it. Just give me the chance to prove it. They will never understand how they shaped who I am, and who I continue to become. Following their lead, in their tracks or their wakes so to speak, learning from their mistakes, maybe, somehow, I'm better prepared for the ones that lay ahead for me. I'm always slow, behind them. Like chasing ghosts, ghosts that leave breadcrumbs for me, showing the hidden path. The answers they give I don't understand because I lack the mileage. The questions I'm asking are too trivial. Too green.

This is how I feel about the giants upon whose shoulders I stand on. I try to remind myself that there's nothing new under the sun. I try to remind myself that they all had mentors

as well, they stood on giants shoulders for a period of time. They are mere mortals, why do I build them up to be higher? I try to remind myself how young I am, as well. Why do I rush myself? Why do I worry that I won't have enough time?

I use the word 'mentors' very loosely. Although most of these people I've never met, the ones I have, so little time was spent with them. In my mind, they are still mentors to me because of what they have taught me, be it indirectly. There are certain people in this world that in their presence you can feel the secrets of the universe unfold right in front of your face. Something takes over, you feel like you know everything and that you are capable of anything. It's a high unsurpassable with any artificial substances.

Things all happen for a reason. I'm a big supporter of the Chaos Theory and believe truly in the power of cause and effect. Things happen at the right time, the pieces seem to fall together. What would have happened if the pieces tried to fall into place earlier or later? Would I understand the answers given to my questions? Probably not. I remember the first time I read Fight Club. It was like being bombarded with philosophical fists at all different angles. I must have been 12 or 13 when I read the book. How could someone barely going through puberty understand the message there. I didn't, but I knew there was something there. Something of extreme gravity and it would eventually change my life. So I continued to read it, and read all of Chuck Palahniuk's other work. Eventually, my eyes started to open. It was my first awakening, but would not be the last. I've asked myself the question, 'Am I the product of my mentors, or are my mentors the product

of me, did I subconsciously choose them?' You'll drive yourself nuts trying to think in a paradox like that. I say, the answer is both.

What I didn't understand at the time was that people change. Nothing is static and nothing is absolute. Everything is constantly evolving, returning in its new, changed form. The when or where doesn't matter nearly as much as the how or the why. And even more important than that is the 'What's Next?' I had to remind myself that my mentors were maturing and constantly changing themselves. It was still a learning process for them as well. And that was one of the lessons, the constant lessons, until the end. What's more important than who gave the lesson is what you do with that lesson, how you adapt it to you. That is paramount. These guys aren't special, and neither am I, but the Idea is special.

In mid 2006 I came across a website that would again, change my life. For some reason when I saw it, I thought of the first time I ever saw Fight Club. Those two and a half hours of salvation. The website was called Gym Jones. Once again, I was overwhelmed. The videos of the disciples were like watching Icons. The message was so clear it was right in front of everyones faces, but most couldn't see it. The Idea was so simple and rugged. I would look at the daily descriptions and was just overwhelmed with the what was going on, I was lost. I started the 'monkey see, monkey do' method. Which worked for a little bit. But ultimately I had to learn. And so for everyday I continued to read every single piece of text from the site as nauseam. I went through the archives of all the way back to the beginning, the first daily workouts. The very beginning. And I taught myself. Imitation became

adaptation became innovation became experience became knowledge became mileage. There was an Idea here, I understood some of it, but once again most of it I just trusted. I knew there was something there, I just couldn't put a name to it. Gym Jones became the reason to cut my nails and brush my teeth. This wasn't just about lifting. This was a philosophy, this was a way of life. There was an Idea. To steal a phrase from V for Vendetta, "*Beneath this mask there is more than flesh, there is an Idea, and Ideas are bulletproof.*" I was learning lessons in every movement under pressure. I was learning about Will, Determination, and Suffering. Dan John, another mentor, speaks about all lifting being complementary. I think it's more true than we think. I think Gym Jones was complementary to my life. It was/is shaping, changing, and evolving me into who I am/become.

It's 3 years later. I don't claim to fully understand, but I know more than most. Anyone who says they have the answers are lying, and are idiots. But I can honestly say I have a good grasp on reality. They will never really know how they affected me. I can't dictate in words accurately without making it seem a bit of hyperbole, how much Gym Jones has helped me. I guess actions speak louder than words. Maybe its the same reason I hate pictures of me. I'd rather someone follow me in movement for a few minutes to see who I am.

When I read 'The Iron' by Henry Rollins, I connected again. This was on a more personal level. Rollins would become one of my most important teachers. I had the pleasure of meeting him once, in Woodstock, but it was only briefly. Something about him clicked with me. I felt like I was looking into a mirror of the future. He was me 20 years

from now. So I did what I always do, jumped in with cement bricks and tried to swim. I listened to any and everything from him, started reading all his books, so I could learn. Rollins taught me to question everything. To travel and flush out the ignorance. To educate oneself constantly. That every minute not doing something, is a minute wasted. He reminded me of a message way back from Fight Club that I had forgotten. If I do not claim my humanity, I will become another statistic. We all have mediums for our expression. Like Yukio Mishima talks about, for me it was the weights. One day it might evolve. Maybe one day I will be scaling a mountain side. But for now, I thank all of you. For helping me learn how to swim.

Or maybe I've just been brainwashed.
Alex, this is fabulous stuff! Keep it up. Love the work...

Kyle's Kettlebell Workouts

Greg Winslow

Greg grew up down the street from me on Wilms Avenue. I lost touch with him for years and we met back up on Facebook. This is an amazing piece.

Any caregiver of a person with special needs understands the challenge of maintaining that person's health. Hygiene, nutrition, medication are all important, but how do I help them maintain or improve their fitness? This is a preoccupation of mine concerning my son Kyle. You see Kyle has autism. In some ways he is fortunate. He is tall

and handsome and I routinely see young ladies checking him out. Unfortunately, problems have surfaced in concert with his autism. He has had seizures and frequently exhibits self-injurious behavior (SIB) such as head banging and biting his hands and arms. Powerful drugs need to be employed to combat these issues and work for the most part, however, these drugs can affect his physical condition. Weight gain, diabetes, and heart disease are some of the potential side effects of these drugs. It's a Catch-22. Kyle needs these drugs to control his SIB but the drugs can contribute to chronic health problems. Pick your poison.



(Our friend, Kyle)

A few months ago I reconnected with Dan via Facebook after 30 years. We grew up in the same South San Francisco neighborhood and spent a number of years playing sports and getting into other kinds of mischief. Since Dan is now a published author, there was no question of buying his book but when. So I purchased his book "Never Let Go" and his DVDs too. The book and DVDs are great. A lot of wisdom to go along with Dan's wit. I gleaned two important concepts from Dan's material: simplicity and improvisation. So I thought to myself what's a simple exercise and walking came to mind but with a twist--walking while holding kettlebells.

Kyle's Workout: Kyle and I grab some kettlebells from the trunk of our car and walk up about a 100 steps from a parking lot to a track at a local junior high school. There's a great view of trees, wildlife, and the city from the track, plus there's clean porta-potty at the track. We walk with the kettlebells doing farmer carries, suitcase carries, and waiter carries. Kyle also does a little free-styling by throwing the weights in the grass or waving them around. The only rule is to keep moving for at least 30 minutes. According to Kyle's teachers and my wife, Tamara, he has lost weight around his belly. It's true, he does look slimmer. On alternate days we walk without weights but do short runs on every lap. We get looks from other runners and walkers because of the kettlebells, but we get stared at anyway so who cares. Besides Kyle likes it and we are outside in the sun so there's no downside.

Tips:

- Standard disclaimer: Make sure your doctor approves first.
- Purchase two pairs of kettlebells--one pair is for yourself. Kettlebells can be purchased sporting goods stores or on-line. If you are concerned about weights dropping on feet, I have seen rubber weights or weights filled water or sand.
- Wear appropriate clothing for the weather.
- Make sure socks are worn properly to prevent blisters.
- Wear a good pair of running or walking shoes.
- Bring water.

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