



## Dan John, RKC

No, not RIP. I'm still typing...

I held off this edition for my RKC (Russian Kettlebell Challenge Certification) in San Jose. Well, it was great, I, once again, know nothing. I had a lot of fun. Pavel was a fine host and I have to thank my brother, Gary, for all the taxi service. I did spend some time coaching him in the throws, so, if he improves, blame me.

I really enjoyed my time and I learned way more than I thought I would. I STRONGLY recommend considering this for most people. More later...

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*.

### Throwing the Discus

## My Perspective

David Witt  
*Seriously, if you don't know David...Get Up's number one author and friend of many...do you ever read this thing?*

I've studied throwing for a long time, 28 years to be exact. It started with a black and white film from the 60's or 70's of some high school kids throwing, no body famous as I recall. I went home and began imitating what I saw in my basement throwing a Frisbee discus style. I've read everything I can find in every city I visited in every bookstore and library. I've sat and talked with the legends of the sport. I've competed off and on for 28 years, and now I want to share my observations about throwing the discus, my chosen event.

**No. 1.** No matter what you do in the back of the ring, you must arrive at the front of the ring in a position with the discus as far back as you can get it. This is usually referred to as the power position. The key is to get the left foot down as quick as possible with the discus as far back as possible so you can pull the discus around as much as possible. Ideally, I would want to land with the discus physically over the left foot when the left foot touches down at the front of the ring. From there, I'm going to get that 360 Degree pull on the discus that John Powell talks about in his video. One of the things Dan said at camp this year really struck home with me. We lift weights not to pull harder on the discus, but to help us hold the discus farther back. The farther back we hold it, the more we can pull on it. From

there, we let the stretch reflex take over and launch the discus.

No. 2. How do I achieve this position? The best drill for throwing the discus I can think of is what John Powell calls the Modified South African Drill. This was presented to me in high school as just The South African Drill. This drill really helps develop/teach the drive across the ring at a speed close to the actual throw. As a matter of fact, I can think of many people that could throw farther with the SAD than they did with their full technique. This is because they run into the power position with the discus farther back than they do out of the full throw. Many people in the full throw allow the discus to catch up to their shoulder coming out of the back and never get the big pull that they do when they just do a South African Drill. The full throw just becomes a pivot around the left side and then running into the SAD from out of the back. Most of the added speed to the discus during the throw comes from the sprint across the circle. It is the act of smoothly converting that sprint speed into a rotational throw that separates good throwers from average throwers.

No. 3. Get up on the ball of your foot. The biggest mistake people make is landing in the center of the circle on a flat foot. When you sprint to the middle, get there on the ball of your foot. Try this, put your foot flat on the ground. Now, rotate on that foot. After the ankle heals, in a couple of weeks, try this same drill with your body weight on the ball of your foot, up on your toes as they say. Much easier wasn't it? And no trips to the ER either. Converting that linear speed into a rotational motion requires a quick pivot on the right foot, but you can't get the pivot if you aren't up on your toes, get up on your toes!

No. 4. The Spanky. Spanky is a term for keeping the discus over your right rear. All of the great throwers wind up in the back of the ring. They pivot around the left side and sprint toward the center of the circle. During the pivot, their upper shoulder line catches up with the hip line. They lose the X! But they get their X back again at the front of the ring. The one constant is that even as they lose the X, they keep the discus back in the spanky position. They do not carry the discus in a straight line with their shoulders, it stays back over the right rear. Ideally, the discus should be the last thing to come around at the end of the throw, kind of a right arm strike at the end. But don't try to arm the throw, use the whole body. If you are doing everything properly, the stretch reflex should take over and you shouldn't have to think about pulling the arm around, it should happen naturally. A lot of people try to stop everything at the end and pull the arm around. If they are right handed, you will see them fall off to the right side if they are doing this.

These things are the things I focused on when I was throwing my best. Variations in style are fine, as long as you get to the front with the discus as far back as possible and then rebound into the throw.

### **New & Expecting Fathers: Tips for Training and Time Management**

Boris Bachmann is a high school teacher, occasional swimming and strength coach, and certified Russian Kettlebell instructor. Boris can be reached by email at [boris\\_york@yahoo.com](mailto:boris_york@yahoo.com), and his "Squat Rx" videos can be found at YouTube at <http://youtube.com/user/johnnymnemonic2>

Fatherhood is a life-changing event. There is "the moment" when the full weight of your new role strikes you. "The moment" may hit others at

different times, but hearing that first weak cry when my son was born was it for me. The words “love” and “responsibility” suddenly carried immense weight. From that moment on, I would find myself in a rage when reckless drivers tailgated, swerved, or honked. I’d get angry when people swore around my son. In short, the world became a scarier place that I needed to be able to defend my baby against if the need arose and, in that context, training became an even greater necessity to me. I can’t prove it, but I believe that becoming a father automatically makes you stronger.

How does this play out in the wild kingdom? Well, take lions, for example; young rogue lions have a rough life - no sex, no pride, no offspring. They have to hang out with other rogue males. They have no pride of their own, which makes hunting harder. When they think they have what it takes, they challenge a pride leader. The king of the pride is probably older, stronger, better fed. If the king loses, he will be stripped of his lionesses, and his cubs will be killed and possibly eaten. Who would you put your money on? Who has more to lose?

The concept of “Dad Strength” is not just “philosophy” (a term coined by Dan Adams, author of Dilbert) – it actually exists. This may or may not translate to bigger numbers in the gym, but things like being able to open a can of whoop-ass should the occasion call for it, take on a whole new level of significance when you are a father, and not just for lions.

In this modern and sophisticated age, however, your wife probably doesn’t get the importance of being able to pummel young rogue lions (which is your purpose after all, isn’t it?). So, unless

you are fortunate enough to be married to someone who shares your obsession with moving heavy things, your “hobby” can take it in the shorts when you are a new or expecting father. There are some things you can do to better your situation and here I present some tips to help you develop or maintain your “Dad Strength” on a limited time-budget.

### ***\*Shift Focus***

As a new father, you will find out how heavy 10 pounds can really be. Imagine carrying and protecting a raw egg in your hands while trying to do track and field events – how tired do you think your upper body would get? The answer is *pretty damn tired, pretty damn quick*. The challenge in holding a small child is not the weight – it is in holding it delicately for long periods of time. Developing “Dad Strength” is a topic for another article, but until your child starts walking, your biggest strength assets will be your ability to carry and load your child + car seat. If you are an expecting father, start doing these exercises NOW: farmers walks, suitcase carries, and “Mr/Miss Stinky Pants Carry” (imagine walking and holding a baby wearing stinky diapers and you’ll get the idea) – you’ll thank me later.

### ***\*Front-Load Your Training Week***

We all have busy patches when it’s tough to get in a single workout, let alone a string of them. We put off training until later in the week and, before you know it, it’s Saturday already and you haven’t done a single rep of anything except maybe some curls with the television remote. A simple (but not necessarily easy) solution to this is to “front-load” your training week. This means planning your hardest and most productive training session early in the

week (Sunday, Monday, Tuesday). If you do this, even if you get busy and don't train for the rest of the week, you still already have one or two good training sessions in the bank.

***\*Have Your Mother-In-Law Over For a Week (or two)***

An easy way to save up on training time is to encourage your wife to have her mother over FOR LONG PERIODS OF TIME. This will curry goodwill from your wife and, if you clean before Mom-in-law shows up, the reward of extra gym-time is almost guaranteed.

There are limits to this though and diminishing returns with respect to the training time gained. My mother-in-law lives in Japan, so when she visits, it's not going to be for dinner or chit-chat - it will be something longer than a week and less than a month. After about a week, EVERYONE (including mom-in-law) wants her gone and is looking for excuses to go to the gym. So plan on, at best, one or two weeks of good training with this scheme.

***\*Get Used to Training at Odd Times***

It's easy to find a solid block of time if you are willing and able to train before everyone else wakes up or after everyone else goes to bed. If you have access to a gym at odd hours or you have equipment at home, the only thing limiting your ability to train is your sleeping habits. Notice that I said your sleeping *habits*, not sleep. Do not sacrifice sleep, because as Dan John says "Recovery is not a drink. Recovery is sleep."

Once the kids are tucked in, excuse yourself to the garage or the gym instead of cracking one open. Or, skip the late night websurfing and worthless cable T.V., go to bed and wake up an hour and

a half earlier to put in a training session before going to work. Will this suck until you get used to it? Yes, but after a while, you will not miss the time you used to waste watching shows you never really liked that much anyway.

***\*Give and Ye Shall Receive***

If you are a slacker in the "home upkeep" department, you have an uncovered mining opportunity to garner training time. Now, understand that time spent on housework is not directly proportional to training time allowed by wives and, as with mom-in-law time, there are diminishing returns. Too much help around the house will reset long-term expectations of you as a husband, so use this tool sparingly, but, as a general rule, being generous with help around the house will yield more training time.

***\*Experiment with Time-Based Training Plans***

Once upon a time, I believed that if you were serious about "strength" (limit strength, that is), you would stick to low-rep, high-intensity sets with generous rest between exertions. Of course, I still believe that, but after numerous injuries put my non-existent powerlifting career on hold, I loosened my views of what "acceptable" training poundages in the squat and deadlifts are, especially with high reps and/or limited rest intervals. As a father, it is hard to find a solid hour or two to devote to training. Training programs like Charles Staley's "EDT" (Escalating Density Training), or Dan John's One-Lift a Day routine, or Dan John's "Training for the Busy Working Guy" plan, or interval training (Tabata, et. al), will let you get A LOT done in less than a half-hour and even less than

15 minutes if you are really pressed for time.

I have nothing but respect for the “It’s Westside or DIE!” types, and if you’re one of them, keep in mind that most of us (unless we were ramping our way up to 600+ pounds) could probably work up to a max single, double, or triple in a given exercise within 30 minutes if we put our minds to it. You’ll have to skip the supplemental and auxiliary exercises, but you can get the max effort exercise in relatively quickly and it’s a simple matter to do supplemental work with extra sessions if you have access to minimal equipment.

***\*If You Can Do It at Home, Do It at Home***

Get Up! readers know this already, but there are a ton of things that you can do at home, even if you don’t own a barbell. With some bands, an Army duffle bag, and a few hundred pounds of sand, you will be able to do most exercises, or at least some variation of them. Throw in plates, rope, duct tape, adjustable dumbbells, and maybe a kettlebell or two and you have a home gym that is as functional as most commercial gyms. Add a “slosh pipe” and you’re freaking cutting edge!!!

***\*Remember, In the Gym and Out, It’s All Quality Time***

Staying engaged in life is something that’s pretty tough with the distractions of the modern age. Finding time to train is easier if you can eliminate the unimportant things that distract us from the things that really matter. Television, texting, web-surfing, and video games can be bottomless pits of wasted time. Avoid them.

Those carefree days of admiring gym eye-candy from the water fountain or

while you pretend to catch your breath between sets of EZ bar curls are over. Depending on how forgiving your wife is, weekend afternoons playing lazy-ass on the couch are probably numbered as well. You have responsibilities now and you need to take care of business, in the gym and out. Having a vision of where you want to be longer term is important for your lifting career and your family life – invest some time to creating or refining that vision.

**2008 Get Up Goalsetters**

*Get Up readers, as everyone knows, are invited yearly to share their goals and the readership is duty bound to provide them with all help necessary. I decided this year to edit little and just let the passion flow...*

Hi Mr. John:

Happy New Year. I am sorry to read about your cat. We have a dog, and she is the world to me and my family.

As for the bozo posting your video on youtube, I’m sorry about that too. Today, with digital technologies, it is nigh impossible to prevent. If anything positive could come out of that, maybe someone will be introduced to your training for the first time, and go to your site to learn more.

I downloaded your Dad to Grad letter and sent it to my trainee’s (I am a Training Officer for the LA County Sheriff’s Dept). There is a lot of wisdom in there, and I hope I can take some of that and use it with my 3 ½ year old daughter. Thank you.

As for the kid that posts as tune5K, I think he is just that, a child. The anonymous nature of the internet is its biggest strength and weakness.

Thank you for sending your DVD's to the boys overseas. I was one of them awhile back and it made a big difference receiving stuff like that.

And finally thank you for the wealth of information and wisdom you post on your site. There are far more people benefiting from your site than those stealing and badmouthing it.

I wish you and your family a wonderful new year. As for my goal for 2008, it would be a 500lb deadlift. I'm at 385 now, so I have some work to do. Semper Fi.

R/S  
Eric Sorensen

First off thank you for taking the time to give me advice. It is incredibly motivating for me to know that you are there helping me out. Like this morning when someone brought in a crap ton of left over christmas cookies...turned them down flat, because I knew I'd be calling you in a few days and I'm not about to eat sugary carbs like that, when I know you are taking your time to help me.

Also I watched the Worlds Strongest Man Competition and I really want to keep working on my DB swings now...Those guys were throwing kegs over a wall and that looks like a good time.

I read the New years addition of Get up. I'm real sorry to hear about your cat. Losing a family member is never easy, and sometimes it seems like losing a furry family member is even harder.

One thing i've noticed about the internet is that it is sure easy to sound like a tough guy through a computer screen. That is part of the reason I don't read forums anymore. Its just a bunch of 15 year old kids pretending to be experts on everything, and bashing anyone with an actual cognisant thought. You show them something great, and they focus on some small insignificant point and miss the entire lesson. Even sadder...you do something great and they rip you apart because they don't have the wherewithal or the discipline to do it themselves.

Ridiculous...anyways...just wanted to drop a quick note and submit my "Get Up Goals" for 2008:

1. Loss fat, I'm not going to set a specific goal, but I'd sure like it to be around 75lbs or better.
2. 28 pushups with good form (one for every year I've enjoyed living).
3. Be able to do pullups and dips
4. Run a 5k with my wife (one of her goals for this year)
5. Complete at least one day on the Tour de Kota (Bicycle Tour), average day is 75 miles. I rode the first day last year and fell to the roadside exhausted at 54 miles.

Well talk to you soon,

-Keith Baker

Dan,

First, I am sorry that gentleman had such poor words to say. Please do not think twice about them.

Well, my goal for this year is to have fun olympic weightlifting. I am not good at it yet - only been competing for four

months - and I can never decide what program, lifts, diet, days per week, etc... work for me. This all might be because I have so many weaknesses! I end up stressing out and she just wants for me to have fun.

By the way, I like Theology and miss your old website. Any way I can catch some of your old articles?

God Bless,  
Bleu

hey dan  
long time reader, first time writer. first thing sorry about jasper, know the deal too well i'm afraid. second, i was tickled to see that at 48, i may be starting to figure out just a small part of the training theory. i promised myself that in 08 two things that would help my highland games would be getting to 20 pullups at least two or three times a week as well as concentrating on front squats and snch grip dls for the strength phase of my training. we'll see. anyway always enjoy your articles wherever i can find them. and enjoy experimenting with some of the diferent ideas you have suggested. (close grip snatch and litvinov program were and are great for me). thanks again and good luck with your own training  
andrew norris

J. Andrew Norris

Dan,

If it's not too late to submit them to Get-Up!, here is a list of my goals for 2008:

- 1) Win a B-Division Highland Games Competition.
- 2) Move to A-Division, climb NASGA ranks into top 100 Amateurs.
- 3) Power Snatch Bodyweight
- 4) Stay Injury Free
- 5) Try a different career
- 6) Continue my education by taking classes online

Best wishes in 2008,

Matt Vargochik

### **Speaking of Pavel**

*Years ago, I compiled some information written by Pavel from sources all over the web. I made a little list and, well, here it is...*

#### **Pavel T's advice to an O Lifter**

Grease the groove with 80% 1RM (rep maximum...if you O lift this is what you do on the platform) on Power Cleans, Power Snatches, Jerks from the Rack, Back Squats and Clean Pulls. Up the volume as much as you can for three weeks. Week four, half the volume and lose the squats and pulls. In week five, go heavier and do the classic lifts and front squats. "Again, vary the load daily." Week six, easy practice with the classic lifts only three days a week and no heavier than 80 percent.

Summary:

Weeks One through Three

PC

PS

J

BS

CP

Upping the volume as much as you can, but stay with 80%.

Week Four

PC

PS

J

Half of the volume

Week Five

Heavier with Snatch and Clean and Jerks

Front Squats

Week Six

Classic Lifts only...three days a week

### **Basic Strength Question**

Strength either comes from bigger muscles or learning to contract the ones you have harder. Most people barely activate 30% of their muscle fibers...so, you can get very strong without bulking up by applying higher tension.

“High Tension means you have to flex your muscles hard. It helps if you use heavy 80% 1RM and up weights and keep your reps down to five and under. You can also do isometrics.”

“Lay off machines,” but you can use rocks, isometrics or barbells. If you do bodyweight drills, do tough ones (one legged squats, one arm chins, for example)

**For endurance training**, try 50-100 reps in the one arm dumbbell snatch or work with the heavy bag for rounds.

### **Gain Muscle Question**

Pick compound exercises, deadlifts and military presses are recommended. Basically do sets of five and keep the rest periods from 1-2 minutes. “Eat a lot of protein. Eat things like meat, eggs and milk many times throughout the day and even set your alarm to have a snack or two in the middle of the night. Get a lot of sleep and cut back on your other activities. Stretch between sets.”

### **The Key to Endurance**

Build up volume and stay relaxed.

In Season Training

Cut out the assistance work . Do this: Power Snatch, Squat and a heavy ab drill. Perform every lift 2-4 times a week, do 2-3 sets of 2-3 reps with weight you usually do five reps with. (He ended the sentence in a preposition, not me.)

### **For a Bad Back**

Spider Lifts...the Zercher Deadlift.

### **General Advice**

Strength is the only indicator of progress...not soreness. No one understands overtraining or soreness.

### **Fat Loss**

First, lay off the carbs. Eat steak (Read Anna Karenina for how long the Russian Officer Corps has been doing this). “Eat your own breakfast, share your dinner and give your supper to an enemy.” Third, build muscle, Fourth, do some cardio, but cycle your load.

### **Strength Gain**

Eat a lot of protein. Train your nervous system with lots of “neurological adaptations”...reps!

*That's enough for now. Mikemahler.com has three of my old articles posted, help yourself. Keep in touch everybody...*

Published by Daniel John

Daniel John, Editor

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