

A Great Issue

I've struggled this year with writer's block, illness and my usual cluelessness. Fortunately, the writers have stepped up and saved me again. Lots of new writers this month: enjoy!

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 "Gary" Column

Gary John

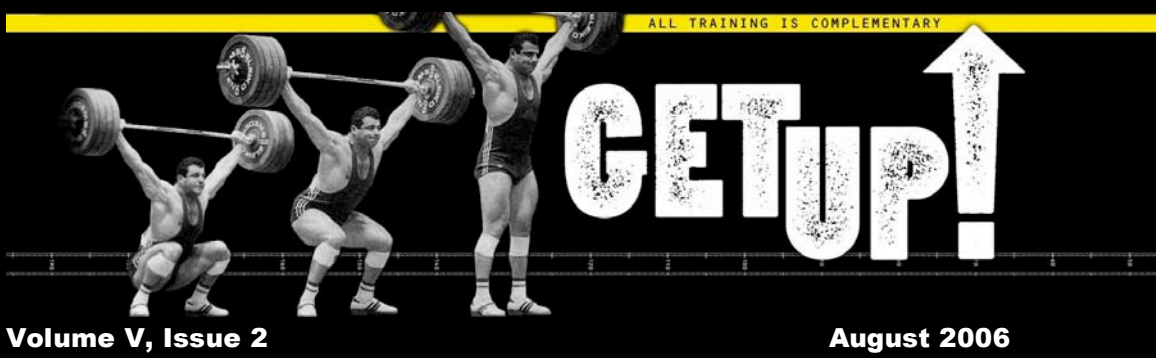
Gary is a "young" thrower in his mid-50's. He is also the Editor's brother and so he gets all what is due to a GU writer: free parking, mints and almonds!

My mother was the youngest of eleven children. So, when we have our yearly cousins picnic, it can be quite a turnout. There will be newborns, newly weds, newly divorced, and cousins moving into their late eighties. The best part of the whole thing, we all actually like each other. Also, since both of Dan's and my parents died long ago, there are still cousins with all the memories of our folks. Each year, one of the older cousins will add another little piece of family history to my fading memory banks. On the way home, I'll pass one of these stories on to my wife and two sons. You need to keep it going.

It does help, when you are in your late fifties, to still feel like one of the younger cousins. My oldest brother, Richard, insists on reminding me that I'm quickly moving up the seniority list, but at least for one day a year, I feel like a kid again.

So, anyways, I'm sitting with my cousin Jim, who is now in his late seventies. He was a fireman, but was also Ken Venturi's caddy. Their family of seven children grew up in our hometown with our six children. He was asking about my throwing, so I get all excited and go on about my latest love, the hammer. Now, that I actually have a place to practice, it is starting to go far. We talk for a while and he tells me that is why he still plays golf. The whole reason, you have something to look forward to. And that is it, the prizewinner. I can't wait to throw more, to train more, to get better, so I can throw more.....

What it all comes down to, is when to you want to give up the kid in you? When do you decide that it isn't time to go out and play? I mean, isn't the hammer the absolutely coolest thing to throw? Or many tossing the 35# weight outside is a great anaerobic exercise, but, the heck with that, its fun. So, the weather is 105 degrees, look at how sweaty you got. Maybe it's raining and you have to dig the shot out of the mud. Any kid would love it.



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Just keep going, find something to look forward to. I see a lot of our readers are trying highland's games for the first time. I so want to do one of those. I'm going to help out at the Norcal Strongman's in Santa Cruz, on August 5th. I know by the end of the day, I will really want to try one. Because, no matter how old I get, I'm always going to keep the kid in me.

Getting on Ladders

Steve Shafley

Steve is one of the first people I met on the internet. Steve has the ability to see through crap faster than anyone I know and he has the skill of "synergy" as you will see in this article. He is an amazing resource...and a good friend. His article on GPP in this newsletter continues to be the best explanation I know of about general training. Glad to have you here, Steve...write more!

Ladders - Practical Autoregulation

There's a little used tool for training called "autoregulation" that I'd like to talk about. It's not used very often, because many of the techniques that could be called autoregulation are fairly complicated. Pain-in-the-ass complicated, not you're-too-dumb-to-do-it complicated. Unless you read the mind-numbing material from "DB Hammer", then you'll just be kind of pissed off and toss it all on the pile of things not worth trying. That'd be a shame, because with a few easy additions to your record keeping, and some different things to try, you might be striking out for new PR territory.

Autoregulation is really just setting some conditions up that tell you when to terminate a set, or a workout, or even an entire cycle. A few people have spoken about it. Charles Poliquin

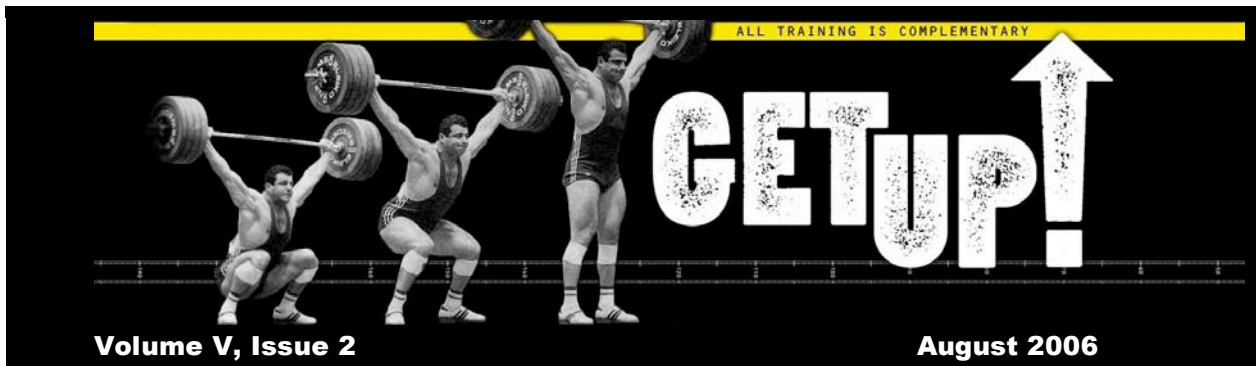
has an article or two that deals with it, and, most recently, the people behind the fictitious "DB Hammer" at Innosport have really been promoting their autoregulation techniques. Both Poliquin and the Innosport people use "drop off percents" to tell you when to terminate an exercise and a set. I'm not going into percent drop-offs in this article, mostly because I'd have to extensively review the literature I have on it, and I am too lazy to get into it right now.

RPEs, Performance Scales, and Cybernetic Periodization

Somewhere, there is an accomplished lifter terminating his sets on the snatch. He's reached his max for today, and maybe done some back-off work. He knows he's had enough. For a regular kind of lifter to reach this point, he needs to start harnessing the power of his training log. I don't think anyone who's been around competitive strength athletes would be surprised to know that most of them train somewhat instinctually, after having put in the time to learn about how they react to the stimuli of weight training.

First off, lets talk about using a simple scale to assess the difficulty of a set. I typically use a very simplified E/M/H/VH scale. (Easy/Medium/Hard/Very Hard) It doesn't matter what I use for these particular ratings, what really matters is that you get a good feeling for how hard a set is for you, and apply the rating consistently. This type of scale is often called a RPE scale, or, rate of perceived exertion. You can use numbers, letters, or anything else that might be useful for you.

Another scale that I like to use describes the performance of the movement. I use somewhat vague descriptive words for this scale in my own training. Ugly/OK/Crisp are the words I use.



Why should you bother to use these kinds of scale? I keep a fairly detailed training log, with the exercises listed on the left page, and notes for that particular exercise on the right page, on the same line. Using these two scales adds useful information regarding that movement with only a few letters. This can be useful in gauging progress. For example, if an entry in my log says "500x1 (H, ugly)" and two months later I have an entry that says "500x1 (M, crisp)", it indicates that progress has been made. I might not have gone any heavier in that particular movement, but the lift has gotten easier and prettier.

Keeping track of that kind of thing is a very simple and useful form of "Cybernetic Periodization." I've always liked that term. I am pretty sure Mel Siff coined it in one of his editions of "Supertraining." I think you get a much better feel for where you are, and where you are going when you use these techniques, even rudimentarily. My edition of "Supertraining" is the 1999 version, and information on cybernetic periodization can be found starting on page 331.

OK, so we've got some of the basic background crap out of the way. Let's get down to the easiest, and, in my opinion, one of the most effective ways to autoregulate your training: the ladder set/rep scheme.

Below is an edited version of my "primer on ladders" post. The unadulterated version can be found on the PowerandBulk.com forums, the BodyRecomposition.com forums, and on Bryce Lane's "Iron Works" message board:

Using the "Ladder" Set/Rep Variation

About 4 years ago, my old training partner and I trained together about 6-8 times a week. We'd train at lunch, and then after work. We followed a pretty typical WSB template, but did have

ample opportunities for extra workouts. For those who aren't familiar with the WSB template, you have a minimum of 4 weekly sessions, one dealing with speed and performance of the competitive bench press, one dealing with maximal effort attempts on special exercises for the bench press, one dealing with speed and performance of the squat and deadlift, and one dealing with maximal efforts on special exercises for the squat and deadlift.

We decided to do a variation of a low fatigue/high volume routine based on the "ladder" technique as extra workouts. We called it "Power Ladders". We chose 3s as our top set kind of arbitrarily. The term "ladder" refers to a progressive repetition scheme. See below. It's illustrated amply. I would like to note that both my training partner and I were drug-free powerlifters, competing in both the USAPL and the APF powerlifting federations at the time.

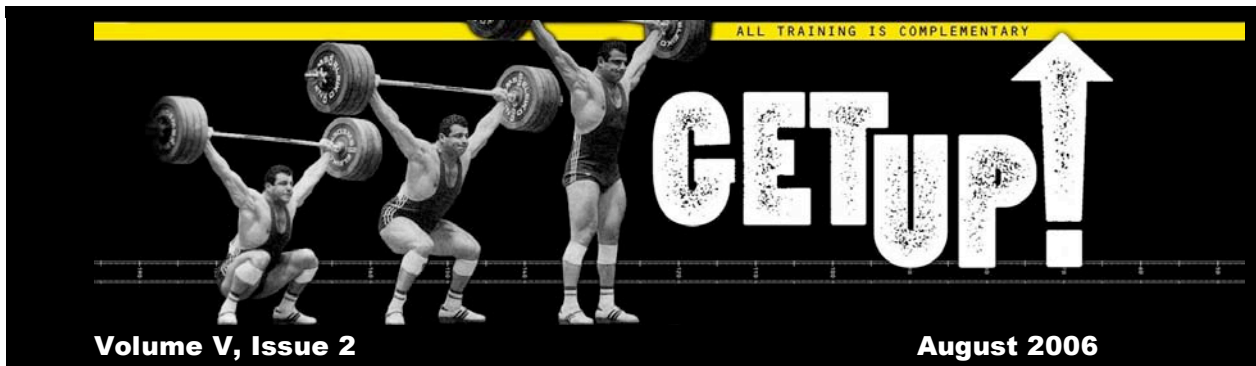
Testing initially indicated I had a 335 close grip bench. This is how I set it up: Rep range was to be 1-3 or occasionally 1-5. Completion of 3 "ladders" at a set weight would trigger progression.

Note: These numbers are approximations, as I couldn't find my training log from back then to get the actual numbers.

Week 1:
 Day 1: 275x1/2/3/1/2/3/1/2/3
 Day 2: 285x1/2/3/1/2
 Day 3: 285x1/2/3/1/2/3

Week 2:
 Day 1: 285x1/2/3/1/2/3/1/2/3
 Day 2: 290x1/2/3/1/2/3
 Day 3: 290x1/2/3/1/2/3/1/2/3

Week 3:
 Day 1: 295x1/2/1/2/1/2
 Day 2: 295x1/2/3/1/2/3/1/2/3



Day 3: 305x1/2/3/1/2/3

Week 4:

Day 1: 305x1/2/3/1/2/3/1/2/3

Day 2: 315x1/2/2/1/2/1

Day 3: 315x1/2/3/1/2

Week 5: Tested my CGBP max.

New max was 365.

Training partner's results were similar.

A 30# increase in 4 weeks of training. The CGBP was done 3 times per week, often two days in a row. Not one rep went to failure.

Not too shabby.

What do you notice? Higher volume, low "relative" intensity, self-regulating "ladder" pattern, ~4-9 sets per "ladder"

I first read about the "ladder" set/rep scheme in one of those old bodybuilding books by Robert Kennedy. Circa 1988-89. That particular book (and I'll eventually look up which one) gave an example of using ladders to work on chins. Sounded easy enough. Do one rep, take a little break, do 2 reps, take a little break, and so on and so forth until you can no longer improve on your rep count.

Fast-forward a few years. Hell, maybe even a decade.

"Chain Yourself to the Power Rack and Call Me in a Year" appeared in MILO: A Journal for Serious Strength, published by Ironmind Enterprises. It was written by a relatively unknown trainer named Pavel Tsatsouline. In it he described how to "grease the groove" of a movement. This article is now on line, at the Dragondoor website and can be found here:

<http://www.dragondoor.com/articler/mode3/69/>

The concept of frequent, heavy practice of a lift while staying fresh is the heart of the concept, when applied to strength training.

Why use ladders?

First, they are easy to set up. Pick a rep range. Could be 1-3, could be 1-3-5, could be 5-10-20. Pick the number of times you'd go "up" the ladder, given that you don't reach the point of momentary muscular failure. Pick the condition that will trigger progression. Now do it.

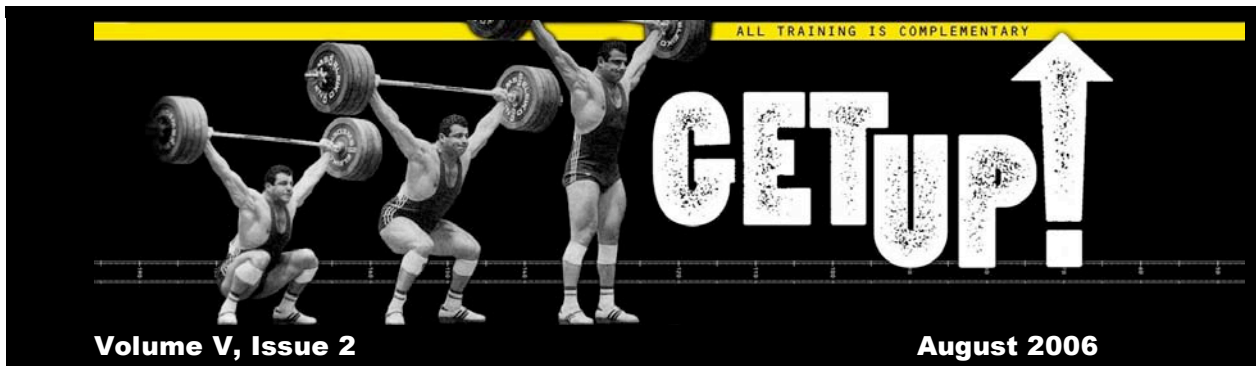
Probably the most important thing is the fatigue management. It's better to start a ladder over than to attempt to force an extra rep out. With ladders you let the volume do the work.

Let me reiterate:

1. Pick your repetition range. Taking your approximate 5 RM and doing a ladder with 1-3 reps is a good place to start.
2. Pick the number of times to run through the ladder. I'd suggest starting with 3 runs through. If you get all three ladders, then you need to add weight next time.
3. It's about staying fresh and crisp. It's not about grinding them out and gritting your teeth.
4. Let the volume do the work.

Other ways to use the ladder:

Bodyweight calisthenics are ideal for the use of a strength-endurance ladder. The most frequently recommended way of using a ladder is with a training partner in a "I go, you go" format. This becomes very competitive. Another variation is the breathing ladder. Do a rep, take a breath, do two reps, take 2 breathes, do three reps, take three breathes....keep adding reps and breathes until you can't add any more. This gets surprisingly hard with stuff like kettlebell swings and even bodyweight squats.



Reverse ladders or countdowns are another useful way. When I do an “EDT” type or “Have it All” type of workout, I often use reverse ladders to manage my fatigue so I can make or exceed my repetition target. This would look like a 3-2-1 or a 5-3-1 type of rep scheme.

The “ratchet” is a version of the ladder I read about over on Scott Sonnon's Circular Strength Training forum. A ratchet would look like: 1-2-3-2-3-4-3-4-5-4-5-6-5-6-7...and so on. The ratchet is a good way to mix things up and keep you on your toes.

In the original post, there are some examples of how you might set up a routine based on ladders. In addition, on the thread on the Bodyrecomposition.com forums, there is a lot of additional information posted, mostly Q&A stuff, and some other routine design stuff.

That thread can be viewed here, but you need to be a member of the forum:

<http://www.bodyrecomposition.com/forums/showthread.php?t=11192>

Another guy I know online tried to incorporate a lot of ladders in his workout. Here's what he came up with:

M
 OHP (2/3/4/2/3/1/2/1) -- pyramid wt on 4th, 6th & 8th set
 DEADLIFT (6/6/5/4/3) -- pyramid
 WEIGHTED CHINUP (1/2/3/2/3/4)
 CGBP (5/3/1/5/3/1) - pyramid

separate M wkout:
 ROWS (5 sets of 4-6) - pyramid
 KTE/TWISTING KTE (3 sets)

T
 100 reps pushdowns or bw dips
 POWER CLEAN or POWER SNATCH (4x4)
 BB SURGS (8/8/6/6)

DB/BB ARM CURL (2/3/4/2/3/4)
 BB "MOST REPS w/ 95 lbs" ARM CURL (1 set each, sometimes 2)
 GHR (3x6-8)

W
 BENCH PRESS (1/2/3/1/2/3/1/2/3)
 WEIGHTED CHINUP (3/4/5/2/3/4/1/2/3) - pyramid wt on 4th & 7th set
 DEADLIFT (10/7/4/6/8) - pyramid
 BB ROW (4x6-8)
 HEAVY CORE CROWBAR (3x6-10)

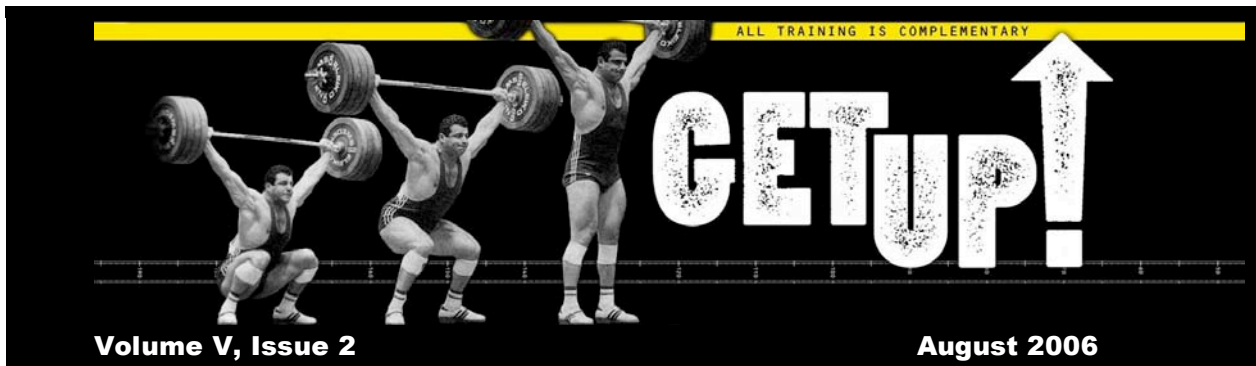
Th
 250 medicine ball throws (4-5 sets each ~90 sec)
 20-30 min. stepmill w/ weighted vest or truck pushing/dragging
 150 swings w/ 16 lb sledgehammer (sets of 30-50).

F
 CGBP (1/2/3/1/2/3/1/2/3)
 WEIGHTED CHINUP (2/3/4/1/3/5/2/4/6)
 SQUAT (3/4/5/2/3/1/2/1)
 OHP (2/3/4/2/3/4)
 GOOD MORNING (3x5)

separate F workout:
 ALT DB ARM CURL (2/3/4/2/3/4/2/3/4)
 DB surg (6x10)
 FACE PULLS (3x8-12)

S
 Truck Push (5x100 yards)
 Truck Drag w/ towrope (2-3x80-100 yards)
 150 swings w/ 16 lb sledgehammer
 Farmer Walk; 2-100 lb orange home depot buckets! (4x100 yards)
 100' monkey bars
 100 pushups

His comments upon the results:



Me and two buddies have been doing heavy ladder workouts for about 7 or 8 weeks now. I drew up the workouts using Steve's primer on ladders (posted at Body Recomp) as a model.

Results have been fast and substantial. I'm not setting the world on fire with my weights, but understand that my body's been so shattered the last few years, it's been hard to train consistently or get results.

For the first 5 weeks, I wasn't eating nearly enough. Despite that I'm amazingly up 10 lbs in bodyweight. It's very hard for me to gain weight, and so the last few weeks I've been chowing at least 3000-4000 kcal/day.

The real amazing difference has been in my shoulder health. I've had pussycuff for years now, and haven't been able to bench over 225 w/o pain in a long, long time (best ever was 305 I think). In fact, I had to grit my teeth to rep anything heavier than 185.

Right now I'm back to benching 275, almost totally pain free, and amazingly I haven't been pushing the effort on bench days like other lifts in these cycles (although, I admittedly am pressing more frequently).

Both my training partners are benching 310-320, each having started the ladder cycles ~ 275.

On Monday I pulled 405x5 and 440x1, missed 455. Wednesday my lower back wasn't quite right, so I kept it light and repped out. Pulled 315 and 355 each for 12.

Standing overhead strict press is 185 (cleaned from floor to shoulder), almost bodyweight. Weighted chin is +70lbs x 3 reps. One of my buddies is right at +100lbs x 1. The other is strict pressing 200, although his clean so fugly we let him unrack it at shoulder height.

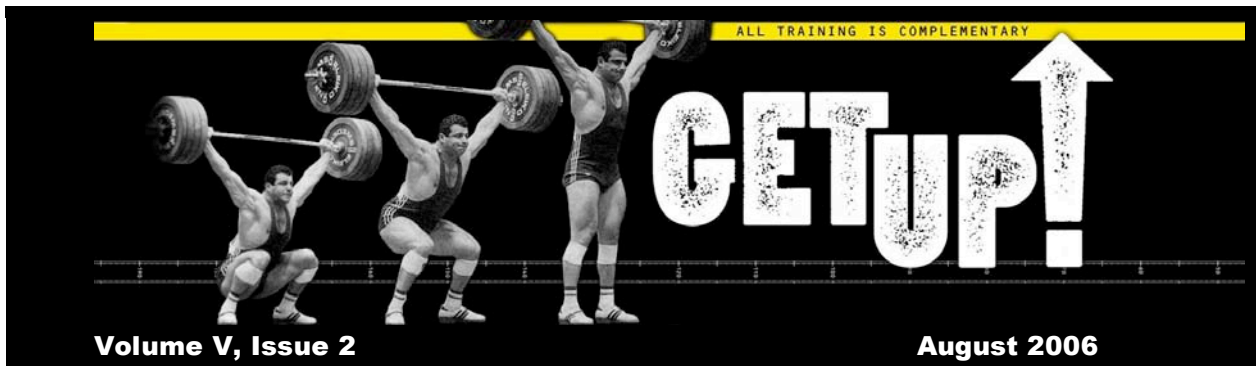
I've been having hip issues last few months, so my squat hasn't quite breached 405 again (I'm having to lean forward to get low enough; can't stay upright). However, my training partners have each ressurected their pussylegs. They're doubling 335 and 365 (staretd at 205 and 280, respectively).

All in all the training's been very positive. I do have hip injury, and a strange torsional strain in my left forearm (bone), but otherwise I feel pretty good.

The ladder technique, in my opinion, is a powerful, yet underused tool. The concept of lots of practice, moderate, progressively heavier weights, and low fatigue really works well for many people. The emphasis really is on managing fatigue. This is where the autoregulation come into play.

The RPE and performance scales I mentioned above become valuable when performing ladders. I've found that the last rep in a ladder should be of "medium" to "hard" difficulty. If you are doing ladders for the same movement multiple times a week, it should be closer to "medium", if you are only doing ladders once a week, then you can move into the "hard", or even "very hard" category, as long as the repetitions are being performed in an "OK" or preferably "crisp" fashion (these are using my scales, but I am sure you get the idea)

Note for a moment that using a ladder style of sets and reps can very easily be dropped into almost any existing framework. Dan John's "One Lift A Day" training? No problem. Charles Staley's EDT or Bryce Lane's "Have It All" routines? Once again, no problem. Ladders can even be dropping into the ME days on a Westside template. The possibilities are myriad.



Yes, You Can!

Lee Fugal

Lee Fugal is an engineer living in oil-patch town of Vernal, Utah. He is the father of seven children, a high school throws coach, the chairman of the local county Libertarian Party, a Sunday school teacher, a Boy Scout leader, the head dishwasher at home, and now also a newcomer to masters athletics.

Yes, You Can!

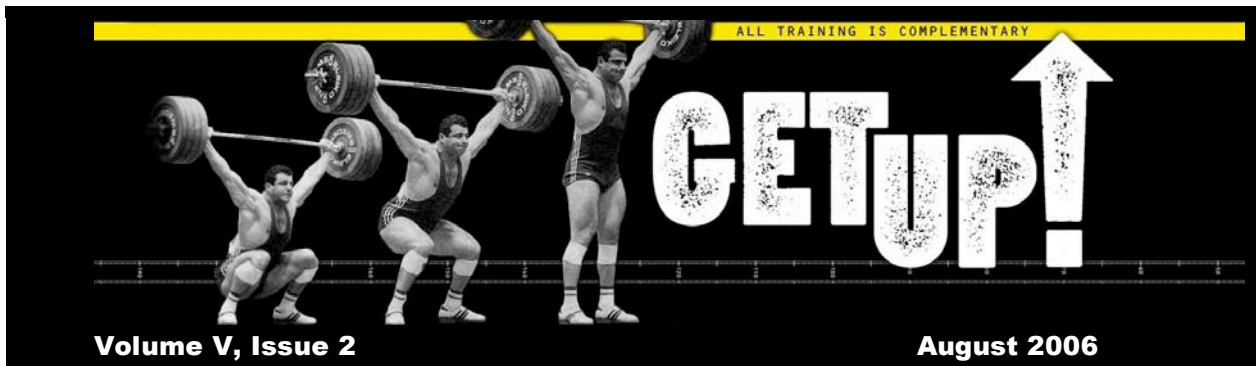
I finally did it! At 52 years old, I made my debut as a master athlete by throwing discus, hammer, shot and javelin at our state games and entering my first Highland Games. Why would a supposedly well adjusted family man do such a thing after over 30 years away from competition? And is it too late for an out-of-shape guy who is already “over the hill”? Well, that is the subject of this little essay.

I always wanted to be an athlete. Unfortunately, the Good Lord did not see fit to bless me with great strength, quickness, or loads of natural athletic ability. Some sports, like basketball, were out of the question for me – too slow, too uncoordinated, etc. At 6’4” and 180 lbs, I was one of the biggest guys in our small school so they let me play football but I was not much of an asset to the football team. After trying a number of things, I found that there were two individual sports that I could do quite well - wrestling, and the discus throw. Finally, in those two sports I was more than just a *wanna-be* athlete!

Many years have passes since then. Through the years I have tried to be somewhat physically active and not become a couch potato. And though I terribly missed the excitement of competition, the extent of my competitive athletics was limited to the occasional pick-up basketball game. The results from that effort were mostly frustration (still too slow and uncoordinated) and knee surgery. My brother, the jogger, tried to get me take up jogging. I tried, but I hated it and couldn’t see the point of running if there wasn’t something nasty chasing me!

Last summer I picked up a discus and attempted to teach my two youngest children (15 and 13) to throw. I knew how to throw but I still wanted to find some tips on the finer points of coaching the throws. So I did what any 21st century student would do, I searched the internet! After wading through tons of information, I stumbled onto Dan’s site. It didn’t take me long to realize that here I had struck paydirt! Here was information that I could use. *The book* proved to be so useful that when I applied the principles to help the throwers at the local high school, they hired me as the Throws Coach.

Not only did I get what I was looking for in *Get Up*, but I read about old guys – like me – who were throwing discus in something called *masters* competitions.



Wow, I could do that! They were also talking about cross training by throwing heavy things in something called *Scottish Highland Games*. What's that? Sounds like fun. Now that I had a discus in my hand again I rediscovered how much fun it is throw.

So, one year ago I set a goal – train hard, win the masters discus event in the 2006 Utah Summer Games, and participate in a Highland Games - time to start training.

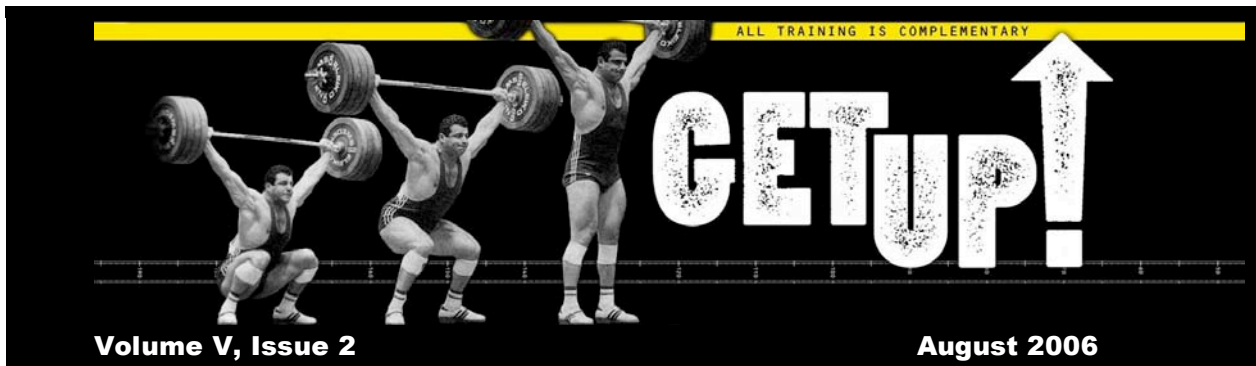
Even before finding Dan's site, I read enough to know that weight lifting would be very useful training and that the Olympic Lifts are especially valuable. What is an Olympic Lift? Well, I watched the Olympics and saw the entire one and a half minutes of the weight lifting television coverage. That was not quite enough background so it's back again to the internet research. Once again I found *Get Up* and the rest of Dan's site to be some of the best info available. I especially enjoy the distinguished editor's brother, Gary. Somebody has to ask those "dumb" questions that I needed to know the answers to.

Armed with *Get Up* knowledge I bought a used Oly weight set, made a crude homemade rack in the back yard, and, for the first time in my life, started lifting weights. That's right. I had never really lifted before. Our high school

"weight room" consisted of one of those square *Universal Gym* machines sitting in the corner of a balcony. As a high school athlete, the sum total of my weight training consisted of the coaches pointing in the direction of the universal gym and saying, "You guys might want to try exercising on that thing once in a while."

As this past year unfolded and I accomplished my goal, I found the inspiration and knowledge I needed from the electronic pages of *Get Up*. I thoroughly enjoyed the games, both track & field and Highland. Moreover, I enjoyed the journey, the training. I went from feeling sluggish and heavy at 255 lbs to feeling invigorated at 235 lbs. I feel better now than I have in decades. And though my strength is low compared to most *Get Up* readers, at 52 years old, I am almost as strong now as I have ever been in my life. I had made unsuccessful efforts to "get in shape" in the past, so what was different this time? This time I had an important element that my previous efforts lacked - a definite goal, a reason for training.

Perhaps there are readers of this newsletter who are wondering "could I really start to throw again at my age?" My experience says, "Yes, you can!"



Losing My Mind In Murray

Arran Caza

Arran is a very good strongman and scholar and he recently visited Utah to compete in the Games here. We can expect great things from this young man...

A few months ago, I had the opportunity to workout with Dan. He took the time to help me, despite the fact that he was preparing for Nationals the coming weekend. It was a unique experience. I had two short workouts and didn't use much weight. They were hard to record in my journal, because we did some odd stuff. But those two workouts changed how I train and compete. Surprisingly, they did this by helping me toward the Zen ideal of "no mind," helping me to move with less intrusion from my well meaning, but very distracting, conscious mind.

So what did I learn in those workouts? A lot, but three items stand out:

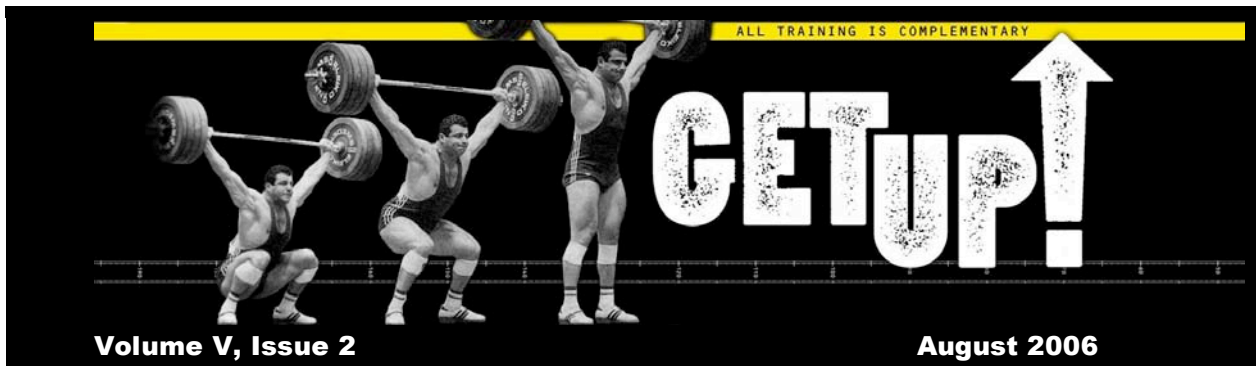
- (1) Less is more. This is one of those bromides that I have trouble following. The neat thing is that I had it reinforced by technique, rather than training volume. I'm a competitive strongman, and jerking the steel log overhead is one of my worst events. Working with Dan, I learned that my initial dip was changing with the weight; the heavier the jerk, the lower I dipped. This is bad practice, since the lower a squat goes, the worse the mechanical advantage becomes. I was unconsciously using the "more is more" approach: if a little dip works, a big dip should work even better. Catching this not only improved my log technique, but did a great job of affirming the less is more approach in general. (Dan's sneaky like that, with his lessons slipping in through the side door . . .)
- (2) Heels together. Another technique for my heavy jerks was starting with my heels together. That is, clean the weight, adjust the feet so that heels

touch and toes point out at an angle, then dip and go. This helps me because it makes jumping into the second dip automatic. Without my heels together, I get caught up in thinking about spreading my feet, which leads to worrying about whether I'm putting them the correct distance apart.

However, worrying about your feet is not helpful when a large steel log is in mid-air above your head. The heel-together trick solved the problem for me. It feels odd and looks funny, but whenever I do it, my feet take care of themselves. Heels-together and a reduced dip let me hit a PR in the log two weeks later in competition.

- (3) Feet together and cast. I mess around with heavy athletics as well, and Dan showed me how to improve my weight for distance throw. I had originally been shown a complex approach that involved trying to make one foot hop to the location of the other. Or something. I don't remember the details. It never worked for me, and it made my throws dangerous to spectators, because they weight was out of control. With Dan, I worked on simply casting the weight in the direction it should do and keeping my feet close together. Not only does this technique feel smoother and put less stress on my arm, but it immediately added over a foot to my 56-pound throw. Like the heel-together trick, focusing on the simple feet-together move got my mind out of the way, and let my body take care of the work.

Overall, I learned some cues that let me keep my mind usefully busy, and thus prevent it from messing up my technique. I also learned that feet are a lot more important than I suspected. In the end, I left a part of my mind behind in Murray, and my athletics are the better for it.



Camp...Go

David Witt

Does David even need an introduction?

A guy from Kentucky, a guy from West Virginia, a guy from Vermont, and a kid from Indiana are riding in a truck. Sound familiar? True story; me, Lonnie, Greg and Seth Rosenberg were coming back from breakfast at The Aladdin, one of the best places to eat in downtown Granville. We were talking about camp and how we loved spending a week of our year there. Also, we noticed that this year there weren't as many masters athletes at the camp. For the masters athlete, camp can be one of the best investments one can make in their later athletic career. One of Dan's famous tips for the master athlete was spend some money on the sport. Camp is one of the biggest bang for your buck. Not only that, I think everyone of all ages and abilities can benefit from some time at camp. Highland Games athletes from amateurs to pros can benefit. College throwers certainly.

There are many things about camp that keep us coming back that would benefit everyone. Let me try to capture and explain them for you. By the end of this, I want you to think "yeah, I need to go there".

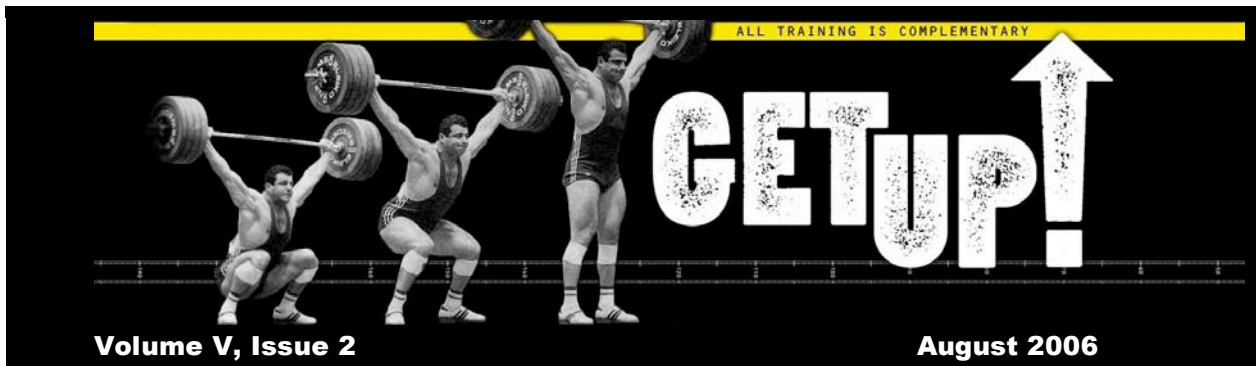
First, there is the learning experience. You will learn by doing at camp. You can sit and read Dan John's articles, or you can stand next to Dan and throw with Dan. This year Dan and I practiced spinning the WOB. Who was helping us with this but none other than Mike Pockoski, one of the best Highland Gamers and Hammer throwers in the country. Need help with your shot or stone technique? Brian Oldfield, the master of the spin is there to help. And help he does. Brian's coaching technique is not to tell you what is wrong, rather he shows you how to fix the cause of what you are doing wrong. Brian is one of the most untapped resources in the throwing community. Just talking with Brian

or John Powell can impact your whole outlook on your event. This year, John impressed me the most with his talk on 'concomitant feet'. This talk alone will drive my training for the next year or two. I primarily train alone, and camp is the one time a year that I get someone with knowledge looking at me and giving me feedback on what I am doing. I've had four great coaches in my life, Marty Mayer, Pep Stidham, Dan John, and Brian Oldfield. If you had told me twenty years ago that Brian Oldfield would coach me one day, I would have laughed in your face and said "I wish". I sometimes marvel at my luck.

Second, new experiences. The spinning WOB was the first time I had tried it with a serious weight. I also tried my first strongman type stuff at camp, and this year picked my first caber. At some point we have most everything known to man at camp to throw. You can come to camp and try new events. You can try highland events if you never had before, or track and field events if you had never tried them. There are all kinds of complementary things to learn at camp.

Third, competition drives a lot of things at camp. Most every drill or station at camp becomes a competition, and people find themselves doing things they never thought possible. This opens up whole new possibilities in their minds about their capabilities and limits. We push ourselves harder with competition, and one of the best competitions we have going on at camp is usually at the end of the first week with the Brian Oldfield Highland Games. This has become a serious competition with some pretty impressive meet records. We even have shirts now for the games.

Fourth, and most important I think, the camaraderie. Another of Dan's famous tips for the master athlete was to hang around after competitions and talk with your competitors. Most athletes beyond college toil alone. Sure, our families support us, but how much do they really understand us. We go to meets, and for a few hours we are with people that understand



what we do, what we go through. The training, pain, pleasure, frustration. Then we go home. Sometimes we spend a little extra time after the event with our competitors, but we go home just the same. At camp, we are together 24 hours a day, eating, training, and playing with one another. Some people golf, others play softball. We throw. And camp is the one time a year that I am around other people that think and breathe like I do. Ask the question “do you want to go throw _____” and nobody looks at you funny. Do you want to spend an extra 15 minutes going over something after everyone leaves? Chances are there are two or three other people there that will stay with you, if only to lend support. That is the greatest thing about camp. It recharges your motivation. We converge on Granville Ohio out of the simple fact that we love to throw. How often do we get the chance to be around people that think like we do? We are a small community, and we need to stick together.

Maybe you are a masters thrower, or a highland gamer, or a college thrower. If you really love to throw you need to come to camp. If you are losing your focus, or desire, you need to come to camp. If you are stuck where you are at in your throwing, you need to come to camp. If you want to be rich, you need to hang out with rich people. If you want to throw, you need to hang out with people that throw. Once a year we get together and celebrate the thing that we all love. We are having a blast and would like for you to come be with us too.

Closing Thoughts

Editor in Sheaf

Quick...think of something to write...

I have a new computer. We don't yet appreciate each other gifts yet...that's why the first five times I tried to load this edition, it ended up being 3.5 megabytes of information to slap on

the web. Who would want to download that? So, I figured it was the pictures...and I pulled them off.

I met with Pavel again a few weeks ago and I am still trying to digest our three hours of interaction. Let me say this...you can read something Pavel writes, but you can't “get it” until you try it.

I feel the same about my ramblings. People ask me all the time why I don't do the Tabata Front Squats daily...or the Loaded Carries...or go to a Highland Game/Olympic Lifting Meet/Track Meet every weekend. Try it...then get back to me.

You see, the internet has brought us a lot of information at the touch of a key stroke, but we have to also consider becoming “Human Doings” rather just “Human Beings.” I love the guys who grill me on internet forums about the minute details of training program, but can't squat the bar. Or, talk about this or that or this or that and never use their real name nor show a pic nor show up to an event.

It's like this new computer. To find out how it works...and doesn't work...I have to use it. I have to try things. I have to fail sometimes.

So, no pics this month. Maybe next month, I will have a handle on it...

Published by Daniel John
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