



Happy New Years

Resolved...not to let so many articles pile up.

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*.

A Double Dose of Witt!

David Witt

David is by far Get Up's most popular writer...which ranks up there in compliments with being Rock Sprint's Best Opera Singer...and continues to mine the gold from his continuing journey in sports....

Shadow Throws

In high school during the winter months when I couldn't get out to throw, I would spend an hour in the basement going through the full throw with nothing in my hand. Working on the feel of the technique and ingraining the movements into the neurons of my nervous system. I would do fifty or more of these throws a day. I was considered a good technician in high school and I believe these empty handed throws contributed greatly to that.

When I bought the book "Wilkins Vs Powell" a couple of years ago, I found the name for this. John called them shadow throws, kinda like shadow boxing. On John's video you see him turning through the ring empty handed, a

shadow throw. You don't need a ring to do these. I wore a bare spot in an oriental rug doing these in high school. You can do these at work on a break.

Mac in his video talks about imaginary throws. I prefer shadow throws since you are actually moving the muscles involved in the throw, more kinesthetic cross-over. You actually feel the right leg come up out of the back of the ring, hold the stretch, turn the foot in the center.

Right now I do these in my garage. I have a number on my 2007 board hanging in the garage. Along with my distances to date for 2007, and lifts and running times, there is a little number up in the corner. It is the number of shadow throws I've done so far. As that number increases, so will my distance. It gives me an incentive to get out there and do my shadow throws, especially when I see the number not increasing as fast as I want.

Try shadow throws. I'll bet after the second session you start discovering things about your technique, good or bad, that you never knew before.

Tips for High School Throwers

Ok, so you want to throw in college. A couple years ago I was talking with Coach Mike Johnson of Berea College. He turned to me and said, "Dave, if you know of any kids that are financially in need and academically strong, send them to me". Now you have to understand, Berea College is a small college in Southern Kentucky that is for students that usually can't afford college. There are strict guidelines as to your family's financial situation that determine whether or not you can apply. I coached a few of

Coach Johnson's throwers in college, that's how we know each other, and one day he asked me what my father did for a living. I told him my daddy was a CPA and my mom a teacher, and he replied, "No, you couldn't come here to school". The students pay no tuition at Berea, and all have a job on campus to help pay for their education. So that's the reason for the first part of his statement.

The second part, about being strong academically, is what I really want to talk about today. Notice he didn't say, "send me all the state qualifiers you can". The most talented athlete in the world isn't any good to a coach if they flunk out of school. So most coaches won't even consider an athlete if they have a low GPA or academic record in high school. Coaches don't like to take a chance on you if they think that after the first semester or the first year you don't come back.

Dan is always fond of quoting his college coach, Coach Ralph Maughan, as saying "recruit speed and smarts". Most track and field events are very technical events, and most track and field athletes are very intelligent people. In college, most track athletes are usually on the academic honors lists every semester. Track athletes are very competitive people, and sometimes that carries over into comparing GPA's and who's on the honors list and who is not. So you don't want to be embarrassed by not being on the honors list when all your teammates are. I'm speaking from experience here, believe me, no matter how much you say it won't bother you, it will.

I teach math at the high school level, in a public suburban high school, so or parochial friends and private school friends may not relate to this next thing. In most high schools there are two tracks. I know, we aren't supposed to track anymore, but lets call a platypus a platypus. The two tracks are usually called something like applied and regular. Sometimes there is a third called advanced. The regular and the advanced are the college prep courses. The applied

is for students who don't plan on attending college. What amazes me is the amount of students in my applied classes who say they intend on going to college. They don't realize that these classes are not rigorous enough to prepare them for entrance exams, or college coursework once they get there. Oh I'm not saying they couldn't go on and succeed at college, but the odds are against them. You wouldn't believe the number of times a student in one of these classes who has a 1.2 GPA and is ranked 380 out of 405 students says "I want to be a doctor". They need to get into the regular college prep courses to prepare themselves for college, and so do you if you want to go to college.

College is tough enough, being a student-athlete in college is tougher. Traveling to meets, practice time, trying to study while your body recovers from training, all these make the life of a student-athlete difficult. But if you take rigorous classes in high school and learn to study and be a good student, you make you chances of getting through college much better. Remember, the national college graduation rate is only about 30%. Only 3 out of 10 college freshman go on to graduate. Do what you can to better your odds and make those college coaches take another look at you.

As always, David...great advice and certainly timely for a lot of people.

The Gary Column

Gary John

Gary has been writing for Get Up since the first editions. Originally, he was famous for asking the "simple questions," but now he is recognized as one of the best advisors and coaches available to the Get Up audience. All six of us...

Training and Throwing

Dan has been saying for years, some of us are throwers who lift. Seems fairly simple, maybe even obvious. Yeah, right. Like everything, it might be a tad harder than I thought. So, for the last

couple of months, I found things that work for me.

Earlier, this summer, I spent a good deal of time working on straight leg deadlifts off of blocks. My original purpose was to work into some deadlift ladders for overall strength. Started with that, but got side tracked into doing rack pulls. I've finally figured how to back squat, so, I wanted a simple squat, pull, press routine. Deads are nice, but they have a tendency to fry you. I like to work in the 80-90% range, so the reps had to stay low. Ladders of 1,2,3, couple of sets worked well. I just couldn't get them in everyday.

I forget where I read a post, or somebody's log, or talked to Dan, or whatever, but, somehow, I got into rack pulls. I lift off of blocks, that are really jacking cribs, big sturdy wooden 12"x4" monsters. I set the bar at mid-knee and pull with straps. I started with about 400# and again did a couple of sets at 1,2,3. Since straps are a pain to get right, I would just count to fifteen between lifts, and to thirty between sets. I would stay strapped in, so I wouldn't have to reset. Damn, these were fun. I could do them everyday, right after back squats.

I ran out of weight at 455#, I didn't have enough 45's, so the bar didn't have any room. A local sports store had a sale for a 300# oly set for \$89 and I already had a \$65 gift certificate for coaching last year. I swiped my 45's off my back deck set and was ready to add.

Worked up to 485# and 3 sets of 1,2,3, so I wanted to try a big single. Got 525, easy, and then pulled a nifty 575. I'll be 58 this month and still weight 175, so a better than triple bodyweight pull sounds fairly nice. Big carryover to throwing. My core is so much stronger. The weight is flying out there and I'm able to counter a lot better.

For back squats, I do a set of 10 at bodyweight plus 20#. Then I rack pull and try to get in two more sets of 10 over the next half-hour. I do this at my warehouse, so I'm getting the crews ready, or answering the phone, or whatever I do everyday. Usually, I'm doing assistance work like power curls,

waiter's walks, or dumbbell snatches for fill in.

For my press work, I simply do hang cleans to push presses. One hang clean, with three push presses in one. I try to do 5-6 of these with a minute rest in between.

So, that is my simple thrower's workout for a thrower who lifts.

Get Up Insanity

In December, I went to a weight pentathlon in Sacramento. It was raining and I got a flat on my pick-up just a couple of miles from home. I still made it to the meet, just a little worse for wear. I was almost late, so rushed to get all my implements weighed in. My brand new stainless steel hammer failed, because of something. I really didn't want to know, since I had to run back to my truck and get my practice hammer.

The hammer was just starting and I was in the first flight. I asked to be moved to the second, since I hadn't had a chance to warm up. I told the lady, who I was, and as I was leaving, a guy wanted to know if I was Gary John. Having no other choice, I admitted to it. Turns out, the fine gentleman and his friend were trying their first weight pentathlon, as inspired by my articles in GetUp. Terry Noyes and Nick Erndt, who have played soccer together for 21 years, had come cold turkey, in the rain to try their first. During the javelin, my worst event by far, it started to hail. Both of these guys are fairly decent javelin throwers, so with their help, I did terrible. Never try and fix something during a meet. Still, though it was pouring during the final event, the weight throw, we had a great time.

Terry is now training with me, when we can. He will teach me the javelin, and I'll help him with the rest. This is my favorite part of writing for GetUp. Just that anybody would be encouraged to go out and show up. By the way, we had to figure our own scores out for ourselves. Terry did all the research. My goal for the year was 3000, I did 2933 in the rain. Look out 3500 on a good day.

The message of Get Up is growing...now, if we only knew what the message was...

Another Utah Visit!!

Rob Bent

Recently, I got an email from Rob asking to "visit." Nobody just "visits!"

December was upon us yet again. It was time for the mother and me to make one half of our bi-annual pilgrimage to snow country. Usually, we go to Colorado and bump down Vail Mountain for a week. This year, however, was a different story.

We were flying out to the fair state of Utah to spend five snow-filled days with a couple of my mom's friends. Then it struck me. The man, the legend, Dan John also lives in Utah! Despite my sneaking suspicion that he lived approximately infinity miles away from Park City, where we'd be staying, I ran a Mapquest check just in case.

It ended up that he lived within an hour, even with traffic. Exciting times, I tell you. I shot him a couple emails and it was a done deal. I would soon be meeting the most highly esteemed strength and throwing coach with whom I had ever had the pleasure of communicating.

After a full day of riding the hills, the mother and I arrived at the John household around 6pm, after only a single navigatory mishap (a new record). Dan met us outside and ushered us into his house to meet his wife and talk for a bit before getting down to business. Tiffini, Dan's wife, graciously supplied a serving of Viking Enchiladas, which was an excellent pre-training chicken and cheese combo.

After eating, Dan took me outside and we, "entered the MILF," which despite initial connotations actually stands for the Murray Institute for Lifelong Fitness. I was given the grand tour of the facility, which includes an Olympic lifting setup, EFS brand chains (attached to collars!), a Dave Draper Tru-Squat,

kettlebells, numerous highland and track and field throwing implements, as well as a number of odd objects, many of which can be seen in Dan's DVDs, which I'll speak about later. He also showed me the area behind his house, where he is able to perform all sorts of carries and sled pulls, as well as throwing exercises.

Dan suggested that we work on the snatch, which was a great idea, since my technique in the lift is generally hideous. To teach the proper position for the snatch, Dan first coached me in the execution of the Romanian Deadlift.

Now, I'd done something approximating a Romanian Deadlift before, but this was the real deal. The movement of the Romanian Deadlift involves simply arching the back and shifting the butt backwards until the bar is just above or, optimally, just below the knees.

Before even starting the exercise, Dan made it clear that it was imperative to maintain the center of gravity over the heels during the entire lift. To this end, he introduced me to a truly complex training tool: the patent-pending "Dan John Weight-On-Heels Device," also known as a ten pound plate under the front of each foot. These plates assured proper weight placement while learning the Romanian Deadlift.

Once my weight was situated properly, it was time to start the lift. To get me moving the correct way, Dan held a stick behind me, into which I tried to "slide," which became the cue word for that movement. He moved the stick further and further back until the bar reached the correct height. When I was able to complete this movement successfully, he then had me perform the "slide" while also placing my chin into his palm, which he kept high in order to maintain an extended chin position.

Finally, when the bar was at my knees in the Romanian Deadlift exercise, and my chin was extended, he had me lower the bar to just below my knees, and then raise it back up to just above my knees. This movement, I was told, helps

further reinforce the lesson that the setup and first pull during the full lift must be controlled and perfect, especially during the transition from the first to second pull.

When I had brought the bar back to the above-knee spot, he counted “one, two, three,” and then “JUMP!” The final command was the cue to explode. The simplicity of Dan’s movement cues was truly the key to success in this lesson, I believe. Before executing the first “jump,” Dan had told me to concentrate on only one thing during the explosive movement, and that was to, “push my chin through the roof.”

In the past, I’ve struggled with the snatch, in part because of my tendency to use my arms too early in the lift. The beauty of Dan’s method is that by concentrating solely on pushing the chin upwards, I automatically forgot about my arms, and their previously detrimental pre-firing became a non-issue. For me, at least, it seems that the KISS (Keep It Simple, Stupid) principle is clearly a winner.

After successfully popping the bar into the finished snatch position, Dan had me perform a deep overhead squat, to acclimate me to the bottom snatch position. I repeated these two movements twice, followed by a full snatch with the same weight. Working up over a few sets, I eventually got up to a single at 115 lbs. Despite its lowly weight, this was a worthy lift in my mind, if only because it had finally been done CORRECTLY.

Between sets, Dan introduced me to some additional, less massive training tools. On his walls were photos of his heroes, those who had helped him towards his numerous successes over the years. He also had his current workouts posted, held in plastic holders attached to the wall, in a very large, bold font that was clearly visible even while lifting. He also had his entire workout schedule for the couple of months both preceding and following the current date posted on the wall. Finally, he had his goals for the next year, as well as his failures during the previous one, written down on a dry-erase board, along with his plans to

achieve his goals and what he had already accomplished towards his aspirations.

After failing at a 135 lb snatch, I asked Dan about complexes. I’d read about his enthusiasm for these groups of progressive movements many times, but had never really grasped the usefulness of doing sets of 65 lb squats. As they say, sometimes the only way to learn is by experience.

Dan had me do a complex of the following movements, in order: bent row, hang power clean, front squat, military press, back squat, and the good morning. Each exercise was to be done for a set of eight, and then the bar moved immediately into position for the next exercise.

All I can tell you is to try it. Never has a 65 lb squat been so breathtaking!

The completion of the final good morning left me a gasping mess, having learned the valuable lesson of the effectiveness of the complex. Dan took pity on me, knowing that I was getting up the next morning to ride again, and only had me do one set. In reality, these complexes are done for three to five sets, the idea of which seems just mind-bogglingly painful.

Finally, Dan showed me how to properly perform the Bulgarian Split Squat. This single-leg exercise is becoming increasingly more popular in all of its variations. The “suitcase” variation has the lifter holding a dumbbell or kettlebell at his side, opposite the leg that is on the ground. The other leg is lifted up onto a bench or step. In the “waiter’s hold” variation, the lifter holds the weight implement above his head with the same hand as in the “suitcase” type. In the “goblet” version of the exercise, the weight is held in two hands up near the chin, as if lifting a goblet to the mouth.

As a follow-up to the last variation of the Bulgarian Split Squat, Dan thought it would be useful for me to be personally introduced to the “goblet squat”. Though I’d heard of the goblet squat before, I’d never attempted it, or even seen it done.

Dan quickly explained the proper execution of the lift, as well as the benefits

of its performance, especially when used to teach proper squatting technique. By holding the weight with two hands, by the face, the elbows are available to push the knees apart when dropping into the bottom squat position.

Using this exercise makes it all but impossible to squat incorrectly. I will definitely be adding this move to my repertoire of instructional squatting techniques.

Following the workout, I dragged myself inside as Dan moved his car back into the MILF, which also doubles as a garage. The complex had really kicked my ass, especially in the high altitude. When my mom asked how it went, I believe I replied with something to the effect of, “hideous...hideously awesome,” and promptly collapsed down onto the couch.

As I recounted the last hour’s events to the mother and Tiffini, Dan opened up the bottle of Blanton’s Kentucky Bourbon I’d brought for The Man. I don’t even drink bourbon, as it tends to taste, well, exactly like gasoline to me, but this stuff was quite tasty.

Over the bourbon, Dan recounted stories of Brian Oldfield, the legendary shot putter, and other odd strength-sport happenings over the years. We were also fortunate enough to be introduced to Dan’s two daughters, Lindsay and Kelly, both of whom are excellent lifters, even at their young ages. Finally, we met Lexie, the pointer, and the ultra-friendly John cat, whose name escapes me at the moment.

Also definitely worth mentioning, in case some of the readers aren’t aware already, is that Tiffini John is the family’s second state champion Olympic lifter. After my visit, I saw her featured in one of Dan’s DVDs, showing exactly why she is so successful.

Speaking of the DVDs, Dan was kind enough to give me copies of “From the Ground Up” as well as “Carried Away”. If you haven’t seen these videos before, do yourself a favor and order copies. “From the Ground Up” reviews and demonstrates the technique Dan used

to teach me the snatch, as well as other exercises useful in power development and technique instruction specifically regarding the two Olympic lifts.

“Carried Away” documents numerous carrying and dragging exercises that look painfully effective. Lacking a sled and large sandbag at the moment, I haven’t had the chance to try them all out, but the couple variations I was able to do while with Dan were extremely taxing.

Two days later, I was again scheduled to meet Dan, this time at his school. Juan Diego High School is a truly massive compound. It houses the largest daycare facility in Utah, as well as schools from elementary all the way through 12th grade. Artwork abounds on the campus, with sculpture and paintings on every surface. Their library is also quite impressive, with chess boards (that were actually IN USE!!!), brand new computers, and a huge selection of books, including the highly acclaimed Paleo Diet, much to my excitement.

Even compared to these great facilities, however, the weight rooms were beyond the pale. Any college, or even professional team, would be lucky to have a collection of tools like this school has. But to see this sort of excellence in a high school just blew my mind. Over 140 bumper plates, 91 kettlebells, numerous olympic lifting platforms, more sleds than they could fit into the room, and chains on every bar in the house were just the beginning. It was truly an impressive sight.

On the docket for the day was one mixed-gender strength training class, two female-only classes, and the after-school track and field training session. Dan and I entered the weight room to the usual high school morning mix of smiles and frowns. Many of the kids said “Hi” to Dan, and really seemed to be looking forward to the upcoming session. Others weren’t so enthusiastic, but what can you really expect from 15 year olds at 9am?

Usually, the strength training class would begin shortly, following a prayer, but today was a “special” day. Down

the hall there were about 30 or so rolls of rug that needed to be moved from under the stairwell into a storage room. Dan led the class down to the movement operation and, much to my surprise, the kids just jumped in without even a prompt or nudge from Dan or any other teacher. They formed an orderly line and, two or three at a time, carried the rolls down the hall.

I was put in charge of moving the largest roll of carpet I'd ever seen. It was at least three feet tall and probably 20 or so feet long. Moving this monster was an "entertaining" exercise, though the kids never complained even once. I can only imagine what would happen if this sort of undertaking were assigned to the students while I was in high school. I'd imagine most would have given the director the finger and have gone back to sleep. The kids at Juan Diego are really a special group.

When we returned to the classroom, the warm-up began with a number of carrying exercises, including the "crush press," which is a repeated kettlebell overhead press walking carry, the waiter walk, the suitcase walk, the farmer's walk, the seesaw press walk (left and right alternating kettlebell overhead press), and the crosswalk. (Most of these carries are shown on the "Carried Away" DVD, if you need more explanation.) We then proceeded to two sets of eight in the goblet squat and a set of bootstrapper squats. Alligator pushups and "wide left wide rights" were used to warm up the shoulders. Deck squats, windmills, half-turkish getups, medicine ball throws, and rolling abs were used to get the abdominals and obliques working, and hurdle step-overs encouraged looser hips for the front squats to follow.

After the exhausting warmup, it was time for the 5-4-3-2-1-1-2-3-4-5 progression in front squats and bench press. Both exercises were done with chains, which was a new addition for me, and proved to be much more difficult than I thought. After getting instruction on executing the weight progression properly, the kids split into groups and

began their exercises. No complaining, no whining. Most seemed to enjoy the exercises, and competed with their friends within their groups.

The most astounding part of the whole class was that every student I saw had excellent front squat form. No bodybuilder-style, "crossed arms" front squats, all squatting to at least parallel, everyone with their weight on the heels. It was a beautiful sight. Sadly, due to the rug-moving, the class was unable to finish all of their sets. Next time, though, I'm sure they'd push it just as hard.

The next two classes were dedicated to all-female strength training. After the same warm-up as in the mixed-gender class, the girls were given a choice of lifting or tumbling. Both classes chose tumbling. Before tumbling, however, each class proceeded to one of the beautiful basketball gyms and went "swimming". Swimming is a term used to describe the movement of the girls as they scoot along the floor on dollies. Dan uses this exercise for low-back and rotator cuff development. The girls also seem to love it, as they raced either all the way around the court or across the floor in a relay-race style.

After swimming, we entered the tumbling room, which also houses the wrestling practices. Following the requisite complaints about the "Wrestling Smell" in the room, the girls were ready to get down to business. Over the next half an hour or so, the class did all sorts of shoulder rolls, cartwheels, somersaults, in addition to "wall walks", shoulder stands, head stands, and some hand stands. It was really a great class, with an emphasis on "cross-hemispherical" movements to stimulate the brain, as well as smoothness and continuity of motion. I actually found it quite fun, not having done much tumbling in some time. After the tumbling, the class concluded with a short warm-down, which included bodyweight goblet squats, bootstrapper squats, and neck rotations.

The final session for the day was the track and field practice, after school. The room filled up with students training for a number of different disciplines. Throwers, sprinters, hurdlers, long jumpers, high jumpers, and others I'm sure I've forgotten were all there. Each sport's members had a separate workout to do, engineered to carry over most specifically to their competition movements.



The high jumpers used tools like a box placed next to the bar, from which they'd perform one legged launches over the bar, without any run-up. Other kids, to my utter amazement, were snatching for sets of five. This day was the first time I had ever witnessed a high school kid snatch, not to mention that he was doing it relatively correctly! Just an incredible sight. And the best part of it all was that the kids had no idea, whatsoever, that their facility and coaching was beyond all realms of normality. When I told them about my weight-lifting experience in high school, their eyes just about bugged out. I think they gained some appreciation for what they have that day, and maybe they'll train just that little bit harder because of it.

All of the kids worked hard and with a keen focus. They were well-trained and knew what needed to be done. And yet, despite their vigilant work ethic, they had fun at the same time. It was a great environment in which the students clearly flourished. As with the rest of the strength training program at Juan Diego,

the fun and effort in the room was clearly a purposefully, perfectly developed mix designed to encourage these high school athletes to better themselves as much as possible.

At one point, near the end of the training session, Dan had his daughter, Lindsay, go outside with me and show me an exercise used by the throwers in the off-season. It consists of a four-step progression, with each step concluding with a vertical tire throw. The steps advanced from a simple twist and throw movement all the way to a pivot-step-step-explode(!) movement that somewhat mimics a full discus throw. Though not much of a thrower, even I was able to grasp the purpose of the exercise and, thanks to the excellent instruction from Coach Lindsay, complete each step with relative success.

Finally, at about 4pm, it was time to go. I took some pictures for this article (not all of which ended up so wonderful), thanked Dan for having me, and ran back out into the cold Utah winter to meet my ride. My day Juan Diego was a wonderful introduction to productive high school strength training, and showed me some very effective methods for bringing great technique and power to large groups of people.

Thanks again to Dan for generously allowing me to come both to his house and to his school to train with and observe him in action. It was a uniquely enlightening experience, and one that I doubt I will ever forget.

Anytime, Rob. It was great having you at the school. Visitors often speak of the quality of the student body and I am proud to be part of such a fine school.

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