



STRENGTH RULES

**How to Get Stronger
Than Almost Anyone—
And The Proven Plan
to Make It Real**

Danny Kavadlo

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By Danny Kavadlo

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STRENGTH RULES was conceptualized, conceived, written & edited in the months following the most difficult time of my life. To rise and become better because of adversity, not just in spite of it, is what makes us truly strong. Here’s to new beginnings. The saga continues...

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FOREWORD

BY DAN JOHN

Steve Martin changed comedy. In an interview with Charlie Rose, he answered the great question that plagues everyone trying to shine in the limelight:

How do you make it?

“Be so good they can’t ignore you.”

Strength Rules, by Danny Kavadlo, is so good you can’t ignore it. It’s minimalistic. It’s low tech. It’s simple.

It’s right.

The equipment required for this program is three-fold, and I quote: “Something to step up on,” “something to hang from” and “something heavy.” The emphasis in the nutrition section is almost out of my mom’s kitchen: eat real food. Supplements? Eat fish rather than fish oil.

From a laugh out loud point of view, Danny’s attempt to explain to someone about eating apples is something that would make Steve Martin chuckle. You can’t make this stuff up and anyone who has ever answered an email knows the punch-line. For clarity: eat an apple a day. It keeps the doctor away.

Like Steve Ilg, one of the least appreciated fitness coaches in the world, Kavadlo’s work always has me nodding along with a lot of “yeses” and “good points.” And like Ilg, he also stops me in my tracks. Part of the *Strength Rules* system is to practice forgiveness and perform an act of kindness every day. If litter on the streets is bothering you, pick it up. Throw it away. The world is now a better place. You have made the community better.

This book is about true strength. The old kind of strength where heroes were people, like Beowulf and Ulysses, who protected the community first. You can feel the “judgment free zone” of his approach to coaching others.

This book is about empowering yourself and others...without stepping on their heads to get to the top.

In addition, he quotes one of my heroes, St. Francis of Assisi: “Start by doing what’s necessary; then do what’s possible and suddenly you are doing the impossible.” True strength, becoming the best you can be, starts with what one needs to do rather than what one wants to do.

The entire work is based around free weights and calisthenics. Many have sneered at calisthenics since the advent of machines, barbells, kettlebells, dumbbells and the army of other pieces of loaded apparatus. Yet, there is still something about moving your own body in space and across the environment.

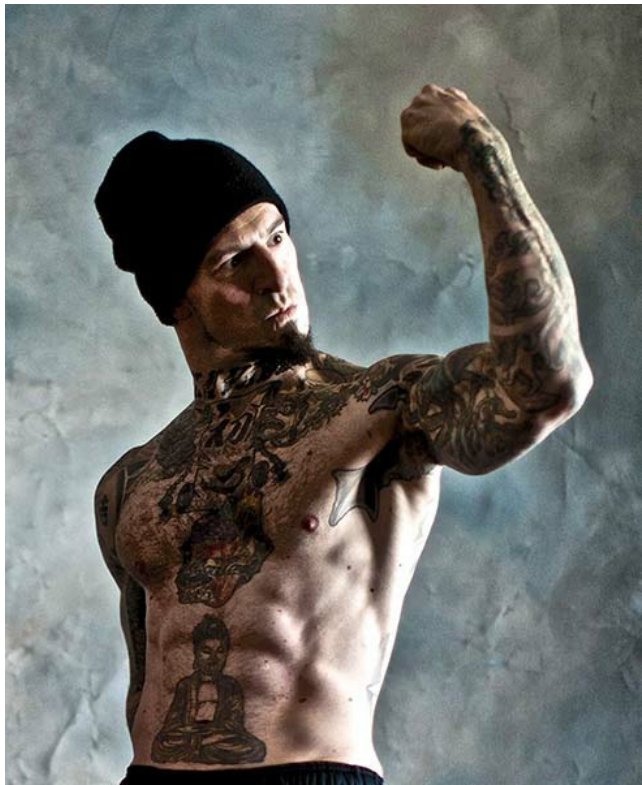
Perhaps you bench double bodyweight, but the elbow lever and hinge dip (the Russian Dip) are going to teach you a few things about strength. I know there is a plethora of videos showing kipping pull ups and momentum-driven chin ups, but show me a plyo-pull up where you clap behind your back and I will listen to all you have to say about upper body strength.

We often ignore calisthenics because of one issue: they are really hard to do. Stop ignoring them. Stop ignoring common sense in nutrition and supplements. Stop ignoring Danny Kavadlo.

Strength Rules is so good, you can't ignore it.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Daniel John". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letter 'D' being particularly large and stylized.

Daniel John author *Never Let Go*



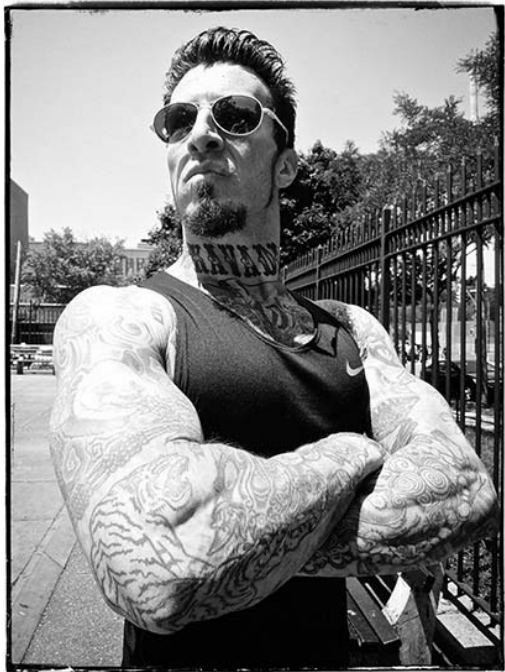
INTRODUCTION



“EVERYONE ADMIRES THE STRONG MAN.
EVERY MAN WOULD LIKE TO BE A STRONG MAN.
FEW OF THEM ARE WILLING TO
PUT FORTH THE EFFORT REQUIRED.”

—BOB HOFFMAN, FROM *SECRETS OF STRENGTH AND DEVELOPMENT*

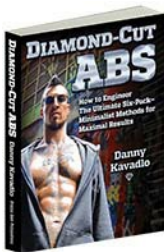




WHY STRENGTH RULES

Do you want to get strong? Think about it. Not “gym strong” or so-called “functionally strong”. Not “sport specifically strong” either. Not even strong in that you can kick someone’s ass or look pretty in a body building pageant. I mean tensile strong. Versatile strong. Pound for pound strong. Not in your ability to move inanimate objects, but in your capability and competency to navigate yourself through this world. Physically unyielding. Mentally powerful. Spiritually grounded. Emotionally sound.

In my last book *Diamond-Cut Abs*, I addressed our cultural obsession, my personal journey and numerous time-tested training and lifestyle methods for harnessing a shredded six-pack set of indestructible abdominals. The manuscript was laced with observation, anecdote and personal experience of a life well lived. Although DCA is much more than an abs book, in the months that followed its release I received literally hundreds of inquiries from many good people who loved the book, but wanted to know more. They asked about full body training, full body health and of course full body strength. Well, here it is, my friends: *Strength Rules*.



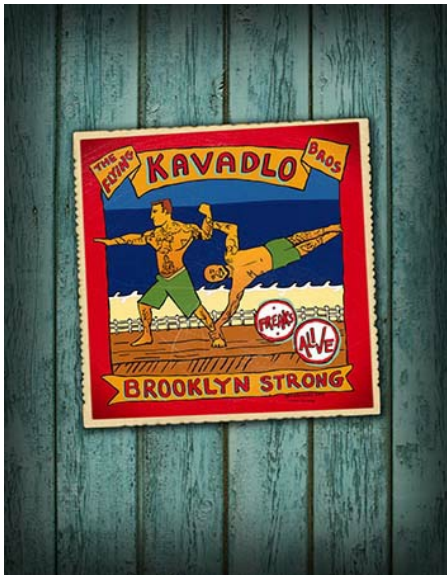
Even if you’ve never read DCA or heard of anything Kavadlo, this is a great place to start. In fact, *Strength Rules* is the best place to start. This work embodies all elements of strength, even how they work into our day-to-day existence, the highs and lows of our being, for better or for worse.

Training (among other things) doesn’t always go according to plan in this adventure we call life and we need to take that into account. *Strength Rules* teaches valuable lessons in rolling with the flow, while still keeping the faith and staying true to yourself.

This book is dedicated to those who are down with the cause. We want to work hard to get strong. We deserve to build our own muscle, release our

own endorphins and synthesize *our own* hormones. We have no desire to chow down on the drugs being hocked by the supplement manufacturers, locker room steroid dealers or the U.S. government. Let's eat real, quality foods, not the commercial grade, processed crap mass-produced by a largely uncaring industry. There's a lot more to "strength" than the workouts.

We have no interest in fly-by-night fitness fads either. Classic exercises have stood the test of time for a reason. I also voice a loud "NO THANKS" to cumbersome, complicated workout equipment and name-brand, overpriced "specialty" clothing every time, instead choosing a dusty pull-up bar and my old sweatpants. We walk a path free from trendy diets, gratuitous chemical concoctions and useless gear: We are the freaks and geeks of fitness! Having always had something to strive against, we are prepared to have something to strive for. We know the value of hard work and how good it feels to earn something. There are no quick fixes.



Are you one of us?

In fact, if you're looking for a quick fix, you picked up the wrong book. Put it down, walk away, nobody's feelings get hurt. This stuff is a process. The journey is the destination, man. Whether it's in the form of a Shakeweight, Viagra pill or fat-free Hot Pocket, most quick fixes are not your friend. We don't need that bullshit anyway. We are liberated, empowered. No, it's *not easy*, but it is *simple*.



Minimalism is a recurring theme in this book. Most equipment and diets are thinly veiled sales pitches, preying on those who don't know any better. Well, we do. There's no reason to overcomplicate our food, our training or our lives.



Sure, extreme moves like this one are totally badass, but you don't need them to get truly strong

Almost every strength exercise comes down to the basics. Essentially, Squat, Push & Pull. These three broad, essential movements really are the granddaddy of 'em all. Throw in some Flexion, Transverse Bends and

Extension, and you've got yourself the tools for a lifetime of full body strength training. Seriously. That's why the exercises contained herein are divided into those few categories. Everything else is a variation. There is no reason to overcomplicate it.

It's also why there are no extreme moves like human flags or crazy bar levers here. The thing is, as incredibly spectacular as a human flag is (and as much strength as you need to do it), it isn't *necessary* to get strong. (For detailed info on the flag, as well as every other move in the street workout stratosphere, be on the lookout for *Street Workout Worldwide*, the eagerly anticipated, first official Kavadlo Bros. collaboration, coming soon...) Sure, we will get advanced in these pages (Pistol Squats, Hinge Dips & Plyo-Muscle-Ups, for example), but our goal is overall strength. My mission in *Strength Rules* is to help anybody and everybody to get in the best shape of their lives. I intend to lay out the truth clearly and succinctly, giving you, the reader, the tools needed to grow stronger and persevere in this mad world, with your head held high and your body lean and powerful.

You will not find any cardio within these pages either. While I wholeheartedly believe that we all need cardiovascular stimulation every single day, it is the subject for another book. We are sticking with strength here. Sure I commute by foot and bicycle, but I do not consider it training. There are many times a day in which I elevate my heart rate, but I consider it life, not exercise. My personal reasons for training are strength, skill and power. There's already a great deal of material available about cardio, by authors far more interested in the subject than I. I don't care to repeat it here. In fact, I do not personally do any cardio-specific workouts ever.

The exercise portion of this book (appropriately titled **ACTIONS**) is split into three levels: **Basic Training** (Starting Out), **Beast Mode** (Classic Strength) and **Like A Boss** (Advanced Moves). Naturally, not everyone will fall 100% into one of these groups for all exercises in all categories and that's fine. In fact, it's likely that even the same individual's level will vary from move to move. That's cool; we all progress at different rates. Respect and acknowledge it. Trust your instincts.

Speaking of instincts, we are wired with them for a reason. If our instincts are wrong then that's millions of years of evolution lying to us. A large part of *Strength Rules* embraces empowerment, faith in oneself and emotional awareness. I believe that being honest with yourself, physically,

mentally and spiritually is a magnificent (and necessary) component of true, overall strength. Yes, sometimes the truth hurts, but it must be embraced if we are ever to be fit and free. We all have the power within ourselves. Use it.

I cry out to all body types, age groups, backgrounds and disciplines. I'm talking to the beginning student, just starting a program. I'm calling on the advanced practitioner, looking for new challenges. I'm speaking to the calisthenics enthusiast and all the hard working personal trainers! This is for *everyone* who wants to get strong. Come with me, friends. Embark on this journey through life and fitness. Learn with me. Train with me. Dare with me. Turn the page...

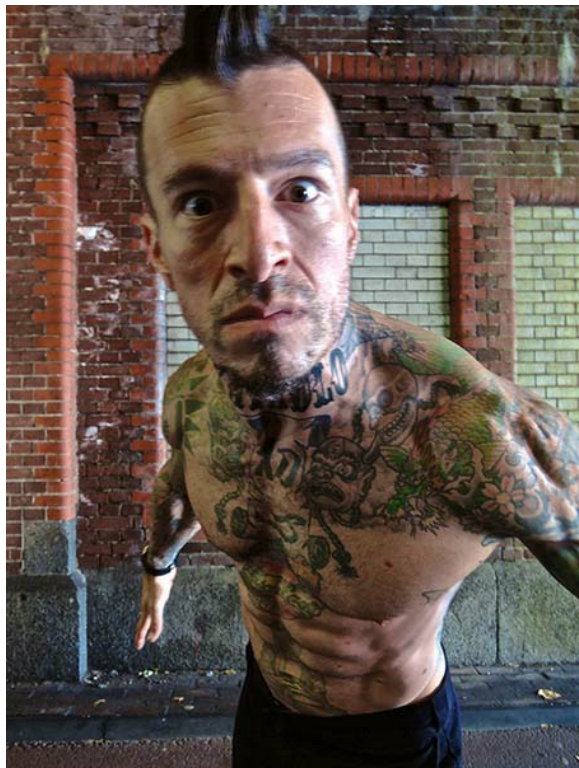


PART I: WORDS



"A
DROP
OF INK CAN
MAKE A MILLION THINK."

—LORD BYRON



CHAPTER 1

YOU TALKIN' TO ME?

W

ell I'm the only one here.

In many ways, each of us is the only one here. Every single one of us is an individual. Highly personalized, specialized, but sometimes (sadly) hypnotized.

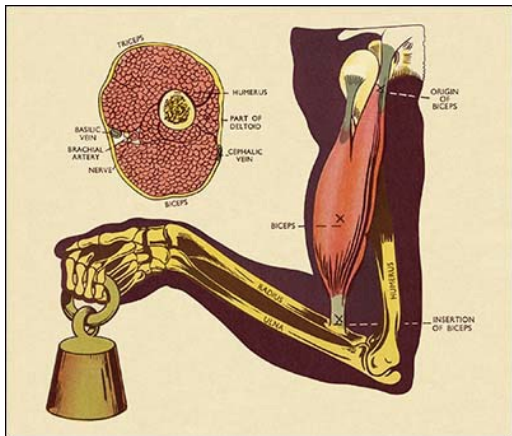
We are often made to feel shameful about ourselves. In the fitness world, we are given false impressions and misleading advice. I've read dozens of articles claiming that *with these five techniques* or *those three superfoods*, you can make unrealistic transformations. Not true. It ain't about a particular exercise, number of reps or specific food. It's about you.

I can never be anyone but me and you can never be anyone but you. There is no improving yourself until you can accept yourself. This assertion applies to many facets of life, from careers, to relationships, to results in the gym. Don't let the marketing departments, society or even your very own mind trick you into believing otherwise. Unrealistic expectations lead to disappointment every single time, in all aspects of life.

From autumn of 2009 until winter of 2011, I trained a tall, intelligent and genetically gifted young man. He stood six-foot-two, had long, strong arms, a full head of hair and perfect teeth. This dude was not only ten years younger than me, he was also professionally at the top of his game, earned a six figure salary and had one of the best New York City apartments I'd ever seen. (Seriously! It was off the hook!) To say he had a lot going for him would've been an understatement.

To be perfectly honest, he was in fantastic shape before I ever even trained him. "What a great client", I thought. However, his biggest goal (and the reason he sought personal training) was, in his words, "to improve the shape" of his biceps. Now, you must understand, I have major ideological issues with obsessing over one small, trivial muscle. The biceps is

approximately 1% of your musculature. I believe that training the body as whole yields far greater results in both function AND aesthetics. But in this case, the greater and more obvious problem was that I could not change the geometric “shape” of his muscles much more than I could change the length of his bones (and they were long!)



No amount of training will shorten your bones or change the insertion points of the muscle. I am all about reaching and surpassing physical goals, but make sure that the goal pertains to your body, not someone else's.

I explained this repeatedly to my client until I was blue in the face, but to no avail. Yes, we can produce mass, grow muscle and cut fat. Indeed, we can affect proportions and build arms, legs, shoulders, back or whatever. But alter the *actual anatomical length*? I don't think so. Homie don't play that. The muscle inserts where it inserts. I remember telling him that even if Arnold Schwarzenegger and Bruce Lee had been training partners (wouldn't that have been cool?), their musculature and overall appearance would still be wildly different.



Come with me if you want to live.

My client did not agree and he eventually fired me. The funny part is that his biceps looked great all along. He just wanted them to look like someone else's and, although they got bigger, stronger and looked far superior after training with me (I credit the addition of Pull-Ups to his previous routine of Barbell Curls, Dumbbell Curls and E-Z Bar Curls), I could never help him be someone else. The biceps muscle runs from the shoulder to the elbow on the anterior upper arm. No amount of training would change the length of his humerus. The biceps inserts where the biceps inserts. His issue, not mine. Damn shame.



Chin-Ups for biceps often trump a stagnant routine of barbell, dumbbell and E-Z bar curls, but they will never make your arms look exactly like someone else's.

Sure some people have more favorable genetics than others, but unfavorable genetics should never be used as an excuse. No one in either category will get results without hard work. Those who rest solely on their laurels will never know how it feels to rise against and will remain mediocre, despite any natural “advantages”. By the same token, one who's had to face

challenges in life and the gym will always be better and stronger for it. Some people are born with little strength, some with lots. No matter what level of physicality you are born with, you can accomplish great things! We all play the hand we're dealt.

In reality, women and men in our world are constantly focused on comparisons to others, rather than on being the best version of themselves. It's unfortunate. Sad, really. Body dysmorphism, eating disorders and depression are serious issues and need to be treated as such. Only self-empowerment can save you. Harping on what you don't have will get you nowhere. I pity the young man in the above example. Despite a life and physique that would make others green with envy, he focused only on one made-up flaw. We all wrestle with body issues, believe it or not. You must realize what you have in order to set yourself free.

This lesson applies to the soul as well. Any transformation, whether physical, situational or spiritual has the potential to be a wild ride, filled with pain, fear and self-doubt. You must stay the course. The ultimate measure of strength may be the ability to take this negativity (or any malevolent force that surrounds us) and channel it into something positive, like push-ups, squats, painting a house or writing a poem. When we harbor hostility, it will destroy us from the inside out, every time. Unleash your inner warrior and channel the positivity.

By the same token, the reason to get fit is yours and yours alone. There are many efforts you put forth for your friends, your job or your family. This is about you. It goes without saying that everyone around you, from you children to your lover, will reap the rewards of the stronger, more vital you, but the journey is yours to walk and you must walk it alone.



AiM:
BE BETTER
THAN YESTERDAY!

Unleash your inner warrior!

Ultimately, all action and accountability falls on you. We all have the time; we each choose what to do with it. No excuses. Even the greatest workout buddy, trainer or cheerleader can never accomplish anything for you. They can teach, help, motivate and inspire, but the hard work is yours. I understand that this can be scary, but to see it as such is a choice. I choose to see self-reliance as empowering. I'm talking to you.



STRENGTH RULES

- 1. YOU REAP WHAT YOU SOW.**
- 2. YOU ARE ALL YOU NEED.**
- 3. NO EXCUSES!**

BROTHERS GRIMM

At the risk of coming across grim (something I generally try to avoid), I cannot omit the following cold, hard fact of life: You can't depend on anyone for anything. That's right, son, nobody for nuthin'. This is good. Basing your happiness on the actions of others is a formula for disaster. We will always be disappointed when we make unrealistic expectations. Welcome to the real world.



CHAPTER 2

DESERT ISLAND WORKOUT

I think sharpest when my mind is clear. I cook best with few ingredients. The less I speak, the more I understand.

My desk is free of gratuitous holdings-on: no overdue bills or expired pens populate my workstation. Zero old paperwork. Nada y nada. A clean, well-lighted place. I function optimally when I use only what is relevant and abandon what is not. All killer, no filler, I like to say. I don't own any fancy shoes either. Minimize the complications in fitness and life.

I aspire to keep my heart and head as clutter free as my desk.

These simple life principles also apply to my feelings on workout equipment. I train at my finest with no distractions. That's the reason why this book consists 100% of bodyweight exercises. Beyond the purity, clarity and boldness of such minimalism, belies a floating, artistic quality to calisthenic movements, unhindered by bulky gear, gratuitous possessions and other such items.

I refer to this type of training as the Desert Island Workout because you can do every exercise in this book, even if you were a castaway stranded on an island with nothing but coconut trees. All you'll ever really need to get in the best shape of your life is you and your environment. Further, freeing yourself from equipment keeps the spotlight on the quality of your movement, rather than on a specific modality or shiny, new apparatus. This focus is necessary for making maximal strength and performance gains. The improved physique is a by-product.

Emancipating yourself from clunky workout equipment encourages your body to stabilize on its own, applying full body tension and harmony to every rep of every set. When we train in this capacity, even exercises that *place emphasis* on one muscle group or movement pattern (as the Hanging Knee Raise emphasizes abdominal flexion, for example) *become full body* exercises (when we factor in the upper and lower body strength and synergy needed to sustain the Hanging Knee Raise). The result is that we exert a

larger amount of energy, firing up more neurons and creating greater intra-cellular communication. This is neurological strength. As an added bonus, the greater muscle recruitment burns more fat, expends more stored fuel and helps you look better with your shirt off. A Push-Up uses your abs. A Squat uses your back. When it comes to gym equipment, we get more when we use less.



When it comes to equipment, you can get more when you use less.

Often, when we talk about strength training, we focus predominately on

the muscular gains and success stories. But let's not overlook the role it plays in your bone strength. Just about every credible source available shows a link between strength training and increased bone density. Stronger bones not only make you more powerful but also less susceptible to injury. A chain is only as strong as its weakest link, which is why Desert Island Workout is the superior way to train. It strengthens your muscle, bone and connective tissue more than isolation-style training and machines that coddle you.

On that note, have you ever noticed how most gyms have soft, padded handles in which to perform Pull-Ups? For some reason, this is how the fitness scene evolved. If you compare the difference between these “ergonomic” grips and, say, a bar (or tree), you will find that not only do your hands have to work harder, so does your connective tissue.



Ligaments, whose primary function is to connect bones to other bones, also serve to keep tendons in place in the hand. When you see a guy in the gym, wrapping and strapping his wrist to perform a Pull-Up (or Deadlift, for that matter), he's more concerned with the muscles he can see, rather than with the connective tissue lurking beneath. It's this connective tissue, in conjunction with the muscle and bone, which makes one truly strong. In reality you get stronger without the grips and straps. Furthermore, you won't have strong joints if you don't have strong connective tissue. Lose the straps, Jack.





Pull-Ups give you strong muscles, bones and connective tissue.

In fact, the Desert Island Workout encourages your joints to move as naturally as possible. Not everybody's mobility is the same. The hip joint for example, differs in everyone. Sure it's a ball and socket for us all, but the depth of the socket, the length of the femur and the size of the pubic bone can vary greatly from individual to individual. Many Squat machines, Smith machines and even Leg Press machines impose limitations, even restrictions, on your body's natural movement patterns. (This is just an example; the same can be said about the shoulder joints in relation to various Shoulder Press isolation machines.)

At their very best, these apparatuses have the potential to limit mobility and neglect the range of motion that needs training the most. At their worst, they'll actually make you weaker in the real world. Rage against these machines!



The manufacturer of this overly complex machine assumes that everyone has an identical movement pattern...



...Your body knows better.

STRENGTH RULES

As far as workout gear goes, you don't need any more than your own body, the environment around you, a strong will and creative mind. These Strength Rules are a list of all the workout equipment you'll ever need:

1. Something To Step Up On

This can be a bench, rock or step. Almost any solid, elevated surface will do. Besides stepping, use this object to adjust inclines, declines and range of motion for exercises like Split Squats, Bench Dips, Push-Ups and Planks.

2. Something To Hang From

It's virtually impossible to execute a straight up vertical pull without something to hang and pull up from. Use a bar, tree, bus stop, ledge or door frame. You can perform endless Pull-Up variations, not to mention Abs, Dips, Levers and more with this piece.

3. Something Heavy

My favorite weighted object with which to train is my own body. There are infinite ways to adjust the body's length, leverage and weight-to-limb ratio. There is no need to use external resistance at all.

STRENGTH RULES

- 1. SOMETHING TO STEP UP ON**
- 2. SOMETHING TO HANG FROM**
- 3. SOMETHING HEAVY**



CHAPTER 3

SET IN STONE

The best workout is the one you will do. We've all been to the gym and seen people stand around, not training, because they were fixed on one exercise or machine that was circumstantially unavailable. Rather than doing something else that will get results, they usually choose to do nothing.

Let's get something straight: You are not Medusa and nothing is set in stone, especially not your workout.



This gargoyle is set in stone.
My workout is not.

THE WAITING GAME

To me, it is silly to wait for twenty minutes for a treadmill, bench press, abs machine or whatever because you can start doing Lunges, Push-Ups or

Sit-Ups right now instead. Just doing something is always better than standing around, doing nothing. Again, this is one of those lessons that applies to life outside the gym too.



Why wait?

You wouldn't believe what I used to witness as a full-time personal trainer at the health clubs. I'd see other trainers with their clipboards (these days, it's i-pads) and a scripted workout planned. They'd then proceed to shake in their proverbial boots when the piece of theoretical equipment that was called for in their hypothetical workout was in use. I could feel their panic. I could smell the foul stink of terror. They saw a cool workout on YouTube or read about a particular plyo-box in a manufacturer's catalog, and felt the need to make every single person they train do the workout that was written by a stranger (who probably does not themselves work out). The only problem is, the gym is more crowded than they thought. Now the trainer has a choice: Continue with the embarrassing task of half-stepping an inappropriate session *OR* admit that the *planned* workout didn't "work out".

It's not necessary to stick to a specific sequence or particular part of the room if it's simply implausible, no matter how much sense it appeared to have made on paper. The dog is meant to wag its tail; when the workout is dictated by anything besides what's really happening in the present, the tail wags the dog. Know what I mean?



Do not wag the dog.

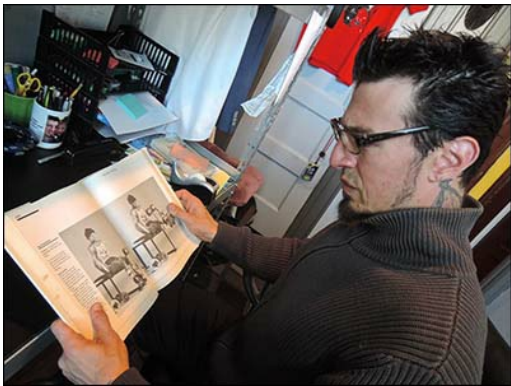
PRESENCE

There are proven methods, progressions, programs and techniques that are part of the formula for success. (These are covered in Part II “Actions”.) And while it's often best to start with some sort of a plan, we must be prepared to deviate from it as dictated by circumstances, including but not limited to mood, energy level, environment, how well you slept, what you had for breakfast, clarity of mind and timing. In fact, if we truly want to be liberated and fit, we must authorize ourselves with the confidence to be present in the current moment. Don't be afraid to improvise. Lots of people are scared to do it. Listen to your body. If you planned on five sets of Pull-Ups but your elbows are in pain, then roll with the flow and do something else. This has at least as much to do with available equipment as it does with what's available from your body. Be here now and take the appropriate course of action.



Be flexible and balanced with your programming.

IN THE ABSTRACT



Studying something is not the same as doing it.


When I was a kid I read every single program to the letter. If the piece of paper said three sets of eight, that's what I did, whether I found it easy, hard, effective, impossible or anything in between. I did the workouts exactly as written, yet *SOMEHOW* my results were not exactly as pictured. Imagine that? If I did a workout that claimed to be written by Charles Atlas, amazingly my young body did not look exactly like Charles Atlas. I was taught that this stuff was an *exact* science and it isn't. It never will be, no matter how many letters or credentials your trainer has after his or her name. Much of the time, the "expert" has read a lot of books, but hasn't spent much time in the gym practicing or observing. You can get a college degree in exercise science without ever exercising. True story.

I will never look exactly like Charles Atlas, but I can be the best version of myself. That's my current goal: to be the best me, to do better than I did yesterday. And if I fall short? It's ok, because I'll be back at it tomorrow!

It's also important to understand that even workouts that claim to be written by celebrity trainers or "experts" are probably not performed exactly as written by the authors themselves (if they even do these workouts at all).


QUESTIONS

I get many emails asking the question “what should I do?” Here are some true-life examples:



Rafael Nathan Menendez 5/14, 11:38am

Bro. Saludos.
I have a question man.
I was trying to do a move but something else came up. I dont know its name (if it has a name) or if its actually correct. If u can help me with that. If theres no problem of course



Shamim Ahmed


We hope our dreams come true.....

Sir give me some workout

Plan

Which I follow...my few friend also like your program...

Sent from Mobile



Ichtiyaq Ahmed Apr 8th, 3:01pm

Hi Danny, Iam Ahmed from India. Iam Practicing Push-Ups since about 5-6 months easier but i cannot even perform 20 pushups in a single set(Iam exhausted at 15 reps only) not more than that. Iam confused because i can perform 30 reps of kneeling Pushups and also half pushups for 20 reps in a set very easily but cannot perform even 20 reps in FULL PUSHUPS
So i wanna ask you that there is any diet should i take for improving my pushups or keep working out.

This is a typical reply:

“Hey thanks for reaching out! It’s great to hear from you, but it’s impossible for me to personally evaluate/guide/advise your form/performance/training if I cannot personally observe it.”

This is not to say that I do not appreciate the inquiries and questions. On the contrary: I love ‘em and I can talk about this stuff all day! In fact, I consider it a tremendous honor that anyone would value my opinion enough to ask me anything. It’s truly a blessing. However I simply cannot give valid critique based on a Facebook comment. There are many online coaches who claim they can and will gladly take your money, but I can’t.



I respond to every question and comment I get, but it's a hypothetical answer based on my common sense and experience, as opposed to the experience of the person asking the question. I'm eternally grateful that people give a damn what I have to say, but actual, factual, tactual training is different from internet rhetoric. As a matter of fact, if I ever do give a plan, I want you to deviate from it. You know yourself better than I do and I will never perpetrate otherwise. Not to mention, these emails are often only selectively truthful and somewhat disassociated from reality. This is why I'll never do online training. I simply don't believe in it. Danny is an in-person experience and so are you!

Every workout is different. Every moment is different. That's what makes life beautiful. I'm right here, right now. You're reading my words. That's the best thing in my world, but how can I possibly tell you from over here exactly what's best in your world? Every workout is happening for the first and only time, every time it happens. It's great to have template but you must live in the moment.



STRENGTH RULES

1. USE WHATCHA GOT.
2. LISTEN TO YOUR BODY.
3. IMPROVISE.
4. BE ORIGINAL.
5. LIVE IN THE MOMENT.

Danny is an in-person experience and so are you!



CHAPTER 4

KEEP IT REAL

Keeplife grounded in reality; the menu is no exception. Bite into real food, the fewer ingredients the better. Most of the time, you cannot go wrong consuming foods with only one ingredient like asparagus, chicken, avocados, oranges, cauliflower, sardines or a T-bone steak.

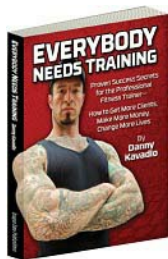
Many moons ago, I was obsessed with theoretical nutrition. I counted grams of proteins, carbohydrates and fats. I paid fanatic attention to so-called “macros”. Calories too. I took my vitamins. I owned a little scooper for measuring powders and creatine and crap, in addition to a little scale for weighing my food portions. (Hard to believe now. WTF!) Ironically, I was less fit then as a young man in my teens and twenties, with less energy and strength than I currently have as a grown-ass man in my forties. Go figure.

I used to eat foods that were fortified with artificial extracts and nutrients, concocted by their creators with detailed attention to the style of science and economics of the time. I read nutrition books, consumed lots of processed brown rice and always had a post-workout shake. I wasn't unhealthy then. Quite the contrary: I was in excellent shape, just bloated, gassy and far from my true potential. I ate lots of nutrients, yet not enough *vitality*.

The way that commercial nutrition was (and still is) defined had very little to do with food and lots to do with theory, superfluous analysis and a general lack of keepin' it real. The healthiest regions of the world eat simple, locally grown, minimally processed foods and take their time to enjoy it. There is no reason to overanalyze things when you're eating good, clean ingredients. In fact, it's unnecessary, even downright oppressive, for anyone other than perhaps a competitive body builder or athlete trying to make a weight class, to ever measure anything they eat, have designated eating times or aim for a specific amount of meals. (For the record, I'd like to dispel any misconceptions: I am far from a body builder and certainly not an athlete.)



Should you have three big meals a day or six small ones? Who cares? Eat when you're hungry and stop when you're full. Don't overthink.



Even when making an effort to eat well, we still tend to make things more complicated than they have to be. My first book *Everybody Needs Training* contains the following sentence: “Apples give you abs.” True indeed. They fill you up and are loaded with dietary fiber, thereby occupying valuable stomach space and leaving less room for a box of Ho-Ho’s, chili cheese fries or White Castle hamburgers. Furthermore, apples satisfy that craving for something sweet. They’re also delicious and vitamin-packed!

About three weeks after the release of the book, I received an email inquiring, “Danny, what kind of apples should I eat?”

“All kinds,” I happily replied. “Whichever you like best. Fuji, Gala, Granny Smith, McIntosh, Honey Crisp. I love ‘em all and I eat whatever is in season.”

About a week later, I had another message in my inbox from the same gentleman: “Danny, how many apples should I eat?”

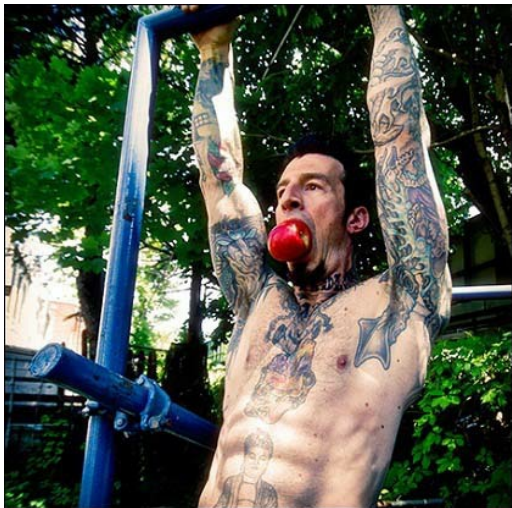
I wrote back. “One. If you’re still hungry, have another. If you’re hungry after that, then eat a third. Apples aren’t like potato chips; you’ll definitely be satisfied after three. If not, have a fourth.” After all, I love apples, and that would be an awful lot, even for me.

The following week, “Danny, what days should I eat apples?”

“Uh, every day.” I meekly responded.

“Danny, what times?”

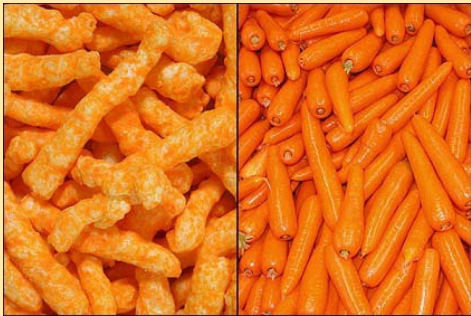
This time I did not reply. He’ll have to figure this one out on his own. There are times when even the most well meaning among us miss the point.



Apples still give you abs.
Pull-Ups do too.

ON CALORIES

I do not count calories because calories don't matter when you eat good food. Trust me, if you're eating well, you'll never need to think about calories again. Yes, I am aware of the concept of Calories In/Calories Out. I also understand that it's a fact that if you are in a caloric deficit, your body will metabolize stored fat for fuel. That's why people who overeat all the time are overweight and people who don't overeat non-stop aren't. I'm just saying that the notion of calorie counting is completely irrelevant if you nourish yourself with quality substances.



Now, there's always some wise guy or gal out there (usually overweight) who says, "Danny, if I eat a calorically restrictive diet, then it doesn't matter if I eat Cheetos or carrots."

Bullshit. Yes it does. To find out why, turn the page... ➡➡➡



The notion of counting calories is completely irrelevant when you eat good food.

Fruits, veggies, nuts, herbs and seeds are loaded with true energy and life. Nothing made in a laboratory or factory will ever have the same vitality as anything from the earth. Cheetos (or any heavily processed snack treat from Snickers bars to Clif Bars) are devoid of any authentic, life-giving nutrients. Even the ones fortified or supplemented are still pure junk. Not to mention that all the added sugar, salt and chemicals takes their toll on the body, even if you're in a caloric deficit. In other words, not all calories are created equal.

These foods are also lacking in dietary fiber. They slow down your metabolism and back up your digestive system. They literally weigh you down. Let's not kid ourselves, kids. Quality nutrition yields quality of life. You can't fake the funk.

THE THING THAT SHOULD NOT BE

I recently did a workshop for a team of elite fitness professionals in my hometown of New York City. There were athletes of many disciplines, coaches representing diverse styles and professional personal trainers all in the same room. You could practically feel the energy buzzing from all the excitement! As is usually the case at such seminars, books from the Kavadlo Bros. are available for purchase. One gentleman expressed interest in purchasing a book that I had written. That is, until he noticed a caption amongst the pages that read: “Supplement Free Body”, after which he was no longer interested in my nutritional musings.

It's not entirely his fault. Both the fitness professional and the everyday layperson are constantly bamboozled by the supplement industry. We don't even realize it. This particular guy ate organic and didn't buy into the hoopla of bulky, silly, isolation machines (hence his attendance at our workshop). He avoided fake foods at all costs, yet he was easily and willingly hoodwinked by the manufacturers of nutritional supplements, the fakest of all foods. Despite shelling out hard earned dollars to attend one of my seminars, he couldn't support my product because it does not endorse supplements. Free your mind, my people. The goal of the supplement industry is to pad their pockets, not to help you get fit. You get everything you need from real food.

⬇ THIS ⬇



⬇ NOT THIS ⬇



I do not use, endorse or recommend any supplements at all. No vitamins, protein powders, athletic green powders, plant gel-caps, herb extracts, creatine, glutamine, fat burners, fish oils, steroids, protein bars or recovery shakes. In other words, I'd rather eat ginger root from the ground than ginger powder from Walgreen's. I prefer an oily fish to fish oil tablets. I'll take spinach over green powders. You get the point. All nutrients are better when they come from the source, despite the handiwork of clever marketing departments.

⬇ THIS ⬇



⬇ NOT THIS ⬇



⬇ THIS ⬇



⬇ NOT THIS ⬇



⬇ THIS ⬇



⬇ NOT THIS ⬇



LAND OF CONFUSION

It's a fact that Americans have an escalating rate of obesity, heart disease and sickness. Is the general population even aware of this? If so, why do so many decide to do nothing about it? I really couldn't say.

I can say however that for the most part, fast food chains like McDonalds, Dunkin Donuts and even the brilliantly marketed Subway are complete garbage. Yet many folks look the other way because the television commercial told them that to “eat fresh” means to gorge on heavily processed, factory made, edible food product. It’s amazing that humankind chooses to eat what they eat and drink what they drink. Coca-Cola, Pepsi-Cola and Snapple (also brilliantly marketed) will make you fat in the short term and sick or dead in the long run. Amazingly, however, most people in this country willingly feed this stuff to themselves and their children on a frequent, almost non-stop basis.

Most, but not all.



This is not food. It's processed crap chemically rendered in a factory to simulate something it's not. A so-called "veggie burger" is completely unappealing to me, despite my love for both veggies and burgers.

In fact the epidemic of low quality, mass produced foods has created a backlash of “healthy” alternatives being marketed to those who care (or at least, think they care). However, marketing is still marketing...

Lots of foods masquerade as healthful choices, pretending to be other foods. Veggie (and soy) burgers were invented in my childhood. They rose in popularity around the same time as fat-free cookies. To me, a veggie burger is as unappealing as a chicken-chipped cookie would be. Veggies aren't beef and chicken's not chocolate. Yes, I do love both vegetables AND burgers, as

I love chicken AND cookies, but only when they're honest and true, not rendered to taste like something else. If given the choice between a veggie burger and a hamburger, I'll opt for beef every time.

It's ridiculous that bizarre fake foods are frequently packaged to give the illusion that they are healthy, honest products. Inventions like “organic brown rice syrup” are nothing more than pure, processed sugar. Almond “milk” and deep fried kale chips exist only to dupe gullible hipsters. They're the modern day equivalent of sugar free desserts, Egg Beaters and margarine—nothing more than misleading altered beasts that are not good for you, preying on the trendy and ignorant.

Not everything that appears healthful actually is.



“What’s the deal with almond milk? It’s not an almond and it’s not milk!”

It’s actually water, sugars, chemicals and thickening agents, plus a small, unconfirmed quantity of mechanically processed almonds.

BELIEVE NOTHING

Foods in packages are pretty much all processed, no matter what it says on the box. Some words mean nothing when they appear on the front of a package, as there is no formal, agreed-on definition. The following terms are completely unregulated: “humane”, “no animal byproducts”, “pasture-raised”, “family farm”, “heirloom”, “heritage”, “locally grown”, “pesticide free”, “no spray”, “sustainable agriculture”, “artisan”, “farmstead”, “vine/tree-ripened”, “beyond organic”, “free-roaming”, “vegetarian diet” and “antibiotic-free”.



The words “all natural” and “fresh” that appear on this label mean nothing.

Of course, there are words and phrases that do have some meaning, but still guarantee very little. The word “natural” does not include any standards of farm practice whatsoever, including the use of antibiotics and growth hormones. “Free range” means the livestock has access to the outside, but does not specify or regulate the quality or size of the outdoor facilities. It also does not regulate how much time is spent outside, which is usually none. Most “free range” animals (chickens for example) are crammed into pens so tightly that the path leading outside is obstructed by literally hundreds of live and dead birds in their way.



This is pure, processed sugar despite the enticing package and the phrases “organic” and “gluten free.”

For crops, the term “organic” indicates the lack of certain prohibited pesticides, synthetic fertilizers, genetically modified organisms (GMO’s) and sewage. For livestock, it means, there are no antibiotics or growth hormones and limited access to outdoors. Interestingly, the US has no organic standards for seafood whatsoever. It goes without saying that organic products are not necessarily good for you so do not be misled. An organic candy bar is still a candy bar.



What's in this stuff? I'd rather have the fat, gluten and sugar than whatever chemical crap they swapped it out for!

I believe that terms like “fat free”, “gluten free” and “sugar free”, although technically accurate, are the most manipulative of all. They in no way equate to a healthier choice in any capacity. These foods are usually extremely processed with very undesirable ingredients. Nutritional claims are bullshit in general. Read the ingredients instead of the boasts. If there are too many ingredients, and you do not know what they are, stay away.



This is the dumbest thing I've ever seen. Yes, gullible hipster foodies will appreciate the "artisan" appearance of the package and are certain to love the words "organic," "fair trade" and "quinoa." But you and I know better. This is just a candy bar.

The best bet is to eat whole foods and get them as locally as possible. We live in a culture where "advertorial" and "infotainment" are actual words. No wonder it's so hard to know who to trust. Combine that with brand tie-ins, uber-sublime promotions and covert marketing. It's trickery. A hoax. Don't get rolled. Nothing is real.

GOOD STUFF

Now that I laid into what not to eat, here is food that I do recommend:

Eat greens every day. I won't get into detail of which specific greens have more Vitamin K or calcium than others because they're all good. Eat spinach, lettuce, collard greens, Swiss chard, Brussels sprouts, arugula and broccoli. In addition to green veggies, I recommend cauliflower, cabbage, carrots, beets, peppers, garlic, onions, cucumbers, celery and squash. I'm also a fan of herbs. Cilantro, ginger, basil, dill, oregano, turmeric and parsley do the body good.



Somehow along the way, fruit got a bum rap (maybe from the same people who eat quinoa chocolate?) This is absurd. In fact an overweight friend of mine once berated me for eating a banana at 9pm. C'mon now! Eat as much fruit as you want any time of day. I don't recommend having a giant bowl of pasta or slab of chocolate cake right before bedtime, but a banana is just fine. Enjoy bananas, apples, citrus, avocados (fat is good!), tomatoes, cherries, berries, pineapple (great for digestion!), grapes, pears and peaches. Yes, fruit contains natural sugar, but also fiber and nutrients. Trust me, if anyone is overweight or unhealthy, it ain't because of fruit!

I'm also nuts about nuts, beans, seeds and legumes. Black beans, kidney beans, peas, red beans, lentils, navy beans, garbanzos, almonds, cashews, peanuts, pistachios and pine nuts are all on Danny's menu. Add nuts and seeds to your salads for some extra crunch!



I drink water all day, every day. It lubes my joints, makes my metabolism move, keeps my skin (somewhat) youthful and helps me think more clearly. I also eat natural fats like olive oil, coconut oil and butter frequently and unsparingly, in addition to plenty of beef, bison, bacon, fish, fowl, lamb, pork, eggs and dairy. Yes I eat meat. Muscle builds muscle.

I don't add sweeteners to anything. Honey, agave, cane, nectar and syrup, whether marketed as natural or not, are all just sugar, the same as table

sugar or high fructose corn syrup (HFC), and we can all stand to eat less of it. That said, I absolutely indulge in dessert from time to time, just not all the time. Food is meant to be enjoyed. Dig in!



STRENGTH RULES

1. DON'T COUNT CALORIES.
2. EAT A WIDE VARIETY OF PLANTS AND ANIMALS.
3. DRINK MORE WATER, LESS EVERYTHING ELSE.
3. HAVE AN APPLE AND SOMETHING GREEN EVERY DAY.
4. AVOID PROCESSED FOODS INCLUDING SUPPLEMENTS*.
5. EAT LESS SUGAR.

*If you must eat packaged food, consult the ingredients rather than the health claims



CHAPTER 5

THAT VOODOO THAT YOU DO

My head hurts. It's raging and swollen and aching. Am I tripping? Hallucinating? Who slipped peyote in my espresso? Experiencing. Sensory. Overload.

My eyes and ears are under siege by horrific words and images: "Are you suffering from Hypertension? Insomnia? Anxiety? Nervousness? Are you depressed? Short of breath? Are you in pain?"

Who isn't?

"You could benefit from Lipitor, Paxil, Prozac, Lithium, Lyrica, Oxycodone or Propofol. Ask your doctor if Xanax, Lyrica or Abilify is right for you."

Huh?

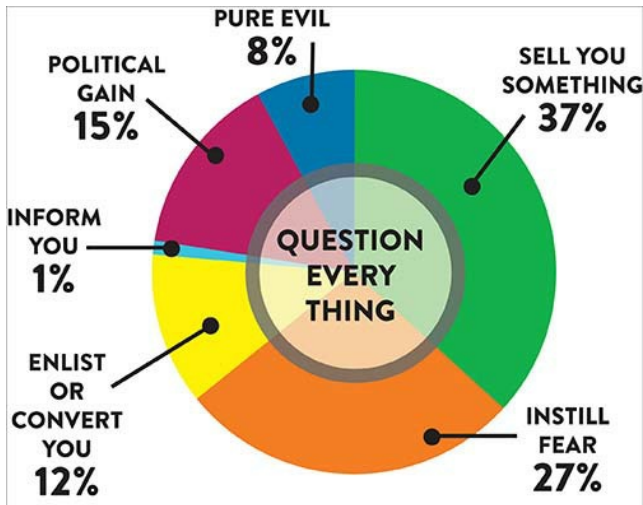
"Side effects include fever, hives, muscle cramps, itching, dizziness, watery or bloody diarrhea, skin lesions, weakness, joint pain, decreased white blood cell count, increased risk of death, severe headaches, constipation, nausea, blurred vision, vivid nightmares and suicidal thoughts".

Is this the state of modern medicine? Is this supposed to make us healthy?

It's all voodoo to me.

From shamans to scientists, healers to hucksters, psychologists to psycho-pharmacologists, someone has a cure for just about everything.

And it seems that "research" is available to "statistically" back up any claim. Here's the thing: 100% of all statistics have an agenda.



100% of all statistics have an agenda. In my case, the agenda is to encourage you to question everything. Even this.

BIG PHARMA IS BIG BUSINESS

I've never been one to hold back my views on the fitness trade or the food industry. I have no intention of censoring my opinion of modern medicine and its marketing practices either. These motherf**kers are worse than big tobacco and McDonalds combined!

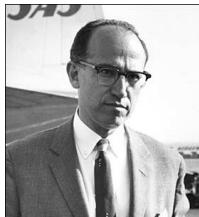
Let's face it: big pharma is big business. Everything changed when the FDA began marketing their products directly to physicians and then later on, to consumers. Oftentimes, doctors pull out a prescription pad before they even hear you tell them what's ailing you. Biotech is a biohazard.

Years ago, I used to work for an event marketing company heading up liquor promotions in the US and Mexico. (I eventually left that job to be a personal trainer; I wanted to help people get healthy instead of making them sick.) Around that time, one of my colleagues left her job as a liquor “rep” at one of my biggest accounts to change careers as well, but her path, while health-oriented in theory, turned out to be less noble in practice. Her new occupation was to entice doctors with giveaways (“spiffs”) for recommending certain drugs. That’s it. Instead of giving night-club owners free bar mats and signage for selling a specific brand of booze, she gave doctors free trips to Hawaii for selling certain brands of drugs. Liquor “rep” to pharma “rep”. True story.

Trust your instincts. You know your body better than any doctor, specialist or clinician, no matter what their credentials are. Like cops, teachers, personal trainers and religious leaders, many medical professionals are upstanding humans, dedicated nobly to their cause. However, there are many others who are corrupt pieces of shit. It’s a broad spectrum. You have to watch your back or this world will eat you alive.



Biotech is a biohazard.



“Could you patent the sun?”
-Jonas Salk

The objective of industry is to make money. Medications are invented, marketed and sold, not with the intention of providing a cure or even a treatment, but for the almighty dollar. Oftentimes, names and packaging materials for medications are contrived, patented and market researched before the product is even invented. This way, in a few months or years, when it is invented, the formula will already have a logo previously proven to appeal to the target demographic. Ca-Ching\$!

It wasn’t always like this, but it’s been a long time coming. In 1952, on the television program *See It Now*, legendary broadcaster Edward R. Murrow asked Jonas Salk, inventor of the polio vaccine, who owns the

patent for said vaccine. Salk's response became the stuff of legend: "Could you patent the sun?" he replied. My, my, how the times have changed. These days, Salk couldn't even get hired with an attitude like that. The profits of doom.

THE OBVIOUS OBLIVIOUS

Sometimes we do not trust the obvious. I've known people who religiously take meds every day for years, even if the meds make them feel worse all the time. They move from one doctor to another to another. They switch from one prescription to next and never feel better or get healthier. Listen up, if you're taking pills and they make you feel worse, stop taking them. That should be obvious. Why would we think that a doctor who spends 5 minutes with you could possibly provide a proper diagnosis? Remember, the medical professional's job is to sell you scripts and keep you coming back.

If they do not keep you coming back, then your corrupt insurance company will no longer pay them. See how this works? The doctor's job is to keep you as a patient and schedule another appointment.



Fact: EXERCISE helps sleep, improves mood, promotes weight loss and increases sex drive. Pills for insomnia, depression, obesity and impotence treat symptoms and place no emphasis on problems, which can be treated by lifestyle changes. Get it?

EXERCISE IS THE BEST MEDICINE

I'll never forget the morning of my fortieth birthday. I saw a TV commercial warning me of a threat called "Low T". By "T", the television pitchman was referring to testosterone. The advertisement was targeted at men exactly my age.



Such propaganda overlooks an important truth: Exercise increases testosterone! We don't need synthetic testosterone to treat "Low T". By training right and eating well, you gain physical competency, growing stronger, leaner and more virile. Your testosterone goes up. So does your mood. You sleep better at night. Naturally.

The same principle can be applied to "happy drugs" as well. Most of us don't need them to treat anxiety. Exercise increases endorphins and doesn't fill your body with synthetic hormones. Furthermore, we have no idea of the long-term results of many of these chemicals.

We can provide the "movement is medicine" template to wild emotions too. Many of these symptoms are often exacerbated by this mad world in which we live. We are overloaded with the communication of graphic images, hostile emotions and hateful rhetoric. It's audiovisual harassment! If I look at the morning news (or even my Facebook feed), I see violent teenage beat-downs, grandmothers getting shot, terrorist death threats and riots in the

streets. I see suicidal pilots on commercial airlines, car bombs, civilians murdering cops and cops murdering civilians. Here's an idea: Blow up the video and take a walk to deal with the stress, instead of staying glued to the i-pad and taking a klonopin.

It's very rare that a doctor will prescribe "Get daily exercise, eat quality foods and go outside." Where's the money in that?

DON'T GET ME WRONG

Of course medical treatment saves lives. I am grateful for vaccines and for the fact that I will not get measles, mumps or rubella. I'm overjoyed that my son will never have to go through chicken pox or polio. If I have an infection, I'm thankful for the invention of antibiotics. I am indebted to modern medicine and the age we live in.

Further, I do not wish to undermine the seriousness of legitimate ailments, conditions and diseases. There are cases where serious procedures or medical attention are very much called for. That said, there are also countless instances when drugs and even surgeries are recommended with very little attention to an individual's needs or lifestyle. This is a major problem. Many of the medications and treatments prescribed can be completely avoided with proper changes in day to day habits.

The same is true for clinical mental disorders. Yes, they do exist. Trust me, I have first hand, personal experience dealing with mental illness in someone I care deeply about. The turmoil experienced by the mentally ill can be debilitating not only to those afflicted, but also to everyone around them. However the honest truth is that these conditions are *way* over-diagnosed. A workout program, a juice fast and a fair distance from toxic influences are better treatment for many sufferers than what is often doctor recommended.

Again, *don't get me wrong*: Medicine is good, not bad. My grievance is when man-made chemicals are the first "go-to" rather than the last resort.



Don't get me wrong



"I'm not a doctor but I play one in this photo."

Danny's Rx: Get daily exercise and eat real, natural foods. Spend time doing activities you enjoy with people you care about. Go outside. No pills needed.

BLEED MY DISEASE

Looking back, with what we now claim to know, it's easy to scoff at some of the health and medical procedures of yesteryear. But let's not glance over the fact that these practices were once taken with the same degree of seriousness and legitimacy as our modern methods of extreme surgery, "pharmaceutical phanaticism" and over-supplementation. For example, the antiquated procedure of "bloodletting" was performed for thousands of years, even up until the late 19th century. Patients were bled as a treatment for fevers, infections and general pain. The worse the ailment, the more blood was let out.



Heroin was once revered as a "miracle tonic". It was just as acceptable and celebrated (but not as easily available) as prescription pills are today. How about trepanning, the act of boring a hole into the skull to treat seizures, migraines and mental disorders? Electroshock therapy, anyone? Even lobotomies were used to treat bi-polar disorder and manic depression as recently as sixty-five years ago. According to Encyclopedia Britannica, doctors used a hammer to insert a modified ice pick called an orbitoclast through the eye socket of the patient to sever connections in the brain's pre-frontal lobe. Ouch!

Physicians of the past recommended drinking all sorts of fluids as well. Liquids, such as urine and mercury for example, were ingested to treat insect stings and toothaches (the former), or syphilis and typhoid fever (the latter). Is that really any worse than the concoctions pedaled by the corporate Pusha-Men these days? Only the future knows...

STRENGTH RULES

1. GET DAILY EXERCISE AND EAT REAL, NATURAL FOODS.
2. DO THINGS THAT YOU ENJOY WITH PEOPLE YOU CARE ABOUT.
3. GET OUTSIDE, TRAVEL AND LISTEN TO MUSIC.
4. LOVE LIFE.



CHAPTER 6

STRONG WORDS FROM A STRANGE MAN

The choices we make en route to any particular goal usually matter more than the goal itself. Day to day activities and attention to detail in the gym, at the dinner table, at your job and in the bedroom are the qualities that really count. Seemingly small choices ultimately pave the path to greatness.

Sometimes people want to achieve profound results without putting in the time. This is not a realistic long-term plan for success in anything.

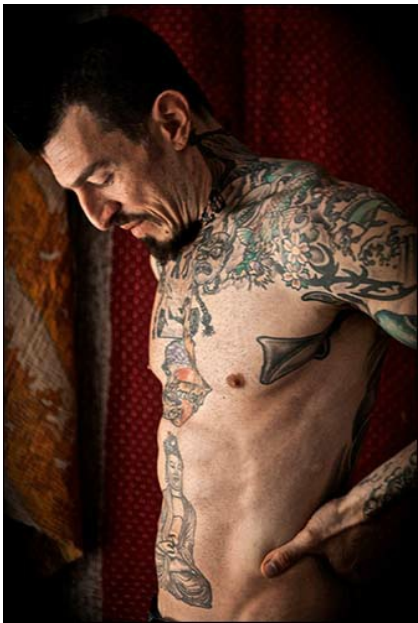
Being extremely consistent with your workouts is probably more important than being extremely intense, although I recommend both. Sticking with delicious and healthful foods 80-90% of the time is probably better than a binge-and-purge approach. Being honest and transparent with yourself and your loved ones, as difficult as it can be at times, builds strength, health, wisdom and wealth.

ACCOUNTABILITY SWINGS BOTH WAYS

You wouldn't believe how many mistakes, bad decisions, lapses of reason and exercises in foolishness I've committed in this life. I accept this. Just as we are accountable to take care of our physical bodies, to *train* and *eat* clean, we must also take care of our inner-selves and *come* clean, about both the good and the bad. Accountability is a pendulum that swings both ways. We are taught to own our successes. We must also own our failures. That's okay; all successful people have failed again and again in their journey. This is life.



Being extremely consistent with your workouts is probably more important than being extremely intense, although I recommend both.



I can be quick to blame others when things take a turn for the dreadful, but I am accountable for everything in my life, for both better and worse.



GLASS HOUSES

Sometimes those who eat paleo have a piece of bread. Sometimes the most committed students of physical culture skip a workout, have a smoke or drink a beer. People who make mostly good decisions have been known at times to make bad ones. That's OK. The world is heavily laden with dogma, judgment and mutually exclusive "rights" and "wrongs". But life is complicated. People who live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones.

THE ELEMENTARY RUDIMENTARY



In calisthenics, music and art, a solid foundation of the basics is usually necessary. Right, Left, Right, Left, Right, Left...

A solid foundation is important for *anything* you construct, whether it's a building, your character or physical strength. When I was a kid, I started taking drum lessons. The first drum teacher I ever had let me rock around the kit and taught me lots of rock beats, jazz fills, even bossa nova grooves. Fun! However, after two years, due to circumstances beyond my control, I had to find another teacher. Some time passed and I found a guy with a great reputation: Hell, he had even played on actual albums and done real tours. I hadn't taken lessons in a while and I was really looking forward to rocking out!

On our first lesson I showed up early, ready to bash the skins, so imagine my surprise when he spent an hour... teaching me how to hold a drumstick!

It took the wind from the sails of my eager young heart. I did not understand this level of discipline, but there was something about it I couldn't walk away from. We practiced holding the drumstick properly for several weeks. Then and only then did he teach me some basic rudiments of drumming.

Simply put, the phrase "drum rudiments" refers to a number of small patterns that serve as the basis for more advanced ones. The first is called the "Single Stroke Roll". I was excited again! But it turned out the "Single Stroke Roll" was not as glamorous as it sounded. Turns out, it goes like this: Right, Left, Right, Left, Right, Left, Right, Left...



You gotta know the rules before you can break 'em. In this case, gravity.

I wound up studying with Howard Fields for twelve more years and his approach helped me in my journey through music, life and even physical culture. I learned a valuable lesson in those early weeks, one that I remind myself of almost every day: You gotta know the rules before you can break 'em. I still train Squats, Push-Ups, and Pull-Ups more than any other exercises. They are the rudiments of bodyweight strength training. Howard, if you're reading this, Thank You!

Like learning an instrument, calisthenic strength training is a process. Almost everything is. We sometimes witness unbelievable feats of strength which are made to look easy by advanced practitioners, but trust me, they put in the time.

AN ARMY OF ONE

I first began training for the dead hang One-Arm Pull-Up in 2006. For those of you not familiar with this particular exercise, it is considered the pinnacle of upper body pulling power. Many of the most world's most dedicated strength and calisthenics aficionados have attempted to tame this beast, while very few have accomplished it. It became my mission.



I have a high threshold for the unpleasant...

Perhaps I obsessed over the goal and lost sight of the process. It can take years to nail the One-Arm Pull-Up, and even still, there are no guarantees. However my young, eager mind wanted it right then and there, dammit! I got ahead of myself, sacrificing my mental clarity and focus. Furthermore, my training started to become more like a job and less like fun, which is something, up until that point, I always tried to avoid. I am not a competitive athlete by any means and I

have no desire to train like one. Needless to say, I had an on-and-off battle with tendonitis for years, as this particular exercise has the potential to put a great strain on the connective tissue. Think about it; the entire weight of the body is curled by one lonely elbow. Yes, every muscle assists in some way, but still, that one relatively small part of the anatomy bears the brunt. This doesn't mean that this exercise should be avoided, simply that I needed to allow ample recovery time and pace myself better than I did. Many of my peers advised me of this, but it was a lesson, I suppose, I had to learn for myself. As we've discussed earlier, ya' can't tell anybody anything!

In time my workouts became downright unpleasant. Now understand, I am blessed (or cursed?) with a extremely high threshold for the unpleasant. It's how I can get tattooed for hours on end or drive cross-country in one shot. It's also how I stayed married for ten years. Perhaps this high level of tolerance helped me endure my bout with frustration and injury. But let's be perfectly clear about something: working out should be fun!

Eventually, I really started to miss the playful aspect of my workouts and I backed up a bit. No more deadlines, timeframes or arbitrary goals. I still trained with focus and frequency, but not obsession. I gained a new respect for the journey and I'm proud to say I did my first dead hang One-Arm

Pull-Up in 2013, *only seven years after I began training for it!* It wasn't until 2014 that I did my second. I have yet to do my third. In fact, I may never do another one again, but I'm having a lot more fun!

SKILL, STRENGTH & SIZE

Who's stronger, the guy who can bench 365 lbs. or the guy who can do 15 consecutive One-Arm Push-Ups? Because I got news for ya, it usually ain't the same guy.

I often ask the above question during my seminars, as it encourages the listener to question what exactly it means to be strong. And depending who you ask, you will get a different response.

When we train, there are different goals, even within the context of "strength". People always want to know how they should train to get better at calisthenics or to get big or to get ripped. And while these inquiries don't have a single, short, simple answer, there are a few broad strokes that can be helpful on the long road to strength. Here are a few of the goals I get asked about most:

SKILL: Generally, when training for skills, I don't advise going to failure on a particular exercise. The method of skills training involves rehearsal of a movement pattern—whether it's handstands or swimming—so that we establish the neurological pathways and intra-muscular communication of the movement. We want to program the body to get comfortable and confident in it's execution. Because this type of training is more like "practice", I feel it's wise not to go balls-out every set.

I also recommend that you practice stellar form. Low reps of perfect (or, more realistically, *near perfect*) One-Arm Push-Ups (as a skill) teaches your body/mind precision. When you do it sloppy, you learn poor form and the skill of the exercise is sacrificed. Do close to as many (or few) reps as you can do as flawlessly as humanly possible and then rest a while. Sets of 1-3 reps



...But working out should be fun!

of the most taxing skills will usually suffice. Leave a little gas in the tank for the next set or the next workout. It will allow you to train these moves with greater frequency.



It can be tempting to do Muscle-Up after Muscle-Up after Muscle-Up and feel like you can keep going, but the reality is that you will burn out. It is a demanding exercise, particularly before the skill is refined. The fatigue usually sneaks up on you.

It's also important to listen to the body. Advanced calisthenics moves like the Muscle-Up, Elbow Lever or Pistol Squat can be more jarring than they appear. It can be tempting to do Muscle-Up after Muscle-Up after Muscle-Up and feel like you can keep going, but unlike when you use external resistance, bodyweight training employs the non-superficial muscles that you can't see (not to mention your cartilage, bone, tendons, ligaments, spatial awareness and proprioceptivity). The fatigue usually sneaks up on you.

By the same token we must learn to recognize the difference between fatigue and soreness, as opposed to injury or pain. Yes, you must work hard to get results, and some discomfort may be necessary, but as discussed in the tendonitis anecdote above, you need to know when to back off. It can be a tricky balance to work hard and listen to your body.

STRENGTH: In weight training disciplines, raw strength is usually measured by a one rep max. This means that there is a finite quantity of weight that you can Bench Press, Barbell Squat or Deadlift for one time only. In bodyweight training, because you weigh what you weigh, your resistance can be adjusted by progressions, as opposed to adding more iron to a bar. Therefore we must ascertain what the most difficult variation of a particular exercise or modality is in order to determine the moves that will build strength most effectively.

In reality, calisthenic strength training and skill training aren't all that different. In a way, *strength is a skill*. Like we've discussed, there is a neurological component to strength in addition to the muscular one. Like skill training, I generally recommend low reps with ample recovery time, although perhaps a few more reps than when training solely for skill. That said, *ALL* of my recommended rep ranges are highly subjective.

For the most part, stick with 2-6 reps of exercises that rock your muscles. Let me be clear, the exercises you choose *must* pose a challenge. Sometimes when people hear that you can build strength in 6 reps, they ask "So, will 6 Bodyweight Squats build strength?" The answer is "No, not unless you find 6 Bodyweight Squats to be extremely taxing. If, and only if, you do, then yes."

But they won't be taxing for long.

Unless you are a complete newbie at the earliest stage of your strength training journey (as we all were at one point), you will have to pick a tougher exercise. Pistol Squats and Shrimp Squats, for example, are Squat variants that have much greater strength building capabilities in the low rep range for most individuals. As the difficulty of an exercise goes up, the reps go down. With effort and consistency, there will come a day when 100 consecutive Bodyweight Squats will cease to build strength. Do something that challenges you.



3-6 bodyweight Pistol Squats will build strength in most individuals. 3-6 bodyweight 2-legged Squats will not.

SIZE: One of the most frequently discussed subjects in regards to calisthenics is whether or not you can get big muscles from practicing bodyweight strength training only. The answer is Yes. Before I elaborate, I must first address our cultural tendency toward the need to categorize everything. We want to break things down into compartments with steadfast rules, black and white, with no areas of gray. While there are no doubt different approaches to the pursuit of different goals, there is a huge carryover between skill, strength, conditioning, power, performance and, yes, size. This doesn't mean we train exactly the same for all of these goals, simply that there is an overlap.

Building muscle (gaining mass, training for hypertrophy, bulking up) is a biological process. At the risk of offending the hardcore science nerds out there, allow me to present an extremely simplified version of what takes place: the muscle is broken down through exercise; it is repaired with rest and nutrition; it comes back bigger and stronger. That's pretty much it.

Remember when I said to do low reps with impeccable form when training for skill? Well this time, you will want to squeeze out those few extra reps in order to tear up the fibers adequately. Like legendary bodyweight strength training author Paul Wade says in his groundbreaking masterpiece **C-MASS**, “embrace reps”. I generally suggest the 8-12 rep range for muscle building, where you really gotta fight for it toward the end of the set.

It’s tolerable if your form is slightly less than perfect on the last few reps, as you want to exhaust the muscle. (Note my choice of the word “slightly”. Don’t go around saying “Danny said poor form is okay”; if your form suffers then the set is over!) Because you’re exhausting the muscle with more reps, you must train the muscle with less frequency. While we can train for skills almost daily (due to leaving some “gas in the tank”), when adding those extra reps for mass, we also add more recovery time. That’s why a split routine of training different body parts on different days is often recommended for putting on size—so your arms can rest on the days you train your legs.



My brother Al and I (pictured here with renown bar athlete Stephen-Hughes Landers) train purely for calisthenic skills, but there's an undeniable overlap of increased strength and size.

You also have to eat more. Just as you must eat less to lose weight, you must eat more to gain. Be prepared for some increased body fat as you are putting on muscle. It is unrealistic to think that you can pack on extra pounds of lean muscle without increasing your fat percentage to some degree. That's why people bulk and cut—because you can't do them both at the same time. Whatever your fitness goals, you must work hard and pay attention to details to get results.

CHILD'S PLAY

This weekend, my son told me “Working out is fun when you have a park to do it in!” If only more adults adopted this mentality. All too often, grown-ups view working out as something they have to do rather than something they want to do. Phrases like “I gotta get to the gym” and “No pain, no gain” have negative connotations. They imply that training is a chore at best and downright agonizing at worst. If you observe children at play, you’ll see they’re pretty much doing basic modalities of physical training... but without the attitude!



STRENGTH RULES

1. WHAT DOESN'T KILL YOU MAKES YOU STRONGER.

To walk through the fire and come out better is what makes us champions.

2. MAINTAIN A CLEAR, TRANQUIL MIND AND POSITIVE MENTAL ATTITUDE.

3. WHATEVER YOUR FITNESS GOALS, YOU MUST WORK HARD, BE ATTENTIVE TO DETAILS AND ALLOW YOURSELF TO RECOVER IN ORDER TO GET RESULTS.

4. HAVE FUN!



CHAPTER 7

THINGS THAT MAKE YOU GO HMMMMM

W

hy do some people drive to the gym, only to ride an exercise bike that goes nowhere? Hmmm.

Why do we as a culture spend so much time sitting? Hmmm.

Why do kids spend more and more time looking at screens, while spending less and less time being outdoors? Hmmm.

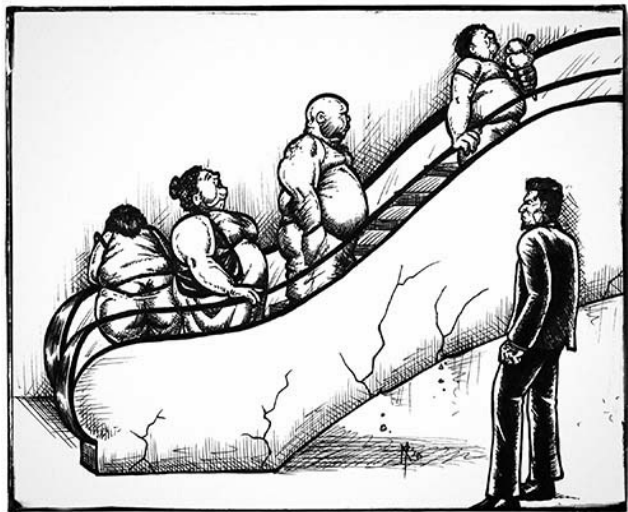


Who would want to spend hours on a treadmill trying to lose weight and then follow it with a high calorie shake at the smoothie bar? Hmmm.

Why isolate one body part at a time, if you want your whole body to get strong? Hmmm.

How could anyone think they're getting a workout if they are focused on a TV or i-pad? Hmmm.





WHO INVENTED THE ESCALATOR?

“Who invented the escalator? Moving steps. Now, talk about crazy. People going up and down escalators, elevators, driving cars, having garage doors that open at the touch of a button. Then they go to health clubs to work the fat off. In 4,000 years we won't have any legs, we will wiggle along on our assholes, or maybe we'll just roll along like tumbleweeds.”

—Charles Bukowski, from “The Captain Is Out To Lunch And The Sailors Have Taken Over The Ship”





CHAPTER 8

Danny's DOs

1. **DO ATTEND TO THE TASK AT HAND.**

For that matter, do only one thing at a time. Do it slowly, deliberately and attentively. Not only does this apply to your workouts, it's also appropriate for daily tasks like cooking, gardening and washing dishes. When training, don't look at your phone or the damn TV. Keep your muscles activated and your entire body present. This is part of the neurology of strength. My friend, living legend, Jack Arnow, former training partner to the late calisthenics great Jasper Benincasa, used to tell me to “get inside the muscle”. As anyone who's ever met Jack knows, he has a way with words.



"Get inside the muscle"
-Jack Arnow

2. **DO DESIGNATE TIME FOR YOUR WORKOUTS.**

Whether morning, afternoon, evening or midnight, make the decision to train. For me personally, the later in the day it gets, the less likely it is that my workout will happen. But that's me. Find a time that works for you. Training partners can help. Don't just assume you'll get to it; training is an active process. Develop rituals. Naturally, there are exceptions to everything as situations out of your control will inevitably arise, but do your best to stick with it. This is part of Danny's formula for success.



Training is an active process.
Develop rituals.
Training partners can help.

3. DO CELEBRATE WHAT YOU LOVE INSTEAD OF BASHING WHAT YOU HATE.

It seems like you can't walk down the street (or log onto the internet) without someone loudly declaring his or her hatred for a style of training (or a celebrity, friend, politician, movie, TV show, band, etc.) It's really a shame. Why proclaim your intense hostility when there is so much in life to be enjoyed? Interestingly enough, any time someone publicly cries out against anything, they actually promote it simply by drawing attention, thus helping the object of their rejection, rather than harming it. Isn't it ironic? Don't you think?

There's too much good in this world to get bogged down on the negative. Be grateful for whatcha got, not hateful for whatcha not.



"Peace begins with a smile."
-Mother Theresa

4. DO EAT WHEN HUNGRY AND SLEEP WHEN TIRED.

Many of us eat way past the point of satiation and it's important to know when to say when. If you're hungry, by all means EAT. If you're starving, EAT A LOT! But all too often, we eat out of habit, boredom, anticipation of potential future hunger or just sheer gluttony. Not everyday

is Thanksgiving and we do not need to stuff ourselves daily. Restraint in and of itself is a form of strength.



I go to bed when I'm tired. If that's 9pm so be it. I listen to my body. For that matter, when I have difficulty sleeping I get out of bed and read a book instead of tossing and turning. I don't want to internally associate bedtime with restlessness. Therefore, I use the bedroom only for sleeping or making love. I don't eat or surf the internet in bed. There is no TV in my room. My phone is turned off and placed in a different room when I retire. I never use it for an alarm. Using the cell phone as an alarm clock creates nervous and/or interrupted sleep, as there will inevitably be pings, calls and texts throughout your slumber. I use a good old-fashioned alarm clock when necessary. I even travel with one. Eliminate distractions and clear your mind. Sweet dreams.

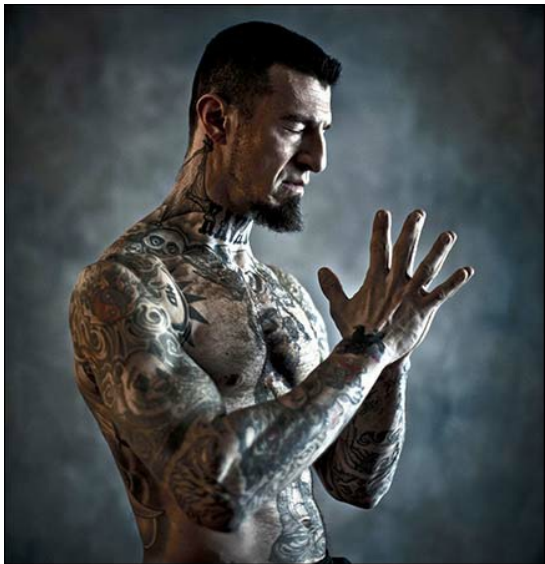


5. DO PRACTICE FORGIVENESS.

I'm a forgiver. Your body is not the only thing that needs to heal. Our hearts, souls, and minds need to as well. Just as picking at a scab will not mend a flesh wound, prodding at emotional injuries will not help either. One of the greatest recipes I've observed in promoting emotional healing is a shot of forgiveness. To paraphrase the ancient proverb, holding a grudge is like holding onto a raging hot coal with the hopes of throwing it at those who've done you wrong. It harms you much more than the person it's aimed at. Put it down and move on.

Forgive others and also forgive yourself. I can't tell you how often I've heard people beat themselves up for missing a workout, skipping their daily

run or having a cookie. Just because you made a mistake yesterday, does not mean that your whole life (or workout regimen) has fallen to shit. Let it go and move on.



6. DO YOUR BEST.

Seems obvious, right? But think of how many times you've observed someone barely phoning it in, exerting the minimum amount of effort needed the fool themselves (or their boss, lover, customer, etc.) into thinking they give a damn. Here is my simple philosophy: When you are at your job, do it to the very best of your ability, even if your co-workers do only the bare minimum. Go above and beyond. If you're painting a room, don't be

lazy. Prime the walls if needed. Apply a second coat. When you're having dinner with your loved ones, look them in the eye. Really pay attention to what they say. When training, be diligent in your workouts. Apply focus and put forth extra effort. Observing this principle will pay you back tenfold.



Be focused and put your best foot forward.

7. DO EAT LOTS OF GOOD FOOD AND NEVER DIET.

Americans are encouraged to diet from a young age, hyper-analyzing the foods we consume to the point that we are detached from our hunger, lifestyle and metabolism. People weigh their food, time their meals, starve themselves and eat supplements instead of nourishment. Ultimately, many people become removed from the purity of food itself, often scrutinizing theoretical grams of invisible nutrients and overthinking hypothetical meal

plans. Well I got a plan for ya: Eat a lot of fruits, veggies, fish, meats, nuts, seeds, beans and greens. Drink plenty of water and avoid junk food. Even have a glass of wine if you want to, just not the whole damn bottle.

And never diet ever!!! The restrictive nature of dieting sets the practitioner up for repeated goal-oriented failure—which is detrimental to both the waistline and the spirit.



You can even have a glass of wine if you want to, just not the whole damn bottle.

8. DO PERFORM AN ACT OF KINDNESS EVERY DAY.

This one is self-explanatory. Hold the door open for a stranger. Lend a hand when you see someone carrying a heavy load. Help your elderly neighbor shovel her walkway. The most meaningful thing you can do in this life is to offer others what you have to give. Both you and the recipients of your deeds will be better for it.



Help your neighbor shovel the walkway.

9. DO ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY.

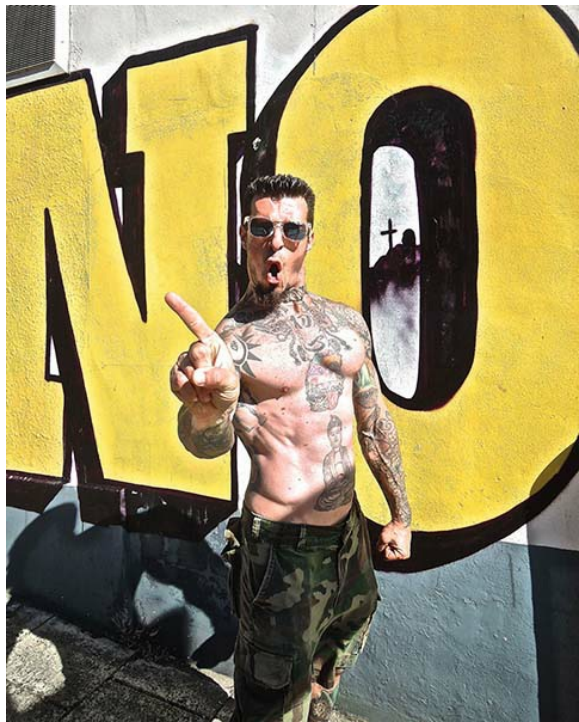
Blaming others for our current state of life has become the societal norm. Something bad or unexpected happens and the first thing that many of us do is point the finger elsewhere. The truth is that we bring everything upon ourselves. Any difficulties from which you suffer are not because of your family, friends or enemies. They're not because of your ex-wife or ex-husband either. Don't blame your boss or the President of the United States of America. It is you and you alone. Deal with it. By the same token, it is equally important to accept credit for your accomplishments. Own both your failures and your successes. This pertains to your workouts too.



10. DO THE RIGHT THING.

Not to show off or look good or because your god will punish you if you don't. Do the right thing because it's the right thing to do. That's it. Truth always overcomes lies. Justice wins over injustice. And righteousness defeats evil. In life and fitness, you reap what you sow.





CHAPTER 9

DANNY'S DON'TS

1. DON'T SHOW ME YOUR MOVES UNTIL I SEE YOUR REPS.

I still do Push-Ups, Pull-Ups, Squats, Lunges and Dips almost every time I train. For real. It's important to have control of the basics. Trust me, I did Pull-Ups for nearly twenty years before I ever even saw a Muscle-Up. There's absolutely nothing wrong with showmanship. In fact, it's a great way to train in it's own right. But when strength matters, you must put in the time.



2. DON'T PRIORITIZE THEORY OVER EXPERIENCE.

Frank Zappa said “Writing about music is like dancing about architecture.” This philosophy has many applications. There comes a point where all the talking in the world means nothing. Many academics, fitness writers, college kids and professors love to perpetrate knowledge when they lack experience. They’ll write a whole dissertation about something they know nothing about and never took part in. Talk is cheap. You gotta practice what you preach!



You gotta practice what you preach!

3. DON'T WASTE TIME.

Not in your life, not with your loved ones, not day-to-day, and *certainly not in the gym*. Circuit training (completing a series of exercises with little to no rest in between), super-setting (alternating between two exercises, push/pull for example), active recovery (stretching or training another body part during your rest period) and performing full-body, compound movements (Windshield Wipers versus Crunches) are excellent ways of getting more done in less time.

Strange as it sounds, getting out of the gym altogether is probably a good idea. In fact, many modern “big box” gyms were built to specifically cater to time-wasters. Just look at all the merchandise for sale, TV screens, dining areas and other distractions. You’re probably better off at the park! If you have the space, build a backyard pull-up bar. You’ll get much more bang for your buck!



4. DON'T MISLEAD PEOPLE.

Say what you mean, not what you think others want to hear. If you get invited to an event and you know you won't attend, then don't say you will. Don't even say you might. If you get off the phone with someone, don't say "I'll call you right back" unless you're planning on doing so. Don't say you will show up somewhere at a certain time and then show up at a different time. Always tell the truth. It's amazing how many people provide lip service with no follow through. Personal trainers do it all the time. If you're a

trainer, don't promise unrealistic results. So many fitness professionals are afraid to be honest, but the truth is, if you make unrealistic guarantees, you set up both yourself and your client for failure.



Misleading people sets you both up for failure.

5. DON'T EAT SO MUCH SUGAR.

Most of us could stand to reduce the amount of sugar we eat day to day. Don't add sugar to your coffee, tea or oatmeal. Avoid sodas, energy drinks and other sugary beverages. Americans consume an alarmingly large

quantity of sugar every day. It can't hurt to cut back. Remember, honey, agave, nectar, brown rice syrup and cane sugar are all pure sugar, even if they are marketed as healthy alternatives to high fructose corn syrup. It's the same shit.



6. DON'T JUDGE OTHERS.

No one ever said it better than Wayne Dyer: “When you judge another, you do not define them. You define yourself.” Words to live by.

ownagesalad69
so its a tattoed loser who has some upper body strength? go do some squats ya chicken leg faggot

belhaj mootez
u loock like shit with those tatos get rid of them man

7. DON'T JUDGE THEIR WORKOUTS EITHER.

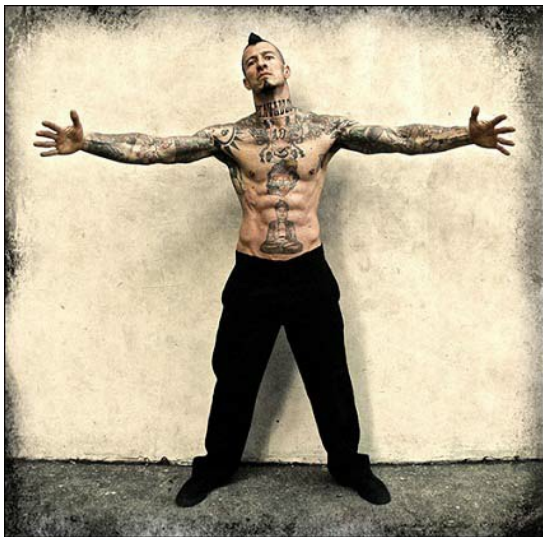
I was guilty of this as a young trainer. I criticized everyone's workout. "Why are they doing that exercise?" "Why this?" "Why that?" "That's stupid!" It was really just my own insecurities. I didn't know the story behind the workout or the reasons for the choices they made. And it was none of my business anyway. There are many effective modalities in which to train. You gotta do what you love.



There are many effective modalities in which to train.

8. DON'T BELIEVE THE HYPE.

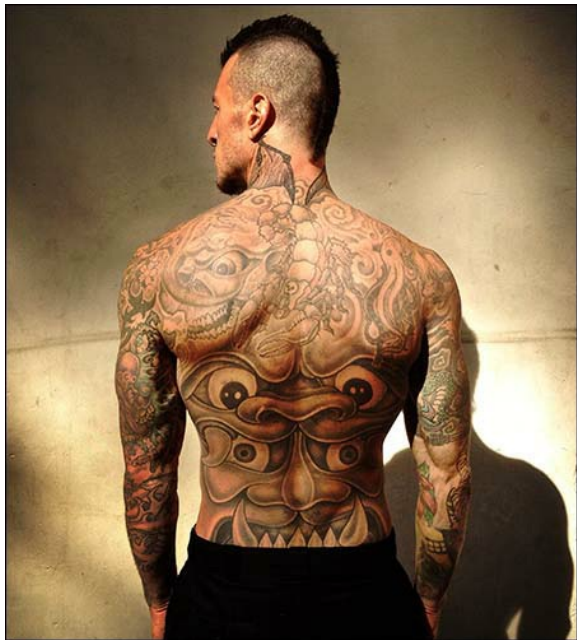
Keep your expectations guarded. The marketers' job is to reel you in so I encourage you not to take the bait. I'm not just talking to about fitness fads, gym memberships and supplements either. I'm talking about talking heads in the media, salesmen, politicians, and gurus. Yes, there are many extraordinary experiences to be had and life is beautiful. I encourage you to have it all. But trust your own intuition and common sense over the propaganda of others. If something sounds too good to be true, it probably is.



9. DON'T PAY ANY MIND TO THOSE WHO TALK BEHIND YOUR BACK. THEY ARE

BEHIND YOU FOR A REASON.

When you argue with a hater, there will be two fools in the room instead of one. Always take the high road.



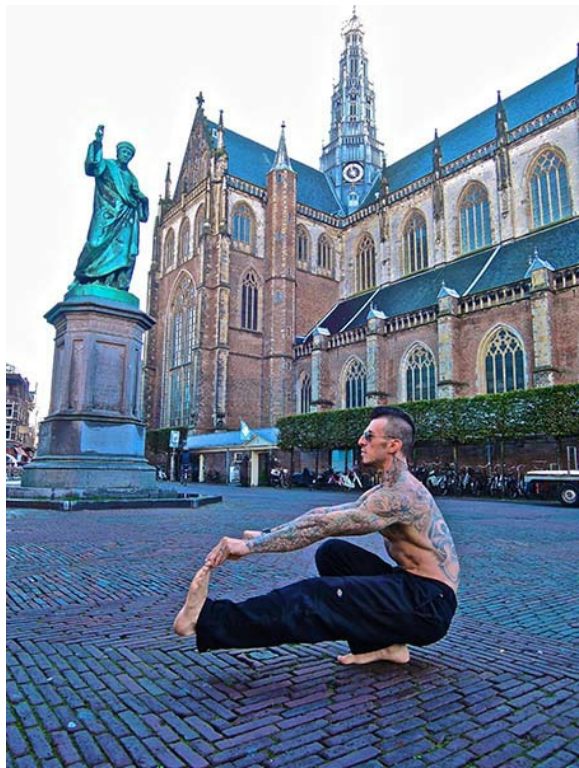
Behind my back.

10. DON'T TAKE "NO" FOR AN ANSWER.

There are occasions in life when failure is simply not an option. These are the times when we cannot back down. Naturally, not every experience falls into this category and not everything will go as you intended it to 100% of the time. Far from it...

Still, we *must* recognize that there are those moments in life (and training) where the only answer is “YES, I’M DOING THIS!” Then actually do it!





PART II: ACTIONS

“START BY DOING
WHAT'S NECESSARY;
THEN DO WHAT'S POSSIBLE;
AND SUDDENLY YOU ARE DOING
THE IMPOSSIBLE.”

—ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI



CHAPTER 10

BASIC TRAINING

(STARTING OUT)

Let's start at the very beginning. It is not uncommon to get ahead of ourselves, centering on goals, yet closing our minds to the early steps required to achieve them. These are the beginners' fundamentals of calisthenic strength training.

There is a need for foundation and structure in beginning. It starts by learning the feel and getting comfortable with the movements. Aim for precision as much as possible, but understand that in these primordial stages, your form will most likely be imperfect. In fact, doing something imperfectly is often the first step toward to doing it somewhat well and ultimately really well. However, I would not recommend moving onto Beast Mode (Classic Strength) until these exercises are executed with close to flawless form, which can take weeks or months. It is of note that your Squat, Push and Pull may progress at different rates from one another and that is totally okay. Respect your level in each modality.

Vincent Van Gogh has been quoted as saying, "Great things do not just happen by impulse, but by a succession of small things linked together." Think of every rep and every set as one of these small things on the path to greatness. (Just don't cut your ear off and give it to a prostitute, like Vince did.) Let's do this!



STARTER SQUAT

The Squat is one of our most fascinating physical movements. It works both the anterior and posterior chains of the legs, plus it also employs the upper body for posture and stability. Squats are also hard wired in our DNA, but sometimes, deconditioned individuals say that Squats feel “unnatural”. As children we had the potential to do impeccable Squats. However, spending too much time at the desk, dinner table or steering wheel changed our bodies, but it’s not too late. We can get it back!

When we are new to working out, because mobility is often an issue, I do not recommend doing Full Range Of Motion Squats (where your butt gets all the way down to your heels) if they do not come easily. We will start with simple, regressed exercises and gradually progress. In time, anyone, barring injury, disability or extreme deterioration will be able to do the full range of motion.



SIT DOWN/STAND UP

This is the place to begin if you are just embarking on your journey. Sometimes we don't have the strength, flexibility or confidence to do unassisted Squats, so bringing a bench into this equation is a big help for many. Start by sitting on a bench (or box, step, etc.) with your chest up, your feet flat on the floor and your shoulder blades retracted. Now drive your heels into the ground, push your hips in front of you and come to a full stand. That is one rep. Sit back down in a controlled fashion.

TRAINER TALK:

Start with a bench about knee height. This way your thigh will be parallel to the ground when you begin. If this is too difficult, use a higher bench. This places you at a mechanical advantage. If it's too easy, then use a lower bench or proceed to Partial Range Of Motion Squats.

REP RANGE:

3 sets of 20 is sufficient to move onto Partial Range Of Motion Squats.



SQUAT (PARTIAL RANGE OF MOTION)

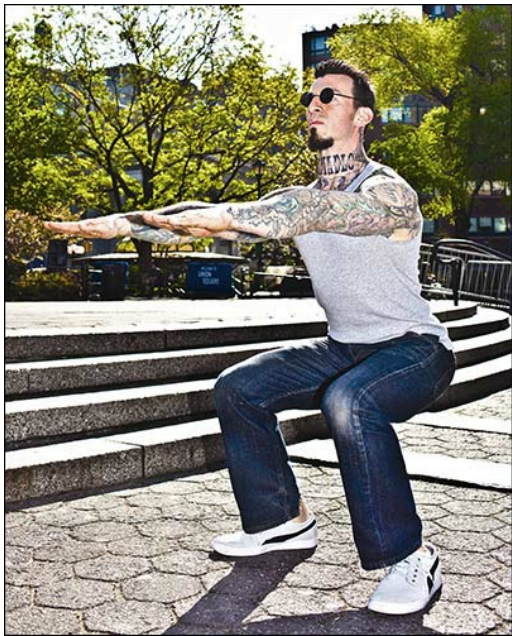
This is just like Sit Down/Stand Up, but without the bench. Start in the top (standing) position and bend at your knees, hips and ankles while putting your butt out behind you as if to sit. Maintain control and lower yourself down until your thigh is parallel to the ground. (Beginners may lack the mobility for the full range of motion.)

TRAINER TALK:

You can play around with different distances between the feet. You will find that different widths and foot positions affect which muscle are emphasized.

REP RANGE:

Shoot for 3 sets of 20.



STEP-UP

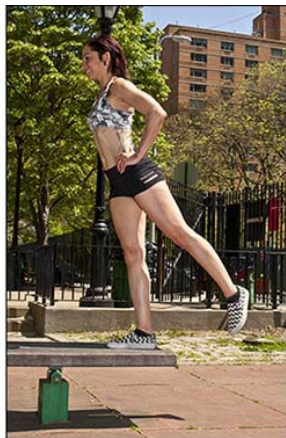
This time instead of sitting on a bench and standing up, we are stepping from the ground onto the bench. Stand up facing a bench. Now place one foot on the bench, maintain your posture and press your foot down, stepping completely up. Step down and repeat on the other side.

TRAINER TALK:

It's important to make sure that your foot is completely on the bench so you can really drive down with that heel and get the most out of this exercise..

REP RANGE:

3 sets of 10-15 reps on each side is good.



SPLIT SQUAT (AKA STATIONARY LUNGE)

Stand with one foot in front of you, flat on the floor. Place your other foot behind you, with the heel up and the ball of the foot and toes on the ground. Keeping your chest up, bend both knees to approximately 90 degrees. (When setting up, it's important to allow ample distance between your front and rear feet to facilitate this bend.) At the bottom of the motion, the rear knee should come close to the floor without touching it. Now push back up with the heel of your front foot and the ball and toes of your rear foot. Repeat. Make sure you train both sides evenly. You may have to go slow to maintain balance and control.

TRAINER TALK:

Although you can switch sides from rep to rep, I prefer keeping my feet in place and performing a complete set with the same foot in front, then switching positions and performing another complete set with the other foot in front. It's worth noting that both the front and rear foot exert in both variations.

REP RANGE:

3 sets of 10-15 per side is solid.





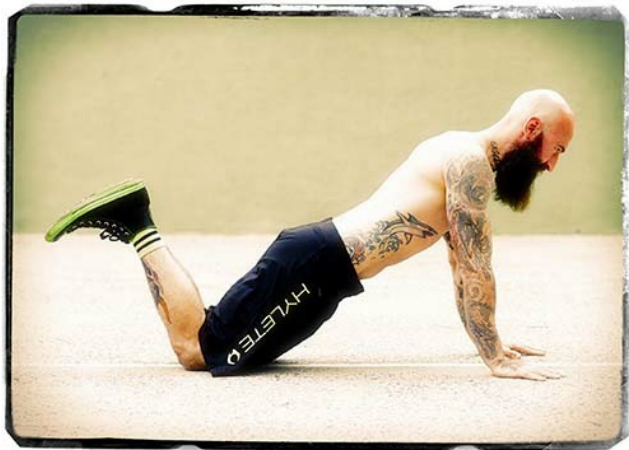
STARTER PUSH

The Push-Up is the ultimate upper body exercise. It is infinitely scalable and works the entire upper body, with emphasis on the chest and triceps.

For all Push-Ups, make sure to keep a straight line from your shoulder to your hip to your heel (or knee, in the case with Knee Push-Ups). Try not to let your hips drop low or come up high. Also, avoid tucking your chin; this will help set your spine up for proper posture. Sometimes beginners set up with their hands too high. Make sure to keep your hands and elbows below your shoulders to avoid excess strain. This will prevent you elbows from flaring out above your shoulders.

Dips are also an upper body pushing motion, not unlike Push-Ups. However, where Push-Ups emphasize the chest primarily, with assistance from the triceps, Dips place the body at an angle that emphasizes the triceps, with assistance from the chest. Exercises that target the shoulders are also included in the “Push” category.

I recommend keeping the entire body (not just upper body) tense and active, including your abs, back, quads and glutes. This generates greater tension throughout the body and will maximize your yields.



KNEE PUSH-UP

It begins here. The Knee Push-Up is the variation that shortens the body to the greatest degree, thus putting less weight in the hands and making the exercise more mechanically advantageous. Start out in a kneeling position. Place your hands on the ground, keeping a straight line from the shoulder to the hip to the knee. Maintain a tense body while you lower your chest to the ground in a controlled fashion. Now press up. That is one rep. Feel free to cross your feet if doing so makes the exercise more comfortable.

TRAINER TALK:

These are spatially more challenging than one might initially think. Make sure you hinge at the knee, NOT bend at the hip or thoracic spine.

REP RANGE:

30 is a solid baseline.



INCLINE PUSH-UP

The Incline Push-Up is also a great place to start. Place your hands on a bench (or other such stable, elevated object) and your toes on the ground. This elevated angle gives you more favorable leverage. Keep your body tense and straight while you lower yourself toward the object, bending at the elbows and shoulder. Come down until your chest is almost touching the object. Press yourself back up. That is one rep.

TRAINER TALK:

This exercise can be progressed or regressed to suit any level by adjusting the height of the incline. The higher the hand position, the more forgiving the leverage.

REP RANGE:

If you can do 3 controlled sets of 10-20 reps, it's time for classic Push-Ups.



FEET APART PUSH-UP

The Feet Apart Push-Up is an example of a Push-Up regression that requires no equipment at all, not even a bench. This variation is done with both your hands and toes on the ground, feet spread apart. Make sure to keep your body straight and muscularly active. Don't raise your hips high or let them sag low. Lower your body until your chest is close to the ground, bending at the elbows and shoulder. Push into the floor and press yourself back up.

TRAINER TALK:

If you are brand new to Push-Ups, start out with a very wide footing. As you get comfortable, you can start bringing them closer together to increase

the resistance placed on the upper body.

REP RANGE:

If you can do 3 controlled sets of 10-20 reps, it's time for Classic Push-Ups.



HOW LOW SHOULD I GO?

Different schools of thought will have different answers. I believe a Push-Up should be done until the chest is almost touching the floor (or bench for Incline Push-Ups). However, that definition is more open to interpretation than one may think. Because different body types move in different ways (due to bone length, joint mobility and other factors), the distance from chest to ground is subject to change from individual to individual. For that reason, I recommend bending the arm until your elbows have flexed deeper than 90 degrees.

⬇ THIS ⬇



⬇ NOT THIS ⬇



BENCH DIP

Place your hands on a bench behind you with your chest up and shoulder blades retracted. Keep your legs extended out in front of you. Slowly bend at the elbow and lower your hips down in front of the bench. Make sure to keep your chest up. It is also important that your elbows point out behind you, rather than flaring out to the side. Be mindful not to shrug at the shoulders. When your elbows have bent to 90 degrees or beyond,

press down into the bench, extending at the triceps and come back to the starting position.

TRAINER TALK:

Though the full expression of the Bench Dip calls for a straight leg, it can also be performed with bent knees, which is an easier variation of the exercise.

REP RANGE:

Rep Range: 3 sets of 10-15 is solid.



WALL PIKE PUSH-UP

The Wall Pike-Push-Up places the body at an angle that targets the shoulders. It's as rudimentary of a bodyweight shoulder exercise as there is. The purpose is not so much to build strength but rather prepare the

shoulder's mobility and the practitioner's neurology for more advanced shoulder exercises like the Pike Push-Up and ultimately the Handstand Push-Up, which load more weight into the shoulders. Begin with your palms flat against a wall. Lean forward, making sure to hinge at the hip. In order to open up your shoulders, it may be helpful to envision "pressing" your chest down and through you arms. Ultimately, you want your upper body almost parallel to the ground. This is the starting position. Now, bend at the elbows and shoulders, bringing your head and shoulders closer to the wall. Once you are close to the wall, extend your arms and press yourself back into starting position.

TRAINER TALK:

When performing this exercise, I like to press my fingers into the wall and fire up my lats as well as my shoulders. This connects me to my environment and helps me get prepped for the classic Pike Push-Up.

REP RANGE:

Beginners should shoot for 5 to 10 reps to get stated. When you can do 3 sets of 20, you are probably ready for Pike Push-Ups.





STARTER PULL

These exercises prepare the practitioner for the Pull-Up, the classic upper body pulling exercise. Each one of the exercises that follow is a viable step on the path. Like the preceding pushing exercises, we want to ensure good posture, keeping a straight line from the shoulder to hip to foot, while maintaining active full body tension.

It is of note that the Australian Pull-Up is a different movement pattern (front to back) than the classic Pull-Up (down to up). It is an exercise that should remain in your arsenal throughout your fitness journey.



AUSTRALIAN PULL-UP (AKA BODYWEIGHT ROW)

Grab a bar of waist height or greater. Place your feet out in front of you with your heels down and a straight line from shoulder to hip to heel. Use your arms and lats to pull your body to the bar while maintaining your straight body positioning. Hinge at the heel, not the hip. Return to starting position.

TRAINER TALK:

Use a higher bar or bend at the knee to make the exercise more forgiving if necessary. By the same token, elevating the feet makes this exercise more difficult.

REP RANGE:

3 sets of 10



Basic Australian Pull-Up.



Here is a more difficult variation that places the feet and shoulders at the same height in the starting position.

BAR HANG (ACTIVE)

Actively hanging from the bar is an exercise in and of itself. Grab it tightly. Feel it in your hands and forearms. Keep your glutes and abs tight too. It's very important to maintain “packed” shoulders, which means keeping your shoulder blades back and your chest up. We want to avoid shrugging.

TRAINER TALK:

Beginners may have a hard time performing Bar Hangs without flexing their elbows a little. Ultimately, however, we want to keep our elbows locked and our arms completely extended.

REP RANGE/DURATION:

I recommend performing this as an isometric exercise, aiming to hang from the bar for 30 seconds or more, with the shoulder blades completely retracted.



FLEX HANG

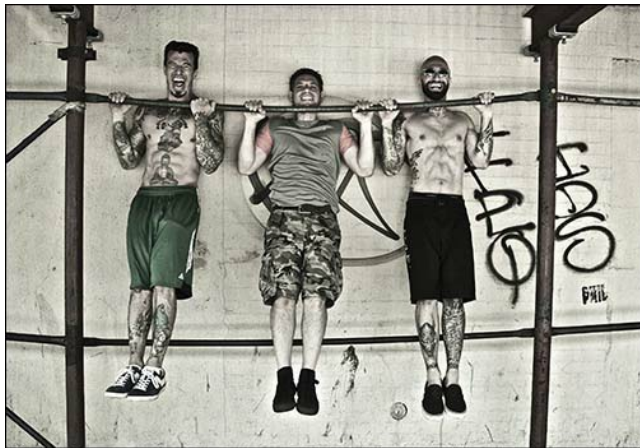
Essentially the top of a Pull-Up position, the Flex Hang is a great precursor to the Pull-Up. Stand underneath a pull-up bar and grab it with the grip of your choice. Pull the bar down until your chin clears the bar. Beginners may need to jump up to the bar, or get some assistance from a workout buddy. Try to pull the bar to your sternum, squeezing your shoulder blades back and pulling your elbows to your sides. Remain at the top position.

TRAINER TALK:

A Flex Hang, like a Pull-Up can be performed with either an overhand or underhand grip. When using an underhand grip, try to envision pulling your elbows almost behind you to get some serious emphasis.

REP RANGE/DURATION:

This is an isometric exercise. Duration will vary greatly from individual to individual. Aim for 30 seconds before moving on to Pull-Ups. A hanging contest is always a fun way to train!





STARTER FLEX, BEND, EXTEND

By now you know that I consider the major three movement patterns of body weight strength training to be Squat, Push and Pull. However, to be as well rounded and well grounded as possible, I also recommend incorporating some form of full body flexion, twisting and extension in order to work the anterior (front), transverse (side-to-side) and posterior (rear) chains of the body.

This is good stuff that should not be neglected for full body fitness.



BENT KNEE RAISE

Lie on the ground with your hands at your sides, palms down, and your legs together. Bend your knees. Now use your abs to flex the body and raise your bent legs up off the ground. The angle of the bend should remain the same for the duration of the exercise.

TRAINER TALK:

Progress the difficulty of the exercise slowly by decreasing how much you bend your knees.

REP RANGE:

3 sets of 15-20 is recommended.



SIT-UP

Lie down with your knees bent and your feet flat on the floor. Place your hand across your chest or behind your head. Squeeze from the abs to bring your upper body toward your knees, smoothly without jerking. Lower back down and repeat.

TRAINER TALK:

Beginners may need to keep their feet under an object or recruit the help of partner to help stabilize.

REP RANGE:

3 Sets of 20 is solid.



Beginners may need to keep their feet under an object or recruit the help of a partner to help stabilize.

CROSSOVER

Start out lying in the ground with your knees bent and your feet flat. Cross your right leg over the left, with your right knee pointing away from

your torso. Place your left hand behind your head and twist the left elbow toward the right knee. Train both sides evenly.

TRAINER TALK:

Make sure the knee stays in place and the elbow comes toward the knee, not the other way around.

REP RANGE:

Work toward 3 sets of 20.



PLANK

Start out by placing your feet on the floor with your forearms on the ground (or whatever surface you are performing it on). The body should be straight and unwavering from the shoulders to the toes. Keep every muscle in the body actively tensed. A solid Plank is a key foundational step in progressive calisthenics.

TRAINER TALK:

Although to the untrained eye, it may not look like much, the Plank is a cornerstone in synergizing the neuro-pathways of mental/physical communication. .

REP RANGE/DURATION:

The Plank is an isometric exercise. I recommend working up to and beyond one minute.



STRAIGHT ARM PLANK

Similar to the forearm Plank, you can also perform a Plank with your arms fully extended and your hands on the ground. This is sometimes referred to as a Straight Arm Plank and resembles the top position of a Push-Up. While this variation grants more forgiving leverage on your body's midsection due to the change in angle, it also places a greater burden on the wrists and shoulders.

TRAINER TALK:

Depending on an individual's strengths and weaknesses, the Straight Arm Plank can be considered a progression or a regression. These things are not always the same for everyone.

REP RANGE/DURATION:

The Plank is an isometric exercise. I recommend working up to and beyond one minute.



Classic Straight Arm Plank



A Straight Arm Plank can also be performed on the side to emphasize the obliques. This is called a Side Plank.

TABLE TOP BRIDGE

The Table Top Bridge strengthens the entire posterior chain, including spine erectors, hamstrings and glutes. Start by sitting on the ground with your hands at your sides just behind your hips. Bend at the knees and keep your feet flat on the floor. Now raise your hips high so that a straight line is formed from your knees to your shoulders. Drop your head back to further extend the body. The position of your body should resemble a table, hence the name.

TRAINER TALK:

If you are new to bridgework, it may be hard to feel when your hips are high enough. Think about actively pressing your feet and hands into the ground, while you contract your glutes to raise your hips.

REP RANGE/DURATION:

The Table Top Bridge is an isometric exercise. Aim for 30-60 seconds, but it can ultimately be held for longer.



STRAIGHT BRIDGE (AKA REVERSE PLANK)

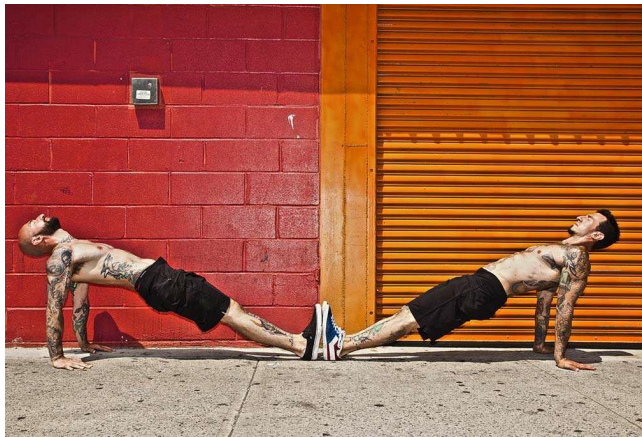
Lie down, face up on the ground with your palms and heels to the floor. Now, while keeping your legs extended, dig your heels into the ground, press with your hands, straighten your arms and raise your hips up to so that your body forms a straight line from shoulder to heel. Drop your head back to further extend the body.

TRAINER TALK:

There is more shoulder strength and mobility required for the Straight Bridge than it may seem. Be mindful.

REP RANGE/DURATION:

Like the aforementioned Table Top, the Straight Bridge is an isometric exercise. Aim for 30-60 seconds, but of course it can be held for longer.





STARTER WORKOUTS

The following beginner workouts are presented in order of difficulty, the first being the most basic Squat-Push-Pull combo. Planks are included as well to emphasize full body tension and harmony. The second workout employs some more difficult variations. By adding Side Planks to the mix, it also incorporates the lateral (side) chain of the body. The third one is pretty demanding. It has more exercises than the previous two, as well as more advanced angles.

I recommend simply practicing each exercise before going for the recommended rep ranges. Form is priority, particularly at the starting stages, so please don't increase your reps if it means a sacrifice in form. In fact, it's worth noting that all the recommended rep ranges are intended to serve as mere guidelines, from which I encourage you to deviate. These workouts are only a rough template; experiment with them.

I recommend working out 3-4 times per week in addition to being physically active every single day.

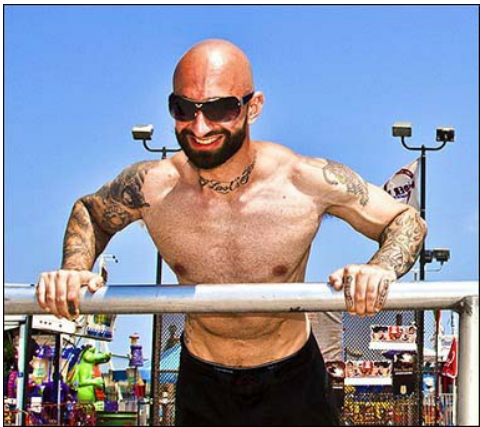
STARTER WORKOUT #1

Sit Down/Stand Up (3 sets of 10-20)

Incline Push-Up (3 sets of 10)

Active Bar Hang (15-30 seconds)

Plank (30-60 seconds)



STARTER WORKOUT #2

Partial ROM Squat (3 sets of 10-20)

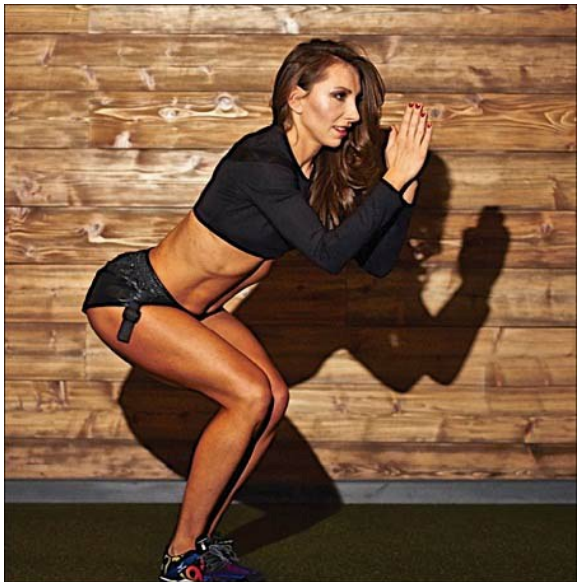
Knee Push-Up (3 sets of 10-20)

Australian Pull-Up (3 sets of 5-10)

Bent Knee Raise (3 sets of 15-20)

Side Plank (30-60 seconds each side)

Table Top (30-60 seconds)



STARTER WORKOUT #3

Split Squat (3 sets of 15 per leg)

Feet Apart Push-Up (3 sets of 10-20)

Bench Dip (3 sets of 10)

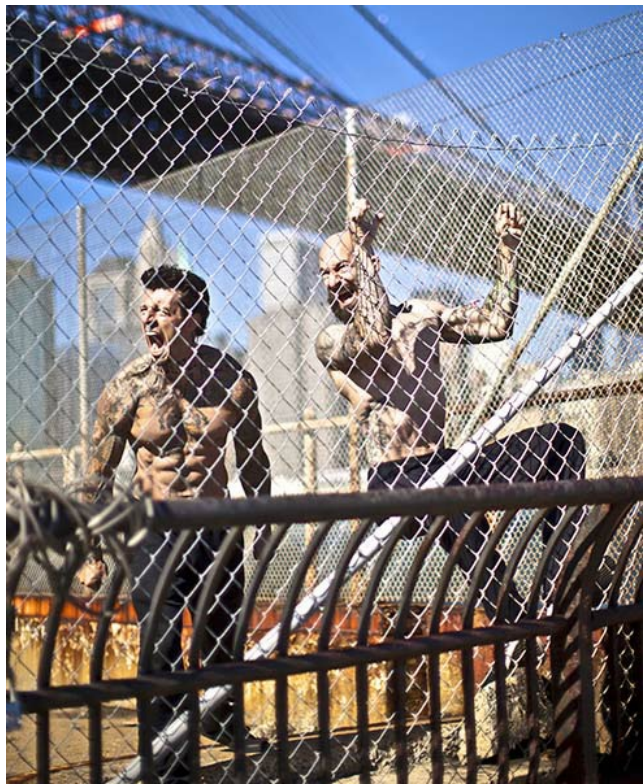
Australian Pull-Up (3 sets of 10)

Flex Hang (15-30 seconds)

Sit-Up (3 sets of 20)

Straight Bridge (30-60 seconds)





CHAPTER 11

BEAST MODE

(CLASSIC STRENGTH)

At this point, the beginner progressions contained in the previous chapter should be performed with a level of confidence, consistency and control. Be aware that not everyone will progress at the same rate. In fact, even the same individual may be inconsistent with their progress from exercise to exercise. For example, if you've mastered the Beginner Push exercises, but not the Pulls, that's okay. You can mix and match different exercises for different levels. Every body is different.

On that note, some people may be able to start with this chapter depending on their current fitness level. In other words, do not feel the need to start with Basic Training (previous chapter) if you can already do those exercises with a certain degree of excellence. Of course, there are always advantages to revisiting the basics and I highly recommend it; just don't feel the unconditional need to start there. We are all at different stages of our respective journeys.

For this reason, I do not impose a timeline on these exercises when it comes to moving beyond this chapter either. Some folks need to spend weeks, others months and some, years building the strength, skill and subtlety needed to perform the basics well. This chapter is the real deal. The nitty gritty. The tried and true.

The information that follows includes classic Squats, along with many challenging variations. The following Push-Ups and Pull-Ups go from the classics and beyond. I've also included Hanging Knee Raises as well as the full Back Bridge, the fundamentals of flexion, extension and overall core power. These exercises provide the material for a lifetime of bodyweight strength training. Dig in!



CLASSIC SQUAT

After working on Step-Ups and beginner Squat progressions, you are now ready to try these classic exercises. Remember, though the following are considered lower body exercises, I recommend doing your best to keep tension throughout the entire body, including abs, back, chest, shoulders, etc. All of the following will help you take it to the next level, from the Full Range Of Motion Squat to the Shrimp Squat of the briny deep, your calisthenic journey continues with these classics.



SQUAT (FULL RANGE OF MOTION)

This is the most foundational bodyweight exercise of all. It is just like the Partial Range Of Motion Squat from the previous chapter, except we get lower. This time, the back of the practitioner's thigh comes in complete contact with the calf. Aside from being a strength challenge, there is extra

flexibility required from the hip and ankle. It could take several weeks to go from the partial range of motion (see previous chapter) to the full expression for people with mobility issues. Be patient. Depending on genetics and other variables, some folks may need to point their toes out slightly to facilitate the full motion. Listen to your body. I am a firm believer that any healthy, uninjured individual can master a complete Squat, ass to ankles, if given enough time. In fact, if you already have the mobility, I recommend that you bypass Partial Range Of Motion Squats and begin here.

TRAINER TALK:

Some fitness professionals disagree with me that a Squat should be performed with a complete range of motion. However unless there is a medical reason why, I don't think this limitation should be imposed. There are cultures in this world where the bottom of a Squat is a resting position. Infants and toddlers of all cultures squat flawlessly in the full range of motion without even thinking about.

REP RANGE:

40 unbroken reps demonstrates a solid baseline.



Moving the feet wider or narrower changes the emphasis of a squat. Wide Squats emphasize the adductor muscles.



Narrow squats place more emphasis on the quadriceps.

PRISONER SQUAT

This exercise gets its name because prisoners are often depicted in the starting position. The Prisoner Squat is just like the classic, except now you place your hands behind your head, with elbows pointed out. This puts added emphasis on the posterior chain of the body, particularly the spine erectors and lower back. Keep your shoulder blades retracted and your chest up, like with all Squats.

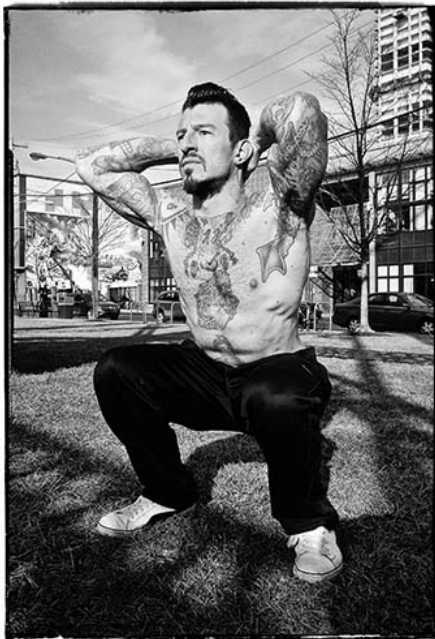
TRAINER TALK:

Generally it is difficult to get all the way down when performing a Prisoner Squat for the first time. This is because the arm position requires

your spine erector muscles to work harder in order to keep your chest up, but with practice and patience, the full range of motion will be achieved.

REP RANGE:

Shoot for 3 sets of 20.



WALKING LUNGE

The Walking Lunge explores asymmetry, balance, stability and momentum. It is similar to the Split Squat, but now we step into each rep, rather than remaining stationary. Begin in a standing position. Step forward with your left leg and place the foot on the ground. Now drop down so that both the front and rear knees are bent to approximately 90 degrees. (Do not let the rear knee touch the ground.) Step forward with your right foot, bringing both feet together, returning to a full stand. Maintaining good posture throughout. That is one rep. Now alternate by stepping forward with your right for the following rep.

TRAINER TALK:

Don't go too fast when lunging. I recommend pausing for a moment when your feet come together between reps. This will keep you in tune with the body and prevent you from getting swept away by momentum.

REP RANGE:

I generally stick with sets of 20 (ten per leg) with my clients, however at the beginning it may be useful simply to practice the movement pattern. I can also be fun to lunge for a certain distance (across the gym, for example), and disregard rep counting.



BULGARIAN SPLIT SQUAT

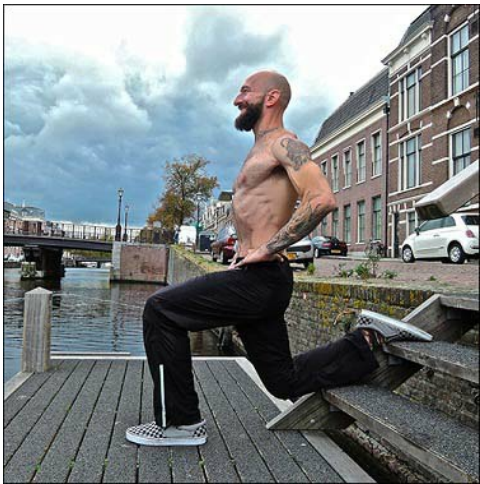
The Bulgarian Split Squat is similar to the standard Split Squat, except in this variation, the rear foot is placed on an elevated surface such as a bench or step. Elevating the foot puts a greater weight-to-limb ratio in the forward foot, increasing the resistance. Be certain to work both legs evenly.

TRAINER TALK:

This exercise is also an excellent stretch for the quadriceps and hip flexor.

REP RANGE:

3 sets of 10 per leg is a great standard, as with most strength training.



HOVER LUNGE

The Hover Lunge is another remarkable Split Squat variation. In this exercise, the rear foot is elevated off the ground and remains in the air, rather than being placed on an elevated surface. There is an added balance factor here, so extend your arms forward in order to act as a counterweight to the rear leg. With both arms extended and your right leg behind you (and bent at the knee) lower yourself down with your left leg. Do not let your rear knee touch the ground. Now return to starting position. That is one rep. Train both legs evenly.

TRAINER TALK:

Because your arms need to balance out the leg that's behind you, there will be an inevitable forward lean. That's okay. Try to hinge at the hip and keep your chest up, as opposed to flexing excessively at the spine. This will have a greater muscle recruitment and produce more yields.

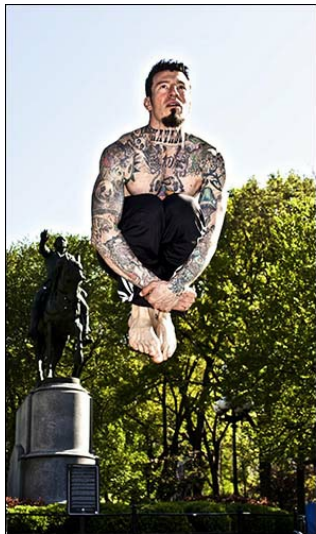
REP RANGE:

When you can perform 3 sets of 10 per leg, getting the rear knee close to the ground, try progressing to Shrimp Squats.



MIGHT AS WELL JUMP

Adding an explosive element can be a great way to bring a new challenge to these classic exercises! Explosive movements that remove your contact with the surface on which you are training are referred to as plyometric exercises. Let's get high!



SIDE-TO-SIDE SQUAT

This is a fantastic precursor to the Pistol Squat, as it is basically a self assisted single leg Squat. Start out with your feet in an extra wide stance and your toes pointed out at a 45 degree angle. Keep your feet wider than you might think. Begin bending at the right knee and hip, while maintaining upright posture. Keep your left leg extended. Your body will shift toward your right side, while your left foot will rotate up, toes toward the sky. How low can you go? Return to the top position and do the left leg.

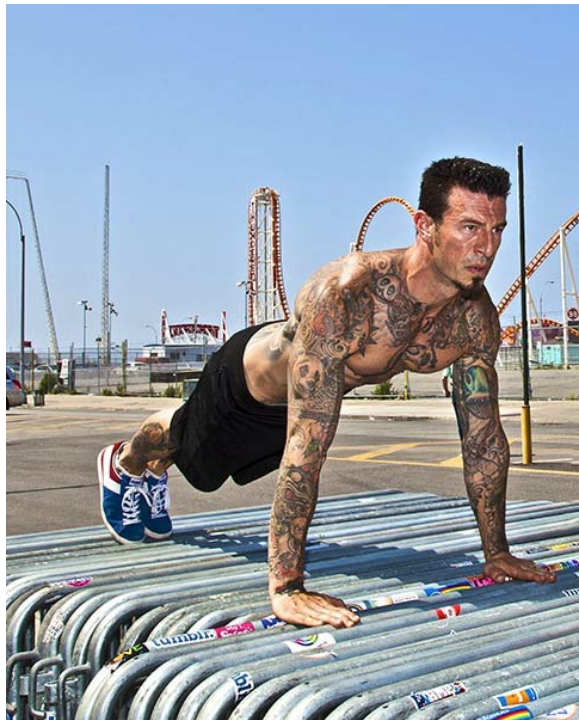
TRAINER TALK:

The Side-To-Side Squat is also a fantastic stretch for the hamstrings and inner thighs.

REP RANGE/DURATION:

3 sets of 10 per side.





CLASSIC PUSH

Behold the beloved Push-Up in its infinite simplicity and splendor! Push-Ups were the first strength training exercise I ever did and, dammit, when my time finally comes, I hope they're the last.

I recall having Push-Up contests with my brothers as a youth. Fond memories. No exercise embodies strength and minimalism quite like the Push-Up. In this section we'll include the basics, as well as many variations, thus challenging yourself further and mixing it up. Remember, Push-Ups emphasize chest, triceps and shoulders but I encourage you to actively recruit you glutes, abs, back and even your legs to get maximal gains from every rep.

Also included in this section are Parallel Bar Dips (the gold standard for triceps, bar none!) and Pike Push-Ups for shoulder emphasis. Push it real good!



PUSH-UP

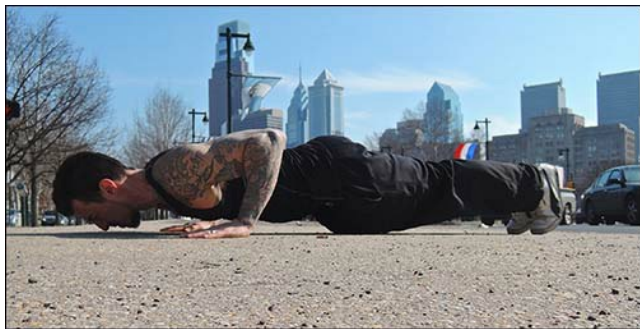
The starting position of a Push-Up places the body horizontally, facing the ground with arms fully extended. Your hands and toes should be the only points of contact. Maintain a straight line from shoulder to hip to heel. Now bend at the elbows and shoulders, lowering your body until your chest is almost touching the ground. Your elbows should flex to a more acute angle than 90 degrees. Press into the ground and return to starting position, elbows fully locked out at the top. That is one rep. It is important your elbows do not flare out above your shoulders when executing a Push-Up; they should point slightly toward your feet.

TRAINER TALK:

When doing any Push-Up variation, I recommend “gripping the ground”. By this, I am referring to the active recruitment of all your muscles, including, but not limited to the primary movers. That’s right, folks: your hands, forearms, chest and back all come alive, almost “pulling” the ground into you. We want your entire body to be neurologically involved every step of the way.

REP RANGE:

30 is considered to be a solid benchmark before moving onto more advanced varieties. 50+ is excellent.



Full flexion.



Full lock-out.

WIDE PUSH-UP

A wider placement of the hands shifts the emphasis slightly more to the chest (pectoral) muscles. The wider you go, the more profound the shift.

TRAINER TALK:

There is always a “sweet spot” when performing exercises. Typically in a Push-Up, it is when the thumb lines up almost directly underneath the armpit. Going wider (or narrower) with the hands progresses us out of our comfort zone.

REP RANGE:

3-4 sets of 25-30 is very good.



A wide grip places greater emphasis on the chest.

NARROW PUSH-UP

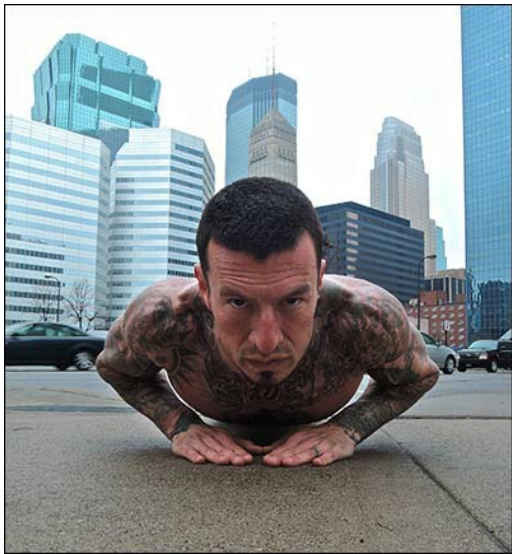
Narrowing the hand placement puts greater emphasis on the triceps muscles and makes the classic Push-Up more difficult. It is of note that the elbows may point more toward the feet in this variation.

TRAINER TALK:

Sometimes it is helpful to think about the “eye of the elbow” rotating out in front of you as you press down into the ground in order to help facilitate the motion.

REP RANGE:

3-4 sets of 20-30.



A narrow grip places greater emphasis on the triceps.

FEET ELEVATED PUSH-UP

By elevating your feet, you increase the amount of bodyweight that your chest, shoulders and arms have to bear. Place your feet on a bench or other stable, elevated surface, with your hands on the ground. You will feel the difference instantly. The higher your feet, the more difficult the exercise becomes.

TRAINER TALK:

With this variation in particular, be mindful of the position of your neck. Due to the change in your body's angle, it can be visually tempting to lift your chin up and compress the cervical spine. Don't take the bait.

REP RANGE:

3-4 sets of 10-30.



ALTERNATIVE GRIP PUSH-UP

Doing Push-Ups on your knuckles or fingertips is a fantastic way to train! Knuckle Push-Ups are a progression for some and a regression for others. While they increase the range of motion and are tougher on the hands, they also pose less of a challenge to wrist mobility. Depending on one's individual physical characteristics, this variation can be harder or easier than classic Push-Ups. Life is funny like that. Fingertip Push-Ups are hard work, but believe it or not they have healing powers. The fact that they

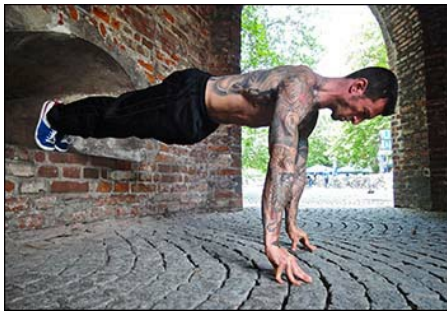
work the extensors often proves to be therapeutic for practitioners who do lots of aggressive gripping on bars and/or suffer some muscle and tendon pain in the forearms. Fingertip Push-Ups help counter all the grip work. When you reach a point in which you are comfortable performing Push-Ups on your fingertips, you can start eliminating fingers. Try them with only four, three, two or even one finger. The Thumb Push-Up is not for the feint of heart!

TRAINER TALK:

Like any Push-Up, in the beginning, it can be helpful to do these Push-Ups on an incline. I recommend a padded surface if you are brand new to them.

REP RANGE:

Sets of 10 is a solid goal, but in the beginning, just practice one rep at a time to build of the strength and subtlety.



Feet Elevated Fingertip Push-Up.



Fingertip, Knuckle and Thumb Push-Ups.

PARALLEL BAR DIP

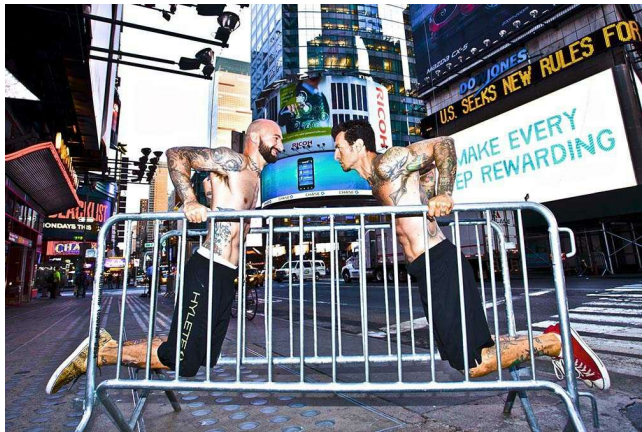
The Parallel Bar Dip, for my two cents, is the unsung hero of the calisthenics kingdom. It is a key component in developing true upper body pushing power. Start by gripping the parallel bars. Keep your chest up and shoulder blades back. Bend at the elbows and shoulders, making sure your elbows point out behind you (not flaring out to the sides). Lower yourself as low as you can in a controlled fashion. Now push yourself back up to starting position. That is one rep.

TRAINER TALK:

Dips are more challenging than Push-Ups because they remove a primary point of contact—the feet—from the equation, thus putting a larger amount of weight in the arms than a Push-Up does.

REP RANGE/DURATION:

I recommend 3 sets of 10-15, but like the Push-Up, 30 reps at a time is a powerful baseline... and harder than it seems!



STAGGERED DIP

Staggered Dips are similar to classic Parallel Bar Dips, except for one crucial difference: They place one hand in front of the other. This unique variation targets the upper-body muscles from numerous angles and can be adjusted infinitely by increasing or decreasing the distance between your hands. To ensure that both arms are training evenly, be mindful to practice equally on each side.

TRAINER TALK:

For an added challenge, try “walking” across the bars with your arms. Just make sure to drop down low and express the full range of motion.

REP RANGE:

Start with 8-16 reps. Keep it even!



PIKE PUSH-UP

The Pike Push-Up is more loaded than the Wall Pike Push-Up and adds strength training to the mobility work. The starting position of a Pike Push-Up requires keeping your hips up high and your hands and feet closer together to each other than you would with a classic Push-Up. With your palms down and hips up, lower the top of your head to the ground and then press yourself back up. The Pike Push-Up is the precursor to Handstand Push-Ups.

TRAINER TALK:

Elevating the feet puts more weight into the upper body. The higher the feet, the more weight is transferred to the shoulders.

REP RANGE:

When you can do multiple sets of 15, it's time to try Handstand Push-Ups.



The classic Pike Push-up has both hands and feet on the ground.



Elevating the feet puts more weight into the upper body.



CLASSIC PULL

These are the exercises you can set your watch to. Although there are infinite types of Pull-Ups, I've chosen to include the following due to their diversity and their universal application. Employing these exercises will affect your lats, arms and abs from numerous angles, providing a very well-rounded pulling regimen. Additionally, they are all accessible to anyone serious about their pulling game. Let's hit the bar!



PULL-UP

The Pull-Up is the king of pulling exercises. Begin by gripping the bar with your arms fully extended. Overhand or underhand is fine with me; you can also do a “switch” grip, with one hand over and one under, which employs a bit more core strength to avoid rotation. I recommend starting with your hands slightly wider than shoulder width apart, but find what works best for you. With a rigid body and a focused mind, pull yourself up so that your chin clears the bar. Pause. Now lower yourself back down.

TRAINER TALK:

Keep the motion controlled. Do not swing or use momentum. Some disciplines actually encourage wavering or “kipping”, but I believe that a solid strength foundation of uncompromised form is necessary before experimenting with these techniques.

REP RANGE:

10 dead hang Pull-Ups is a solid baseline.



Overhand Pull-Ups emphasize the lats slightly more than their underhand counterparts.



Underhand Pull-Ups are often called “Chin-Ups” and demand more biceps flexion.

INCLINE AUSTRALIAN PULL-UP

Like the starter Australian Pull-Up, the Incline Australian Pull-Up begins in a horizontal rowing position. Only this time, your feet are placed higher than your shoulders as opposed to lower. You can use a high bar or a partner to assist. The change in positioning makes it more difficult because, by elevating your feet, you place more weight into your arms. As always, keep proper posture and complete body tension. Pull your chest to the bar in a controlled fashion and lower yourself down. That is one rep.

TRAINER TALK:

We mentioned in the preceding chapter that the Australian Pull-Up is a different movement pattern than the classic Pull-Up (front to back as

opposed to up and down). The Incline Australian Pull-Up is a spectacular way to increase the resistance.

REP RANGE:

3 sets of 10 or more is a very fine goal.



PARALLEL GRIP PULL-UP

Parallel Grip Pull-Ups require two high bars set up side by side. The traditional Parallel Grip Pull-Up has the palms facing one another, with the practitioner hanging in between. From there, pull yourself all the way up between the bars. Return to starting position.

TRAINER TALK:

Due to the unique hand position, Parallel Bar Pull-Ups tend to put less strain on the shoulder and elbow of certain individuals. If you experience pain or discomfort with classic Pull-Ups, then employing the parallel grip may be more appropriate for you.

REP RANGE:

3 sets of 10 or more.



NARROW PULL-UP

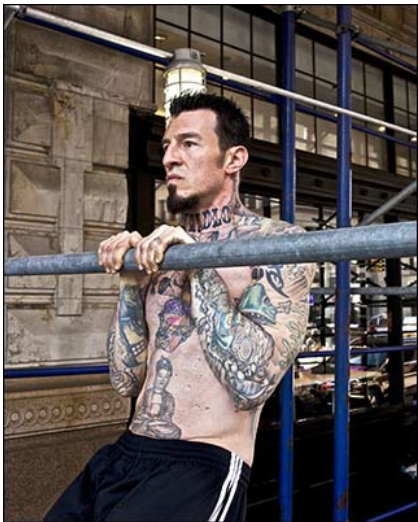
By executing a Pull-Up with your hands closer together, you add emphasis to the biceps and forearms. This exercise is deceptively difficult.

TRAINER TALK:

Many exercises have a “comfort zone”. Narrow Grip Pull-Ups can take you out of that zone.

REP RANGE:

3 sets of 10 or more.



WIDE PULL-UP

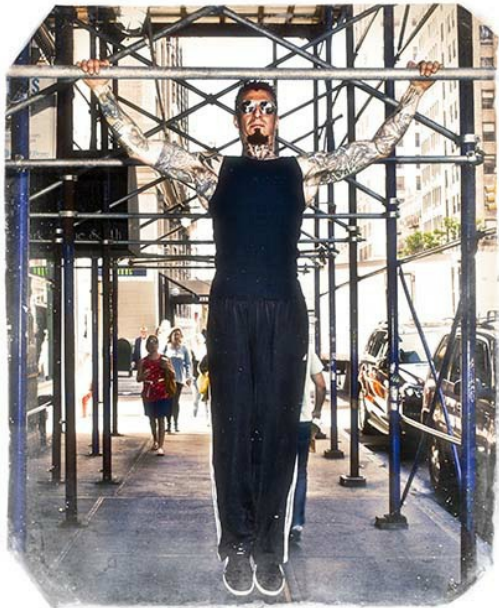
A Pull-Up performed with an extra wide grip recruits more of the latissimus dorsi. Because there is less of a degree of biceps flexion, the lats must work harder.

TRAINER TALK:

This is how you get a wide back!

REP RANGE:

3 sets of 10 or more.



Wide Pull-Ups give you wings.

ODD SURFACES

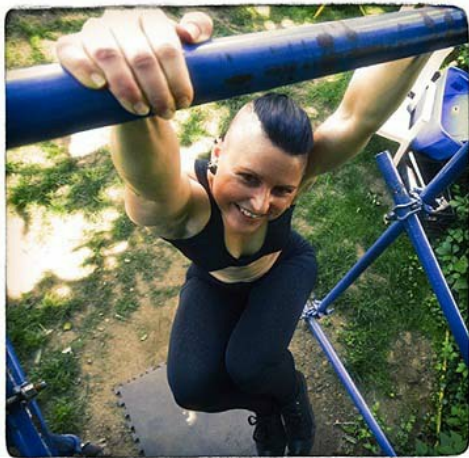
Performing Pull-Ups on unconventional surfaces presents a new set of challenges. Besides that, there are times when a traditional Pull-Up bar is simply unavailable. Different objects work the biceps, triceps, hands, fingers and forearms in unique ways. Without a round bar from which to pull, we have to get creative, which is something I love about bodyweight training! As I'm fond of saying, you just need something to hang from. Have fun!





CLASSIC FLEX, BEND, EXTEND

As our strength and skill levels increase, we need to upgrade the difficulty of the Basic Training exercises detailed in the last chapter. By changing the length and leverage of the body we increase the resistance even if our bodyweight remains the same. The exercises become both more challenging and rewarding.



LEG RAISE

This exercise is just like the Bent Knee Raise, except now we keep our legs fully extended. Begin by lying on the ground with your hands at your sides, palms down, and your legs together, straight out and locked at the knee. Now use your abs to flex the body and raise your legs up until they are

perpendicular to the ground. Maintain control and attention throughout the entire range of motion and return them to the ground slowly.

TRAINER TALK:

You can progress this exercise by increasing the range of motion. At the top position, raise your hips straight up in the air for an added challenge.

REP RANGE:

Sets of 15-20 reps is a solid foundation before moving onto advanced abdominal flexion.



HANGING KNEE RAISE

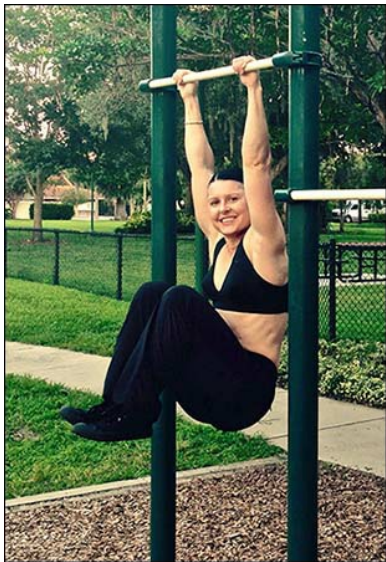
Begin by hanging from the bar. Keeping your legs together, bring your knees up to hip height or higher. It can be helpful to point your toes slightly in front of you at the bottom range of motion, rather than straight down, in order to avoid picking up excess momentum.

TRAINER TALK:

Sometimes people start to swing when performing Hanging Knee Raises. Squeeze that bar tight and take it slowly to help to prevent this.

REP RANGE:

20 consecutive reps is a considered to be a solid baseline.



HANGING KNEE RAISE WITH A TWIST

This exercise is exactly what it sounds like. While performing your Hanging Knee Raise, twist your knees to your right, slowly and deliberately in a clean, fluid motion. Now return them to the middle position and lower them down to the starting point. Repeat on the left side.

TRAINER TALK:

This transverse twist recruits the oblique muscles.

REP RANGE:

3 sets of 10-20 reps.



GECKO HOLD

The Gecko Holds resembles a Plank, but with only one arm and one leg serving as points of contact, thus creating an added stability challenge on the

muscles that cross your trunk.

TRAINER TALK:

Gecko Holds can be done with a straight arm, using the hand as a point of contact or on the forearm, which provides more stability, but also puts the abs at a less mechanically advantageous angle.

REP RANGE/DURATION:

Start with 30 seconds, but Gecko Holds can ultimately be held for minutes on end.



SUPERMAN

The Superman is performed lying belly-down on the ground, with your arms outstretched over your head and your legs straight out behind you. Try to keep your elbows and knees locked. From this position, lift your arms and legs up off the ground by contracting your posterior muscles and

hyper-extending your upper and lower back. Squeeze your shoulder blades together and tighten your glutes. Get your chest off the ground. This is an exercise works the entire backside of the body. The Superman can be performed for reps or held isometrically. The top position is said to resemble the Man of Steel when he flies through the air.

TRAINER TALK:

Be careful not to bend your knees when at the top position of a Superman, as it will compromise the integrity of the exercise.

REP RANGE/DURATION:

Go for 10 reps or a 30 second hold.



BACK BRIDGE (AKA WHEEL POSE)

The Back Bridge is the epitome of bodyweight exercise for the posterior chain. Take this move slowly. Some people require a very long time to develop the necessary mobility from the lumbar spine and shoulders. Begin by lying on the ground with your knees bent and feet flat. Place your palms beside your head slightly wider than shoulder width. Now press your feet and hands into the floor, lifting your hips to form an arc with your body. Try to push your chest forward so that the body forms as symmetrical of an arch as possible when viewed from the side.

TRAINER TALK:

Allow your neck and spine to lengthen in order to open up the upper back. Be patient. Even advanced bridgers may need to warm up for several minutes when training the Back Bridge.

REP RANGE/DURATION:

I like holding a Bridge as an isometric hold. 30 seconds is a good starting point, but it can ultimately be held for minutes on end.





CLASSIC WORKOUTS

The following are basic combinations of the classics. The first one is about as simple and straight-forward of a bodyweight strength workout as there is. In fact, all of these templates keep it pretty simple, as there is no need to deviate from the basics.

As these workouts progress, more variations are included in order to challenge you at increased degrees. That said, we revisit some beginner steps to get the body primed and warm. Again, it is of note that these workouts are designed to be improvised upon and deviated from as you feel appropriate. The rep ranges are mere suggestions.

CLASSIC WORKOUT #1

Squat (3 sets of 20)

Push-Up (3 sets of 20)

Pull-Up (3 sets of 5-10)

Hanging Knee Raise (3 sets of 15-20)



CLASSIC WORKOUT #2

Step-Up (3 sets of 15 per side)

Prisoner Squat (3 sets of 20)

Wide/Narrow Push-Up (2 sets of 15-20 each)

Parallel Bar Dip (3 sets of 10)

Australian Pull-Up (2 sets of 10)

Wide/Narrow Pull-Up (2 sets 5-10 each)

Leg Raise (3 sets of 15-20)

Superman (3 sets of 10)



CLASSIC WORKOUT #3

Squat (3 sets of 20)

Side-To-Side Squat (3 sets of 20)

Fingertip Push-Up (2 sets of 10-20)

Knuckle Push-Up (2 sets of 10-20)

Pike Push-Up (3 sets of 10)

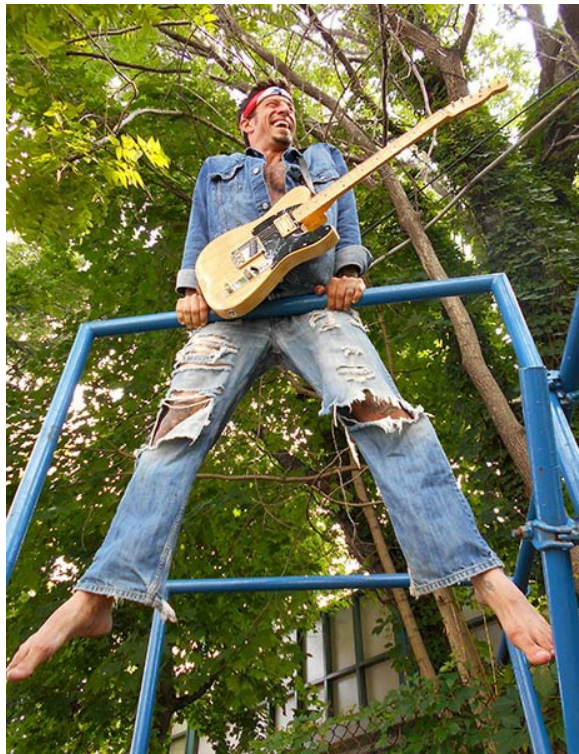
Incline Australian Pull-Up (2 sets of 10)

Parallel Grip Pull-Up (4 sets of 10)

Hanging Knee Raise With A Twist (3 sets of 20)

Back Bridge (2-3 holds for 30-60 seconds)





CHAPTER 12

LIKE A BOSS

(ADVANCED MOVES)

Remember earlier when I said that I was doing classic Push-Ups and Pull-Ups for many years before training One-Arm variations and Muscle-Ups? Keep that in mind as you read this chapter. I'm not saying you must take as long as I did. In fact, hopefully you can learn from my experience and take *far less* time than I did. But please understand these are serious moves and there is no overnight mastery. It is important, when progressing, for us to remind ourselves of the need for a solid foundation. It is also worth noting that not everyone will advance in all planes of movement at the same rate. If you get a One-Arm Push-Up before a Gecko Bridge, such is life. Be proud of what you accomplished. Stay the course.

Every exercise contained herein is advanced. Don't get caught up in seeing things on YouTube and thinking that everyone in the world is a competitive Street Workout athlete. Far from it. Nurture the process with respect to the goal. Every single one of these moves is within your reach if you are willing to give enough time, patience and discipline.



ADVANCED SQUAT

To me, the following advanced single-legged Squats embody everything we strive for in calisthenics. Few exercises come close in terms of the required skill and power. One could easily argue that single-legged Squats are the greatest fusion of strength, mobility and balance in the entire world of calisthenics. They are a work of art not for the feint of heart.



SHRIMP SQUAT (AKA SKATER SQUAT)

The Shrimp Squat is an advanced version of the Hover Lunge, except it places one of your hands (or both for advanced Shrimpers) behind you, clasping your rear elevated foot, rather than extended in front of you. This change in hand position puts more weight on your heel and shifts the balance against your favor, making the exercise far more difficult. Make sure to train both sides evenly.

TRAINER TALK:

The Shrimp Squat provides a very deep stretch to the quadriceps and hip flexors of the rear leg. Take it slowly if you have flexibility issues.

REP RANGE:

Multiple sets of 5-8 reps is an excellent goal.



You can play around with hand position to vary the difficulty.



AKA "Prawn Squat."

HAWAIIAN SQUAT (AKA FIGURE 4 SQUAT)

The Hawaiian Squat is a single leg squat variant in which the non-squatting leg is bent at the knee and rotated at the hip, with the ankle placed on the thigh of the squatting leg, in a "Figure 4" position. This creates a unique flexibility challenge.

TRAINER TALK:

Because of the additional mobility required by the Hawaiian Squat, the range of motion is generally not as great as with the Pistol Squat. Further, it can take some time to open up, so the more you train, the greater the likelihood of increased flexibility.

REP RANGE:

3 sets of 5-10 reps.



PISTOL SQUAT

The Pistol Squat represents the state-of-the-art of single leg Squat variants. Begin by standing on your left foot, with your right leg extended straight out on front of you. Place your hands out in front of you and squeeze them together. (This will help generate tension throughout the body.) In a controlled manner, bend at the left knee, hip and ankle and

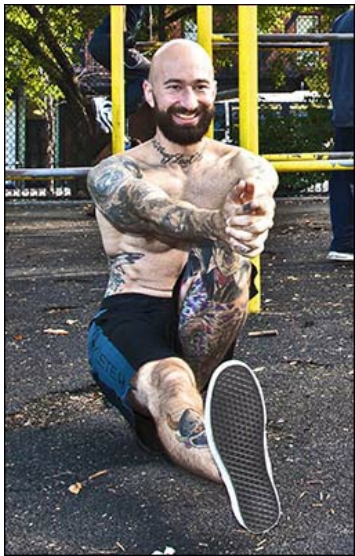
lower yourself down. The full expression of the exercise sees the calf coming into full contact with the back of the thigh at the bottom of the movement, although employing a partial range of motion can be a helpful step along the way. Train both sides evenly.

TRAINER TALK:

The hamstring flexibility in the non-squatting leg can be challenging for some. Make sure to keep the quadriceps of the forward leg (and every other muscle in the body, for that matter) actively fired up in order to counter tight hamstrings and yield maximal results.

REP RANGE:

3 sets of 10 reps is an excellent goal, but when learning the move, keep reps low, 3-5 per set.



Bang!



The Sit Down/Stand Up technique from Basic Training can also be applied to Pistol Squats.



Advanced Pistol Squat.



The “Wushu” Squat can be considered a **progression** to some, yet a **regression** to others. In this Pistol Squat variant, the practitioner clasps the toes of the extended, forward leg. It demands greater mobility than the classic Pistol, so if flexibility is your weakness, you’re up for a real challenge. However, the “Wushu” also creates more tension throughout the body, increasing stability.

This can be helpful to those who may be flexible enough, but to who find raw, muscular strength to be the biggest obstacle.



ADVANCED PUSH

This section includes some of the most challenging bodyweight pressing exercises out there. Each and every one of them will not only force you to “push your limits”, but is incredibly important in regards to pure strength gains. Additionally, they all possess a huge carryover into day-to-day life.

I’ve included some of my very favorite examples of advanced Push-Ups and Dips, as well as Handstand Push-Ups. Behold the beasts of upper body strength training. Hellyeah!



PLYO-PUSH-UP

Plyometric Push-Ups are Push-Ups that generate such explosive power that the practitioner becomes airborne. A key component for creating this force is to push into the ground fast and hard, almost as if trying to push *through* the floor.

TRAINER TALK:

If you are new to Plyometric Push-Ups, be mindful of the impact on your hands and wrists. Try to land gently in order to absorb the impact, rather than just slamming your hands into the ground.

REP RANGE:

15 or more is respectable.





Examples of Plyometric Push-Ups



ONE-ARM PUSH-UP

Start in a classic Push-Up position, except with your feet slightly apart. This step is crucial, as it is arguably impossible to keep a totally rigid body with your feet completely together. For a right-handed Push-Up, pick up your left arm off the ground and bring it to your side. You will need to establish an extremely tense body, including the non-pushing arm. A great

deal off cross tension—right arm to left foot—is necessary to keep the body steady. Bend at the right shoulder and elbow, lowering yourself down, making sure to keep your shoulders even and parallel to the ground. When you get to the bottom, push yourself back up, without “snaking” or wiggling at the hips. Abs and glutes can be your secret weapon here, as more core strength is required than many people anticipate. You see, when you eliminate a crucial point of contact (your arm), these other muscles must pick up the slack.

TRAINER TALK:

When pushing up, think about a “corkscrew” motion at the arm. Push into the ground and rotate the “eye of elbow” out in front of you. The floor won’t move but you will.

REP RANGE:

When practicing for sheer strength and form, keep reps low, in the 2-6 range. Once perfect form is established, shoot for more.



The classic One-Armer.



One-Arm Push-Ups can be practiced on an incline to build up strength until you're ready for the real thing.

ONE-ARM ONE-LEG PUSH-UP

This is exactly what it sounds like. Start with a standard One-Arm Push-Up, but lift the leg opposite of the non-pushing arm up off of the ground. The One-Arm One-Leg Push-Up is a great example of how different people advance at different rates. It illustrates how progress is not always linear. Some individuals may find that elevating the foot makes this exercise mechanically more forgiving than the standard One-Arm Push-Up, as the body seeks to find a balance using the opposite limbs. Believe it or not, sometimes the leg naturally feels like it “wants to” sneak up on some people. If that's the case for you, then go with it.

TRAINER TALK:

Maintaining a solid core with unbelievable cross tension is key. Even the most advanced Push-Up practitioners have a tendency “snake” at the hip. Just as we found it was important in the One-Arm Push-Up to keep tension in the non-pushing arm, when performing a One-Arm One-Leg Push-Up you will need to keep a great deal of tension in the elevated leg, not to mention your abs, back, glutes and shoulders.

REP RANGE/DURATION:

Keep the reps low, shooting for 1-5 with perfect form.



Progression or regression?

SKULL-CRUSHER

Some of you may be familiar with Skull-Crushers in the weight room. I find that equal or greater yields can be achieved with bodyweight only. Start in a narrow grip Push-Up position, arms shoulder-width apart (or closer),

with your hands on an elevated surface. Keep your hands close together and your elbows pointed down. Bending only at the elbows (not the shoulders), lower your upper body down until your forehead is between your hands. Pressing from the triceps, push yourself back up.

TRAINER TALK:

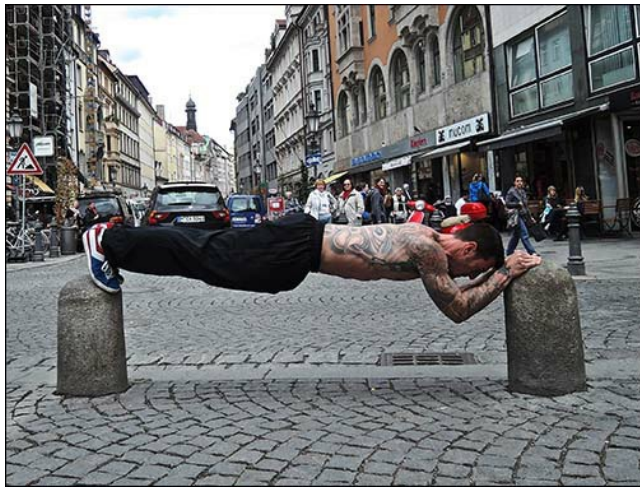
The lower the incline, the more challenging the exercise.

REP RANGE/DURATION:

3 sets of 6-10 reps.



Top and bottom position.



Advanced Variation
(Unfavorable leverage)

STRAIGHT BAR DIP

Straight Bar Dips tend to be more difficult than their parallel bar counterpart. Start at the top position of the exercise by gripping a pull-up bar of approximate waist height (or by Muscling-Up onto a high bar). Your hands should be just outside your waist. While squeezing the bar *hard*, bend at the elbows and lower yourself down until your chest comes close to the bar. Keep your elbows pointed behind you and try not to let them flare out to the sides. Get as low as you can while remaining above the bar, then press yourself back up. Keep the backs of your hands facing the sky.

TRAINER TALK:

On the way down, you will have to push your chest forward and extend your legs out in front of you in order to keep yourself balanced around the bar. Unlike when you perform dips on parallel bars, you cannot go between the bars this time, so maneuvering around the bar is necessary.

REP RANGE:

3 sets of 10-15.



HINGE DIP (AKA RUSSIAN DIP)

Hinge Dips start out the same as Parallel Bar Dips, but they involve pushing your body back and placing your forearms directly on the bars at the bottom range of motion. An ungodly amount of force must be generated to hinge forward and press your body simultaneously. Try to use muscular control rather than momentum.

TRAINER TALK:

When performing the negative, try to take it as slowly as possible. This will help you get maximum yields from the exercise.

REP RANGE:

3 sets of 10-15



PLYO-DIP

These dips require serious explosive power. You will need to generate enough force from the bottom position of the classic Dip to push your body so hard that you come up off of the bars. You want to get high enough that you can remove your hands from the bars when at the top position. This is an advanced Dips variation that is not for newbies.

TRAINER TALK:

Plyo-Dips can be surprisingly tough on the hands. Be prepared for impact when your hands return to the bars.

REP RANGE:

Just take these one at a time. Once you can get to 10 reps, you're lookin' real good!



HANDSTAND PUSH-UP

Handstand Push-Ups are Push-Ups that put you in a position which shifts the emphasis from the chest to the shoulders. (It also puts more weight in your hands.) Begin by kicking up into a handstand against a wall. Now lower yourself down until the top of your head comes in contact with the

ground. Push yourself back up. Keep the entire body tight the whole time. Avoid flaring out with your elbows

TRAINER TALK:

You can perform this exercise with a narrower grip for additional triceps emphasis.

REP RANGE:

Aim for 3 sets of 10. It's harder than it sounds!



Standard HSPU



Narrow grip for added triceps emphasis.



ADVANCED PULL

These are hard moves for the hardcore. Every single one of the following exercises requires a considerable amount of time and effort. It goes without saying that a solid foundation in classic Pull-Ups is recommended before embarking on these exquisite exercises. I suggest being able to perform at the very least 10 full dead hang Pull-Ups before advancing onto these bad boys.

As always, be patient with your journey. Advanced Pull-Ups require not only a brutal amount of raw strength and control, but also a solid core and very fine intra-muscular communication. There is more subtlety than one might expect. Are you ready to work hard?



BEHIND-THE-NECK PULL-UP

These Pull-Ups generally require a wider grip than the classic. Grab the bar with an overhand grip and pull the bar behind your head, keeping your abs flexed and your shoulder blades retracted

TRAINER TALK:

People who don't work out often decry these Behind-The-Neck Pull-Ups as saying they can injure your neck or shoulders. While I don't recommend *any* advanced variations to a complete novice, if you have strong, healthy shoulders and can do 10 classic Pull-Ups as I suggest, then you have nothing to fear.

REP RANGE:

3 sets of 10.



COMMANDO PULL-UP

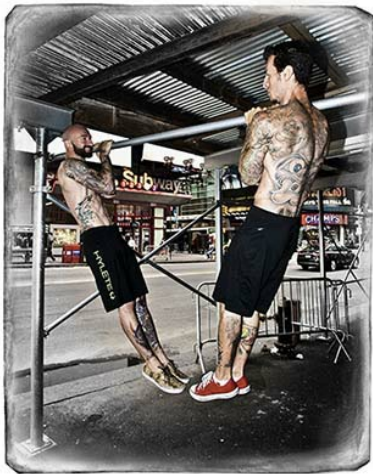
The Commando Pull-Up is a more advanced version of the Parallel Grip Pull-Up in which you place your hands one bar, not two. In this variation, due to a smaller footprint (or “handprint”, if you will), the body must work even harder to avoid twisting. Grab the bar in a parallel “mixed grip” with your hands close together. Pull yourself up, bar to shoulder, making sure to alternate shoulders between reps.

TRAINER TALK:

Make sure that you not only alternate which shoulder you pull toward between reps, but also switch which hand is closer to you between sets.

REP RANGE:

2-4 sets of 10 alternating side to side.



VAMPIRE PULL-UP

This is also an advanced progression of Parallel Grip Pull-Ups. When you perform Vampire Pull-Ups, however, you place your hands with your palms facing away from one another as opposed to *toward* each other as with the classic Parallel Grip. This will require bars that are slightly farther apart. The unique grip of a Vampire Pull-Up places a great deal of extra emphasis on the forearms and lats. The form is said to resemble the hairy-legged vampire bat, stealthy and steely in its ways.

TRAINER TALK:

Vampire Pull-Ups are phenomenal for strengthening the tendons in the arms, as well as increasing hand strength.

REP RANGE:

Shoot for 3 sets of 6.



PLYO-PULL-UP

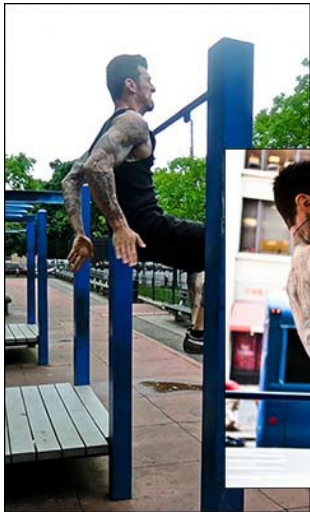
Start just like a standard Pull-Up, but this time, try to yank the bar down as quickly and explosively as possible. Generate enough power so that you can let go of the bar at the top of the movement.

TRAINER TALK:

Begin by simply trying to take your hands off the bar for just a split-second when you get to the top of the rep. In time, you can work toward more height, maybe even a clap. If you put in enough effort, you may even be able to clap behind your back! To do so, not only must you give yourself enough air time away from the bar to allow this additional movement, you will have to work on timing to execute it smoothly.

REP RANGE:

Shoot for low reps to develop the technique. Ultimately you can work your way up to 3 sets of 10.





The Plyo-Pull-Up

MUSCLE-UP

Muscle-Ups are the ultimate bar exercise. They represent the perfect combination of raw strength and refined technique. And they're totally badass! Begin with an overhand grip, arms slightly wider than your shoulders (typically narrower than a Pull-Up grip, however). Keep your hands cocked over the bar as much as possible with the backs of your hands facing straight up at the sky; this will help ease the transition from Pull-Up to Straight Bar Dip. In time, this beginning grip may not be necessary, but it is a helpful step when first learning the exercise. Pull the bar as low down on your body as you can in an explosive fashion. In the beginning, it's usually necessary to jerk the bar down with as much speed and force as possible. (Aim to get the bar to your hip, although it will probably wind up low down on your chest.) At this point, press your chest forward, trying to get it over the bar. It's helpful to buck your hips out behind you to assist in this transition. Extending your legs forward can also be helpful, as you will have to maneuver around the bar to some extent. Quickly, extend your arms and "dip up" into full extension. It is not unusual for one arm to go over first in beginners. It's OK to get a sloppy one first and clean it up over time.

TRAINER TALK:

Muscle-Ups are generally easier to learn with an shoulder-width overhand grip, but in time can be executed with a switch grip, underhand, even a close grip. The sky is the limit!

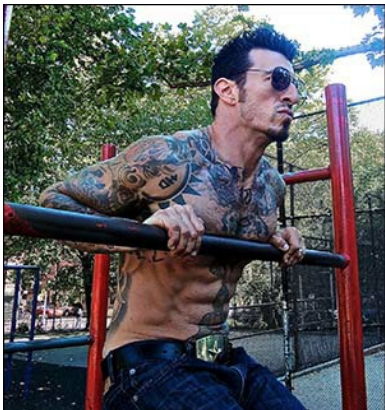
REP RANGE:

Go for one or two at a time, as the second muscle-up in succession can sometimes come easier than the first if you are new to this exercise. 10 in a row is an excellent goal.



MUSCLE-UPS DECONSTRUCTED

These movement patterns constitute the almighty Muscle-Up. I broke it down into four parts and tried to keep each description as terse and concise as possible. It must be noted that the basic Muscle-Up goes by very quickly (although they can be slowed down over time by advanced practitioners). No amount of brevity in the written word can communicate how quickly and closely these movements are linked. Ultimately, the following steps are really meant to go by in one fluid motion.



1. It all starts with an explosive pull. Jerk the bar down as low as possible, with as much speed and force as you can muster up. Practicing this movement pattern alone is a viable step in its own right.



2. Push your chest over the bar and bring your elbows as high above the bar as you can. Push your hips out behind you, extending your legs in front of you so they act as a counterweight.



3. Press the bar low down on your body, raising yourself above the bar. Extend your arms like a Straight Bar Dip, and maneuver the bar from your chest down to your waist. The bar won't move but you will.



4. Continue extending your arms and raise your chest up. Congratulations! You just did a Muscle-Up!

PLYO-MUSCLE-UP

As we've discussed, a plyometric exercise is any explosive movement where we get some air at the top and eliminate all points of contact. Plyo-Muscle-Ups are no exception. In order to perform this exercise, you must exaggerate the final pressing phase and remove your hands from the bar at the top of the motion. Like Plyo-Pull-Ups, in the beginning, you will only be able to remove your hands for just a moment. Over the course of time, and with more practice, you can get your hands higher and higher, for longer and longer. It should be understood that one would have a solid foundation in classic Muscle-Ups before attempting plyo's.

TRAINER TALK:

Technique is important. Really get explosive on the press out, while at the same time, aggressively lifting your hips away from the bar. These subtle methods will facilitate the possibility of lifting your body higher, giving you

more air time. This will allow you to remove your hands from the bar for a longer period of time, resulting in a greater range of motion.

REP RANGE:

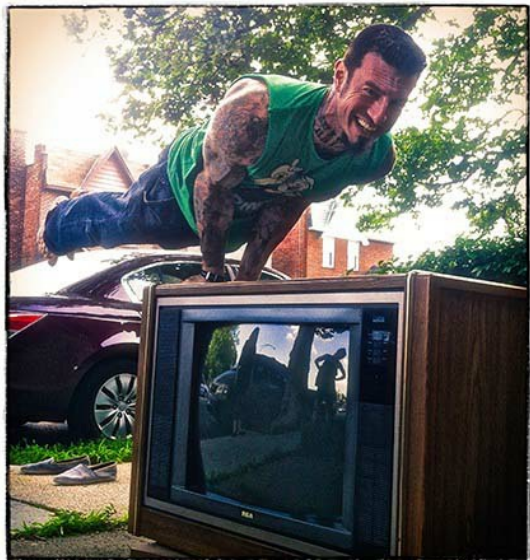
Any quantity of this exercise is excellent. 3-5 reps is a realistic goal.





ADVANCED FLEX, BEND, EXTEND

The following exercises require a certain degree of strength and balance, and put even the most advanced bodyweight warriors to the test. Each one of them takes a classic movement and brings it that much further, to insure the greatest gains possible from every repetition or static hold. As is the case with all the exercises in these pages, some will come easier (or at least less difficult) than others. Stay hungry and focused.



LOOK! I'm on TV!

SHINS-TO-BAR

Start by hanging from the bar with your legs straight and your knees locked. Contract your body and raise your legs, bringing your shins all the way to the bar, between your hands. Lower them back to starting position with control

TRAINER TALK:

A certain degree of upper body pulling is also involved. It can be helpful to envision pushing the bar down toward your shins as you raise your shins to the bar.

REP RANGE:

6-10 reps is a solid goal.



HANGING LEG RAISE WITH A TWIST (AKA WINDSHIELD WIPER)

Perform your Shins-To-Bar exercise, except this time bring your legs to the “10:00” position instead of straight up the middle. Return to the starting position. Now raise them to the “2:00” position. Train both sides evenly.

TRAINER TALK:

A great variation of this exercise is the Windshield Wiper, in which you rotate at the trunk from the “10:00” to “2:00” position and back repeatedly, without pausing at the starting position. Hell, you can even go from the “9:00” to the “3:00”.

REP RANGE:

3 sets of 10 (5 per side) is a solid goal.



HYPER-SUPERMAN

The Hyper-Superman resembles the classic Superman, except that it is performed lying belly-down on a bench (not the ground), while actively gripping it. Keep only your upper body on the bench, with your legs extended behind you off of the bench. By employing the bench, you can use your entire upper body to “pull” the bench into you, generating more power and tension throughout the body, increasing the work load and helping to facilitate a greater motion from the lower back, glutes and hamstrings. The Hyper-Superman can be performed for reps or held isometrically.

TRAINER TALK:

If you find your knees bending at the top position, mentally focus on keeping your quadriceps flexed.

REP RANGE/DURATION:

Go for 10 reps or a 30 second hold.



ELBOW LEVER

The Elbow Lever involves balancing your body on your hands in a horizontal plane, while leveraging off of your own elbows. It may be helpful to think of it like a Superman, except with your hands being the only point of contact between you and your environment (as opposed to your upper body), hence the balancing component. Start by rotating your elbows in medially, as far as possible, as you will need to rest against them. Depending on your specific anatomy, your elbows may align with your abdomen, your hip bones or somewhere in between. Place your palms flat on the ground (or off of a bench or other elevated object). From there, retract shoulder blades and tighten your abs. Now lean in, pitching your upper body forward while lifting your chest and opening your elbows to about 120 degrees. Extend your back, as well as your glutes and hamstrings. Beginners often underestimate how much lower back strength is required.

TRAINER TALK:

Levering off of an elevated surface has its advantages when learning this move. First, it allows you to squeeze your hands tightly, helping to establish tension. Additionally, the distance off the ground allows room to dangle your feet and establish the balance, before extending the body completely.

REP RANGE/DURATION:

Start by holding for just a few seconds. 30 seconds or more is a respectable goal.



GECKO BRIDGE

The Gecko Bridge refers to a 1-Arm/1-Leg Bridge variant. It requires extraordinary strength and balance. Start in the classic Bridge position and slowly pick up one hand. Now gently pick the opposite foot off the ground, keeping tension diagonally across the supporting limbs. It takes time, dedication and patience.

TRAINER TALK:

Advanced practitioners can even remove an arm and leg from the same side!

REP RANGE/DURATION:

At first just a few seconds is fantastic. 20 seconds is very good. Advanced practitioners can hold it for longer.



Traditional.



Advanced.



Advanced WORKOUTS

Each of the following workouts is a bad-ass, full-body beast. Switch them up, mix and match, have some fun.

Like the previous workouts, I recommend really rehearsing each individual exercise to the point of ownership prior to embarking on any of these particular workouts. We stick mostly with advanced moves here, but there are also some earlier progressions included in order to get the body primed. Again, the rep ranges are only recommendations. At the end of the day, you are the one who is best qualified to determine what is right for you.

Let's kill it.

ADVANCED WORKOUT #1

Squat (2 sets of 20)

Pistol Squat (3 sets of 5-10 per leg)

Push-Up (1 set to warm up)

One-Arm Push-Up (Multiple sets of 3-5 each arm)

Pull-Up (1 set to warm up)

Commando Pull-Up (3-4 sets of 8)

Staggered Dip (2 sets of 20)

Shins-To-Bar (3 sets of 10)



ADVANCED WORKOUT #2

Squat (2 sets of 20)

Shrimp Squat (3 sets of 5-10 per leg)

Push-Up (1 set to warm up)

One-Arm One-Leg Push-Up (Multiple sets of 3-5 reps per arm)

Hinge Dip (4 sets of 5)

Behind-The-Neck Pull-Up (3 sets of 10)

Muscle-Up (5 sets of 5)

Elbow Lever (2-3 holds for 30-60 seconds)



ADVANCED WORKOUT #3

Side-To-Side Squat (3 sets of 20)

Hawaiian Squat (3 sets of 10 per leg)

Advanced Pistol Squat, Hands Behind Back (3 sets of 2 per leg)

Skull-Crusher (3 sets of 10)

Plyo-Push-Up (3-4 sets of 10-20)

Handstand Push-Up (3 sets of 5-10)

Pull-Up (1 set to warm up)

Plyo-Pull-Up (2 sets of 10)

Plyo-Muscle-Up (5 sets of 5)

Shins-To-Bar With a Twist (3 sets of 10, alternating sides within sets)

Gecko Bridge (2-3 holds for 20-30 seconds)





CHAPTER 13

STRETCH IT OUT

Flexibility is a big part of training and, ultimately, getting strong. When our mobility is limited, so is the range of motion of our exercises. In fact, lack of mobility can also reduce the number of exercises we are capable of performing in the first place, giving us less of a proverbial “toolbox” from which to choose from when we design our workouts. For these reasons, both the quality and quantity of our exercises are at stake if your flexibility is lacking. Simply put, being flexible helps make you stronger.

People often ask me “Danny, should I stretch before or after my workout?” My answer is typically the same: “I stretch before, during and after my workout.” Do what feels right. Certain specified athletic training may demand some adjustment to my blanket statement, but this book is about *getting strong*, not about any sport-specific performance.

On that note, a lot of people in the strength world are quick to dismiss stretching as unnecessary at best and a waste of time at worst. Not me! I say stretch it out, baby!

These are a few of my favorite stretches. I do all of them just about every time I train, frequently and consistently. Check them out. Experiment and see what works best for you.

STANDING HAMS

Stand up. Put one heel up on a bench or other elevated surface. Lean forward toward your elevated toes, with your knee locked out and your leg fully extended. Take it slowly and lean in as far as you can. Try to hold this position for thirty seconds. You will see your range of motion increase over time. Repeat on the other side.

TRAINER TALK:

Make sure to keep your hips even and level with each other. Oftentimes, the hip of the extended leg moves in front of the body. Don't let that happen, as it will take away from the stretch.



GROUNDED HAMS

Start at the bottom of a deep down squat. Keep your muscles relaxed. Extend your left leg out completely. You should start to feel the stretch in your hamstring already. Now, lean in and touch the left foot with your left hand. For a deeper stretch, twist further and touch the left foot with your right hand. Repeat on the other side.

TRAINER TALK:

Take your time with this one. You'd be surprised. After 15-20 seconds you'll be able to get deeper and deeper into the stretch.



Make sure to stretch both your left and right sides.

STANDING QUADS

Stand up straight. Bend at the left knee and grab your ankle. Really press deep and exaggerate the knee bend to feel the stretch deep in the quadriceps. Keep your knees together. Return your foot to the ground and repeat on the other side.

TRAINER TALK:

You can increase the bend to include the hip. This will target the hip flexors in addition to the quadriceps.



Quads.



Quads and flexors.

CHEST & SHOULDERS

Stand up and place your right arm straight out, bent 90 degrees at the elbow so that your forearm is perpendicular to the ground. Place your forearm against a wall or pole, pressing it against the surface and rotate your body away. This will target the chest and shoulder with emphasis on the chest. Repeat on the other side.

TRAINER TALK:

You can repeat the exercise, keeping your arm straight, without bending at the elbow. This will target the chest and shoulder with emphasis on the shoulder.



Emphasis on the chest.



Emphasis on the shoulder.

PASSIVE HANG

Grab a pull-up bar (or doorframe or tree) and hang. That's it. This is a relaxed hang (unlike the active Bar Hang in the Starter Pull section). Do not keep your shoulders packed and your scapula retracted. The idea is to let your spine elongate and your lats and shoulders loosen up. Even your hip sockets will feel this one. Ahhhhh.

TRAINER TALK:

Hanging is hardwired in our DNA. Children instinctually do it from as soon as they're old enough. All primates do.



LATS 'N' LEGS

Find a bar about waist height. Cross your arms and place your hands on the bar. Drop down into a deep squat and lean back. Feel the stretch in your lats, low back, hips and legs. Rock side to side, backwards and forward.

TRAINER TALK:

Switch which hand is crossed over on top, to facilitate stretching evenly on both sides.

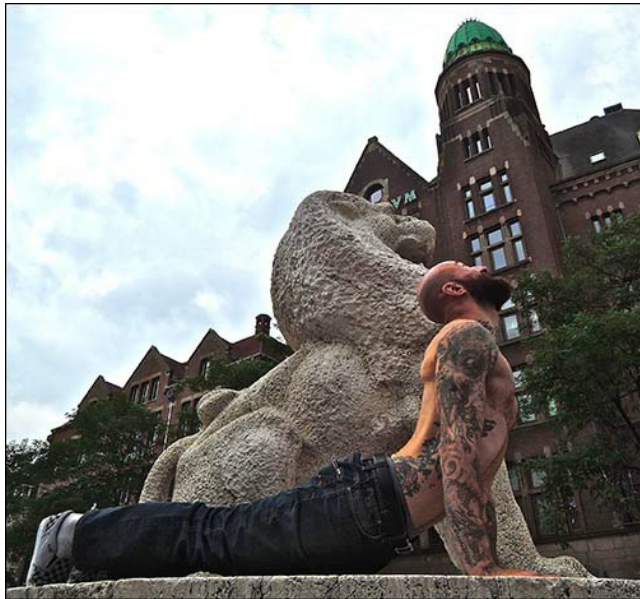


ABDOMINAL ANIMAL (AKA UPDOG)

Start in the top of a Push-Up position and lower your hips to the ground, making sure to keep your shoulders from shrugging. This will stretch out the entire anterior chain, particularly the abs. Press your hands down and push your chest up.

TRAINER TALK:

If keeping your arms fully extended places too much pressure on your lower back, bending at the elbows will help alleviate it.



TRANSVERSE TWIST

From a low, close squat position, twist your trunk to the left, placing your right arm against your left knee. Turn your head to the left too. You will feel the stretch in the abs, lower back and shoulders. Make sure to do the other side so you stretch evenly.

TRAINER TALK:

Keeping your chest up and the palm on the side to which you're twisting flat on the ground will help you maintain stability and ultimately deepen the stretch.



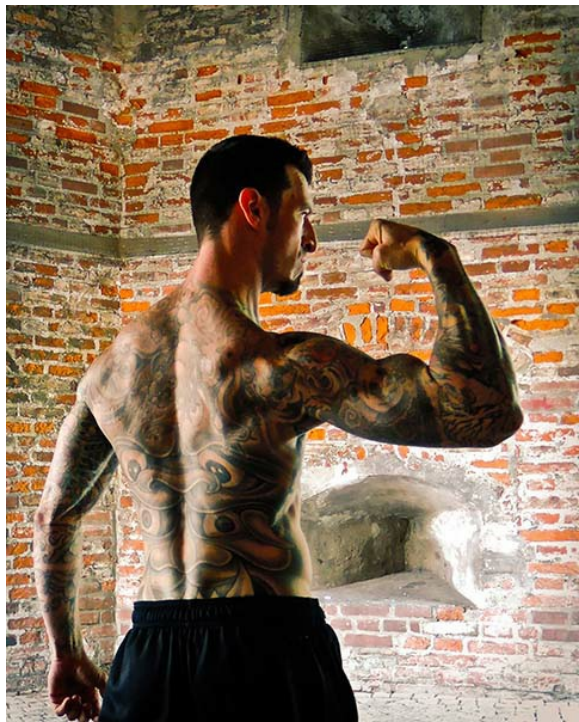
CHILD'S POSE

Kneel on the ground with your feet close together and your knees spread apart. Lean forward, extend your arms overhead and place your palms on the ground. Reach your hands away from your head as you press your butt toward your feet; imagine pushing your chest down toward your knees. You will feel this opening the shoulders, hips and back.

TRAINER TALK:

Try to gently drive your chest between your knees. This will push your palm further against the ground and increase the stretch in the shoulders and hips.





CONCLUSION



“EVERY MAN WHO SAYS FRANKLY AND FULLY
WHAT HE THINKS IS SO FAR DOING A PUBLIC SERVICE.
WE SHOULD BE GRATEFUL TO HIM FOR ATTACKING
MOST UNSPARINGLY OUR MOST CHERISHED OPINIONS.”

—JOHN STUART MILL, FROM *ON LIBERTY*







WITH LIBERTY AND FITNESS FOR ALL

These pages do not contain “fitness for bodybuilders”, “fitness for models” or “fitness for athletes”. This is not for any exclusive or particular niche. This is fitness for all of us, baby. Right here, right now. We’re all cut from the same cloth.

Every man, woman and child on this great planet can stand to be a little stronger, wiser and more resilient—to possess a higher aptitude for strength in all its forms. And all you need to do it is you.

As we’ve seen, the elements of strength comprise more than mere physicality. Mental, emotional and spiritual endowment are all part of the program. Train hard, eat good food, be honest with yourself and kind to others. Harbor peace and positivity. Love freely. Life is short; enjoy it while you can.

Yes, sacrifice is sometimes necessary and there are times in this journey where we must embrace the unpleasant (even the unbearable) and plod forward with focus and conviction in spite of our circumstances. Just be leery of sacrificing too much or too often.

THE LONG, NAKED RIDE HOME

Life is complicated. Those who know me personally are aware that I make it a point to wear my heart on my sleeve. Honesty is the best policy and I have nothing to hide. Just prior to the writing of this book, a ten-year relationship with the woman I thought I’d spend the rest of my life with ended. Fast.

Things change. I've never needed strength more than I have this past year. I went from being a family man to a full-time single dad. I had to be strong for myself, but even more so, for my son.

This change has been the most difficult obstacle of my life, but the truth is, I'm better for it. That's right, not in spite of it, but because of it. I am more empathetic, more forgiving, more compassionate, less selfish. In a word: "Stronger".



When you're down in a hole, you must embrace the unbearable.

Yes, in my darkest hours, I suffer from despair as much as anyone. As a guy who's generally known for positivity, I can be my own worst nightmare. Life is not always black and white. The mind is not rational. Emotions, by their very nature defy logic. I am aware that at times I am a walking

contradiction. We all are. But regardless of what changes occur, we must be strong and grow. Despite having less free time than I've ever had in my life, I still find the time to train. If I can do it, so can you!



Things change.

ON DOUBT

We are all overcome with irrational emotions from time to time. Everyone on this earth has been subject to fears, wild thoughts and terrifying prospects. Yes, we all have doubts.

I've never cared for the phrase "No Doubt" because I do not believe in suppressing anything that clearly exists. I am convinced that it's much more conducive to life to confront your doubt. Question it. Expose it for the fraud it often is, rather than run away.

Regarding doubt, poet Rainer Maria Rilke wrote: "Ask it, whenever it wants to spoil something for you, **why** something is ugly, demand proofs from it, test it, and you will find it perplexed and embarrassed, or perhaps rebellious. But don't give in."

When you challenge your doubt, it has to justify its existence. Don't submit to it. Look your doubt in the eye and tell it "You ain't shit!" Set yourself free from this irrational oppressor.

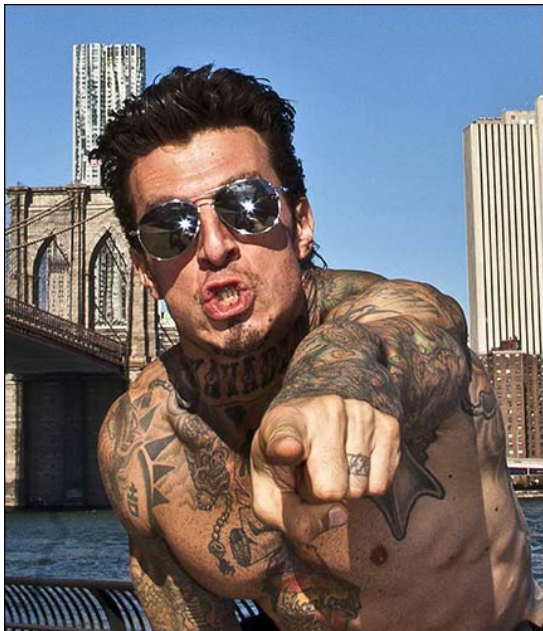
WHERE DO WE GO NOW?

As for calisthenics training, do it because you love it. Train because it feels good to get strong. The purity of maneuvering around your environment without the distractions of superfluous gear and gadgets is rewarding unto itself. Bodyweight training is an art form with direct physical and emotional benefits. Train for the high, the freedom from mental oppression and the brother- and sister-hood of the Progressive Calisthenics community.



If you don't love it, then find a modality you do love. Run, swim, lift. Bodyweight strength training is my passion. Find yours. Movement is movement and I encourage all exercise! If you are "one of us" then I hope to

see you at a Progressive Calisthenics Certification sometime down the road. After all, you only live once. Let's get strong, my friends! Carpe the hell outta this diem!



Carpe the hell outta this diem!



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Danny Kavadlo is one of the world's leading authorities on calisthenics, nutrition and personal training. He is known globally for his minimalist philosophy, feats of strength and motivational gifts..

Mr. Kavadlo is the author the #1 Best-Seller *DIAMOND-CUT ABS* and the critically acclaimed cult classic *EVERYBODY NEEDS TRAINING*. Danny has been featured in the *New York Times*, *Men's Fitness* and is a regular contributor to *TRAIN* magazine and Bodybuilding.com.

Danny lives in Brooklyn, NY with his son, Wilson and their dog, Rex. They enjoy food, music and going to the beach. Life is good.





NOTES FROM THE UNDERGROUND

To my son Wilson: You are my heart, my soul, my flesh and blood. You are the best pal I ever had and the brightest light that shines in my universe. This past year has brought us even closer (I didn't know it was possible!) I'm the luckiest person who ever lived.

My brother Al: It's a blessing to be Bonham to your Plant, a privilege to be "The Anvil" to your "Hitman", an honor to be Pinky to your Brain. Let's take over the world!

To Rosalie and Carl Kavadlo, you guys have given me more strength than anybody. No matter what words I choose, I can never thank you enough for all you've done and continue to do for me.

To John Du Cane, the fitness industry's greatest revolutionary, the facilitator of greatness himself, the OG of PCC and a man I am proud to call a friend: thanks for believing in me. I'm so lucky to have met you.

Paul Wade: None of this would be here without you, Coach! Your wisdom, knowledge and humility continue to inspire me every single day. Thanks my friend. I'd love to shake your hand.

My friend and colleague Adrienne Harvey, thank you for your generous contributions to this book. Progressive Calisthenics would not be the same without you.

To visual genius Derek Brigham, once again thanks for making my writing look good. You're creativity and brilliance are unparalleled.

To my best friends Mike Anderson and Matthew Mangiaracina (AKA The Kid): I love you guys forever and I'm so glad you're still in my world. It feels like ten lifetimes. Has it been?

Tremendous gratitude to Randy Schustal for your supreme wisdom and amazing guidance through one of the most difficult (and important) times of my life. You're the best!

Mad Love & Special Thanks To The Following:

Beth Andrews, Jack Arnow, Rob Avellan, Rekha Ayalur, Matt Beecroft, Eric & Beth Bergmann, Martijn Bos, Jeff Bodnar, Paul Britt, Jasmine Brooks,

Giorgio Capriata, Edward Checo, Logan Christopher, David Colon, Dana Conte, George Corso, Tony Ebanks, Zach Even-Esh, Mike Fitch, Nader Freij, John Gaczewski, BJ Gaddour, Angelo Gala, Marty Gallagher, Chris Garay, Liz Gilbert, Steven Graves, Micke Haggstrom, Adrian Harrington, Roger Herr, Steve Hitzone, Fredrik Hogstrom, Steve “Coach Fury” Holiner, Ryan Hopkins, Tanner Hubscher, Stephen Hughes-Landers, Randy Humola, Dan John, Kelly Jo Johnson, Nick Kenon, Tom Legath, Ronnie Love (Aka Zoolander), Steven Low, Andi Lutz, Errick McAdams, James McConnell, Albert Matheny, Grace Menendez, Robert Alexander Miller, Hannah Mirwald, Jose Mota, Josh Murphy, Juanjo Nejara, Peter Ngo, Joel Omansky, Alby Owens, Johan Ottosson, Arlene Patruno, Jose Perez, Katie Petersen, Michael Polito, Moritz Rammensee, Anders Randin, Eric Reyelt, Robert Rimoczi, Adam Von Rothfelder, Lyall Rowan, Andrew Read, Elena Recinos, Rick Richards, Laura Robertson, Raul Robinson, Trainer Steven Rowe, Rosally Sapla, Shannon Scullin, Rob Severiano, Maria Simone, Andrew Speer, Mike Spiegel, Robby Taylor, Jessica Viglotti, Annie Vo, Stacey Walder, Benji Williford, Jennie Willink, Mike Wilson, Robb Wolf & Chunhua Yang.



I am indebted to all my friends, family and followers from around the world.

Thank you for believing in me.

I am truly blessed to be part of the Progressive Calisthenics movement.

Thanks to everyone who has ever read one word I've written or had anything to say (good or bad) about anything I've ever done.

Keep on spreading the word! I'd also like to give a shout out to every trainer — and every soul—who promotes fitness, focus and positivity.

Stay strong! I am grateful to you all. HELLYEAH!

Keep The Dream Alive, My Friends!

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "DKavadlo". The signature is stylized and fluid, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.



INDEX OF EXERCISES

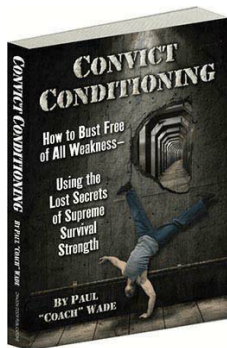
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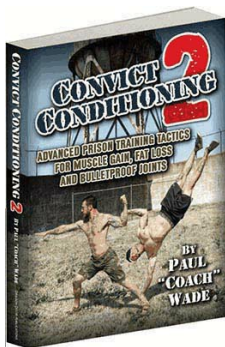


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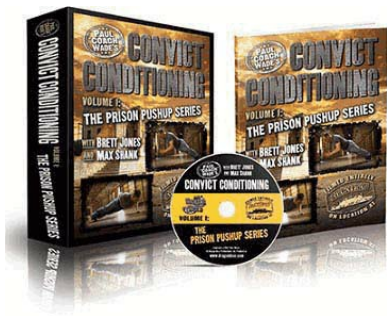
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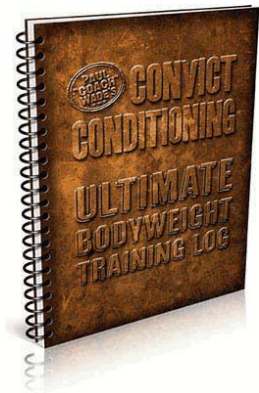


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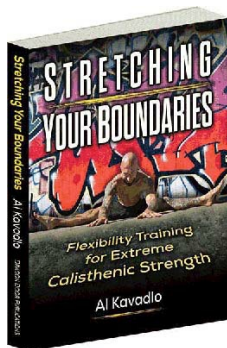
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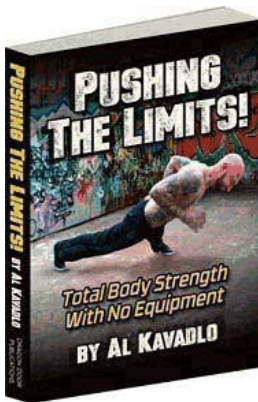
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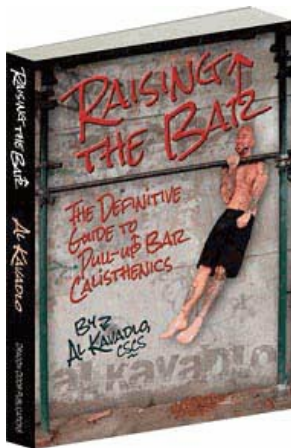
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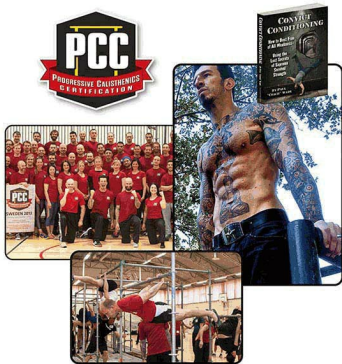


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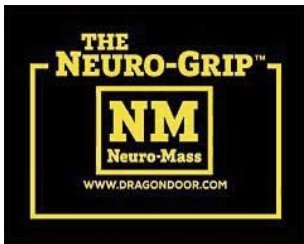
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Title / Thread Starter	Replies / Views	Last Post By
Sticky: New RKC II workshop in Florida with Master RKC! Andrea Du Cane Started by John Du Cane, 12-11-2013 09:08 AM	Replies: 0 Views: 136	John Du Cane 12-11-2013, 09:08 AM
Sticky: "Best course I have seen in my 20 years as an Elite Coach"—RKC, Australia Started by John Du Cane, 12-09-2013 11:03 AM	Replies: 0 Views: 225	John Du Cane 12-09-2013, 11:03 AM
Sticky: Announcing two new RKC Team Leaders Started by John Du Cane, 12-07-2013 08:17 AM	Replies: 1 Views: 268	BChase 12-07-2013, 08:57 AM
Sticky: Exclusive New York City PCC at SoHo Strength Lab now open for registration Started by John Du Cane, 12-04-2013 10:03 AM	Replies: 0 Views: 168	John Du Cane 12-04-2013, 10:03 AM
Sticky: Marty Gallagher's Top 10 Tactical Training Tips Started by John Du Cane, 11-30-2013 08:12 AM	Replies: 0 Views: 638	John Du Cane 11-30-2013, 08:12 AM
Sticky: Participant Praise for the Sweden Progressive Calisthenics Certification (PCC) Started by John Du Cane, 11-29-2013 08:55 AM	Replies: 0 Views: 205	John Du Cane 11-29-2013, 08:55 AM
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Exercise/Fitness/Strength

"*Strength Rules*, by Danny Kavadlo, is so good you can't ignore it. It's minimalistic. It's low tech. It's simple. It's right. Kavadlo's work always has me nodding along with a lot of 'yeses' and 'good points.'

This book is about true strength. The old kind of strength where heroes were people, like Beowulf and Ulysses, who protected the community first. This book is about empowering yourself and others...without stepping on their heads to get to the top.

Kavadlo quotes one of my heroes, St. Francis of Assisi: 'Start by doing what's necessary; then do what's possible and suddenly you are doing the impossible.' True strength, becoming the best you can be, starts with what one needs to do rather than what one wants to do.

We often ignore calisthenics because of one issue: they are really hard to do. Stop ignoring them. Stop ignoring common sense in nutrition and supplements. Stop ignoring Danny Kavadlo. Again, *Strength Rules* is so good, you can't ignore it."

—DAN JOHN, author of *Never Let Go*

"I have been waiting for a book to be written on strength training that I can recommend to all of my patients, and Danny Kavadlo has delivered with *Strength Rules*. The people who need strength the most are often the hardest to convince that they need it and can do it. Danny has written a stripped down approach to strength that is accessible to everyone.

He has distilled his wealth of knowledge and experience in coaching and bodyweight strength training into a program that is cohesive, scalable, and instantly applicable to all comers. He has also added a rock solid approach to nutrition and ample doses of inspirational story telling and philosophy, resulting in the gem that is *Strength Rules*.

I dare anyone to read this book and still give me an excuse why they can't strengthen their body and improve their health. No excuses. Get the book and get to work!"

—DR. CHRISTOPHER HARDY, author of *Strong Medicine*

"*Strength Rules* is one of the finest books on strength I've ever read. No ifs, ands or buts. Not just 'bodyweight strength'—*strength*, period. There are a million and one strength books out there about hoisting heavy iron and screwing up your joints...usually written by coaches and athletes using steroids and other drugs. But if you want to learn how to unleash *ferocious* strength and power while also improving your health and ridding yourself of extra fat and joint pain, THIS is the book you need to own.

If you are a bodyweight master, this is the bible you will want to go back to again and again, to keep you on the straight and narrow. If you are raw beginner—Jeez, then get this book right now, *follow the rules*, and save yourself years of wasted effort! *Strength Rules* is as good as it gets!"

—PAUL WADE, author of *Convict Conditioning*



Danny Kavadlo is the author of the #1 Amazon bestseller *Diamond-Cut Abs* and the cult classic *Everybody Needs Training*. When not training clients in his native New York City, Kavadlo travels the world as a Master instructor in Dragon Door's internationally-acclaimed Progressive Calisthenics Certification program, the PCC.

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