

THE CUBE 3 METHOD

STRONGMAN *by* JOSH THIGPEN

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Josh Thigpen is a pro strongman from Houston TX who has qualified five times for the World's Strongest Man competition. His strongman career has spanned 16 years and over 60 competitions all over the world with the majority being at the pro level. Josh has been on the podium of many international pro competitions. He is the creator and author of the revolutionary Cube Method for Strongman program and books. In addition to these, Josh has also written The Strongman Guide and co-authored the Performance Nutrition Encyclopedia with Dr. Zach McVey. He does online training and coaching for strongman and is a member of Team Impact, a group of athletes who do public speaking all over the world.

INTRO

I didn't plan on writing another Cube for strongman book. The last thing I wanted to do was write another book just for the sake of writing another book. I thought the two cube books I had written were it. In fact, I was also pretty much done with training and competing in strongman. But then I got invited to compete in China. I started training again and slowly but surely the hunger came back. I decided to compete at the LA Fit Expo, but in order to do so I needed to make some adjustments to my training program. That is how *The Cube Method for Strongman 3* was born.

When I began training again, I had not trained at all in a year and a half, not even once. I also was eating whenever and whatever I wanted every day. It wasn't uncommon for my dinner to be a bunch of Twix bars and popcorn. I was working on other things and just enjoying a somewhat normal life. After 15 years of competing, I really needed a break. I was miserable going into World's Strongest Man 2015 because my body was so beat up. A positive from the rest I took was allowing my body to really, finally have a chance to heal. My bodyweight dropped down from 320 to 255 during this time. As you can see, I literally was starting from scratch with my training.

Because I was starting from such a low point I knew I wouldn't be at my best shape for the Fit Expo, but I decided to jump in anyway. The Fit Expo had 10 events covering just about every form of strength you can imagine. If I was going to compete, I needed to really put together a program that would prepare me for everything. I placed 3rd at the Fit Expo, which was pretty miraculous with all things considered. My overhead wasn't the greatest at the contest, but if you would have seen where it was a few months before the competition you would know how far it had come. I attribute the quick and drastic improvement to the new programs.

Not only did I see the need to adjust my program specifically for the Fit Expo, but I also wanted to address some things in need of change with the program in general. I will elaborate on these changes throughout the book. I have learned to never say never, but I feel like this is the final Cube for Strongman book and program. I truly believe this is the completion of what has been a game changing program for strongman.

Cube for Strongman 1 and 2

Summary/Refresher

Below is a summary of the original basis of the Cube Method for Strongman for those who have not read Cube 1 and 2 and will serve as a refresher for those who have had the chance to read it -

Strongman creates a unique challenge because the sport demands many forms of strength and endurance which requires the athletes training to reflect this diversity. You may have a max or repetitions event, or an explosive event or some combination of them all. In order to train for this in an efficient way that delivers the best results while also maximizing recovery, the program is split up in the following way:

1 – Heavy

2 – Speed

3 – Repetition

It is called “Cube Training” because when the program is mapped out it looks like a cube. You don’t lift heavy on two lifts in a week. For example, if I deadlift heavy then my overhead is dynamic and my squat is for reps. As the weeks rotate, the effort is rotated as well. This combination is what forms the cube. Here is the set-up:

<u>Week</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
Deadlift	1	2	3
Overhead	3	1	2
Squat	2	3	1

Throughout the weeks, agility days are on Tuesday and Friday. The reason for the days of focus on agility is the necessity of movement during strongman events, so adding in some foot work and light sprints helps the athlete stay nimble as training progresses. Events can be won or lost during the transitions between implements. We are not trying to become a world class sprinter, just keep moving throughout the week to maintain a balance between agility and strength. The agility days look like this:

Tuesday:

- Ladder Drills 4 sets of 4-6 varying ladder drills with very little rest in between
- Cone Drills 4 sets of 3-4 cone drills very little rest in between
- Abs
- Side Bends – 2 x 15 per side
- Hanging Leg raises – 3 x 15

Friday:

- Jump Rope – 3-5 minutes
- Sprints – 6 sets to 60 feet with increasing speeds
 - o 1st set at 40-50%
 - o Increase speed progressively with remaining sets up to 70%
 - o 30-60 seconds rest in between
- Decline Crunches - 3 x 30

The events seen most frequently in strongman contests are:

1. Overhead press
2. Deadlift
3. Yoke
4. Farmers
5. Stones

Cube for Strongman training emphasizes and centers on these five events. The Overhead and Deadlift are trained during the week on Wednesday and Thursday. The Yoke, Farmers, and Stones are trained on Saturdays. These three are trained every other Saturday, rotating between lighter and for speed, and heavier and closer to contest weight with a Saturday of varying events in between. The Saturdays in between these “Big 3” days are dedicated to the additional events not included in the top 5 list such as Tire Flip, Carry Medleys, Truck Pull, etc. This schedule is combined to be the First Cube for Strongman program:

Week 1

Monday:

- Speed Squat (any squat variation) – 50% x 8-10 x 2 (stop when bar speed slows down)
- Walking Lunges – body weight only – 3 x 15 per leg
- Light Leg Extensions – 3 x 12
- Calf Raises – 3 x 25

Tuesday:

- Ladder Drills
- Cone Drills
- Abs
 - o Side Bends – 2 x 15 per side
 - o Hanging Leg Raises – 3 x 15

Wednesday:

- Repetition Overhead – 80% x 8 or more reps x 2 sets
- Incline Barbell Press – 3 x 8
- Dips – 3 x Max Reps
- Band Push downs
- Regular Grip (palms facing the floor) – 2 x 10 with 2 second pause at lockout
 - o Hammer Grip – 2 x 10 with 2 second pause at lockout
 - o Dumbbell Lateral Raises – 3 x 12

Thursday:

- Max Effort Deadlift – 1-2 reps
- 45° Hypers – Body weight x 3 x 20
- Shrugs – 3 x 15 (Barbell, Dumbbell, Farmer's handles...)
- Heavy Dumbbell Rows – 3 x 10 per arm
- Rear Delts – 3 x 15 (face pulls, rear delt raises...)
- Barbell Curls – 1 set with bar to failure

Friday:

- Jump Rope – 3-5 minutes
- Sprints – 60 feet
 - o 1st at 40-50%
 - o Remaining sets progressively increase speed up to 70%.
- Decline Crunches - 3 x 30

Saturday:

- Light Yoke – 40-50% of contest weight for speed for 4 runs for 60-80'
- Light Farmer's – 40-50% contest weight for speed for 4 runs for 60-80'
- Light Stones – 5 stones in series for speed with lighter stones than would be in your contest. The weight should be at least 30% lighter than you are going to be using in your contest.
- Stone load with 50% of your max stone for 3 x 5. You should focus on speed and the one motion technique to build explosiveness.

Week 2

Monday:

- Repetition Squat (any squat variation) – 80% x 8 or more reps
- Leg Press – 3 x 10
- Calf Raises – 3 x 25

Tuesday:

- Ladder Drills
- Cone Drills
- Abs
 - o Side Bends – 2 x 15 per side
 - o Hanging Leg raises – 3 x 15

Wednesday:

- Max Effort Overhead (any variation of Press) – 1-2 reps
- Close Grip Bench Press – 3 x 8
- Dumbbell Incline Press – 3 x 10
- Band Pushdowns
 - o Regular Grip – 2 x 10 with 2 second pause at lockout
 - o Hammer Grip – 2 x 10 with 2 second pause at lockout
- Dumbbell Front Raises – 3 x 12
- Dumbbell Lateral Raises – 3 x 12

Thursday:

- Speed Deadlifts – 50% x 8 x 1 with 30 seconds rest between lifts
- GHR – 3 x 8-10
- Barbell Rows – 3 x 8
- Pulldowns – 3 x 10
- Shrugs – 3 x 15 (Barbell, Dumbbells, Farmers,...)
- Rear Delts – 3 x 15 (face pulls, rear delt raises...)
- Barbell Curls – 1 set with bar to failure

Friday:

- Jump Rope – 3-5 minutes
- Sprints – 8 runs x 60 feet
 - o 1st at 40-50%
 - o Remaining sets progressively increase speed up to 80%
- Decline Crunches - 3 x 15 with weight

Saturday:

- Contest events or events of your choice. (other than Yoke farmers or stones) You should train these heavy, i.e. contest weight. For example, carrying medley, tire flip, truck pull, sled or implement drags.

Week 3

Monday:

- Max Effort Squat (any squat variation) 1 -2 sets of 1-2 reps
- Leg Press – 3 x 10
- Calf Raises – 3 x 25

Tuesday:

- Ladder Drills
- Cone Drills
- Abs
 - o Side Bends – 2 x 15 per side
 - o Hanging Leg raises – 3 x 15

Wednesday:

- Speed Overhead (any variation of Press) – 50% x 8 x 3
- SlingShot Bench Press – 3 x 5
- Barbell Incline Press – 3 x 10
- Overhead Triceps Extension – 3 x 10
- Dumbbell Front Raises – 3 x 12
- Dumbbell Lateral Raises – 3 x 12

Thursday:

- Repetition Deadlifts – 80% x 1 x 8-10
- 45° Hypers – 3 x 10 with weight
- Seated Rows – 3 x 10
- Pull-ups – 3 sets x 8-10 (use a band for assistance if needed)
- Shrugs – 3 x 15 (Barbell, Dumbbells, Farmers...)
- Rear Delts – 3 x 15 (face pulls, rear delt raises...)
- Barbell Curls – 1 set with bar to failure

Friday:

- Jump Rope – 3-5 minutes
- Sprints – 8 runs x 60 feet
 - o 1st at 40-50%
 - o Remaining sets progressively increase speed up to 90%
- Decline Crunches - 3 x 30

Saturday:

- Heavy Yoke, Farmer's and Stones at or heavier than contest weight.
- Two heavy sets of yoke and Farmer's, the distances are the same as week 1.
- Either a heavy stone over bar for 75 seconds or heavy stone series.

Week 4: Deload

Monday:

- Leg Press – 3 x 15
- Leg Extensions – 3 x 15
- Calf Raises – 3 x 25

Tuesday:

- Go for a light walk, swim or stretch

Wednesday:

- Dumbbell Incline Press – 3 x 15
- Band Pushdowns:
 - o Regular grip with a 2 second pause – 2 x 15
 - o Hammer grip with a 2 second pause – 2 x 15
- Dumbbell Front Raises – 2 x 15
- Dumbbell Lateral Raises – 2 x 15

Thursday:

- 45° Hypers – 3 x 20 with no weight
- Chest Supported Rows – 3 x 15
- Pulldowns – 3 x 15
- Shrugs – 2 x 40 (Barbell, Dumbbells, Farmers...)
- Rear Delts – 3 x 15 (face pulls, rear delt raises...)
- Barbell Curls – 1 set with bar to failure

Friday:

- Go for a light walk, swim or stretch

Saturday:

- Contest events at 40-50% of contest weight. Or if you don't know the events ahead of time you can do sled drag, Prowler, light sandbag carries

There were some changes to percentages, rest times, and grip work added in to the 2.0 program which looked like this -

Week 1

Monday:

- Speed Squat (any squat variation) – 55% x 8 sets x 2 30 seconds rest between sets
- Walking Lunges – with bar on back – 3 x 15 per leg 3 minutes rest between sets
- Calf Raises – 3 x 25 3 minutes rest

Tuesday:

- Ladder Drills 4 sets of 4-6 varying ladder drills very little rest in between
- Cone Drills 4 sets of 3-4 cone drills very little rest in between
- Abs
 - o Side Bends – 2 x 15 per side
 - o Hanging Leg raises – 3 x 15

Wednesday:

- Repetition Overhead 2-3 sets of 10 reps with 70 % of max weight
- Incline Press – 3 x 8
- Dips – 3 x Max Reps
- Band Push downs
 - o Regular Grip (palms facing the floor) – 2 x 10 with 2 second pause at lockout
 - o Hammer Grip – 2 x 10 with 2 second pause at lockout
- Dumbbell Lateral Raises – 3 x 12

Thursday:

- Heavy deadlift work up to 3 sets of 4 with 85 % max weight on deadlift
- 45° Hypers – Body weight plus 75 pounds- 3 minutes rest in between sets
- Shrugs – 3 x 15 (Barbell, Dumbbell, Farmer's handles...)
- Heavy Dumbbell Rows – 3 x 10 per arm super set all three exercises with 3 minutes rest in between supersets
- Rear Delts – 3 x 15 (face pulls, rear delt raises...)
- Barbell Curls – 1 set with bar to failure

Friday:

- Jump Rope – 3-5 minutes
- Sprints – 60 feet
 - o 1st at 40-50%
 - o Remaining sets progressively increase speed up to 70% - 6 sprints with about 30-60 seconds rest in between
- Decline Crunches - 3 x 30

Saturday:

- Yoke - pick a weight that is roughly 60 % of the heaviest yoke you have done, and do 4 speed runs with only 1 minute rest in between each run
- Farmers - Just like yoke pick a weight that is roughly 60 % of the heaviest farmers you have done or 60 % of contest weight and do 4 speed runs with only one minute rest in between each set. Then do 1 farmers hold for time. Pick up a weight and stand there holding on as long as you can, do this for 1 set.
- Atlas Stone Load a light to medium weight stone, to a height for 8 sets of 2 reps with only 30 seconds rest in between sets

Week 2

Monday:

- Repetition Squat (any squat variation) – 2 sets x 70 % x 8 reps
- Barbell Hip Thrusts with a weight you can get 3 sets of 8 –
- Calf Raises – 3 x 25

Tuesday:

- Ladder Drills 4 sets of 4-6 drills each
- Cone Drills 4 sets of 3-4 cone drills
- Abs
 - o Side Bends – 2 x 15 per side
 - o Hanging Leg raises – 3 x 15

Wednesday:

- Heavy overhead- 3 sets of 3 with 85 % of your max, take as much time as needed between these sets
- Close Grip Bench Press – 3 x 8
- Dumbbell Incline Press – 3 x 10
- Band Pushdowns
 - o Regular Grip – 2 x 10 with 2 second pause at lockout
 - o Hammer Grip – 2 x 10 with 2 second pause at lockout
- Dumbbell Front Raises – 3 x 12
- Dumbbell Lateral Raises – 3 x 12

Thursday:

- Speed deadlift 55% max weight, 8 sets of 1 rep 30 seconds rest in between sets
- Goodmornings - 2 sets x 8-10
- Barbell Rows – 3 x 8 3 minutes rest in between sets
- Pullups – 3 x 10 superset all 3 exercises 3 minutes rest in between sets
- Shrugs – 3 x 15 (Barbell, Dumbbells, Farmers...)
- Rear Delts – 3 x 15 (face pulls, rear delt raises...)
- Barbell Curls – 1 set with bar to failure

Friday:

- Jump Rope – 3-5 minutes
- Sprints – 8 runs x 60 feet
 - o 1st at 40-50%
 - o Remaining sets progressively increase speed up to 80%. 6 sets with little rest in between
- Decline Crunches - 3 x 15 with weight

Saturday:

- Do any event you want here other than yoke, stones, or farmers (i.e. tire flip, truck pull etc.) 3-4 events x 2 sets each event with no more than 4 minutes rest in between sets

Week 3

Monday:

- Heavy Squat (any squat variation) – 85 % x 3 X 3 reps as much rest as needed
- Barbell Hip thrusters use a weight you can get 3 sets of 5
- Calf Raises – 3 x 25
- Tuesday:
- Ladder Drills
- Cone Drills
- Abs
 - o Side Bends – 2 x 15 per side
 - o Hanging Leg raises – 3 x 15

Tuesday:

- Ladder Drills 4 sets of 4-6 drills each
- Cone Drills 4 sets of 3-4 cone drills
- Abs
 - o Side Bends – 2 x 15 per side
 - o Hanging Leg raises – 3 x 15

Wednesday:

- Speed Overhead 55 % max weight x 8 sets of 3 30 seconds rest between sets
- Axle incline press 3 x 10 - 3 minutes rest
- Overhead Triceps Extension – 3 x 10 Super- set all 3 sets 3 minutes rest in between
- Dumbbell Front Raises – 3 x 12
- Dumbbell Lateral Raises – 3 x 12

Thursday:

- Repetition Deadlifts – any deadlift variation you prefer for a weight you can get 1 set of 8 reps with
- 45° Hypers – 3 x 10 with weight 3 minutes rest between sets
- Seated Rows – 3 x 10 3 minutes rest between sets
- Pull-ups – 3 sets x 8-10 triple set all 3 exercises 3 minutes rest in between triple sets
- Shrugs – 3 x 15
- Rear Delts – 3 x 15 (face pulls, rear delt raises...)
- Barbell Curls – 1 set with bar to failure

Friday:

- Jump Rope – 3-5 minutes
- Sprints – 8 runs x 60 feet
 - o 1st at 40-50%
 - o Remaining sets progressively increase speed up to 90%
- Decline Crunches - 3 x 30

Saturday:

- Yoke x 90 % of contest yoke x 2 sets with 5 minutes rest in between sets
- Farmers x 90 % of contest weight x 2 sets with 5 minutes rest plus 1 set farmer's hold for time
- Stones do a load for reps with a heavy stone with a 75 seconds time limit x 2 sets

Week 4: Deload

Monday: (this whole week keep everything light, 15 reps should be fairly easy on each set I also recommend getting a couple of ice baths and massages during this week.)

- Leg Press – 3 x 15
- Leg Extensions – 3 x 15
- Calf Raises – 3 x 25

Tuesday:

- Go for a light walk, swim or stretch

Wednesday:

- Dumbbell Incline Press – 3 x 15
- Band Pushdowns:
 - o Regular grip with a 2 second pause – 2 x 15
 - o Hammer grip with a 2 second pause – 2 x 15
- Dumbbell Front Raises – 2 x 15
- Dumbbell Lateral Raises – 2 x 15

Thursday:

- 45° Hypers – 1x 20 with no weight
- Chest Supported Rows – 3 x 15
- Pulldowns – 3 x 15
- Shrugs – 2 x 40 (Barbell, Dumbbells, Farmers...)
- Rear Delts – 3 x 15 (face pulls, rear delt raises...)
- Barbell Curls – 1 set with bar to failure

Friday:

- Go for a light walk, swim or stretch

So what is new with Cube 3?

This is where the new changes to the program come into effect. Although I don't think changes is the right word perhaps variations or options is better, because these are simply alternate ways to train the Cube for Strongman. Throughout my career as a strongman, I have always trained overhead once a week. In both the Cube for Strongman 1 and 2 overhead has one training day. It always seemed to work for me because overhead is one of my strengths. However, when I decided to come back from the year and a half break from training, I was forced to reconsider. The Fit Expo included 4 different overhead implements, a medley with dumbbell, log and axle plus a block press event as well. I could not get all of the necessary training to be prepared for each overhead using my once a week program. When you take a look at most of the really big pressers, they train pressing more than once a week on average. I also thought about Olympic weightlifters training overhead every day and get stronger in doing so. When I made my brief venture into weightlifting I trained overhead 3 times a week. I wrote an article for startingstrongman.com explaining overhead is the most important event in strongman in my opinion. It is included here because it is relevant to explanation of the overhead changes in the program.

The Most Important Event in Strongman

The goal of a strongman is to become as strong as possible in every way possible, to be a complete strength athlete. However, there is one event seen more than any other in strongman, the overhead press. In the past I have had people challenge me on this, but let me be clear, it is not necessarily the most important strength to have. You need a strong back and legs for most strongman events. Most people immediately shout, "The deadlift is the most important event!" The reasoning for this is most events require

picking something up off the ground, but this does not hold water. The deadlift was always my weakest event in strongman, but I was consistently good at every other event requiring deadlift type strength. For instance, I was always good at farmers walk, even heavy farmers, without being good at the deadlift. The same for atlas stones, power stairs, cleans, tire flip, etc. In just about every contest I ever did, most could out deadlift me, but I could usually beat them in the previously listed types of events. Furthermore, when I say the most important event I am talking PERCENTAGE wise it is the most common event and with the most variations (other than a medley).

Most contests will include an overhead in them and many have overhead as 2 different events because it is the primary way upper-body strength is tested in strongman. Consider World's Strongest Man and the Arnold, the two biggest contests in the world. The Arnold usually has 4 or 5 events with 2 of those being overhead! That is 40 or 50 percent of the contest being an overhead press. At World's there are two events solidified in the qualifiers and finals and they are overhead and stones. The stones are going to be pretty close to the same in each, although they may be heavier in the finals. But you will most likely have to do 2 different types of presses in the qualifier and finals.

You may wonder what does that have to do with you, if you don't compete at WSM or the Arnold? The same rule tends to hold true throughout the amateur and pro ranks. The overhead is the most common event in strongman. There was once a time when the atlas stones might have been considered the most common, but for whatever reason over time it has become a little less common.

Take a look at all the variations of the overhead:

- Log Press
- Axle Clean and Press
- Dumbbell Clean and Press
- Viking Press
- Keg Clean and Press
- Block Clean and Press
- Natural Stone Clean and Press
- Sand Bag Clean and Press

All of these can be done for either reps, speed (in a medley) or for max. So you must be proficient at all of them, especially if you have multiple lifts in a medley. The deadlift does not have as many variations as this. You are either doing a side or front handle deadlift from different heights, but you don't have to master so many disciplines. Pressing a natural stone is completely different from pressing a log or axle.

How do you become a good presser? Of course the goal is to acquire as much of this equipment as possible so you have the ability to train them all. But if you don't have access to all of them, do your best to at least get an axle and a log. Presses like the keg press, sand bag press, block press, and natural stone press all require a neutral grip like the log, so if you have a log you are pressing with the appropriate grip for those events. You will also need to train strict pressing with the log. The first reason for this is most good log pressers are monsters at strict press. Because you cannot get as much leg drive with a log, the more brute pressing power the better. Furthermore, keg, sandbag, block press, and natural stone press are also pretty strict movements, so again at the very least you will build up brute pressing power with the right grip. Your press training should certainly not be limited to strict press training, but should be in addition to your push pressing.

I believe in rotating heavy, repetition and speed days for the overhead, as I do in the Cube Method for Strongman, so you are prepared for anything that is thrown at you. In strongman, events are frequently changed, often without much notice. If you are tall with long arms, and not a naturally good presser, really working on the lockout portion can be of benefit. Of course it can be of benefit to anybody, but I have seen athletes with longer arms get the most out of it. Doing work with bands and chains on overhead can really help build tricep and lockout power for longer-limbed strongmen, so throw those in the mix as well. The way we will rotate these is 3 times in one week or twice in one week.

Once you have done your training with the implements there are some great assistance movements which can really help to build up your pressing power:

Overhead Assistance Work:

- Incline Press – Dumbbell or Barbell
- Bench Press – with varying grips
- Board Presses
- Rack Lockouts
- Floor Presses
- Front Raises
- Lateral Raises
- Overhead Triceps Extensions
- Lying Triceps Extensions
- Pushdowns of all varieties (with bands is my favorite)
- Dips

Pressing with:

- SlingShot
- Chains
- Bands

A strong overhead press is of the utmost importance in strongman. Give it the attention it deserves. Acquire as much equipment as possible and blast away in training, and begin to dominate the overhead! (End Article)

Conditioning

In the Cube Method 1 and 2 programs, I pointed out that the best conditioning for strongman is the actual events themselves. I still stand by it, but now I also see the benefit of doing other lower impact methods of conditioning. I once said the only reason for lack of conditioning is laziness. This is one hundred percent true. Although I think the events are the best way to condition especially when done with little rest in between sets, there is more that can be done. I hate, and I do mean HATE, gassing out on an event in a strongman competition. When preparing for the Fit Expo, I began to train the medley and it did not go well conditioning wise. I could not breathe at all. Although I knew I would get better at it with training, I also knew I wanted to be completely ready for this. I honestly was pissed off to be breathing so heavily and to know my conditioning was preventing me from doing my best on the event. I decided conditioning would never be a problem again, so I started to implement conditioning into my training. The event I had for the medley was a farmer's walk into a duck walk and into power stairs. So I started implementing kettle bell swings for 90 seconds for as many reps as I could possibly get. I chose kettle bell swings because the motion is very similar to the duck walk and power stairs. I also included some longer steady state cardio on an elliptical machine for about 30-45 minutes. Once I started implementing these into my training, the medley became much easier. I realized some additional conditioning could really be of benefit. I now rotate between these conditioning methods:

Steady State Cardio in the 30-40 minute range

This had gotten a bad rap in the strength world. The line of thinking has always been that longer distance cardio would hinder strength and muscle gains, but I have not seen any conclusive evidence on why that would be the case. If the problem is it burning too many calories, then simply adding extra calories on that day would solve the problem. On top of helping with conditioning, the benefits of longer distance cardio ripple into a domino effect. Blood is flushed throughout the body which leads to a quicker recovery

which leads to muscle gains which lead to strength gains. For this type of cardio I prefer to be on an elliptical or bike or treadmill for a fast-pace walk. These forms of cardio are low impact and really save the joints.

Event Cardio

On these days, the actual events are being used for conditioning while relying on low rest times in between sets and events in order to really push conditioning. Also on event day, it is optional to do some actual lighter weight conditioning with the events. For example, flipping a light tire or pushing a car and doing every minute on the minute

HIIT Cardio

HIIT cardio is more sport specific for strongman and is a great way to be more conditioned for strongman events without having to actually do the events. This type of cardio has also been shown to increase growth hormone and testosterone levels. I prefer to keep things in the same time range as strongman events, so somewhere in the 60-90 second range at a high intensity, and then do a 2 to 1 rest to cardio ratio. So if I go 60 seconds full speed on the elliptical, I then pull back for 2 minutes and then repeat. I tend to do no more than 5-6 intervals.

Here are a few conditioning methods for either HIIT or Steady State cardio:

- Kettle Bell Swings
- 400-800 meter Low-Level Sprints (somewhere between a jog and an all-out sprint)
- Rowing Machine
- Elliptical Machine (I love these going both forwards and backwards because they effectively simulate a truck pull or drag)
- Light Tire Flips
- Jumping Rope
- Hammer Swings
- Swimming

Alternative Event Days

One of the questions I get asked the most is, "What events should I train on the Saturdays that are not yoke, farmers, and stone days?" I gave a list of events for these days in my past book, but I would like to explain the training structure and breakdown just a little bit better. The Saturdays set aside for alternative events in between the "Big 3" training days are great for keeping event training fresh because you have a variety of options to pick between. First, you can choose to train other events you may not be typically training. Secondly, another option is to choose events that are in your contest other than the standard top 5 strongman events. Thirdly, you could choose events in which you might have a weakness. Lastly, another way you can pick events is to focus on what the next most common events would be based on trends in the sport. Some strongman events rise to a higher level of popularity and it's important to pay attention to these trends because it means the probability of you facing them at a contest becomes greater.

The following is a list of the alternative events (events outside of the 5 most common):

- Tire Flip
- Sand Bag Carry
- Keg Carry
- Sled Dragging
- Chain Dragging
- Truck Pull
- Arm-Over-Arm Pull
- Hussafell or Stone Carry
- Conan's Wheel
- Duck Walk
- Throwing Events such as keg or kettle bell
- Medley combining any of the above events

The way I typically handle the alternative event day is after warming up, I will start with some kind of throwing event, kegs or kettle bells, then I will move on to a loading medley, and then to flipping a tire or pulling a truck. Some days I will also throw in power stairs training. So my typical alternative event training session would look like this:

- Keg Toss – 10 Throws x 2 Sets
- Sand Bag Keg Medley - 2 Sand Bags + 2 Kegs x 2 Sets
- Truck Pull (arm-over-arm or harness and rope) – 60 to 75 ft x 3 Pulls **OR**
Tire Flip – 8-10 Flips x 2 Sets

Thoughts on Increasing Training Frequency

Perhaps the only thing more impressive than the 5 WSM titles Mariusz Pudzianowski attained was the way he trained to attain them. We used to sit back and wonder how it was even possible to train the way he would. He trained twice a day, every day, first with weights in the morning and second with events in the evening. We often joke in strongman that after a heavy event day or competition even your soul hurts. So we always wondered how in the world his joints, CNS, and everything else was able to handle it because it just didn't make any sense. No amount of drugs could even explain this type of workload. Many other athletes were enhanced as well, but were still at their limit with training only 1 event day a week. On top of this consistently heavy training, Mariusz would do karate, run, and swim throughout the week. Mariusz is made of bone and flesh and blood just like you and I. I believe he has given us proof that we can train more than we might think we can. Training in a way similar to Mariusz will get you prepared for just about anything.

Some people think a 6 day training week is too much, and now I am adding even more training on top of that with the increase of overhead days and conditioning. But I have seen a simple correlation between those who train more and those who have success. I listen to Kaz and how he trained 49 days in a row without a single rest day and some of those days included two training sessions. You may be one of those people who think this is too much, but what was the end result for Kaz? Zydrunas trains 6 days a week every week and it's impossible to not see his success and the list goes on. I realize these men are champions who have made it to the top of their sport, so you may be thinking these things don't apply to you. But I truly feel there is a tendency to under-train rather than over-train these days. Feeling beat up on a new program does not mean you are over-trained. In fact, even going backwards on your lifts sometimes doesn't necessarily mean you are over-trained either. It could mean you are under-trained and need to push through those couple of weeks when you feel beat up causing your body to adapt. Of course there will be exceptions to this. For instance, Phil Pfister who only

trained 2 or 3 times a week and ate Oreos and milk for breakfast but still won World's Strongest Man.

I used to go out to Cypress, Texas and stay with the Ortmyer's and train twice a day in the middle of Houston summers. Despite how tough this training was I did not have to convince myself to get motivated or to go train in fact I loved every second of it. Why? Because I wanted to be the best, to go to World's Strongest Man, so I loved the training. If you are not as motivated, it gets easier to become beat up and lose the desire to train. But where the mind goes the body can follow, which leads me to my next change in the program, deloads.

Deloads

In Cube Method for Strongman 1 and 2 there is a deload week every 4th week. One of the keys I always reinforce with this week is that deload does not mean no load. So if you are having a mental block when it comes to deloads remember you are still training, it is just a chance to give your joints and CNS a little bit of a break. The higher reps and sets effectively flush blood into the body and will help your body to feel better overall. I have found in my own training, that deload weeks do not have to be every 4th week. I would say if you feel like you can give deloading every 7th week a shot. So you can try doing a couple of 3 week cycles in a row and then taking the deload. I realized this during my training for the 2015 World's Strongest Man competition. I really needed to get in shape in time for World's and frankly didn't have the luxury of taking deloads the way I normally would because I needed every full on training session I could get. In doing this, I kept getting stronger and recovering week in and week out despite adding weight each week. So with this in mind, deloads should be considered optional with the new Cube for Strongman program, at least for 6 weeks.

Percentages

I cannot emphasize enough that the percentages in this program are approximate and suggestive. Many people say they do not believe in training with percentages and I don't necessarily like using percentages either. My main suggestion is to not get hung up on the percentages. The most important thing is to understand and follow the CONCEPT of each day. In other words, if it is a repetition day make sure to use a weight you can get somewhere around the goal reps for that day. For those of you who are just getting started in the sport the percentages might be more of a help to you, so if you consider yourself a beginner feel free to follow the percentages a little closer. But be mindful that you may not be able to get the same reps with 75% of your overhead as you can with your squat, so it's impossible to set a percentage that everyone is able to get the same amount of reps using.

If you have a contest coming up, you can use those contest weights to base your percentages on for event days. If you don't have a contest coming up, you can use what a typical weight is for your division or go off your maxes in those events. So if the heaviest you have done is a 700 lb. yoke, then on speed day you can do between 350-420 lbs. Follow along with this same type of thinking for your rep range. Don't get down if you don't hit every rep prescribed on that day. If your goal was 8 and you hit 7 then you still are within the concept of that days training which the goal is always. Here are the following rep and percentage ranges to stay within for each type of training.

As long as you are within these ranges you are right within the training zone of that day:

Repetition- 70-80 % 6-10 reps

Heavy- 85-95 % 2-4 reps

Speed 50-60 % on squat, dl and overhead. 50-70 % yoke and farmers

My Favorite Assistance Exercises

I emphasize on the first two programs that you don't have to follow the programmed assistance exercises to an exact point. I've chosen the assistance movements that are best in my opinion, but you can choose whichever assistance exercises you want for the specific body part. Don't stress if you don't have a particular piece of equipment to do an exercise listed in the program. Just like the percentage and reps schemes, the important thing to remember is the *concept* of that days training.

Squat Assistance Work:

- Lunges – Stationary, Walking, or Step Back versions
- Step-ups
- Leg Press
- Leg Extensions
- Hip Thrusts
- Sled Drag
- Prowler Push

Deadlift Assistance Work:

- Glute-Ham Raises
- 45° Hypers
- Stiff Legged Deadlift
- Reverse Hypers
- Good Mornings
- Shrugs – Barbell or Dumbbell
- Barbell Rows
- Dumbbell Rows
- Chest Supported Rows
- Seated Rows
- Lat Pull-downs
- Pull-ups/Chin-ups
- High Rep Curls with Barbell or Dumbbell as a PreHab Exercise
- Post Delt Raises
- Face Pulls

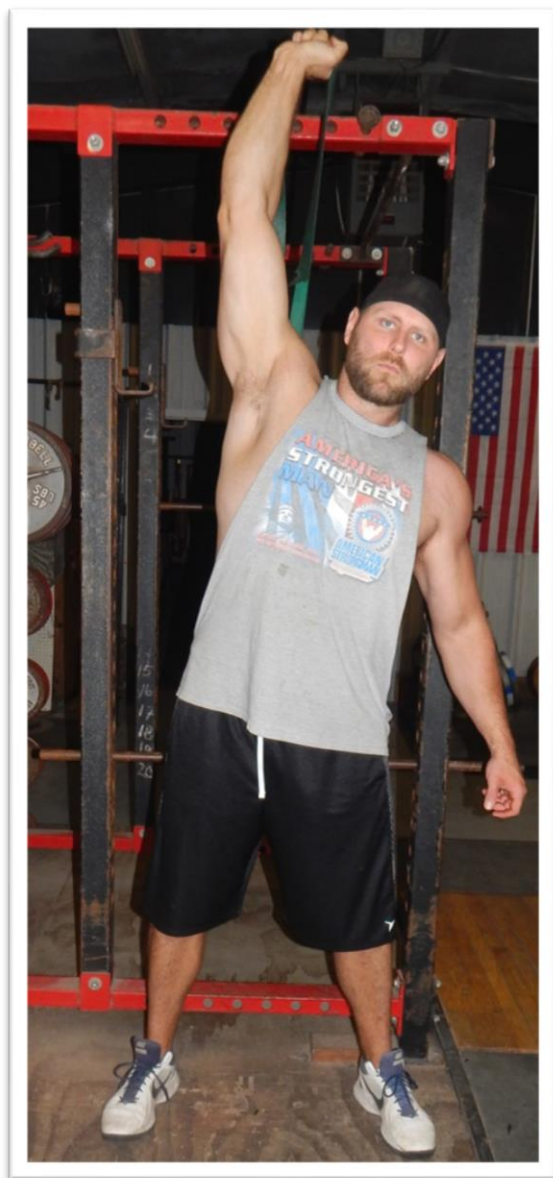
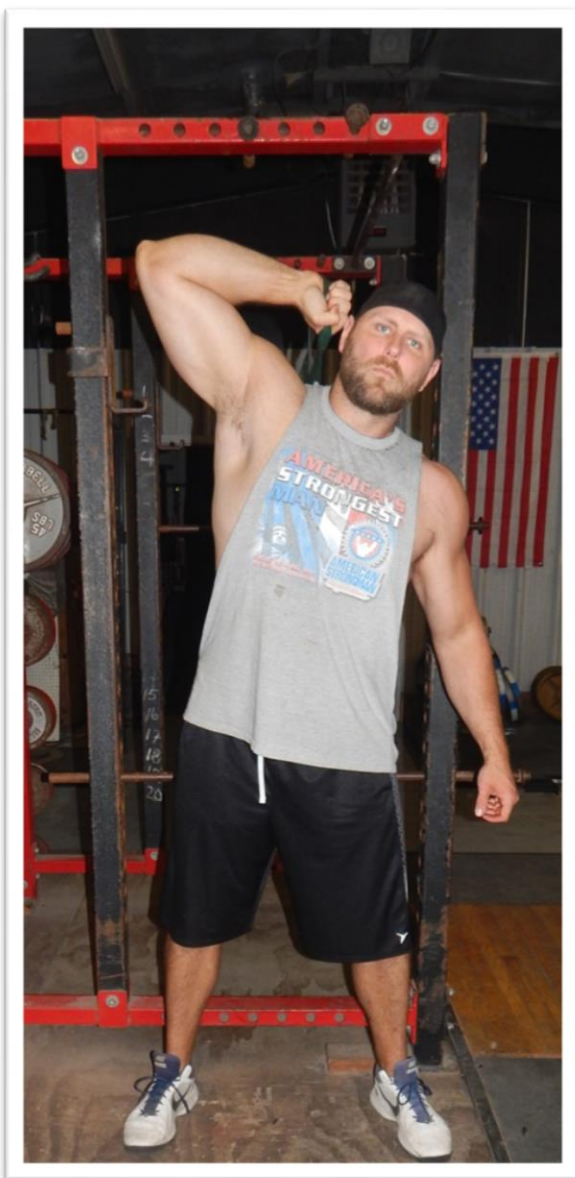
Overhead Assistance:

- Incline Press – Dumbbell or Barbell
- Bench Press – with varying grips
 - o Board Presses
 - o Rack Lockouts
 - o Floor Presses
 - o Close Grip
 - o Sling Shot
 - o Chains
 - o Bands
- Front Raises
- Lateral Raises
- Overhead Triceps Extensions
- Lying Triceps Extensions
- Pushdowns of all varieties (with bands is my favorite)
- Dips

Below are some of my favorite ways to do some of these exercises with some added “secret” twists:

One arm overhead tricep extensions with bands or dumbbells:

This is the best assistance exercise I have found to help build the circus dumbbell press. I prefer with a band, but dumbbells work as well. When using bands I try to do the movement in a similar position and angle as the circus dumbbell press. Be as explosive as possible and hold the lockout for a 2 count at the top. I prefer using the band because it puts a little less tension on the elbow than a dumbbell.



Push up with bands or chains:

These are a great way to blast the chest and triceps. I like these especially for if some reason I don't have a spotter for bench or if I just want a good finisher for my press work. The best way to get the most out of these is to do a slow negative on the way down and a pause on the bottom and then explode up.



Deadlift start rows also known as Pendlay rows to the waist:

These are great for building deadlift strength and implement pick up strength. They can be done using a straight bar, but some other variations include using a football bar or a log. Some people choose to do this exercise by pulling the bar into the chest as opposed to the waist, but in my experience pulling the bar into the waist builds more power. It also builds more of the lats and mid-back muscles, and you can use more weight. Be sure to finish the movement still bent over and not locked out and try to bring your chest out and shoulders back at the top as well. Be explosive with these and load up the bar.



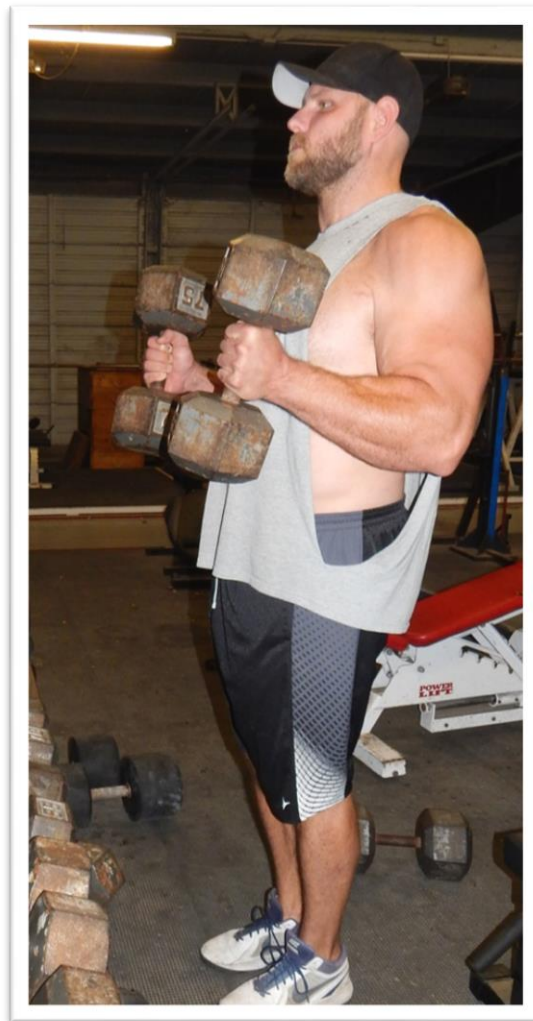
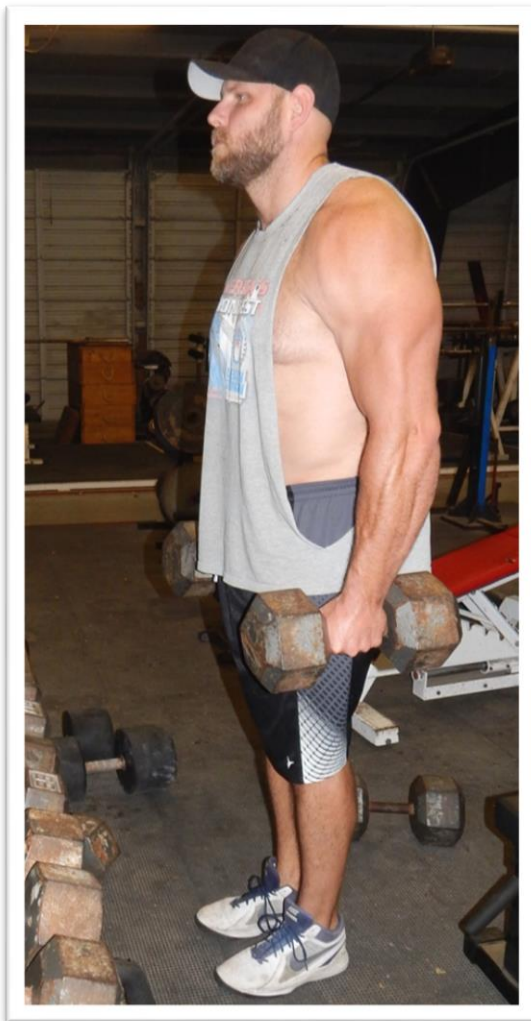


Leg press:

Many people gawk at leg presses but the strongest men of all time certainly don't. Zydrunas Savickas, Andy Bolton, Eddie Hall, Jouko Ahola and Mariusz Pudzianowski are just a few who see the benefit of doing these. Leg presses are a great way to build leg and squat power, and perhaps the greatest benefit of leg presses is how they are able to build the deadlift because the position you are in is very similar to the deadlift start position.

Hammer and Barbell Curls:

In my first two cube books the only direct bicep work I included was a set of curls with the bar for very high reps specifically to keep the bicep tendons healthy. The reasoning for this is almost every event in strongman heavily uses the biceps and therefore the strongman training was sufficient on its own. There was also a fear of doing too much bicep work leading to a bicep tear, which is a major injury in strongman. But after making the decision to include hammer and barbell curls into my regiment, I could see the strength difference on things like stones, sandbags, kegs, and many other areas. As I added them in I also included bicep specific massages and stretches and found they were able to recover and stay injury free.



Hybrid Dumbbell Press/Flys:

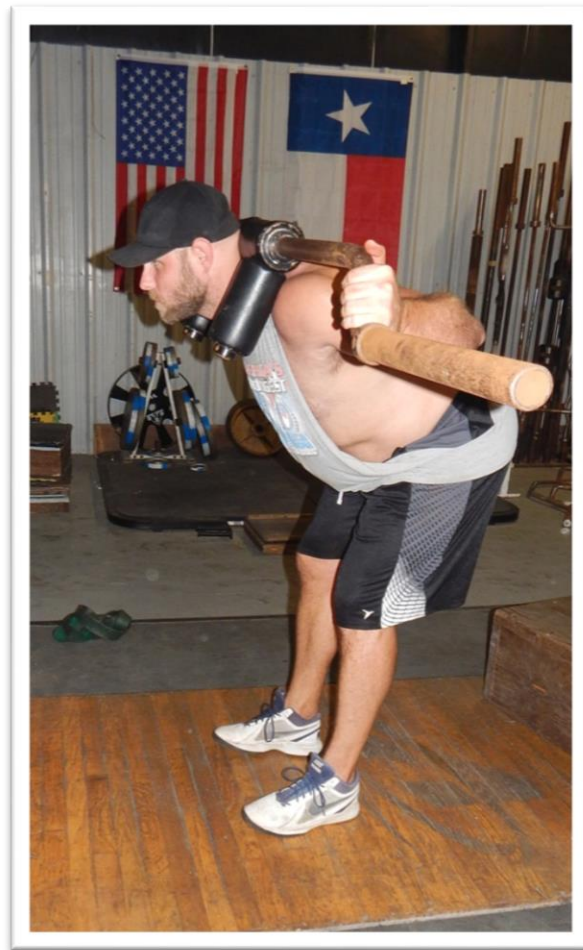
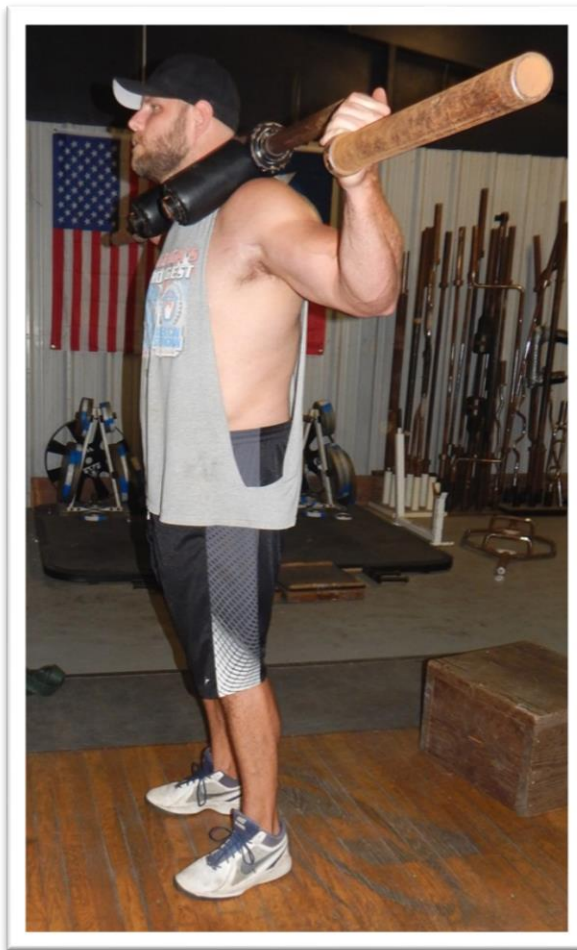
I think these exercises are good for a strongman for two reasons. First, the squeezing of an atlas stone actually engages the chest and this is a similar movement. If you ever take a break from stone lifting and then comeback to it, often times you will even notice your chest is sore the next day. Second, I believe they can help the log press when done in an incline position. The key to this movement is to make it wider than a press but not as wide as a typical fly. To get the most out of this exercise be sure to really sink the elbows down at the bottom and keep the shoulders back with the shoulder blades squeezed together.





Safety Squat Bar Good Mornings:

I prefer doing these with a safety squat bar because it forces the upper back and neck to really work along with the posterior chain. You can do these with either a wider or a narrower stance. I like to do them in my deadlift stance because that is where I need the most work. I have seen a benefit in my deadlift, stones and yoke from doing these.



Seated Speed Overhead Press with Bands:

Overhead presses with bands are a great way to build lockout power. I am seen here doing them with a log but you could also use an axle or regular bar. I do them seated because I am generally too tall to do them standing in a rack, but you could do them standing. I like to do 2 or 3 speed reps and hold the last rep of each set at the lockout for 5 seconds. I prefer to do more of a half rep or lockout with these but you can do a full rep. Give these a shot and your lockouts will feel much stronger.





Warm-Ups

Always warm up properly prior to training. I recommend the following warm up:

General Warm-up – Overhead Day:

- Foam Rolling- get into the shoulders with a medicine ball
- Shoulder complex warm up/stress with PVC pipe.
- Jump rope for 3-5 minutes
- Overhead squats with an empty bar

General Warm-up – Squat/Deadlift Day and Event Day:

- Light Foam Rolling the hips
- Mobility exercises
 - o Leg Swings
 - o Fire Hydrants (I do these standing, not on the floor)
 - o Bodyweight Squats
 - o Static Lunge stretch (concentrate on stretching the hip flexors and squeeze the glute)
- Kettlebell swings to help warm up the lower back
- On event days I will do some light jogging.

*The exercises above are my staples that I do regardless of the events trained.

Cube Method for Strongman 3 Programs

This new Cube for Strongman program rotates the overhead press through heavy, speed and repetition in 1 week on Monday, Wednesday and Friday along with the new Cube for Strongman conditioning protocol. Over the past year I have used all of these programs to get back in shape for strongman. I feel like these new variations of the Cube Method program are superior to Cube Method 1 and 2.

Week 1

Monday:

- Speed Squat (any squat variation) – 55% x 8 sets x 2 30 seconds rest between sets
- Heavy Overhead warm up then 2 sets of 3-4 reps 85 %
- Walking Lunges – 3 x 15 per leg 3 minutes rest between sets
- Calf Raises – 3 x 25 3 minutes rest

Tuesday:

- Ladder Drills 4 sets of 4-6 varying ladder drills very little rest in between
- Cone Drills 4 sets of 3-4 cone drills very little rest in between
- HIIT conditioning
- Abs
 - o Side Bends – 2 x 15 per side
 - o Hanging Leg raises – 3 x 15

Wednesday:

- Speed Overhead 8 sets of 3 reps at 50-60 %
- Incline Press – 3 x 8
- Dips – 3 x Max Reps
- Band Push downs
 - o Regular Grip (palms facing the floor) – 2 x 10 with 2 second pause at lockout
 - o Hammer Grip – 2 x 10 with 2 second pause at lockout
- Dumbbell Lateral Raises – 3 x 12

Thursday:

- Heavy deadlift work up to 3 sets of 4 with 85 % max weight on deadlift
- deadlift start rows 2 x 6-8 reps
- Shrugs – 3 x 15 (Barbell, Dumbbell, Farmer’s handles...) 3*
- Dumbbell Rows – 3 x 10 per arm
- Rear Delts – 3 x 15 (face pulls, rear delt raises...)
- Barbell Curls – barbell or hammer curls 2 x 8-10 reps

Friday:

- repetition overhead 2 sets of 8-10 reps 75 -80 %
- conditioning (steady state cardio)
- Sprints – 60 feet
 - o 1st at 40-50%
 - o Remaining sets progressively increase speed up to 70-80%. do 6 sprints with about 30-60 seconds rest in between
- Decline Crunches - 3 x 30

Saturday:

- Yoke - pick a weight that is roughly 60 % of the heaviest yoke you have done or contest weight, and do 4 speed runs with only 1 minute rest in between each run
- Farmers - pick a weight that is roughly 60 % of the heaviest farmers you have done or contest weight and do 4 speed runs with only one minute rest in between each set. Then do 1 farmers hold for time. Pick up a weight and stand there holding on as long as you can, do this for 1 set.
- Atlas Stone - Load a light to medium weight stone to a height for 8 sets of 2 reps with only 30 seconds rest in between sets

Week 2

Monday:

- Repetition Squat (any squat variation) – 2 sets x 70 % x 8 reps
- heavy overhead
- barbell hip thrusts with a weight you can get 3 sets of 8 -
- Calf Raises – 3 x 25

Tuesday:

- Ladder Drills 4 sets of 4-6 drills each
- Cone Drills 4 sets of 3-4 cone drills
- HIIT cardio
- Abs
 - o Side Bends – 2 x 15 per side
 - o Hanging Leg raises – 3 x 15

Wednesday:

- Speed overhead- 8 sets of 3 reps 50-55 %
- Close Grip Bench Press – 3 x 8
- Dumbbell Incline Press – 3 x 10
- Band Pushdowns
 - o Regular Grip – 2 x 10 with 2 second pause at lockout
 - o Hammer Grip – 2 x 10 with 2 second pause at lockout
- Dumbbell Front Raises – 3 x 12
- Dumbbell Lateral Raises – 3 x 12

Thursday:

- Speed deadlift 55 % max weight, 8 sets of 1 rep 30 seconds rest in between sets
- Goodmornings 2 sets x 8-10
- Barbell Rows – 3 x 8 3 minutes rest in between sets
- Pullups – 3 x 10
- Shrugs – 3 x 15 (Barbell, Dumbbells, Farmers...)
- Rear Delts – 3 x 15 (face pulls, rear delt raises...)
- Barbell or hammer curls 2 x 8 reps

Friday:

- Jump Rope – 3-5 minutes
- Repetition overhead
- Sprints – 8 runs x 60 feet
 - o 1st at 40-50%
 - o Remaining sets progressively increase speed up to 80-90%. 6 sets with little rest in between
- Steady State cardio 30-40 minutes
- Decline Crunches - 3 x 15 with weight

Saturday:

- Do any event you want here other than yoke, stones, farmers (i.e. tire flip, truck pull etc.) 3-4 events x 2 sets each event with no more than 4 minutes rest in between sets

Week 3

Monday:

- Heavy Squat (any squat variation) – 85 % x 3 X 3 reps as much rest as needed
- Heavy overhead
- Barbell Hip thrusters use a weight you can get 3 sets of 5
- Calf Raises – 3 x 25

Tuesday:

- Ladder Drills
- Cone Drills
- HIIT cardio
- Abs
 - o Side Bends – 2 x 15 per side
 - o Hanging Leg raises – 3 x 15

Wednesday:

- Speed Overhead 55 % max weight x 8 sets of 3 30 seconds rest between sets
- Axle incline press 3x 10 3 minutes rest
- Overhead Triceps Extension – 3 x 10
- Dumbbell Front Raises – 3 x 12
- Dumbbell Lateral Raises – 3 x 12

Thursday:

- Repetition Deadlifts – any deadlift variation you prefer for a weight you can get 1 set of 8 reps with
- 45° Hypers – 3 x 10 with weight 3 minutes rest between sets
- Seated Rows – 3 x 10 3 minutes rest between sets
- Pull-ups – 3 sets x 8-10
- Shrugs – 3 x 15
- Rear Delts – 3 x 15 (face pulls, rear delt raises...)
- Barbell or hammer curls 2 x 8 reps

Friday:

- Jump Rope – 3-5 minutes
- Repetition Overhead
- Sprints – 8 runs x 60 feet
 - o 1st at 40-50%
 - o Remaining sets progressively increase speed up to 90%.
- Decline Crunches - 3 x 30

Saturday:

- Yoke x 90-95 % of contest yoke x 2 sets with 5 minutes rest in between sets
- Farmers x 90-95 % of contest weight plus 1 set farmers hold for time
- Stones do a load for reps with a heavy stone with a 75 seconds time limit x 2 sets

Week 4: Deload (optional after 3 week phase)

This is optional after 3 week phase. This whole week keep everything light, 15 reps should be fairly easy on each set. I also recommend getting a couple of ice baths and massages during the week.

Monday:

- Leg Press – 3 x 15
- Leg Extensions – 3 x 15
- Calf Raises – 3 x 25

Tuesday:

- Go for a light walk, swim or stretch

Wednesday:

- Dumbbell Incline Press – 3 x 15
- Band Pushdowns:
 - o Regular grip with a 2 second pause – 2 x 15
 - o Hammer grip with a 2 second pause – 2 x 15
- Dumbbell Front Raises – 2 x 15
- Dumbbell Lateral Raises – 2 x 15

Thursday:

- 45° Hypers – 1x 20 with no weight
- Chest Supported Rows – 3 x 15
- Pulldowns – 3 x 15
- Shrugs – 2 x 40 (Barbell, Dumbbells, Farmers,...)
- Rear Delts – 3 x 15 (face pulls, rear delt raises...)
- Barbell Curls – 1 set with bar to failure

Friday:

- Go for a light walk, swim or stretch

This variation of the program trains every mode on overhead but over two days a week. Heavy and repetition are done on the same day without any assistance work and the speed day is done on Wednesday a long with all of the pressing assistance work. The way I prefer to do this is to do two different overheads on Monday. For example ill do log and dumbbell or axle and viking press etc. By doing this I am getting more work with different implements every week

Week 1

Monday:

- Speed Squat (any squat variation) – 50-55% x 8 sets x 2 30 seconds rest between sets
- 1 set heavy overhead 3-4 reps 85 %
- repetition overhead 1 set 8 reps 70-75 %
- Walking Lunges – with bar on back – 3 x 15 per leg 3 minutes rest between sets
- Calf Raises – 3 x 25 3 minutes rest

Tuesday:

- Ladder Drills pick 4-6 ladder drills and do 4 sets set's of each drill very little rest time
- Cone Drills pick 3-4 drills and do 4 sets each drill with very little rest time in between
- HIIT cardio
- Abs
 - o Side Bends – 2 x 15 per side
 - o Hanging Leg raises – 3 x 15

Wednesday:

- Speed Overhead 8 sets of 3 reps 50-55 % of max weight
- Incline Press – 3 x 8
- Dips – 3 x Max Reps
- Band Push downs
 - o Regular Grip (palms facing the floor) – 2 x 10 with 2 second pause at lockout
 - o Hammer Grip – 2 x 10 with 2 second pause at lockout
- Dumbbell Lateral Raises – 3 x 12

Thursday:

- Heavy deadlift work up to 2 sets of 3 with 85 % max weight on deadlift
- 45° Hypers – Body weight plus 75 pounds- 3 minutes rest in between sets
- Shrugs – 3 x 15 (Barbell, Dumbbell, Farmer’s handles...)
- Heavy Dumbbell Rows – 3 x 10
- Rear Delts – 3 x 15 (face pulls, rear delt raises...)
- Barbell or Hammer Curls 2 x 8 reps

Friday:

- Jump Rope – 3-5 minutes
- Sprints – 60 feet
 - o 1st at 40-50%
 - o Remaining sets progressively increase speed up to 70-80%. 6 sets
- Steady State Cardio 30-40 minutes
- Decline Crunches - 3 x 30

Saturday:

- Yoke - pick a weight that is 50-60 % of contest yoke, and do 4 speed runs with only 1 minute rest in between each run
- Farmers – Just like yoke pick a weight that is 50- 60 % of contest weight and do 4 speed runs with only one minute rest in between each set. Plus 1 set of farmers holds for time
- Atlas Stone - load a light to medium weight stone, to a height for 8 sets of 2 reps with only 30 seconds rest in between sets

Week 2

Monday:

- Repetition Squat (any squat variation) – 2 sets x 8 reps 70-75 %
- Repetition Overhead 1 set of 8 reps 70-75 %
- Heavy Overhead 1 sets of 3-4 reps 85 %
- Barbell Hip Thrusts with a weight you can get 3 sets of 8 - -
- Calf Raises – 3 x 25

Tuesday:

- Ladder Drills pick 4-6 drills and do 4 sets of each drill little rest time in between
- Cone Drills pick 3-4 drills and do 4 sets of each.
- HIIT cardio
- Abs
 - o Side Bends – 2 x 15 per side
 - o Hanging Leg raises – 3 x 15

Wednesday:

- Speed overhead- 8 sets of 3 reps 50 %
- Close Grip Bench Press – 3 x 8 3 seconds rest in between
- Dumbbell Incline Press – 3 x 10
- Band Pushdowns
 - o Regular Grip – 2 x 10 with 2 second pause at lockout
 - o Hammer Grip – 2 x 10 with 2 second pause at lockout
- Dumbbell Front Raises – 3 x 12
- Dumbbell Lateral Raises – 3 x 12

Thursday:

- Speed deadlift 55 % max weight, 8 sets of 1 rep 30 seconds rest in between sets
- Goodmornings 2 sets x 8-10
- Barbell Rows – 3 x 8 3 minutes rest in between sets
- Pulldowns – 3 x 10
- Shrugs – 3 x 15 (Barbell, Dumbbells, Farmers,...)
- Rear Delts – 3 x 15 (face pulls, rear delt raises...)
- Barbell or hammer curls 2 x 8 reps

Friday:

- Jump Rope – 3-5 minutes
- Sprints – 8 runs x 60 feet
 - o 1st at 40-50%
 - o Remaining sets progressively increase speed up to 80%.
- Steady State Cardio
- Decline Crunches - 3 x 15 with weight

Saturday:

- Do any event you want here other than yoke, stones, farmers. (i.e. tire flip, truck pull etc.) 3-4 events x 2 sets each event with no more than 4 minutes rest in between sets

Week 3

Monday:

- Heavy Squat (any squat variation) – 85 % x 2 X 3-4 reps as much rest as needed
- Heavy overhead 1 set of 3-4 reps 85 %
- repetition overhead 1 set of 3-4 reps
- Barbell Hip thrusters use a weight you can get 3 sets of 5
- Calf Raises – 3 x 25

Tuesday:

- Ladder Drills
- Cone Drills
- HIIT Cardio
- Abs
 - o Side Bends – 2 x 15 per side
 - o Hanging Leg raises – 3 x 15

Wednesday:

- Speed Overhead 55 % max weight x 8 sets of 3 30 seconds rest between sets
- Axle Incline Press 3x 10 3 minutes rest
- Overhead Triceps Extension – 3 x 10
- Dumbbell Front Raises – 3 x 12
- Dumbbell Lateral Raises – 3 x 12

Thursday:

- Repetition Deadlifts – any deadlift variation you prefer for a weight you can get 1 set of 6-8 reps with
- 45° Hypers – 3 x 10 with weight 3 minutes rest between sets
- Seated Rows – 3 x 10 3 minutes rest between sets
- Pull-ups – 3 sets x 8-10
- Shrugs – 3 x 15
- Rear Delts – 3 x 15 (face pulls, rear delt raises...)
- Barbell or hammer Curls – 2 set 8 reps

Friday:

- Jump Rope – 3-5 minutes
- Sprints – 8 runs x 60 feet
 - o 1st at 40-50%
 - o Remaining sets progressively increase speed up to 90%.
- Steady State Cardio 30-40 minutes
- Decline Crunches - 3 x 30

Saturday:

- Yoke 90-100 % of contest weight x 2 sets with 5 minutes rest in between sets
- Farmers same as yoke plus 1 set of farmers hold for time
- Stones do a load for reps with a heavy stone with a 75 seconds time limit x 2 sets

Week 4:Deload

This whole week keep everything light, 15 reps should be fairly easy on each set I also recommend getting a couple of ice baths and massages during this week.

Monday:

- Leg Press – 3 x 15
- Leg Extensions – 3 x 15
- Calf Raises – 3 x 25

Tuesday:

- Go for a light walk, swim or stretch

Wednesday:

- Dumbbell Incline Press – 3 x 15
- Band Pushdowns:
 - o Regular grip with a 2 second pause – 2 x 15
 - o Hammer grip with a 2 second pause – 2 x 15
- Dumbbell Front Raises – 2 x 15
- Dumbbell Lateral Raises – 2 x 15

Thursday:

- 45° Hypers – 1x 20 with no weight
- Chest Supported Rows – 3 x 15
- Pulldowns – 3 x 15
- Shrugs – 2 x 40 (Barbell, Dumbbells, Farmers...)
- Rear Delts – 3 x 15 (face pulls, rear delt raises...)
- Barbell Curls – 1 set with bar to failure

Friday:

- Go for a light walk, swim or stretch

Yet another variation here is to rotate repetition and heavy overhead every other week with speed days on Wednesdays every week.

Week 1

Monday:

- Speed Squat (any squat variation) – 50% x 8 sets x 2 30 seconds rest between sets
- Repetition Overhead 2 sets of 8 reps 70-75 %
- Walking Lunges – with bar on back – 3 x 15 per leg 3 minutes rest between sets
- Calf Raises – 3 x 25 3 minutes rest

Tuesday:

- Ladder Drills- pick 4-6 drills and do 4 sets of each
- Cone Drills-3-4 drills 4 sets each
- HIIT cardio
- Abs
 - o Side Bends – 2 x 15 per side
 - o Hanging Leg raises – 3 x 15

Wednesday:

- Speed Overhead 8 sets of 3 reps with 50-55 %
- Incline Press – 3 x 8
- Dips – 3 x Max Reps
- Band Push downs
 - o Regular Grip (palms facing the floor) – 2 x 10 with 2 second pause at lockout
 - o Hammer Grip – 2 x 10 with 2 second pause at lockout
- Dumbbell Lateral Raises – 3 x 12

Thursday:

- Heavy Deadlift - work up to 2 sets of 3 with 85 % max weight on deadlift
- 45° Hypers – Body weight plus 75 pounds- 3 minutes rest in between sets
- Shrugs – 3 x 15 (Barbell, Dumbbell, Farmer’s handles...)
- Heavy Dumbbell Rows – 3 x 10 per arm
- Rear Delts – 3 x 15 (face pulls, rear delt raises...)
- Barbell or Hammer Curls – 1 set with bar to failure

Friday:

- Jump Rope – 3-5 minutes
- Sprints – 60 feet
 - o 1st at 40-50%
 - o Remaining sets progressively increase speed up to 70-80% for 6 sets
- Steady State Cardio 30-40 minutes
- Decline Crunches - 3 x 30

Saturday:

- Yoke - pick a weight that is roughly 50-60 % of the heaviest yoke you have done, and do 4 speed runs with only 1 minute rest in between each run
- Farmers - Just like yoke pick a weight that is 50-60 % of the heaviest farmers you have done and do 4 speed runs with only one minute rest in between each set. Followed by 1 set of farmers holds for time
- Atlas Stone - load a light to medium weight stone, to a height for 8 sets of 2 reps with only 30 seconds rest in between sets

Week 2

Monday:

- Repetition Squat (any squat variation) – 2 sets x 70 % x 8 reps
- Heavy Overhead 2 sets of 3-4 reps with 85 %
- Barbell hip thrusts with a weight you can get 3 sets of 8 -
- Calf Raises – 3 x 25

Tuesday:

- Ladder Drills pick 4-6 drills and do 4 sets each
- Cone Drills pick 3-4 drills and do 4 sets each
- Abs
- HIIT Cardio
 - o Side Bends – 2 x 15 per side
 - o Hanging Leg raises – 3 x 15

Wednesday:

- Speed overhead- 8 sets of 3 reps with 55 % max weight
- Close Grip Bench Press – 3 x 8 3 seconds rest in between
- Dumbbell Incline Press – 3 x 10
- Band Pushdowns
 - o Regular Grip – 2 x 10 with 2 second pause at lockout
 - o Hammer Grip – 2 x 10 with 2 second pause at lockout
- Dumbbell Front Raises – 3 x 12
- Dumbbell Lateral Raises – 3 x 12

Thursday:

- Speed Deadlift 50% max weight, 8 sets of 1 rep 30 seconds rest in between sets
- Goodmornings 2 sets x 8-10
- Barbell Rows – 3 x 8 3 minutes rest in between sets
- Pulldowns – 3 x 10 2 triple set
- Shrugs – 3 x 15 (Barbell, Dumbbells, Farmers...)
- Rear Delts – 3 x 15 (face pulls, rear delt raises...)
- Barbell or hammer Curls – 1 set with bar to failure

Friday:

- Jump Rope – 3-5 minutes
- Sprints – 8 runs x 60 feet 6 sets
 - o 1st at 40-50%
 - o Remaining sets progressively increase speed up to 80%. 6 sets
- Steady state cardio
- Decline Crunches - 3 x 15 with weight

Saturday:

- Do any event you want here other than yoke, stones, farmers. (i.e. tire flip, truck pull etc.) 3-4 events x 2 sets each event with no more than 4 minutes rest in between sets

Week 3

Monday:

- Heavy Squat (any squat variation) – 85-90%x 2 X 3 reps as much rest as needed
- Repetition Overhead 2 sets of 8-10 70-75 %
- Barbell Hip Thrusters use a weight you can get 3 sets of 5
- Calf Raises – 3 x 25

Tuesday:

- Ladder Drills 4-6 drills and do 4 sets each
- Cone Drills 3-4 drills and do 4 sets each
- HIIT cardio
- Abs
 - o Side Bends – 2 x 15 per side
 - o Hanging Leg raises – 3 x 15

Wednesday:

- Speed Overhead 50-55 % max weight x 8 sets of 3 30 seconds rest between sets
- Axle Incline Press 3x 10 3 minutes rest
- Overhead Triceps Extension – 3 x 10
- Dumbbell Front Raises – 3 x 12
- Dumbbell Lateral Raises – 3 x 12

Thursday:

- Repetition Deadlifts – any deadlift variation you prefer for a weight you can get 1 set of 8 reps with
- 45° Hypers – 3 x 10 with weight 3 minutes rest between sets
- Seated Rows – 3 x 10 3 minutes rest between sets
- Pull-ups – 3 sets x 8-10
- Shrugs – 3 x 15
- Rear Delts – 3 x 15 (face pulls, rear delt raises...)
- Barbell or hammer Curls – 2 x 8 reps

Friday:

- Jump Rope – 3-5 minutes
- Sprints – 8 runs x 60 feet
 - o 1st at 40-50%
 - o Remaining sets progressively increase speed up to 90% 6 sets
- Steady State Cardio 30-40 minutes
- Decline Crunches - 3 x 30

Saturday:

- Yoke x 90-95% of contest weight x 2 sets with 5 minutes rest in between sets
- Farmers same as yoke followed by 1 set of farmers hold for time
- Stones do a load for reps with a heavy stone with a 75 seconds time limit x 2 sets

Week 4: Deload

This whole week keep everything light, 15 reps should be fairly easy on each set I also recommend getting a couple of ice baths and massages during this week.

Monday:

- Leg Press – 3 x 15
- Leg Extensions – 3 x 15
- Calf Raises – 3 x 25

Tuesday:

- Go for a light walk, swim or stretch

Wednesday:

- Dumbbell Incline Press – 3 x 15
- Band Pushdowns:
 - o Regular grip with a 2 second pause – 2 x 15
 - o Hammer grip with a 2 second pause – 2 x 15
- Dumbbell Front Raises – 2 x 15
- Dumbbell Lateral Raises – 2 x 15

Thursday:

- 45° Hypers – 1x 20 with no weight
- Chest Supported Rows – 3 x 15
- Pulldowns – 3 x 15
- Shrugs – 2 x 40 (Barbell, Dumbbells, Farmers...)
- Rear Delts – 3 x 15 (face pulls, rear delt raises...)
- Barbell Curls – 1 set with bar to failure

Friday:

- Go for a light walk, swim or stretch

The basis of this cube rotation is kind of in the same idea as an Olympic weightlifting regimen, with overhead and squats 3 days a week. I used this program when I first got back into training as my legs and overhead power really needed the extra work. The program is 3 days of weights and 1 day of events. If you follow this program, I would recommend the majority of your squats to be high bar Olympic style and/or possible front squats. Low bar power squats are tougher on your body as a whole, and you will be able to recover better with the higher bar squats.

Week 1

Monday:

- Heavy Overhead 85% 2 sets of 3
- Speed Squat 8 sets of 2 reps 50 % 30 seconds rest
- 3 Squat Assistance Exercises 2 sets of 8-10 each

Tuesday:

- Ladder Drills 4-6 drills and do 4 sets each
- Cone Drills 3-4 drills and do 4 sets each
- HIIT cardio
- Abs
 - o Side Bends – 2 x 15 per side
 - o Hanging Leg raises – 3 x 15

Wednesday:

- Speed Overhead 8 sets of 3 85 %
- Repetition Squat 2 sets of 8 reps 70-75 %
- Heavy Deadlift 2 sets of 3-4 85 %
- 3 Deadlift Assistance Exercises 2 sets of 8-10 reps each

Thursday:

- Jump Rope – 3-5 minutes
- Sprints – 8 runs x 60 feet 6 sets
 - o 1st at 40-50%
 - o Remaining sets progressively increase speed up to 80%. 6 sets
- Steady state cardio
- Decline Crunches - 3 x 15 with weight

Friday:

- Repetition Overhead 2 sets of 8 reps 70-75%
- Heavy Squat 3 sets of 2 reps 85%
- 3 pressing assistance movements

Saturday:

- Speed Yoke
- Speed Farmers
- Speed Stones

Week 2

Monday:

- Heavy Overhead 90% 2 sets of 2-3 reps
- Speed Squat 55% 8 sets 2 reps
- 3 Squat Assistance Exercises

Tuesday:

- Ladder Drills 4-6 drills and do 4 sets each
- Cone Drills 3-4 drills and do 4 sets each
- HIIT cardio
- Abs
 - o Side Bends – 2 x 15 per side
 - o Hanging Leg raises – 3 x 15

Wednesday:

- Speed Overhead 8 sets of 3 50-55% 30 seconds rest
- Repetition Squat 2 sets of 8 reps 70-75%
- Speed Deadlift 8 sets of 1 rep 50% 30 seconds rest
- 3 Deadlift Assistance Movements

Thursday:

- Jump Rope – 3-5 minutes
- Sprints – 8 runs x 60 feet 6 sets
 - o 1st at 40-50%
 - o Remaining sets progressively increase speed up to 80%. 6 sets
- Steady state cardio
- Decline Crunches - 3 x 15 with weight

Friday:

- Repetition Overhead 2 sets 8 reps 75- 80 %
- Heavy Squat 2 sets of 3 reps 85-90 %
- 3 Press Assistance Movements

Saturday:

- Events other than Yoke, Farmers, Stones i.e. tire flip, truck pull, sandbag and keg loading

Week 3

Monday:

- Heavy Overhead 2 sets of 2 reps 90-95%
- Speed Squat 8 sets of 2 reps 60%
- 3 Squat Assistance Exercises

Tuesday:

- Ladder Drills 4-6 drills and do 4 sets each
- Cone Drills 3-4 drills and do 4 sets each
- HIIT cardio
- Abs
 - o Side Bends – 2 x 15 per side
 - o Hanging Leg raises – 3 x 15

Wednesday:

- Speed Overhead 8 sets of 3 60%
- Repetition Deadlift 1 set of 8 reps 75%
- Repetition Squat 2 sets of 8 75-80%
- 3 Deadlift Assistance Movements

Thursday:

- Jump Rope – 3-5 minutes
- Sprints – 8 runs x 60 feet 6 sets
 - o 1st at 40-50%
 - o Remaining sets progressively increase speed up to 80%. 6 sets
- Steady state cardio
- Decline Crunches - 3 x 15 with weight

Friday:

- Repetition Overhead 2 sets of 8 reps 75-80%
- Heavy Squat 2 sets of 2 90-95%
- 2 Assistance Movements

Saturday:

- Heavy Yoke
- Heavy Farmers
- Heavy Stone

Cube for Strongman Nutrition and the Importance of Nutrient Timing

I wanted to include a section in this book about an important nutrition tip that I truly believe will help any strength athlete when they are applied correctly. That is the subject of pre, mid, and post workout shakes and nutrient timing. Although this is not meant as a nutrition book, I can tell you following this method has had a tremendous impact on my own training.

Much has been said about the "anabolic window" and whether or not you need to get your protein shake in within an hour of training or not. Some say just go with real food post training. While solid food is overall the main choice of the majority of your meals, there is something to be said for getting liquid protein and carbs in at the right times centered around training. There is a great book titled *Nutrient Timing* which studies and goes in depth about the benefits of before, during, and after training liquid nutrients. Please keep in mind that I don't have a dog in this fight, although I once did. I believe in this so much that I created a supplement based exactly around these principles. It was called Chronomass, I sold it successfully for a year or two before I decided running a supplement company was not really for me. But during this time, people drank the shake and gained tons of size and strength they weren't otherwise getting without it. Recovery between workouts and energy went up and perceived exertion went down during workouts. I very rarely ever train without a intra-workout and post-workout shake now, but if for some reason I have a session where I don't have the shake, I can always tell the difference immediately. I have less energy during my training and my recovery and strength gains are not as good.

In my opinion, the best way to do this for a strongman is also with creatine. Creatine is absolutely the best supplement you can take for strength gains. I believe every strength athlete should be taking it. I honestly can't think of one, single reason for a strength

athlete to not take creatine. I have encountered a couple of people along the way who say they don't get anything from creatine, but I think those people are the minority. Standard protocol is 5 grams a day, however I have noticed a significant difference with taking 10 grams instead of 5 which may not be the case for everyone but I never fail to take 10 grams of creatine immediately after training. The benefit of taking the protein, carbs, and creatine in liquid form is it getting into the system faster and thus begins the repair process as quickly as possible. When training, the body is very open to receiving nutrients. The carbs we want are simple carbs. Simple carbs will get into your system much faster, and will also spike insulin levels and assist that protein and creatine getting shuttled into your body to help begin the protein synthesis. Dextrose is the most ideal form of simple sugar as it will spike the insulin levels very high. I actually drink Gatorade because of its dextrose content.

The following nutrient breakdowns are considered optimal according to *Nutrient Timing*:

Pre-Workout:

- Protein – 0.15-0.25 g/kg
- Carbohydrates – 1-2 g/kg
- Fat – few, if any

Intra-Workout:

- Protein – 10-15 g/hr in the carbohydrate solution
- Carbohydrates – 30-60 g/hr in a 6-8% solution every 15 minutes
- Fats – few, if any

Post-Workout:

- Protein – 0.2-0.5 g/kg
- Carbohydrates – 3-4:1 ratio of a high glycemic index carbohydrate to high quality protein.
- Fats – few

Sample Strongman Meal Plan

This is a sample meal plan for a strongman competitor. Obviously this amount of food is not for every athlete so you should adjust it to meet your needs. The nutrition plan is an excerpt from *The Performance Nutrition Encyclopedia*, the most comprehensive book on sports nutrition out there. It can be found at StartingStrongman.com.

Start the day with a shake because after a long fast this is a great way to get nutrients in quickly.

Area 51 Shake:

- 1 cup Frozen mixed Berries
- Whey Protein powder - equal to 45 grams protein
- Digestive enzymes
- 1 tsp mixed greens (powdered)
- 1 tsp BCAAs
- 2 cups whole Milk

Breakfast

- 6 Eggs
- 1 cup Oats (dry measure)
- 2 Tbsp. Butter
- Stevia, or other flavoring/sweetener
- Multivitamin
- Glucosamine/chondroitin
- Cod liver oil
- Heart health supplement – CoQ10
- Vitamin C

Lunch:

- 3 oz. Avocado/Guacamole (this often has lime juice, onion, garlic, tomatoes, etc... for added benefit)
- 4-5 oz. Tilapia or Chicken
- 1 cup Brown Rice

Pre-workout meal:

- ½ lb. Deli Lunch Meat
- 1 Banana
- Almonds/Almond Butter

Pre-workout shake: (10-20 minutes before workout)

- 15-20 grams of protein
- 20 grams high glycemic carbohydrate
- BCAAs
- Caffeine
- Creatine

Mid training: sipping on pre-workout drink

Post-workout: double the carbs and protein with creatine immediately post-workout.

Dinner:

- 12 - 16 oz Beef/salmon
- 4 cups Salad (mixed greens or Romaine)
- 1/3 cup vinaigrette made with olive oil
- 1 cup Broccoli, asparagus, tomatoes
- 1 cup Sweet potato
- Multivitamin
- Vitamin C

Pre-bed meal:

- Cottage Cheese/Casein based Protein Shake
- CLO
- Apple/Pear

On a non-training day, drink a second Area-51 shake at your normal time of training.

Cube Psychology: Harnessing the Power of the Mind

The basis of the Cube Method for Strongman is to become the perfect all-around strength athlete. Because of this, it is important to discuss in-depth the most important strength training of all, the training of the mind. Mental strength is the most important aspect of a successful strength athlete, yet how much attention is given to this aspect? We train as hard as we can with the events and weights, and we put a lot of attention into our nutrition, so why not mental training?

Of course mental toughness is important to do well in any sport, but especially in strongman. One of the reasons I've always loved the sport is the real world application of mind over matter. Strongman and strength sports in general are not just about lifting heavy things, there is much more to it than that. Don't get me wrong I enjoy that aspect of strongman, but if you really examine it, the sport strengthens our character, resolve and overall mental strength.

I believe we are very limited in our understanding of just how powerful our minds are. The basis of strongman is that you have an obstacle in front of you and that obstacle must be overcome. Before you lift or move any object you must first believe you will. I have seen people lift things they have no business lifting whatsoever. What I mean is they literally did not have the physical strength to lift the weight, yet somehow, somehow through mental strength they forced their bodies to lift it. The body does what the mind tells it to do. Once you put this principle into effect the possibilities are endless.

My Intro to Psyche: Kaz

To say that Bill Kazmaier understands the power of the mind-body connection would be an understatement. I think a better statement would be that he exemplified it. I feel very fortunate that the 1981 World's Strongest Man competition was the first strongman contest I ever saw. Because of this contest, I got an education on the power of the mind in strongman. Maybe if I just saw huge guys lifting things I would have thought it was cool, but I wouldn't had been quite as captivated as I was. I believe my interest was piqued because I saw the incredible focus, drive and psyche power of the Kaz. He was certainly dialed in.

The first event was the log press. The other lifters walked up to the log and maybe gave a little yell before trying to lift it. One by one they all failed at the final weight. Then, up comes the Kaz. His approach was different from the others. He was stalking around behind the crowd. His eyes were closed and there was a look on his face of extreme intensity and focus. He stops and goes into a trance like state. His breathing changes and he is doing some serious visualization. Suddenly he bursts out of his trance, starts growling and then proceeds to grab the log and in one motion power curled all 360 pounds straight into a strict press overhead in the blink of an eye. He followed this up with the barrel load where he convinced himself the barrels were helium filled and started throwing them onto the platform. He wasn't done yet. After tearing his pec off in the bar bend, he worked himself up into an absolute frenzy and squatted 969 pounds in one of the most explosive squats I have ever seen. Next came the deadlift and Kaz ripped 940 pounds off the ground not once, but twice. Following the contest the announcer asked Kaz what his secret to psyching himself up was. His reply was, "Psyche. Gosh it's something from within. It could be possibly metaphysical. It's the ability to concentrate and draw in powers that are all around us, and focus." This was my introduction to the World's Strongest Man competition. I didn't need to get a degree to learn about psychology, it was right there in front of me. I have since had the opportunity to hang out and talk with Kaz many times and learn some of his secrets to mind power.

You might say Kaz was also genetically gifted and trained like an animal. I would agree with you, but there is much more to him than that. If you have ever spoken with him, you can clearly see that Kaz is on another plain. He speaks almost poetically and cryptically like he is from another time. I believe it is this mentality that set him apart. He may have had great genetics and trained exceptionally hard, but if he wasn't as mentally strong as he was we would have never seen the true capabilities of Kaz.

Applying What I Learned

After seeing this amazing display of psyche, I decided one day I would make it to the World's Strongest Man. Of course I would start to train hard and eat as much as I could, but I also started to incorporate some mental training from a young age. Taking Kaz's lead, I started psyching myself up in training. I would mimic his growling and breathing patterns and try to focus on making the weight seem light. I tried to find different thoughts that worked for me. Over the years my ability to psyche myself up increased as I learned more and more about the power of mind over matter. For instance, during one deadlift workout I was having some real trouble lifting a certain weight. It just did not want to budge. I tried a couple of times but it wasn't happening. Often times in the deadlift if you miss a lift you are done, it's just not going to happen. However, on this day I wasn't accepting that as fact. I used some psyching up techniques and came back and ripped the weight off the floor 3 times! I hadn't physically gotten stronger in those few minutes. The only difference was the change in mental thought I had. This type of story is standard at the top level of the strongman world. The very best are able to force the body to do what they want it to do. Through proper channeling of the mind they can enforce their will on whatever is in front of them.

Mental strength is not only needed in order to lift something heavy, it is also needed in order to overcome extreme amounts of pain. In strongman, you must be carrying something heavy with an extreme amount of lactic acid building up, while becoming extremely oxygen deprived as well. When the body starts shutting down, you will need

to draw upon inner strength and constitution in order to continue on. Pain tolerance is of paramount importance in the sport.

Mental Training Techniques

Since we have discussed the importance of mental strength, we can now begin to learn some ways to increase the ability to psyche oneself up and to become mentally tough. I believe some people are born with a natural ability to focus their mind. But I also believe there are certain techniques to be learned to maximize inner strength. Here are a few things I have found to be extremely helpful:

Power of Positive Thinking

This may seem like an obvious technique, but let's really examine it. The very first step in increasing the mind power is replacing negative thinking with positive. I'm not talking about sunshine and rainbows here. I'm talking about believing you can do whatever is necessary to succeed. When doubts come into your mind you must acknowledge it, then move it to the side and replace it with a positive one. For example, if you have a competition coming up and there is a certain weight which may be a stretch for you. You are going to have to do the event so how does it benefit you to doubt yourself or think you can't do it? The answer is it doesn't help you at all. It will only hurt you to think this way. If you are going to have to attempt the event anyway, go ahead and think positively about it in training. Why not have an un-dying belief in yourself no matter what? One thing is certain, if you don't believe you can do something you won't. When I was growing up I was a skinny, short, weak, little kid. No one would have ever thought I would make it to the World's Strongest Man competition. I never let that stop me though. I have always felt it was never IF I was going to make it to WSM but WHEN. I think without this belief I would have never made it which is not to say that I have never had any negative thoughts or struggled with doubts in training. But in time I have learned to turn those into positive thoughts.

Start to take note of any negative thoughts that come into your mind about your abilities. This may be about an up-coming training session or a certain event you aren't good at. Start to practice replacing those negative thoughts with a positive one like "I'm getting better on this event no matter what." I believe positive thinking is a common trait of all champion athletes. They don't let negative thoughts stick around. Champions don't hope to do well, they EXPECT to do well. When Michael Jordan got the ball for a game-winning shot attempt, he wasn't just hoping to make the shot; he naturally EXPECTED to make it. Begin to EXPECT to reach your goals and do anything you decide to do.

Visualization

Visualization is one of the most important tools you have in your mental training arsenal. There are two types of visualization I would like to discuss - meditative visualization and active visualization. First, let's discuss meditative visualization. Meditative visualization is when you take a specific time out of your day, find a quiet place and begin to visualize yourself accomplishing certain things. This could be something like holding the trophy at the end of a competition. You could think about feeling the sun on your face and the weight of the trophy in your hand. You can even hear the announcer calling your name as the winner of the competition. You can make it as detailed as possible. You start to live this out many times in your head before it ever even happens. This will cause your subconscious mind to start to expect the very thing you are visualizing to happen and your body will then follow suit when the time comes to live it out. Many champion athletes use this technique. George St. Pierre has said when a fight is coming up he closes his eyes and over and over hears in his mind, "And still, the welterweight champion of the world!!! George St. Pierre!!!" He feels his hand being raised and feels the belt being put around his waist again. He rehearses this repeatedly, leading up to a fight and for the last six years his visions have been correct. You can utilize this with a certain weight you are going after as well. Let's say you have a certain weight in mind as a goal you want to one day hit on the log press. You can close your eyes and start to visualize yourself doing this. Think about how light the weight feels coming off the ground. Feel it roll up your chest explosively. See yourself taking a breath and then your

entire body fires to drive the weight up overhead. Imagine it flying up very quickly because it feels so light. Over time this kind of visualization will cause the body to work to make this goal a reality.

The second type of visualization I want to discuss is active visualization which is when in your everyday life you are seeing yourself doing something before it happens. Rather than taking a certain time during the day and finding a quiet place you can do this at any time and wherever you are. For instance, you might be driving in your car and as you are driving you are thinking about your next squat workout. You are visualizing the weight feeling light, and you are excited about hitting your goal weight, sets and reps. If you do this throughout the day, continuously expecting to reach your goal and being excited about it, by the time your squat workout rolls around you are in the best possible mental state to hit that goal. This could also be right before an event in training or competition. You look at the event and make yourself believe it weighs nothing, or even better still like Kaz, that it is helium filled. If you really convince yourself of that, when you start the event it will feel exactly how you imagined it. Such is the power of the mind.

Anger

It may seem odd coming from a Christian evangelist to encourage anger, but let me explain. I am not a fan of leading an angry life for angers sake, or constantly being angry at your fellow man. I'm speaking of a different kind of anger. There is a time and place for anger. Even Jesus displayed serious anger upon visiting the temple and seeing what it had become. Many great men in history have accomplished much from righteous anger and indignation. The anger I am speaking of is an anger against something that is trying to defeat you. It is an anger at something that is trying to bring you down. Indeed sometimes anger is exactly what is needed in order to move an immovable object. A one thousand pound yoke will try to drive you into the ground. That should piss you off. Plain and simple, there is an object in front of you that is trying to defeat and bring you down. Anger about that very fact is often the very solution to

overcoming that enemy. Now sometimes, there are things we can draw on from deep inside of us as well, perhaps something from the past. Whatever it is you might think about, strongman can be a good outlet for those thoughts. I know I have one particular thought in my head that from time to time I can go to and it has not failed me. If you have a thought like that you can utilize it as well. Some people are very emotionally charged about the psyche up process and some are very introverted and keep it inside. For instance Zydrunas Savickas goes about his lifting very calmly and quietly, but still gets the job done. Others prefer slaps and lots of yelling, either way is good, as long as it works for you.

Realize the Power of the Whole Body

One of the techniques I have often used with great success is to realize the power of the body as a whole. We often think in terms of separate body parts when we do a lift. For example, when you do an overhead press you might think of shoulders as the primary muscle lifting the weight. If you change your thinking however, and think about utilizing every muscle group in your body, it can work wonders for your strength. Imagine if you utilized the strength of every muscle group of your body all at once. How much weight could you really lift? I am aware of the fact that there are certain muscle groups that are dominant on certain lifts. The goal however, is to try and activate your entire body's energy and strength as a whole to lift the weight. So when you do that overhead press you aren't just using some leg and shoulder strength, but every muscle to lift the weight which means calves, hamstrings, biceps, shoulders, triceps, traps, abs, back, everything! If you try to make a physiological counterpoint to this about which muscle groups are involved in certain lifts, you are completely missing the point. The point is if you think in terms of how strong your whole body is when every muscle fires at the same time, 2, 3, or 400 pounds overhead begins to seem like light weight. Try this psychological "trick" out and see if the weight doesn't seem lighter.

Overcoming Pain

Here is a fact - you will experience pain in strongman. A true strongman may have a certain amount of enjoyment for pain, but at times it is necessary to block it out. There are certain techniques that can be done to accomplish this. One thing you can do is realize what pain is. Pain is simply a message sent to the brain that some type of trauma or stress is going on with the body. Therefore, if you could turn off that signal there would be no more pain. This takes some practice. In training or life in general when you are going through pain you can acknowledge the signal the body is trying to send and then once it is received, turn the signal off. It isn't needed anymore because you got the message. This may or may not make sense to you, but try it out and see if you are able to turn off the signal. There is a less scientific approach and it involves motivation. If someone is motivated enough no amount of pain will be able to stop you. For example, if something terrible is happening to a loved one and in order for you to save them you would have to do something that caused a lot of pain. Because you had the proper motivation you would go through it without a moment's pause wouldn't you? The same principle applies in strongman. If you are motivated enough to strive for excellence, refuse to be a quitter and become the champion you want to be, no amount of pain will stop you. Ask yourself where your motivation and conviction levels are. At the end of the day, you may just need to man up.

Sometimes Less Psyche is More

There are certain times when too much psyching up is detrimental, for instance a medley. During a grueling medley your heart rate will go through the roof and you will be oxygen deprived. If your heart rate is already very high before the medley starts it will get way too high during the event, and you will gas out way too soon.

I have had a problem with this in the past. Before a medley, I would start anticipating what I was about to go through and the anxiety of the event would cause my heart rate to go too high. I have learned to calm myself down and bring my heart rate back down to a reasonable rate. Do your best before events that are very stressful on the heart to

calm yourself down or you might not perform at your optimal level during the event. Here it's not always beneficial to work yourself up with too much adrenaline.

You Are Your Biggest Competition

At the end of the day, always remember you are your biggest competition. I am a very competitive person, but I have realized I enjoy competing against myself the most. Ultimately, other athletes will do what they are going to do in a competition and you will do what you do. Don't go through strongman without taking some time to realize there is more to the sport than just lifting stuff. As fun as that is, there are life lessons and real world applications to be learned from training and competing. Begin to realize if you can use the power of the mind to move weights that previously seemed impossible, then you can use the same mind to accomplish other things in life. If you can push through a medley even though you feel like you will die if you go one step further, what else can you get through in life? What can you go through and come out on the other side and say I believed I could do it and I did? I believe this is the ultimate goal of the strongman journey, and I hope these tips can help you in not only strongman, but life as well.

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