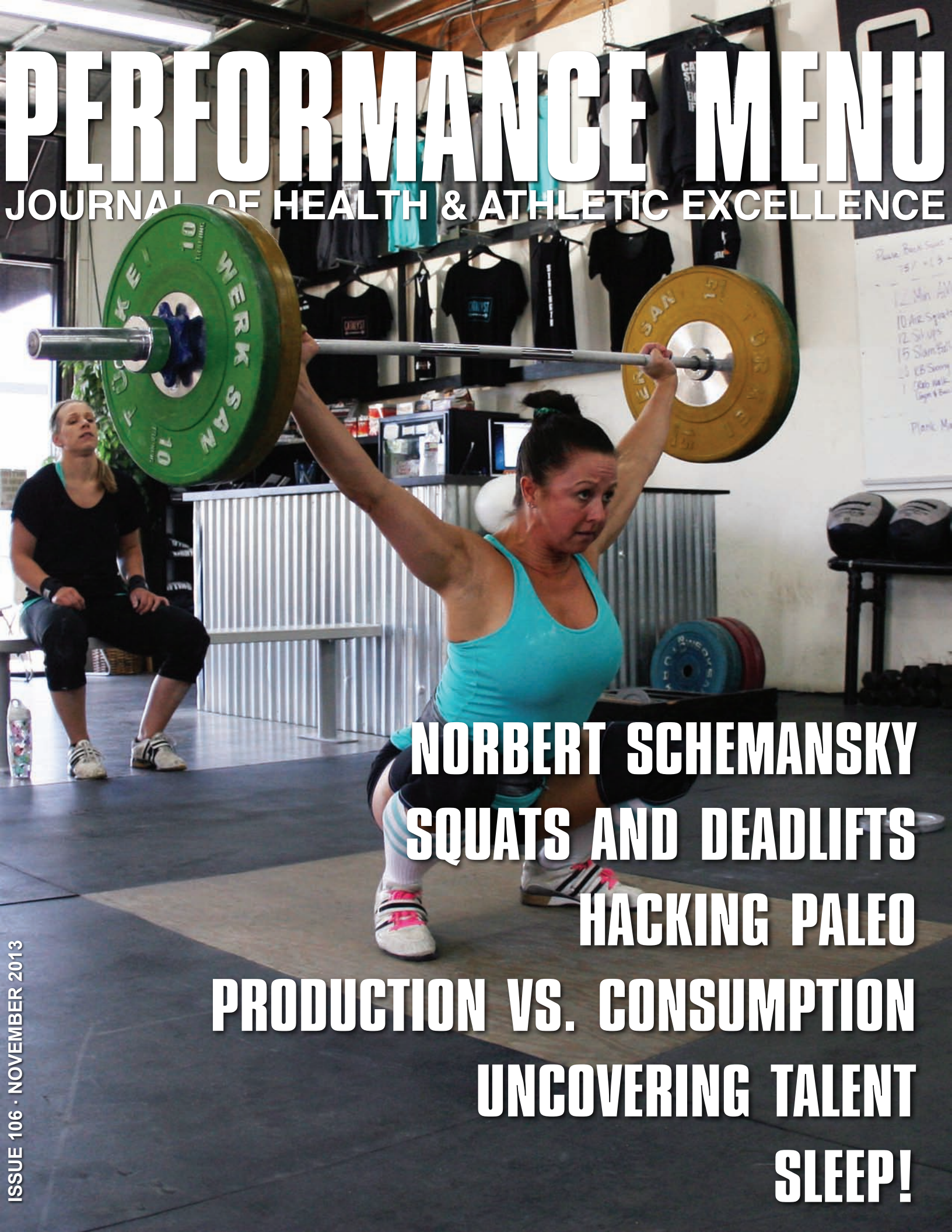


PERFORMANCE MENU

JOURNAL OF HEALTH & ATHLETIC EXCELLENCE



NORBERT SCHEMANSKY

SQUATS AND DEADLIFTS

HACKING PALEO

PRODUCTION VS. CONSUMPTION

UNCOVERING TALENT

SLEEP!

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ASK GREG

Want your question answered by Greg Everett? Send your email to ask@performancemenu.com.

Troy Asks: *I've been training for just over 3 years (took about 6 months off in there) and have a question about injuries. I'm currently training 4 days a week (most days include one exercise for Snatch, Clean, Pull and Squat) but find myself getting nagging injuries much more frequently than most other athletes (primarily calf and knee pain). I foam roll and warm up before every session, and stretch after. Just wondering if you've had any athletes that are prone to injuries and any advice you may have for preventing them? I feel that not being able to train injury free for long stretches is hindering my progress a fair bit.*

I'm 25, about 5'10-11", 87-88kg, snatch 115, CJ 150, BS 200.

Thanks for your help.

Greg Says: At only 25 years old, I wouldn't expect you to be getting so beat up, especially training only 4 days per week. If you're foam rolling, warming-up and stretching well as it sounds, it's even stranger. First thing I would do is some additional work on the problem areas—calves, quads and hamstrings. Roll and stretch these areas even between sets during your workouts.

Next, I would suggest you find a way to do contrast hydrotherapy as often as possible. Ideally this means alternating hot tub and cold plunges, but I realize that few people have access to this. There are facilities that offer the use of these things for around \$20/hour, so look around in your area. It may be something you can do once weekly or twice monthly. Anything is better than nothing.

I'm also a fan of ice baths. Drop 20-40 lbs of ice in a bath tub of cold water and enjoy sitting in that for 10-15 minutes. Ice has gotten a bad rap lately, but anecdotally, this is very effective. Post workout or at the end of the day is the best time to do it. If you have a separate shower and bath tub at home, you can contrast by alternating ice bath and hot shower. Worst case, you can do contrast showers—not nearly as effective, but better than nothing. This stuff should help not just with inflammation, but more with improving blood flow and nutrient turnover to help recovery.

I would also look into your nutrition. Reduce pro-inflammatory foods and improve digestion. You can check out [Functional Diagnostic Nutrition](#) for some solid testing protocols and guidance there.

And of course, your sleep has to be in order. Do what you need to get 8-10 hours/night of the highest quality sleep possible. If and when possible, throw in a nap in the early afternoon—even if it's 10 minutes of lying quietly somewhere and not worrying about work or the impending collapse of civilization.

Finally, you may try more frequent and dramatic modulation of training intensity and volume. For example, training hard for 2 weeks and backing off for 1, and having only 2 of your 4 weekly sessions being really high volume and intensity, with the other two being more moderate.

Kit Asks: *Just wanted to start off by saying GREAT SITE and thanks for all the valuable information!! If we lived out there we would be clients for sure!*

I don't know if this would help but here are some stats:

Male-
6'1"
240 lbs
Max clean- 275 lbs
Max Snatch - 230 lbs
Front Squat - 365 lbs
Back Squat - 465 lbs

I wanted to ask if you or any lifters at your gym have experienced Patella Tendonitis, and if it's common among Olympic style Lifters? I am in week 5 of a 12 week (2 peak) program which has week 6 as 1 peak so were getting into heavy doubles and singles. At the beginning of the program, I would start getting some tightness and slight pain right above my patella towards the end of the workouts, in the auxiliary movement sets. I use the warm up from your site (great by the way) and also roll out on the foam rollers to keep my quads warmed in.

This last week the pain comes on within the first few sets, it was starting to change my technique, so I shut it down. I have visited my local orthopedic doctor, and he eluded (not very definitively) to Patella Tendonitis. After some research, it looks to be where the pain is located and occurs while performing the explosive extension parts of the lift. His advice was to rest it... yeah I payed for that advice!

After some rest, 3-weeks or so, is there any specific types of mobility movements/ workout types or actions I should perform in a routine to help with this not coming back? I have attached a video of a warm up lift for your review. My coaches here have said they don't see any issues on the technique-end of the lifts that would contribute to this type of injury. Prior to the last few weeks, I've have never felt this type of pain. I have only been Olympic lifting for about 6 months now and really enjoy it so I don't want this to hinder my advancement, which is the main reason for reaching out to you guys.



Any advice would be much appreciated!

Greg Says: Very often this seems to come from tightness specifically in the rectus femoris (middle quad muscle that cross the knee and hip). Generally, it sounds like you're on the right track with the foam rolling and warming up, but you may need to put more emphasis on this area. In addition to foam rolling all aspects of the quad (from VMO to ITB), get a lacrosse or softball and roll in the tender spot right above your knee (in all directions), along the ITB (you may find you have a particularly tight or sensitive spot about halfway up your thigh) and on the VMO. Sometimes tightness or adhesions in these areas prohibit normal patellar movement and cause pain.

Also, add what we at NorCal Strength & Conditioning used to refer to affectionately as the Death Stretch. I actually like doing this best on an incline bench (knee on seat, leg against back of bench), but you can do it on just about anything, such as a plyo box, flat bench, table, couch, etc. The idea is to stretch the quads at both the knee and the hip (really attacking that rectus femoris mentioned previously). Get into a lunge position with your back foot supported on some kind of platform (e.g. the top of a plyo box) and flex the knee while extending the hip. You can change the emphasis of the stretch to the hips by opening the knee joint more and extending the hip farther, or to the knee by closing the knee completely. Do both. You can also add rotation of the trunk to both sides.

You can also do the stretch by placing a pad on the floor next to a wall or post. Place the back knee on the pad and your foot/shin against the wall in a lunge position. I like this setup the least because it puts pressure on the knee and unless you're already pretty flexible, it's difficult to get into a good position for an effective stretch.

Try using a heating pad on your knees pre-workout, and then some ice post-workout after you've hit everything with the foam roller and softball and

stretched. See the previous question also regarding contrast—all of that should help you get it recovered and keep it healthy.

DISCUSS THIS ARTICLE ON THE PERFORMANCE MENU WEBSITE!

Greg Everett is the owner of [Catalyst Athletics](#), publisher of [The Performance Menu](#) and author of [Olympic Weightlifting: A Complete Guide for Athletes & Coaches](#).



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A GREAT OLYMPIC CHAMPION... AND YOU

I don't write about other people very often. It's not what I want to do, and I don't think it's what most of you are interested in reading. This magazine is called Performance Menu, which probably means most of the people who read it are looking for ways to improve their...performance. I don't think athlete biographies or weightlifting history articles are exactly what you're thirsting for, and I understand. As I said, it works out pretty well because that kind of stuff isn't what I want to focus on as a writer.

However, there are a few situations here and there where I think we can learn a hell of a lot by reading the stories of certain people. I love watching shows like A&E Biography and Inside the Actors Studio. When successful individuals sit down and talk about their lives, I almost always find something in their back story that connects really well with my own. Every single one of them has had defeats and obstacles, which is something we all like to hear because it makes us understand that we're not the only ones. Also, they've all usually had a point in their lives where they had to take some kind of huge risk. This gives us confidence about the chances we have to take in our own lives.

So, let me tell you some things about a guy most of you have never heard of (which is a damn shame). I'm going to write about Norbert Schemansky in this month's article. Norb was an American Olympic lifter during the 1940s, 50s, and 60s. You could make a pretty strong case that Norb is the best American weightlifter of all time. In fact, it's not a huge stretch to mention his name when you're talking about the greatest weightlifters in history...period.

STOP! Some of you might already be thinking about dismissing this article because you're not interested in spending a few minutes of your day reading about some weightlifter from the old dinosaur days. You want to read about training programs, technique, coaching, and all the other stuff we normally cover in this magazine. That's why I'm going to stop you dead in your tracks and tell you with 100 percent certainty that you can learn some of the most important lessons of your career by reading about Norb Schemansky. He's my weightlifting idol. And I'm not one of those guys who do a lot of "hero worship" with athletes, or anybody else for that matter. This guy is an exception to my rule, though. He's an exception to every rule you could ever think of.

Trust me, I'm not going to bore you with three or four pages of statistics and stuff like that. I'm going to connect this guy's life with your own. You're going to learn about Norb, but what you're really going to do is learn about yourself. By looking at what he did, you're going to get a clearer vision of what you want to do. By reading about what he went through, you'll see the things you're going through in a different way. And by learning about the kind of person he was, I honestly think you'll develop some new ideas about the kind of person you want to be.

I probably shouldn't use the word "was" in that last sentence, because Norb is still alive. At the time of this article, he's 89 years old. His career as an athlete is obviously in the distant past, but the accomplishments and legacy of this man will live forever because his spirit is in all of us. Yes, you read that right. His spirit is in you, me, and every weightlifter in the world. Let me prove it to you.

HOW'S THIS FOR A RESUME?

Norb is from Michigan, the Detroit area (Dearborn, precisely). He was born in 1924 into a working-class Polish family. After growing up in a pretty normal way, he started playing around with barbells and weightlifting during high school. His training was interrupted for a few years by this pesky little inconvenience called World War II. No big deal. He joined the Army and served with an anti-aircraft unit in Europe, fought in the Battle of the Bulge, shot down German fighter planes...you know, the typical stuff we all did in our 20s. When the war was over, he did what most GIs did. He came home, got married, impregnated his wife a few times, and got a job. But he also decided to get back into the weightlifting thing because he was pretty good at it, and he was hooked. I'll give you the basics of Norb's career:

- Four-time Olympic medalist (silver-1948, gold-1952, bronze-1960, bronze-1964)
- Three-time World Champion
- Nine-time US National Champion
- 26 World Records (he set his last one when he was 38)
- 34 US National Records

Like I said, he's one of the greatest weightlifters of all time. That record stacks up against anybody, from any era. How much did he lift?

- Clean and Press- 402 lbs
- Snatch- 363 lbs
- Clean and Jerk- 445 lbs

Now, I need to give you a few bits of information about these numbers. First of all, weightlifting was a three-lift sport until 1972. Some of you might not know that. When you competed in a weightlifting meet, you did the clean and press (which is exactly what it sounds like, a clean followed by a standing overhead press), then the snatch, and then the clean and jerk. The press was eliminated in 1972. Ever since then, it's just been the way we know it now (SN, C&J). Stop and think about what it would be like to do a three-lift weightlifting meet like this. I'm telling you, the guys from the old pressing days were as hard as pig iron.

Second, Norb was a split-style lifter (as were most of the old timers from that era). That means he did

split cleans and split snatches. If you don't know what these are, get on YouTube and type in "split snatch" or "split clean and jerk." Almost nobody does them anymore, but they used to be common practice.

Now, I listed above that Norb's best snatch was 363 lbs. That means he split snatched that weight. Stop and think for a second about split snatching 363 lbs. Once that image has kicked you in the brain, let me mention that Norb did this weight when he was 40 years old, after having a back surgery to repair a crippling injury that prompted doctors to tell him he might never walk again.

Yeah, he split snatched 363 lbs when he was 40 years old. He did it in a full three-lift meet. That means he had already clean and PRESSED 400 lbs, then he did the 363 split snatch, and then he split clean and jerked almost 450. When he was 40...after back surgery...while working a full-time job and supporting a family... We can reach a clear conclusion from these little details; this guy was the toughest son of a bitch in weightlifting history.

And by the way, he did all of this before the age of steroids. That means he was drug-free. Brothers and sisters, there has never been anybody like this guy. I know we've got some behemoth numbers in the sport these days. The top lifters in the world can snatch 450 lbs. and C&J 550. But when you look at all the pieces of the puzzle, and you take everything into consideration, this man's feats of strength are incomparable. Norb Schemansky is one of the giants of strength history, an iconic legend.

WORK, DIET, TRAINING, PERSONALITY...

A guy named Richard Bak wrote a book about Norb a few years ago called Mr. Weightlifting. I hated the title, but loved the book. There was obviously a ton of information about his life and athletic career, but the best parts were the sections where Norb talked about the way he approached certain things. I'm going to break this down into a few short categories:

NUTRITION

Obviously this is a topic that's hugely important to a lot of you. Eating for performance has become a field unto itself. Libraries of books and literature have been

published about how to use nutrition to become a championship athlete. Well, let me give you the words of a guy who won more championships than almost anybody in history. When asked about his diet, Norb said, "Most of my diet is hamburgers, pizza, Polish sausage, and beer. If a guy needs a special diet to compete, I've already got him beat." Yeah, that's what he said. Based on that statement, you might think Norb had a sloppy physique. And you would be wrong. Norb was built like a Greek god. He actually competed in a few bodybuilding contests just for fun...and won.

TRAINING

Programming is on everybody's mind. One of the main reasons you're probably reading this magazine is to pick up some tips about your own training regimen that will make you a better weightlifter. Here are some thoughts from Norb: "Don't attempt maximums in the gym. Some members of the U.S. lifting team couldn't believe how much more I could do in a contest, where it counted. I was never burned out. Attempts at limit weights should be restricted to once every three or four weeks. One should not work any more than 80 to 90 percent of his limit in training." That's straight from the horse's mouth. You might want to keep this concept in mind when you're planning your own training, since it comes from one of the greatest.

WORK

Most of us have never trained at an Olympic level. I'm talking about the kind of training you have to do when you're the best in the world and you're trying to stay there. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out that the intensity, stress, and all-consuming physical demands at this level are stupefying. Now, think about having to train like this when you're working a full-time job, worrying about paying your bills and supporting your family. Most of you are shaking your heads, and with good reason. It sounds like an impossible situation. Seriously, do any of us think the top lifters in Europe and Asia are working 40 hours a week at a brewery, struggling to afford their house payment, and then training to win the Olympic gold medal? Of course they're not. But Norb did. There's actually a famous story about how he once asked his boss at the manufacturing plant for some time off so he could train for the Olympics. The boss said, "Take all the

time you want. You're fired." Then he had to go look for another job, while he trained to win an Olympic gold medal for his country.

OKAY, OKAY...WHAT DOES THIS HAVE TO DO WITH ME?

After all of those neat little facts and quotes, how can we use the content of this article to make you better? I told you in the beginning that I was going to connect the story of this man to your life, right?

There are a couple of different ways we can do that. First of all, I want you to think about the concept of mental strength and determination. Now, look back at some of Norb's accomplishments. A 363 lb. split snatch at the age of 40, setting a world record at 38, winning four Olympic medals, making a comeback after a major back surgery, all that stuff. I want you to think about the phenomenal resilience and willpower it must have taken to do those things. Then I want you to think about your own lifting, your athletic career. Specifically, you need to think about the barriers and obstacles that are in front of you. Some of you probably have a mountain of crap standing in your way as you fight to reach your goals. Well folks, Norb's story is one of the greatest examples of overcoming obstacles in the chronicles of sports. Personally, I feel like his story gives me strength. This guy didn't believe in limits, and he never backed down. What kind of possibilities might be waiting for all of us if we simply apply those two principles to everything we do?

Second, some of the things Norb said about training and nutrition are obviously a lot different from what you read these days. Most current literature directly contradicts his ideas. Some might say we've progressed over the years, that our world has advanced beyond a lot of older methodology. We do things differently now because we're not in the caveman days anymore. Okay, I think that's true. But I also want to suggest the possibility that there are some old-school beliefs that we should reconsider, and maybe go back to. Everybody wants to think outside the box these days. Most people believe "thinking outside the box" involves moving past our old ways. Well, maybe one of the best ways to think outside the box is to GO BACK to some things that produced success in the past but got thrown in the toilet at some point because we were in such a hurry

to reinvent the wheel. Am I telling you to quit eating Paleo and move to pizza, hamburgers, and beer? No. I'm just asking all of us to challenge the way we think and not reject certain ideas simply because they're from an older time.

Finally, I'm a big believer in the old transcendentalist concept of the Oversoul. This is the idea that the souls of all people are connected in some way, that we've all got the same spirit flowing through us and, on some level, we're all linked together. I think this is especially true in weightlifting. Why do you think weightlifters are so close-knit? Why do you think we stick together so tightly? Why do you think we're all so fanatical about what we're doing? It's because there's something intangible going on inside us when we become weightlifters. Nobody can put their finger on it exactly, but it's overpowering and it changes our lives. We're never the same after we've felt it. That's what connects all of you to Norb Schemansky. His career is one of the highest manifestations of the weightlifting spirit. He had something inside that propelled him forward, something that drove his engine beyond the limits of human ability. And you know what? You've got it too.

Look, I'm not a hippie. Some of you know me, and you know damn well I'm not a flower child, rolling around in a meadow and trying to communicate with nature. I'm an old-school guy, like Norb. But I definitely believe what I just wrote about the spirit of a weightlifter. We've all got it in our blood, just like he did. So, in some strange way, his life is a part of all our lives. That means his strength is part of our lives too. And that's a beautiful thing, brothers and sisters. A beautiful thing.

DISCUSS THIS ARTICLE ON THE PERFORMANCE MENU WEBSITE!

Matt Foreman is the football and track & field coach at Mountain View High School in Phoenix, AZ. A competitive weightlifter for twenty years, Foreman is a four-time National Championship bronze medalist, two-time American Open silver medalist, three-time American Open bronze medalist, two-time National Collegiate Champion, 2004 US Olympic Trials competitor, 2000 World University Championship Team USA competitor, and Arizona and Washington state record-holder. He was also First Team All-Region high school football player, lettered in high school wrestling and track, a high school national powerlifting champion, and a Scottish Highland Games competitor. Foreman has coached multiple regional, state, and national champions in track & field, powerlifting, and weightlifting, and was an assistant coach on 5A Arizona state runner-up football and track teams.

SQUATS AND DEADLIFTS FOR CROSSFIT

The squat and deadlift are the foundational movements for strength. If you want to dominate the “sport of fitness,” you need to be proficient in both. With that being said, CrossFit athletes have been presented with lots of misinformation in regards to training these lifts. Strength in both of these exercises must be developed over a wide range of reps, and as you strive to develop this strength, you must do it within the context of a program that develops many other (sometimes competing) skills.

Before we get into my ideas about how to best train these lifts for CrossFit, let’s get a couple of things straight...

SQUAT LIKE AN OLYMPIC LIFTER

CrossFit incorporates much more Olympic lifting than it does powerlifting and for this reason, among others, you need to make your squat look like an Olympic lifter’s. Whether you want to call it an Olympic squat, high bar squat, close stance squat, ATG squat or any other name, what matters is that you squat with a nearly vertical torso, in a stance that resembles your feet during the catch of a clean or snatch. You are squatting deep and explosively.

The low bar back squat is a detriment to the development of your Olympic lifting technique. It engrains a forward torso angle that will carry over to your snatch and clean catch position, and lead to missed lifts.

Olympic lifters don’t box squat, the overwhelming majority of top raw powerlifters don’t box squat, and

you shouldn’t box squat if you want to squat huge weights and aren’t wearing a multi-ply powerlifting suit. With that being said, the box squat is a good tool to use to teach the squat and can have its place as a supplementary movement, but it cannot be the basis of your squat training.

DEADLIFTS DON’T EQUAL SNATCH/CLEAN PULLS

The first pull of a clean or snatch and a deadlift are very different movements and should not be taught as the same thing. Treating them as the same thing will make you worse at both of them.

Snatches and cleans will make your deadlift go up, but the opposite is not necessarily true. Of course, for the beginner trainee, improvement in general exercises (whether it is deadlift or squat variations) will improve your Olympic lifts, but the point of diminishing returns or the deadlift will be quickly reached.

To be a good CrossFit competitor, you need to be a good, not great, deadlifter in the grand scheme of strength. 500-550 range at 190ish bodyweight is very good and enough for CrossFit, for example, but isn’t making any waves in powerlifting with 181 and 198 lifters pulling well over 700 pounds. Squatting and Olympic lifting with very little deadlift practice will make you a good deadlifter.

Now that we have those two issues out of the way, let’s talk about how to get strong in these lifts to have great success in CrossFit. To be successful in CrossFit, you must have maximal strength, explosive strength and

strength endurance. None of these qualities need to be developed to the utmost elite levels, so we should use a balanced approach to improve them, while also keeping in mind the other dozens of things you must train.

When structuring the strength component of your CrossFit training, you should prioritize the primary exercises as...

1. Squat. This is HBBS. Squatting more will make you snatch, clean, press, jerk, and deadlift more. It is the exercise with the highest transfer of training and until you are a national level or better weightlifter, putting 10kg on your squat is going to have a direct carryover to your snatch and clean.
2. Snatch. The snatch takes precedent over here because it is more technical than the clean. Someone who can snatch and squat will more than likely be pretty good in the clean.
3. Cleans. Cleans take practice, of course, and give you extra work in the front squat, but because squats and cleans don't necessarily equal a good snatch, it gets the third spot.
4. Front Squats. The front squat is important to clean technique and will improve many other exercises, but since it can't be loaded like the squat it gets the lower billing.
5. Deadlift. All the way down here at number five is the deadlift. Why? Because all the things listed above will make the deadlift go up, but the deadlift won't necessarily make them go up. Plus, the deadlift is highly stressful to the CNS and when you have so many things you need to train for, you can only fill up your CNS cup so much with one exercise.

Let's take a look at my favorite ways to train the squat and deadlift as it pertains to developing the wide array of strength qualities you need for CrossFit.

Submaximal Loads for Moderate Reps

You don't need to do work over 90% every week to squat and deadlift more! There, I said it. Hate to break it to you all but almost no top level raw powerlifters are working up to max singles on a weekly basis. Not only does the CrossFitter not need to do this, they shouldn't do it. If you want to get better at squatting, you need to squat more, you need to practice, and

doing multiple sets at slightly lower percentages will give you this opportunity.

For example, instead of working up to a max set of 3 (usually about 92.5%), do 3x3 at 85%. Focus the bulk of your maximal strength training in the squat, press and dead on sets of 3-8 reps at between 65-85% of your 1 rep max. The Olympic lifts will still necessitate going above 90% frequently.

Going along with this same idea, you want to attempt very few maxes and avoid missing lifts. Missed lifts don't build strength, making them do. Max outs are very taxing to the body and central nervous system and is an unnecessary stress to the body of a CrossFitter. Build your strength, don't always worry about testing it and understand that PRs can come in many forms, weight, reps, speed and quality of the lift, so spend more tips focusing on the latter three.

TIMED WORK

Of course, you need to do a lot of timed work in CrossFit but I mean something a little different here. Work on max rep in a given short time frame sets and short rest periods. For example, try doing max reps in the squat in 10 seconds with 50 seconds rest. Power is work divided by time, so if you want to become more powerful, you either can increase the work (weight or reps) or decrease the time. So if you can squat 300x6 reps in 10 seconds and then train to be able to squat 300x8 in 10 seconds, you have become more powerful. Working with timed sets, whether it is timed work or timed rest, will help to improve your work capacity.

ROTATING METHODS ON THE DEADLIFT

As I mentioned earlier, the deadlift is highly stressful to the CNS and because of that, we don't want to pull heavy very often. The most frequently I would advocate pulling a heavy set of one to three in the dead from the floor would be every three weeks, but ideally every six weeks. Using a rotation between heavy, explosive and rep deadlift days, like Brandon Lilly discusses in The Cube Method, is a great way to go for CrossFit.

I would make a few adjustments though from what Brandon does for competitive powerlifting, because

there is more emphasis on the higher rep ranges for CrossFit. A six-week modified Cube approach on your deadlifts could be the following.

WEEK 1 (SPEED): 15 sets of 2 reps at 60%, rest no longer than 10 seconds btw. sets

WEEK 2 (REPS): Snatch Grip Pulls from 4" Blocks at 60% for 1x rest pause (I'll explain what that means in a bit)

WEEK 3 (HEAVY): Work up to 85%x3x3 from 2" Blocks

WEEK 4 (SPEED): 10 sets of 2 reps at 65%, rest no longer than 10 seconds btw. sets

WEEK 5 (REPS): Deadlift from Progressively Higher Blocks at 60% for 1x Mechanical Drop Set

WEEK 6 (HEAVY): Work up to a nearly maximal set of 1-3 reps.

BODYBUILDING REP STRATEGIES

Gasp! Bodybuilding for CrossFit, yes. Bodybuilding rep strategies like rest pause sets and drop sets, both mechanical and weight, are some of the best ways to build strength endurance and lactic tolerance.

For those of you not familiar, a rest pause set is a combination of three small sets into one giant set. Perform a rest pause set by performing reps (60% is a good starting point) until you are one to two reps shy of failure, rack the weight and rest for 20-40 seconds, perform another set just shy of failure, rest for 20-40 seconds, perform a third set to failure. This is a great way to exceed your rep capacity and build endurance. It can be used with basically any exercise.

Drop sets can be done by either reducing the weight through a set or by improving your mechanical advantage as the set progresses. For a weight drop set, simply start performing reps and have your training partners pull off weights as you go. For example, set up in the squat with 45s and 3 25s on each side of the bar and try performing a set number of reps at each weight, having your training partner pull off 25s as you go until you are down to the 45s and rep out there. Using chains and progressively removing sets from

the bar as you go is also a great way to performed weight drop sets.

A mechanical drop set is done by improving your mechanical advantage throughout a set, so you can continue doing reps with the same weight despite fatigue. Try out these mechanical drop sets.

1. OVERHEAD MECHANICAL DROP SET

Load the bar with 70% of your strict press max, begin performing strict press reps, when you feel like you like you can only do one to two more reps, immediately start doing push presses, when you feel like you can only do one to two more reps, immediately start doing push jerks until failure.

2. DEADLIFT DROP SET

Load the bar with 60-70% of your 1RM, begin performing as many reps as you can in 30 seconds, add 3" blocks under the weights and continue to rep out for another 30 seconds, then add another set of 3" blocks and perform reps for a final 30 seconds.

3. CLEAN OR SNATCH DROP SET

Begin by performing muscle variations of the lift until you are one to two shy of failure, then progress to power variations until just shy of failure and finally the full version of the lift. This same concept could work with Hang-Power to Hang-Full to Full, or anything that progresses your ability to continue doing reps.

Hopefully this has given you some new perspective on effectively and efficiently developing strength to improve your abilities in CrossFit. It won't be easy, but it isn't particularly complicated either: squat heavy, for speed and reps, let your deadlift be built with other exercises and focus on building instead of always testing... and watch your strength skyrocket!

DISCUSS THIS ARTICLE ON THE PERFORMANCE MENU WEBSITE!

Chad Wesley Smith is the founder and head physical preparation coach at Juggernaut Training Systems. Chad has a diverse athletic background, winning two national championships in the shot put, setting the American Record in the squat (905 in the 308 class, raw w/ wraps) and most recently winning the 2012 North American Strongman championship, where he earned his pro card. In addition to his athletic exploits, Chad has helped over 50 athletes earn Division 1 athletic scholarships since 2009 and worked with many NFL Players and Olympians. Chad is the author of The Juggernaut Method and The Juggernaut Method 2.0.

HACKING PALEO WITH PATRICK VLASKOVITS

You may know [Patrick Vlaskovits](#) as the CEO of [Paleohacks](#), the place to get answers to questions on all things Paleo. (You can also peruse recipes or listen to the podcast on the site.) But in the tech startup world, Vlaskovits is known as the New York Times bestselling author of [The Lean Entrepreneur: How Visionaries Create Products, Innovate With New Ventures and Disrupt Markets](#), a mentor for the 500 Startups seed fund and accelerator, and the cofounder of [Superpowered](#), a startup that increases speed on mobile devices.

Paleohacks is particularly intrigued because of the crowdsourced questions and answers. It provides a very necessary platform for thoughtful discussion about what's working and not working for site readers.

If you've grown comfortable with the proliferation of Paleo blogs widely plastered all over the internet, try to remember back to the time (early 2010) when this wasn't the case. "I was into Paleo stuff a few years ago and at the time there were only a few blogs talking about this stuff. It was even before [Mark Sisson](#) had a blog. There was [Richard Nikoley's blog](#), and [Art DeVany](#) had a blog, and a few other folks," Vlaskovits recalls.

"I started Paleohacks because a lot of the same questions kept coming up in the comments of these blogs and the comments weren't a good place to answer these questions because the answers often change as new knowledge emerges. At the time the Stack Exchange platform was pretty new, and I thought it could be a really good platform for the community that was emerging around Paleohacks.

I'm a big believer in n=1 self-experimentation, and the quantified self stuff people talk about and I thought I could do something cool and build a community, and that's how Paleohacks got started," he adds.

The Paleo community has grown in leaps and bounds in the past few years, and this has led to many people embracing Paleo as a lifestyle choice or image. Vlaskovits believes this has its pros and cons.

"I don't like the infighting. It's just less interesting. It's very silly and tribal," he explains. On the positive side? "...the good part it is that so many of us are thinking about our health and where our food comes from. I have two children and I think a lot about whether I'm feeding them the lowest common denominator wheat-based or corn-based shit that American agribusiness has foisted on us; I try not to do that. The bad part is where it's sort of a human vanity BS type stuff, and [people arguing about] who's more Paleo, are you really Paleo type of stuff," he says.

Like many of you, Vlaskovits is juggling a hectic career, multiple side projects and a family, and managing to maintain a Paleo lifestyle while working in a community where drinkups and crap food are the norm. He offered five hacks for maintaining a Paleo lifestyle in the midst of dinner meetings and events where you're surrounded by free pizza and beer.

1. EAT BEFORE YOU TO GO EVENTS WHERE YOU'LL BE SURROUNDED BY SHIT FOOD.

It seems like a no-brainer but the trick is to actually do it. "You go to a hackathon and then just go to a local pizza place and everyone just gets beers and

cokes, and it's kind of fun, everyone's having a great time and good pizza tastes good. I personally react very poorly to wheat and gluten. They really mess me up, and so one hack I try to do is I try to eat before I go. I know that sounds pretty obvious, but if you can do that you're at home and can eat some eggs or whatever and then show up, you're not hungry [and] that makes a big difference," he explains.

2. DRINK LIQUOR, NOT BEER.

"I love beer, by the way, I love drinking a good beer," Vlaskovits admits, "but I know that if I have beer, I'll feel like crap the next day, even if I have just one or two, and if I have a few more, there's a chance I'll have a legitimate migraine the next day. So for me, I just don't drink beer, but I'll drink high-quality spirits like vodka or even whiskey because there's no gluten in those." Robb Wolf's NorCal margaritas are also an option.

3. REMEMBER HOW BAD YOU FEEL WHEN YOU EAT PIZZA, BEER AND CHIPS.

It's sometimes difficult in the moment, but remember what you feel like after you gorge on specific foods because everyone else is, and "... then the next day you're like, 'Crap, I feel like shit. Why did I do that?'" whereas if you eat pretty clean the next day you feel really healthy, you can actually feel that. I see it on my face. When I eat poorly I wake up and I'm like, 'Jesus, I look terrible today,' Vlaskovits says.

4. IT'S OKAY TO HAVE A CHEAT MEAL.

As long as you're consistent most of the time and aren't suffering from a chronic illness, you might be able to handle cheat meals from time to time. "When I'm in New York, I will go get a good New York pizza even though I know my body will not like it, because I'm in New York; I'll have some pizza. But generally I



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Matt Foreman's new book, *Bones of Iron*, is out now!

"This is a great read that I will recommend to all of my lifters and fellow coaches."
-Leo Totten

"All of us involved in the sport of weightlifting are in need of factual information, but we also need a healthy dose of perspective, common sense and a little well referenced humor. All of that is in Matt's book."
-Bob Takano

"With unapologetic candor and unrelenting humor throughout, in "Bones of Iron" Foreman doesn't simply open a window into the often misunderstood world of weightlifting; he hijacks a bulldozer and knocks down the whole d*mn wall separating "us" and "them."
-Rachel Crass

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try to eat healthy, I'll try to eat Paleo-ish, but you don't have to be nuts about it," he says.

5. PALEO DOESN'T HAVE TO BE SOCIALLY AWKWARD.

You can make healthy food choices without being aggressive or making others uncomfortable. "What I don't want to do if I'm in a business meeting or at a legitimate business dinner, I'm not going to go to extreme measures to eat Paleo. If I'm at a business lunch and everyone else is getting sandwiches, I'll just get a salad, which isn't weird or anything, but I'm not going to go crazy and make people feel weird. I'm not going to be the guy who goes, "Ooooh, I'm gluten-

free," in a way that makes people feel awkward and weird. I personally don't like being that guy," Vlaskovits explains. "Eating with people is about interacting with them and getting to know them and being a super-aggressive hyper-aggressive Paleo person is I think silly."

DISCUSS THIS ARTICLE ON THE PERFORMANCE MENU WEBSITE!

Yael Grauer is an independent journalist living in Minneapolis. She dabbles in Olylifting and trains in Brazilian jiu-jitsu. Find her at <http://yaelwrites.com> and on [twitter](#).

HEALTH AND FITNESS PRODUCTION VS. CONSUMPTION

It's 5:45 AM and John's alarm goes off. After a swig of the generic pre-workout mix from the local GNC store, he jumps in his car and heads to the gym.

Today's workout is yet another bodybuilding routine he found in the latest issue of Men's Health magazine. After a brief warm-up of 5 minutes on the elliptical, he starts chipping away at his superset of bench presses and bicep curls. Or was it supposed to be lat pull-downs? And what about the sets and reps... was it 3 sets of 8-12 reps like last week, or 4 sets of 6-8 reps? Well, he thinks, whatever, at least I'm in the gym and doing some work.

Contrast this with Bill. He skipped the gym this morning because he felt a bit tired; after all, his alarm clock woke him up in the middle of an REM cycle, and he read somewhere online that ignoring your body when you're tired is bad for you. That's okay though, he thinks, I'll just head to the park this afternoon for a bodyweight workout, like MovNat.

After spending his entire lunch break on MovNat's website figuring out what he should do, Bill arrives at the park only to find that it doesn't have the right equipment for what he was planning. After some haphazard warm-ups and drills, he heads home a bit frustrated without having gotten much done. Hmm, he thinks, maybe I should read a bit more tonight so I'll know exactly what to do tomorrow.

Okay, by now you should have a pretty clear picture of what I'm getting at with John and Bill. Whereas

John just puts his head down and heads into the gym without any real thought or background knowledge of what is better or worse, Bill, on the other hand, spends all his free time reading fitness blogs and never actually commits to the hard work required to see real results. John has done presses, curls, and pull-downs every week for the past year, but he can't squat with flat feet or stretch his arms overhead. Bill knows that CrossFit is comprised of constantly varied functional movements performed at high-intensity, but he's never actually tried the Olympic lifts. Whereas "post-workout nutrition" for Johnny means a few scoops of powder the sales rep at GNC told him to buy, Bill can list off numerous benefits of branched chain amino acids, even though he has never actually bought and taken it.

To combat the Johns and Bills in the world, I want to discuss how to balance your Health and Fitness Consumption vs. Production. If you are more of a blog junkie like Bill, then you need to start producing as much health and fitness in your life as you consume. For instance, if you spend one hour watching YouTube clips of Olympic lifters, then you need to spend at least one hour in the gym applying whatever you just learned. If you follow Mark's Daily Apple and read all his recipe posts, then you better go shop at your local farmers market and actually cook your own food!

On the other hand, the John's out there need a bit more thought behind what they're doing. (Side note: since you're reading this article in the Performance

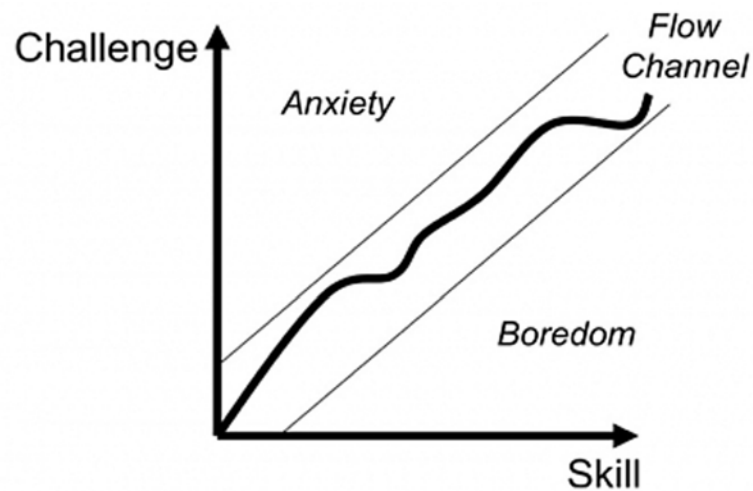
Menu, then you are probably more Bill than John. Additionally, if you are a trainer or a coach, then your clients and athletes are probably more John than Bill. Think about it!) For example, it would greatly benefit John to read Greg Glassman's "What is Fitness?" article so that he can program a bit more variety into his fitness routine. And perhaps perusing Robb Wolf's The Paleo Solution would be beneficial so that he can make a few simple dietary changes that would actually yield some pretty significant results!

"But Chris," you might be asking, "I do CrossFit three days a week, and I just love it so much that all I want to do for hours on end each night is read blogs and watch videos!" That's fantastic; it's great to cultivate hobbies in your life about which you are passionate. However, think a bit outside the box about how you can produce as much fitness as you consume here. How about sitting in the bottom of a squat while reading the Performance Menu? Or perhaps after watching another Ido Portal clip on YouTube, you actually try to hold a handstand against the wall for a few seconds? These are just some thoughts and suggestions, and obviously you should tailor your practice towards your goals.

Now consider the other stereotype, someone who produces more than they consume in health and fitness. Again, you might see this more often with your clients and athletes, and it is likely more common in the world of traditional sports than it is in exercise. Perhaps your friend really enjoys practicing Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu a few days each week, but outside of the gym he is sedentary, eats poorly, and only sleeps a few hours each night. This person would see huge performance gains in his grappling if someone points him towards Charles Poliquin's website or suggests that he pick up anything written by Martin Rooney. Similarly, you might have some clients who are struggling to lose body fat because outside of your one-hour sessions twice a week, they forget what you tell them and revert to old habits. In this instance, getting them to try some recipes from Primal Palate and having them download the Lift app could seriously help.

Take a look at the chart below from Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi's book Flow (figure 1).

The Hungarian psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, besides having an incredibly difficult name to spell, is



"Flow" concept by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi. Drawn by Senia Maymin.

Figure 1

a leading scholar in the field of positive psychology and optimal experience. His concept of flow, as described in his book Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience, is "the mental state of operation in which a person performing an activity is fully immersed in a feeling of energized focus, full involvement, and enjoyment in the process of the activity." Just as the chart shows that the Flow Channel is a delicate balance between Skill and Challenge, your personal journey of health and fitness depends on balancing your production and consumption. Too little of one and too much of another will impede your results, thus leaving optimal experience on the table.

Please take this article and use it for your own advantages. If you're a trainer, then take the balance between production and consumption as yet another filter through which you can classify your clients. Just like you would screen their movements or assess their mobility before assigning strength work, now you can determine whether you should be pointing someone towards a blog or towards a barbell. And perhaps even you yourself can take something away from this to improve your own health and fitness routine, whether that means more cooking, more sleeping, or more squatting..

DISCUSS THIS ARTICLE ON THE PERFORMANCE MENU WEBSITE!

Chris Garay is a freelance fitness and music professional based out of Virginia. His background includes degrees in philosophy and religion, several national tours as a percussionist, and years studying physical training and applying it in the gym on a daily basis. He can be found practicing handstands, drinking coffee, or writing at www.chrisgaray.com.

UNCOVERING TALENT

Talent (tal-ent) - A natural aptitude or skill, Synonyms; gift - aptitude - ability - genius - capability. As defined by the Oxford Dictionary

Would you believe me if I told you that talent is specific to individuals who are fortunate to attain it? Even the definition of talent, according to the most trusted dictionary in the world, leads you to believe this true. Generally people would agree, but what would you say if I told you I was actually lying?

If you type “talented people” into Google, you will see musicians, dancers, sporting personalities, artists, and so forth. The list goes on. When we address them as talented, do we allude to the fact they will be good at most things, or do we mean that they possess an incredible level of skill in their respected field? The answer to this question can be found by looking at what happens when you take a talented athlete out of their field, even just a little.

In his book *Bounce: Mozart, Federer, Picasso, Beckham, and the Science of Success*, Matthew Syed explains a couple of events he encountered. First off, it is important to note that Syed was previously ranked number one in Great Britain for table tennis, is a three-time Commonwealth champion and competed in two Olympic games.

Syed speaks of a promotional tennis event he attended where he was able to have a game with Michael Stich, a former Wimbledon champ from Germany. He requested that Stich serves as fast as he could, to see whether he would be able to react fast enough to make the return. Each and every serve, Syed was nowhere near it, yet he comes from a sport that has almost half the time to play a return shot, AND was well-renowned for doing such things!

In addition to this, Syed also recalls a previous table tennis teammate who was known as the fastest player in the sport. After the team underwent a reaction test, this so-called Speedy Gonzales turned out to be the slowest reacting person on the whole team!

To explain the reasoning behind this, Syed and Coyle speak of a research carried out on chess players. They took a group of world-class (WC) chess players, and a group of non world-class (NWC) players and tested them. The first test required players to place the chess pieces into various positions that could be found in a game, and both groups were told to remember the exact positions. Almost 100 percent of the WC players remembered, which can't be said for the NWC group. The second test was placing the pieces in any random order that is unattainable in a normal chess game. This time around the tables had turned; the NWC group dominated the WC group in remembering the positions. Why was this? Because it wasn't something that the WC players were familiar with; it didn't resemble a previous move that they could recognize and identify with.

So why couldn't Syed return a serve in tennis? Because he wasn't able to recognize the positions that Stich was going through to then read and predict the positioning of the ball upon service. It's similar to table tennis, but it's not the same. And why was Syed's teammate slow at reaction tests but known as the fastest man in the sport? Because the tests simply didn't resemble the sport.

So what about the forming of talent in individual sports, such like the table tennis and the tennis athletes, among others? Well, it all comes down to practice!

A 1993 research study that you may have heard of was carried out by Ericsson concerning the difference

between great musicians and good musicians, and what tells them apart. Ericsson found a number of interesting things. One of these was that we all learn at exactly the same pace. To put it another way, 'talented' people do not learn any faster than 'non-talented' people. Therefore, becoming talented has nothing to do with the speed of development or learning. In fact, the only identifiable difference was the amount of practice attained, showing that at the age of 20 the great musicians had attained 10,000 hours of practice, whereas the good ones had only attained 8,000 hours.

Syed, his teammate and these world-class chess players have practiced so much that they can identify positions and anticipate their next move before they have even happened. They've seen almost all there is to see in their respected sports. They have been through hours of practice learning how the opposition behaves, how the equipment they use feels and reacts, and they have subconsciously remembered all of it.

As an Olympic weightlifting coach, my immediate thoughts are to suddenly start writing a Bulgarian style training program including lots of sessions per day. However, it is important to note that Coyle (2009), Ericsson (1993) and Syed (2010) all state that there is a limit to how much you are able to practice and benefit from on a daily basis. This reverts us back to the famous quote that has since been modified; "Perfect practice makes perfect." So the question is this: how is young talent formed? How are we able to squeeze more practice into less time?

Heyes (2009) and Ramachandran (2000) both underwent studies to discover further understanding of the role of the mirror neurons in humans. The mirror neuron is quite an interesting thing to understand. Neurons are like cables, some of which are connected to muscles. These cables carry signals or stimulations to activate the muscles requested by the brain. So without neurons, we are unable to send such signals.

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To explain what the mirror neuron is, both researches speak of a previous test in monkeys, which looked at brain activity while the monkey was eating peanuts. Purely by accident, they had left the device running on a monkey whose neuron activity started to activate without access to any peanuts. How was this possible? The monkey was observing a lab scientist eating peanuts and was replicating the actions involved by up to 80 percent neuron activity. Tests were then underwent on humans to see if such effects are present, and it was concluded that not only do we have this function, but we also react to a lesser extent when we hear a noise that we can familiarize with.

So not only taking part in activities but to a lesser degree by watching and listening, we are actually practicing. How do young talented individuals manage to get so much practice in such short space of time? They observe and they listen. This is effectively subconscious practice, and lots of it.

Coyle (2009) goes further than this, in fact, to explain the type of practice that is required--something called "deep practice." Deep practice is one of three required components to create talent, but before deep practice can be undergone it requires "ignition" and "master coaching," the other two components.

Ignition is, as I expect you have already worked out, your motivation to practice. The thing that spurs you on to better yourself. As with mirror neurons, this could be completely subconscious. In fact, this is usually because of the master coach: small cues that are used, unaware to you, to ignite something subconsciously.

Coyle (2009) speaks of a research with a test involving a story of a mathematician who succeeded against all odds. There were two groups involved in the study. One group had the story unchanged, while the other group had the birthday of this successful mathematician altered to match that of their own. On further testing, those who were in the group with the alteration to the birthday excelled. As small and insignificant as it may sound, this was the ignition, as carefully placed by the master coach.

The role of the master coach is to keep the ignition alive, but also to deliver high levels of coaching. Depending upon the sport or performance, different

variations of coaching or teaching can be used. Some can be silent, delivering concise cues only at the point of a breakdown, and others can be a long string of exact instructions to follow, stopping you at the moment of error. Both work, but only in the right disciplines. Get this wrong, and you are potentially delaying the progress that can be achieved from deep practice.

The moral of the story is this: don't give up on your dreams. Talented individuals are the ones who have practiced hours upon hours. If you want to become one these people, you know what to do: find an inspirational and motivational coach, practice, watch the best in action and pay attention to their performance.

I will finish with a quote from Coyle's book:

"Struggle is not optional, it is required. You must make mistakes, pay attention to those mistakes and learn from them. We must be persistent and passionate to succeed."

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TRUE OR FALSE: YOU NEED TO GET A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP BEFORE A COMPETITION

The great sleep researcher Casey Stengel (okay, not really: he's best known as the wise-cracking manager of the Yankees in the 1950s) once quipped, "It's not sex that wrecks these guys, it's staying up all night looking for it." Regardless of how you spend your nighttime hours, are you setting yourself up for failure if you lose sleep before a big event? The answer, shown by studies of Olympic lifters, Judo competitors, and elite motocross drivers, might surprise you.

WHEN YOU'RE STRONGEST

A study of collegiate weightlifters, published in the *Journal of Strength and Conditioning Research* in 2007, showed that [they did just as well](#) on the snatch, clean and jerk, and front squat even after a night of missed sleep as they did after a normal night. Well, there's our answer. We can go home. (Please don't go home. This gets super interesting.)

Those guys were tested in the morning, and it turns out the time of day counts. In a study done this year in Tunisia, [Judo competitors were studied](#) in both the morning and evening, and after a normal night of sleep they did better on tests of power and strength in their evening session. That's a common finding in time-of-day studies--so, if you have a choice of when to compete and sleep isn't an issue, choose the afternoon.

After partial sleep deprivation, though, the judokas' morning performance was fine but degraded in the afternoon. The researchers also tested whether it mattered when they missed sleep. Staying up late led to better results than waking up early, even though the total amount of sleep was the same.

Maybe you've heard the advice that one bad night of sleep is no biggie, but two or more is what does you in. (As you can see above, that would apply to morning competitions.) So one would expect that on the second day, performance will be crappy to match. Getting back to weightlifting, let's look at multiple nights of inadequate sleep. [This 2007 study from Liverpool](#) doesn't say whether the subjects were trained lifters, but their strength was tested in the evening after an all-nighter with a biceps curl, bench press, leg press, and deadlift. After the first night, their 1-rep max was the same as usual, but submaximal performance was already going downhill. The second and third nights, of course, were worse on all counts.

HOW ABOUT AEROBIC PERFORMANCE?

Cardio fares a little better, but with some caveats. After a single night of partial sleep deprivation, Taekwondo practitioners [did fine on a running test](#) that put numbers on their heart rate, lactate, and perceived exertion. In a [2009 treadmill study](#) (where 11 subjects

were tested in the afternoon after a total all-nighter), runners said they felt fine, but couldn't cover as much ground.

But there's more to an athletic performance than strength and cardio. What if you need accuracy in your movements (and really, who doesn't)? One French study from 2012 [examined elite motocross racers](#), who often need to stay up fixing their bike during multi-day competitions. Their ability to balance and control their bodies degraded after they lost sleep, a finding that's been repeated in studies of various types of athletes.

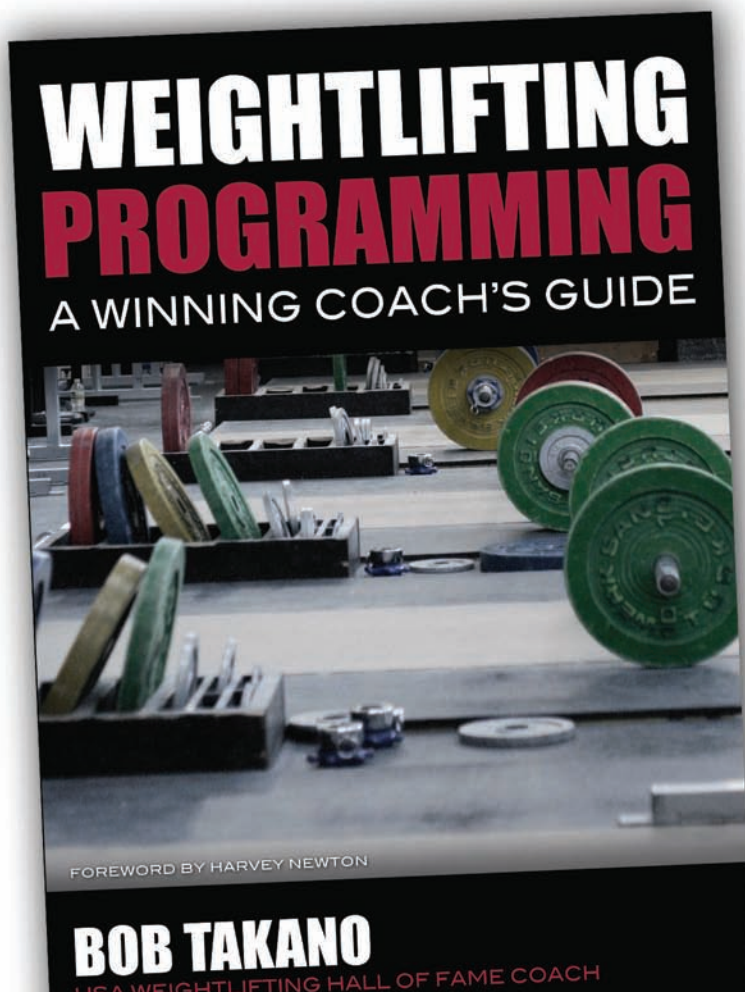
CAN CAFFEINE HELP?

Results on this are mixed. Tennis players asked to serve balls into a tiny area [found their accuracy degraded after missed sleep](#) in a Sleep Research Centre study from earlier this year, even though their strength was at normal levels. Even an 80-mg shot of caffeine (the same as a can of Red Bull or a weak cup of coffee) didn't counteract the effect.

On the other hand, a study done in the UK of ten elite rugby players found that accuracy in repetitive passing drills [could be restored](#) with either caffeine or creatine.

And finally, a study of military snipers who'd been denied three nights of sleep found that their accuracy degraded – not surprising. Done during Navy SEALs' grueling "Hell Week" of training, snipers who took 200+ mg of caffeine [were able to find the target and shoot faster](#), but their accuracy wasn't any better than their peers on decaf. (It also wasn't worse, meaning no significant jitters.)

The caffeine question is a tough one because although doses are standardized in the studies, but caffeine tolerance can vary from person to person; it has less of an effect on somebody who chugs Starbucks every morning than it does on people who (I swear I have met people like this) avoid chocolate chip cookies because of the caffeine in the chocolate chips.



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OKAY, OKAY, I'LL SLEEP ALREADY

Let's put a positive spin on this. If you sleep more than you need to, will you do better? There's evidence that points to yes. When basketball players were made to spend 10 hours in bed each night, as part of a Stanford sleep clinic study, [they had better sprint times, shooting accuracy, and reaction time](#). Their mood even improved (which a lot of the above studies mentioned too – lose sleep and you'll be cranky.)

BOTTOM LINE

Sleep is good, but you can get away with little to no sleep before a morning competition. Your performance will start to degrade by afternoon, and definitely by

the next day. Caffeine may help in a pinch, but don't count on it to stand in for lost sleep. And if you have to miss sleep, say to travel, it's better to stay up late and crash in the morning, than to start your journey in the wee hours.

DISCUSS THIS ARTICLE ON THE PERFORMANCE MENU WEBSITE!

Beth Skwarecki is a freelance science writer who questions everything. What does she want? Evidence-based recommendations! When does she want it? After peer review! Follow her on twitter: [@BethSkw](#).

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COOKING WITH SCOTTY SCOTT HAGNAS

NON-STICK CAST IRON COOKWARE

This isn't really a recipe, but a technique of making your cast iron cookware non-stick.

1. Coat the pan with coconut oil. If it's partially solid, this will be easier.
2. Dust the pan with liberal amounts of salt.
3. Place the pan in a cold oven, then pre-heat to 350 degrees.

4. Once the oven reaches 350, turn it off and allow the pan to cool enough to handle.
5. Wipe out the salt and oil with some paper towels. You are done!

Do not use any soap to clean the pan, ever! I clean it by heating some water to hot in a teakettle, then adding it to the dirty pan. Allow it to sit for a bit, dump the water, and wipe dry with a paper towel.

BREAKFAST HASH

Here's a simple recipe using leftovers. Though it calls for beef, you can easily use any other meats or even leftover sausage.

Time: 20 minutes

- 2 Tbsp. tallow
- 1/2 onion, diced
- 2 yams, peeled and diced
- Cajun spices to taste (paprika, cayenne, garlic powder, red pepper flakes)
- 1 lb. leftover beef
- sea salt

Heat the oil to medium in a skillet, and then add the onions. Sauté for several minutes until they begin to soften. Add the yams and spices, and sauté for about



Cast Iron Skillet



Breakfast Hash

10 minutes, stirring often. Add a dash of water if they begin to stick too much.

Add the leftover beef and salt, and cook for around five minutes longer until the yams are soft, and then serve.

Nutritional info: 3 servings at 26g carb, 40g prot, 24g fat.

BAKED WINTER SQUASH

It's the season for winter squash. Take advantage of the many varieties you can find this time of year. To save on time, cook as many as you can at once and have them on hand. In this batch, I cooked (L to R) Carnival, Gold Nugget, Swan White Acorn, Danish, and Delicata squash.

Time: 1 hour 15 minutes

- squash! (your choice)
- coconut oil or butter
- sea salt

Halve and seed the squash. A good knife helps here!

Heat your oil or butter to melt it, and then liberally coat the squash. Add sea salt if desired. Bake at 350 for a full hour.



Baked Winter Squash

You can eat the squash as-is, dice it and put it in salads, puree into a soup, and more.

Nutritional info: varies with the type of squash and quantity of oil used.

ROASTED BEEF WITH LEEKS

Here's a three-part recipe that's great for a holiday meal.

Time: 2 hours 15 minutes

Roast:

- beef roast, 6+ lbs.
- fresh ground pepper
- 2 heads garlic
- 2 Tbsp. tallow
- 1 tsp. thyme
- sea salt

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Dust both sides with pepper, and then place the meat fat side up in a roasting pan. Remove the dry skins from the garlic cloves and cut off the stem ends. Place into aluminum foil, drizzle with some oil, and then wrap well and place alongside the meat.

Insert a meat thermometer, roast for 1 1/4 to 1 1/2 hours. Remove the garlic at 45 minutes. Once the garlic has cooled, use a garlic press to mash the

cloves and place the garlic into a small bowl. (Reserve 4 cloves.) Stir in the thyme and salt.

Remove roast when the thermometer is at 135 degrees for medium-rare, or 150 for medium. Move to a cutting board, rub with the garlic sauce, tent with aluminum foil. Let stand 15 to 20 minutes, then top with the reserved leeks and slice the roast. Serve with the gravy and leek sauce.

Sauce:

- 2 Tbsp. tallow
- 1 cup chopped leeks
- 1 cup coconut milk
- 2 Tbsp. Dijon mustard
- sea salt to taste

Chop the white ends of the leeks crosswise, and then chop into thin strips. Heat a small skillet over medium heat. Add tallow and the leeks, and stir until they are slightly browned. Set them aside. In a bowl, mix the coconut milk, mustard, and salt. Add half the leeks; save the other half to top the roast.

Gravy:

- drippings from the meat
- an equal amount of beef broth
- arrowroot to thicken
- 4 cloves roasted garlic (from the meat)

Combine the drippings and broth in a saucepan; bring to a low boil. Mash and add the garlic. Reduce the heat, and then add the arrowroot slowly while stirring continuously. Stop when the gravy has thickened to your liking.

Nutritional info: variable, depends on the cut of meat used/quantity of gravy, etc.

DISCUSS THIS ARTICLE ON THE PERFORMANCE MENU WEBSITE!

Scott Hagnas is owner of [CrossFit Portland](#). He is certified as a CrossFit level 2 trainer and Circular Strength Training (clubbell) instructor. He has been riding BMX flatland for 26 years and counting and has filmed/produced/edited several series of BMX videos, plus several training videos. He formerly competed in bicycle trials, placing second in amateur in the World Championships in 1990. Cooking is one of his favorite pastimes.

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