Team EliteFTS 2008 Holiday Tips



Balance

It's all about balance. The holidays are a time for celebration and being with friends and family. Now while that doesn't mean you should absolutely put your health and fitness in the gutter - it does allow for a little more leeway in your normal diet.

Typically our clients eat 5 meals per day, with 3 workouts per week. So in a week that's 35 meals plus 3 post workout shakes. We use a points system - a missed meal is -1, a non-compliant meal is 0 - a good meal is 1 point. (I'd prefer a client "cheat" than skip a meal).

So generally that's 38 possible points. During the year we shoot for 90% compliance - or 34 "good" meals. During the holidays, though, we look for 80% compliance. In other words you are allowed about 7 meals "off."

Over the course of a week, that allows a cheat meal almost every day. Basically it allows you to relax a little over the holidays and enjoy yourself, but it also keeps you focused on the fact that lunch on Tuesday doesn't need to be an all out binge either!

Most important rule, though? It's not what you eat between Christmas and New Years that matters, it's what you eat between New Years and Christmas!!

- Alwyn Cosgrove

Don't Miss

The most important tip regarding training during the holidays is that there is no excuse to miss a training session. You may have to be more flexible in when you train, but that doesn't mean you can skip a session completely. For example if your Max Effort lower body day is Tuesday night and you have a Christmas party to attend and can't train at that time, then find a time you can train. If you have planned for a meet 10 weeks out, this means you have 9 Max Effort lower sessions. If you are on a 4 day a week Westside cycle, you train 4 times a week for 9 weeks (10th week is usually rest and recovery). This adds up to 36 training sessions leading to a meet. If you skip one session, that means you're short 2.7% of your training. This may not be that big of a deal, but from a Max Effort lower body perspective you've missed 11% of your lower training for the meet. This means it can truly affect your performance. So make time to train in some capacity and never skip a session completely.

- Scott Cartwright

The 80/20 Rule

Everything in moderation. It all goes back to the 80/20 rule. If you're good and stick to your plan 80% of the time, you can maintain your current weight even if you fall off the wagon for the other 20%.

- James S. Smith

The Early Bird

Train in the morning if possible. If not, make it a point to get up an extra 30 minutes early and at the minimum go for a brisk half-hour walk. The holiday season makes it easy to blow off scheduled workouts. At the very least, you'll have included some measurable cardiovascular work should you miss a training session.

- Mike Szudarek

Pick Your Poison

If you're looking forward to certain treats or desserts at a holiday meal, then just have those one or two treats (after your regular meal) rather than grazing on everything in sight. This way you'll still be able to enjoy what you want, without the excessive calories of an all-out binge.

- Shelby Starnes

Accountability

Be accountable. Set a goal as a family to get a specific amount of activity in each week and stick to it.

- James S. Smith

Quality

Focus on quality. You don't need to do endless hours of physical activity to get a good workout. Concentrate on high intensity and get out. Get back to your life.

- James S. Smith

Circuits

Instead of skipping your workout due to time constraints, try doing all of your assistance work circuit style. This cuts time in the gym in half and forces your metabolism into high gear. Remember to keep the weights as heavy as you can (for the desired reps) to get the most benefit. High intensity strength training has been proven to increase calories burned post-workout better than anything else.

- CJ Murphy

Groups

You must have a strong and dedicated training crew. Strong people come from strong groups here at the gym. You must surround yourself with strong-minded and strong-bodied people. In the near future my crew at the gym will have 4 people that total 2600lbs. We help each other become better. Don't be the big fish in the small pond.

- Matt Wenning

Brown Bagging

Try brown bagging your lunch and snacks when you hit the mall for a day of shopping. There is almost nothing healthy or conducive to staying lean at the mall. Pack some nuts, fruit and low-fat cheese. It's cheap, healthy and better for you, and fits in your pocket too.

- CJ Murphy

WASH

Wash your hands. Remember this is the time of the year you will be around many people, and germs spread fast.

- Dave Tate

Reminders

The holidays can really throw you off your diet and goals. During the holidays you should do your best to adhere to your diet plans. It takes discipline, but if you have set up a solid set of goals for your training, then your diet is an important part of these goals. I think the best thing to do to keep your diet on track is find something that reminds you of your goals. For example, get a bracelet or a coin that you carry with you every day, all day, that reminds you of your goals. Prior to each meal or opportunity to eat, look at that symbol and ask yourself how much these goals mean to you.

- Scott Cartwright

Perfection

Don't try to be "perfect." If you haven't been "perfect" all year, you're not going to be anywhere close to it during the holidays. Know that you won't be eating the healthiest food during family gatherings, and prepare ahead of time. Try to exercise the morning of family gatherings where you know you'll be eating a lot of food. Exercise can put you in a state of EPOC where you burn calories at a higher rate for the remainder of the day.

- Justin Harris

Hype

With all the holiday festivities going on, you don't want to neglect your internet presence for long, so make sure you carve out plenty of time to get online and hype yourself! Your best bet here is YouTube. Hold cameras directly up to your face so we can see up your nasal cavity, film creepy ten minute home office videos, or just show yourself rolling around on a Persian rug!

- Anonymous

Mail it In

When your boss, or someone who does a lot of stuff for you, asks you to participate in a holiday project for charity – like, say, emailing him a couple of holiday training and diet tips – the best thing you can do is either a) ignore him, or b) send him some barely literate half-ass nonsense that nobody can use. Try it!

- Anonymous

Damage Control

Try to "minimize the damage." You know that crackers are better than greasy potato chips. You know that pretzels are better than a pound of cheese. Try to make "healthier" junk food choices throughout the day.

- Justin Harris

White Meat

Focus your meal on white meat turkey, stuffing, and choose fruit and/or cranberry sauce as your "sweet" of choice over heavy cakes.

- Justin Harris

Consolidation

Plan for the unplanned. Living far from both in-laws, I never know if my stay will last 3 days or 7 days. If you are going to be out for a week, take one day and use it to hit a little bit of everything before you set off for that 5 day excursion to the in-laws'. I have learned that the holidays are for family and the other 290 days are for training. I use this time to take off from my routine and let my body rest. If I have the need to get some sort of workout done I will bring along some Mini-bands. These are great for the upper and lower body. You can do just about anything you put your mind to with a set of bands and actually get a decent workout in.

- Ronald Yard

Maintenance

If you can maintain your regular gym routine through the holidays, then more power to you. Keep on keeping on. In my sporting youth, I can remember training right through the holidays, including running wind sprints on Christmas morning to prepare for a fight in mid-January.

At this point in my life, it's just not realistic for me not to expect to cut back on gym time during the holidays. And to be brutally honest, my life is more enhanced by spending time with family members I rarely see than it is by doing another leg workout.

It's about maintenance at this time of year. Think of it as either an "off-season" or an "in-season" for three weeks. We're basically looking at the time period from one week prior to Christmas, right through until January 1st. January 2nd, it's back on!

The mistake most guys make during the holiday season is trying to fit their regular workouts into their busier, more unpredictable holiday schedule. This never works. All that ends up happening is they inevitably miss workouts, feel frustrated, and don't make any progress. They do too much for it to count as recovery work, but don't do enough to actually make any gains or maintain their condition.

I think a low volume full-body workout (or upper-lower split) that gets you in the gym once every three days over those three weeks is perfect. No more than 2 working sets per exercise, 5-6 exercises per workout - so we're looking at around 12 total sets. That should get you in and out of the weight room in around 30-40 minutes.

- Alwyn Cosgrove

Relax

The end of November and December is a weird time for me because it signifies the end of football season, which for me usually means it's time to relax for a few weeks -- kind of like players do -- and not stress myself out too much about dieting. What I pretty much try to do, at least until after New Years' is diet when it's time to diet, and relax when it's time to relax. I did what I had to do on Thanksgiving and with leftovers on Friday, but I was strict in the week leading up to it and strict after that. The same goes for Christmas. It's just an extra few cheat meals for me.

- The Angry Coach

Deload

I don't really change anything here because with my lifestyle, there's no real reason to. If anything, I start training harder the couple of weeks before Christmas because I'm "preparing" for the onslaught of rich food an alcohol consumption that happens. I'll probably take the week between Christmas and New Years' as a deload, then start blasting away again in January.

- The Angry Coach

What's In It?

Know the ingredients of the food you eat. If you have allergies not knowing what is in your mother-in-law's prune cake could be deadly.

- Dave Tate

Gains

Drink lots of egg nog!!! During the holidays there are lots of big meals and treats. Take advantage of these and eat as much as possible. Grow fat and strong. Drink more egg nog!!!

- Chad Aichs

Sleep

Make sure you get enough sleep during the holidays. Make sure your CPAP is plugged in, and strap it on nice and tight so you don't snore it off during the night. For most people, an hour to an hour and a half ought to be plenty of sleep on most nights, so if you can manage not to choke on your tongue from about 3-4:30 am, consider it a bonus.

- Anonymous

Hors D'oeuvres

Skip the hors d'oeuvres. If you go to a party that has chips and dip, candy and other things out before dinner is ready, skip it. It's too easy to mindlessly eat these. Worst case, go for the veggie tray. Instead, fill up on the main course. And try to stick to one piece of dessert. You don't need to sample every one!

- Julia Ladewski

Do A Pull-Up

Lifting out of your weight class? Can't do a pull-up? Here's an easy fix that should have you doing a real one by New Years':

Take a green band and string it across the spotter bars on the power rack at about belly button height. Do 3-4 sets of 8-10. Do this 4-5 times a week, then the following week, drop the spotter bars down a few holes and try to match your sets and reps. The following week, drop the spotter bars down a few more holes and do the same thing. If you start doing this now, you should be able to do at least one decent pull-up from a hanging position by the beginning of the year.

- The Angry Coach

Bands

Something is better than nothing, especially if you're traveling. I always try to get to the local gym once, but that doesn't always happen. We pack a few bands and are able to do a band and callisthenic workout a couple of times. It helps to plan ahead. Know when you will be visiting with family or going to parties. Try to schedule gym time early in the morning before everyone gets up.

- Anonymous

Jim Wendler's Top 5 Training Tips for the Holidays

Don't train. This is the perfect excuse to not do anything and have a perfect "alibi."

If you have to train, just go to the weight room and don't do anything.

If you have to go to the weight room and actually do something, don't do anything you normally would. For example, I never really sweat or push hard when I train, so my whole goal is to actually produce some kind of water from my skin. This is where the sauna becomes a key component to my holiday training.

Become familiar with the cardio equipment. Since many of the people reading this think cardio training is the devil, it is best to take a peek around the cardio room and see what you will be using once you have a heart attack after doing interval training.

Use that $5 that Grandma gave you in the re-used Christmas card and buy yourself a smoothie.

Eat Less

Sounds odd, doesn't it? But the truth is everyone who has come to me for weight loss over the years tells me that they eat 1-2 meals a day. Every fat loss guru on the planet will tell you that if you want to lose weight, you must eat more frequently. Generally I see 6-8 meals a day prescribed with each meal being a small amount. So if we're trying to gain weight, then surely we must do

opposite – eat less frequently but eat bigger meals. With all the food being cooked this shouldn't be a problem during the holidays.

- AJ Roberts

Drink Your Calories

Although research has not been conclusive, it seems that drinking your calories has a different effect than eating them. In a recent article published by CNN, it was stated that:

"The body doesn't respond to liquid calories in the same way it would if those calories came in the form of French fries or chocolate cake. Appetite is controlled by a complex mix of hormones. Some signal the brain that your stomach is getting full. Others, including a hormone known as ghrelin, signal it's time to eat again.

If you eat a big burger, the level of ghrelin drops for a few hours. That drop doesn't happen if you drink a Big Gulp soda, even if it has more calories than the burger, according to Wayne Campbell, a professor in the Department of Foods and Nutrition at Purdue University."

If you're like me, you'll be traveling a lot over the holidays so be sure to always have your supplements and shaker bottle on hand. It's a great way to cram extra calories down your throat without having to stop for food.

- AJ Roberts

Clear Your Colon

Contrary to what most people believe about holiday weight gain, pounds of additional bodyweight are not only gained by an increase in belly and thigh fat, but also by an increase in excess fecal matter firmly packed and pasted to the colon wall. In fact, it is quite possible to accumulate an extra 2-11 pounds of damp and disgusting do-do during your holiday dysfunction.

When the New Year arrives and you have suddenly realized that trips to the throne have gotten more and more infrequent, your breath begins to smell increasingly putrid, acid boils up into your esophagus after drinking the most mild drinks such as Strawberry Quik, and a small yet furiously itchy rash has appeared on your chest between your nipples...your reaction may be to panic and ask your "prescriber" for a script of Prilosec.

Well, since you fired your doctor after watching Michael Moore's documentary on "Big Pharma" and your All-Natural, Snake Oil Healer thinks your poo-poo problem is a form of "past-life" trauma creeping back into your life like last night's McRib sandwich, I've devised a list of tips to keep your plumbing proper and feces flowing though the festivities:

1. Avoid Sugar – it alkalizes the acidic environment in your colon that leads to purification. It is also the snack of choice for fungus and parasites.
2. Avoid Alcohol – does the same as sugar only it also burdens the liver leading to autointoxication and itchy anus syndrome.
3. Reduce Stress – Stress causes your sphincters to tighten. No feces flow when the hole is closed.
4. Drink Water – Sugar, Alcohol and Stress tend to dehydrate. Do-do with no dampness hardens up and stays stuck in the gut.
5. Squat Deep – we are designed to crap with our bellies touching our lap (not on a porcelain stool), in fact your thighs compress the ascending and descending sides of the colon to aid in elimination.

All jokes aside, make sure you take a shit every day.

- Elliott Hulse

Slow Down

Eat slowly, and don't fill your plate. Enjoy your food slowly, savoring each bite. This will make for a more pleasurable eating experience and also result in less overall calories consumed. If you eat too fast, you won't realize you're full until you've already ate too much. Also, don't fill your plate – just put a couple items on at a time. When you have a full plate, you're more likely to feel obligated to finish it all.

- Shelby Starnes

Pre and Post Workout Shakes

There is a lot of debate on when you should take your workout shake. Some say before, others say after, and a few say during. I say if you're serious about gaining weight then you should do all three. After all, why leave anything to chance? I got this protocol from Justin Harris and, simply put, it works.

30min before training:
1 scoop whey isolate
10g BCAAs
75g Waxy Maize

During training:
10g Whey hydrosylate
15g BCAAs
5g L-Leucine
50g Waxy Maize

Immediately after training:
30g Whey isolate
15g Whey hydrosylate
15g BCAA's
5g L-leucine
110g Waxy Maize
I have been using this method for weight gain for close to 5 years now. In this time I have added over 120 pounds to my frame and drastically increased my total. Despite the huge weight gain, my body fat percentage still falls in the range of what is considered normal. Obviously training has a lot to do with this.

- AJ Roberts

Don't Want The Bloat? Start Jumping Rope!

With the holidays here and food flowing, the best way to avoid that extra ten pounds is to jump off the ground.

Easy, you say. Try ten minutes a day, and watch those pounds stay away.

One foot, two foot, it doesn't matter. Just know it will keep you from getting fatter.

Be creative, have some fun. Who knows, maybe you should just go for a run.

But who am I to say? Maybe you're not an athlete anyway. But for under ten dollars, you're definitely on your way.

- Ryan Magin

Get a Haircut

Let's say it's New Year's Day, and you wake up with a hangover, walk into the bathroom, and suddenly see you have some f-ed up blonde stripe on your head. The best thing you can do is break out the clippers – or even a Bic – and get rid of that thing before someone kicks your ass. Try it!

- Anonymous

Stock Up

Snag plenty of great meats and complex carbs to build muscle. Take advantage of them and package and refrigerate and freeze leftovers into prepackaged meals for the weeks to come.

- Chris Clark

Learn To Say No

This is the time of year will you will be invited to several parties, events and family functions. There is no golden rule that says you have to go to them all, and people will understand if you say you can't make a specific event. The more parties you go to the more chances you have of screwing your training up. Keep it to the most important to you and your family.

- Dave Tate

Learn How To Say "Dictionary"

One great resolution to make for the new year is to not spell any words incorrectly in your columns or emails. This takes discipline, though, and it's something to which you'll defiantly have to conform. Once you start paying attention to your writing, you'll make a lot more money!

- Anonymous

Big Movements

If time is an issue then make sure you get your main movement (squat, bench, deadlift) in first, and then superset 2-3 assistance exercises that work opposing muscle groups for 3-5 sets of 10-12 reps. Try to avoid any single joint movements as well as any machines, and stick to barbells and dumbbells. You'll be surprised at how effective this can be.

- AJ Roberts

Have A Plan

If you know that during the week of Christmas you're going to be visiting family for the majority of the time, then be sure to plan for this in your training. Use this week as a deload so that you can be in and out of the gym in minimal time. If you know you're going somewhere and won't be able to get to the gym, then make sure you take a few flex bands with you so you can at least get something in.

Check with your training partners and see what their plans are. It's frustrating enough having to put up with the holiday mayhem. The last thing you want is to show up to train and be the only guy there.

- AJ Roberts

Re-feeds

Use your holiday parties and big dinners as re-feed times. Not that these times aren't already, but even though stuffing yourself may not be the best option, you can use them as sort of a high calorie day that restarts your metabolism. This concept is used in carb-cycling

diets where the dieter has depleted on calories and carbs for a extended period of time and emptied all the glycogen stores, forcing the body into ketosis or using the fatty tissues of the body as a energy source.

During the week or times where you know you will not be eating a lot of bad food, simply take as many carbs out of your diet as possible throughout the first meals of the day. Don't go below 50-60 grams of carbs total for these meals. Keep up the meal frequency(4-5 meals). At the end of the day, or whenever you are having the dinner or party, eat what you want. You won't gain as much this way if you. It's not the best solution, but it will help.

- Marc Bartley

Up The Cardio

A simple thing I do is up the cardio during the week. I upped the time from 30 to 45 minutes per day. I try to do this 5-6 days a week. You can keep the intensity low just as long as you get the time in. This will slow it down some. The tradeoff does not seem worth it sometimes, but an

extra 500-plus calories a session 5-6 days a week adds up to a lot of dessert or second helpings. You can still take the weekends off if you choose to. There is always a price to pay.

- Marc Bartley

Clean Foods

Keep the foods clean, even if the quantity is higher than normal. This means more fruits and veggies, one salad a day, lots of lean meats. Keep the proportions of carbs lower than the proteins.

- Zach Even-Esh

Slipping

You will slip during the holidays. That's ok, just don't make an entire day of it. Maybe one bad meal as opposed to an entire bad day of indulging in crappy foods.

- Zach Even–Esh

Start Heavy

Begin with a heavy compound lift followed by supersets to jack up the metabolism, as well as to save time since it's a busy time of year.

- Zach Even–Esh

Be Consistent

The best thing you can do is try to stick to your normal schedule and routine. With everything that is going on during November and December a lot of times people sacrifice time in the gym because of other things that crop up this time of the year. This is a big mistake and can put a big dent in any gains you have made over the year.

- AJ Roberts

Rope Resting

Throw in the jump rope in between some sets throughout the entire workout to keep the heart rate pumping.

- Zach Even–Esh

The Gun Show

On the way to the party, stop off and grab a Monster, Rock Star or any other energy drink. Use this to wash down an Animal Pump Pack and make your way to the party. Now, I assume you will be wearing your best short sleeve polo shirt. Every time you make your way into the bathroom you will knock out 2 sets to failure with bodyweight triceps extensions using the following scheme.

Trip 1: 2 sets to failure with hands on floor. If this is too hard on your elbows then just do close grip pushups with thumbs and forefingers touching. This first session should get your pump on.

When you begin to feel the pump wearing off and people stop looking at your arms it is time to head back to the can. This will be the rule for the entire night.

Trip 2: 2 sets of bodyweight triceps extensions using the toilet seat for your hands.

Trip 3: 2 sets using the side of the bathtub for your hands.

Trip 4: 2 sets using the counter for your hands.

At this point you may be looking at over 150-200 total reps and the possibility of a huge de-pump so it is time to either pull the sweater on or head for the door. The gun show is over.

- Dave Tate

Get Your C

Up your Vitamin C intake (1000mG). Everyone snacks on more sweets (pies, puddings, cakes, candy, etc) than they care to admit. When you consume a lot of sugar it suppresses your immune system for hours, so to prevent sickness and to keep your immune system strong, limit these sweet devil foods and take Vitamin C to help.

Try to snack more in between meals and consume some fish oils (2-3 grams) to prevent over-eating at the many holiday feasts and banquets you'll be attending. Fish oils will help give you a full feeling and they can help with craving sweets.

Don't beat yourself up if you indulge a few times. Just limit overdoing it and enjoy your holiday and cake/sweets too.

- Rob Pilger

Digestion

This one is not necessarily the greatest thing to do, and I am not sure how well it works, but find a good digestive stimulator and take it with your bad meals or before going to bed. This may not slow insulin spiking or keep the fat off, but it will keep the system flowing and loose. This is very important when you are consuming vast quantities of bad food that can bind up your system and cause upset stomach, intestinal pressure or even bloating. I have used this on many high carb/bad days with much success in maintaining body fat or weight. The best one I have found is called Digestive Stimulator by Blessed Herbs.

- Marc Bartley

Hardcore

One way to "keep it real" over the holidays and not be labeled soft like Tate is to get a new tattoo, preferably in a really uncomfortable place like your neck or on your shaved scalp. This is a classy way to ring in the New Year, and these look great on job interviews, especially since the economy is crashing. Bonus points if it's Satanic.

- Anonymous

Short & Simple

Keep your workouts short simple but intense. With all the family, work, and friend holiday activities coming your way, working out tends to take a back seat if it's seen as a time consuming burden. Try half hour workouts – at least two full body compound movement workouts per week. In a circuit fashion, one right after another, perform a push movement, squat, vertical pull, lunge, horizontal pull, and vertical push movement using 10-12 reps. Rest 1 min (if you can) and perform 3-4 sets of these. Perform 1-3 sets, using 15-20 reps of a core movement after.

Get a day or two of high intensity interval training in to keep the weight down also. Tell yourself you're going to perform 15 minutes of it as a way to not psyche yourself out and make it seem like a burden, but once you're warmed up and into it push yourself to 25-30 minutes.

Break your training down like this keeping it short and sweet and you'll keep the pounds off. This way the extra drink you have at parties won't be for guilt but for praise for staying with your training while everyone else ditches it!

- Rob Pilger

Pin Down Times

Get with your training partners in advance and pin down training times so there will no excuses. Don't worry about exact workout spacing – a day early, a day late, no worries. Remember, Christmas comes only once a year and the times we spend with our families can never be replaced.

- Chris Clark

Family Fitness

Buy something fitness related that the whole family can do together. A membership to a local gym, a set of elastic bands, new sneakers for everyone; it doesn't matter. Get active and fit together.

- James S. Smith

Bulking

If you are looking to pack on size there is no better time to do it than around the holiday season. As many people know by now, the simple act of overeating has been proven to be anabolic in the absence of any weight training whatsoever. With all the excess calories from holiday parties and events you should have no trouble getting yourself into an anabolic state, ready to grow. Some people try to resist and do their best to avoid junk food at the holidays, but I say why fight it? Embrace it. Eat, drink, be merry and train hard. It's winter time so if you put on a couple of pounds of fat with the newly added muscle you can hide it under a few layers and diet it off in the spring. Winter is the time to get jacked.

- Jason Ferruggia

Meal Timing

To take advantage of the caloric surplus but also finish the year without looking like Santa Claus I suggest timing your feasts appropriately. If you follow a carb cycling diet, try to be flexible and plan your high carb days appropriately and try to follow up a big cheat day with a low carb day. It's always best to schedule a training session

as close as possible to the holiday chow down.

I recommend weight training followed by at least 15 minutes of intense cardio an hour or so before pigging out. If the company Christmas party is at seven, that gives you just enough time to leave the office promptly at five and get in a 45 minute workout, shower up and be there right in time for cocktails and some fried stuff. If you are just trying to gain as much weight as possible before the new year, have a post workout shake and then eat whatever they are serving at the party. If you are trying to stay a bit leaner and temper the fat gain, I would forgo the post workout shake. You will be getting more than enough calories to help you recover so the extra carbs and protein from the shake might be overkill.

- Jason Ferruggia

Muscle Mass

If you are flexible with your training goals I suggest that you make hypertrophy the focus of your workouts around the holiday season. Higher volume training will create a greater caloric deficit and will help you store the extra calories as muscle glycogen instead of body fat. This is the perfect time to be hitting some high rep leg work,

rest-pause sets, and finishers like sandbag cleans. It's important that, in addition to your resistance training, you do some kind of cardio/energy systems work on a regular basis if you intend to really indulge throughout the holiday season. For some of you, weight training will be enough, but for most of us, the additional cardio will help keep the fat gain at bay and give us a little more freedom to enjoy the four main food groups favored by Buddy the Elf: candy, candy canes, candy corn and syrup.

- Jason Ferruggia

Oversharing

Start a column on your website where you document everything from your bowel movements to your erectile dysfunction, then pay a team of people to make it look like you actually know how to spell C-A-T even though you defiantly can't. That way, people will really think you're smart. Try it!

- Anonymous

Binge Eating

I recommend a high intensity cardio session after weight training and a more moderate session first thing in the morning following a night of binge eating and drinking.

- Jason Ferruggia

Eat Regular

I usually drop weight over the holidays because I do not eat enough meals per day. On the feast days I may get two to three HUGE meals but my overall calories are lower than normal. I have not mastered this skill yet but it would be a great idea to keep your meal timing at one meal every three hours.

- Dave Tate

H2O

Be sure that you are drinking at least a gallon of water per day in order to help you store the extra carbs more effectively.

- Jason Ferruggia

Small Plates

Use the smaller serving plates for snack foods so you don't take too much at once.

- Mike Hanley

The Biggest Bang

If you need to get in and out of the gym in a hurry, either do your one main movement and leave or try some DC or HIT training programs. All these should get you out of the gym in under 30 minutes.

- Dave Tate

The Biggest Tool

A great thing you can do over the holidays is build your own gym, hang out in it all day, not let anyone else in except on special occasions, then write tips about how to "get in and out of the gym in a hurry." This is especially good if you tell people to "go green" while driving an Escalade. Try it!

- Anonymous

Social Networking

Make sure you block out some time to step away from "real" family and friends to update your blog, Twitter and Facebook pages with shit nobody cares about that's never going to make you a dime. And while you're at it, make sure to be grammatically incorrect and spell even the most basic words wrong. Try it!

- Anonymous

Cheat Day

Allow yourself one cheat day per week and be flexible with it to accommodate the most tempting times. On this day eat whatever you want and as much as you want. So if there is a big family dinner on Christmas Eve, eat all the ham, mashed potatoes, corn bread, pies, cookies and sweets that you want without guilt. This will be a good mental break, and even though you may notice a tiny bit of fat gain (if you really go all out in your pig fest), as long as you adhere to the rest of your plan it will not derail your diet success.

- Matt Kroczaleski

Tolerance

One of my favorite holiday traditions involves testing myself to see how much pain I can tolerate on Christmas morning. Once all the gifts are opened up, I'll throw the Christmas tree on my back, ornaments and all, and go out in the snow and do lunges. Two years ago, it was still plugged in, and I electrocuted myself from the wetness of the snow, but I managed to control the current with my mind and complete 15,000 steps. Try it!

- Anonymous

Elbows To Yourself

Stop elbowing your way to the front of the line and wait longer between servings. It will give your body more time to register that it's full.

- Mike Hanley

Holidays Are For Holidays

Keep the holidays ON the holiday. Enjoy the special days and moments WITHOUT letting it turn it into a week after week free for all.

- Mike Hanley

The Big Party

Carb deplete before a big party. One way to allow your body to utilize the higher carbs & fat a holiday party/ dinner can usually have is to limit your carb intake for 3-4 days prior to the event. This will deplete your muscle of glycogen and prime it to soak up the food at the party. Your muscle is like a sponge after a few days of depletion and it will keep you from storing that extra food as fat.

- Mike Hanley

If You're a Lush

Avoid sugary mixed drinks like margaritas and punches along with calorie packed frozen drinks such as pina coladas. Opt more for a glass of wine or a vodka and diet soda.

- Mike Hanley

The Final Flush

When you have to go the rest room (and we ALL do), the new holiday rule is your ass is not allowed to hit the seat. This means you will be doing a static iso squat while you do your business. Only when your ass hits the can will you be able to flush. If you need extra resistance, hold the magazine rack across your chest. If you want to get REALLY crazy try this with one leg forward, but make sure to clean the seat if you do.

- Dave Tate

Don't Let Others Hold You Back

Don't rely or wait on training partners that might not share your dedication through the holiday season, they'll hold you back.

- Mike Hanley

Don't Be Stubborn

Change your workout schedule to work with family and/or work events. You can make it work if you try, even if you have to wake up an hour earlier.

- Mike Hanley

The BIG Push

So it's Christmas Eve and you're bummed out because you had to miss your extra workout this morning. Well, I have a solution for you. It is VERY common to forget that one gift requiring a quick trip to Walmart. Nobody will even question this and they surely will not want to go when there is wine, shrimp, cookies and everything else right there. Not only will you get some freedom but there is a KILLER workout waiting. I am not going to tell you to park the furthest from the store so you can walk an extra 100 steps. This is stupid! It may burn 2 calories, and odds are it will be freezing outside. Park as close as you can because when you leave you will NOT want to walk to your car.

Here is what you do. Walk in the store, grab a cart, and dash right back to sporting goods. Make sure to say hi to the greeter and toss some change in the Salvation Army can. When you get there start piling all the weight plates they have in the cart. If there isn't enough, use the dumbbells too. With the cart FULLY loaded begin pushing from sporting goods (the far right hand side of the store) to the bakery (far left hand side). When you get to the bakery, open a donut box and place one donut inside.

Now return back to sporting goods. This is 1 trip.

For the next trip you will push the cart by placing your hands on the lower rack (the dog food shelf), add one more donut, and return.

The third trip go back to the top handles and alternate handles each trip you take. When the donut box is full make your way to checkout.

Since you will be in line for a good 15-20 minutes it would be a great time to get a post workout drink. To the right of you should be a fridge filled with soda. Grab a Coke and wait your turn to check out. When it is your turn to pay, just tell them you changed your mind on the plates and just want to buy the donuts.

In the spirit of the holidays tell the casher you will push the cart over to the return center for her.

- Dave Tate

Snow

Stop delegating the snow shoveling detail to the neighbor's kid and do it yourself.

- Mike Hanley

Regarding Training

Identify the biodynamic and bioenergetic characteristics of the target of your training

Biodynamics encompasses all movement related considerations (dynamics of human movement) so you must consider the kinematics (positions void of concern of mobilizing forces), kinetics (positions and their mobilizing forces), all enveloped within biomechanics.

Bioenergetics encompasses the human bioenergy systems that mobilize activity and these include the short term (anaerobic-alactic), medium term (anaerobic-lactic), and long term (aerobic) systems. Bioenergetics characterizes the flow of energy through living organisms

The power of an energy system characterizes the peak attainable intensity via that particular energetic mechanism

The capacity of an energy system characterizes the peak sustainable intensity via that particular energetic mechanism

All considerations listed above are enveloped in the Principle of Dynamic Correspondence (Dr. Yuri Verkhoshansky PhD), which postulates a list of criteria that, depending on how fully satisfied, assure how well the training means (exercise) or complex of means (group of exercises) will positively transfer (correlate) to the actual target of your training

The criteria of Dynamic Correspondence includes: amplitude and direction of movement (the range of motion and the direction in which force is generated)

intensity and duration of movement (magnitude of external resistance that must be overcome, speed, rate of

work, etcetera and the characteristics of the duration that reflect the bioenergetic demand; ergo, short, medium, long term, intervals, etcetera)

where in the working amplitude is the greatest force produced (consider the range of motion of the movement(s) and where in that range are the greatest forces generated)

regime of muscular activity (overcoming/concentric, sustaining/static/isometric, yielding/eccentric, ballistic, and so on)

dynamics of movement (biodynamic considerations listed above)

The target of training is undoubtedly to attain the realization of the goal and if this is done efficiently, which in my view is the objective, then, in the words of Thomas Kurz, the highest sport result is attained at the least expense of time and energy.

In order to assure that the goal is attained most efficiently, the coach/trainer must have a working understanding of the information listed above. Period.

- The Thinker

English, Please

When you're feeling festive this holiday season, help out a few friends whose training might be lagging a little, but do it using words that nobody understands so NOBODY KNOWS WHAT THE HELL YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT. That way, even if you're wrong, you can just attack their inferior vocabularies and tell them they'd never understand what you're saying anyway.

- Anonymous

Leniency

If you're trying to stay in good shape or even lean up and diet over the holidays, a good way to approach it is to allow yourself some leniency but have a good overall plan that you can stick to. Trying to be totally perfect in your diet over the holidays with all the big dinners, holiday cookies and sweets will usually just lead to frustration and eventually an all out binge fest.

- Matt Kroczaleski

Move It Around

Again the holidays with all the family visits, last minute shopping trips, limited gym hours (if you train in a commercial gym) and hectic schedules calls for some flexibility. Try moving some of your training days around to accommodate the busiest days or if you have family or friends that you're going to be seeing over the holidays that train maybe try to work a training session into your visit. Just be sure not to sacrifice other family plans in the process or you may have a significant other on your hands that will remind you of your insensitivity for a long time to come.

- Matt Kroczaleski

The Wave

Schedule a wave of revised weight training that focuses on reduced intensity (lighter weights) and higher volume (more sets and reps). This makes it mentally much easier to drag yourself to the gym if you've consumed too much to drink the evening before.

- Mike Szudarek

Carry a Big Stick

If you find yourself doing a seminar over the holidays, start out your presentation talking in almost a whisper so nobody can hear you. Even when people ask you to speak up, continue speaking at an extremely low volume. That way, they all have to move their chairs to within three feet of you in order to hear what you have to say. Now you have them.

- Anonymous

Take A Break

If you happen to be feeling mentally or totally physically burned out this could be a good time to take a planned break. Perhaps a week off or so, and of course that will score huge points with your wife if you spin it so that it looks like you're putting her needs in front of your own for a change.

- Matt Kroczaleski

The Laws

In all training there are 2 main biological laws that must be followed in order to get past barriers and keep you progressing.

1) Law of accommodation
2) Law of specificity

The law of accommodation states that if an athlete incorporates the same measures to increase performance, that they will not work as efficiently as previous times and must change constantly. This can be in the form of using the same bars, resistance type (for example, only using free weights to become strong), stances, grips etc. Training must be varied.

The law of specificity states that muscles must be used in similar patterns and ways that they are needed in order to make specific gains on the organism. This is why we have many different bars so we can squat every week without having to take time down, same holds true with bench, and deadlift. This is also why we have certain rep parameters on dynamic effort days to match time needed for the task, as well as train 1 rep maxes often. Training must have transfer.

- Matt Wenning

Dedication

As a side note: When I part of the Westside Barbell Team we trained every Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Sunday. This was regardless of holidays. We may have trained much earlier or later at night, but I have done many workouts on Christmas, Thanksgiving and Easter. If you have a meet coming up you really need to find a way to get it in but be respectful to your family. Find out what works best for them FIRST then ask your training partners.

- Dave Tate

Get Out

Get fresh air and move your body. If you're overeating and indulging too much, get to the local park and walk or do walk/run intervals. The local high school stadium steps are great where you can sprint up and walk down. Fresh air is critical when confined indoors too much and overeating.

- Zach Even–Esh

Have Traditions

Nothing says "Seasons Greetings" to me more effectively than going to a Mastermind/Mind Map session in the morning, then getting out some thick rope, oiling up, and grappling on the living room floor with the guys for the rest of the day. Think of some traditions of your own, and do them every year!

- Anonymous

Frey's Top Training Tips For the Holidays

1.Corn doesn't stop growing on the weekends so your training shouldn't stop just because it's the holidays.

2.If you are Shelby and trying to stay small then get your cardio in 5 times per week.

3.You want to be bloated on bench days. It will add at least a 1 board.

4. Train with partners. They will help push you even when you don't feel like working out.

5. Never think you know it all, because you don't. Ask for help if you need it, and keep reading, experimenting, and revising.

6. Please, start thinking about what you do and if it is really getting you to your goals. If you don't have any goals, set some. Write a program to get you there, and execute knowing changes will happen along the way.

- Jeremy Frey

Grandma's Horseshoes

Here is another great exercise you can sneak in that will help define and detail the nice horseshoe tricep you have been training for. When Grandma is not looking, snag her walker. Tuck one leg behind the other and do a 1/4 dip holding the top for a 2 second peak contraction. Then, take one step forward and do another rep. This will also build great lockout strength in the bench press, hence the quote, "My Grandma could press that."

- Dave Tate

The Mini-Diet

Create a "mini-diet" game plan that includes the entire month of December and schedule your weekly diet around planned gatherings, dinners and events. If done properly and disciplined, you'll not need to worry about the extra calories or poor food choices at those holiday parties.

An example might look as follows:

Monday: low carbohydrate, high protein, medium healthy fats

Tuesday: low carbohydrate, high protein, medium healthy fats

Wednesday: (Day of office holiday party) 3 small meals evenly spaced plus whatever food and drink at party

Thursday: low carbohydrate, high protein, medium healthy fats

Friday: (holiday gathering with friends) 3 small meals evenly spaced plus whatever food and drink at party

Saturday: low carbohydrate, high protein, medium healthy fats

Sunday: regular meal schedule

Key takeaways:

1. Be extremely disciplined on your regular "non-event or holiday" party days and keep your carbohydrates low.

2. Include 30 minutes of some form of aerobic exercise three days per week.

3. No skipping meals on day of party or gathering. Always eat normally on the day of a event. People who skip meals to save up calories tend to overeat everything. Eating sensibly throughout the day will take the edge off the appetite and empower restraint.

- Mike Szudarek

Train Hard

Train hard regularly, don't skip workouts - with the increased caloric intake, make your workouts more intense.

- Zach Even–Esh

Intensity

Try to increase the intensity of your exercises. You know that you will have more than enough food energy to fuel hard training sessions, so take advantage of it. You'll improve your strength and conditioning while also minimizing fat gain during the holiday season.

- Justin Harris

Forget The Rolls

Opt for lean meat such as turkey or lean beef over the high carb empty calories of the side items such as stuffing or rolls.

- Brian Schwab

Frey's Top Diet Tips For The Holidays

1. Put on at least 10 pounds.

2. Go to every holiday dinner you can, even if you're not really invited.

3. If you puke in your mouth, swallow it and eat more.

4. The only pie you should be eating over the holidays is cherry pie. Take that any way you want!

Sugar

Avoid constantly snacking on sugary holiday foods at the office or at work.

- Mike Hanley

Pressure

Don't put pressure on yourself to set new records or exceed all time goals. Use the holiday season to experiment with new exercises or movements, bring up weak areas or lagging parts, or simply to come into the gym and have fun. Plan well in advance and schedule this "downtime" into your yearly planning. If done properly, it will actually serve a critical purpose in helping you reach your overall goals: a well deserved mental and physical break.

- Mike Szudarek

Don't Skip Meals

Don't skip meals earlier in the day to make room for a big holiday dinner. This will only slow down your metabolism and set you up to eat too much bad food when you do eat. Eat as you normally would, even filling up on good healthy foods before you head over to a holiday dinner, so that you aren't as likely to gorge yourself on calorie-laden junk foods when they are available.

- Shelby Starnes

Go Nuts

Avoid filling up on high glycemic snacks such as cookies and candy. Try opting for nuts, vegetables, and deli meat instead.

- Brian Schwab

Most of All

If you're trying to prevent yourself from gaining weight, then stop eating when you're full!

- Brian Schwab

The Sneak Out

This was my trick for years. Since I rarely drink, I am usually the first one up. I will get up one hour earlier and head to the gym before anyone is up. When I time it right, I am back before they are up. NOW if I time it wrong and they are opening packages, then I am in deep shit. If you do the "sneak out" make sure you are back on time. Seriously, trust me on this one.

- Dave Tate

Jim Wendler's Top 5 Diet Tips for the Holidays

1. First thing is not to be a fat slob during the rest of the year so this (the dreaded holiday weight gain) won't be that big of a problem.

2. The second thing to do is to not care if you gained a few pounds over the holidays. If you work out all the time, a few pounds won't make a difference and can be disposed of like a sanitary napkin. So make sure you stop caring all the time if you look like an airbrushed model from the cover of a magazine. Seriously, if you are a guy and care, I mean really care what you look like, you have some serious problems.

3. Grow a beard (or a goatee of some sort) – you must prep awhile for this but a gnarly beard will cover up that massive double chin of yours. Let the thing grow and don't turn your Man Beard into a well-trimmed face hedge. You gotta have some length on the thing to make sure the chins are well hidden

4. Run everywhere you go. You have Xmas dinner at Grandma's house and it's an hour away? Grab your mittens and get started early. In line at the New Years buffet? Do some high knees. Always wear a heart monitor but never check it. This is for the paramedics to use to see if you're dead while you lay on the highway.

5. And the last one...the one that is the most radical diet tip of all: Don't eat like crap.

Adjust

The best advice for holiday training is to relax and don't freak out if you can't get a workout in or if your workout is not up to par. The holidays are usually very busy and stressful for the majority of people. Between the economy, dealing with the public (shopping for gifts), and family; the holidays can be tough. All this will effect your training and recovery, so adjust your training accordingly. I suggest trying to more sleep with days off, eating a lot, and spending some time with loved ones.

- Chad Aichs

Get Some Air

Wearing a kilt is a great way to introduce some variety to your training while being festive for the holidays. It'll increase your range of motion on all lifts, and it will give you the light and airy feeling you won't get from wearing gear. The key to lifting in a kilt is to make sure you're competing raw.

- "Big" Kenny Hinchman

Shout at Your Clients

The best way to make your clients get stronger and lift more weight is to shout, "EXPLODE!" at them right when they're about to lift the weight.

- Anonymous

10 "Kick Your Ass" Holiday Workouts from Zach Even-Esh

Workout # 1

1A) handstand push ups 5 x 5 reps
1B) mixed grip pull ups 5 x max reps
1C) 2 hand KB swings 5 x 10 reps

Workout # 2

1) Deadlift 5 x 5

2A) plyo push ups 5 x 5
2B) recline rows on blast straps 5 x 10
2C) any ab exercise 5 x 15

Workout # 3

1A) Barbell Hang Clean & Press 5 x 5 reps
1B) mixed pull ups 5 x 5

2) jump rope tabata style x 4 minutes

Workout # 4

1A) sandbag zercher squat 3 x 10
1B) blast strap push ups 3 x 10

2A) 1 arm DB row 3 x 6
2B) 1 arm DB flat bench 3 x 6

3) sled or prowler x 5 minutes non stop

Workout # 5

1A) floor press 5 x 3 - 6
1B) barbell hang clean 5 x 3 - 6

2) jump rope tabata style x 4 minutes

Workout # 6

1A) box squat 5 x 3 - 5
1B) pull ups 5 x submax

2A) clapping push ups 3 x 10
2B) recline rows on blast straps 3 x 10
2C) face pulls on blast straps 3 x 10

Workout # 7

1) box jumps 3 x 5
2) walking DB lunges 2 x 100'
3A) 2 hand KB swings 3 x 15
3B) glute ham raise 3 x max
4) sled / prowler x 5 minutes non stop

Workout # 8

1A) Kettlebell or Dumbbell Snatch x 10, 8, 6, 4, 2
1B) box jumps (box should be waist height) x 10, 8, 6, 4, 2

2A) mixed grip pull ups 3 x max
2B) dips on blast straps 3 x max

Workout # 9

1) Flat Bench Press : work up to 3 rep max for 1 set
2) deadlift: work up to 2 rep max for 1 set
3) jump rope tabata style x 5 minutes

Workout # 10

1A) 1 arm dumbbell clean & press 5 x 3 - 5 reps
1B) weighted pull ups 5 x 3 - 5 reps

2) sled / prowler x 6 minutes non stop

BONUS: The End of Year Circa Max Raw Bench Program

Week 1

Day 1 - Dynamic Effort Bench

Bench Press with double mini bands- 40% for 3 sets 3 reps with wide grip (forefinger on rings), 3 sets 3 reps with medium grip (little finger on rings) and 3 sets 3 reps with close grip (thumb on smooth). Then work up to 60% for 2 sets 5 reps without bands

3 Board Presses - work up to your heaviest set of 3 reps - rest 3-5 minutes and repeat

Rows - any type of row for 3 to 4 sets of 8 to 10 reps

Rear Delt - any rear delt movement for 4 sets 10 reps

Day 2 - Max Effort Bench

Floor Press - work up to 5 rep max

Extensions - any type of tricep extension working up to two heavy sets of 5 reps

Pull Downs - 4 sets 10 reps

Side Delt Raises - 3 sets 12 reps

Week 2

Day 1 - Dynamic Effort Bench

Bench Press with 2 double mini bands- 30% for 3 sets 3 reps with wide grip (forefinger on rings), 3 sets 3 reps with medium grip (little finger on rings) and 3 sets 3 reps with close grip (thumb on smooth). Then work up to 70 for 2 sets 3 reps without bands

2 Board Presses - work up to your heaviest set of 3 reps - rest 3-5 minutes and repeat

Rows - any type of row for 3 to 4 sets of 8 to 10 reps

Rear Delt - any rear delt movement for 4 sets 10 reps

Day 2 - Max Effort Bench

Floor Press - work up to 3 rep max

Extensions - any type of tricep extension working up to two heavy sets of 5 reps

Pull Downs - 4 sets 10 reps

Side Delt Raises - 3 sets 12 reps

Week 3

Day 1 - Dynamic Effort Bench

Bench Press with 2 double mini bands- 35% for 3 sets 3 reps with wide grip (forefinger on rings), 3 sets 3 reps with medium grip (little finger on rings) and 3 sets 3 reps with close grip (thumb on smooth). Then work up to 80% for 2 sets 1 without bands

1 Board Presses - work up to your heaviest set of 3 reps - rest 3-5 minutes and repeat

Rows - any type of row for 3 to 4 sets of 8 to 10 reps

Rear Delt - any rear delt movement for 4 sets 10 reps

Day 2 - Max Effort Bench

Floor Press - work up to 3 rep max

Extensions - any type of tricep extension working up to two heavy sets of 5 reps

Pull Downs - 4 sets 10 reps
Side Delt Raises - 3 sets 12 reps

Week 4

Day 1 - Dynamic Effort Bench

Bench Press with 50% for 2 sets 3 reps with wide grip (forefinger on rings), 2 sets 3 reps with medium grip (little finger on rings) and 2 sets 3 reps with close grip (thumb on smooth).

Rows - any type of row for 3 to 4 sets of 8 to 10 reps

Rear Delt - any rear delt movement for 4 sets 10 reps

Day 2 - Max Effort Bench - Taken 2 days later than normal

Bench Press - work up to 1 rep max

Authors

Mike Hanley

Mike Hanley is the President of Hanley Strength Systems, LLC and the Owner of The Training Studio in Morganville, New Jersey. Mike has made a name for himself as one of the premier trainers in the country, helping clients and athletes from all walks of life achieve their physique and sports performance goals.

Mike is a well respected and established USAW Certified Coach and Russian Kettlebell Instructor. With over 12 years active in the fitness industry, he is a wealth of knowledge and experience in the health field. His training methods include a mixture of powerliting, Olympic weightlifting, kettlebell training as well as many other methods to produce significant strength & performance gains. His specialty is his versatility to provide the highest quality training for every ability level from the young athlete to fitness enthusiasts to professional fighters. Mike has also worked closely with autistic teenagers as well as senior citizens both in the rehabilitative & fitness arena

In addition to his work in the strength & conditioning field, Mike Hanley is also a competitive athlete. Dedicated to leading by example, he has competed on a national level in bodybuilding and powerlifting. Mike has also been seen modeling in various fitness publications.

Dave Tate

Founder Elite Fitness Systems, Q/A Staff, Powerlifting, Personal Training

Dave Tate is the founder and CEO of Elite Fitness Systems, staffed by experienced professionals dedicated to providing strength coaches, athletes and trainers with the highest-quality equipment, personalized service and extensive knowledge needed to advance their training programs.

Dave has been involved with powerlifting for more than two and a half decades as a world-class participant, coach and consultant. He has logged more than 10,000 hours of personal training and strength consulting sessions with professional, elite and novice athletes, as well as with professional and university strength coaches. He holds Elite status in powerlifting (in three weight classes) with best lifts of a 935 squat, 740 deadlift, 610 bench press and 2,205 total.

In addition to remaining active as a participant who still pushes himself to excel, Dave contributes insights and inspiration to the sport that has shaped him. Through Elite Fitness Systems, he has conducted hundreds of influential seminars and clinics nationwide for gyms, training centers, schools and universities. He has written

more than 100 articles on strength training for magazines and web sites, including Powerlifting USA, Men's Fitness, Men's Health and T-Nation.com. This athlete-entrepreneur earned a Lifetime Achievement award in 2005 from the Society for Weight Training Specialists.

Dave Tate's impact also extends beyond training techniques and beyond his sport. As a business adviser, motivational speaker and author, he shows how athletic disciplines teach valuable lessons for overall achievement. "We each have all we need to achieve success in anything we choose to do," says Tate, describing the theme of his 2005 book, Under the Bar / Twelve Lessons of Life from the World of Powerlifting. He lives with his family in London, Ohio.
View Dave's Training Log here

Jim Wendler

Senior Editor, Q/A Staff, Sales Manager, Powerlifting Senior Editor and Sales Manager of Elite Fitness Systems. He worked as a Strength and Conditioning coach at the University of Kentucky where he worked with several different teams including football and baseball. He played football and graduated from the University of Arizona

where he earned three letters. Jim's best lifts include a 1000lbs squat, a 675 bench press, 700lbs deadlift and a 2375 total in the 275lbs class.
View Jim's Training Log here

The Thinker

Q/A Staff, Sport Specific

The Thinker is a student of Soviet and Eastern Bloc training methodologies and is engaged in the constant pursuit to further his own physical conditioning and coaching abilities. The Thinker's aggregate of professional experiences include training sportsmen in the disciplines of American Football, Athletics, Weightlifting, Powerlifting, Military Special Operations, and many other Olympic sports. The Thinker is a Strength Coach (football) at a major D-1 University and will no longer operate at EFS under his real identity. The thinker is the founder of Power Development Inc..

View The Thinker's Training Log here

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Alwyn is a Tae kwon-do international champion and has utilized his personal experience as an athlete and combined it with the advanced theories of European Sports Science and the principles of modern strength and conditioning systems. He has worked with a wide variety of clientele, including several Olympic and national level athletes, five World Champions and professionals in a multitude of sports including boxing, martial arts, soccer, ice skating, football, fencing, triathlon, rugby, bodybuilding, dance and fitness competition.
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Zach Even-Esh

Q/A Staff, Powerlifting, Personal Training
Zach specializes in training young athletes and combat athletes. A former bodybuilder who converted to the Darkside after experiencing countless athletic injuries due to uneducated training methods, Zach now operates his own websites and training business, Underground Strength Coach. He continues to train in combat sports

such as wrestling and BJJ.
http://ZachEven-Esh.com
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Jim "Smitty" Smith

Q/A Staff, Sport Specific Grip Development, Non-Conventional Training
Smitty, a strength coach with the Diesel Crew, dedicates himself to studying, developing and enhancing athletic performance through the utilization of conventional, non-conventional and grip strength training protocols. Helping athletes of all skills levels attain their goals and "Achieve Beyond Potential", Smitty is also an amateur strongman competitor, lecturer and author whose writings regularly appear on EliteFTS.com, TotalPerformanceSports.com, DragonDoor.com and many others.
http://www.DieselCrew.com,
View the Diesel Crew's Training Log here

CJ Murphy

Strongman Advisory Board
Murph is the owner, and head instructor at Total. Performance Sports and also a multiple award winning trainer, including the "Spirit of Strength" award from USA Master Trainers.

Shelby Starnes

Shelby Starnes is one of Justin Harris / Troponin Nutrition's premier nutritionists. Since joining Troponin in 2005 he has helped hundreds of athletes dial in their training, nutrition, and supplementation. Shelby has been involved in powerlifting and bodybuilding for over ten years, competing and placing very respectably in both. He holds a bachelor's degree in psychology from Wayne State University and has written numerous articles on sports nutrition.

In his first bodybuilding competition he won the overall in the Novice division, and took 2nd place in the open middleweight class, thereby qualifying himself for national level competition. Since then he's competed twice at the NPC Jr. Nationals, placing 5th in 2006 and 6th in 2007. View Shelby's Training Log here

The Angry Coach

The Angry Coach is the strength coach, and also a positional coach, for a successful high school football program. Since 2001, an impressive number of his players have gone on to play college football, including several at the Division I and I-AA levels and two who have played professionally in the NFL. The Angry Coach has also worked with athletes at the college and professional levels in a variety of disciplines, including football, track and field, baseball, basketball, lacrosse, rowing and mixed martial arts (MMA). Unlike most "speed camp" trainers, The Angry Coach actually played football at a high level and knows what it feels like to get hit. For professional reasons, the Angry Coach will not be using his real identity.
View The Angry Coaches Training Log here

Brian Schwab

Powerlifting, Personal Training
Brian is the world's number one ranked powerlifter in the 148lbs. class and a WPO champion in the lightweight division. He also won the 148lbs. class in the first Bench America contest and is recognized as one of the most consistent powerlifters in the world. Brian holds a

Bachelor of Science degree in Exercise and Sport Sciences from the University of Florida and owns and operates Orlando Barbell (www.orlandobarbell.com)--a 24 hour access gym focused on hardcore training. His best lifts in the 148 lb. class are a 765 pound squat (five times bodyweight), the highest 148 pound class full meet bench of 565 pounds, a 606 pound deadlift and the all time highest total (148 pound class) of 1,930 pounds. He is now moving up to the 165 pound class where his best lifts include a 788 pound squat, a 600 pound bench, a 628 pound deadlift and a 1929 pound total.
View Brian's Training Log here

Marc Bartley

Powerlifting, Personal Training
Marc is one of the premier 275lbs. lifters in the world. He is a WPO competitor and at the 2005 Arnold Classic he squatted a huge 1058. Marc has been competing in powerlifting for 6 years and has used the IPA, APF, USAPL and the WPO to showcase his strength. He currently owns Total Gym in South Carolina. Despite his appearance, Marc is a very well educated man as he holds two degrees from the University of South Carolina; one in finance and one in economics. His best lifts include a 1058 squat, 700lbs bench press and a 722 deadlift. His best total to date is 2463. SouthCarolinaBarbell.com

Chad Aichs

Powerlifting
Chad is a WPO competitor in the SHW division. He began training seriously for powerlifting in 1999. In six years, Chad has proven to be one of the strongest lifters in the world. Chad now has an 1173 squat, an 821 bench press and has pulled 755. His best total is 2733 and has a lot left to prove. Chad holds the AWPC world records in all three lifts and holds the WPO three-lift bench press record. Chad currently trains at American Iron Gym in Sparks, Nevada.
View Chad's Training Log here

Julia Ladewski

Powerlifting, Sports Specific
Sports Performance coach and a #1 ranked powerlifter (132lb class). Julia's best total is 1102 with competition lifts of 457 squat, 240 bench press and a 424 dead lift. Julia also won her weight class at the 2005 APF Senior Nations. Julia spends her days working with both men and women athletes of various sports, abilities and skill levels.
View Julia's Training Log here

Matt Kroczaleski

Powerlifting
Matt made quite a statement at the 2006 Arnold Classic. Lifting in the 220lbs class, Matt squatted 926, bench pressed 660, and deadlifted 755 and came away with the win. A cancer survivor, Matt has overcome many obstacles on his way to becoming one of the most dominant forces in powerlifting today. Matt currently trains in Michigan and has competed in the USAPL, WPO and the APF. View Matt's Training Log here

Scott Yard

Powerlifting
Scott a native out of Baltimore MD is a 2004 graduate of Western Maryland College. He is an Insurance Producer in the state of Pennsylvania. Training competitively for 6 years as a bench specialist Scott decided to throw his hat at full meets. In his second full meet in September of 2006 Scott broke the all time world Record total for the 275 class. This was done at the age of 23. His 2605 total consists of a 1050 Squat, 840 Bench, and a 715 Deadlift. Scott's 840 Bench is the heaviest recorded bench to date in a full meet across all weight classes. Scott trains out of Club Natural Gym in Hanover PA and hopes to compete for many years to come. View Scott's Training Log here

Chris Clark

Powerlifting
Chris is a SHW powerlifter from North Carolina. He has recorded a 970 squat, 675 bench press and a 733 deadlift. He won the 2006 WPC SHW open class in New York. He currently trains at Granite City Barbell and trains with Travis Mash and Chris "Ox" Mason.
View Chris' Training Log here

Justin Harris

Powerlifting, Nutrition
As owner of Troponin Nutrition, and the reigning Jr. USA Super Heavyweight bodybuilding champion, Justin Harris has helped hundreds of athletes with individualized, sport specific diet and nutrition planning. His writing on nutrition and performance has been spotlighted in publications including Muscular Development and Ironman magazine and he has been featured on the cover of numerous others.

Justin holds a bachelor's degree in exercise science from Alma College and was a two-time division III all American in football. He also was 2000 Division III MVP/ Player-of-the-year and was featured in Street and Smith's

as pre-season "Small College MVP."
He recently achieved an elite total classification in the 275-pound weight class in his very first powerlifting contest. He squatted 876 pounds, bench pressed 573 pounds and deadlifted 700 pounds for a combined total of 2149 pounds.
View Justin's Training Log here

Jeremy Frey

Jeremy brings to the team a world of hands-on experience. He played football in high school and rugby in college, all the while pursuing powerlifting on the side. Today, in addition to being the Head Strength and Conditioning Coach at a Division III college, he has become a serious, competitive powerlifter. In fact, Jeremy was the 2005 Junior Division APF Senior Nationals Champion, as well as that year's WPC Junior Division World Champion. Jeremy is has a passion for helping teach others along with an ability to motivate and inspire those around him. His philosophy is straightforward: "Success comes from learning from those who have been there, by doing it yourself, and having an understanding that you can always learn something new." In the

November 2005 WPC World Championship in Helsinki, Jeremy turned in the following performance in the 220 lb. junior division: squat, 788 lbs.; bench, 501 lbs.; dead lift, 661 lbs.
View Jeremy's Trainnig Log here

Scott Cartwright

Scott "Hoss" Cartwright has totaled Elite in both the 275 lb. and 308 lb. weight classes and has put up over 2,300 lbs. in single-ply gear. His best total to date is 2,436 lbs. Amazingly, Scott — having completely torn his triceps tendon at last year's WPC World Powerlifting Championships in Lake George, N.Y. — came back just six months later to total a 215 lb. personal record. Talk about determination! Scott played football in college and after that, became a pro rugby player based in Hong Kong, with a winning team in international competition. When he returned to the U.S., he got hooked on powerlifting and has competed ever since. He earns a living, however, as regional manager for IBM's software group. As of August 2007, Scott earned the following in the USPF Nationals: squat, 909 lbs.; bench press, 650 lbs.; and dead lift, 744 lbs.
View Scott's Training Log here

AJ Roberts

AJ is an accomplished athlete in the sport of powerlifting, and is currently ranked as one of the top 100 powerlifters in the world in two separate weight classes. His best lifts include a 1003 lb squat, 705 lb bench press, 705 lb dead lift and a 2413 lb total. Currently AJ is the Director of Personal Training and Youth Fitness at a health club in Owensboro, KY. He previously was a NCAA Division I Strength & Conditioning Coach at the University of Idaho and also served as editor for Sports Specific, one of the largest sports training Web site's in the world.
View AJ's Training Log here

Jason Ferruggia

Jason Ferruggia is a highly sought after, world renowned strength and conditioning specialist based out of the New York/New Jersey area. Over the last 15 years he has trained more than 700 athletes from over 90 different NCAA, NFL, NHL and MLB organizations. He has also worked extensively with firefighters, police officers and military personnel as well as countless weekend warriors, Hollywood stars and entertainers. Jason is known as "the secret weapon" by many of his clients for his unmatched

ability to deliver awe inspiring results in record time. He has also been called "the most controversial man in the fitness industry today" for his outspoken views and politically incorrect, underground training methods.

Jason is currently the chief training adviser for Men's Fitness magazine where he also has his own monthly column called The Hard-Gainer. He has authored over 500 articles for various other fitness related websites and magazines such as Men's Health, Maximum Fitness, MMA SportsMag, Today's Man, Muscle and Fitness Hers and Shape.

Jason has also written four highly regarded and controversial training books that have sold in more than 126 different countries worldwide. A regular lecturer and media consultant, Jason has given seminars all over the country on the subject of fitness and performance enhancement, and his cutting edge training techniques have been featured on over 30 radio and TV stations such as CBS, ESPN, FOX, ABC, 1010 Wins: New York, America Tonight and many others.

Fifteen years of extensive research, in-the-trenches experience and the ability to consistently deliver unsurpassed results have earned Jason Ferruggia a reputation as one of the top fitness experts in the world today. When he's in your corner, success is guaranteed.

Rob Pilger

Rob has been involved in fitness and Strength/ conditioning for seven years. He has interned with, studied, and taken seminars with some of the top names in the field. Paul Chek, Charles Poliquin, Mike Boyle, Charles Staley, Dave Tate, Joe De Franco, Dr. Eric Serrano, John Berardi, RTS Faculty, to name a few.

Rob's growing list of certifications include:
CHEK Level I Practitioner
CHEK Level II Practitioner
PICP (Poliquin International Certification Program) Level I Theory, Technical.
RTS Lecture, Practical
AIFE Personal Trainer
USA Boxing Coach Level II

He has also studied Gary Craig's EFT, Emotional Freedom Technique. Dealing with balancing out the body's energy system.

Rob is known for producing winners and champions. He is also know for giving people what they want goal wise. His training experience consists of training several OHL All-Star hockey players, collegian baseball players, football players, basketball players. He has trained high

school football, volleyball, soccer, softball and baseball players, and MMA fighters and boxers.

People seeking fat loss and lean muscular gains have enjoyed much success with Rob's methods. Not only have their physiques improved dramatically but their energy levels and sense of well being are like nothing before.

Rob was also a competitive Amateur boxer winning three golden glove championships. He has been involved in boxing, as a fighter, then trainer for 16 years. His training experience consists of being assistant trainer at three national golden glove tournaments. Rob also has experience coaching in the professional level, having helped corner several fighters.

Rob has also spoken to kids' schools about goals, direction, and principle. He is a very passionate trainer, coach, and speaker. He is a life long learner in his field, and strives to offer the best training experience possible to his clients.

Mike Szudarek

Mike Szudarek is a partner with Marx Layne & Company — one of Michigan's largest privately held public relations firms — Szudarek counsels clients in broad spectrum of industries and specializes in middle market businesses. He is directly responsible for directing a broad range of public relations, marketing, communications and media relations programs. He holds a bachelor's degree in journalism from Wayne State University. Szudarek serves on the advisory board for the American Powerlifting Federation, Michigan chapter, is a national level competitor, and a certified world judge in the World Powerlifting Congress. He also totals International Elite in the 220 pound weight class.

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