

the **CrossFit** JOURNAL

July 2006



The Grinder

CrossFit Operations Order #1, "CHAD"

The purpose of OPERATION GRINDER is to produce group workouts that utilize equipment commonly found within a military unit.

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Fit to Eat: Spicy Summer Barbeque

— Benjamin Sims —

SPICY SUMMER BARBEQUE

Spicy Lamb Skewers with Cabbage Salad, Lime, and Avocado

Fresh Watermelon

Four 4-block servings

Now that summer is here and in full swing, I look forward to spicy foods inspired by cultures with tropical climates. If I don't start using jalapeño, lime, and cilantro in the restaurant, the customers stay away on the hot days. The last thing one wants to eat in the heat is something heavy (lasagna and meatballs are definitely not my big sellers in the summer). I tend to acquire my inspirations from Asia and Central America this time of year, places where people have been making lots of hot-weather food for centuries. Here is something light and crisp with a bit of spice and tang to combat the blazing sun and keep you moving.

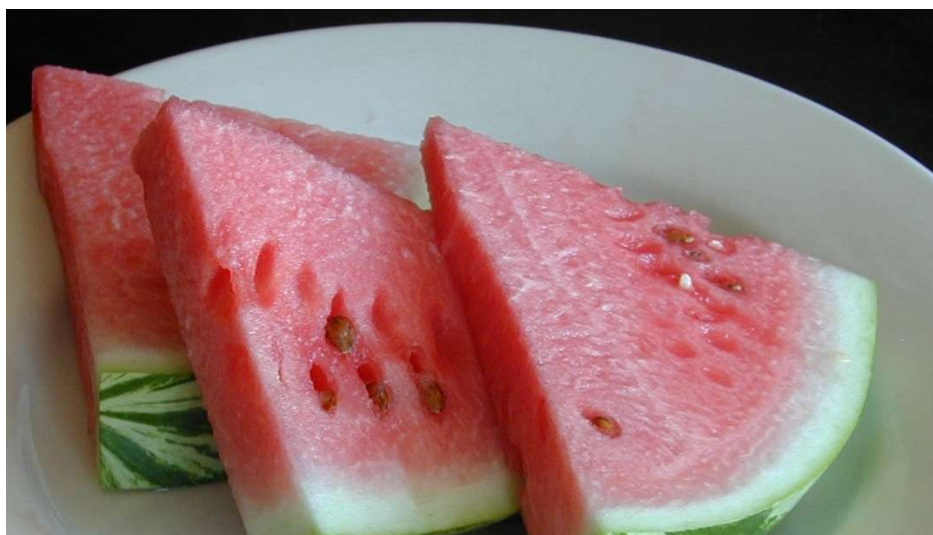
Lamb Skewers with Cabbage Salad, Lime, and Avocado

Lamb Skewers

1 pound lean lamb meat, cut into sixteen 1-ounce cubes (I use lamb sirloin)
1/2 jalapeño
2 limes
1 bunch of cilantro stems (reserve the leaves)
Salt

Four to six hours ahead of time, marinate the diced lamb. Slice the jalapeño and limes as thinly as you can, roughly chop the cilantro stems, and combine in a large mixing bowl. Add the lamb and season with salt. Refrigerate, stirring every hour or so.

When you are ready to grill, wipe off the marinade and thread the diced lamb onto skewers, 4 pieces per skewer. Make the



Spicy Summer BBQ

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skewers as even and flat as you can so they will grill neatly and evenly. On a hot grill the lamb should take very little time to cook. Sear it on the flattest side for about 2 minutes, then flip it, and another 2 minutes is all it should take.

Cabbage Salad

1 head of green cabbage, shredded
Salt

1 Japanese cucumber, thinly sliced
1 bunch of cilantro leaves
Jalapeño, minced
Juice of 4 limes
2 tbsp ground coriander
2 tbsp ground cumin
2 avocados

About an hour before you want to eat, start the salad and light the grill. Put the shredded cabbage into a colander, sprinkle it with salt, and let it drain in the sink. The salt cures the cabbage quickly, causing it to release a lot of its water and soften.

Mix the jalapeño, coriander, and cumin with the lime juice; this will be your salad dressing.

Mix the drained cabbage with the dressing, add the whole cilantro leaves and sliced cucumber, and toss well.

To serve, slice the avocados, fan out half of one on each plate, sprinkle with salt, give each plate a mound of cabbage salad and one skewer of lamb, and that's it.

Watermelon (Dessert)

I saved 1 block of carbs for dessert, which means each person gets 3/4 cup of watermelon.

Unfortunately watermelons are rather big, and even if you buy the already cut ones (which I do, to determine their quality), there will be more than the allotted amount. So dice up 3/4 cup for each person and try not to eat the whole thing. (If you can resist you have more willpower than I.)



Benjamin Sims is chef at Ristorante Avanti in Santa Cruz, CA (and a regular at CrossFit Santa Cruz). He graduated from the California Culinary Academy in 1996 and has trained and cooked in the San Francisco Bay Area, Italy, and London.

Parkour Basics

Part 3: Jumping

— Jesse Woody —

My last two articles dealt with the basics of vaulting technique; now it is time to take the body awareness gained from vaulting practice and apply it to developing jumping power, accuracy, coordination, and, above all, balance. Jumps are essential to parkour, as well as everyday life, because they are often the fastest, most efficient way to get from one point to another, especially when moving between surfaces or objects that are on different levels. The basic two-footed jump and landing are foundational skills that lead to many other techniques, so learning to do them correctly is extremely important to the progression of parkour training.

There is no standardized way to jump. The movement itself is so inherently human and natural that it's ludicrous to assume that there is necessarily a right or wrong way to do it. Nonetheless, there are definitely a few points that will make jumping more efficient while assuring a good base for learning parkour movements that take the jump and expand it through more varied situations.

Begin in what has aptly been named the jumping position, with your feet slightly narrower than in a squat or catch position in the Olympic lifts. Your feet should be turned out just slightly to facilitate proper biomechanics. Your body should be relaxed and ready.

It is easy to think of a good jump as being created by the power of your quadriceps, but that misses the fact that it is a full-body technique. Bend your knees until you reach a partial squat position, bringing your weight toward your toes. As you explode out of this half-crouch position, the power for the jump will travel through your calves and ankles through your thighs and finally into a powerful hip extension. This will all happen in one fluid, coordinated movement.

One aspect of the jump that is often overlooked is the role that the arms and head play in effective application of the technique. When you dip toward the



ground, swing your arms back. As you jump, throw them toward your path of travel (in this case, straight up), so that they reach their apex at the very end of the jumping kinetic chain.

As you reach the climax of this chain of movements, your head will follow your arms toward your path of travel. At no time should you be looking down at the ground or to the side, but rather slightly up or toward your landing area if you are jumping horizontally. If any part of this movement lacks either power or coordination, your jump will be weak and ineffective.

When you jump straight up, your legs can dangle toward the ground, as the movement is purely vertical. When you want to move in the horizontal plane, however, it helps to tuck your knees toward your chest to reduce the leverage you have to work against to make progress. Incorporating the tuck-jump technique into the midpoint of a jump keeps your body-mass centered and helps more effectively transfer your momentum forward. As your feet leave the ground, relax your ankles and hamstrings and forcefully tuck your knees toward your chest, using your hip flexors and lower abdominals. This movement should be less the product of rounding your back to meet your knees and more the end result of a coordinated effort from your upper thighs and trunk to bring your knees upward.

Parkour Basics

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The amount you tuck is up to your personal preference, as you will find the most efficient technique through varied training. There will be a balance between the benefit of economical movement with the legs bent and the cost of the energy expended to do the bending. The sweet spot lies somewhere in between. Once you're airborne, it is time to reverse the motion and prepare for landing. In mid-air, your body should be as relaxed as possible to allow for unhindered motion and effective transfer of momentum. As you begin to approach the ground, you should straighten your knees and hips and "reach" to meet the landing area with your feet. The movement pattern for the landing will be the exact opposite of the jump: you will first land on the balls of your feet, then bend your knees, then hips, then finally contact the ground with your hands between your legs to finish the movement. At no point in time should your heels bear any appreciable weight, as this means you have essentially "bottomed out" your absorptive ability and have taken on a jump that is too big for your current skill level. After your feet contact and you begin to descend, control the momentum by keeping "strong" and resisting the urge

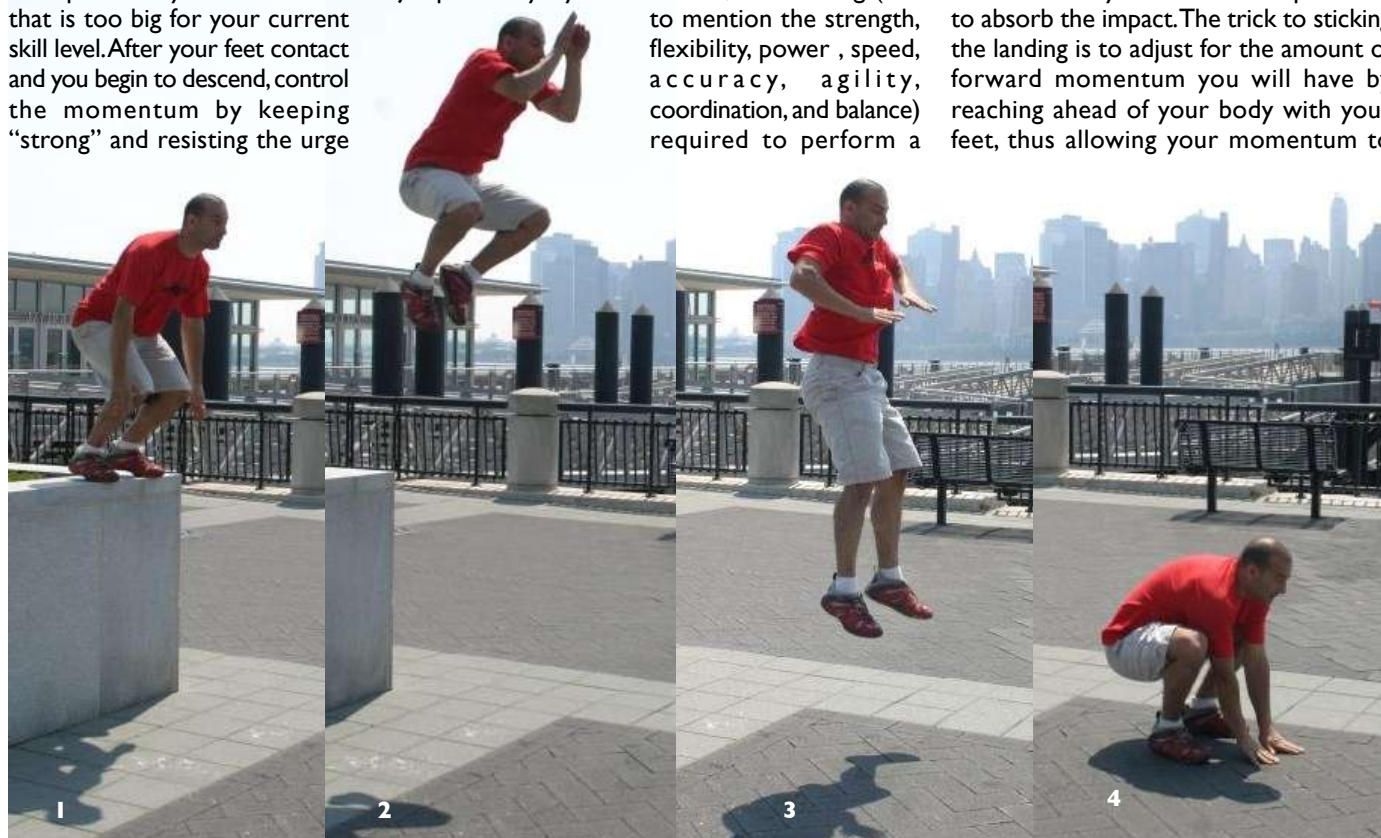
to flop uselessly on the ground. Use the eccentric tension in your hips, thighs, and calves to control the descent and make the landing smooth and quiet.

This basic movement pattern—tuck, explode, tuck, reach, and absorb—will serve you well in most techniques involving jumping from one place to another, whether you're leaping over a gap or flying across an alleyway toward a cat leap. Among all these techniques, though, the movement reaches no higher expression than in the precision jump.

A precision jump is basically a jump to a small area that requires concentration, balance, and accuracy to stick the landing. It is often performed on small walls and railings, but after training for a while you will begin to see the potential for this movement in everything from the rocks across a riverbed to tree branches or fence posts. Beyond the purely practical applications of the movement in your everyday environment, the training (not to mention the strength, flexibility, power, speed, accuracy, agility, coordination, and balance) required to perform a

large and powerful broad jump onto an exceedingly small landing surface can benefit every athlete.

To perform a "precision," as it's known, follow the steps for the basic jump and landing outlined above, but apply them to a broad jump. Swing your arms back as you crouch, then explode at a roughly 45-degree angle toward your target while throwing your arms in the direction of travel. In the air, tuck your knees toward your torso as your body moves from an angle to more upright. Your arms will swing back behind you to help right your body in the air. As you begin to reach your landing area, spot the point of impact and extend your feet toward the surface, basically reversing the angle of takeoff with your legs while keeping your torso upright. This will put you in a V position with your upper-body angled forward in the direction of travel and your legs nearly perpendicular to this angle. The basics of all non-rolling landings apply: land on the balls of your feet and allow your knees and hips to flex to absorb the impact. The trick to sticking the landing is to adjust for the amount of forward momentum you will have by reaching ahead of your body with your feet, thus allowing your momentum to



Mark prepares for a jump from height by assuming the jumping position.

He jumps upward and tucks his knees toward his chest.

As he nears the ground, he extends his legs toward the landing area.

He lands on his toes and follows by bending his knees and then hips, finishing with his hands to dissipate the last of the force.

Parkour Basics

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Mark assumes the basic jumping position.

As he explodes upward, he swings his arms in the direction of travel—in this case, straight up.

As the kinetic chain of his ankles, knees, and hips reaches its apex, his arms are straight overhead.

At the apex of the jump, he tucks his knees toward his chest.

Mark extends (slightly off-balance here) toward the landing area.

He absorbs the shock with his ankles, knees, and hips and prepares to explode directly into a run.

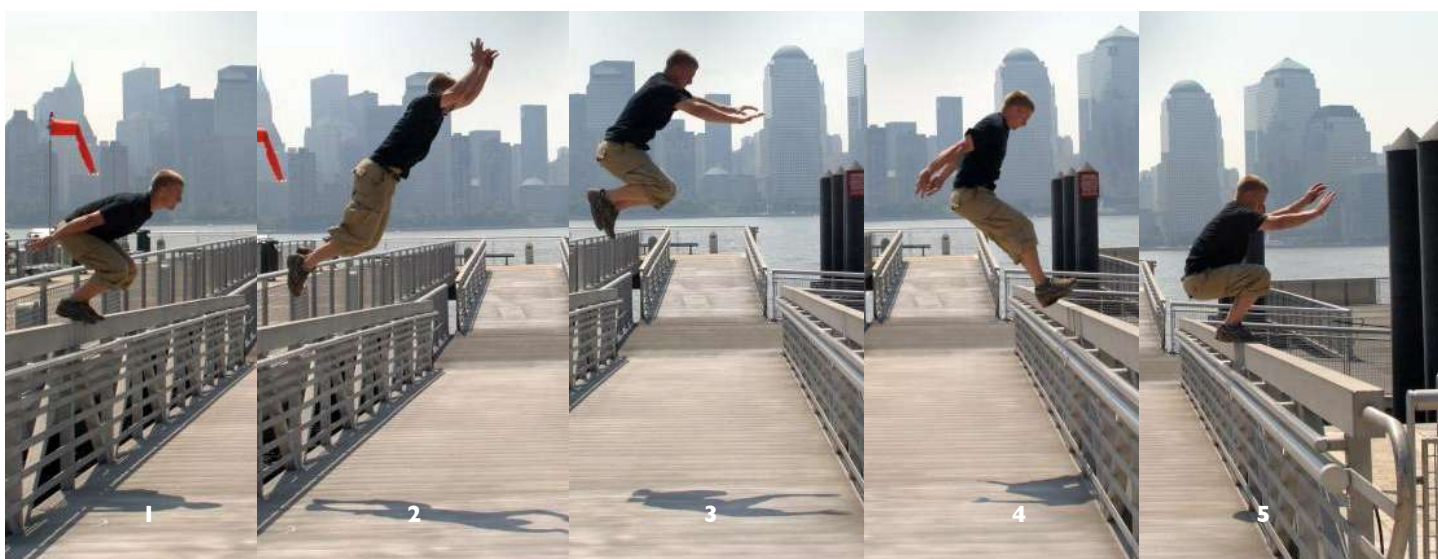


carry you to an upright position. As you land, it helps to swing your arms forward again to regain balance.

The precision jump is very committing and requires absolute focus on your point of landing once you start working up to smaller landing zones and larger gaps. This

is its greatest strength, as I have experienced no other technique that works accuracy, focus, balance, coordination, and commitment better than the precision jump and all of its derivatives. Once you are able to confidently launch yourself toward a measly hand-railing from seven or eight feet and land with total control

and balance, many other aspects of moving throughout your everyday environment will become much easier. That, in the end, is why we commit to the work that we put in day in and day out, and why incorporating parkour movements into your everyday fitness will help you reap its many varied benefits. ◇



For the precision jump, assume the jump position, bend your knees, and swing your arms back.

As you reach the apex of your jump, tuck your knees and bring your arms back to right your body in the air.

As you approach the landing area, extend your legs toward the object and prepare to absorb your momentum and stand upright.

If your accuracy and balance are spot-on, you will be carried to your feet with perfect control to continue on your way.

The Slow Lifts

Part 4: The Deadlift

— Mark Rippetoe —

I know of no better example of functional strength than a 600-pound deadlift. Except a 700-pound deadlift. That's what strength is: the ability to generate force, and the "functional" part is really just a qualifier. Because when you're that strong, it's functional. That's the part that has the modern "academic" wing of the fitness industry in such a fog just now.

It is currently fashionable to characterize certain types of training as "functional" and other types of training as something else, maybe "non-functional" or "training that lacks function" or "functionless" training. I have no idea why this has received such attention recently, except that there are several equipment manufacturers that make stuff that is supposed to add "function" to our training. And damned if it doesn't always involve some sort of instability that the overcoming of provides the benefit.

But more than involving instability (and expensive proprietary devices), it also always seems to involve very light weights. Look, if a guy wants to do his alternate dumbbell presses while seated on a stability ball, that's fine with me. But my god, you have to use more than the 15-pound dumbbells! Because if you want functional strength, you have to at some point get strong enough to lift more than the 15s. You just do. But this point often gets lost on stability ball day.

And I swear that I actually saw a guy doing 50-pound behind-the-neck lat pulldowns while seated on a Swiss ball. I was out of town, by the way, in a state that begins with a C.

It seems as though whenever we talk about functional strength, we get all hung up on the functional part and forget about the strength part. So I'm going to go out on a limb here and suggest something that may upset the PTs and the ATCs and the exercise physiologists that seem to be so

fond of this stuff. My contention is that if you make your deadlift go from 185 up to 400, you have obtained functional strength without the use of anything but a weighted barbell. Furthermore, if you do this, your seated alternate dumbbell stability ball press will go up too, without having to suffer the embarrassment of actually doing it in public.

The deadlift teaches function, because there is no more functional a movement



than picking up something heavy. It's one of the things our bodies are built to do, and when we do it as an exercise, we get better at using our bodies the way they were built to be used. We just need to make sure we're doing it right, since when we learn it right as an exercise, it carries over into all the other situations where "functional" is important.

I had a little business venture a couple years ago that was going to make me and Carla, my associate here at Wichita Falls Athletic Club, millions of dollars in a short time. Fistfuls of cash, I tell you. Why, had it worked I wouldn't be writing this now, because there would just not be enough time. We were going to teach the deadlift to industrial and commercial employees, for the purpose of applying the skill to workplace situations and thus preventing back injuries. The idea was sound, I'm still convinced, but it was not something the corporate human resources people were

willing to give up the paper clip money for. We eventually got tired of trying to sell the idea to people who had no idea how a reduction in the incidence of \$500,000 back injuries could save them money. I'm actually glad we got it out of our systems, before we got our faces sued off by a plaintiff's attorney representing some fat guy with a back injury he got in his garage.

The deadlift has the reputation of being even more hated than the squat. Even people who will actually do their squats will sneak out of the gym before I notice that they haven't gotten the bar down on the floor. This disappoints me, but I understand. Deadlifts are hard. Most people don't like hard stuff. That's why there are more people doing one-arm triceps kickbacks on the wobble board with the 5-pounders than there are people doing deadlifts. And the deadlift is hard to cheat; a squat can be high and people might disagree, but a deadlift is easy to judge.

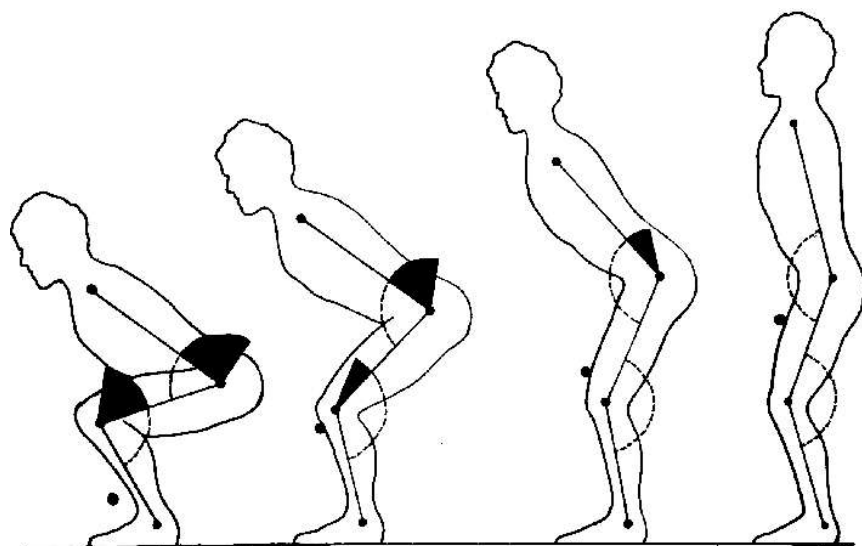
It is actually a very simple exercise, requiring only a couple of important technical considerations and a willingness to pull on things that would rather not move. The two technical considerations are back position and the bar path.

The lower back needs to be extended, or arched, during the entire pull so the bones of the spine stay in the right position to bear a load safely. The thoracic spine needs to be in a correct position too, best accomplished by keeping the chest up during the pull. The position is the same one that you assume when standing erect normally and correctly, referred to as "normal anatomical position." The low back arch is not natural for some people, and it must be worked on and coached diligently if it is not right. The upper back, "chest-up" position can cause problems with our other main consideration, the bar path, if it is not understood clearly.

When the bar gets heavy, the bar path of

The Slow Lifts

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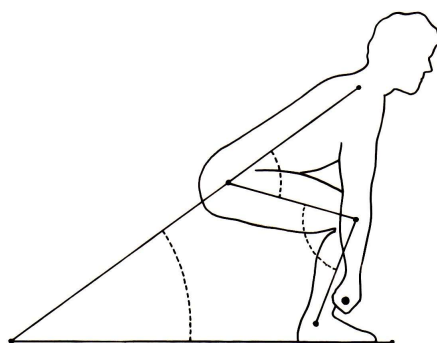
a correct deadlift will be essentially vertical. This is because the straight line of a vertical pull is the shortest distance between the floor and lockout, and this is the way your body likes to do heavy deadlifts. There will be an angle, defined by the plane of the flat back as it intersects the floor, that produces the most efficient pull off the floor. That angle will allow the best use of the quads as they straighten the knees for the initial push, it will allow the bar to stay on the shins as it comes vertically up, and it will keep the bar in contact with the legs until it locks out at the top. This back angle will be maintained as the knees straighten out and the bar passes them on the way up, until the hips begin to extend and the knees and hips lock out together.

If the back angle is too horizontal—too parallel to the floor—the net effect is the removal of the quads from the pull. Quads straighten out the knee. That is their anatomical function, but it must occur while the bar is moving up, not before, or the muscle group has not contributed to the pull. Think of it this way: in a good deadlift, the knees push the bar away from the floor, and the hips pull it to lockout. If the knees start out straight (or straighten before the bar rises above them), you have done a stiff-leg deadlift, an assistance exercise for the hamstrings.

If the back angle is too vertical, the hips will rise before the bar leaves the floor, straightening out the knee without moving the bar up, and pulling the shins back away from the bar so that there is air between

bar and shin. This wastes movement, but, more important, it puts the bar in a bad mechanical position to pull, too far away from the hips—the point of rotation around which the force of leg drive is turning. Then the bar either stays too far away from the legs during the pull or it bangs you in the shins as it comes back in line where it should have been. Either way, the pull is inefficient and incorrect.

Furthermore, the most efficient angle will be a little different for everybody, since it depends on individual anthropometry—the differences in the lengths of the segments of the body: the arms, the spine, the femurs, and the tibias. People with long torsos and short legs will have a steeper back angle than people with long legs and short torsos. At the correct back angle, the only things that are constant are the bar in contact with the shins, the shoulders very slightly in front of the bar, and the back locked into normal anatomical position. If you're coaching, don't expect there to be a template that everybody fits. Right is relative.



These effects are observed mainly when the bar gets heavy. At light weights all manner of mistakes are possible because the bar path can be a crooked line and the universe does not care. However, what with gravity being the law, at heavy weights the bar path will be damned close to vertical, possibly with a very slight arc back toward the legs as it comes off the floor, and you will have to learn to like it and adapt accordingly.

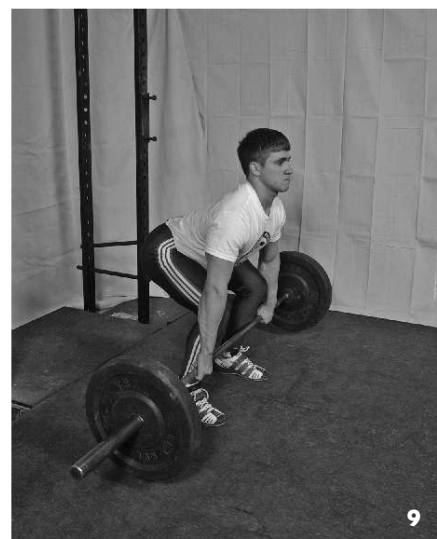
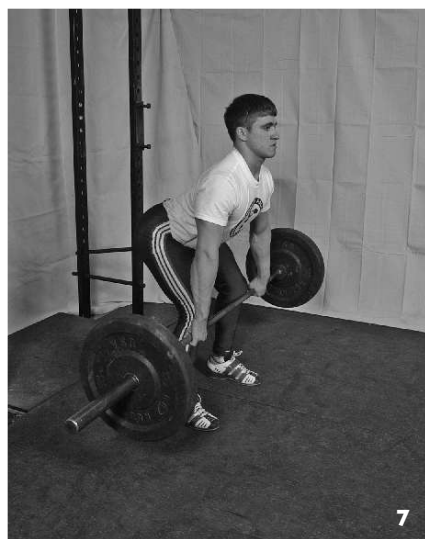
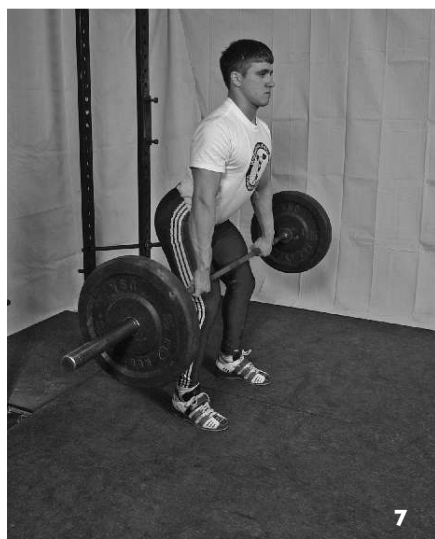
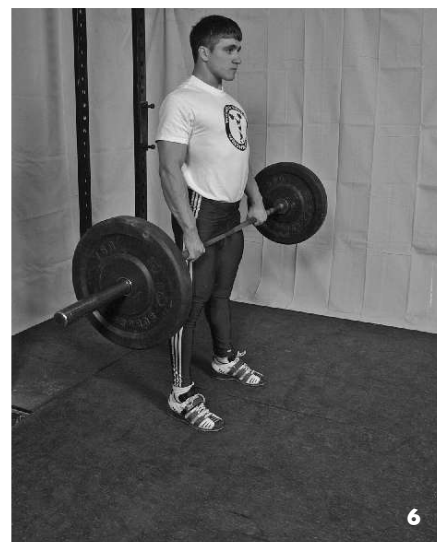
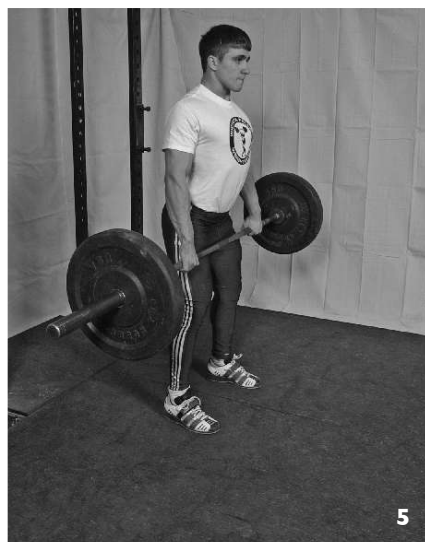
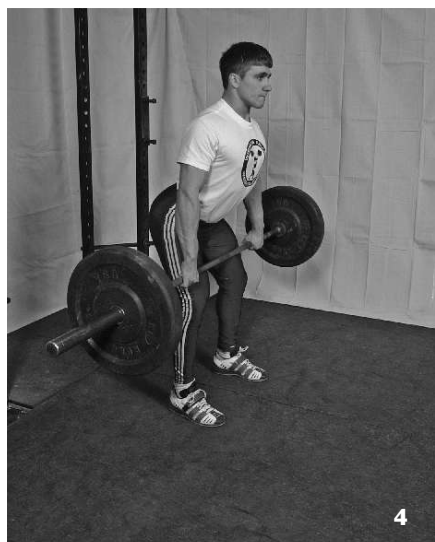
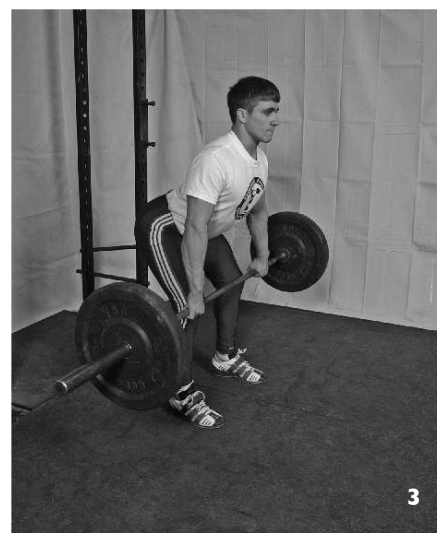
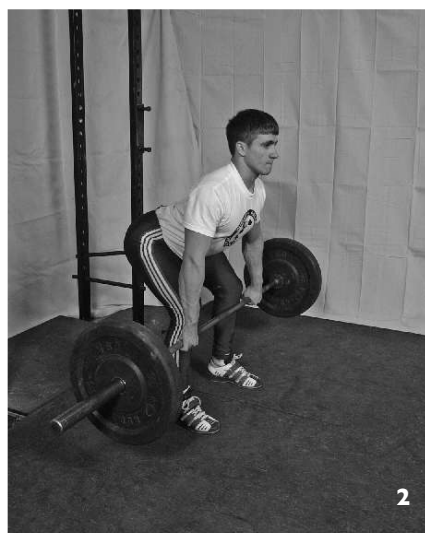
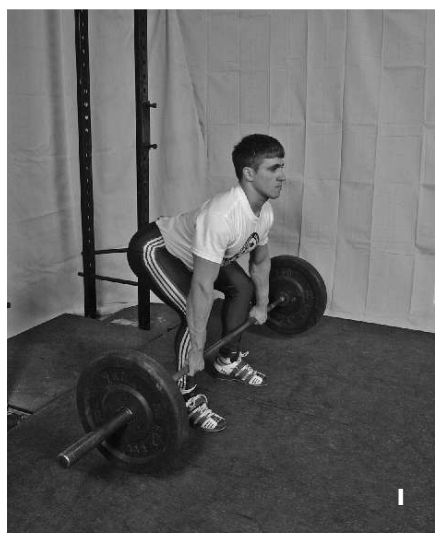
Now, the chest position has an effect on the starting position (sorry if this is getting dry, we're almost through with the concentration part) due to the fact that many people confuse chest-up with back angle. Lifting the chest is a thoracic spine extension, done with the muscles of the upper back. When you lift the chest, you do it by straightening out the curve between the T1 and T8 vertebrae, tightening the upper slips of the longissimus dorsi, and producing an isometric contraction that holds the vertebrae immobile during the deadlift. Theoretically, at least. The whole spine should be protected by this isometric contraction. In effect, the hips and legs generate the movement—they are the motor. The locked back transfers this movement down the arms to the bar—it is the transmission.

This must be understood: the chest-up position has nothing to do with the back angle. The chest can be lifted by the thoracic contraction in any position, standing straight up or bent over at the waist. So can the lower back extension, the movement that tightens the muscles that protect the lumbar spine. This skill needs to be developed so that a tight back position can be assumed whenever it is necessary, in any position, whether deadlifting or picking up the groceries, skiing really fast downhill or staying tight while you hit the nose guard, maintaining a tight torso during a sprint or carrying a charged hose up the third flight of stairs.

This is precisely why the deadlift is as functional as exercise gets. Name a physical movement that applies in more situations or that occurs as frequently as generating force against the ground and transferring it to a load in the hands. Nothing that involves a big yellow ball gets even close.

The Slow Lifts

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The Grinder

CrossFit Operations Order #1, "CHAD"

The Grinder: CrossFit Operations Order #1, "CHAD"

Introduction

The organization and format of this article may be confusing for some; it may appear to be written in a foreign language. However, to others—namely, military officers and senior non-commissioned officers—it will be instantly familiar and comprehended. "The Grinder" is produced following the NATO operations order format. An operations order (OPORD or Op O) is a directive issued by a commander to his subordinates in order to effect the coordinated execution of a specific operation (Ranger Handbook, SH 21-76). For this article, the operation or task is a group workout.

The five-paragraph NATO OPORD format, and annexes, are used to organize the commander's direction, to ensure a common operating picture, and to assist subordinate leaders in fully understanding the commander's intent and what results he wants the operation to produce—the end state. It is a logical, clear, and concise method of conveying a plan. The five standard paragraphs that make up the OPORD are: SITUATION, MISSION, EXECUTION, SERVICE SUPPORT, and COMMAND AND SIGNAL.

Because the CrossFit Journal is read by a wide range of military units in the United States and around the world, terms from the NATO glossary of abbreviations, AAP-15(2006), are used whenever possible to clarify directions. The primary audience for "The Grinder" is the military and law enforcement community. However, any agency conducting group physical training will find the content useful, once they get used to the format.

For an OPORD to be effective, it must 1) be constructed so that personnel understand the intent, their own tasks, and the context of those tasks; 2) inform personnel what effect they are to achieve and why it needs to be achieved (for the "Grinder", it is to achieve unit cohesion and combat fitness under fatigue conditions); 3) identify the resources required to execute the task; and 4) impose a minimum of control measures to ensure freedom of action and flexibility.

"The Grinder" is a direct result of the requests generated by last month's CFJ article "Large-Group CrossFit Training" for additional articles addressing platoon and squad combat fitness training.

CrossFit Operations Order #1, "CHAD"

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CFHQ
Santa Cruz, CA
USA

01 Jul 06

OPS 01

Operation Order 01 – OP GRINDER

Task Organization: Annex A

1. SITUATION

a. General.

- (1) The contemporary operating environment facing coalition forces today is complex, diverse, diffuse, and lethal. It is an asymmetrical battle space that is extremely dangerous and constantly evolving. Coalition forces are required to conduct a wide range of tasks simultaneously within an area of operations. There has been an operational shift from the traditional "third-generation warfare" to the current "fourth-generation warfare" model. This evolution has produced an operational environment that focuses mainly on complex terrain such as mountains, built-up areas, and jungles. Due to the evolving threat facing coalition forces, military organizations have had to develop new doctrine, tactics, techniques, and procedures to be effective.
- (2) Combat fitness and survivability is one of the critical areas currently being examined by coalition armies. Recent missions in Afghanistan and Iraq have shown that soldiers require real combat fitness to be effective on today's battlefield. Just as doctrine and tactics must be amended and enhanced to allow for success against these new threats, so must military fitness training.
- (3) Last month's CrossFit Journal article "Large-Group CrossFit Training" has generated many requests from readers for future articles addressing platoon or squad combat fitness training.

b. Grinder's Intent.

- (1) Purpose. The purpose of OP GRINDER is to produce group workouts that utilize the equipment commonly found within a military unit. The workouts will address both garrison and austere training protocols for platoons, squads, and fire teams. They will be scalable and flexible to allow for a wide range of utilization—to include troops conducting basic training through to elite combat operators. The format and language will be based on military organizations; however, this is just for ease of direction. The workouts are amendable to suit any agencies or organizations that conduct group physical training.
- (2) Method. Initially, "The Grinder" will be produced periodically. However, based on demand from the military/LEO community, the

CrossFit Operations Order #1, "CHAD"

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column could become a monthly addition to the CFJ. It will provide a workout, to include direction, description, and graphic representation. Each "Grinder" will be produced in an Operations Order (Op O) format that all NATO personnel are familiar with. This will allow for a common operating picture, regardless of unit. To ensure a successful transition to future training, there will be "Be Prepared to" (BPT) or "Follow-on" tasks in the EXECUTION paragraph. This will allow leaders to use concurrent activity to prepare for the next workout. These preparations could include instructing and rehearsing skill moves such as the clean or overhead squat; conducting reconnaissance of required or potential future training areas, or obtaining specific logistics for the execution of the next phase of the workout. An example would be "BPT: conduct a workout requiring 1 x sandbag and 1 x .50 cal ammo can filled with sand per four man fire team, and a 400-meter running route. Troops will have to be competent with the front squat and deadlift to execute the next WOD (workout of the day)." The BPT tasks will set the conditions for success during the next month's workout. An annex will accompany the Op O to provide a graphic representation of the workout set-up and the locations of key personnel or equipment. The Op O will provide direction on the effects desired from the workout; however, it will be the leader's responsibility to determine how best to accomplish these effects based on his organization's skill level, available equipment, and location.

- (3) End State. Units will be equipped, organized, and prepared to conduct individual and group combat fitness at the company, platoon, or squad level in garrison and/or austere environments.

2. MISSION

"CHAD": run 400m /25 deadlifts/ run 400m /25 thrusters / run 400m/25 front squats / run 400m /25 push-presses / run 400m

3. EXECUTION

a. Concept of Operations.

- (1) Intent. Complete each of the prescribed exercises as quickly as possible in a safe manner. This is a "task-specific" team workout. The purpose of this workout is to develop cohesion and fitness under fatigue conditions while executing a simulated combat casualty evacuation.
- (2) Scheme of maneuver. Each squad will be divided into two teams of four. Each team will have a stretcher, a water jerry can filled with water (45 lbs.), two .50-cal ammo cans filled with sand (50 lbs. each), a sandbag (50 lbs.), and a rock (45 lbs.). All the teams will start at the same time from the same location. They will load the sandbag, water jerry, rock, and one .50-cal ammo can onto the stretcher (total weight 190 lbs.) and run/walk 400m carrying the stretcher. When they return to the start point, each member of the team will secure a piece of equipment and

CrossFit Operations Order #1, "CHAD"

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do a specific exercise for 25 reps. The exercises are: deadlift, the two .50-cal ammo cans (one in each hand) for 25 reps, perform thrusters with the rock for 25 reps, front squat with the sandbag for 25 reps, and push press the water jerry for 25 reps. Once each member of the team has completed the 25 reps, they load the equipment back on the stretcher and complete another 400m run/walk. When they return to the start position again, each member will conduct 25 reps of another exercise with a different piece of equipment. This rotation will carry on until each member of the team has done all four exercises. Upon completion, each soldier will have done 25 reps of deadlifts, thrusters, push-presses, and front-squats and run a total of 2km (5 · '5f 400m).

- (3) Main Effort. The safety of all personnel, and the development of unit cohesion through shared challenge and hardship.
- (4) End State. The successful completion of all exercises by each individual in the squad, and the unit prepared to carry on with further training.

b. Coordinating Instructions.

- (1) Team Organization. Squad leaders can organize the four-man team however they want. It is a leadership decision on how best to deploy each team to accomplish the mission. If the squads cannot be grouped into fire teams of four, add a fifth soldier to the team. The fifth exercise to be completed will be 25 burpees. For the 400m-casualty carry, the fifth team member can rotate into carrying the stretcher during the run.
- (2) Scaling. The workout can be conducted in PT gear or full battle gear to include vests with plates, depending on the fitness levels of your soldiers. The four pieces of equipment selected—sandbag, water jerry, ammo cans, and rock—are for austere conditions. If you have the resources, you can use dumbbells or barbells. The weight of the equipment or number of reps can be increased or decreased based on the skill level of your troops. The weight of 190 lbs. to be placed on the stretcher will simulate the weight of a casualty.
- (3) Scoring. The finish time is based on the combined time for the complete squad. Therefore, if Team A and B make up the first squad, and their times are 26:30 and 30:02, the squad's workout time is 56:32. The squad that has the lowest combined time wins.
- (4) Follow-on Tasks. The next workout will require a 400m running route, pull-up bars, and M2 Bradley 25mm ammo cans filled with sand. The preferred ratio is one 25mm ammo can for each soldier; however, if this is not possible, one 25mm ammo can per three soldiers is acceptable. If you cannot obtain 25mm ammo cans, find something that weighs about 70 lbs. and can be lifted overhead: a rock, a barbell, a dumbbell, etc.

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4. SERVICE SUPPORT

a. Equipment Weights

Ammo Can Nomenclature	Quantity / Size	Type	Weight	Contents
Cart 25mm APFSDS-T	30 rds	PA125	70 lbs	Sand
Cart cal .50 4B/1T	100 rds	M2A1	50 lbs	Sand
Cart 5.56mm ball clip	910 rds	M2A1	30 lbs	Sand
Cart 7.62mm belt 4B/1T	220 rds	M19A1	20 lbs	Sand
Jerry can	20 liters	7240-21-852-5150	45 lbs	Water
Sand bag	14 in .5f 26 in	8105-00-142-9345	50 lbs	Sand
Stryker tire and rim	1	2610-20-000-7697	Apprx 350lbs	NA

b. Equipment Requirements. Each 4- or 5-man fire team will require one rock (45 lbs.), one jerry can (45 lbs.), two .50-Cal ammo cans (50 lbs. each), one sand bag (50 lbs), and one stretcher.

c. Time Recording. One stopwatch and writing material to record each fire team's and squad's workout times.

5. COMMAND AND SIGNAL

a. Timer/Score Recorder. Only one timekeeper is required for all squads. This soldier will record the times of all the fire teams when they finish the workout. He is positioned at the start line/exercise area for command and control purposes. All fire teams begin the workout on his command. Once a fire team has completed all the exercises, they inform the timekeeper, who records all times.

b. Instructor/Coach/Safety. To ensure proper conduct of the workout, use of correct exercise form, and safety of execution, a designated member of the platoon can fill this billet. An injured soldier who cannot participate in the PT or another member of the company can also perform this duty. Although not preferred, the platoon leader or platoon sergeant can also serve in this key position, especially if the target training audience is the individual squads.

Annexes:

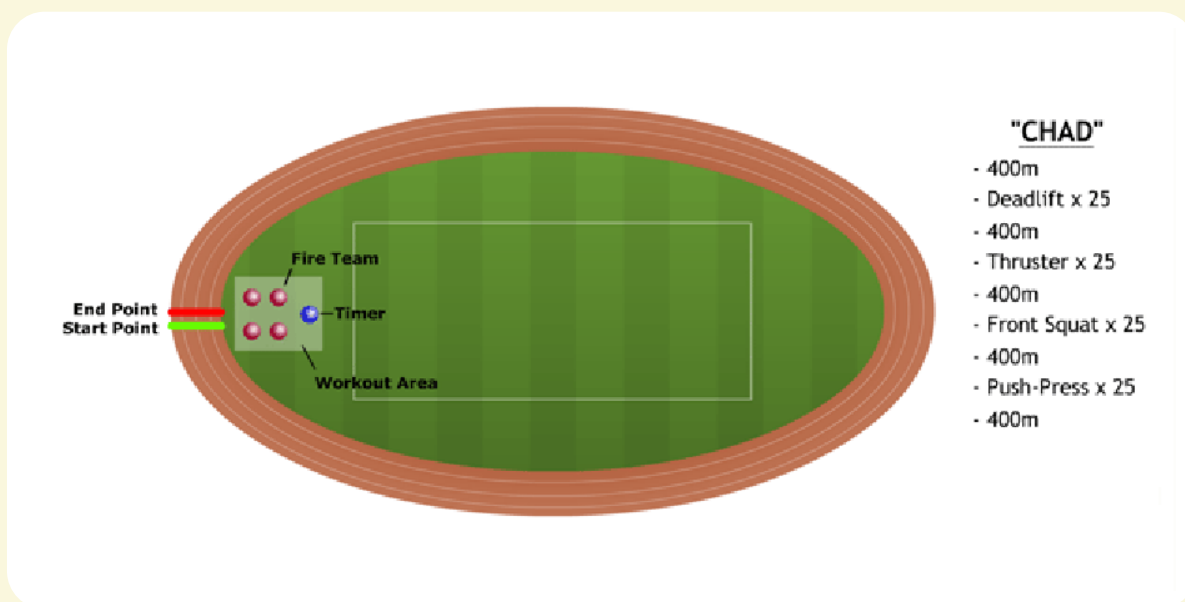
Annex A Workout diagram
Annex B Equipment
Annex C Exercises

This workout is dedicated to LTC. Chad Buehring, US Army (SF) who selflessly gave his life to liberate the oppressed. Fair winds, Chad.

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Annex A Workout Diagram



Annex B Equipment



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Annex B Equipment (cont'd)



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Annex C Exercises



Deadlift

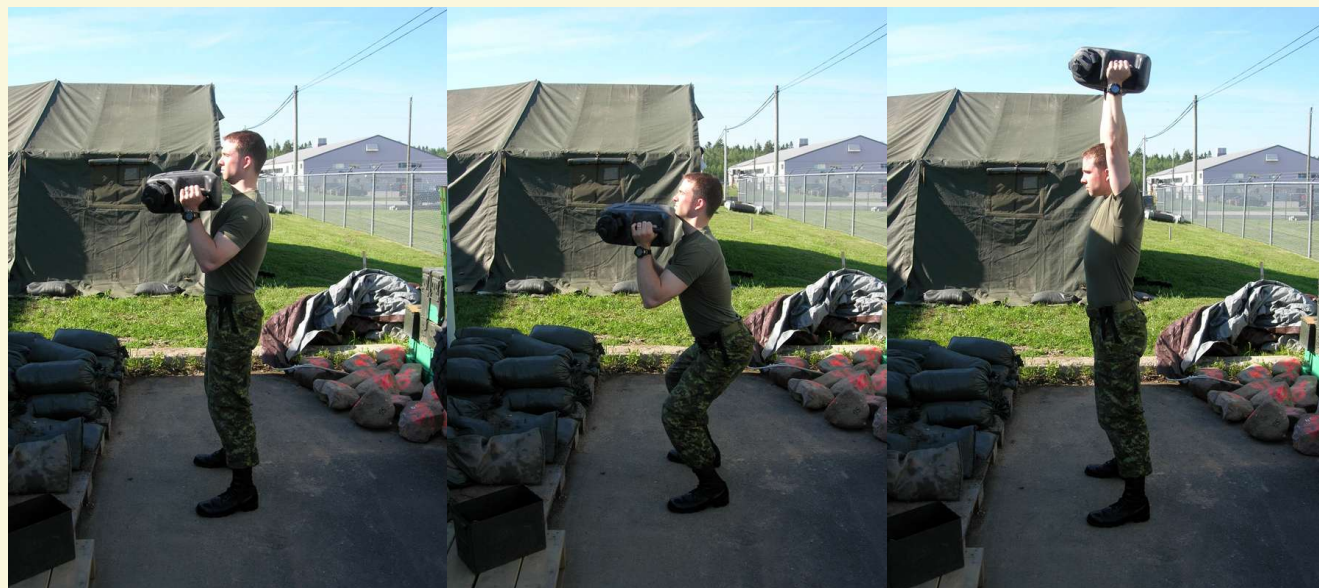


Front Squat

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Annex C Exercises (cont'd)



Push Press



Thruster



Combat Calisthenics

— Tony Blauer —

I've been training and teaching martial arts and combatives since 1967. During a career that has now spanned 30+ years as student, athlete, instructor, and coach, I've been exposed to a variety of conditioning and training advice. I've worked with every type of student, from children to soldiers and everyone in between. Before I delve into the heart of "combat calisthenics," let me offer a disclaimer: This article is not intended to criticize or condemn any form of exercise. In a nation plagued with laziness and obesity, I respect, admire, and support anyone who is working out. But that doesn't mean that every training regimen produces equal results or exploits every resource it can. At the end of the day, performance is paramount. In fact, performance is everything.

On game day, we all want to win. This applies to a recreational game of tennis, a chase, a battle, or a street fight. But to improve your chances of winning, your training regimen must provide a balance between conditioning your mind and conditioning your body and between general physical preparedness and skill-specific training for your "event." Your fitness routine must suit your event.

To develop event-appropriate drills and skills, I use a reverse engineering process that asks 1) Why are we training? and 2) What are the worst-case conditions we would need to perform under? While these conditions certainly include things like weather, austere environments, etc., I'm concerned with more fundamental emotional and psychological conditions, such as sudden stimuli that elevate your heart rate, reflexive responses, and fear-triggered physiological responses that affect complex motor skills coordination. My interest is in training for situations in which you're physically and psychologically taxed and at the same time require bombproof performance at common general physical skills like running, climbing, and jumping and some specialized skills like realistic close-quarter measures.

Necessity is the mother of invention

Functional combative training became a major focus from the time my very first student got his butt kicked in his first real-life self-defense confrontation. I took his loss seriously and personally. How had I and my training tools failed him? That fateful fight back in 1980 helped spawn my training methodology, inspire a new combative system, and revamp my approach to conditioning for self-defense and combat.

As a result of that first fight and many observations made during subsequent training, I started to question the applicability of conventional conditioning when it came to martial and combative athletes. While my conclusions were mostly intuitive, there were a variety of signs of the problems:

1. Average performance from above-average athletes.
2. Seemingly unrelated or irrational injuries.
3. Complex motor-skill failure during intense scenarios or real street altercations.

Out of respect for the opposition and concern for the outcome, performance enhancement became the key objective to training for real life self-defense. The result of this introspection gave birth to an approach to training I refer to as combat calisthenics.

The paradigm shift

Modern athletes generally cross-train in a variety of disciplines to work their stamina, strength, and endurance. Contact sport athletes also train their skills competing in their chosen sport to force targeted athletic demands on the specific motor skills they need. This allows these athletes to utilize conventional conditioning because they are also getting skill development during sparring or competing.

Combative sports like boxing, Thai boxing, kickboxing, and mixed martial arts allow practitioners to spar with the same rules, rounds, and types of contact as when the athlete is actually competing. Realistic self-defense training and combative training,

however, does not provide the same sport-model options, and it's this paradigm shift that is crucial to fully appreciate the rationale for the combat calisthenics approach. In reality, most athletes training for street defense are still using conventional training methods because the notion of combat-specific calisthenics is little-known or mistaken for sparring.

Separating sport and street

Every contact sport has structure and parameters: time, place, rules, weight divisions, safety gear, allowed targets, and so on, are agreed to. This allows the athlete to fully visualize competition scenarios, train specific tools and targets, and condition specific to the timeline of the match. Simply put, in the sport realm there is consent, awareness, and preparation for every event, no matter how physical or how potentially dangerous. This is not the case in combat and self-defense. In combat, in the street attack, there are no weight divisions, there are no rules or refs, there is usually just one round, and that round is often really really short (10 to 20 seconds).

In the street attack and in combat, there is no true consent (at the time of an assault). Preparation is based on theory and anticipation. There truly are no rules. Most telling is that when something goes wrong, it goes wrong fast. There is no padded floor or mouth guard, no medic standing just outside the ring. It is vital that preparation for the street take these essential differences into account.

Enter combat calisthenics

While there are many iterations and evolutions of this program, the short explanation and philosophy is this: Train using drills that replicate actual real-life attacks. Study specific portions of real fights and then replicate key "Murphy moments" in training. Our athletes execute specific attacks at slow to medium speeds so that attacker and defender replicate the actual angles present in real-world incidents. Resistance training is based on a force-on-force formula where athletes, working as partners, train core, stabilizers and

Combat Calisthenics

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flexor/extensor motions through gross and complex motor skills. Rather than warming up with jumping jacks, we warm up with real-life attacks.

Here's an overview of the components in the combat calisthenics recipe:

- **Replication theory** - Use scenario analysis to identify common attacks and off-balance positions.
- **Three-dimensional training theory** – Train based on real scenarios in order to integrate the emotional, psychological, and physical elements of real confrontations into our drills.
- **The "off-balance/point of domination" training model** - Take into account the fact that in a real fight, when you are the target, you are off-balance.

Drills start off-balance on purpose. The defender starts in a position of adversity and then uses micro adjustments including isometric and isotonic principles to regain balance and hit the "point of domination" (a tactical and athletic position of advantage).

Combat calisthenics:
A visual example

SCENARIO: Tackle attempt. Reflexive interception/jam. Reposition to point of domination.

Here we work startle/flinch conversion (as practiced in my S.P.E.A.R. System[®]), extensor muscle development, and off-balance conversion (stabilizer & core strength development) all through a field of resistance to a tactical "point of domination." (In essence this is weight and resistance training, but we use the actual angles, resistance, and feel of a human being rather than weights.)

Important training note: Just as CrossFit workouts can, and must, be adapted to individuals' abilities, combat calisthenics should be scaled appropriately as well. In the scenario above, if Mulligan's lock and restraint were too much to work against, I would simply ask him to lighten up, the



Photo 1: Starting off with an arrest scenario, S.P.E.A.R. coach and police officer Sean Mulligan (right) plays the role of aggressor.



Photo 2: Mulligan parries the hand and moves inward. Blauer (left) intentionally allows this move to replicate the sudden ambush, so he can catalog pre-contact cues. (Safety note: The initial action is performed at slower speeds to warm up. The parry makes contact with triceps area to avoid injuring the elbow joint.)



Photo 3: Blauer reacts with the primal flinch to protect his body, but as a research athlete, he allows Mulligan to continue his tackle attempt by driving his shoulder in and grabbing Blauer around the waist. This puts Blauer off balance and in a position of disadvantage.



Photo 4: Starting in this off-balance position, Blauer begins his counter by driving his arm outward and lowering his center of gravity.



Photo 5: Blauer continues to drive outward, slowly shifting his axis position forward, applying kinesthetic perception to explore and exploit muscle recruitment until he reaches a full tactical position and point of domination. Repetitions using this methodology build and burn key synaptic paths and help the combative athlete visualize where he needs to be. Real-life tactical proximities are also blueprinted by the combat athlete from repetitive practice.

Combat Calisthenics

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same as selecting a lighter kettlebell or weight plate in a strength and conditioning exercise to avoid injury and continue the set with proper form. Combat calisthenics is weight training—but with a human being rather than a dumbbell.

Combat calisthenics addresses three interdependent training components necessary for theoretical combative confidence. We lovingly call them the tactical training trinity:

1. Physical conditioning
2. Physical skills development
3. Strategic and tactical conditioning

The principles and philosophy of combat calisthenics addresses each facet of the trinity in every training session. Each set uses a real world scenario/attack to inspire the conditioning drill. And each rep develops “tactical” core strength while executing a protective technique.

Partner and solo drills

Most of our drills are partner drills because most confrontations involve at least one other person. Your partner/aggressor is like a bio-resistance apparatus. If you were training solo, you could still apply the same principles from the combat calisthenics recipe. For example, when I run I imagine myself chasing or being chased. This adds a scenario to the training. (Did you know you run faster when you visualize yourself being chased?) If I'm doing push-ups, I think of the extensor muscles used in palm strikes, or the lift I need to elevate an opponent on my back, etc., so even though I'm only doing a push-up I'm also visualizing a scenario or a tactical problem or solution.

A combat calisthenics workout also coordinates your skills to suit the actual problem (teaching you the ability to fight a person, not a pad) and allows you to make real-time adjustments and even inject “use of force” choices. Proximity sense is developed (based on a moving opponent, maneuver, or flinching), and you can even incorporate speed and power adjustments, multiple assailant considerations, and possible weapons issues.

Many of my students cross-train in a variety of systems, but, still, the glue that keeps it all together at the skill application level is the combat calisthenics approach. It has not only created more confident and skilled exponents, but it has also reduced injuries.

Always a student

I've been training since 1967 and teaching for 24 years. As a coach and athlete, I've had to explore various types of training methods to condition, toughen, and enhance my students' and my own capabilities. I've been exposed to all sorts of training principles. While our program has always applied principles of spontaneity, dynamic application, and movement based on natural biomechanics, our focus has been on core strength related to combative positions and tactics, and, in reality, it was lacking in terms of developing total fitness. Since incorporating CrossFit into the training regimen, the changes in our bodies and functional strength have been dramatic.

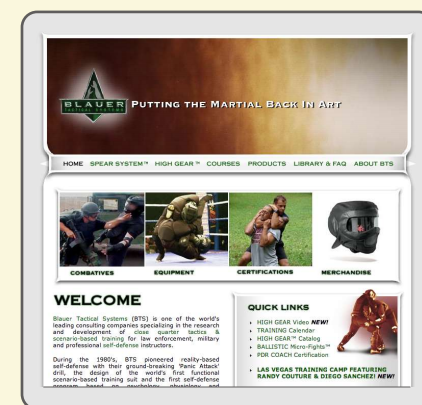
Most real confrontations are very intense and very short. And while skill and ability are paramount in the outcome of a confrontation, strength and conditioning are huge determining factors as well. CrossFit's short, intense workouts are perfect for all fighters (fire, gun, fist, mat, etc.).

CrossFit is the most intensive, dynamic, functional fitness program I have encountered. Its core principles of functional movement, intensity, and variance are pure, simple genius and resonate at every level with our research and approach to combative training.

Train hard and stay safe.



Tony Blauer is CEO of Blauer Tactical Confrontation Management Systems®, (BTCMS), a consulting firm specializing in research and development of combative programs for the military, law enforcement, and martial arts communities. He is highly sought out by progressive trainers interested in his S.P.E.A.R. System™ for counter-ambush and extreme close-quarter tactics and for his High Gear™ simulation equipment for advanced scenario work. To learn more about Blauer's work, see www.blauertactical.com.



The Back Handspring

— Roger Harrell —

If you ask beginner gymnasts what skill they most want to learn, the most common answer is “a back handspring.” It is a visually impressive skill and is frequently used in performance arts and in movies. It is a functionally powerful movement and helps develop strength, power, and agility. Learning to do a back handspring properly and safely also requires individuals to overcome fear and override many reflexive instincts. Overcoming these obstacles is a valuable skill in itself—one that carries into other aspects of training—and life.

Fear is a significant factor in learning a back handspring. The fear response is a good thing. Executed improperly or without appropriate progressions, an attempted back handspring can lead to serious injury. Follow all steps correctly and thoroughly. Ensure that you have the right equipment (including mats and pads) and spotting for each of the stages.

The drills

The first step in learning a back handspring is learning how to sit back properly. The main direction of the back handspring is backward, not upward. This is somewhat counterintuitive, and you must learn how to sit back properly so your jump travels backward. Find a stack of mats that is just below hip height. Stand facing away from the mats with your heels about two feet away from them. From this position, sit back and jump backward onto the mats. You should try to travel as far across the mat as possible leading with your hands. During the sit, your torso and lower leg should remain vertical. You must bend at the hip and the knee so that your hips track well behind your knees, and your knees stay directly above, or just behind your feet. You will not remain on balance; once the sit is initiated you will need to jump onto the mat, step, back or fall. At the beginning of the drill you will be looking at the wall in front of you. As you jump and land you will be looking at the ceiling.

A similar drill can be performed without a large mat, but it requires a spotter. The spotter will stand behind the gymnast with their hands on the gymnast's lower back. The gymnast will then sit and drive



Hips already open, which eliminates hip extension in the jump and severely limits power



Leaning forward, which results in a hip thrust during the jump that does not drive the back handspring backward



The sit is on balance, which will make the subsequent jump will go up, not backward



Correct sit: off balance, torso upright



Flight phase of jump drill; full extension

backward. The gymnast will not arch back as he would for the drill on the mat. This drill primarily trains the sit and jump phase of the skill. This drill reinforces that a back handspring is a jump backward, not upward.



Another drill trains the second half of the back handspring. Handstand snap-downs will help to develop the snap and block necessary to finish the back handspring with good positions and sufficient power to continue to another back handspring, or to an aerial salto skill.

Start with a panel mat or box that is about 12 inches tall. Kick to handstand on the mat, then snap your feet down off of the mat, back into your initial standing position. Do not allow your arms to drop after the snap-down. You should aggressively snap into a hollow position as you push off of the mat. Your goal is to land with your feet in front of your knees and your knees in front of your hips. Your upper body will be hollow and your arms will be by your ears. (See images following page.) This is a powerful move: if the snap-down is executed properly, you will need to walk or run backward to avoid falling down.

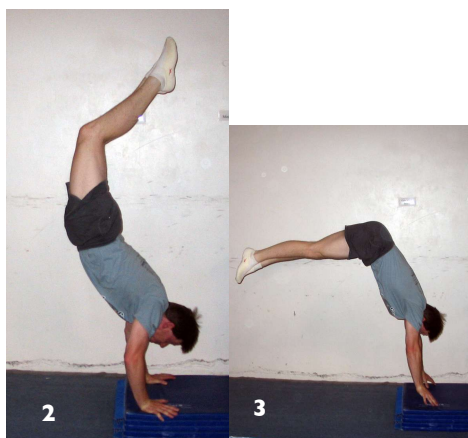
A back handspring is among the easiest skills to spot. Most people can become competent spotting back handsprings with just a few minutes of instruction. The

The Back Handspring

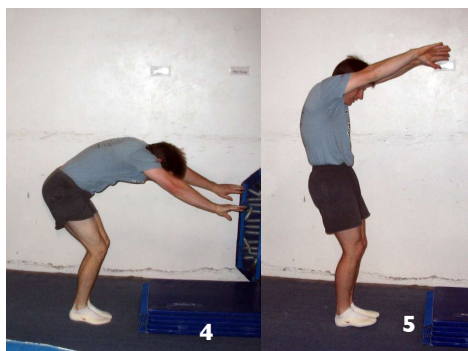
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spotter will kneel behind and off to one side of the gymnast. Assuming the spotter is kneeling on the gymnast's left side the spotter will place their left hand on the back of the gymnast's left leg just above the knee with the spotter's hand supinated. The spotter's right hand will be placed, thumb up, on the gymnast's lower back. At this point the gymnast will sit and jump back. The spotter will help support the gymnast as they jump back onto their hands. The spotter's left hand is to assist with rotation. Once the gymnast's hands have contacted the ground it is easy to assume that the dangerous part of the back handspring is over and the spotter can relax. Do not make this mistake. Quite often, especially in adults, the gymnast is completely lost and can come crashing to the floor as their legs rotate over their body. To help the gymnast finish the skill the spotter can move their left hand from the gymnast's leg to the gymnast's stomach. This will help slow the descent and help ensure that the gymnast's feet are the first things to contact the floor. (See images to right.) All instructions are reversed for a spotter being on the gymnast's right side. With two competent spotters, one on either side, most people can perform a back handspring safely.



Shoulder flexibility will aid progress in the back handspring. If you are unable to fully open your shoulders, it will affect the mechanics and flow of a back handspring. Practice bridges regularly to improve this flexibility and develop a feel for the arch required during a back handspring. When practicing bridges, be sure to push your head and shoulders out over your hands so the primary stretch is in your shoulders. Broomstick dislocates and cat stretches will also help improve flexibility.



The common mistakes

An extremely common mistake is to turn your head as you jump into the back handspring. This is a natural reaction and often a difficult habit to fix. It is a fear response, so the best way to fix it is to reduce the perception of risk in the skill. With two spotters, perform slow back handsprings. Sit back while looking at the



wall, and then extend into the back handspring. Be sure to follow your hands with your eyes. Focus only on extending and reaching back for the floor. Relax and take it slow. Two spotters can carry you through the skill slowly. As you become more comfortable accelerate the movement. Gradually add a stronger jump into the movement. As you progress, continue to ensure you are watching your hands.

Undercutting a back handspring occurs when the hips are thrown forward during the jump. This severely limits the power in the jump and will reduce the function of

The Back Handspring

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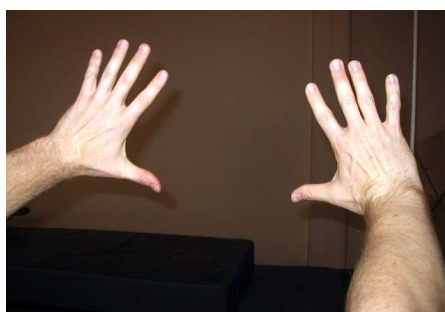
the skill, as well as increase the time it takes to learn a back handspring. If you thrust your hips forward during the jump, the power of your hip extension does not carry into the jump, and the only motive force for the jump comes from leg extension, which is not sufficient to drive the back handspring. The primary cause of the hip thrust is leaning the torso forward during the sit phase of the move. If your torso drops forward during the sit phase, it is very difficult to generate effective hip extension during the jump phase. The sit should occur with the torso upright. (There is an exception to this for certain special case back handsprings when the gymnast wants to loft the back handspring, but that should be limited to those with a strong basic back handspring.) If you are throwing your hips forward as you jump into the back handspring, back up and practice the sit and fall drills. Be critically aware of your torso position during the drills.

Even when all the drills leading up to a back handspring are performed correctly, it is still very common not to sit back sufficiently when performing a back handspring. This will result in a back handspring that goes too high, or in an ineffective hip thrust. A back handspring that goes too high will have limited power and will not flow well. When sitting back at the beginning of the move, be sure to have your knees behind your feet and your hips behind your knees. Regularly practice the sit and jump drills until this movement is natural and fluid.

A “monkey flip” occurs when the gymnast never fully extends into the back handspring, or rushes it by trying to bring their feet around too quickly. This is the mechanics used by monkeys when they perform back flips and back handsprings. If you begin to pike or your shoulder angle closes before your hands contact the ground, you are doing a monkey flip. In a monkey flip, the gymnast’s feet will land very close to their hands. This blunts the power carried in the back handspring and reduces its utility in terms of transfer to other skills.

Hand placement

Proper hand placement is also important to maximize function and power in a back handspring. In addition, proper hand placement will help reduce strain on the wrists. When your hands contact the ground, they should be turned inward and spread apart. To see the proper position, form a tear drop shape by putting your right and left index fingers and right and left thumbs together. Then separate your hands to about shoulder width. This is the position your hands should be in when they contact the ground.



This hand position allows for better function in the shoulders than with the hands turned out. It allows for the strong block into a hollow position that is required to properly complete a back handspring. A strong block (or push away from the floor with the arms) will allow the back handspring to turn over sufficiently, with the upper body traveling upward to connect it to additional back handsprings or to an aerial.

Keeping your hands turned out significantly reduces the strain on your wrists by increasing the angle between your wrist and your forearm, so that the wrist bend is not so radical. Additionally, if an arm

bend occurs during the back handspring the wrist will not be compromised with your hands in this position. If your hands are turned out this will not be the case and bending your arms will dramatically increase the strain on your wrists.

Proper execution: Length, flow, and rhythm

A proper back handspring will travel. It should be low and long. This enables it to carry momentum effectively for transfer into subsequent skills. When practicing back handsprings you should try to cover a lot of distance. A standing back handspring should travel nearly twice the gymnast’s height. A back handspring that follows another skill should be even longer.

Back handsprings should flow well. As a gymnast performs a string of back handsprings, they should be alternating between a standing extended arch reaching back with their hands to an inverted hollow position with arms by their ears. Subsequent back handsprings will accelerate and lengthen. Developing a good flow allows the gymnast’s power to go directly into each handspring, rather than fighting poor mechanics.

Good back handsprings can be identified purely by sound. Timing between contact points with the floor will be even. The interval will begin to shorten with subsequent back handsprings, but there should be no difference in time between feet to hands and hands to feet. It is common to hear a pause between the feet contacting the floor and the hands contacting the floor, followed closely by the feet contacting the floor again. This is indicative of going too high in the back handspring.

Practice to keep your back handsprings long, low, and even. Proper mechanics will allow them to carry momentum, which will enable you to perform long series of back handsprings or connect the back handspring into aerial salto skills. A strong powerful back handspring is essential to performing higher-level back tumbling skills.



The CrossFit Insurgency

— Scott Satterlee —

This is the story of how a small group of soldiers used “Unconventional Warfare” (UW) to bring CrossFit to 1st Battalion 1st Special Force Group, Torii Station, Japan.

Insurgency is a condition of subversive political activity, civil rebellion, revolt, or insurrection against a duly constituted government or occupying power wherein irregular forces are formed and engage in actions, which may include guerrilla warfare, that are designed to weaken and overthrow that government or occupying power.

Unconventional warfare is a broad spectrum of military and paramilitary operations, normally of long duration and conducted predominantly by indigenous or surrogate forces that are organized, trained, equipped, supported, and directed in varying degrees by an external source. It includes guerrilla warfare and other direct-offensive low-visibility, covert, or clandestine operations, as well as the indirect activities of subversion, sabotage, intelligence activities, and evasion and escape (E&E).

There are three prerequisites that must exist for an insurgency to be successful. The first is a vulnerable population. The second is a leadership element that can direct the frustrations of a dissatisfied populace along the lines drawn by the overall insurgent strategy. And the third is a real or perceived lack of government control. The greater control the government has over the situation, the lower the chances for insurgent success. The opposite is also true: the less control the government has, the greater the likelihood of insurgent success. In the case of our Special Operations Forces (SOF) unit, the vulnerable population was our own soldiers. The dissatisfaction arose from our desire for a better state of physical readiness, as well as our frustration with current physical fitness regimens.

Leadership was ready-made and very reactive to the will of the populace. The leadership was not removed from or oblivious to the significant costs and consequences of a feeble workout program; we were all in it together.

The “government” to be overthrown in this case was our prescribed bible for physical training, Army Field Manual (FM) 21-20, as well as the huge bureaucracy of non-elected officials that governs activities within the military.

There are a number of other conditions that must exist or be produced for an insurgent movement to succeed. For our cause, popular support, propaganda, favorable environment, and external support were the additional circumstances. Popular support was derived from the exceptional increases in physical output achieved through CrossFit workouts. Propaganda was easily developed through the injudicious use of trash talking after the overwhelming dominance of CrossFitters over others in physical competition. This in turn was an outstanding recruiting tool. The favorable environment for CrossFit is built into the population, as an average SOF soldier is usually seeking physical excellence. External support has been provided by the CrossFit organization. The massive amount of clinical information that the program is based on provides a ready-made support infrastructure.

CrossFit Guerillas to CrossFit Gorillas

We started in July of 2005 with the Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT) plus four additional tests of athletic ability. The APFT consists of three tasks: two minutes of max reps push-ups, two minutes of max reps sit-ups, and a two-mile run. This test is used across the Army, with a passing score of 60 percent of the standard for each event, scaled by sex and age. A Special Operations Forces soldier is required to pass at 70 percent of the standard in the toughest age group in order to try out. That's 55 push-ups in two minutes, 62 sit-ups in two minutes, and the two-mile run in 15:02. In other words, not a very good test by the standards of CrossFit (or the ten general physical skills described in CrossFit's definition of fitness). The four additional tests we added for our experiment were vertical leap, 100-meter shuttle run, max reps strict pull-ups, and body composition.

We started with six individuals and graded according to the strictest standards. In each category of the APFT our low score was just above 80 percent and the high score was 98 percent. Vertical leap was a low of 16 inches and a high of 24 inches; pull-up numbers were 9 and 16; and the shuttle run was 16.5 and 19 seconds. Body composition ranged from 16 percent to 21 percent body fat. The plan was to CrossFit for a nine-week cycle and then retest.

During the nine-week cycle we spent eight weeks deployed to two different countries. We had to come up with creative substitutions for many exercises, but we were always able to preserve the intent of the workout of the day (WOD). When we retested ourselves after the nine-week cycle the difference was profound. The APFT score increased by 20 percent across the test group. Vertical leap increased by four inches, shuttle run time decreased by more than one second, and pull-ups increased by 8, on average. Body fat decreased by an average of two percentage points. We had just created our hard-core insurgent cadre.

The test results were made public to the rest of the battalion for evaluation. However, this first move was not successful for spreading CrossFit in the unit, in large part because we just published the results and overlooked the active education process. So we took a step back and started smaller by inviting key personnel to our workouts. This approach was much more successful. When we hosted our commander at our workouts, he was able to see firsthand the impact that CrossFit had on our general fitness level. We then proposed a company-level competition that would thoroughly test the fitness of the soldiers of the unit. The workout consisted of 25 pull-ups, 400m run, 25 50-pound rucksack thrusters, 400m run, 100m 75-pound duffle bag toss, 400m run, 400m run with 75-pound duffle bag. For time, of course.

The unit competition was hugely successful and had the desired effect. The best score was close to 14:30 and the worst was around 30 minutes. The competition was

The CrossFit Insurgency

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set up to test anaerobic and cardio thresholds, power, and skill in several different military-oriented activities. After compiling the scores, we separated the results into three categories and published them in a very public place in the unit. An individual was deemed reasonably fit if he finished the event in less than 16 minutes (15 percent of the unit scored under 16 minutes). A time of 16 minutes to 20 minutes (50 percent) meant the individual's workout program was substandard and missing some essential components of fitness. Anything over 20 minutes (35 percent) we labeled f__ked up and the soldier a potential liability on a mission. This was not well received, but it elicited the response we were looking for: anger.

We attributed the poor outcome for most of the soldiers to lack of true cardio training—i.e., insufficient metabolic conditioning. Overnight we doubled our numbers of CrossFit trainees. This was only a problem because we then suddenly had twelve guys who needed training, on two different teams, with different schedules. At the time, Jim Decker and I were still educating ourselves on the CrossFit methodology. We had not had any formal training yet, and when confronted with the more in-depth questions, we had difficulty explaining the program. The one thing we could always use to support the training was our progress, which after six months was really taking off.

Soon after that event we convinced our command to let some of us go to a certification seminar in Santa Cruz. At this point the command was hooked so we were able to get permission without much trouble. Before getting on the airplane to fly across the Pacific I was able to secure a verbal agreement to bring the CrossFit staff out to Okinawa for additional training. This is where we are to date.

The process of testing and measuring our progress was incidental to the program itself but critical to the success of the effort. Now we had huge measurable improvements in physical fitness that supported propagation of the program. We could show records and results in a

form that both CrossFitters and old Army types could understand.

The SOF community can be resistant to change. In order for any insurgency to be effective, it needs a plan. The plan needs to start by finding or creating vulnerabilities in the target population. This is especially true with a free populace. We had to create a vulnerability—an unmistakable need for the results CrossFit produces—by getting ourselves into a state of better fitness than the rest of the men in the unit, and then finding a venue for displaying their weaknesses. As of this writing, we have conducted approximately six separate events with each one providing increasing reinforcement of the efficacy of the program. It has taken eleven months, but we have created a vulnerable population.

In our case, the leadership of the unit is cyclical, so developing relationships quickly is critical. Maintaining a very high standard of conduct among the CrossFitters (especially in contrast with the non-CrossFitters) is very important, but also very easy to do. It seems that one of the intangible benefits of CrossFit as a fitness program is its tendency to appeal to those who seek virtuosity in all aspects of life.

Most SOF soldiers are likely to resist adopting CrossFit initially. At first the resistance will probably come from their not knowing what the workout is until the WOD is posted. Our answer to that is to direct them to go to any previous month in the WOD archives and print. Sooner or later, they tend to accept the fact that the Kool-Aid is not laced with poison.

It is a tripartite “government” that we set out to depose and replace: 1) Field Manual (FM) 21-20, 2) the practice of training specifically for the APFT, and 3) the current command climate of risk aversion, wherein commanders are sometimes reluctant to commit to anything new for fear of career suicide.

The end state of our little insurgency is to propagate CrossFit to the rest of the battalion. An individual soldier's time on Okinawa is limited to 36 months, after which he is reassigned to another unit

within SOF, or to a regular Army unit, anywhere in the world. The potential for infiltration and viral spread of the CrossFit insurgency is endless. One of my young soldiers may someday end up the Sergeant Major of the Army, or one of my officers may become the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. You never know.

Conclusions

I hope that other potential “insurgents” out there can draw on our experience to use CrossFit to unseat and supplant inadequate physical training regimes in institutions of all variety of sizes and missions. A few key elements will get you on your way:

- **Educate yourself.** Be able to talk clearly and convincingly about CrossFit methodology. Have a working knowledge of physiology. Do an Internet search on “high intensity interval training,” “Olympic lifts,” and “high-repetition Olympic lifts,” and read all 12,000,000 pages in the results list.

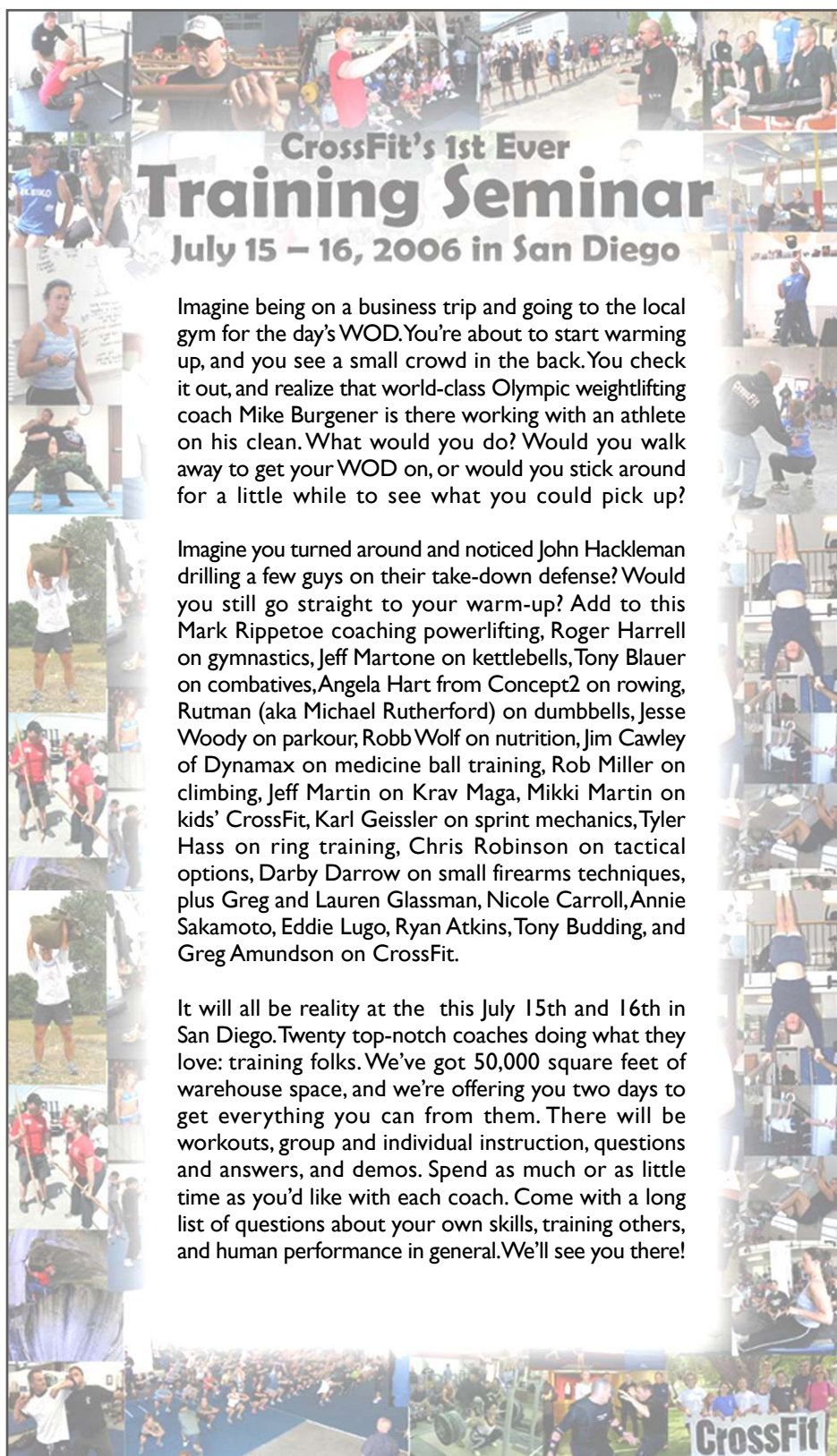
- **Start small, and be visible.** Start with a small group of peers, share knowledge, and keep track of your progress. Always explain the workout and the intent behind it to anyone who is interested, especially post-workout, when they are feeling the effect the most. To gain momentum for your insurgency movement, you will need hard and fast data to support your program; “I just feel better” will not get the job done. Post your workout times and loads and rankings in a public place. Word will spread, and people will get interested.

- **Be the example.** Get yourself and your core group into shape. This will give your movement credibility. Get the form right first, and then turn up the intensity. Take the long view. Injured people will set back your cause, so be smart, and be patient.

- **Be persistent.** 'Nuff said



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Imagine being on a business trip and going to the local gym for the day's WOD. You're about to start warming up, and you see a small crowd in the back. You check it out, and realize that world-class Olympic weightlifting coach Mike Burgener is there working with an athlete on his clean. What would you do? Would you walk away to get your WOD on, or would you stick around for a little while to see what you could pick up?

Imagine you turned around and noticed John Hackleman drilling a few guys on their take-down defense? Would you still go straight to your warm-up? Add to this Mark Rippetoe coaching powerlifting, Roger Harrell on gymnastics, Jeff Martone on kettlebells, Tony Blauer on combatives, Angela Hart from Concept2 on rowing, Rutman (aka Michael Rutherford) on dumbbells, Jesse Woody on parkour, Robb Wolf on nutrition, Jim Cawley of Dynamax on medicine ball training, Rob Miller on climbing, Jeff Martin on Krav Maga, Mikki Martin on kids' CrossFit, Karl Geissler on sprint mechanics, Tyler Hass on ring training, Chris Robinson on tactical options, Darby Darrow on small firearms techniques, plus Greg and Lauren Glassman, Nicole Carroll, Annie Sakamoto, Eddie Lugo, Ryan Atkins, Tony Budding, and Greg Amundson on CrossFit.

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