

## Organization of Training Part 2

By: Louie Simmons

When planning training, one must not plan for the next meet, but rather the next year or even longer. The following are some issues to consider:

Weight gain or loss

Improving form on competitive lifts or special exercises

Raising work capacity and improving general fitness

Gaining general training knowledge

Testing character and courage

Learning how to use legal equipment

The effectiveness of your training is based on all of these considerations.

In this part I will discuss testing character and courage, learning how to use legal equipment, and gaining general training knowledge.

Testing character and courage. I am a huge fan of most sports, but when I watch basketball, I frequently hear the announcer say the player passed up an open shot to another player because he did not have the confidence to shoot the ball himself, or during a football game, the announcer will say that a certain player is a natural leader. So what are the other 10 players? Natural-born followers? I hope not, but who knows? Why can't the other 10 teammates step up and take over? Angelo Bernardinelli said it best: "They are two types of people, the prey and the predator." Which are you? And don't stroke your ego. I watched Angelo try to break the world middleweight squat record for years. He was always close, but was never able to. The record kept going up, from 766 to 771 to 773. Finally at the WPO m in York, PA, in June 2002 he made 777. Now Angelo has that world record, and he dares anyone to take it away from him. The top middleweights this year are all predators.

When I hear someone tell me what place he got in a meet rather than what his numbers were or if he got a personal record, I know his ego will hold him back. The real contest is with yourself. A trophy proves only what you have done, but has no bearing on what will happen next. You must always do better and better. That's the real world. You can be the greatest powerlifter in the world, but the day you retire, you're forgotten. If you quit one time, you're a quitter. You may go for

a year or two without progress before coming out of a slump. Training knowledge as well as technology will make it possible to make progress for a very long time if you want to. Powerlifting is a tough sport. No one said it wasn't.

As far as training partners go, if you run with the lame, you will develop a limp. So only train with those who have the same goals as your own. Everyone cannot be a world champ, but we all can be better. At Westside we have many in-house contests, mostly on max effort day. They can happen without notice, and most often, that's the case. I recall pulling a heavy sled on a Monday a few years ago. I was minding my own business when Chuck Vogelpoh yells out the door, "Get your old ass in here. We're going to have a deadlift contest off pin 1 in the power rack." Well, I'm dead tired from pulling the sled, but someone was running their mouth as usual and now I'm being pulled into a contest on something I had not broken a PR in 15 years. But I', obligated to take part, and somehow I break my record. How? I guess I was so pissed off at those nitwits that the only way I could get even was to get a PR. When I lose, I use my age (54) as an excuse, but if I win, I rub it in. It's been said, show me a good loser and I'll show you a loser. Thank goodness we have some very bad losers at Westside. If someone refuses to engage in a spontaneous contest, we will throw challenges at him when he least expects it. If someone regularly backs out, we boot him out of the club. We know by experience that if a lifter will not take a challenge in friendly surroundings, he will fall apart in a real meet.

Our training in general is designed to build confidence year round by doing so many different exercises. WE are always breaking records. Remember, you must raise your mental and emotional limits as well, or you won't raise your weights. It may take years to learn to focus on training, let alone meets. Some of us are late bloomers, while others start fast but fade just as fast. Many times the brighter star burns out the fastest.

Westside loves to see successful teams like Donny Thompson's Maximus team rising fast. The LA Lifting Club is moving up fast as well, thanks to Joe's pushing and pulling with the help of his wife Nance. And there's my Finnish friend Sakari Selkainaho, who lifts and coaches his teammates Jarmao, Ano, Miko, and the rest. I love to see teams or individuals gaining momentum to see how the guys at Westside react to it.

Just remember, if you're a betting man and two lifters are coming out to squat and one's psyching up to DMX and the other one is listening to Patsy Cline's "I Fall to Pieces", which one are you going to put your money on?

Why do some lifters put limitations on themselves? What I'm talking about is all the "world champs" and "world record holders" I talk to every day. Now wait a minute. There's only one world record in each lifting category and one world champ per weight class. That person holds the biggest total of the present year or of all time in his weight class. Yes, I'm talking to you master and teen lifters.

You may think I'm an asshole for saying this, but you are selling yourself short my man. If you get in a fight and you're a master, do you get to throw the first three punches? Hell no. When there's a hottie in the lounge, us old guys are always hitting on the young babes. Right? So why limit yourself by age? Just do the best you can, and you are a champ.

Using equipment. This is 2002 and it's time we all think that way. For example, why don't all federations use monolifts? Or a bar for each event? Not only is it stupid not to do so, it is dangerous.

Don't be stuck in the past. If NASCAR kept the same pace as Powerlifting, the cars would be much slower because of tire restrictions and other safety factors. How many times does it take walking out those before disaster strikes someone? Some federations are held together by one or two great lifters. Please don't get them hurt because your backward thinking has you on the verge of extinction. Just look at your membership totals slipping lower and lower.

If there's only one top 100 list, then make all things equal: suits, shirts, weigh-ins, etc. It's not the gear, drugs, or equipment that makes the list. But as Vince McMahon says, "It's the size of your grapefruits." You are paying card members, so speak up. Take control of your own destiny.

Gaining general training knowledge. I hate to say this, but at Westside we have lifters who don't even read Powerlifting USA, let alone some of the books I frequently mention, such as those I am about to describe.

Michael Yessis published The Soviet Sports Review. There was some valuable information in those articles translated from mostly Russian sports scientist in a quarterly magazine. It covered many sports, but was invaluable to me at the time. The first book that made me a believer was The Managing of the Weight Lifter by Laputin and Oleshko. In this book was shown a table that explained how to regulate volume by intensity zones. The writing of Verkhoshansky such as Fundamentals of Special Strength Training in Sports and many more including Supertraining by Mel Siff are valuable books. A highly respected author is A. S. Medvedyev, who wrote A Program of Multi-year Training in Weightlifting. Of course, there are several other highly accomplished authors including P. V. Komi, Thomas Kurz, Tamas Ajan, and Tudor Bompa. Lazar Baroga's book Weightlifting Fitness for all sports is a must-read. Zatsiorsky is particularly valuable to anyone who participates in sports or weightlifting. Try Science and Practice of Strength Training for one. I also enjoy Starzynski and Sozanski for information on explosive power training and Pavel Tsatsouline for stretching and ab work. Without these men, who have dedicated their lives to the promotion of sports science used in a practical environment, I would have ended my lifting career in 1983. The results worldwide speak for themselves. I wish I could thank each of these men personally. Thank goodness I have the

opportunity to speak with Dr. Siff and participate in a few seminars with him so I can play a small role in the development of others.