



WEEKLY MUSCLE BUILDING EXPERT *Interview Series*



Ryan Magin Interviews Dave Whitley

RM: Hi, guys. I just want to welcome everybody to the call once again, and thank everybody for submitting all their questions. This is Ryan Magin with CriticalBench.com, and we're here tonight with Dave Whitley.

Dave is a performing Strongman, a kettlebell expert. Dave is a senior instructor in RKC, the original leading kettlebell instructor certification, founded by Pavel Tsatsouline. He's a certified kettlebell functional movement specialist and a professional performing Strongman. As a kettlebell instructor he teaches the RKC certifications and conducts kettlebell workshops around the world and trains clients currently in the Nashville area. He's worked with college and professional teams and athletes and all branches of the US Armed Forces.

As a performing Strongman, he keeps alive the old-time tradition that dates back to Vaudeville and before, and he gets on stage and performs feats of strength such as

tearing phone books, full decks of card, bending steel spikes and rolling frying pans. He does all that in his spare time. So, Dave, once again, thanks for being on the call tonight.

DW: Thanks for having me, Ryan. I'm super excited to be on the call and looking forward to seeing what kind of questions people have.

RM: Good stuff. Let's just start this off. How did you get started in lifting and how did the whole...performing Strongman thing and kettlebells kind of come to be to where you're at now?

DW: Well, I've kind of been on again, off again most of my life with lifting stuff. I started watching the "Incredible Hulk" when I was a kid and wanted to be Lou Ferrigno. And then, by the time I was grown, I realized that I really didn't have the genetic makeup to do that sort of thing. But, I still enjoyed going to the gym and picking up heavy stuff and all that sort of stuff.

In about 2002, I got exposed to kettlebells by way of Muscle Media Magazine. Pavel had written an article about doing one-arm pushups and one-legged squats with the Marines. And there were these photos in there of Pavel and these Marines holding these funny looking black balls with handles on them. And they were all kind of the in bottom position of the one-legged squat.

I kept reading and found out that this guy, Pavel, was a former Russian Special Forces drill instructor and that these things were called kettlebells. I kind of filed that away in my head, because I'd always been kind of a fan of the Oldtime Strongman stuff like Arthur Saxon, Eugen Sandow and all that stuff. So, it looked like of familiar to me, but I just kind of filed it away.

And then about...it seems like it was about a week later, but it maybe a little more, little less than that, an acquaintance of mine had bought a kettlebell and asked me if I knew anything about it. I said, "Well, yeah. I just read this article about it in Muscle Media." So, he loaned me the kettlebell and he loaned me the original "Russian Kettlebell Challenge" video on VHS, is how far back we're going.

RM: Oh, wow!

DW: Which seems like a really long time ago right now. It wasn't on like laser disc or anything like that. I'm a little older than you. But, anyway, so I took it home and played with it and the kettlebell weighed 16 kilos, roughly 35 pounds. I set about watching the video and trying to figure out what to do with this thing. I have this very vivid recollection of snatching that kettlebell ten times with each arm, and then kind of falling

into a crumpled heap of exhaustion in my front yard, and waiting for the buzzards to come and peck my eyes out and stuff.

I knew that there was something to it, because I was pretty strong. I had a pretty strong dead lift, in the high fours, low fives, pretty strong squat. No world record stuff, but fairly strong for my size, which was just over 300 pounds at the time.

This 16 kilo kettlebell just completely whooped my ass. I was faced with the choice of accepting the truth that there was something to it and I needed to pursue it, or continuing on in willful ignorance and playing in the gym like I had previous been playing and think that was going to do something for me. So, I decided to pursue it.

It wasn't much longer after that, a few months later, I was in St. Paul, Minnesota at the RKC for the first time, there with Pavel and with hundreds of kettlebells and a bunch of other people who were learning how to use them. It was very much a paradigm shift for me. It was very much a...just one of those defining moments in my adult life, because everything about my life changed from that point forward, because now, here I am on the phone with you, and I do this full time for a living. I travel around and teach people how to use kettlebells and teach people locally, here where I am. That's kind of the short version of the kettlebell thing.

As far as the Oldtime Strongman stuff goes, I used to do like a CD of the month, audio interview thing, kind of like what you're doing right now. But, I would put it on CD and mail it out to people. One of the people that I wound up doing an interview with is a guy named Dennis Rodgers, who is...the Association of Oldtime Barbell and Strongmen named him pound-for-pound, the strongest man in the world for the feats he performs.

Just to see him, he's a very unassuming looking guy. He's about 5'8", about 170 pounds. He's in his early to mid 50's, and he just looks like some guy that lives down the street that would ride a Harley.

But, he bends wrenches. He holds back airplanes. I've seen him bend a quarter. So, it's just some pretty intense stuff that he's doing and I befriended him and expressed an interest in learning how to do these things. So, he taught me a bunch of stuff.

I've worked on it for a little bit since then and I'm actually able to go around and do that sort of stuff and get in front of people and use that as a vehicle to talk to people about how to focus their mind into what they really want to accomplish. That's really what it comes back to, is just focusing on what you want and then doing it.

RM: A good life lesson, for sure.

DW: Yeah.

RM: Well, now that we got a little bit of background out of the way, let's jump right into these questions. We've got a bunch of them. We'll try to bang-out all of them if we can. I apologize in advance to anybody listening if I butcher your name. But, I'll do the best that I can.

So, the first one comes in from Christopher **Cardinolly** and he asks: *"How does one incorporate grip training or other kettlebell routines while still staying fresh?"*

DW: Okay. Keeping the grip fresh while training with kettlebells and talking about grip training in general. It's a little bit of an 'it depends' sort of question. When you say grip training, what are you talking about exactly? Because, it's kind of like saying, 'lifting weights'. Bodybuilders lift weights, power lifters lift weights, Olympic lifters lift weights, football players lift weights. But, the weights are a means to an end.

So, if you're doing grip training, if you're working on... Say you've set a goal to close the number three Captains of Crush gripper. Well, that's a very different goal than say, bending a horseshoe. They both still involved grip strength, but it's a different application of that strength. So, it kind of depends on what your grip training entails.

Now, having prefaced everything with that little caveat, I'm a firm believer that with grip training, especially, or anything that involves training the hands, the wrists, the forearms, anything like that, that it's better to do a little bit every day than it is to do a lot once or twice a week. I believe that partly because it makes sense neurologically and partly because of my own experience.

I have done it before where I've done grip-type things and pushed it to failure and tried to get all high intensity with it and everything, and not been able to do anything for several days afterwards because my hands were so sore and my forearms were so sore, and everything was all beat-up. I didn't make nearly as much progress doing that as I did treating it as a practice.

I believe that strength is simply practice. To kind of rip-off and paraphrase Houdini a little bit. Houdini said, "Magic is practice." I think strength is the same thing, particularly with grip type stuff. Because, you're practicing a specific skill, and if that skill is bending horseshoes, then the best way to get better at that is to do things that related to bending horseshoes.

So, working kettlebells into doing that... Kettlebell training carries a grip element very naturally, just because of the design of the kettlebell and because of the way the exercises work. The ballistic loading and things like swings and snatches puts a little more stress on the grip than some other modalities and some other types of training might.

So, there's a natural element of grip training that goes along with kettlebells. And if you don't have a specific thing in mind that you're training for with your grip, then just training with kettlebells the proper way will enhance your grip and kind of take care of that.

If you have something specific that you're working towards, like sometimes I'll get emails and stuff from martial artists, grapplers, that sort of stuff. They want to use kettlebells in their conditioning, but they want to work on their grip at the same time. I'll have them do stuff that mimics their sport. So, they'll maybe wrap a towel around the handle of the kettlebell and do swings or kind of hammer throw type swinging around the head type stuff like that or farmer's carries with a towel. Because that kind of mimics the feeling of having your opponent's gi in your hand and it builds that specific kind of endurance in the grip that you need to be a grappler like that.

The main thing is learning to develop the ability to listen to your body and to be able to know when to back off intuitively. Because, a lot of times, where we mess up, I think, is we go in and we start to train and we feel really strong. And so, we push further than we need to.

Most of the time when I train, I finish my session feeling not really exhausted or beat-up, feeling just as good if not a little bit better than I did when I started. Occasionally, once every couple of weeks, I push myself, from a conditioning standpoint, to get a little more fatigued than that. But, most of what I do is in terms of training skill and in terms of training, the neurological adaptations rather than trying to get huge. Does that make sense?

RM: Yeah, it makes total sense. Most people today do make the mistake of...I know I'm guilty of it, taking a set of dead lifts or taking the most random things to the point where your body just crumbles. And then the next three or four days after that, you don't want to get out of bed. I know. I'm sure everybody's guilty of that one. So, definitely the moderation thing is key, and especially if you're dealing with your hands, I'm sure.

DW: Yeah, definitely. From a neurological standpoint, if you look at the way your nerves are distributed throughout your body, you have more sensory nerves in your hand, just in the palm of your hand, than you do in the entire rest of your arm. So, I found out the hard way, but it stands to reason if you just stop and think about it, that if you do stuff that causes a lot of stress and a lot of fatigue to the hands, you will fatigue your entire central nervous system by default because there is so much neurological activity going on from a sensory perspective in your hands.

If you just train heavy grip a lot, to the point of exhaustion every day, you'll eventually – it won't take very long either – start feeling tired all the time. Just like if you

were doing a lot of squats or something like that, that you would think would take more out of you. You won't be sore with the kind of onset muscular soreness that you have, but just neurologically you'll feel kind of beat-down. I've done that and I don't want to do it again. So, it's important to know how to reign yourself back in.

RM: Definitely.

DW: Especially when it's feeling good to you. That's a really dangerous time, when you're feeling especially strong, you want to push a little harder. It's better to back-off then. It's better to push right up to where you can see the edge, but not look over it...and certainly not step off of it.

RM: Well, the next question we got here comes from David **Tharp**, and *he's been training with kettlebells seriously for the past several months, and made significant strength gains and has become noticeably leaner. However, he's not gaining the muscle mass he would like. What would you recommend to add more lean muscle?*

DW: Eat more. That's... When people are trying to get bigger, that's one of the two things that I go back to. If you're trying to get bigger lifting kettlebells, then you probably need to eat more or do more volume with a heavier weight.

He didn't mention what size kettlebells he's using, so we'll assume that he's already doing something fairly heavy. You cannot discount the amount of metabolic activity that gets stimulated from doing kettlebell movements. Because, if you're doing it properly, if you're doing it the way that we do in the RCK, just about everything you do it going to involve either a full body explosive movement or a full body tension movement. And anytime you're doing a full body type movement, you're going to be using more energy than if you were doing a set of curls or a set of tricep kick-backs with a pink dumbbell or something like that.

So, you have to take that into account. You will need to eat more regardless of how heavy the bell is, if you're doing a lot of volume, especially if you want to gain size. So, I would say up your food intake.

RM: Would you recommend also maybe adding... I mean, it doesn't necessarily say in the question, but adding in like a barbell dead lift or something of that nature as well?

DW: Yeah. I mean, if you have access to that stuff, yeah. The barbell dead lift is, in my opinion, the kind of mass building exercises, even more so than the squat. If for no other reason, it's easier to teach people.

RM: I firmly, I totally agree with that one. I'm more build for dead lifting platform than a squat, any day.

DW: Yeah, a squat is a little bit difficult to teach people how to do compared to a dead lift. A dead lift is a very natural movement.

I took my four year old cousin bowling a couple of weeks ago and he wanted to pick the ball up by himself. He walked over to the ball and he's, you know, three feet tall and weighs 60 pounds or whatever. He walked over to the bowling ball and squatted down in a deep squat and wrapped his arms around it and picked it up just like watching one of the guys...world's strongest man do a stone lift. I mean, it was a dead lift. He did a dead lift, is what it amounted to.

So, it's a very natural movement that you don't really have to teach people. You just have to help them remember what it is. Squatting with a barbell has a little more technique involved. It's a great exercise, I'm not knocking squats at all. But, as far as ease of learning and slapping on a lot of meat, I would go with barbell dead lifts.

If we're looking outside the context of lifting kettlebells, then yeah, you can supplement with barbell dead lifts. I'm a fan of pull-ups. I'm a fan of dips and military presses. Those four movement are like the big ones for me for slapping on size.

A lot of people like the bench press, and I'm not down the bench press, I just am not a fan of it personally. I've never liked it, personally. I don't see a lot of athletic carryover. But, I know the bench press is the big one that people... When people find out I'm a Strongman, the first thing out of their mouth is, "How much do you bench?" And the next thing out of my mouth is, "I have no idea. I haven't bench pressed in seven years."

RM: But, I can dip with 90 pounds attached to a belt. And then they look at you with a funny look on their faces.

DW: Yeah.

RM: Moving on. This is from David K: *What is the best way to increase the number of cards that one can tear? He's stuck at around 20 cards and he can certainly close the Captain of Crush 2.5 gripper for 3 reps with his right arm. So, crushing grip shouldn't be a problem. What specific techniques do you recommend for card-tearing newbies to employ?*

DW: Okay. That's a really, really good question. I'm glad people are asking stuff like that. First of all, I would look at the technique and make sure that you're not losing power anywhere in your technique. The next thing I would do, if he's tearing 20 cards pretty consistently, about once a week I would actually tear cards and if you can tear 20, you can probably tear 22. And if you tear 22 cards, then maybe next week you can tear 25 or 28, and just gradually add a couple of cards to the point that it's almost

imperceptible. If you go from a 20 to 35, you're going to notice that. But, if you go from 20 to 22, 23, 25, something like that, then you won't hardly notice it. So, just gradually add cards like that. The problem you run into is that can get to be expensive.

RM: That's a lot of card decks.

DW: Yeah. You go through a lot of cards that way. So, closing the Captain's of Crush gripper – this goes back to the concept I was talking about earlier – doesn't really have a whole lot of carryover to card tearing. What does have a lot of carryover to card tearing is plate curls and pinch-grip stuff.

So, I would start doing some plate curls and some plate wrist curls. And what I mean by that is, start pretty light. Start with maybe a 10 pound or a pair of ten pound plates, and you would pinch-grip them together just like if you were going to pinch-grip off the ground. And you would get them in a position like you were just going to do a curl, like just a regular dumbbell curl without the wrist pronation and supination. And just do curls that way and keep your fingers as straight as you can and keep your wrist as straight as you can when you do it. Keep the reps low and in the beginning, do low sets. Do like maybe three or four sets of three to five reps and then gradually add sets. But, keep the reps low. So, work up to maybe ten or twelve sets of three, four, five reps, something like that. That would be on the top end of what you're going to do. And then, when you can do that, go to a heavier weight and drop back down and do a few sets of three and build up again.

Ryan Pitts at StrongerGrip.com makes a great product called The Pinch Lever or Pinch Block Lever, I forget exactly what it's called. But, essentially it's like a pinch block with a bar on it and you can put plates on it. And you can keep the same amount of weight on it, but move it further away from the block on this like 14" long bar. So, the leverage changes and the weight effectively gets heavier even though you don't have to add weight to it, because the leverage point changes. I like those a lot for card tearing.

And then the other thing for tearing cards... You can do the same thing like plate curls, but just do wrist curls. So, you sit down and you rest your forearm on your thigh with your wrist kind of hanging off your knee, and do wrist curls with a pinch grip on plates the same way. You can do that with one hand or two hands.

And then the other thing for tearing cards is since you will go through a lot of cards learning how to tear cards, I am a big fan of isometrics for doing any of this kind of Oldtime Strongman stuff. So, get a deck of cards and wrap it in ten or twelve layers of duct tape. Wrap it up so that there's absolutely no hope of you tearing it, at all. And then just practice isometrics for anywhere from six to twelve seconds, all-out effort, full body effort, laying into it as hard as you can. Do anywhere from three to ten sets like that, once or twice a week, and then actually tear, like we were talking about, adding

cards in maybe once a week, and you'll condition your hands. You will build that same nervous system kind of output strength. Throw your plate curls in there a couple of days a week after you've done that and it won't be long until you're blasting right through a deck of cards.

RM: Sweet. I'll have to start practicing on that one.

DW: Yeah, I mean, it's really simple, it's just a matter of putting the time in. The hardest part for me, tearing cards when I was learning how to do it, is the technique that I used. I wound up tearing skin off of my thumb. I did that thing where I tore a deck and it got real good to me, so I tore five or six decks right after that and just kind of shredded myself and made myself bleed and stuff. And I'm calloused there now and it doesn't happen. I can tear four or five decks without anything bad happening to me.

But, it was, again, one of those cases of I felt real strong so I pushed it too far, too soon. There's no need to do that. Calm down, take a breath and realize that you can either hurt yourself doing it all today, or you can get there in a week and a half or two weeks without causing any real damage.

RM: Makes a lot of sense. The next one we've got, this is from **Kioshi** and *he's currently working on the Rite of Passage Program, performing clean and press ladders and timed swings. Should he incorporate anything else for ladders, or just designate all other lifts to his variety days?*

DW: The only other thing that I would add to the clean and press ladders is if you're interested in adding pull-ups in, then do pull-ups. The way that would work with the ladder... For anybody who's not familiar with the Enter the Kettlebell Rite of Passage program, it's a program built around primarily kettlebell clean and press and kettlebell swing. The Rite of Passage ultimately should end up with you doing a strict clean and military press with a kettlebell that is close to half your body weight. So, if you weigh 175, it would be a 40 kilo bell. If you weigh 220, it would be a 48 kilo bell, something like that. The other side of that is the secret service snatch test, which is 200 reps in ten minutes with the 24 kilo kettlebell, switching hands whenever you want to.

The Rite of Passage is designed to get you to that particular goal, if you're patient and if you work it long enough. The Rite of Passage is something that I come back to, usually about every three or four months. I'll do anywhere from two to six weeks of Rite of Passage just because it's simple for me to follow, it works and if it's not broken, then why bother trying to fix something?

Now, if he's doing the Rite of Passage the way it's laid out in the book, again, if anybody's not familiar with it, by ladders what we mean is, I would grab the kettlebell that I'm working with and I would do one clean and press with one arm. I would switch

hands and do one clean and press on the other side, put the kettlebell down and take a short rest. The next set would be two reps per side with this rest. The next set would be three reps per side, and so forth.

Rite of Passage is laid out so that you have very specific instructions on how many rungs of each ladder to climb. So, the way that I tend to do that if I'm doing it by myself is if I'm not training with someone, if I'm alone, I will just pretend that I have a partner and I'll do my one rep per side and set the bell down and then imagine that my imaginary, virtual training partner does one per side. And then I'll do two, and I'll rest as long as it took me to do two, imagining that someone else is doing it.

So, with each successive set, the set gets longer, but the rest period gets longer. So, you build-up volume over time that way. You can get a lot of reps in without going to failure or to any kind of exhaustion that way.

So, to add pull-ups into that, if you're interested in doing that, I would do one clean and press per side, then immediately do a pull-up. And then do two clean and press per side, and then immediately do two pull-ups, and work as far up the ladder as you can. That will help out your upper body strength tremendously, because it's the other component of the upper body movement. The clean and press is a push, the pull-up is obviously the pull. So, you're working in both directions that way.

Anything else, I would stick in on a variety day. The way the Rite of Passage program is laid out, there are three days of clean and press and swings, and then a couple of days that are designated as variety days where you just kind of take it easy and practice a new skill or do whatever you want. Or, nothing at all. If you're kind of beat-up and tired, you can just take the day off.

So, if you're working on Turkish get-ups or bending horseshoes or anything like that, squeeze those in on your variety days, but don't push it too hard. The bulk of what you should be doing on the Rite of Passage is the clean and press and the swings.

RM: I remember actually the ladders... Dan John, I don't know if anybody's familiar with him. But, he's a very big proponent of doing kettlebell ladders and cleans off ladders and pull-ups.

DW: Oh, absolutely. I actually ripped-off some of his ideas and have come up with some pretty devastating things that I'm working on.

RM: He's a good guy.

DW: Yes, Dan is a genius.

RM: The next question comes from Nick and it's kind of a general question. He says, *"How many times a week should one train to allow for hypertrophy and strength increases at the same time?"*

DW: Stop me if this sounds familiar, but it depends. Without looking at the specific program, it's hard to make a call on that one. Let's assume that you're doing something like a moderate weight, high volume type thing. I would go three or four days a week like that. If you're doing something that's a lot heavier than that, you may need a little more recovery. If you're doing something like a 20 rep squat routine, you may need several days recovery in between.

I appreciate the question, and I wish I had a better answer. But without knowing specifically what kind of program is going on, it's really hard to make that call. And that's kind of the art of what we do, rather than the science. The science is knowing the anatomy and the physiology and the nutrition and the biomechanics and all that. The art of it is knowing how to take that science and apply it to a living, breathing human being and take into account their psychology and take into account all the day-to-day stresses that they have with their job or their kids or their wife or their family or their dog or their girlfriend or boyfriend or whatever, and be able to blend those two things together. That's the art of it.

I'm going to have to say there's not really enough information there for me to make a specific call on that. But, kind of a general rule is we come back to anywhere from two to four times a week, will get you bigger and stronger at the same time. If you're lifting heavy, if you're lifting appropriately and if you're getting enough rest and enough food in your belly.

RM: Good, so I was going to add to that, I know the gym I train out of, Strength Camp with Elliott Hulse, one of the best ways we build size and strength is just heavy, high rep sets of dead lifts. I mean, to the point where it gets uncomfortable.

DW: Yeah.

RM: Most people tend to steer away from things like that, but at the same time, nothing beats training like that.

DW: Yeah, I mean, the solution to getting big and strong is lift heavy stuff, eat a lot and get enough rest. Everything else is details.

RM: The next question here comes from George Morgan. He asks, *"What is one exercise that you think helps the most on shoulder strength and back strength?"*

DW: Shoulder strength and back strength, one exercise? I'm going to go with the Turkish get-up. The Turkish get-up has a magic in it that very few exercises have. The

reason being, for the shoulder particularly, is you're taking it through this really unique range of motion type thing, working on supporting strength as you're moving through all these different angles of the shoulder. So, it will really strengthen...I like to call it deep strength. It feels like it's deep in the socket with all the connective tissue and stuff that's in there.

It's really good for the smaller muscles that keep the shoulder healthy as well as for the deltoids and traps and all of that that make you look big and impressive. So, definitely that.

I'm a big fan of military presses, too, particularly with the kettlebell. The reason I like the kettlebell military press more than the barbell or dumbbell military press is because you can get a greater range of motion. I can take a kettlebell, rack it out to the side, the way we rack a kettlebell, and my hand is well below my chin when I start. I can press all the way up to complete extension so that my bicep is almost grazing my ear and my palm faces forward and still have room to do that with a weight in each hand.

You know, if you get heavy dumbbells, it's hard to turn the palms so that they face forward and maintain vertical with the arms, because the bells will run into each other. The kettlebells, it's not as much of an issue.

So, military press for shoulders, Turkish get-ups for overall everything with a shoulder emphasis.

RM: Awesome. this next question is from Connor Gary. He asks, *"What is the most effective way to gain powerful explosive muscle without subjecting the back to stress, like in such as squats and dead lifts?" He has injured his back and doesn't want to reinjure it.*

DW: First of all, find somebody who knows what they're doing and get them to teach you the right way to dead lift. Because, if you hurt your back when you're dead lifting, you're doing it wrong. That's what we call an indicator.

Having said that, I find that you can use the kettlebell swing to teach the same movement pattern as the dead lift and actually get a lot of explosive strength that has carryover to dead lifts from doing kettlebell swings and kettlebell cleans. Because, you're able to do a lot more volume with a much lighter weight and train that neurological strength by doing that.

I, several years ago, focused on doing long cycle clean and jerk with kettlebells. I was only using a pair of 24 kilos. And a long cycle clean and jerk, for people who don't know, you do one clean, you swing the kettlebells back between your legs, snap the

hips, bring them into the rack position. And then from there, you jerk them overhead. The kettlebell jerk is kind of like a barbell jerk, but without the split or without the really deep squat. We just jerk it and do a knee dip that's just enough to get the arms locked out and then stand up with it.

I did pretty much nothing else but clean and jerk for about four or five months, and then within two weeks after doing that I had added 25 pounds to my best ever dead lift without having practiced the dead lift. So, I added 25 pounds to it. And that's not an usual thing.

I worked with Vanderbilt football team and I got a call from their head strength coach. They had been doing swings and snatches and I think Turkish get-ups, just those three exercises with kettlebells, and they had a kid that added 125 pounds to his barbell clean. And they practiced cleans twice during the four months. The only thing I can attribute to that is he'd trained his nervous system to send the message to his muscles to be more explosive because he was doing so much explosive kettlebell lifting.

People get caught up in the big and strong thing, and to quote my colleague Brett Jones, "Big ain't strong. Strong is strong." And I'm a big fan of being big and strong, but it's that it's big AND strong, not big EQUALS strong.

So, there are a lot of strong, small guys out there. They're strong because their nervous system knows how to tell their muscles to contract with enough force and enough tension to express that strength. Muscles are dumb. They're really, really, really stupid. All they do is whatever the nervous system tells them to do.

So, if we can stop thinking, at least partially, about getting big equaling being strong, and go back and start thinking about actually getting strong, then we get stronger. And once you get strong, it's easier to get bigger, because you're able to move more weight. At that point it's a matter of recovery and food.

RM: And doing nothing but the kettlebell clean and jerks for that long, what kind of physique changes did you see? Did you lean out a lot or?

DW: Yeah, I was hungry all the time. I was doing a lot of volume, too. I was hungry all the time. I think I lost seven or eight pounds and wasn't really trying to lose any weight. I had not like super noticeable, but it was apparent to people who hadn't seen me for a month or two in between there, that the size and shape of my traps and my deltoids had improved, I guess from all the jerks.

RM: That's cool.

DW: So, yeah.

RM: All right. Moving on to the next question. It's from Shawn Arnold. *"If there was one grip exercise, for building more grip strength, that you think is the best, which one would it be?"*

DW: One grip exercise. That's a tough one, because like we talked about earlier, it's kind of a specific thing. I'm a big fan of plate curls. Plate curls are really good. I think they have a lot of carryover to a lot of different activities involved in the grip. So, you have to tell me first what it is you want. If you just want to have a stronger grip, you can get a lot of grip strength out of doing ballistic exercises with kettlebells. If you want better grip endurance, then farmer's carries are really good, dead lifts are really good. Crushing strength, I think is kind of a specific thing that works best with grippers, if you're going to do that. But, I guess all the way around, I would say either plate curls or some variation of plate curls and maybe levering type stuff with sledge hammers.

RM: Cool. Next question comes from Dwayne. *He doesn't have anybody to train with and can't seem to get out of the starting and stopping cycle. Any tips for long term training motivation?*

DW: Doesn't have a partner and is consistently starting a new program and then...

RM: Stopping, I would assume.

DW: Then stopping and then starting and then stopping and... Yeah. I would say that Dwayne, you need to figure out why this is important to you. To go back to Dan John, you have your behavior and you have your goal. Does your behavior match your goal? So, if your goal is to put on 20 pounds or to dead lift 500 pounds or to lose 20 pounds, does your behavior match-up to whatever you say your goal is?

If you want to put on 20 pounds and you're missing workouts and you're eating junk food and you're not getting any sleep, then your behavior doesn't match your goal. If you want to dead lift 500 pounds and all you're doing is concentration curls with a 20 pound dumbbell and calf raises, your behavior doesn't match your goal.

So, maybe sit down with a piece of paper and write out, "This is my goal," and whatever the relevant information is that surrounds that goal, and then write down, "This is why this goal is important to me." And then, after that write down, "This is what I'm willing to give up in order to achieve that goal."

That's kind of how I approach motivation. What do I want and what am I willing to give up to get it.

RM: That carries over in many more aspects other than training as well.

DW: Yeah, because the training part is really the easy thing. It's just execution of a plan. The hard part is the planning and the motivation and the scheduling and all of that. Without the motivation, you're just going through the motions. If you want to lose 20 pounds, you have to be willing to give up beer and cheese fries, at least for a short period of time. If you want to dead lift 500 pounds, you have to be willing to go in and do a lot of dead lifts. So, figure out why it's important to you and then figure out what you're willing to give up.

RM: Good stuff. Next question is from Steven. He asks, "*How do you legitimately rip a phone book and what do you recommend the best way is to train for this feat?*"

DW: Legitimately ripping a phone book is a topic near and dear to my heart. There are several different ways to rip a phone book, and there are ways to use trickery to make yourself look strong and rip a phone book and you're really not. There are a lot of people on YouTube going, "Well, I can rip a phone book, it's just a trick." And there is a trick to doing it the way that they do it. It's not a legitimate feat of strength. It's more like a trick.

The legitimate feat of strength way to do it is what we call the 'grip and rip' technique. I learned it from Dennis Rogers. Just a quick run-down of the technique, if I can describe it, hopefully people can picture what I'm saying without having an actual video or seeing me do it.

The first thing we're going to do is we're going to tear the book parallel to the binding, not across the binding. So, if the person tearing the phone book is right handed, we're going to take the binding side of the book and we're going to put that in our left hand with the binding kind of outside the pinkie, and running in that direction. So, you're holding onto the top of the book with the binding, the spine of the book, out to your left. You do that same kind of pinch-type movement we were talking about earlier with the plate curls.

You take the other end of the binding and you brace it against your hip and then you take that left hand and you put it kind of against your thigh so that you're able to press your hand into your thigh and you're able to press the book into your hip. Now what you've done is you've locked the book into place between your hand, your thigh and your hip, so the book can't move all over the place. It's kind of like putting it in a vise.

You take the right hand and you grab the book at the top, same side where the left hand is holding onto it. So, your hands are kind of next to each other, just like you were going to rip a sheet of paper in half, and you pull up and out with the right hand. You have to squeeze really hard. That's where the plate curls really come in handy with it is, if you're not squeezing hard enough, then you're not going to get a legitimate tear

on it. And when it's a legitimate tear, you can pull on it and it will all kind of tear at the same time and you'll just have a straight line torn through the book. If it's not a legitimate tear, if it's kind of the popping method that I'm not even going to talk about, then the tear will be kind of jagged and funky looking.

So, you brace it against your leg, you squeeze real hard and you pull. If your pinch grip is not strong enough, then what will happen is the cover and two or three of the pages from either end will rip off in your right hand and your right hand will come flying off and you'll have part of the cover in your hand from the top and the bottom, and the rest of the book will be intact. That means you're not squeezing hard enough. So, go back to your plate curls at that point. And that's really all there is to the legitimate phone book tearing technique, the 'grip and rip' that I learned from Dennis Rogers.

The progression on doing that is a lot like what I described with the cards earlier. if you can't tear the full phone book that's in whatever city you live in, split it down the spine to whatever thickness you can tear, and start practicing with that. And then next week add 15 or 20 pages. And next week, add 15 or 20 pages. And then eventually you'll get to where you're tearing 1,200 to 1,500 to 2,000 pages.

The other thing you can do is very similar to what I said with the cards earlier, is take the phone book that's whatever the size is that you're working on and wrap it in 20 layers of duct tape so that there's no hope of you ripping it, but it still had a little bit of flex in it. Get in that same position with that same technique and do isometric pulls for six to twelve seconds, sets five to ten, of those once or twice a week, and really, really work on that initial pull.

Once you get the tear started, it's pretty easy to complete. But, that initial tear is the most difficult thing. So, work on the isometric with that and work on gradually doing something progressive. It goes back to the same principle of progressive overload that we've heard about for years and years and years with Milo and the Bull. Right? He picked up the calf and he carried it around the arena every day and by the time the Olympics rolled around he was carrying a full grown bull.

You take 200, 250 pages and you get to where you can tear that and you practice that technique. And then, you gradually add more and more pages. So, it's a progressive training type thing. You put that in with your plate curls and you should be good to go. 4621

RM: Cool. Once again, this comes back to keep practicing it over and over again.

DW: Yeah. Well, strength is practice. I was fortunate enough when I decided to get serious about phone books, that I had a guy that I hadn't spoken with in a while contact me on Facebook. I had put on my Facebook that I was looking for phone books that

needed killing. And he sent me a message said, "We've got some lying around the office if you want to come by and pick them up."

If you've ever gotten phone books in bulk before, at least in Nashville where I am, they come eight in a pack, wrapped in plastic. So, he told me that they had some bundles of them laying around and I'm thinking I'm going to go to his office and pick up 16, maybe 24 phone books, if I'm lucky.

I show up and they've got literally a small office sized room full of these bundles. And I made out of there with I think 212 phone books. And I couldn't tear a phone book at the time. But, by the time I got those books home and figured out how many I could tear, I split them down the spine like that and figured how many pages I could tear, and worked my way up gradually like that.

Another thing about tearing phone books is, anybody who's seen any of the YouTube clips that I have of me training at home, I have a shed out in my back yard. It's a 10X12 shed that I keep all my stuff in. I call it the Shed of Strength, which kind of started out as a joke, but I kind of like it, because it's the Shed of Strength.

I put about half of those phone books in that shed and I brought about half of them in my house. And so, I'm out there, and this is summer time, and I'm in Tennessee and it's 95% humidity and it's 100 degrees and I'm sweating all over these books and I'm yanking and pulling and trying to tear them. I would spend 15 or 20 minutes tearing half a phone book in half. It just was miserable.

I did that for a few weeks, and then I was inside the house one day and I grabbed one of the ones that had been inside the house the whole time and gave it a shot and it just flew apart. I just ripped it right in half.

So, I called up Dennis Rogers and was talking to him about it and he said, "Yeah, if you leave them out in the humidity, they phone book will soak up that humidity and it makes it a lot harder to tear." It makes it almost a kind of a spongy type feeling. So, if you're going to work on tearing phone books – and the same thing applies to cards – keep them in a dry place. Unless you just want them to be really, really difficult to tear.

Because, the way I look at it, there are training books or training cards, and then there are performing cards. And it could be the same brand of card, because some brands of cards are more difficult than others, or it could be the same size phone book. But, if I leave my...

I've got a big stack of phone books here at the house now, and I leave some of them out in the shed because I know they're going to be harder, even though they're the same size, which allows me to practice the same technique, but have more resistance

when I do it. But, if I'm going to a show, then I'm going to take something that I know is going to just fly apart because it's more impressive that way. It doesn't really matter for the people, because the people aren't going to be able to tear it either way.

RM: Yeah, so either way you're going to impress them.

DW: Yeah. And that's what people want to see. They want to see the feat done and they want to see it look like it's not that big of a deal, even though it is.

RM: Definitely.

DW: Next question?

RM: The next question we've got is from Dave. He wants to know, "*What's the best kettlebell exercise for hamstring work?*"

DW: Swings.

RM: Swings? Awesome. We move right on to the next one. Bernice asks...*she's a 70 year old woman, 5'10" and a 192 pounds. What kettlebell exercise do you suggest for her to gain muscle and lose fat without damaging her already arthritic joints? She's worked in construction most of her life so she's fairly strong for her age, but she doesn't want to keep losing ground as she gets older.*

DW: And she's how old?

RM: Seventy.

DW: Seventy? Seven-zero? Wow! First of all, a big round of applause to a 70 year old woman who's wanting to know how to get stronger. That's awesome.

RM: That's no easy feat either.

DW: Yeah, I mean, that's awesome, because I know a lot of men and women both that are 45 and think they're old and done. So, first off, hats off to her for that.

If she's arthritic, first of all, doctor's clearance, that's just kind of the caveat, because I don't want some lady going and doing something and then hurting herself and then suing me because I said do it. So, get your doctor's clearance first if you have any sort of medical condition like that.

I would find a competent instructor. If you go to the Dragon Door website and look at the list of RKC instructors, there's one near you somewhere. If you can't find one, email me at IronTamerDave@hotmail.com and I will try to help you find someone.

But, it's critical for someone who had any sort of a joint or bone issue like that to practice perfect technique from the get-go. Because if you don't, then it's going to wind up causing problems. I would also find someone who's skilled in the functional movements screen and make sure that there aren't any kind of imbalance or anything like that going on.

Having said all that, I would give a steady diet of swings and Turkish get-ups at least for the first month to three months to work on that movement skill, to work on mobility in the hips and shoulders and thoracic spine, and to work on linking everything together. Because I've worked with people who are silver foxes like that, people who have been around a while, and they tend to have a lot of mileage. She said she has worked construction. So, she's probably got a unique set of physical dysfunction that comes from doing that sort of work. And I have found that it is a better to spend a lot of time working with the movement patterns that are covered with the swing and get-up and really get those movements dialed-in before you try to do anything else. If your movement pattern is screwed up and you add strength and conditioning on top of that, then you're just speeding yourself on the highway to injury.

So, the short answer is, swings and Turkish get-ups. The long answer is, everything else that I just said.

RM: That's going to go back a lot to listening to her body and what she can and can't do during the day.

DW: Absolutely.

RM: Training by feel, would probably be really good advice in her case.

DW: Yeah, absolutely. And the other thing is – and I'm this way too – we want it all and we want it yesterday. But, the thing you have to keep in mind that whatever body you're walking around in right now, is the one that you've earned through your habits, through your activities, through your exercise programs, through your lack of exercise, through whatever injuries you've had. You're walking around in whatever body you have earned just from the mileage you've accumulated.

So, you have to own that and if you have dysfunction, you have to own that dysfunction and then go about correcting it. And you must understand that you didn't get screwed up overnight. You will not get unscrewed overnight, in most cases.

The good news is, a lot of times you can take something that took 10 or 15 years to get at its absolute worst and correct it in a matter of a few months. Change direction and head toward health.

RM: That's some good stuff. This is from Lewis. *"How does he block off the pain or work up towards handling the pain from bending something?" His hands and grip just give-out too soon.*

DW: That's a really good one. I like that. There is something that is innate in all of us that wants us to be safe and healthy. So, to deliberately expose yourself to something that causes pain is a very unnatural thing to do. It is not a natural activity to bend a horseshoe. It's painful. When I was first learning how to do it, the palms of my hands were sore and I had these massive bruises on my leg from where the edge of the shoes dig into my thigh. Learning to shut that off is a skill in and of itself that's...it's easy to explain, but really difficult to learn how to do. Because, you have to experience it to be able to do it.

I was talking to Slim "The Hammerman" Farman. If people know who Slim is, then they know he's a legend. If they don't, then they have no idea what I'm talking about. Slim calls it the governor, this thing in your brain that is a self-preservation mechanism. You can develop the ability to consciously override that.

The first step in doing that is to look at whatever activity you're doing, whatever feat that you're trying to perform, and knowing that you've taken every possible precaution as far as safety goes, to keep from injuring yourself. When you understand that logically and rationally, it's easier to talk the irrational part of your brain into believing that you're capable of doing something.

Once you've done that, it takes practice to cultivate it, but if you can trick yourself into believing that it's a life and death situation, then suddenly you turn into that mythical woman who lifts the car off of her child. She's not strong enough to do that, and yet she did it.

That's happened to me before when I've been in front of people. Being in front of people and doing a feat of strength is an amazingly motivating thing for me. It happened not too long ago. I was at a party with my wife and the new people I had just met were like, "What do you?" And I tried to explain to them what it is that I do and they look at me like I'm crazy because I think in some ways I am. Someone had seen my Facebook photo profile and I'm rolling a frying pan and that. And they're like, "What is that you're doing to the frying pan?" I said, "Well, I roll it up." The lady whose house we were at is like, "No way." And I'm like, "Yeah, it's part of what I do."

So, she goes in the kitchen and comes back with a frying pan and just hands it to me. I'm like, "Well, I'll give it a shot and see what happens." And so, I grabbed it and I leaned into it and it gave a little bit. The way this particular pan was made is the bottom part that rests on the eye was a lot thicker than the rest of the pan, kind of the bowl part of the pan.

So, the bowl part gave and it started to roll, and I heard a few gasps like people do when they've never seen that sort of thing. And then I hit that thicker part and it just stalled. And so, I stopped and I said, "Yeah, I don't know about this." And I looked up and all these people are looking at me like, well, that's impressive anyway. I said, "I'll hit it one more time."

And so I hit it again and it gave and then it sprang back on me. The feeling it give, but then feeling it come back against me kind of flipped that switch in my head that I'm talking about. And I looked over at my wife and she said, "Oh shit. It's about you and pan now." And I said, "Yeah."

She knew that either me or that pan was going down at that point. So, I just laid into it and managed to roll it up. But, it was a situation where the pan that was handed to me is not one like I would normally use in a show. The ones that I use in shows are pretty consistent, and I know that I'm going to get it every time that I pick the pan up. This one I had no idea. But, it was handed to me and so, I gave it a shot.

I did roll it up. It wasn't as tight a roll as I normally get, but I did manage to get it rolled up. And it was one of those situations, if I had been alone out in the shed, I never would have rolled that pan up. It would have been too hard for me to do. But, since there were those people there, and they were expecting to see this happen, I was able to tap into whatever this governor thing is and finish the roll.

All of that to say, you have to practice what you do enough to know kind of where your limit it physically. I've rolled enough frying pans to and done enough of this kind of stuff that I know the difference in how it feels for something that's about to get injured and something that just hurts a lot. Once you're able to understand that difference and kind of process that intellectually, you can start to shut off the hurt. The danger that you run into is that the further down that road you go, the more likely you are to shut off something that's going to injure you.

Slim has told me that he's broken bones in shows before in his wrist lifting hammers and not known it until after the show was over with. I've seen Dennis Rogers bend wrenches and poke holes in his palms. And after he's done, he notices that he's bleeding.

So, understand that that skill comes at a price. If you're willing to pay the price, then you'll be able to do the feat. If you're not, then I'm certainly not going to think less of anybody because they're not willing to see how much pain they can inflict upon themselves. It's not for everybody.

RM: No, but I'm sure if anybody gets interested in it, I mean, there's got to be that switch too, somewhere, where they're like...a lot of people will give it a try. That ones that stick with it...I don't know.

DW: Yeah. Well, and that's the thing. If you can imagine that someone was standing there and they either had a gun on you or they had a gun on your wife or your child or your mother or someone who's real important to you like that, and it's either do this feat or I pull the trigger. If you can kind of muster that within yourself, then you'll be unstoppable. But, it's a hard thing to learn how to do.

RM: Channeling that energy, for sure.

DW: And it starts to get kind of esoteric sounding and everything. But, I believe that it's all about knowing that you can do something. I talked to Zach Evanish about that a few weeks ago. You have to know, not just believe, but you have to know that you can do it. There's a difference between believing and knowing, in my opinion.

RM: That, once again, relates more to life and kind of the value of training that you get from actually doing the training to mentally pushing yourself in other aspects of your life as well.

DW: Absolutely. And you and I met at a conference for fitness professionals, where the majority of the subject matter had to do with increasing your business and generating more revenue in your business. The principles are pretty much the same. If you believe that you can accomplish something, you'll get to a certain level. But, if you know that you're going to accomplish it, you'll go way beyond what you believe you're capable of doing.

It's the same thing with doing physical things. You just have to learn how to remove whatever limitations you've put in front of yourself. Because pretty much any limitation in your life is something that's self-imposed. Now, I know that like if you're paralyzed in a wheelchair, then you're not going to get up and squat 500 pounds. There's some stuff that is outside the realm of what I'm talking about. But, if you're a normal functioning human being who has all of your faculties and all of your physical attributes, you'd be amazed at what you're capable of accomplishing.

RM: That is true.

DW: If you look around and someone else has done it, then you know it's humanly possible. If someone else can bend a horseshoe, then you can. If someone else can make a certain amount of money in whatever business it is that you're interested in doing, then you can do it. The limitations are whatever you put in your own way.

RM: Definitely.

DW: And that's a process and a skill that has to be practiced, too, is getting out of your own way.

RM: Yeah, that's a topic for a whole other call in itself.

DW: Absolutely. What else we got?

RM: *"For your RKC test, did you do hard style or corkscrew?"*

DW: Hard style.

RM: All right. Pat Bitner: *"Dave, how do you know when to move to a bigger kettlebell when a different kettlebell exercise?"* I assume when it gets too light.

DW: Yeah. I have the luxury of having every sized kettlebell that Dragon Door makes, in pairs. So, that goes back to what specific drill are you talking about? When you completely own the technique, you can start adding some more weight to it. But then again, the flip side of that is sometimes you don't know if you own the technique unless you try to do something that's a little heavier.

So, who was that? Pat Bitner that asked that?

RM: Yeah.

DW: Pat, if you've got a specific exercise or something like that in mind, shoot me an email and I'll try to answer it a little more in depth.

RM: All right. Next one. William Ellsworth-Champaign. That's a long name. *He recently acquired a monster kettlebell, a 96 kilogram, and wants to begin his way to snatching. What exercises and what frequency best prepares him for that?*

DW: For snatching a 96 kilo kettlebell?

RM: Yeah, that's a big guy.

DW: That's a big kettlebell. A 212 pound snatch with a kettlebell. Well, I'd need to know where he is in his snatching right now. If he snatches 16 kilos, then he's got a long ride to go. But, if he's snatching 48 kilos, he's half way there.

I would recommend for heavy snatching like that, using that same ladder approach that we talked about with the Enter the Kettlebell Rite of Passage earlier. use a heavy kettlebell, one that you can snatch maybe 8 or 10 times and ladder it up to 5, and do that 3 times a week or so. Do that for about 4 weeks and then back off for a week, and then start a new cycle of doing maybe 2, 3 or 4 reps per side, starting at the top of the minute.

I've had a lot of success in going up in weight for low reps with kettlebells, doing this particular kind of thing. You would set a timer for one minute and then do one or two reps per side in snatching, and then put the bell down.

If he's working towards... If he can snatch 40 pretty easily, for 8 or 9 reps and 48 for maybe 1 or 2, practice this with the 40. So, do one or two reps, put it down, rest to the top of the next minute. Do one or two reps, put it down, rest to the top of the next minute. When you get to about 30 minutes of doing that, then you cut the time back to 20 minutes and instead of doing 2 reps, do 3 reps per set and work your way back up to 30 minutes. When you've gotten to 30 sets of 3 and 3 that way, drop back to 20 minutes and then do 4 and 4 and work up to 30 minutes that way.

By the time you do that, you should be pretty comfortable with the next heavier bell. The problem you're going to run into with the 96 kilo bell is there's not a lot in between sizes on that. So, you're going to run into a little snag that way. I would probably say do heavy clean and jerks with it as well, to get used to supporting that much weight overhead.

The heaviest kettlebell I've ever snatched was a 64 kilo, 132 pounds or whatever it was. It was 64 kilos, 130-something, 140-something pounds, whatever that is. I had never snatched anything heavier than a 48 kilo before that, and I walked up to it and snatched it. It wasn't a pretty snatch, but it was a snatch.

So, you can build a lot of strength with weight that's a lot lower than what your one-rep max is just by practicing the technique on the lift.

RM: We do a lot of tire flipping at our gym. We have a 400 and 600 and a 750. Really, the weight isn't so much the matter, it's just the more you do it, the easier it gets, no matter how heavy the tire is, because you just get used to the motion, you get acquired to it.

DW: Yeah, that's that strength skill we were talking about earlier. Of course, absolutely, when somebody snatches a 96 kilo kettlebell, I want to see footage of that. If you put up footage of you snatching the 96 kilo kettlebell, go out and buy a six pack of whatever you want and send me the receipt and I will reimburse you for that. I will buy you a six pack.

RM: Good stuff. Next question is from Anderson. He asks, "*What is a sure-fire fat burning program for an overweight guy?*" He needs to lose 50 to 60 pounds and wants to get to 200 from 260 over using kettlebells as exercise modality. So, I guess a sure-fire fat burning program.

DW: A sure-fire fat burning program is eat less and move more. That's the simplified version of it. I'm a big fan of the Warrior Diet. Some people that doesn't make sense to them and so they won't do well at it. Find a nutritional program that makes sense to you, that you can live with day in and day out and stick to for the long haul. It should include a lot of protein and a lot of green things and not much else. If you're a frequent feeder, that's fine. If you're an intermittent faster, that's fine, too.

But, I'm a big fan of meat and greens. Put that together. Keep a food log because you eat more than you think you do. "But Dave, I eat really healthy." No, you don't! No, you don't, because I think I do until I start writing it down. When you write it down you'll be less likely to eat the doughnut or the chocolate chip cookie or drink the beer or whatever your particular thing that you do enjoy is.

As far as a workout goes, I like swings a lot. They burn a lot of calories. From a fat burning perspective, I like to do things with kettlebells for time rather than specific number of reps. I'm a big fan of the Gym Boss Timer. I do this in my boot camps because most of my people that come to boot camp want to burn some body fat.

What I do is I'll pick a few different exercises, maybe 4 or 5, and I'll set the timer for either 45 seconds and 15 seconds or 50/10 or 40/20, something along those lines. We will do the drill for 40-50 seconds and then we use that 10-20 seconds to transition to the next drill. And then just do that. Work up to between 16 and 25 minutes of doing that.

So, a good sequence of exercises... Say you've only got one kettlebell. We would do a press with one arm, a press with the other arm, a row with one arm, a row with the other arm and then a Goblet squat holding the kettlebell by the horns in front of you. Repeat that sequence. So, each individual exercise, including the rest period/transition period, takes one minute. So, one time through that sequence would take five minutes. Repeat that sequence 4 or 5 times, rest a little bit and then spend about 10 or 15 minutes doing swings. If you really want to get down to specifics about it, set the timer for 30 seconds on, 30 seconds off, and do ten rounds of swings like that.

So, you've done 10 minutes worth of swings. You've done 20 or 25 minutes worth of the circuit type stuff. The whole workout would take probably 35, 40, 45 minutes tops, including loosening up and recovery in between the circuit and the swings.

If you do that kind of thing three or four times a week and cut out anything from your diet that wasn't food 100 years ago... Because, if it wasn't food 100 years ago, it's not food now. Eat the kind of food that God intended you to eat. It will burn off pretty quick. You can mix in body weight exercises like that, too.

Say you're clean and press technique's not real good. You could do row and pushup. Or, you could do a split squat or a lunge on one leg and then on the other leg. We do that kind of stuff all the time in the National Kettlebell Boot Camp.

RM: All right.

DW: If you set up for three days a week thing, you do that twice a week and then once a week do Turkish get-ups for 20 minutes and then the following week do the get-ups two days and that circuit one day, so that you've done it three times, each workout you've done three times in a two week period. Let me know how you look in 12 weeks.

RM: Good stuff. The next one, actually Clay Bueller asks, "*How do you know if you're overtraining?*" *What's a good indicator?*

DW: You will get weaker. You will be tired all the time. You'll probably catch the flu. You'll be grumpy and irritable and have dark circles under your eyes. You won't be fun to be around and you'll get weaker. You won't make progress.

So, going back to what we talked about early on in the call, when you feel really strong, that's when you're at the most dangerous place in terms of overtraining. Because, if you're just following a fly-by-the-seat-of-your-pants, instinctive type workout and you don't have the experience to be able to handle the freedom that comes with that, you will overtrain. Because, you'll feel really good and you'll keep going and you'll do that for two or three weeks and the next thing you know, you'll just feel like crap.

So, I'm a big fan of planning things in advance until you are in touch with yourself enough that you don't have to. If you plan it in advance, then you can still back-off. But, if you plan to do something that is X number of sets and reps for volume or whatever and you do more than that, then you've not followed your plan.

RM: All right. Next one comes from John Baer. He asks, "*What's the most common kettlebell movement that most people have no business trying yet, or that you see the most mistakes being made?*"

DW: The most mistakes being made... A lot of people screw-up the bent press. The right to do the bent press is something that I think you have to earn. You have to put in a lot of time with a bell overhead. You have to put in a lot of Turkish get-ups and windmills. You have to have proper thoracic spine mobility, or else you're not going to do it.

The bent press, however, is a pet lift of mine that I'm kind of a snob about, to a great degree. So, I want everybody to learn how to do the bent press, but it's one of those things. It's pretty technical and it takes a lot of time to get there.

The other one is the swing. A lot of people screw-up the swing. They'll watch me or...well...no, they don't watch me. They watch like Jillian Michaels on YouTube and think they know how to do a swing because they watched her infomercial. Then, the next thing you know, "Those kettlebells made my back hurt." And to paraphrase Dan John, "No, the way you swung the kettlebell made your back hurt."

RM: All right.

DW: I've seen a lot of people do a lot of stuff that they're calling get-ups that are pretty lethal, too.

RM: Yeah, I know I'm probably guilty of messing-up all of the above.

DW: There are a lot of ways to do a get-up and I'm a fan of most of the variations of it. As long as it's safe, then you're not doing a get-up wrong, in my opinion.

Now, we have some very specific things in the RKC that we do with the get-up that's designed technically to achieve a particular goal or a particular response in the body. That doesn't mean that something different than that is wrong. It's just it's using a screwdriver to drive a nail. It's the wrong tool for the job or the right tool for the job.

But then again, you see some people who do stuff like... I saw a video of somebody on YouTube doing a get-up and they were keeping the arm locked overhead and trying to switch hands without taking the kettlebell from over their head. Which I think is kind of a self-correcting thing, because once you drop it on your head and die, you won't do that anymore. If you're switching the kettlebell overhead or over your face, then that's dumb and you shouldn't do it.

RM: Here's a good question from Sebastian. He asks, "*Where should one start for bending things?*" *He started with a nail, he could bend, but could not bend the harder one after numerous tries in about a month.*

We got a couple of questions that relate to nail bending.

DW: Well, if you've got a nail that you can bend, and whatever the next bigger thing is, is something that you can't bend, then spend a lot more time with the one that you can bend and work on your technique and practice the technique and develop the ability to generate force with that specific technique.

Jedd Johnson wrote a great resource for nail bending, Jedd from Diesel Crew. I think it's called something really clever like "The Nail Bending Book" or something like that. They sell that on the Diesel Crew site and on Jedd Johnson's blog. It's an invaluable resource.

I'm not a great short bender, but I understand how it's done. The way I got better at bending was I found... Well, I got the Ironmind Bag of Nails and kind of worked through that and ran out of nails and thought, "Okay, well, I need to get some more nails." I went to the hardware store and found some 60 penny nails and I bought a 50 pound box of them and worked through that. I bought the next 50 pound box and they were a lot harder. So, I went and bought about 15 pounds from another store of the same size nails that were easier.

Because, what you run into is nails, by and large, are made out of recycled steel. The way steel is graded is it has to meet a minimum hardness of whatever it is, however they measure the stuff. As long as it's that minimum, then it can be whatever above that.

So, if I say to you, Ryan, "We're going to go out somewhere and I want you to bring at least \$100 with you," and you bring \$20,000, you did what I asked you to do. Right?

RM: Yeah.

DW: So, but you did it to excess. So, some of those nails that are made out of recycled material are incredibly hard. I've seen 60 penny nails which are smaller in diameter and length than the red nail, that are a lot harder to bend than a red nail.

So, I got some that were easier and some that were harder, and I would spend a couple of days bending anywhere from 6 to 15 of the easy nails and then I would spend one day a week bending between 3 and 8 of the harder nails. And just over time I got to where I was able to bend the harder nails easier.

The next step above the 60 penny nail is a grade 5 bolt. Sometimes they're hot-rolled, sometimes they're cold-rolled. So, you've got to be careful because some of them are springy and some of them aren't. You can tell after you bend one. If the bend is very sharp and pointy, the angle at which it bends, it's going to be easier to bent than if you bent it and it's more "U" shaped. That's a springier kind of steel and it will be harder to bend.

But, go get Jedd's book. There's a lot of assistance exercises and stuff that I don't really do because I haven't focused solely on bending. Jedd knows more about bending than me, so do what he says.

RM: Awesome. Our next one is, Steve Matthews says, "Dave, thanks for doing this."

DW: You're welcome.

RM: "I'd like to hear you talk about carryover from the heavy bent press to other lifts."

DW: The heavy bent press carryover to other lifts. There is a tremendous amount of it. Because, the bent press involves...it's a fully body lift. It also involves a lot of mobility and flexibility under tension that carries over not just to other lifts, but to other athletic type stuff. When you're in the bottom of the bent press, it's a lot like being in the bottom of a windmill except the weight that you've got overhead is heavier than anything you could do in a windmill if you're doing a very heavy bent press.

A bent press will allow you to get more weight overhead with one hand than any other lift. But at the same time, you have to earn the right to put that much weight overhead with one hand, because if you don't, then at best you will drop the weight on the ground. At worst, you'll drop it through your floor or on your head and probably wrench something as you do it.

So, make sure not to neglect your get-ups and your windmills as you're working towards your bent press. Get your thoracic spine mobility going, work your military presses, get your shoulders nice and strong and then work on that technique with the lats.

In my Full Body Power DVD, I have a teaching method on there where I use a dog leash with the bent press. You kind of put the loop around one hand and run it across your back and across your butt to the opposite foot and stand on it. The leash doesn't move and it forces you to keep your hands still. That's the biggest mistake I see people making with the bent press is, they'll get almost to lockout and then they'll start pressing with their arms and they'll lose the whole thing.

The bent press, the weight should stay at about the same height. So, the carryover there, shoulder flexibility, strength in a compromised position, a lot of activity going on in the mid section and being able to stand up with a heavy weight overhead from a really bizarre angle. So, a lot of carryover. I love the bent press.

RM: I can tell.

DW: And it's a cool thing to do if you're like out at a bar and you want to lift a girl over your head with one hand and she's a little portly. It looks dangerous, even though it's not. It's a really, really safe way to do it. But, because very few people lift stuff overhead with one hand, and because very few people fold at the hips while they're doing it, it looks unusual to people. So, it's a very visually entertaining lift.

RM: I can definitely see it impressing people at a bar, for sure.

DW: Yeah.

RM: Next one, David asks, *"What supplements do you recommend?"*

DW: Steak.

RM: Steak.

DW: I don't do a whole lot of supplement. If I do supplements it's because I don't feel like I've managed to get enough out of whatever food was available that day. I like fish oil and essential fatty acids. I like protein powder because sometimes it's tough to eat the amount of protein from a natural animal source or from a dairy source that is needed to do the kind of stuff that I do. So, I like protein powder.

I like Pro-Grade brand. I've got links on my website that will take you to that. It's a brand that's available only through people who are in the fitness business. You can't get it in stores. But, they make a product called Pro-Grade Lean. It's a really, really tasty meal replacement type thing.

RM: Yeah, they do make the best tasting.

DW: That's pretty much all I do. I've used creatine before and I believe it works. I'm just not really interested in getting any bigger. I think that it made me bigger and it probably helped in getting stronger, but the kind of strength that comes with getting bigger is not the kind of strength that I'm chasing right now. So, I believe creatine works.

Anything else, like nitrous oxide or NO₂ whatever that stuff... I think you'd be better off just buying steak.

RM: All right. The next one comes from Anthony. He asks, "*When it comes to odd feats of strength, is there anything you won't try? Why or why not?*"

DW: Is there anything that I won't try? No, not that I can think of.

Yeah, there is something that I'm not willing to try. My friend, Mike "The Machine" Bruce has the strongest neck in the world and he does feats with his neck that I will never do. I've seen him hang himself before, and I'm not going to do that because I just don't want to.

And also, we've done shows together where I've stood behind him with a 5/8", 4 foot long bar and bent it across his throat. I will never let anybody bend a bar across my throat, for a couple of reasons. One, that's kind of Mike's thing and I don't want to be like Mike. And the other thing is, I've asked Mike and he tells me it hurts a lot. And I've seen him spend the rest of the evening kind of having to clear his throat because he had so much pressure on his trachea. I'm just not interested in doing that particular feat.

But, it's an impressive thing if you ever get a chance to see him do it, especially if I'm the one pulling on the bar. Because, talking about that whole shut-the-pain-off thing earlier, even more difficult than shutting the pain off for yourself is being willing to just unload on your friend and do something that might kill him. It took me probably 7 or 8 times of bending the bar across his throat to get to the point to where I know that I'm not going to hurt him, and I can just explode on it now and really hit the bar with everything I've got, because I know his neck can take everything that I've got.

It's an impressive feat. He holds his arms out to the side like a crucifix and exhales when he does it. His head turns all red and it's bald and it's really scary. Then, you've got me back there cranking on this bar like I'm trying to wrap it around his face. It's a cool feat. If you ever get a chance to see Mike "The Machine" do his thing, he's a really good Strongman.

RM: What's your favorite one to do?

DW: Right now, things come in seasons and I cycle through things a lot. Right now my favorite thing to do is bending horseshoes, because I've been spending a lot of time working on that lately. I'm a big fan of the horseshoe.

I like tearing cards a lot. I like...from a kettlebell standpoint I like doing the bottoms-up stuff. And one of the ones that has kind of turned into a signature thing for me is the pinkie press, which I don't spend a whole lot of time practicing that particular thing, because it hurts a lot. But, I do train my pinkies with like a jump stretch band type of stuff. I do a lot of low weight/high rep stuff with the pinkie. But, the pinkie press with the kettlebell just hurts a lot. So, I don't really practice it that much. I do it in shows.

RM: We'll do one more question here. Doug asks, *"What advice would you give a person who has a good foundation in kettlebell techniques and had five months to prepare for the RKC certification?"*

DW: My best advice is to over prepare, be ready with... At level one RKC we teach six foundational drills. We teach the swing, the get-up, the clean, the squat, the snatch and the press. Work on those.

Everyone who goes to RKC, before they get there, stresses out about the snatch test. They're worried about their snatch. They're worried about their snatch test. The snatch test is the least of your worries. The main thing you need to be ready for is an insane amount of volume over the course of three days, and do everything you can to take care of your hands and to get your technique dialed-in enough and to get the conditioning of the skin of your hands dialed-in enough that you're not ripping your palms to pieces.

Because, that's the biggest complaint that people have, is they come in and just through the amount of volume that we have and the fact that they don't have perfect technique when they get there, they wind up tearing their palms up. Do a lot of swings. Do a lot of swings. Be ready to go from 9 o'clock in the morning until 7 o'clock at night for two and a half days.

RM: Do you recommend like a lot more eating prior to that. That's a ton of volume those three days. I'm just curious how the structure of the day are with your eating and stuff like that.

DW: Eat as much as you can as often as you can while you're out there. We break for lunch. So, eat a big breakfast, carry some food out on the field with you.

He said he had a solid foundation in kettlebell training, I'm going to assume that he's met with somebody and learned how to do this stuff. But, if you're not sure, find an RKC and learn the way we do things before you go. Go in with a good attitude. Go in ready to learn, because I've seen people come in who've decided they're going to show us what they've got and they're always the people who fail to being anything.

The people who come and do really well are the people who come in with an attitude of wanting to learn and wanting to be a part of what we do. So, we welcome those people. We welcome everybody, but it's up to you to decide what kind of experience you're going to have. Just do a lot of swings. A lot of swings and a lot of get-ups.

If you need a short answer to that, then follow the Rite of Passage. Everything else we'll teach you when you get there.

RM: Good stuff. Tell us, you have a couple products. Tell us a little bit about your Full Body Power DVD.

DW: The Full Body Power DVD is... I call it Full Body Power Beyond the Basics. It's kind of my take on stringing together foundational movements into longer complexes, but a little bit differently than a lot of people do stuff with complexes.

It's a couple of years old and some of the stuff that's on there I have kind of refined and don't really do it that way anymore. But, I'm probably going to shoot Full Body Power Volume 2 later on this year.

But, it's about doing complex type combination movements in ways that nobody had thought of, or at least nobody had put a product on the market. It's kind of just my way of thinking of doing those things at that point in time. There's, in my opinion, probably one of the best bent press tutorials that's on the market, on video. Not that I'm so much better than anybody else at doing that, it's just that nobody else has really

gone into as much detail with the bent press as I do on that video, just because it hadn't happened yet when I did that video. So, I'm really pleased with the bent press section on that.

I talk about a few different press variations. I think it's a good video. It was shot during a workshop, so I have people there who are learning the moves and they're making the mistakes that a lot of people make. And so, you're able to see real-time corrections of a mistake that you might make, if you buy the video. It's available at FullBodyPower.com.

RM: Another question. "Who do you recommend for mentors and other guys to follow as far as their training styles so people don't get stuck into one frame of mind? Who do you recommend, like who do you follow and look up to and kind of your mentors?"

DW: Obviously Pavel, because the whole thing with the RKC kind of reshaped the way I think about things. I'm a big fan of Dan John. I think that his approach is very just sensible. It just makes sense. When Dan John talks, it's hard to argue with anything he says because any objection that you might have is countered before you can ever come up with it. Mark Reifkind is another who's like that.

I'm a big fan of Alwyn Cosgrove. I think that the simplicity of his delivery is a good balance to the insane amount of science that the guy knows. He understands human movement. He understands that physiology and he's able to articulate it very, very well. And he understands the psychology behind doing things, which he's been a big help to me.

I'm a fan of [Charles Staley](#). I like kind of the logical approach that he takes with stuff, too. Obviously Dennis Rogers, one of the best Strongmen that's ever been around. And my buddy [Zach Even-Esh](#). Zach has some good stuff, too.

I'm a big fan of Kenneth Jay. Within the RKC community, Kenneth Jay and a guy who doesn't really have any products out is Jeff O'Connor. But, I talk to Jeff four or five times a week, any time I have a training question, he's usually the first person that I ask.

Brett Jones and Gray Cook with the functional movement screen stuff, because they helped me to take a knee that was going bad and realize that it wasn't my knee, that it was my hip and do stuff to correct it. So, now my knee doesn't bother me anymore.

RM: That's always a good thing.

DW: Yeah.

RM: Well, that's going to wrap it up, Dave. I appreciate you taking the time...

DW: Oh, and Jedd and Smitty from Diesel Crew, I would be remiss without talking about them, because they help...and Adam Glass. Adam Glass knows a lot about destroying stuff, too.

RM: A lot of those guys I've actually...those that I've joined up recently onto my list and signed up for this call, there's a Cosgrove interview that you'll be getting. If you haven't got it already. Smitty will be I think in like two or three weeks. So, I'm trying to get everybody I can for the interviews as well.

I wouldn't recommend listening to that Cosgrove if you don't like customers. He's a very...

DW: If I had to distill it down to two different...or three different people, it would be Dennis Rogers, Cosgrove, but it...Pavel is... He's so important to everything that I do that he's one through five of the top ten list. Because, if it weren't for Pavel, we wouldn't be talking right now. Nobody in this country would know what a kettlebell is. He's the father of the whole kettlebell movement, and the RKC is the root of any kettlebell certification that we have right now in the western world, anyway. I choose to stick to the source.

RM: One more time, what were the main sites that...I know you said FullBodyPower.com for people that wanted to purchase your DVD. But, where else can they checkout your work and what you have going on, Dave?

DW: My main website is IronTamer.com, and I'm actually... Rocco Castellano was redoing that site as we speak. So, it should be completely redone here in a couple of days. My local site for Nashville is NashvilleKettlebell.com and then I have a blog that's tied into each one of those sites. They're cleverly named, NashvilleKettlebellblog.com and IronTamerBlog.com. But, the main site is IronTamer.com and you can pretty well link off to anything else that I've got going on from that site. It's kind of the hub site.

I usually keep an updated schedule of workshops and appearances that I'm going to be doing. I need to throw this plug out there, too. I am available for Strongman performances and workshops. So, if anybody is interested in bringing The Tamer to your town, then shoot me an email and I will come and lift kettlebells with you and help you move better and destroy stuff and eat beef with you.

RM: Awesome. Well, once again, Dave, I want to thank you again for taking the time. I hope everybody on the call and all the ones that...if we didn't get to your question, you can shoot either me or Dave an email and we'll try to get that answered for you. But, we've gone now for almost two hours.

DW: If you liked the call, I appreciate it and tell everybody about it. If you didn't like it, just shut up and don't say nothing to anybody.

RM: Awesome. And once again, this is Ryan Magin with CriticalBench.com and Dave Whitley from IronTamer.com. Thanks again, Dave, and I will talk to you soon.

DW: Thank you, Ryan. I appreciate it. Good night everybody.

RM: Good night, guys.