



WEEKLY MUSCLE BUILDING EXPERT *Interview Series*



Mike Westerdal Interviews Joe Hashey

MW: Hey everybody, this is Mike Westerdal here with LeanHybridMuscle.com. I'm pumped up. I've got Joe Hashey on the line tonight. He's a Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist from New York. He owns Synergy Athletics and he's an author of several strength and conditioning programs including Bull Strength and the new Bull Strength Conditioning. Welcome, Joe. Thanks for being here tonight.

JH: Mike, thanks for having me. I appreciate it.

MW: Yeah, good times. I was reading on your blog on the "About Us" section, I just want to jump right into some background information about you. You were talking about real world strength, working with your dad growing up. Can you tell the listeners a little bit about that?

JH: Sure. Yeah, my dad was kind of one of those old school guys, I guess kind of my whole family on his side was. They were basically lumberjacks from the state of Maine.

They didn't really believe much in the gyms. They believed in a hard day's work and getting those man muscles they used to say. They used to laugh at everyone for how small their hands were and stuff like that, because they were used to hauling lumber, hanging pipes and stuff.

My dad specifically was the furnace man and he'd be hanging pipe and carrying furnaces up and down stairs. He used to always say that's how you get real strength. He used to laugh at the gym muscles and him and his friends were some of the strongest guys I've ever met in my life. I used to shake their hands and they're just engulf mine. At 6'5" myself, it's kind of hard to do, but these guys are just crazy strong. The introduction that that kind of strength has gotten me more excited towards gym workouts that combine with what gets the best results for athletes and the general population.

MW: How old were you when you were helping your dad out and stuff?

JH: We started...well, we were called gofers because they'd go for this and go for that and they always sent us out to go get the screwdrivers and stuff. I used to like it when I was younger, then when I was in high school it started to get a little bit monotonous. I started to get a little bit of that social life in me.

MW: That's cool. I read an article up on the site once, I called it old man strength instead of real world strength, sounds better. But, I was doing the same stuff, helping my dad out, just working in the yard and stuff, in high school thinking I was pretty strong and stuff. But, my dad would be able to just pick rocks out of the yard that I couldn't even budge. It's like, how can he do this and I could bench press probably about twice as much as him because he never worked out in the gym or anything. So, I knew exactly what you're talking about. That's pretty cool.

You played in high school. You played football and you went on to play at Colgate, right?

JH: Yep. In high school I played football, basketball and baseball. I loved playing sports. I wasn't into the training in high school yet. I did end up going to Colgate University to play football.

MW: What position were you there?

JH: I was a hefty ole lineman.

MW: Okay.

JH: I went there, I was 6'5", like I said, 305 pounds. By the time it was my sophomore year I was about 315.

MW: What years were you there?

JH: I was there 2000 through 2002, were the two season I played before I got injured. Fortunately my senior year I didn't get to play, but that was the year they went undefeated; they went to national championship game. I got to watch from the sidelines. It was the worst feeling of being torn and wanting to be out there at the same time.

MW: What conference were you guys in?

JH: We were in the Patriot League. So, it was like Holy Cross, Bucknell, Lehigh, Georgetown...we were all in that league.

MW: Yeah, because we played some of the same teams. I just missed you. How old are you? Are you around like 31-ish?

JH: No, 28/29.

MW: Okay, sorry. I stayed a little longer in college. But, me and Elliott actually played against each other. I went to Central Connecticut.

JH: Did he play down in the Long Island area?

MW: He played at St. John's.

JH: St. John's, alright.

MW: Yeah, so we were all 1-AA. Like, you played Monmouth, they were in our conference and stuff. We played Stony Brook and Georgetown's in the MEAC and stuff like that. I don't know. I think it's all changed since we left.

But then, when you hurt your knee, that was during college. What happened after that?

JH: Well, I hurt both my knees in college, actually. The first time was just a scope, go in and clean up the cartilage. But, with reoccurring knee problems they had to what's called lateral releases. From what the doctor explained, the kneecaps aren't quite right and the knees...they were pretty complicated surgeries on both my knees and they basically said I couldn't play sports, I shouldn't lift weights or do anything else on the legs every again.

MW: Could you imagine?

JH: Yeah. I couldn't imagine what it would be like if I actually listened to them. I don't know what I'd be today.

MW: Wow. That's some scary stuff to hear.

JH: Yeah.

MW: But, you did go on and play after that?

JH: Yeah, I did. I have a little bit of a stubborn streak in me. Like I said, I was 315 pounds. It wasn't a quality 315, it was... I liked going to the dining hall and eating my Philly cheesesteak sandwiches, 315. But, around then is when I started getting real serious about strength and conditioning. I ended up cutting down to 245 and then I started getting into weights a lot more.

MW: That sounds pretty lean for 6'5", 245. That sounds pretty lean.

JH: Yeah, I cut right down. You know, if you do it right, I did the conditioning, I started eating right, I definitely wasn't starving myself. I just changed from eating the crap to the good foods. You'd be surprised how quick the changes come about. It was probably maybe five or six months.

MW: Oh, wow.

JH: Like I said, cheesesteak and soda to chicken breasts and spinach and conditioning. I got turned around. Once I cut down I started feeling better, my knees were feeling better. I learned to exercise the right way without hurting myself. I did go back and play semi professional football when I came back to this area. There was an up-start team that started. I played two seasons for them, had a good time, made the All Star Team, still had it, then I hung it up.

MW: That's cool. I know you don't like to brag or draw too much attention to it, but that's quite an underdog success story right there, going against odds and coming back the way you did, and losing all the weight. That's real motivational for people to hear, I think.

You said you learned to do things the right way. I just know from my experience in college, not to bash any of the coaches, and we had a lot of different ones there, but it probably wasn't the smartest training that we were doing at the time. I mean, I've learned a lot more as well since I graduated. I'm wondering, what kind of stuff were you guys doing for your strength and conditioning program for the football players? What kind of stuff did the coaches make you do? Was there anything they made you do that actually was harmful for you, do you think?

JH: Well, I think it was pretty good. We had a pretty good strength coach. I think he went to Colgate. He went to Oregon for a while, went there for division one. It was basically the standard Olympic style lifting program. It was pretty good.

Now, where it was lacking... It was pretty good programming. We had 100+ players on the team that would go in the weight room. The form coaching and cues really wasn't here. I know that if I ever saw my squat form today, what it looked like back then, I'd probably slap myself. That was just the form side.

Now, the conditioning side, I'm sure you had this experience in college, too. Conditioning was used more as a punishment in college.

MW: Yeah.

JH: If people screwed up, you punish them with conditioning. So, you kind of got this negative connotation ingrained in you because that's what was going to happen if you did something wrong. There's this one time, I think we had a curfew around 11 o'clock and we had the football coach, he's an excellent coach. He's still there. He used to be everywhere and see everything. I don't know how he did it. Whenever I walked down the street I would see him, no matter where I was.

A couple of the guys on the team stayed out too late. It was like 11:30, they were downtown eating pizza and all this kind of crap and we were conditioning the next morning. When we were conditioning we'd get up at 6AM, go down to the field house and you do about 20 minutes worth of drills and then condition for about 20 minutes.

This day he found out that a couple of people stayed out too late. So, instead of the 20 minutes of drills, we had 40 minutes of conditioning and all it was was just sprinting 100's for 40 minutes, and I use the term sprinting loosely. We're running and we're running and one of the guys who was out too late the night before, a big, fat ole lineman, maybe about 10 sprints in, which wasn't even half way, he started to not feel good because he was eating all the pizza and crap the night before. He bends over and he throws up. I kid you not, one entire mozzarella stick without bite marks in it.

MW: Oh, my gosh.

JH: So, we had to condition until...he ended up getting sick. A lot of people got sick that day. And not only the negative side of seeing him throw up an entire mozzarella stick, but we had conditioning so hard that our bodies were just breaking themselves down, just throwing stuff up. Probably 10 or 20 guys threw up that day.

MW: Yeah, just breaking the athlete. It's nothing to do with getting you better for football.

JH: Yeah, it's a mental thing.

MW: You're bringing back some bad flashbacks for me as well. You guys had curfews and stuff, was the during the season or off season?

JH: Well, Division 1, 1-AA, it gets pretty serious. You're year round.

MW: We had our conditioning in the off season. It was twice a week, I think, at like 6AM for an hour. A lot of plyometrics and it was circuits. You had like 8 different stations and you had plyometrics at some of them and like shuttle run drills at other ones. What I really hated, you'd spin in circles and then the coach would blow his whistle and yell a color and you had to run and touch that color while you're all dizzy and stuff.

JH: Like a dizzy bat race.

MW: Yeah.

JH: That's funny. I never heard of that.

MW: I don't know how that helped anything. I think that was just to torture us.

JH: Yeah, it was very similar, two days a week we'd do that and then two other days a week would be speed training. But, that wasn't 6AM. We'd get at least mid morning for that, in between classe.

MW: Cool. Tell me a little bit about your gym.

JH: Well, it was originally Synergy Athletics. It started out in my garage and it's not a very large garage. Fortunately I had high enough ceilings I could fit two power racks and dumbbells. Right after I started, I trained a couple of kids, they had great results. Word got out, so my client list filled up. I could only take 15 clients, working 3 hours, 5 clients an hour was all I could take. I ran that for about two years and I just expanded it on Monday.

Monday was probably the busiest day of my entire life, to move everything over to the new gym, lots of new clients on Monday. Bull Strength Conditioning got released on Monday and as you know, I also teach high school and I got all new students on Monday.

MW: You just did that this Monday?

JH: Yeah, that was this past Monday.

MW: Wow. Where'd you move the gym to?

JH: I moved the gym to a plaza right next to the high school. So, I really couldn't turn the offer down. The rent was incredibly cheap and it's actually sharing a building. I saw this baseball facility, they do baseball skills training. The owner used to play minor league baseball, I think, for a couple of seasons, a really nice guy. They have this big

area in the back that they don't use, so I called them up to see if I could use it, because there's a lot of clients right there that can convert right over to training with me from the baseball skills training. So, I moved the gym over there. It's about 15 times bigger than my basement. And that was just on Monday.

MW: Did you leave some stuff at home, too?

JH: I have a bunch of concrete weights and a bar at home right now.

MW: You're married, right, Joe?

JH: Yeah, I'm married.

MW: So, she's not taking that room back or anything? You get to keep one gym at home and you get the other gym, too?

JH: I think that would be a good deal. I've got to do one thing at a time. I put the paperwork through for moving the new gym with her, with Melanie, and now, start rebuilding it here.

MW: Cool. You bring kids...because you coach football and baseball, right, at the high school?

JH: Actually, I did coach football and baseball. I coached football for about four years, baseball for two years. I actually have to give it up this upcoming season. This last fall was my last season coaching because I had so many clients at home for personal training, I can't do the coaching anymore.

I don't bring a lot of kids from my own team. I talk to the parents, parents bring them over. I'm one of those people that's really kind of uncomfortable talking about myself and I don't want to seem like I'm advertising to kids. Here's my gym, if you want to come, come. It gets filled anyway.

MW: So, you have the competition of your kids...

JH: Pretty much. The gym, like I said, just moved closer to a different high school. It's not the one I teach or coach at.

MW: Okay.

JH: Just proximity wise, a lot of kids come from that high school.

MW: That's exciting, man. It sounds like this is really taking off.

JH: Yeah. it worked out great, got that spot right next to a baseball place. I called a local physical therapist in town who I've been communicating with. I'm like, "Hey, I got

this place, it's right next to a high school." He wants to come put some tables in, so he's going to pay a lot of my rent, and I got this great facility. So, it just washed out perfectly.

MW: Well, give a shout-out. What's the address and where's it at if anybody's listening that's nearby?

JH: It's in Endwell, New York. The name of it is actually Strength and Performance Headquarters. We're changing the gym name from Synergy Athletics. The website and everything will be the same. But, Strength and Performance Headquarters on Hooper Road in Endwell, New York.

MW: All right, cool. Is it a lot of high school athletes, or who do you mostly help? It is kind of open to everybody? Who do you prefer to train?

JH: I prefer to train high school athletes right now. I do have...we just moved on Monday. I had a client list of 15. It's Thursday, I'm up to about 28 clients already. They're almost all high school and 8th grade athletes. I have one group, when I train myself, I have a couple of guys who are 30, 34, 35 that still enjoy training. They come in and train during my training hour.

MW: Oh, cool. What kind of workouts do you guys do, like your group that you're training with? What do you like to do?

JH: We always like to do primary lifts. It's either power lifting style lifts, Strongman style lifts or kind of...we've enjoyed jumping a little bit in our age. We'll do some box jumping, all kinds of things so we can pretend like we're young again. We still play some old man basketball and try to keep up with the kids.

MW: Nice. So, what people did you study coming up as a strength and conditioning coach? Did you have any guys that you looked after or you really enjoyed their books or teachings?

JH: Yeah, certainly I did. The biggest experience I had was with all the coaches I had in college, TJ Reagan who was the strength coach at Colgate. I read a lot of his stuff. He kind of helped me out a lot. I picked up my basics from some guys that are local. I do, for my science and practice, I've always referred to Zatsiorsky, Science and Practice of Strength Training. That was one of the first books I read along with the NSCA material.

But, that gives me all the ground work. But, for the practical application, I've been very fortunate to live very close to Jim Smith of the Diesel Crew, read a lot of his material. His Combat Core manual really got me into kind of the creative side of training.

MW: How far away are you guys from each other?

JH: He's about 35 minutes. So, on the weekends we'll get together and train. He'll be out training at my gym sometimes. We'll be doing some clients together, some groups together there.

MW: That's really cool.

JH: It gives them a chance to get to know him and he's taken me to some very cool places. I know you mentioned books, and I know you know this, that under the bar experience is just so valuable. I've been fortunate enough to have him...give him the credit here. He took me down to DeFranco's, down to Zach's. I've been out to Westside. Getting into these great gyms and try to soak in all their knowledge has been a great experience.

MW: Right. I think sometimes that's even more important than what you read about.

JH: Yeah, it's a fusion of the two. There seems to be a lot of trainers out there that are either really book smart or have a lot of practical experience. I think it's important to have both of them.

MW: Right, and definitely be able to walk the walk.

JH: Yeah, exactly.

MW: Nothing bothers me more than getting advice from someone that doesn't look like they take their own advice.

JH: Exactly. You see a lot of the in commercial gyms. Not all of them, I don't want to categorize all of them, but you see the trainer wearing the khaki pants and a golf shirt with their belly hanging over their belt six inches, leaning on equipment. It's not a good situation for anybody.

MW: Exactly. Well, I don't know what it's like in New York, but I trained up in Massachusetts and you didn't have to have any certification or anything. They gyms could just hire you. There were no laws about it or anything. So, we were going through training at some gyms, people that didn't even know what body parts were used for what exercises. It was pretty bad.

JH: That's not good. That's not helping anyone out, not even the trainer.

MW: How did you get started online? How long have you had the site up and stuff? I always like to hear people's stories how they get on the internet and start their products and stuff.

JH: Yeah, I've been just kind of soaking-in what everyone else is doing. I just had a static website. The Synergy website's really business around football camps for area kids to get them more involved in football. I teamed-up with a guy who played at Colgate with me. He went on to play NFL Europe and stuff. He lived in the area as well. We teamed up and started running some football camps and started the website from that. It was all made through like a Yahoo site builder. It looked real crappy. I made it myself. Then, I started checking out these other people. I'm like, wow, I wish I had a website like that.

That was about two years ago. I had no idea what a blog....well, I knew what a blog was, but I didn't have any concept of what it looked like. So, about two years ago I got this formatted site. It's Synergy-Athletics.com. The way it is now with the blog... Every once in a while I'll throw some things in there, take some things out, switch hosting companies because the other hosting company I had couldn't handle the traffic and the plug-ins and stuff that I wanted to get done.

So, I got that site and I actually wrote...my original training manual was Bull Strength, which is the name that my dad used to call the old school strength, which is kind of written as a tribute to my dad. I needed a manual basically for the gym so all the guys could see everything they were doing and have the concept for my clients that were coming in. I kind of expanded it and turned it into a manual for everyone to see and use. It's big. It's like 250 pages.

MW: When did you write that?

JH: A little over a year ago that one came out.

MW: Okay. And that's basically a manual for the type of training you're doing at your gym?

JH: Yep, exactly. It's got a training protocol that I follow for the strength side of things. And what was missing from it was the conditioning aspect. So, this year, what we're talking about right now, is Bull Strength Conditioning. It came out on Monday to kind of finish up the program, what we do for the gym portion of training athletes.

MW: Yeah, Bull Conditioning, I mean, I got that open right now on my computer, too. That's awesome stuff. This was such a perfect fit for any strength training program to be able to add-in conditioning, especially these circuits at the end of the a workout or something. I mean, people really can't stand just running on a treadmill or going for walks or elliptical machines and all the overuse injuries and just the boredom and the results it doesn't make. Checking out these circuits and things you've put together, I love how the conditioning...it combines the resistance with the cardio into these circuits. It's great stuff. I mean, I think on the page where you put it up, you're saying you can

do these workouts in like 15-20 minutes. That can be the workout itself or you can do it at the end of something else you're already doing.

JH: Exactly. I appreciate the kind words. Most people are on different programs. I like to try different programs. I go through one for a while, try out different programs. They're all excellent programs and this is kind of what puts the icing on the cake. This is a plug-in that can go with any of those programs and it's just these complexes that are extremely efficient. They say 15-20 minutes. I overestimate. I just didn't want anyone mad. Oh, this takes me 15 whole minutes. It can even be less than that. I tested it on myself for a couple of months without changing anything, I just started adding these complexes. My strength gains were still going up and I actually lost about 13 pounds, 13-14 pounds and I wasn't even really trying to, from adding them. It took me about 10-12 minutes at the end of my workouts.

MW: Plus, you can go through them, I mean, if you wanted this to be the whole workout, you can piece these together yourself and you can go through the circuit a bunch of rounds or do less rounds, whatever you want to do.

JH: Yeah, add a conditioning day into your program, take two of these, work them together. You can go full body, upper/lower. The program is separated into upper/lower, full body conditioning so you can kind of pick what you want right out of the program.

MW: Right, like if you've got a lower body power day or something, you could throw in the lower body conditioning at the end of it if you're trying to do like body parts split stuff or anything like that. I mean, it really looks like it could fit with anything.

JH: Yeah, exactly.

MW: I get confused sometimes with the words like, you hear people say cardio, then strength coaches hate saying cardio and stuff. What's the difference between cardio and conditioning? Can you explain that for us?

JH: Yeah, sure. The cardio pulmonary system is basically how much oxygen you get into your lungs and how efficiently your heart can pump it, which might mean it could be running at a lower rate, getting the blood more efficiently out to your muscles. The reason why strength coaches don't like it...I could do without the term, it seems to categorize people who like to do more running. They say running is cardio, your long distance gets the moniker of cardio, so people are starting to not like the term as much.

Well, conditioning, it's aerobic and anaerobic, especially the Bull Strength Conditioning program, where it's not only working on your oxygen up-take, getting into muscle, it's also how long your muscles can endurance a load. So, a lot of these

complexes do involved some weighted movements, even if it's just your body weight in a greater way than just running.

So, it's the anaerobic/aerobic part, adding a load to your body, conditioning your muscles to withstand that kind of pressure. Because, most sports, like I said I train athletes, you're going to have some sort of pressure against you, whether you're a basketball player, whether you're a football player firing into someone else at the line. You're going to have some sort of manual resistance and your body has to be able to get the oxygen to your muscles and you have to be able to overcome that resistance and press against it under stress.

MW: Yeah, exactly. Take an MMA fighter for example, that goes and jogs five miles and they think they're in great cardio shape. And then, all of a sudden when they're in the ring tugging and pulling and pushing and they're dead in a matter of seconds just because they're not in the right kind of conditioning state. Definitely training with the resistance, I mean, it's great for your muscles.

Elliott and I talk a lot about how we think that reconfigures the muscle, making it stronger, bigger and it makes it more resistant to fatigue. So, this is awesome.

JH: Right, like you said, I tried that program out in my own program and I actually had strength gains during the conditioning when I was introducing the conditioning phases to it. It's just like you're saying, you get bigger, you get stronger, you get more efficient at your different lifts.

MW: Plus, obviously you're burning calories, working your lungs. So, it's got to be great for fat burning, too. Right?

JH: Exactly, absolutely. I believe on Alwyn Cosgrove's site they did a study for I believe Dayton University, I'm going to have to double check that, where they did a study of all the different styles of cardio and which ones are most efficient at fat burning. It basically came down to dumbbell complexes or barbell complexes, were the most efficient in regards to the limited time you have to spend doing it and the amount of fat it will burn.

MW: It only makes sense. You're adding resistance as you're doing basically cardio. You're going to burn more calories and it's going to take you less time with more resistance.

JH: And you're feeling that time. You're going to be fatigued. It's not an easy 10 minutes. It's not like you're going to pretend you're on a stroll.

MW: What do you think of those trainers that tell you to stay in the...you've seen it on the machines where it says the "fat burning zone" where you're supposed to be able to

hold a conversation without getting out of breathe and just stay in that zone for like 40 minutes and you'll burn the most fat. I mean, how can they teach that stuff?

JH: They must have learned that in marketing school so people buy into it. But, it's not...they didn't learn that from looking in the mirror, that's for sure.

MW: Right. So, why do you think people hate regular cardio compared to the conditioning? We talked a little bit about it.

JH: Yeah, you mentioned it at the beginning. People get bored from doing regular cardio. That popular picture online of that person running on a treadmill, it looks like a gerbil wheel. I've seen that on a bunch of different websites. You just feel like you're stuck in this monotonous, slow paced environment. And even for people who run and don't mind that, if you want to get a strength program done at the same time, you're going to have to give up two, three of your days to do just that conditioning. So, it's not very efficient. People get bored with it.

MW: Just the time, too.

JH: Yeah, the time restraints. I mean, I don't go to the gym and get in the fat burning zone on the elliptical for 50 minutes and then lift weights for an hour. That's two hours out of your evening. You get out of work at five, then you get home at seven, eat dinner and hang out with the wife for maybe an hour. It's just not... I mean, strength and conditioning's part of your life, it's not just out on this island all by itself. So, the biggest problem people make is they just put such an over-emphasis on jogging or these things that they have learned somewhere that they think is going to burn fat for them. It just doesn't work out.

MW: Yeah, I felt like I was in really good shape in college when we did a lot of conditioning and stuff like that. Then after college, I kind of got stuck in that same rut it seems a lot of people do where you've got your weight training followed by 30 to 45 minutes of cardio. And the workouts just take forever and you have a full time job and you got to get home to your family and get up and do it all again the next day. It's just not practical.

JH: Yeah, you hit the nail right on the head with that one, Mike.

MW: You talk about the three biggest conditioning mistakes on the webpage you have over at HybridConditioning.com. What are those three biggest mistakes you think most people make?

JH: Well, the one we mentioned, you have that slow and steady. It just takes too long and it doesn't work out well. But, I'm not going to talk about that much because we just did. Probably the biggest mistake is too much, too fast where people go online with

these forums and someone will post some crazy conditioning workout that's like impossible to do. They'll post the times and say to try to beat this. These people go and try it and these people can't even do a body weight squat. But, in that program is 225 for 20 squats or something like that. People just try to jump right into these advanced programs. You're going to quit because you're not going to be able to do it and you'll feel crappy about yourself. It just doesn't make any sense and you're not going to actually burn any fat because you won't be able to do the exercises.

So, if you do too much, too fast, it's a big one I see now online, coupled with core exercise selection where people tend to pick inefficient ways to try to burn fat, talking about the elliptical, just straight jogging. It doesn't make sense for me.

MW: Do you think the main reason a lot of people are doing conditioning or cardio is to lose fat just to look better?

JH: I think so, because the general fitness people, the main goal is to lose fat, not to necessarily be able to run for 7 miles. They want to look good when they look into the mirror. That's a good point and I'm glad you brought that up. Yeah, it's mostly to look good, feel good, not necessarily for the distance running benefits that a lot of people are trying to do their conditioning with.

MW: Right, I mean, it just sounds perfect. Whether you're playing sports and you want to get in shape for your sport, whether you want to tone your muscles or burn fat, this is a quick way to do it all at once.

JH: Yeah, this kind of comes from my days of being an offensive lineman where the style of conditioning we did was running, and that sucked, especially for a guy who was 320 pounds and making me run 100 yard sprints.

MW: You know what else sucked? Nobody else could stop running until all the linemen finished.

JH: Yeah, exactly. It's good for no one. The whole team suffered. If you have slow linemen then you condition like crazy, these long distance runs. And then in a game, you have what? Bursts of four feet you need to push somebody? It doesn't make sense.

MW: You made them do conditioning on like the bags and stuff or actually pushing people, doing things like that.

JH: Exactly. So, the Bull Conditioning came out of not every athlete is going to be able to run, and actually very few people are going to be distance running. So, this is high intensity, you can alter the work to rest ratio to fit the needs of your sport or the maximum results you want for general fitness. So, this is not a running based program.

Lots of complexes do mention some running activities in there, I've included them. It's a great activity, but there's more than that and hopefully this will open some people's eyes to those kind of complexes.

MW: Yeah. Now, do you think by doing this, it's not necessarily going to make you be able to run long distance or anything like that, is it?

JH: No. There is slight carryover between running long distance and the conditioning, and a small carryover between being able to do this and to be able to run long distances. But, it's not going to make you a marathon runner, that's for sure.

MW: Right. I've been doing a lot of these kinds of complexes and kettle bell workouts and doing a lot of resistance cardio training, but I really haven't tried to run a few miles in a while. I'm not sure how that would go now. I'm wondering about the carryover, but I'm starting to doubt whether that's even good for you to even be doing that.

JH: Right. The only scientific study I have, and by scientific I mean not scientific. I had to take my car to the garage the other day and it's like a $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile from my house. I had to drop it off there and walk home. It was so cool that I decided to jog home. Not to toot my own horn, I was hauling ass pretty good on the way home. It was freezing. Maybe that's the placebo effect or something, but I didn't get gassed. I was able to make the $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile and I haven't run a distance in a long time.

MW: What's the temperature up there right now?

JH: Right now...it got real cold this week. It was probably down to maybe 10 degrees or so, 10 or 20. What's the temperature down there.

MW: You don't want to know.

JH: I know. I was about to hate you a little bit.

MW: You have better weather in the summers, though. That's when it's like over 100 down here.

JH: Yeah, I couldn't do that. I'm a sweater.

MW: Yeah, can you do these workouts outdoors and stuff or are they mostly indoor gym type workouts for the Bull Conditioning?

HJ: Well, I've been getting some questions about that in emails. There's actually a little bit of both. I would say the majority of the complexes do come from either using dumbbells, barbells or body weight. So, you can do those in your house with your body weight or at the gym with barbell/dumbbell. There are a few in there like the rundown, some sled dragging variations that you can do outdoors as well, but it's certainly not

necessary. It kind of gives you a choice, wherever you got, you can find something to fit this program.

MW: It's all varying kinds of equipment. There's a lot of stuff you can do with your body weight, but then there's some stuff you'll need a couple of pieces of equipment for. But, there's a ton of variety in here.

JH: Yeah, exactly.

MW: Things can definitely be modified, too. Do you have any grip stuff in the book? I know you're big into grip training, too. That's not really part of conditioning though.

JH: Yeah. With conditioning, I didn't really include much grip conditioning in this one. The original Bull Strength manual is like 30 pages of grip exercises, or something like that. But, the conditioning manual doesn't for the simple reason that the time we have to train grip, we usually go for max, just crushing strength. You really need grip endurance to do long term kettle bell swings or flips. You could get some grip endurance.

MW: Right. Yeah, I spent a whole hour talking with Smitty one time just about grip stuff.

JH: Yeah, he's got those Popeye forearms.

MW: Yeah. How did you get into grip so much? Did you like it from working with your dad and stuff, or when did you start getting into grip training?

JH: Well, work with my dad certainly played a role in it. I wouldn't call myself a grip training expert on the level of Jed and Smitty out there at the Diesel Crew. I got into it because not necessarily for the sake of grip. I got into it because I identified a weakness that a lot of athletes have and it's that they have weak hands.

So, it wasn't necessarily that I wanted to do grip, I wanted to fix athletes who are weak. Their weakness was hands. They kind of hold onto people, they couldn't push people around, they couldn't grab a rebound, they couldn't snap a good pitch-off because they're just...they're trying to throw with a noodle for a wrist and a hand.

MW: Right, so the wrist is part of the grip?

JH: Yes, absolutely. When you close your hand, you feel those muscles in your wrist go in and out, when you extend your fingers, your extensors, you feel it. So, it's all from the elbow included down to the finger tips.

MW: Is that one of the weakest links, or it depends on the person?

JH: It depends on the person. But, it's usually grip and just for a starting point, this is what I'd look at if they're good. It's usually grip and it's usually actually core strength, surprising enough. People love to do their crunches, it's not what you can use in a sport or for your real world old man strength health.

MW: So, if you're doing a max effort dead lift and you don't drop the bar, but something else, you don't get it at the top for the lockout or something, then your grip might be...you might have some other areas to work on instead?

JH: Yes, absolutely.

MW: Do you have any favorite grip exercises you like to do?

JH: Well, man, I love a good grip exercise. We do the plate pinches... Oh, favorite grip exercise is probably card tearing.

MW: Eww.

JH: We got a stack of cards in the gym. Jed Johnson out of the Diesel Crew told me how to tear a deck of cards. He's like you know, start with a half deck and work up. Of course, we started out with a whole deck, it took us like 15 minutes to try to get through it, our pinkies hurt and stuff. But, actually, we got down to ten decks of cards. Maybe once a month I'll break that one out and it's not just a feat of strength, it's a serious exercise.

MW: You've got to break that out every time you go to a party or go to a football game with your friends, anytime people haven't seen you do that, you got to whip that out.

JH: Yeah, in the class with my students.

MW: Right.

JH: I carry around a deck of cards in my pockets just in case someone sasses me, just rip them in half.

MW: Yeah, you don't even have to scare people. You just take a deck of cards out and rip it in front of them.

JH: Yeah, you remember that old game 52 Card Pick-up? One hundred and four card pick-up, boom.

MW: That's crazy. You took a long time learning how to do it? Is there a lot of technique or is it really just getting your hands strong?

JH: Well, there's a little bit of technique. The only grip I use is the S-hook. You kind of put your hands like an 'S', squeeze really hard and then twist. If you're strong enough, they rip.

MW: Okay. How do you practice, just by ripping less cards?

JH: Yeah, that's what they say, rip less cards. Like I said, we just went full deck and went for it, and tried a full deck again and again until finally we were able to rip a full deck. I didn't feel like buying more decks of cards. It was running up the bill after a while.

MW: That's cool. People are just obsessed with grip when it comes to like athletes and strength competitors and stuff. I was over at this power lifting meet this weekend called the Raw Unity Meet, over in Tampa. I don't know if you know you APT Pro Gear, but he's got a lot of different grip things and stuff like that. I was hanging out behind his booth. Every single person that walks by the booth picks up those heavy grip things and wants to see what they can close. There was this one huge one that nobody could close. He offered anybody who closes it like \$1,000 cash. I'm like, "How many people have closed it?" He's like, "Nobody's ever closed that."

JH: And the heavy grippers compared to what you buy at like Wal-Mart,... The National Grip Challenge, whatever Jed and Smitty put on this last year, I think Andrew ended up winning it. These are crazy feats of strength. They're picking up inch dumbbells, pushing them around, tearing decks of cards. The guys who are into it are really into it and there's grip competitions popping up around.

MW: Yeah, that's cool. I haven't gotten into it that much. I like it, but I didn't know about the competitions and things like that.

JH: Yeah, I was talking to Jed the other day. They're actually having a grip contest at the Arnold this year. I think Mark Henry's in it.

MW: So, that's right up there with arm wrestling and everything else.

JH: Yeah, they're getting into it. Like I said, I don't want to categorize myself as a grip guy, I'm probably more like you where it's just part of a program. My dead lift sucks, I needed to get stronger hands and I just started picking up some exercises I really enjoy. So, it's just part of my strength program.

MW: Do you keep track of PR's as far as one rep maxes in different exercises, or do you go more for reps and things?

JH: We do them both. We do them both. It's a big gym. Everyone tried to compete against it. It's pretty much 225 for reps, which I know that the NFL combine takes a lot

of hits because it's not necessarily an indicator of athleticism. But, a lot of the people at the gym can do 225. So, that's kind of our...about eight guys get into it now.

MW: What's the record at the gym? Do you keep track up on a board and stuff?

JH: Yeah, the rep at the gym is 27 right now.

MW: Nice.

JH: I have the record at 27. My brother at 26. I have a high school junior that just hit 22 last week, and a high school freshman that's hit 17. So, it won't be too long before those kids crush me.

MW: Well, that means you're being a good coach if they do.

JH: Yeah. I need to listen to my own advise, like you said, start getting strong like those guys.

MW: So, you just had a baby, right? Congratulations!

JH: Oh, thank you very much. Yeah, he's about five weeks old now. It's flying by.

MW: Oh, wow! You've got a lot going on lately.

JH: Yeah, I forgot to include baby in how crazy my Monday was.

MW: Yeah. Is that your first kid?

JH: Yeah, our first child. My wife did not want to know what I was, it was a surprise. We had a boy. Not that I was hoping for a boy, but I was. So, we got Logan here now. He's upstairs with my wife. He's being pretty good right now, which is good, so I can get on this call.

MW: That's really cool. So, what's next? Taking care of the baby? Open the gym? Do you have any other projects coming on? What are you doing the rest of this year?

JH: Well, for the next six months I'll have the Bull Strength Conditioning membership site where I'll send a lot of videos to people who got the up-sell, joined the membership site which is a \$17 a month. I send them out a conditioning video, so I've been making a lot of videos for that. That's my big project.

Bull Conditioning, it took me about a year to make. And people don't think it takes that much work to go into it and process it and test it. I mean, it takes a ton of time. I'm going to hopefully just build the gym for a while, take a break from the online manuals and stuff like that and concentrate on my clients, get back into that in about six months.

MW: Well, it sounds like a plan. Good luck with everything and who knows where this interview's going to wind up. So, everybody definitely go check out our sites. We've got LeanHybridMuscle.com. Your main site is Synergy-Athletics.com, right?

JH: Yeah, I've got that damn hyphen in there. On the other site, there's not even anything there, but I can't get the domain. So, Synergy-Athletics.com is where I've been at for a few years now.

MW: Cool, and definitely check out Joe's new book [Bull Strength Conditioning](#). You can find that at HybridConditioning.com. So, thanks a lot for being on the call tonight, Joe. It was great talking to you.

JH: It was great talking to you, too. Thank you very much. I really appreciate it.

MW: All right, thanks Joe. I'll talk to you soon.

JH: All right, take care guys.

Joe Hashey's [Bull Strength Conditioning](#)

Get ready for a complete conditioning program that is easy to understand and even easier to implement!

Ready to look in the mirror and see those lean muscles smiling back? Bull Strength Conditioning, with complete DONE FOR YOU workouts, will end your search for the most effective program!

10-15 Minutes Each Workout Can CHANGE YOUR PHYSIQUE!

These workouts are plugins. Replace these resistance cardio circuits with the boring cardio you are currently doing at the end of your workouts.

Visit [Bull Strength Conditioning](#) to put a permanent end to never ending cardio sessions that aren't burning the fat they should.

