



## WEEKLY MUSCLE BUILDING EXPERT *Interview Series*



### **Luke Allison Interviews Matt Wichlinski**

LA: This is Luke Allison with CriticalBench.com and I'm here with Matt Wichlinski. Matt, how are you?

MW: Fantastic, how are you doing today?

LA: Doing good, glad to run you down and find a little bit of time. Take a second and give some of the listeners an idea about your background, what you do and sort of what you do as an athlete.

MW: Well, first of all thanks for having me on and asking me some questions. Basically, my background, as a kid I was always running around, climbing trees and jumping off of dumpsters and hoping to God I don't land on my head, stuff like that. So, I got into wrestling and gymnastics when I was younger, and that taught me a very good base of how to use my body. And then I proceeded with track and field and wrestling and stuck with football for about 17 years.

I was an All American running back in college and after that I proceeded to play in Europe for one of the NFL European affiliate leagues in Finland, and that was one heck of an experience playing over there, some big strong guys over there, but the skill level was pretty low. But, those guys sure knew how to get strong and they taught me a lesson over there, that's for sure.

LA: So, a little bit of everything, sort of a style that's maybe not as familiar as what most people would do where they find one sport and they sort of stick to it until they burnout or get too injured to play anymore.

MW: I'm sorry, my microphone's kind of breaking up a little bit. I'm trying to hear everything you're saying. I apologize.

LA: No problem. I was just mentioning that perhaps your background is a little bit different than some of the people listening where you participated in quite a few different sports where it seems really popular these days for people to lock-in on one or two sports and play until they get injured or so burned-out.

MW: You know, I mean, I have quit a few friends. They just did one thing and they stuck with it. You get pretty good playing baseball, for example, or even tennis, and it could be anything. Football, obviously there tends to be a risk factor for injury, as far as people believe, because of the hitting and the intensity factor.

But, I mean, you have just as much chance to get injured walking across the street. We've all heard these sort of things. But, it's just always been my nature to do different things, always learn a new skill.

I don't care if it was kayaking, playing tennis... And tennis and football don't really go hand-in-hand. But, you know, I like to get in there and do that. That was how I got my cardio. You never saw me on an elliptical machine or something like that, being stuck. I would much rather watch a chicken roast for 20 minutes than be bound to something like that. And that's typical bodybuilding prescription, sit on a treadmill or bike and put the headphones on and read your book for 20 minutes while you just burn it out for a little while.

I just found a way to just entertain myself and go for a hike or a mountain run or something like that when I was living in Pennsylvania, and just always tried to change things up. And learning how to use my body as a youngster, wrestling and gymnastics and stuff like that, it just...I was just never afraid to get out there and just do stuff and start flipping and moving around.

So, I still maintain that athletic base. I'm in my 30's now. I just turned 32 this weekend. That doesn't make a guy feel awesome, but you know, you're only as young

or as old as you feel. I still feel great. I can still run up trees and do back flips and do these things that some kids can't do when they're teenagers. So, as long as I can keep these things up, one day at a time, I'm feeling good.

That's one of the things that I preach to my younger athletes. Just learn as many things as possible, but you really want to get good at one thing at a time. And not try to just learn everything at the same time. Things get sloppy, you might not really get that good at anything. If you play a sport, that is your priority, of course, but definitely get out there and keep learning and growing and getting more experience by learning new techniques and new adventures through various sports.

I think that's going to help your overall background and your overall potential in the long run, if you're developing from a junior high through high school and into college.

LA: Certainly. I can't argue with that at all. One of the things I really noticed, I ran across your videos on YouTube and I was basically amazed at the sort of diversity of the lifts you were doing, the implements you were doing, the speed and it just, it didn't really remind me of what anyone else was doing. Is that something that you sort of take joy in, in being able to do so many different things and have different attributes going at all times, basically?

MW: Absolutely. Well, a couple of years ago I came across CrossFit and that intrigued me because it was similar to things that I was already doing. I didn't find too many other things that implemented raw strength and power and agility and things like that and CrossFit preaches that.

But, I'm not diehard CrossFit guy like where I think that there's no other way out there, because I know there is and I'm always looking and searching and training for a better way. But, at the same time, I'm surely not going to get away from the basics. I'm always preaching and teaching just basic squats. Get your back squat right, dial it in and do it the right way, your dead lifts, your heavy pressing and your pulling. Those are the staples.

So, people see some of my YouTube videos and they contact me, how do you do this? They want to start...I don't know, like swinging the Bulgarian bags around and whatever, like all kinds of different stuff, and they can't really do a back squat the right way. And if you're not... You've got to walk before you run and I tell people this stuff. I don't have any clichés. But, do the basics first. Get your bones, your muscles, your connective tissue strong before you go being a knucklehead, being an idiot like myself where it seems very potentially dangerous. But, it's just kind of out there for show and it gets some attention.

I guess it kind of worked. You called me, so... That was kind of the idea. But, if people don't understand to stick with the basics first, then they're kind of missing the boat.

LA: And that's one of the things that's not exactly apparent. Maybe that's sort of the age we live in with the internet and instant gratification and things like that, is people want to do the things that they like, the few little things that they like and they don't want to have to learn multi joint, really hard things that have to be corrected on, like the squat and things like that. Is that something where they need to hear it from you if they contact you and say, "That's not really what you should be doing right now."

MW: Yeah, I mean, absolutely. If you're trying to do certain things that are out of your league, it's just going to end up bad. So, take note of where you're at in your training and if you've been training for a couple of months, you need to train like a beginner or you're not going to advance if you're trying to train like an intermediate or an advanced level athlete.

I've had younger athletes that they want to train with their older brothers who might be four or five years older than them, and they've been training for that much longer. So, they're trying to do these new techniques and things like that and it just doesn't work. You've got to train like a beginner. You've got to go through 1<sup>st</sup> grade and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade and work your way up before you start training on an advanced level.

So, that's something that I've got to bring these younger kids that are coming to me or even some people that call me. It's hard when you're talking on the phone or messages on YouTube or FaceBook or something like that, because I have no idea what these peoples backgrounds are and what they're trying to accomplish sometimes, and what they know how to do. If they... "Well, yeah, I squat this." But, is it a quarter squat? Is it a full depth squat? So, numbers get inflated and things like that and they want to keep moving forward, but moving forward too fast isn't always going to be your best bet. Make sure that you're on the level of where you're supposed to be.

LA: One thing I've become sort of aware of recently is a movement towards training athletes whether they're teammates or from different sports, but at similar levels together in small groups and sort o of through the same workout basically. Is that something that you find useful or maybe not? Talk a little bit about that.

MW: It's something that I do find useful, like it might not be ideal for everybody. I think what is ideal for me is, I like to get people on a one-on-one basis for one to three sessions or so, depending on their skill level and their background. And I like to spend time with the individual privately to make sure that the basic things are intact and I get the learning out of the way and drill it into their skull, deep into their brain so when I can give them cues, they know exactly what I'm talking about as far as their back

positioning, their foot positioning. I see them get down to the bottom of their squat, but their back's rounding out, their heels are coming up.

If I do that immediately in a group environment, and they're all trying to go too far too fast, and they're focused on each other as opposed to what they're doing themselves. So, I like to get one or two sessions alone first. It's not always perfect and doesn't have to be that way.

But, once I get beyond that, then I do really like the group setting. The intensity factor gets up, everyone pretty much knows their cues. I can watch almost guard like several kids at a time, and have a couple people resting, a couple of people working, and the rotations, they flow smoothly.

When it stays on a one-on-one basis, the intensity is lost, the workouts, the motivation. I think there's going to be some benefits, some pros and cons, on both sides of the fence. But, if I have it my way, I would like to spend a little bit of private time with each individual first, for an hour or two, I then move them into a group with like-minded people. That's one thing that CrossFit preaches total scalability. So, you can have the soccer mom working out with the Navy Seal and it works fabulous for some people.

It just doesn't, you know, I don't know if it's going to work ideally in my environment. We could make it work, but I prefer... Like, I just had a group of high school kids, all baseball players, play on the same team, and that...to me, that's ideal. But, you're not always going to have that. You can't always work in the ideal environment. You take the best with what you've got.

But, you keep the cost a little lower, for one. I work in small groups, keep the intensity factor higher, the atmosphere stays pumped up, the kids really like it, and I think they get a killer workout with things that are benefiting them, and they all have the same goals. They can work towards it.

If you have too many different demographics in the same training environment, you know, there's bound to be different goals. So, CrossFit is this ingenious thing where everyone's trying to attain everything at the same time. So, it doesn't matter what the workout is, it's going to be ideal for everybody.

But, in reality, if you are an athlete, a specialized athlete, baseball, basketball, football, you don't need every single thing. Football doesn't need a 5K or 10K run. I highly recommend against a 10K run for football players. But, you need five to ten seconds of the most explosive burst of power that you could have, and then rest for 30 or 45 seconds and you're going to go hard for 10 sets of that and you're going to back off for a couple of minutes and get a good, solid rest and then come back at it again.

That type of training is hard to find in a larger scale group, larger demographics where everyone is trying to maximize their cardio respiratory endurance and their stamina as well as their power. A football lineman doesn't need the same kind of endurance that a triathlon athlete needs. So, depending on what the athlete's needs are, if you're specialized in a sport, I like to get them into that. But, I do have just some general fitness enthusiasts that come in and CrossFit is something I like to use with them. But, it's not something I like to use for my football players or a few other athletes.

You can use aspects of that fitness regime. I am talking about CrossFit. I am a CrossFit trainer and I do like it, I highly recommend it, but I just don't think it's ideal for everybody all the time.

LA: The line where it seems to sort of breakdown on whether CrossFit is good or bad is people seem really unfamiliar with what they want to do, not only goals, but sort of developing the attributes that they would need for those goals. And so, like you were talking about, you have linemen, maybe they don't need to be in CrossFit. But then, the person that would benefit from CrossFit, maybe doesn't want to spend the time learning and then sort of working on mobility and flexibility and things like that. So, you have this sort of educational curve. Do you have that where you have different sort of programming that you have for people that aren't really even sure what they want really?

MW: Well, there's...when they come in, they're going to do some very basic moves and you're going to have some athletes that are just incredibly athletic, and they're just insane. And then you've got other guys that can barely touch their nose if they close their eyes. So, their coordination factor is going to be a little bit different.

So, I have to keep their programming just extremely basic and different guys, they could benefit with Olympic lifting or different implements. I have guys that just can't learn how to really swing a kettlebell right away. Maybe that's something on my part, not being able to teach them the right way. But, some people, you know, you just have to find what cues work for the right person. There's not one way to teach everybody, but there's several ways to teach each individual person.

So, I make the assessment on the individual and we slowly work from there. We're going to build up to greater mobility and range of motion through their joints. I think that's good for anybody. But, as far as strength and power development, if they can't do an Olympic lift, they're just going to stay with like weighted box jumps and then pushing the sled real hard, because these movements are extremely simple, but not necessarily easy.

Whereas, some people could consider a snatch or a clean jerk extremely technical, but I don't think it has to be that technical either. But, I guess that's all on a

relational curve compared to other things. If you look at some gymnastics type movements, a snatch seems relatively easy compared to like certain planches and iron crosses and things like that, as far as a difficulty scale.

But, I make the assessment with the individual and if they are able to perform particular movements, I'm going to implement them and I'm going to get these guys to learn as much as possible and gain as much effectiveness in their program as possible. But, if they can't do certain things, they're just going to stick to some very basic moves and get really good at them, and slowly and surely, start implementing new movement patterns and new routines into their program.

LA: You spoke a little bit about specializing for sport or specializing for maybe your fitness level. Talk a little bit about sort of what it means to actually be specializing specifically for one sport, whether it's football or wrestling or gymnastics or whatever and sort of how you can do certain things, but as a result of that, you're just not going to be able to do other things based on the way you're spending your time and the sort of quality that you're developing muscularly and then what you're teaching your body to do.

MW: Okay. Well, one thing that I've found, I see some people do is... Like, say for baseball players or a golfer, they'll put like a 30 pound golf club or some kind of implement and try to get people to swing a super heavy golf club to try to strengthen their torso or whatever, or even a basketball player trying to shoot a heavier basketball than however many ounces a basketball weighs to try to strengthen those joints. But, I think it's going to mess up the motor pattern and the movement or throw off their shot because the implement isn't quite the same.

So, I don't...when I talk about specificity, I'm not trying to mimic any particular movement. So, a baseball player or a wrestler or a football player, even basketball player, can have a very, very similar program, but the difference is going to be keyed in the rest periods and duration of sets. So, reps, sets and rest period, and that has a huge impact on what their capacity is.

A couple of heavy sets of deads versus a little bit lighter, a couple extra reps and that makes all the difference between...especially with kettlebell work, just changing up a little bit, 30 seconds on, 30 seconds off, and pending on if you're a grappler or a lineman, you can still do swings, but just changing up the weight and the temp, the reps and set scheme. That's what I talk about in specificity.

You don't have the change the actual exercise. As long as it's functional movement, multi joint compound movements, it's going to benefit. You're moving your hips, you're working in an explosive fashion, you're going to be able to kick harder if you're a kickboxer. You're going to be able to attack faster if you're a grappler. You're

going to be able to get out of the hole, if you're a lineman, and explode right through the tackle or the running back. The basketball player's going to be able to jump higher.

So, these things, the movements stay pretty similar, but it's the implementation as far as reps and sets and rest periods, is my biggest differentiation for different athletes, different sports.

LA: As you begin to sort of move those different parts around, which I guess is basically what programming breaks down to, what sort of influences do you draw on? Where do you go if you have questions? Things like that? What really interests you when you put all these pieces together?

MW: Like where do I go as far as...?

LA: Yeah, do you read articles, do you watch DVDs, do you go to seminars?

MW: Okay, yeah. Whenever I have a seminar or some clinic that I can go to in my area or wherever I can manage to get to, I love doing that, hands-on experience. As a matter of fact, this weekend, coming up, September 6<sup>th</sup>, I'm going to see Chris Wilkes at an Olympic lifting clinic out in Chesapeake, Virginia. I don't think it's at his particular gym, but it's in his area. I saw him last year and that day, my PR snatch and clean and jerk went up approximately 10 to 12 percent by seeing someone who's better than I am, a specialist at what he does.

And I spend some time really focusing on one or two major goals at a time. Get your seminars. When I took my USA Weight Lifting Sports Performance coach, I went out to Ohio to do that. You've got to take the time to get out. If it's important to you, you make the drive, you take the flight, invest the money, because it's going to come back to you tenfold, a hundred fold, over and over again, if it's something that you're planning on investing a lifetime in. Or, even a season in, whatever. A couple of hundred bucks, take a trip and make sure you're going to reputable sources.

I can't tell you how many, I think almost, quack like CPT, Certified Personal Trainer, courses there are. There are certifications everywhere. Some people are just good, some people aren't. You know, you have the gold standards like your National Strength and Conditioning Association if you want to become a certified trainer or certified sports conditioning specialist. So, they're great.

Yes, you have to read the books. As far as nutrition goes, I mean, it's hard to say. You're looking at millions of books out there, and every one of them has a different fountain of knowledge that they're pulling from. You've got your high carb diet, your low fat diet, your high protein. They're all over the place and there's so little road to really know where to follow.



But, you do the background and you've got to find out what works best for you. So, there's time under the bar. It's going to be the most important thing. I don't care how many books you've read. If you're not spending your time doing the do, getting sweaty in the gym, you're not going to learn anything.

I don't know how many pilots became a pilot just by reading the books. They've got to fly the damn plane. So, you get under the bar and you start lifting it and you're going to learn. Okay, I relax my back. I breath...I exhaled at the bottom of my squat. That didn't really work out so well. I can't get my PR up because I'm rounding out and now I've got like a pulled muscle in my back, whatever, because I did the wrong thing. You've got to learn, but obviously a good coach is going to shorten that learning curve and tell you the right things to do.

But, yeah, it's articles. Zach Evanish is a great guy. He's always been very passionate, helping me out along the way. Ross Training, that's a great site, great forum to go to. I mean, CrossFit, Catalyst Athletics. If you're looking to get better at one particular thing, you've got to learn who's the best Olympic lifters out there, the best coaches.

Mike Bergner, a great coach. Chris Wilkes is a local guy for me. But, there's always going to be some kind of clinic that you can get to. That's going to get you better at your sport. And if it's basketball or something like that, then that's what you got to do. If you want to learn more about nutrition, maybe you should take a college course or something like that.

But, at the same time, like I said, so many people are preaching different things. I've read books that say you've got to have 70% carbohydrates. Then, other diets, the carbs are very low, no grains. Don't eat any grains at all, no rice. That's going to cause hyper insulinism and you're going to get inflammation and disease, because they're preaching the same things that... If you do the same things that they're telling you to do in these college nutritional courses, that's what's going to give you inflammation and heart disease. So, how do you know what to believe? It's hard to say when you're talking about a nutrition aspect and things like that.

But, as far as training goes, I mean, you're right. I think you said it earlier. There's so many different sites out there and people want that instant gratification. There's so much information right in your face, all you've got to do is hit one keyword in your computer and you have a plethora of knowledge jumping up at you. How do you know what's reputable, what's garbage?

We find out pretty quick the people that have the lasting power. There are some big dogs out there that definitely carry the weight. You've got to just eliminate the other crap out of the way, I guess.

LA: I'm not sure if you said it, but I remember listening to someone who was probably someone from Elite Fitness or maybe Critical Bench, I forget exactly who, that said one of the worst things every for strength training was the internet, just the advent of the internet and sort of what that's done to the proliferation of information. It's just been unbelievable. I don't know if you have a story about the internet, maybe good or bad, but it's certainly changed almost everything, it feels like.

MW: Sure, absolutely. Yeah, and Elite Fitness training, that's definitely a site that I follow regularly, and some of the strongest guys on the planet come in. You've got Louie Simmons and Super Training out in San Francisco. But, yeah, I mean, these guys are absolutely right. It's so easy to access the information, but there's just so much conflicting information as well. Who knows what's right? But, it seems like as soon as someone writes something down, they're automatically an expert and that's not always the case, unfortunately.

LA: Very true. One of the things that I think is interesting, which is why I really wanted to talk to you was, I know that you opened up your gym. You've opened up your own place and sort of having...I would assume sort of personal feelings about sort of the way you train athletes and do things as you explained, is there a way that you can sort of bring it all together in terms of maybe people are not getting instruction like they used to. I don't remember being taught how to lift weights, say in high school. I sort of don't know where people would be learning that now, and maybe they need to come to Strength Shop or somewhere comparable. Does that seem to make sense with your experience and the people you see coming into your gym?

MW: Well, as far as my background goes, kind of through high school I was in a situation where one of the assistant coaches sat in the corner and read a magazine. We had a basic template that we were supposed to follow, but were never really taught. I was taught by the guys who were a year or two ahead of me, and I remember doing things like lateral arm raises and front raises and things like that. I'd get on the leg press and leg extensions. No one really taught me how to squat. I figured it out after a while, but no one really told me how to do it.

So, my learning curve was pretty long. So, I'm trying to eliminate that learning curve and get these kids doing things right before they develop terrible habits or hopefully get them starting to do something, because some of them don't do anything. Maybe they play their sport, or they don't play a sport at all. So, they can come in here and they can learn how to be an athlete. Some kids are just very gifted and they need very little instruction, some don't. Some aren't as gifted.

That is the idea for me. Because, I remember I got very little instruction and I know some high school programs or college programs are much better than others.

But, I just look back at where I came from and it wasn't there. It was good at the time because that's all I knew. I didn't know another way. I thought that's what it was. But, I think giving these kids that much of an advantage...are they riding the bench their junior year, or are they that close to getting to the next level, from going from riding the bench to making first team. Are you looking at going D3 or are you going to be D2 or D1 going into college? Are you going to make state or all region?

I want to take the guys to the next level. I'm not always going to get the best athletes in here, but what I want is to get the guys that have the heart and desire to want to get better. They don't have to know anything and I'm more than happy to take guys that come in here and don't have any bad habits. Because, the habits are some really hard things to break sometimes. You've got to break them all the way back down to the very beginning, and they don't want to do that. They think, 'Oh, I already get a 350 squat.' You've got a 350  $\frac{1}{4}$  squat with your hips in bad alignment. They're like dog squatting. They're tucking their hips under and things like that and everything just looks horrible watching it. It puts me in agony.

So, it's not getting stronger just for the sake of getting stronger. I want these kids to have a lifetime of knowledge. Twenty years, thirty years down the line, hopefully they're going to still be doing things in the gym or teaching somebody else and I'll be the guy that taught them how to do things the right way and they can still be healthy, safe and strong years down the road. Because, I taught them the right way and I'm just hoping that I am teaching them the right way. I mean, I just opened the Strength Shop about a month ago, but I've been training for years. Every day, every month I'm trying to get better and find a more efficient way to teach these kids.

At times, I've found myself actually having a little bit of a template, but that's not accurate. I've kicked myself in the mouth a couple of times by trying to train different people the say way. Everyone learns, and I've made my mistakes and I've learned from them, and I'm sure I'll make more. But, I'm doing the best I can to teach these guys the right way, that hopefully they have a lifetime of knowledge that they can learn from and have that base to keep growing and getting stronger that's going to benefit them in a way that helps their sport and helps their life.

LA: Now, I know that I'm jealous of the fact that you either sort of have been able to open up your gym and sort of maybe conceivably be...that's the place where you go to work until you don't want to work anymore. If someone else has a goal like that, talk a little bit about what the process was like of actually sort of deciding that that was what you wanted to do and then seeing it happen.

MW: Well, I was working at a bodybuilding style gym up the road from my present location. The people were great, everybody was nice, but I just knew it wasn't for me

because every time I brought in a client, I always felt like I was being obtrusive and intruding on someone else's territory. Like, their workouts were being invaded by the obtrusive things that I was doing, having them do like hard jumps and there would be a little more noise and a little more sweat. And the trainer next to me, who's training a little bit older woman, you know, I'm not going to have her doing box jumps or anything like that. But, she's training the way she's got to train this person.

She'd actually be sitting, I remember like certain instances like this where they'd be sitting in the leg extension machine, drinking coffee and would never even break their conversation. You do a couple of reps and you talk, and we've all seen that, we've all done it. But, that just destroyed any kind of credibility I had as far as trying to train athletes and get on bigger, stronger...just the environment. I'm saying it just from credibility. But, the environment was just detrimental to what I was trying to achieve. And trying to bring in more than one, it just amplified it that much more.

We spoke earlier about that small groups and group training. That's what I was trying to get towards, not the one-on-one and when there's nothing but machines lined up next to each other, you don't have the space to train athletically in an open environment because it's not always about how you can move a machine, it's about how you can move your body. Treat your body as the machine.

I'm not 100% against machines. I think there's a place for them. They can certainly get you strong, but because they work in such a linear fashion, one dimensional pushing or pulling motion, I think their uses are limited. So, I choose to have several different implements. One of the first things I like getting people on is the sandbags, stuff like that. So, they learn a lot of different things and that is the reason why I knew I needed to get my own place.

So, I don't have any frills here. It's about 925 square feet, got high ceilings, about 20 foot ceilings. I just drove around town, I looked for storage facilities and offices for rent and tried to find some of the cheapest ones possible that weren't too far away, as far as location. I found one that's relatively centrally located in Virginia Beach, and there's not even a bathroom in my facility, but there's one on the end of the building. So, you've got to do essentially a 50 meter sprint if you've got to do your business. But, hey, that's the way it is.

I don't have air conditioning. The doors come up, the bay door, that comes open. I got a couple of like big wind tunnel type fans, flow them on and the kids just love the environment. They bring in their music, I throw it in, they go nuts and they just love the environment. They talk about it, they go out and they tell their friends about it.

In the past couple of weeks, I have about doubled my business just because everyone's bringing in another friend. "You've got to see this. You've got to do this."

Because, they're so used to these rules and regulations that they have to follow in the facilities that they train in currently, whether it's high school or their local recreation center where you can't drop a weight, you can't make any noise. If somebody sees sweat, they are appalled and you're essentially being asked to leave.

And things like Planet Fitness, are you tell Planet Fitness, the lunk alarm? Have you guys heard this? If you make a peep, if you make any kind of noise at all, you're getting kicked out. Are you kidding me? How are you supposed to get any better at what you're doing if you don't... I'm not saying you have to scream. I don't have guys screaming on rep number one, and then they're doing a 12 rep set and at every single rep they're screaming louder and louder. That's not intensity to me. That's kind of being a jackass. But, learn how to control yourself and do what you've got to do.

Getting back to the point, opening a warehouse gym, find a location, find something that fits in your budget, and my budget was next to nothing. But, I knew if I didn't make a move I'm always going to be stuck in a place that I did not enjoy what I was doing. I couldn't get the groups in, there wasn't the space for it, because there was just too much machinery, too much equipment. So, I wanted to back off away from the equipment.

I told the owner, "Some of the machines in there," I said, "They've got to go. They're worthless." "What do you think I should do with them?" I said, "Melt them down and make manhole covers out of them and they'll be a lot more useful to society, if you turn them into manhole covers as opposed to taking space over in the corner, what they're doing right now, because it's just a complete waste of time." And the way I see it, you're spending two to three thousand dollars on some of these...I hate to call out any names, but these large exercise equipment, machinery. Pay three thousand dollars, they do one exercise. Three thousand dollars for one exercise? You can grab a kettlebell for less than \$100 or somewhere around \$100, \$200 and you have dozens of exercises. So, talk about a training economy? I mean, that's what it's all about.

So, you've got to be smart and practical about your equipment selection. Sandbags are killer. They cost next to nothing. I mean, I had a video on how to make a Bulgarian bag and that's by far and away my most popular video, something that costs next to nothing to do. That's what people like. They want to find out, how can I maximize my training or enhance it just a little bit with changing things up. It doesn't cost much money, just a little bit of creativity and I'm getting hard.

Some just don't know this. They don't know that certain things exist. They come in here like, what's this? And I'm showing them how to do things with the sandbags and they're doing a bunch of different exercises with get-ups and broad jumps and just shouldering and lunges and they thought they couldn't do these things unless they had

a particular machine that they're all waiting for in their local health club facility. You don't have to wait for that machine. Your body goes just like this, here, now hold this dumbbell, hold this kettlebell or this medicine ball or this sandbag and you do it. I've got five or ten people doing a workout where they'd all be trying to rotate on the same machine, where they're sitting down, relaxing their core, getting a fraction of the results in more time. So, here, they're getting more results in less time and they're in a really fun environment and it's something that they can go away with energized and telling their friends about.

The rent here for me is pretty cheap, like I said, 924 square feet. I don't know what you're going to find in your area, but it cost me \$460 a month. Some people are going to pay a lot more than that for that kind of space. It just depends on what kind of sacrifices you're willing to make. There's no frills here. There's nothing but sheet metal walls, brick on one side, no heating, things like that. I was willing to make those kind of sacrifices. The weather doesn't get too bad in Virginia. It gets hot in the summer and they're dealing with the heat, but it doesn't get too cold in the winter. So, I'm going to see how that works out. I may get a couple space heaters. I'll do it.

But, the comradery and the energy that gets in here when these guys are working out, I feel like they're going to follow me and do whatever I do, no matter where I go. I tell them what to do and they do it. I make sure they're doing the right thing and just the hard work and the intensity and the attitude and the culture that's being grown here. They're things that I've been yearning for, as opposed to just being like this dull, droid like mentality. Like, walking around in your local gym or facility, that's not it. That's not what it was about to me.

So, I knew to express my personality, express my training ideologies, I had to get my own place. There was just no other way. I just couldn't do it any other way besides getting into a place where I didn't have the rules and regulations. I could have started out making more money and working for somebody else, doing their hours and having them feed me clients, that I didn't want to train anyway. But now, I get to accept the people who I want, I get to accept them, I get to turn them down, not that I want to turn anybody down, but if you've got a bad attitude and you don't really have the desire to learn... Or, maybe your goal is like, I want to lose five pounds, I don't really want to work for it. I'm going to be nice and polite and I'm going to tell you that this probably isn't the right place for you. But, if I was at a different facility, you better believe I'm going to get fired by saying, "You know what? This isn't for you. take your business somewhere else."

So, I just know that this is the right thing and I had to do it. I took the step, made the plunge, put up the little bit of extra money to start, and hopefully it comes back to me many times over. It's not all about the money, I mean, you don't get into coaching to

make millions of dollars. You get into coaching because that's who you are, you're a coach and you want to help people. So, this provides me with the opportunity to do so.

LA: That last little bit reminds me of something that Elliott Hulse is very fond of saying most of the time, is that, it's not for everyone. But, I think more people are willing to even recognize it, do want something like that. They want an environment like that. So, it's good to have you on and give you a chance to sort of say your side of the story and let people know that you're out there and things like that.

We're running out of time, but tell people where to find you if they're in Virginia Beach or maybe if they're on the internet, tell them how to get a hold of you.

MW: Well, my website, I was having some problems with it on GoDaddy, but it's TheStrengthShopVB.com, and GoDaddy should get all those issues worked out any time now. But, on YouTube, my videos are located on MWich40, that's my YouTube page. I guess I should switch that to TheStrengthShop. I've been doing that for a lot longer than I've had the Strength Shop open. Email me at [TheStrengthShop@me.com](mailto:TheStrengthShop@me.com) and if you're anywhere in the Virginia Beach area, please stop on down, get yourself a little trial membership, see if you like what we do and get yourself stronger, more flexible and enjoy life a little bit more with your better attitude and increased health and fitness.

LA: Well, Matt, I appreciate the time, on a Monday, taking a few minutes to talk with us. But, it's good to hear from you. Thank you again.

MW: Thanks so much, Luke, talk to you later.

## About Matt Wichlinski

- Two-Time All-American NCAA Football Player. Played in the NFL Europe affiliate league.
- Background in Gymnastics, Wrestling, Track & Field
- NSPA Certified Personal Trainer
- Crossfit Level I Certified
- USA Weightlifting Sports Performance Coach

