

How to get stronger faster

This E book will help you to get stronger by explaining basic concepts of lifting.

RUN FASTER
LIFT STRONGER
THINK DEEPER



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Letter from the author

Run faster, Lift Stronger, Think deeper

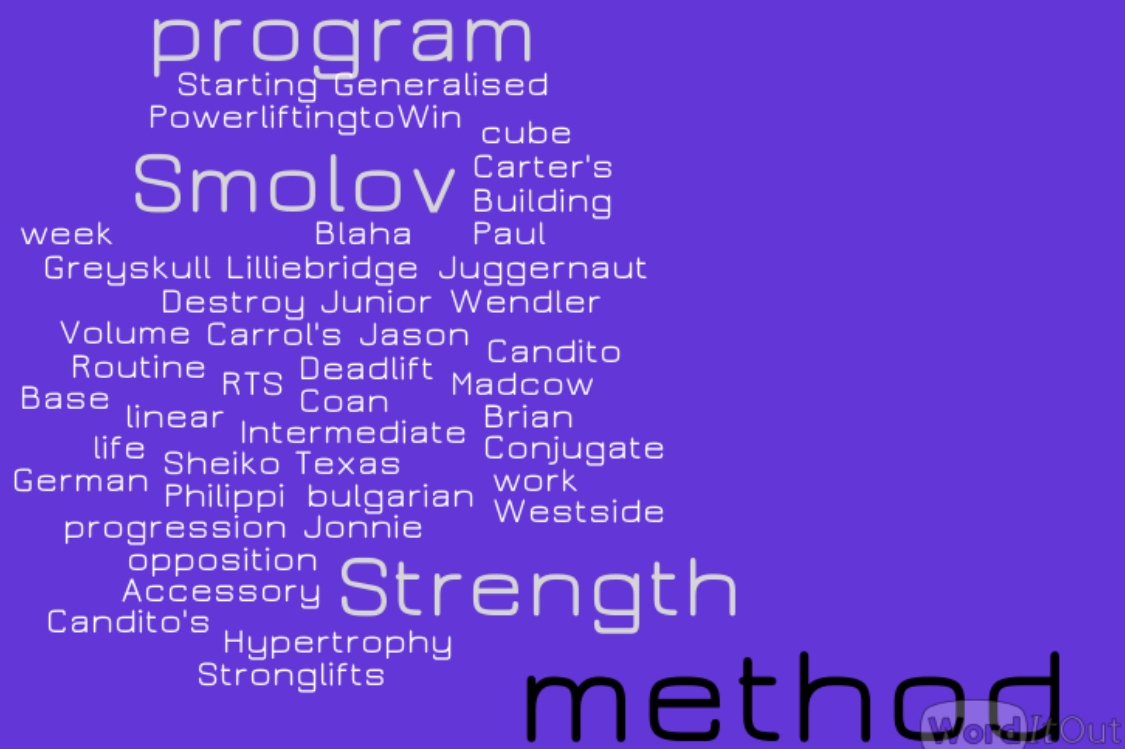
This is the trio I live by when it comes to physical activity to be the best man I can possibly be. The pursuit of the best possible version of yourself is a century old principle going back to Aristotle. Agility, strength and Intelligence will help you in every situation to be happier, more effective and efficient in achieving your personal goals. This E book will get into details on how to start to become a stronger person in the physical sense.

I started to train regularly in the middle of 2014 after I had run my first marathon to get stronger and more defined. It became a source of satisfaction where I could pursue my own goals without being dependent on the input of others. It was just me, the barbell and the weights. No other road blocks except myself. No red tape, no clients, no family disputes.



I do not claim full knowledge or that my experiences are ultimately right or wrong. I hope they help you as you downloaded this Ebook for a reason. Always consult a doctor when in doubt about what exercises to do. Apart from this stay hungry and foolish as Steve Jobs says to squeeze this orange called life to get the juice you want from it. It is up to you.

You will find basics of training for the three compound lifts which are used in powerlifting and beginner's programming in this book to get you started. You will find more information on www.marathon-crossfit.com regarding programming and how I progress in my pursuit of getting stronger.



Basic Principle #1:

**Stick
to your
program**

"A good plan violently executed today is better than a perfect plan executed next week"
- George S. Patton

The first and most important thing is to have a plan before you step into the gym. If you do not have a plan and just randomly go to the machines and free weights it will take you more time to achieve your goals and the workouts will get longer and longer without getting you anywhere.

You can spend weeks or even years to find the optimum program for yourself, but these are weeks & years lost in which you already could make progress. If it takes you longer than a weekend to pick a program, I am convinced you have to revisit your goals, as they will give clarity which program to choose over the other.

Once you have picked a program, do it until you do not get stronger anymore. A good program for you is one that you can understand in theory and execute in practice. As you most likely are a beginner keep it as simple as possible from a mathematical and execution perspective. Linear progressions and a few compound movements are your friends for the time being.



Basic Principle #2:

Leave
your ego
At home

“Your ego will literally break your back if brought into the gym”

- Pascal Landshöft

Only lift what you can lift and stick to the program and how it is written. You do not know more than the people who wrote these programs, they have been lifting longer than you. If you are in the gym for getting stronger to impress the ladies or your bros you will stop as soon as they are not impressed anymore. Maybe reconsider your basic “Why” if that is describing you correctly.

Work hard and stay humble. Deload when you fail. Count the repetitions as done, not as imagined. Clock the tonnage as lifted, not as it is supposed to be in the program. Only this way you will make progress and be able to see the shortcomings of your training or the exercises with the most impact based on the valuable data you collect. If you lie to yourself, the only person you cheat is yourself and this will keep you from getting stronger, faster.

Form comes always before gains.

The Squat

The squat is one of the core exercises in weightlifting and powerlifting. There are two variations of the squat, front squat and back squat. The back squat is the most commonly performed lift and relevant to the programs you will find out there so we will stick with it for this article to get you started the fastest. The squat can be divided in three phases, the setup, the squat and the phase where you put the bar back into rack. For all of the phases you should establish a routine which stays the same for each of your squats so that you can minimize thinking once you get to high load. Your squat should always be the same and practiced in that manner.

When you imagine that you are attacking the bar when setting up for your back squat it will help you to get the needed muscle tension in place to perform the lift. No matter if it is your warm up set, work set or other, think of it as a one rep maximum test and take it serious. This way you will get more out of every repetition and avoid injury due to messing about with the barbell or losing control midway through the lift.

Your hands should be positioned as close to your body as possible without being uncomfortable whilst keeping tension in your upper body. You want to lock that bar in close to your upper body so that there can be no movement during the lift. For me this is one thumb width from the beginning of the outer knurl, for others this can be wider depending on your physique. Remember to be symmetrical and in the middle of the bar to avoid imbalances. The knurling is your best guidance to secure symmetrical loading.



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Once your hands are in position squeeze the bar as hard as you can. Keep this tension through the entire lift. This technique is also known as white knuckling and applies to all lifts to get the most bang for the buck.

Next step is to bring your body under the bar. I personally like to think of it as sucking the bar into your back and keep it in place. You will find a natural resting place where you feel the strongest. Go with that.

Get your feet parallel under the bar and bring your hip forward to unrack the weight. This is the easiest way to unrack the bar when using a power rack. If you use a monolift station just get in position and let your spotter unrack the bar for you.

Walk three steps back to get into squatting position. The first step is to get some distance from the J-Cups on which the weight rested. The second step plants your first foot in final position. The second step brings your second foot into position to start to squat. You might not get it perfect with three steps every time, but this should be your aim. You want to have the least possible steps to get into position to save energy for the actual squat. With a monolift station you have the luxury of not having to walk out to squat.

Your feet should point slightly outwards at this stage. A good way to determine how far they should point outwards is to squeeze your butt cheeks together whilst standing feet shoulder width apart without any weight on your shoulders. Your feet will travel outwards. Where they end up is the position you want them for your squat.

Take a deep breath in. It is up to you whether you prefer to suck in air through your nose or your mouth. Ed Coan, hall of fame powerlifting member recommends breathing in through the nose, whilst Layne Norton, also a powerlift record holder, recommends breathing through the mouth. Based on this I would say go with whatever makes you feel stronger. I take a deep breath through the mouth.

"To be number one you have to train like you are number two"



IPF world records as of June 2015

Squat

-59kg Fedosienko, Sergey, Russia	300kg
-66kg Danilov, Konstantin, Russia	326kg
-74kg Olech Jaroslaw, Poland	377.5kg
-83kg Jose Castillo, Ecuador	377.5kg
-105kg Semenko Dmytro, Ukraine	415kg
+120kg Christensen, Carl Yngvar, Norway	490kg

Bench Press

-59kg Fedosienko, Sergey, Russia	201kg
-74kg Poinson Adrien, France	245kg
-83kg Bakkelund, Kjell Egil, Norway	261kg
-93kg Wegiera, Jan, Poland	300kg
-105kg Dovganyuk, Vadym, Ukraine	323kg
-120kg Jäger, Kevin, Germany	333kg
+120kg Sandvik, Kenneth, Finland	371kg

Deadlift

-66kg El Belghitti, Hassan, France	313kg
-74kg Gaishinets, Sergei, Russia	327.5kg
-83kg Martin, Tomas, Great Britain	345kg
-93kg Gunhamn, Erik, Sweden	370.5kg
-105kg Coimbra, Anibal, Luxembourg	387.5kg
-120kg Barkhatov, Maxim, Russia	397.5kg

Total (Squat, Benchpress, Deadlift combined)

-59kg Fedosienko, Sergey, Russia	761kg
-66kg Gladkikh, Sergey, Russia	815kg
-74kg Olech, Jaroslaw, Poland	905kg
-83kg Castillo, Jose, Ecuador	955kg
-93kg Inzarkin, Dmitry, Russia	1000kg
-105kg Dovganyuk, Vadym, Ukraine	1050.5kg
-120kg Rokochiy, Oleksiy, Ukraine	1075kg
+120kg Christensen, Carl Yngvar, Norway	1230kg

This concludes the setup phase of the squat. Keeping the air in you squat as deep as you can while maintaining proper form which means tight upper body, core and legs. Your aim is to go below parallel, which means going lower for your backside than your knees. Your knees should travel out and not cave in. Once you are in the lowest position you make your way up again and exhale the air out of your lungs when you lock out your hips (not before, this might get the bar flying) with a hiss. This completes one repetition and you start the next repetition by inhaling again. Repeat until you finished your set and walk the barbell back in the rack to finish. A good setup is key to a good squat. If you can not go below parallel it is an indicator that your ego got ahead of you and you either lack the flexibility or the strength to perform a proper squat with this load. Deload accordingly.

If you want to know more visit the youtube channels of CQTraining, Brandon Campbell, Supertraining06 and Layne Norton to check your form and get tips on how to perform better in the gym.

Summary of the squat:

- Squat deep
- Breathe deep
- Stay tight in your core
- Attack the bar

The Bench Press

The bench press is one of the most commonly performed free weight movement's in the gym. Even Hollywood incorporates it in a scene between Robin Williams and Matt Damon in the movie *Good will hunting* as a test of manliness. The major variations of the bench press are related to the width of the grip and whether it is performed in a straight movement or with a pause on the chest. For this article we assume you wanted to perform a one rep repetition under maximum load or the maximum amount of repetitions at a lower load.

As for the squat think about attacking the bar. You want to bend that steel and make it your own and not be dominated by the steel. For this place your hands approximately one thumb width away from the knurl or whatever feels most comfortable for you to exert maximum force to drive the bar up from the chest. Your head should be positioned below the bar and at the center. Experiment with distances on how high above your chest you want the bar to be in the racked position and how far the bar has to travel to get into the locked arms position depending on your individual physique.

Ideally you can easily rerack the bar by tilting it slightly backward and lowering it in the cups when your arms are fully extended. If you can barely unrack the bar it is positioned too high. If you already have to perform half a bench press to get it to starting position it is too low. Squeeze the bar as hard as you can and press your hips up and bring your backside back on the bench to form a bridge.



Walk your feet in as close as possible to your shoulders and squeeze your buttocks together to achieve this. Only your shoulders and your bottom touches the bench, not your lower back, if done correctly. In addition squeeze your glutes as hard as you can as if you wanted to suck that bench in through the place where the sun does not shine. Build this tension and keep it.

Unrack the bar and lock out your arms until your arms are straight and not tilted forwards or backwards. Than lower the bar in a controlled manner to your chest while maintaining the tension in the bridge. Touch the chest slightly and move the weight back to full extension in the locked position. Repeat this movement until your set is finished. Put the bar back into the rack by tilting it backwards when you are finished.

"Other gyms use machines...crossfit builds them"



How much should you lift ?

Bench Press

Body /kg	Untrained	Novice	Intermediate	Advanced	Elite
60	42	62	81	101	121
65	43	64	84	104	125
70	45	66	87	108	129
75	46	68	90	111	133
80	48	70	92	115	137
85	49	72	95	118	141
90	50	74	98	122	145
95	52	76	101	125	149
100	53	78	103	128	154
105	55	80	106	132	158
110	56	83	109	135	162
115	58	85	112	139	166
120	59	87	114	142	170
125	60	89	117	146	174
130	62	91	120	149	178
135	63	93	123	153	182
140	65	95	126	156	186

Squat

Body /kg	Untrained	Novice	Intermediate	Advanced	Elite
60	43	75	107	139	171
65	44	77	110	143	177
70	46	80	114	148	182
75	47	82	118	153	188
80	49	85	121	157	194
85	50	87	125	162	199
90	52	90	128	167	205
95	53	92	132	171	211
100	55	95	135	176	216
105	56	97	139	180	222
110	57	100	143	185	228
115	59	103	146	190	233
120	60	105	150	194	239
125	62	108	153	199	245
130	63	110	157	204	250
135	65	113	160	208	256
140	66	115	164	213	262

Deadlift

Body /kg	Untrained	Novice	Intermediate	Advanced	Elite
60	54	91	129	166	204
65	56	94	132	171	209
70	58	97	136	175	214
75	61	100	140	179	219
80	63	103	143	184	224
85	65	106	147	188	229
90	68	109	151	192	234
95	70	112	154	197	239
100	72	115	158	201	244
105	75	118	162	205	249
110	77	121	165	210	254
115	79	124	169	214	259
120	82	127	173	218	264
125	84	130	176	223	269
130	86	133	180	227	274
135	89	136	184	231	279
140	91	139	187	236	284

The Deadlift

The deadlift is usually the lift in which an individual can pull the highest load, as you can incorporate the most muscle groups of the three big lifts. Variations on the deadlift are the sumo deadlift, trap bar deadlift and the conventional deadlift. For this article we will focus on the conventional deadlift only. I strongly recommend to you to learn the other variations as well, once you get stronger, to add variety to your training. If you lack mobility the trap bar deadlift is usually the more controlled and easier lift to learn than the conventional deadlift, as the trap bar forces you into a less taxing execution of the movement.

Keep your feet shoulder width apart with your toes pointing slightly outward. As for the squat squeeze your glutes when your feet are parallel and where they end up will be the angle you want your feet to point in.

The bar is positioned above the middle of your feet. Let your arms travel down to the bar whilst remaining outside (as opposed to in-between) the legs. Keep the arms as close as possible to your legs and grab the bar.

For the grip you can either use an overhand grip with both hands or the over under grip. For the overhand grip approach the bar with the hands from above and grip it as tight as you can while locking your thumb across the lower knuckles of your fingers. Place the bar deep into the palm of your hand when you do this. This will ensure that your grip remains strong throughout the lift.

The over under grip places your dominate hand on top of the bar whilst twisting the other hand so that the palm faces away from you before you grip the bar. Your arms remain straight. If you have to twist your elbow you've turned your hand in the wrong direction. This is the stronger starting position for most lifters performing a deadlift.

I recommend the overhand grip for the warm up sets and over under grip for work sets. I've personally pulled the deadlift for a year without using the over under grip but decision is yours to make. Once your hands are in position lower your back slightly below parallel. The deadlift is not a squat. You want your arms to be straight, while still being able to make the most use of your legs. Tighten your shoulders and arms and squeeze the bar as hard as you can. Get everything tense before you start the lift. Keep your back straight and resist the temptation to round your back as this will do damage to your lower back. This concludes the setup.

First and foremost do not jerk the bar. Instead keep the tension from the setup to extend your legs fully and then bring your hips forward to lock out in final position. The bar travels as close to your body as possible and in a straight line. Once you have locked out you can either drop the bar if you did a one repetition maximum attempt or lower the bar down to the ground again to repeat the movement. If you do deadlifts for repetition I personally like to set down the weight fully to straighten my back again. I have experienced that form is very likely to break down when deadlifts are done for repetitions if you do not pay close attention.

"That is a good weight... for a small woman"





Whatever you do have a plan before you step into the gym .If you spend more than 1.5 hours for a session you most likely do not have a good plan in place to achieve your goal. The three compound exercises described in this e-book are the ones which will make you stronger faster. Use free weights, learn the movements and take the necessary security measures by performing these moves in a power rack. If you stick to your program, do not let your ego get ahead of you and challenge yourself constantly on the workouts. It will pay off in the long run.

Consult a doctor if in doubt which movements you can do. Prioritize cardio over strength training if you are overweight, that worked best for me. Become a machine once you have shed off those extra pounds.

Have fun and get stronger. Once you start you will feel more balanced. In the end might even create a second income for yourself once you've mastered your body.

Healthy body. Healthy mind!