

## A Breakthrough Workout Routine for Improving Athletic Strength Using 'Old Time' Strongman Training!

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Are you tired of boring workout routines in the gym? You can supercharge your sports workout routines using 'strongman' exercises. Coach Henkin teaches you his system for dramatically improving strength and you'll learn the best exercises every athlete should incorporate into your training program, no matter what sport you play!

For many years we have been fascinated with people of great strength. From the classic Scottish games to today's modern Strongman and Strongwoman contests we have seen top athletes accomplish feats of strength that we thought were beyond human abilities. While these contests are fun and interesting to watch, the question arises, can these lifts serve any other purpose?

The answer is yes! Whether you are an athlete or looking to improve your body composition, odd lifts (what we will call this realm of lifting) can serve as a great benefit. These workout routine exercises are amazing to help people realize what they are capable of accomplishing. I have seen a sixty-year old woman flip a 100-pound tire (of course this was done only after proper preparation over some time). I have also seen countless every day people perform acts that they previously thought were impossible. How many times have you come away from your workout routine with an increased sense of confidence and self-perception?

The odd lifts also are the most basic and fundamental exercises for increasing "functional strength". Anyone around a gym enough has heard this term. Most trainers apply it to exercises that are done on unstable surfaces. The truth of the matter is that the odd lifts are far more functional than any lift you can perform on an unstable surface. Try to deadlift, squat, or carry an odd shaped object challenges the body like no other form of training. The lifter is forced to adapt the implement and this type of coordination brings about amazing strengthening of the trunk, legs, and upper body. Trying to clean and jerk a keg is amazingly different than bar or dumbbell. The liquid within the keg is moving during the lift throwing off the comfortable groove of the workout routine exercise. Much more realistic to circumstances that athletes will find in sport or we all will face in every day life.

Lifters are also forced to use muscles in ranges of motion that are often inhibited by current equipment. For example, when using a sledgehammer the lifter is able to integrate their grip, shoulders, and trunk rotation in a manner that is impossible to duplicate in the gym. This may

serve as a form of Specialized Physical Preparedness (SPP) for throwing and combative athletes. This form of SPP is developed not only through the rotational components of the lift, but the form of gripping and the timing of the gripping as well. Most throwing athletes will explain their sport is not performed with a constant vice grip on their implement. Rather, it is the perfect timing of relaxed and tight grips.

The odd shaped lifts are fantastic for improving one's strength-endurance as well as activity recovery. Whether it one is using wheelbarrows, sandbag relays, tire flips, or many of the many other options, even elite athletes will feel the ability to perform work to rise to new heights! These lifts serve as activity recovery if they are implemented correctly. The key is to not completely tax the body or use loads that greatly increased the rate of perceived exertion (RPE) in your workout routines. Many of the above mentioned lifts have a much smaller eccentric loading so that toll on the body and nervous system is much less. Therefore one can continue to perform effective work without interfering with the body's recovery.

There are numerous ways to implement these lifts into anyone's workout routine. The first step is to get some of the equipment. Don't worry this type of training equipment should not cost you an arm and a leg. You can often get wheelbarrows, sledgehammers, and sandbags from the local hardware store for less than you would most protein powders. Now where to find a tire? Many construction or even tire stores (depending upon where you live) will happily give you free tires as it costs the companies money to dispose of them. If you are interested in the actual Strongman implements I would highly suggest visiting [www.brutestrength.com](http://www.brutestrength.com), this company produces low cost high quality Strongman equipment.

When deciding how to organize odd lifts into one's workout routine it is important to take the same steps as with any other technique or method. What do I wish to accomplish this exercise, how will this affect my overall goals, and do I have orthopedic conditions that contradict such movements? Once this is answered we can begin some of the fun stuff!

If you wish to add some of these exercises as some variety and increased nervous system activation, then you may place them right into the workout routine as any other exercise. You will have to determine the optimal number of sets, repetitions, and rest intervals for your goals. I would encourage that these lifts be performed earlier in the workout routine as they are very demanding and often require some technique. Therefore, if you often clean and jerk a standard Olympic bar you may find a steel log, sandbag, or keg a nice change to the nervous system.

Your goal may be increase your work capacity, which may cause you to implement odd lifts as a finisher. At the end of your workout routine you would choose an activity and try to perform it for time, or a specified distance. Although you will be ambitious to kick butt, start smarter with smaller time frames (3-5 minutes) and shorter distances. You will be surprised the impact this new form of training has on your body at first!

Now, if you are still skeptical and do not want to go out and hunt for these new exercise tools you may use some of your standard gym equipment to try it out. Here are some optional movements to utilize...

**Farmer's Walk:** This is an oldie, but a goodie. Find two weights of equal size, take a tight grip and take a walk while holding your chest high and the weights down by your side. Most lifters will grab some dumbbells, but I can help but love barbells for this movement. You will find the increased leverage of the barbells to be especially evil in your workout routine.

**Overhead Walks:** A technique that I learned from Sports Performance Coach, John Davies. Simply take a weight and carry it overhead for a certain time or distance. You may find alternating the implement to be a great stimulus. For example, one workout routine uses a barbell, the next use some dumbbells. This is fantastic for shoulder and trunk stabilization.

**Bar Carries:** Use a load approximately 30-45% of your squatting weight and place the bar on your back and begin to walk. The more turns you can make the more challenging the drill becomes on the core muscles. If using dumbbells, you may carry one in front of the body cradling by the chest or two in a hammer curl grip. You will find whole new group of muscles in your back and upper body! Plate carries may be performed in the same manner.

**Deadlift Carry:** Choose a load that you can hold for 30 seconds. Deadlift the weight to the standing position and begin to walk in various directions. You can choose distance, time, or a certain level of RPE as the stopping point. This exercise alone will produce dramatic results in your workout routine.

There are numerous other ways to use common gym equipment to accomplish similar goals. Hopefully those mentioned above will stimulate some creative ideas of your own.

We are often searching so hard for some secret method of training that we forget the most fundamental aspects of strength training. It constantly amazes me how such simple drills can make even the most elite athlete perform that much better! Try some of these exercises in

your workout routine and I am sure you will be astounded by their amazing ability to help you accomplish your goals.

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