

Training for strongman events: part one

Events change year to year and as you will read, they often benefit athletes in different ways. Shorter athletes often do better at some while taller athlete may have an advantage at others.

The following is a list of some of the most common events seen in strongman competitions these days:

Farmer's Walk -2 cylinder-like implements are carried, one in each hand, a given distance or through a certain course. Weights per cylinder range from 180-330lbs per hand.

Car Walk - This is usually seen in larger events like the World's Strongest Man (WSM) seen on ESPN/ESPN2. The competitor is strapped into the inside of an old car. The floor board, engine and seats are generally removed from this car (basically a car shell) and the competitor must stand and walk with the weight bearing on their shoulders. While the car's parts have been limited, the weight can be over 800lbs.

Loading Events - These vary depending on the competition's promoter. It usually entails carrying 4-6 objects differing in size and weight from one place to another. In the past, they used to call it the keg loading, as it involved loading 5+ kegs into the back of a truck. Object used can be rocks, stones, chains, logs, fire hydrants, kegs, blocks of metal or stone, well you get the picture.

Log Press -There are two variations seen in the log press. The first, is when the athlete must clean and press the log overhead as many times as possible in a given time period. The weight can be between 185-305lbs for as many reps as possible. The second variation could be doing as much weight as possible for a single rep. Like a powerlifting meet, each athlete is given 3-5 attempts to do as much weight as possible. The log is usually lifted from the ground/floor to the chest (cleaned) and then pressed over head to a lockout position with knees and elbows locked.

Crucifix - This event is simple. An object (axe, dumbbell, television, basket, etc) is held at arms length out to the side of the athlete making a "T". Promoters often use signal devices that the object must touch at all times. As the athlete fatigues, the arms lower and the object loses contact with the sensor-thus stopping the time. The object, obviously the longest time wins.

Keg Toss -This is a fun event to watch. Each athlete must toss a keg varying in size and weight over a wall or bar. Each athlete is given 3-5 tries to get the object as high as possible.

Cask/Stone Circle - Here, the athlete holds a thick weighted bar in the crease of their elbow and walks in a circle, pivoting with the other end of the bar. Going around as far as possible is the goal. Often times there is a huge basket of stones, huge beer casks, a car or weights hanging from this thick pipe.

Viking Press - This event is another shoulder pressing event. The athlete presses up a weighted contraption that is pivoting up and down at a joint on the other end. This event is gaining in popularity.

Deadlift - A classic event and test of strength, the deadlift is performed by bending over and picking up the bar until the knees are locked and shoulders back. Variations include the Flintstone Lift where they use round stones instead of weights and the Silver Dollar Deadlift where each athlete lifts a bar loaded with a cube filled with money on each end. In the past, the winner of this event got the money in the boxes. The boxes are often mid-thigh in starting height so more weight can be done as the range of motion is less.

Truck Pulling - As many of you saw at the bodybuilding.com grand opening, I pulled a Budweiser delivery truck with my bare hands. This is a very popular event because different sizes and numbers of trucks, cars, etc. can be used with minimal expense to the promoter. A harness is attached to the athlete and allows them to pull with the legs and hips while a rope is in front of the athlete allowing them to pull with the arms and back. I've seen Cadillac Escalades, Cranes, and Budweiser Trucks and in a WSM I saw each competitor pull 2-yes 2-semi trucks with trailers!

Atlas/McGlashen Stones - This event often makes or breaks a competitor. Five round stones weighing from 135-365lbs must be lifted, carried and placed on a wall/pedestal. The height of the placement platform usually gets lower as the weight of the stone gets higher. Jouko Ahola has lifted a stone weighing 474lbs onto a 3'7" barrel. That's the world record at this event-can you beat it?

Tire Flip - A huge tire weighing from 450-900+lbs is flipped over and over for either a certain distance as fast as possible or as far as possible in a given time frame.

Medley - This event can vary as much as your imagination. It usually involves doing a number of strength feats as fast as possible. One I've seen started with carrying a huge stone, running and flipping a tire, then running back and pushing a hummer a given distance. Again focusing on speed and agility, strength and technique.