

# UNDERGROUND STRENGTH TRAINING SECRETS FOR DEVELOPING FREAK STRENGTH AND RUGGED MUSCLE

If you want to get brutally strong and powerful as well as having the look of thick, dense muscle then [it's time to train Underground](#). Many decades and even centuries ago the greatest lifters and most dominant

athletes looked strong AND actually were brutally strong! They were what we would call “All Show and ALL Go!”

Nowadays too many people look strong but can't perform with high levels of strength and power. And if they are strong, their strength has no endurance, it lasts only a few minutes or maybe only one minute, and no more.

This is what happens when you follow pretty workouts that revolve around high tech equipment, isolation movements and going for the “pump”.

We're after what many coin as “Real World Strength” or “Functional Strength”. You need to be strong, athletic and highly conditioned.

The simple fact is that training is supposed to be hard and the human body is supposed to be strong, there are no two ways about these facts. This is how results will come about.

## **YOU'RE GONNA HAVE TO EARN YOUR STRENGTH AND MUSCLE.**

In this special report you're going to learn that it doesn't take anything fancy to develop the look of a Gladiator. Show me someone who is satisfied with their strength and they are likely satisfied with everything else around them far too easily.

The men of the “golden era” and prior lifted anything that would yield results in strength and muscle gains. This is how I train and this is how I train my athletes. The results are superior to any of the fancy training

methods out there and you can experience the same if you're ready to put in the work.

- stones
- heavy barbells lifts with two hands and one hand
- heavy kettlebells
- climbing rope
- pressing & rowing heavy thick handle dumbbells from all angles
- Focused on ground based lifts (very little was performed lying down and nothing was performed sitting down, unlike many of today's "popular" programs)
- Partner gymnastics based movements, acrobatics, hand balancing and ring training

These men also trained with higher volume and frequency than what many are accustomed to today. Ask an athlete nowadays what extra training he does and the majority do little to nothing.

The difference was that back then, the choices of exercises were not many, so they practiced the compound lifts with frequency, and because they practiced so often, they gained GREAT skill (i.e. STRENGTH) in these lifts.



**Above, Alan Mead, circa 1924. Alan lost his leg in WW I and decided to take action by lifting heavy as his method of recovery where most people would have made excuses and given up. There are NO excuses for modern day Gladiators.**

These lifts were ALL compound lifts and packed on slabs of rugged muscle very quickly. Because these men practiced these basic lifts regularly, they also had high work capacity, which is what most people lack today.

When an athlete begins training at [The Underground Strength Gym](http://TheUndergroundStrengthGym.com) in Edison, NJ, we build them up to handling heavy weights for more than just one set. We don't want your body shutting down on you when you need it to work. The right style of training will promote physical and mental toughness.

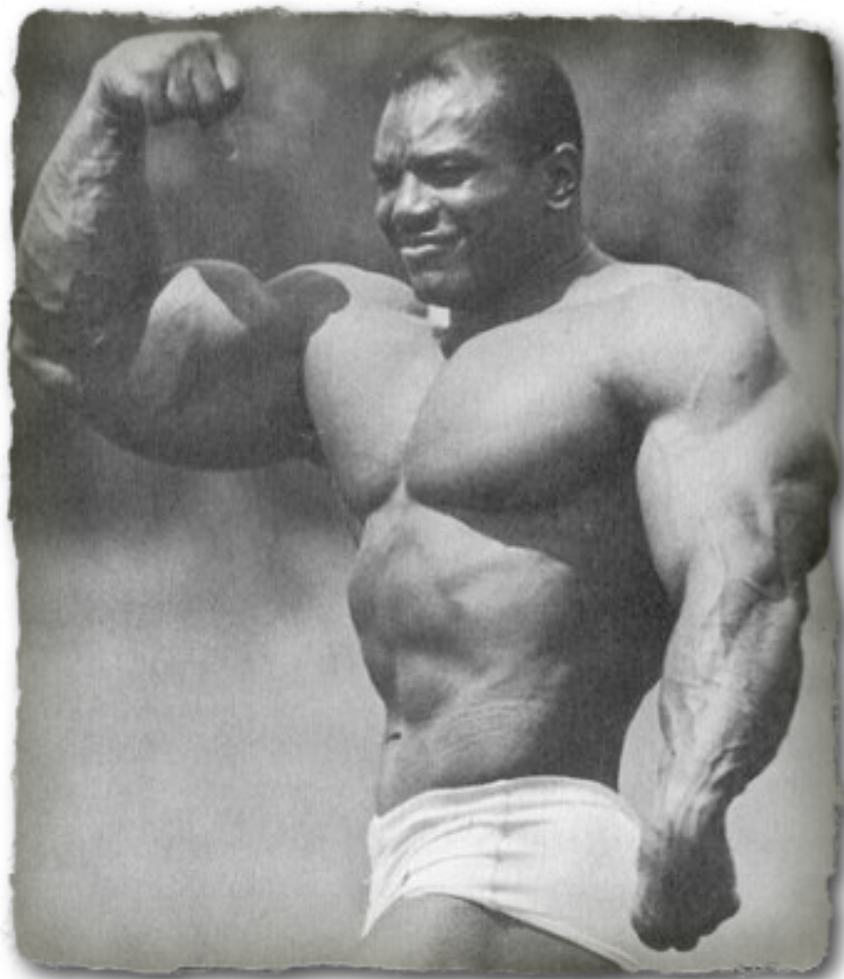
With regards to volume, the men of The Golden Era did not perform many different movements, instead, they performed 1 - 4 movements per workout, and worked their ass off on each movement.



Bodybuilding Legends such as Sergio Oliva & Robby Robinson would perform countless supersets of bench pressing and pull ups for the upper body. Squats and Romanian Deadlifts for the lower body.

They were also strong as hell with these lifts and had the “Long Strength” I continue to talk about.

Variety is great for stimulating the mind and body and it is a necessary aspect of improvement. With too little variety, your body adapts to the stimuli and progress slows.



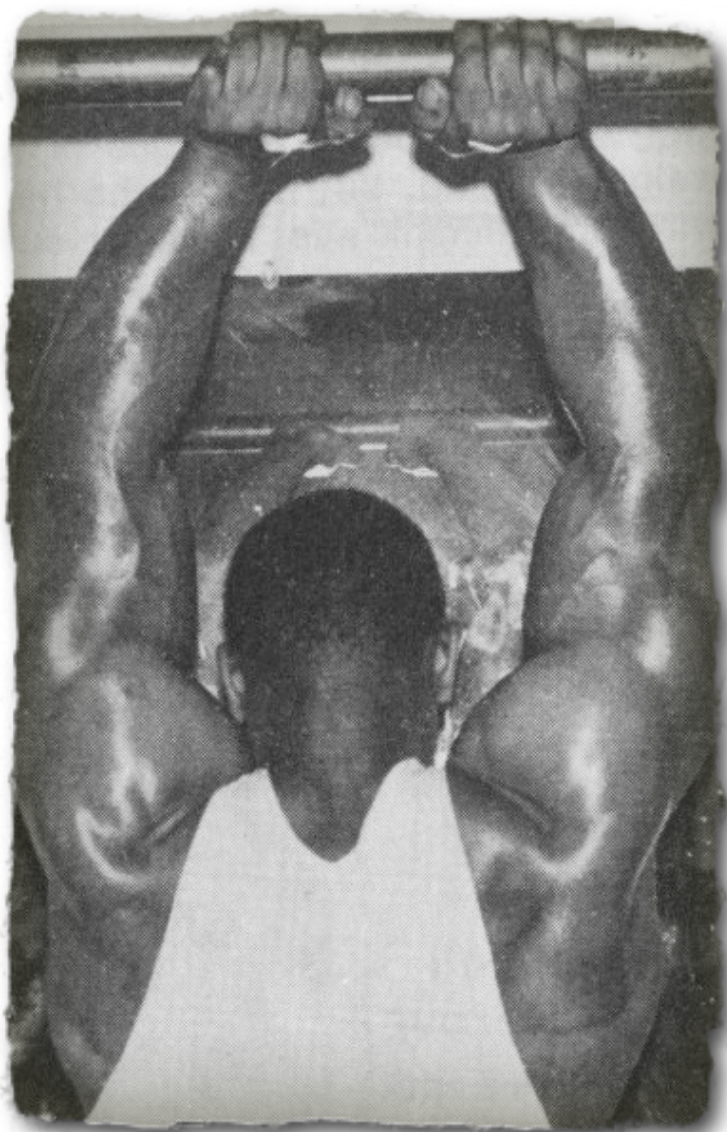
But, what the men of The Golden Era did to combat their lack of variety was to constantly strive to break PR's (Personal Records). And because they always got stronger, they consistently added muscle.

Unlike many of today's men who work out and avoid the intensity required to break records, these men of might moved weights that shock many of the most advanced lifter's of today.

Don't think for one second that you need a fancy place to train at or fancy equipment to train with. I started out in my parent's garage which was FREEZING cold and all I had was a crappy 300 lb Olympic set from Costco, a pair of 50 & 100 lb DB's and a gun rack which I used for

squatting. I used an old tool box to elevate the flat bench for incline dumbbell benching. Wasn't pretty but it worked.

Not my surprise, I got strong as heck and I packed on rugged muscle faster than ever before in that tight space in my Dad's garage, all because I was limited to going heavy and basics only! I am using the word "limited" loosely here, these were great "limits" to have!





On the weekends, I would take a trip to a different gym to change things up a bit. One weekend I was training at a Gold's Gym, and the kid at the front counter started chatting with me after my workout as he wondered where I trained since he never saw me before.

When I told him I train at home in my garage his jaw dropped! He asked how I got so big training in a garage! I told him all about the need for basics, heavy weights and intensity. The young kid was a wrestler, and he got to talking about his workouts at this fancy Gold's Gym (I wish the **original** Gold's Venice was the norm for gyms of today). His workouts revolved around all the machines and fancy equipment most of which were isolation movements.

### **BIG MISTAKE, especially for a wrestler!**

Movements that had him sitting down and lying down were common place for his training. I started chatting with him about [George Hackenschmidt](#), the great wrestler who was also incredibly strong, even at the young age of 19. We spoke about heavy Olympic lifting, powerlifting, heavy ground based lifts and overhead presses. His eyes lit up and we mapped out a simple Underground program that had him training three days a week.





Above, George Hackenschmidt, [The Russian Lion](#), sporting a seriously rugged physique!

Back then I was still bodybuilding and using a split workout template. But, I was training more like a **power – bodybuilder**. Nevertheless, the program I was following was working BIG time and I kept getting stronger and bigger.

In addition, I was coaching wrestling at the time and had no problem wrestling with other athletes without resting. I would go for 20 – 30 minutes non stop with the younger wrestlers.

This conditioning and wrestling made me stronger and improved my ability to tolerate intense workouts. This is coined “work capacity”. You can’t just be big and strong, you must also be highly conditioned and wrestling and other combat sports are a great addition if you want to be a Bad Ass!



The greater strength developments I gained resulted in improved strength endurance & power endurance, which was something I never had before (back when I was doing the traditional gym workouts).

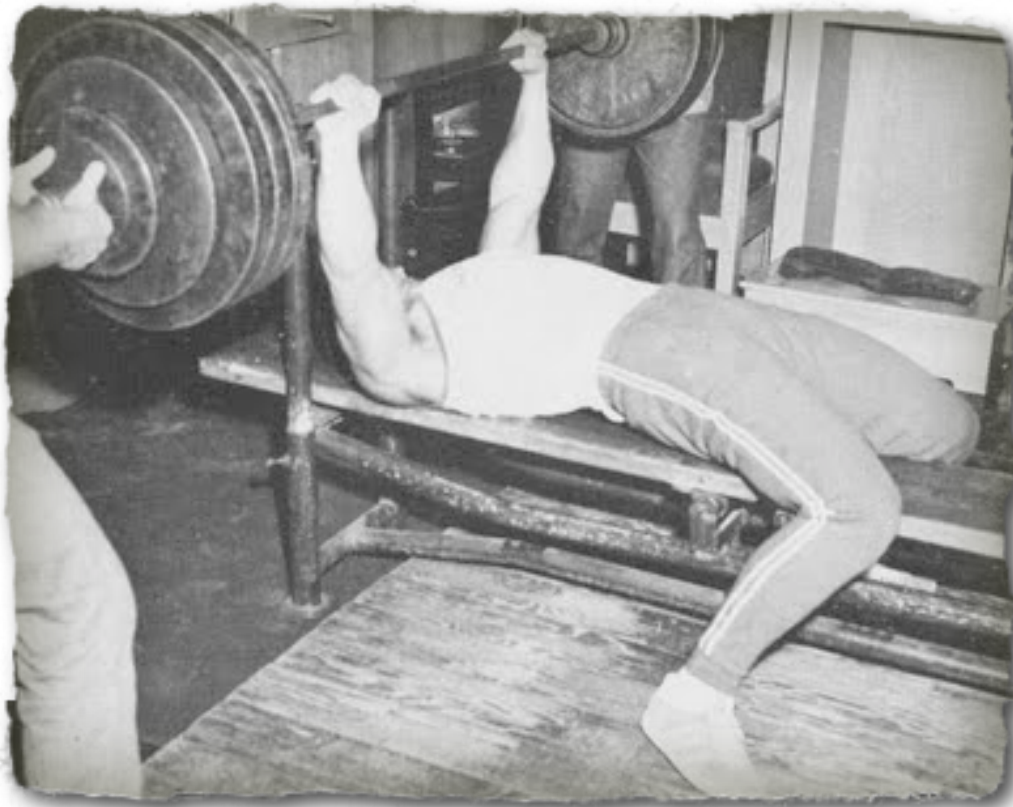
**Let's take a look at my old school power – bodybuilding split workout from the garage days:**

### **Day 1: Shoulders, Arms**

- 1) BB hang clean 4 – 5 x 3 – 5 reps
- 2) 1 arm DB laterals (heavy) 2 – 3 x 6 – 12 each
- 3) bent over DB laterals 2 – 3 x 6 – 12 reps
- 4) BB shrugs 2 – 3 x 15 – 20 reps
- 5A) BB cheat curls 3 x 5 – 10 reps
- 5B) lying DB extensions 3 x 5 – 12 reps

## Day 2: Legs

- 1) BB back squat worked up to 2 x 12 - 20 reps (I only had 300 lbs so the reps were higher than normal)
- 2) DB lunge variations 3 x 6 - 10 each
- 3) BB RDL 2 - 3 x 10 - 20 reps
- 4) 1 legged calf raise with Dumbbell 4 x 10-20 reps



### Day 3: Chest & Back

- 1A) Flat Bench Press – work up to 2 Heavy Sets x 3 – 5 reps
- 1B) 1 arm DB rows – 1 warm up set at 50 lbs, then all remaining sets at 100 lbs for 15– 20 reps each arm
- 2A) Incline DB bench 3 x 5 – 10 reps
- 2B) bent over BB row 3 x 5 – 10 reps
- 3A) incline or flat DB flys 2 x 6 – 10 reps
- 3B) feet elevated push ups 2 x max reps

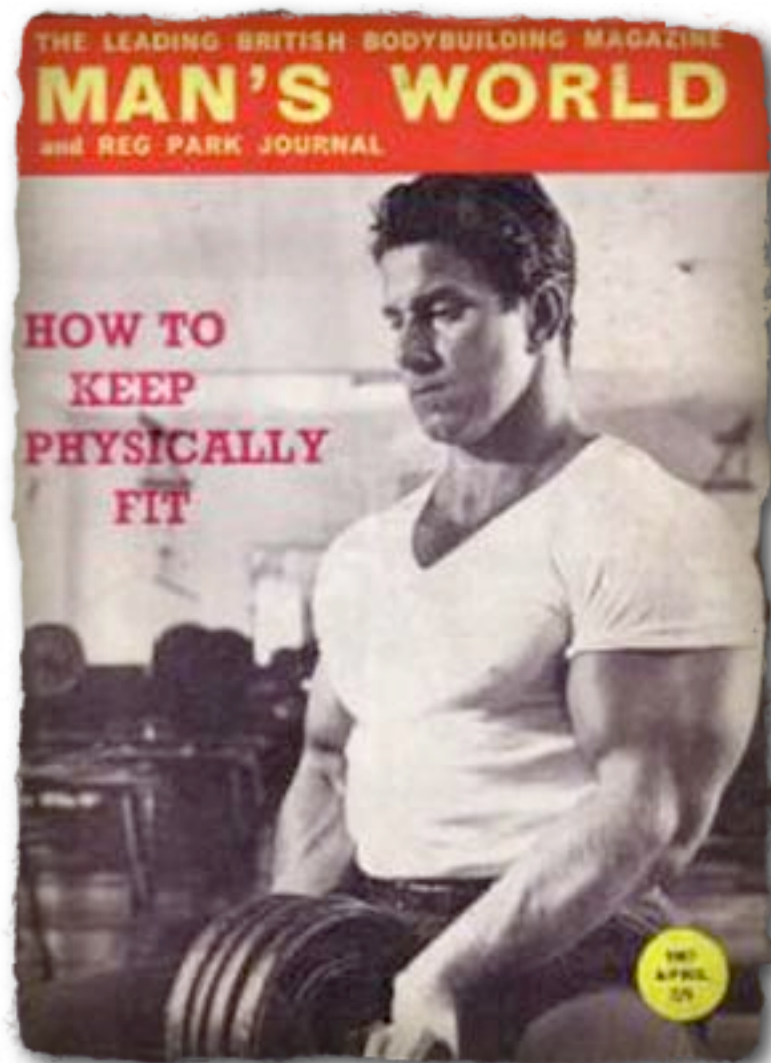
At the end or beginning of each workout I worked abs and / or calves. I also hit the forearms with some traditional wrist curls at the end of upper body days since that was all the grip training I knew of back then. Here and there I would throw in some DB curls and close grip benching for the arms, but not too often.

I did have an influence from a **Rogue Lifter** whom I met back when I was only 14 years old. His name was George. I was trying to mimic the way George trained at the old YMCA yet I enjoyed the variety of several movements as opposed to working one or two movements over and over so I modified his workouts into my own. I never rested much between sets which was great for improving work capacity.

**George was a beast of a man** I used to train alongside at the OLD Metuchen, NJ YMCA. Back then, the Y was the typical golden era style gym: lots of york plates and round head dumbbells, dip bars, pull up bars, a york isometric rack and plenty of benches. What a gem this place was. It's a shame it had to go.

George used to train movements, not muscle groups. He would perform 1 or 2 exercises per workout for endless sets, I noticed his LONG time periods spent on each of the movements he chose.

It was typical for George the Beast to train one movement for up to 45 minutes at a time. usually his workouts were just 2 movements. His favorites seemed to be the Romanian dead lift (RDL), the bench press, weighted dips, barbell cheat curls, skull crushers, etc.



What a freak this guy was, built like solid rock! And boy was he in shape, resting only 30 – 60 seconds between HEAVY sets and never slowed his intensity!

Today, someone mows the lawn and they feel exhausted the rest of the day and unable to work out. Or, they go to the beach and the rest of the day their exhausted because of the sun. Come on, that's Bull Shit! Let's see some physical and mental toughness happening again!

## **FARM BOY TRAINING**

In the early and mid 1900's young kids worked 12 hours or more every day on a farm performing manual labor. Nothing bad ever happened to them!

My wife's cousin grew up in Pa. and his father always had him working with him on weekends or around the house during the week, all of which required manual labor. This kid was always moving stones, cutting down trees, digging ditches, swinging a sledge hammer or axe, pushing wheel barrows and carrying sandbags or mulch. His work ethic and work capacity was second to none.

When he was working on my house, he noticed my climbing rope in the back yard hanging from the tree and he climbed up with ease using no leg assistance. He then told me I need to get a longer rope on a higher branch! This is the same kid who cut down the trees in my back yard and left me a few logs. He KNEW I would find a use for them when training my athletes and he was 100 % accurate.

We started using the logs for all our carries and lower body movements and our wrestlers benefited immensely from their use! There's something to be said for the people growing up on farms or working in tire yards / junk yards. They all seem to have that freak strength that so many others struggle for through the weight room yet never achieve.

## BASIC LIFTING

Let's take a look at the **basic lifts** you will want to incorporate on a regular basis. The extra isolation movements which will NOT be listed are simply icing on the cake and you can incorporate the isolation movements on your own with your own discretion.

**Key:**

**BB = barbell**

**DB = dumbbell**

- BB hang clean & press (or push press)
- BB military press (or push press)
- BB high pull
- BB power clean or hang clean
- BB bent over row (overhand and underhand grip)
- 1 arm DB rows
- DB swings
- DB hammer cheat curls
- BB cheat curls



- 1 arm DB snatch
- 1 arm DB clean and press (or push press)
- BB back squat
- BB deadlift variations (RDL, Snatch Grip DL)
- BB or DB floor press
- Mixed grip pull ups
- Parallel bar dips
- Push Up Variations

Now, the above list is incredibly simple, but, if you chose 2 –3 of the above movements for each workout and worked at them incredibly hard 3 – 4 x week you will develop freakish strength and a physique that will shock others!



**Bent over BB rows with a thick bar, a must have for developing a rugged and muscular back! The thick bar adds plenty to the grip!**



Sure, the list above may very well be completely different than what you are currently doing as well as what others in your gym are doing.

**You will be skipping the lat pull downs, the concentration curls, the leg extensions, the seated machine presses and all the other crap exercises. It's time to train movements, NOT just exercises.**

Let's hit the weights hard and heavy in the 1 - 10 range (unless performing calisthenics), and once a week perform a high rep workout with lighter weights with a rep range anywhere from 12 - 50 reps per set.

Yep, you read that correctly, all the way up to 50 reps!

High rep training can be a great catalyst for building muscle. It is also very challenging, so be mentally prepared to push through the pain zone when your muscles are screaming with fatigue.

After training hard for 2 – 3 weeks, take one week and train light but also stop your sets way before any serious intensity is required. The “holding back” will allow your mind and body to recover, and when you return to the intense training one week later, your body will have compensated and reaped the rewards of your training.

Along with quality nutrition and this “old school, Underground” style of training you will quickly begin developing a rugged physique.

Remember, we reap the rewards of our training through proper rest **and** nutrition. Part of your discipline will be resting when you may really want to train. Discipline means doing what you have to do and what is best for you, not what you want to do! What you want to do has nothing to do with what is best for you!



Above, [George Hackenschmidt](#) - known as the '[Russian Lion](#)', was a brutally strong, powerful and jacked wrestler from the early 1900's.

“Hack” regularly used Russian Kettlebells, heavy barbells and dumbbells to develop dominating strength, power and a rugged body that many aspire to achieve today! Hack did this under what many today would consider sh\*\*ty conditions.

**TRAVEL BACK IN TIME WHEN  
UNDERGROUND TRAINING WAS THE NORM,  
NOT THE RARITY**

Let's take a look at some of the tools they used back in the day, which have made a comeback into today's training for many individuals, athlete or not! I must warn you though, this training takes guts and a no fear attitude! You must be willing to push yourself and challenge yourself with heavy weights and odd objects. You'll be sore in places you never felt before.

In the end though, you will reap the rewards of Underground training which is that of obtaining a body that looks strong and powerful while performing with domination! If you think you're ready then let's get started!

## **EQUIPMENT LIST**

Below is a list of equipment that you will want to start collecting slowly for your own gym. That's right, your personal gym – not many gyms are left out there nowadays that cater to the hard core lifter who wants to train raw, in the trenches, NO BS style.

Many of the strongest, best developed physiques were developed in dungeon type gyms that are either in basements, garages or old school gyms.

Don't forget though, much of the equipment listed here can be obtained for free from junk yards, tire yards or can be made by a local welder. My suggestion is that you investigate your resources and snag the necessities for FREE, then move on and purchase toys if necessary.



## TRACTOR TIRES

Tire flipping is the ultimate in full body power and strength development. Make sure you don't curl the weight up. Focus on driving into the tire with your legs while the chest presses against the tire. This will help you jump up quickly and powerfully. Start with lighter tires to perfect your form and prep the body for future heavy loading!





The tire flip is one of the most effective movements for developing muscle in your entire body! I have routinely performed workouts that consisted only of tire flipping and sled dragging!

**SLEDGE HAMMERS** – Sledge hammers will work your grip, your core, your legs, your shoulders and cardio! It’s also a great way to work in some loaded mobility training, which we can all afford to incorporate mobility work.

You can swing for high reps or time, using overhead, diagonal and side swings plus many more variations! Try 2 non stop minutes of sledge hammer training and you will develop a solid “core” and rock hard forearms!





Sledge Hammer work to the sides are great for building rotational power through the core and a great conditioning tool as well. If you have a large tire, just stand up the tire and hit against the tire.

## **CARRIES**

Anytime you can incorporate a farmer walk or carry of some sort, Do it! These movements develop tremendous overall strength and muscle size. We utilize many different carry variations but the most challenging carry is HEAVY walks with long farmer handles!

When you begin performing heavy farmer walks you'll notice how your back and legs get extremely jacked up! There isn't a muscle in your body which gets a chance to relax when you perform these walks HEAVY!



You can also carry stones, heavy sandbags, heavy DB's or any odd object you can think of, they ALL work. The slight differences add variety to your workouts, keep things fresh and keep the body off guard, which in turn spurs muscle growth and strength on a regular basis.

Too much of a good thing is never a good thing!



**Above, Judo Beast, David Ellis carries a 135 lb anvil. Required to deadlift, then carry, then squat down, no muscle is left out of this simple drill!**



**Above, wrestling with a sandbag during a long walk of heavy sandbag carries. This man's rugged physique came through all the basics, nothing fancy, lot of hard work, consistency and determination!**

## **THE BARBELL, KING OF THE WEIGHTROOM**

If you're low on funds, check E Bay or Craigs List and snag a 300 lb. used weight set! You definitely need to snag yourself a barbell of 300 lbs. or more. You don't even need a bench or power rack to get started here. Simply performing all the barbell lifts that are ground based will be plenty. If you have a training partner, he can hand you the bar for floor presses.



**Above, BB rowing in an old Dungeon like gym. I don't see anything fancy in that gym, do you?**

Squatting can be done for ultra high reps with a weight that you can press overhead and get on your back. And, I often get a lot of flack for this, but, I don't think you need to squat to develop a strong and powerful lower body.

You can perform high rep walking lunges with a BB or DB's, walking across a parking lot for extra high reps will be BRUTAL on the legs and can add tons of strength and muscle to the quads, hams and glutes!

You can also perform various deadlifts as well as the hack squat, where the BB is held behind the back. In addition, all the ground based lifting and Olympic lifting develops the legs to a great extent.

## **PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER**

Now that we have desissified your training, it's time to see how you can incorporate all these tools into a basic program.

## **HERE ARE A TWO VERY BASIC OPTIONS FOR ORGANIZING YOUR WORKOUTS:**

- 1. Perform one movement for upper body push, upper body pull and a lower body movement with a BB or DB.** Finish OR start the workout with one full body movement using one of the odd object lifts listed in [The Grip Experts E Book](#) (i.e. – tire flip, sandbag or keg shouldering, etc.). Train in this fashion 3 x week on nonconsecutive days, all workouts are full body workouts.
- 2. Perform three workouts per week with the following split: upper body one day, lower body the next day, full body the final day.** Your full body day will be ALL odd object / underground style training. Training should be performed on nonconsecutive days.

The two samples above are very general, but guess what, BIG strength and muscle comes from generalizing your strength, not isolating it!

**Here is a sample workout from the athletes at my [Underground Strength Gym in NJ](#).** This crew came in and performed a full body workout with strongman lifting only. After a warm up, they performed the workout below:

- 1) Farmer Walks: 1 light, 1 medium, 1 very heavy set x 200'
- 2) Tire Flip 1 warm up set, 2 Heavy x 5 reps



3) Sled Drag on cement 3 x 200' mixing forwards and backwards dragging and then pulling the sled rope hand over hand at the end of each drag.

When the workout was finished, an ab circuit is performed, then recovery and mobility work as well.

If our athletes feel strong it's not odd for us to perform 2 – 3 hard sets of the strongman Log Clean & Press. Each set is performed either for time (30 seconds) or for reps in the 3 – 10 range.



I will always remember that hole in the wall YMCA I trained at when I was 14. There was some jacked up dudes moving enormous weights in that gym. They had very little in the way of variety but man did they look like they could knock a house down with their strength and size! Many of those lifters were influenced by the training of **The Golden Era**, so heavy basics were the common theme.

Combine some of these principles, methods and movements with what you know works for you and you will be well on your way to surpassing all the others who follow the so called “rules” of getting big and strong!

Now the rest is up to you!

Make It Happen!

In Strength,

Zach Even – Esh

<http://ZachEven-Esh.com>

**P.S. – Try my 30 day trial membership at The Underground by [clicking HERE](#)**



# UNDERGROUND STRENGTH COACH

## RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

**Here is a list of my favorite web sites, products, training tools and resources.**

**Enjoy!**

**[My Blog](#)** - Lessons in Lifting, Life, Business and Success!

**[Underground Strength Coach 30 Day Trial](#)** - Private Videos and Membership Forum giving you inside access to my coaching and advanced training methods as well as unshared info from industry leaders.

**[15 Minute Muscle](#)** - The training I utilized when the shit hit the fan! Back when I was working countless hours and trying to squeeze it all in, trying to balance being a husband and father, working 9 - 5, building a internet business, building and managing my **[Underground Strength Gym](#)** and STILL training hard and heavy!

If I did it so can you, perfect for the **[Busy Man](#)**.

**[Underground Strength System](#)** - The Entire Underground Collection: 3 training manuals, The Beast Strength Program and The Underground Freak Strength Audio Collection!

**[Underground Kettlebells](#)** - The Best Kettlebells in the World. Period.

**[The Underground Sandbag](#)** - Built for use and abuse and of course, getting you Strong as Hell!

**[The Purposeful Primitive](#)** - One of my Favorite books, revealing some of the most amazing methods, stories and insider secrets on how the strongest, most muscular men in the world trained!

**[The Lost Secrets of Strength Seminar](#)** - Joe DeFranco and I unleash our training secrets and take a crew of hard core Strength Coaches through the workout of their life!

**[Kettlebells for Combat](#)** - The Most Kick Ass DVD Set on Kettlebell training. Period. This course has stayed under the radar for too long, now you can get your hands on it [HERE](#).

**[The Sandbag Assault](#)** - F\*\*K the Gym! Make a sandbag and train at home, in your garage, backyard or basement. Scare the s\*\*t out of your neighbors and onlookers but you'll also get Jacked and Strong as a Beast.

**[Grip Experts](#)** - The Ultimate Resource on developing Real World, Functional Strength and hand of steel that crush like Vise Grips.

**[The Russian Lion Power Course](#)** - The definitive training course on how one of the strongest men in the world developed his body and mind.

**[The Power Wheel](#)** - The most effective core and ab training device I have ever used. In addition, it is a brutally effective and fun tool for training the upper body, performing hand walking and even lower body training!