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A Few Words from the Founders of FIT

As the new year draws near, we find ourselves reflecting on the year that has passed. Collectively, FIT's clients and staff have lifted hundreds of thousands of pounds and lost a few hundred pounds of body fat. More than a couple of clients have battled life threatening illnesses (working out all the while) and won. Babies have been welcomed and marriages have been celebrated. In this business of personal training, one of the top reasons clients give for their patronage is the need of inspiration and motivation to stick with an exercise routine or to take their fitness to the next level. Looking at all that has been accomplished, it is Thom and I and the entire FIT staff who are inspired and motivated by you. We are very thankful to be a part of your endeavors to live a healthier life. All of us at FIT wish all of you the happiest and healthiest of holidays and all the best in the coming year.

Tracey and Thom Downing
and the FIT crew

The Long Haul

by Johnny Nguyen

I have two personal training clients, a married couple, that I'm about to release from my supervision to do all their workouts in Crossfit classes. The husband is excited and committed, but the wife is apprehensive and doubtful that she can survive the intensive classes. Having been my client for over 6 years, she's not used to doing things differently. But, I reminded her, she already knows a lot of the basics, and it's a matter of using that knowledge among a larger group in which everyone will perform at different levels. She will have to spread her own wings, now, and flap them at her own pace.

And with this encouragement you can see the relief in her face, knowing that she is in this thing called fitness for the long haul – for life – and therefore she must become accountable. Making this switch, from personal training to a serious and competitive small-group circuit class, she will take one big step closer to fitness independence. She will become an owner of her own routine, and she can take this ownership anywhere in the world. Going on vacation no longer means that for exercise she can do only low-intensity walking, or a jog at best. She will have options: Air squats, pushups, lunges, sit-ups, burpees, and a host of other fitness activities that our Crossfit classes include with minimal use of specialized equipment. After years of

exclusive personal training, this will be the best move she will have made, and she can now do it for the long haul.

When I first came to work for FIT in 2001, Thom and Tracey said that they envisioned this company to be a “hub” for fitness activities. Over the years FIT has offered programs of all kinds that were in addition to our core business – personal training. We have had regular group rides, in which clients and friends meet on their bikes and ride a predetermined loop around the bay area. We have had running groups that met on certain afternoons, to which clients can bring friends and families. Everyone was welcomed, no matter the level. We have joined charity-event races, promoted our own races, and hosted Olympic-style weightlifting competitions. We even had unofficial, just-for-kicks aesthetic competitions, in which we bared our abs and had you voted for the best appearance.

A little over a year ago we added Crossfit classes and small-group classes to our fitness hub. Now FIT offers not just high quality personal training and the classes above, but also physical therapy, therapeutic massage, Barbell Club for serious Olympic-style weightlifters, a kids fitness program, a teen strength and conditioning program, a special-population program, and a nutrition program. More are in the works. FIT is truly a hub of many program options for people who seek health and fitness for the long haul.

There have been a couple of people who have taken “the long haul” literally. One is Pam Kochman, who decided to run a marathon in her 50s, even though she has never run more than a mile in her entire life. The other person is our very own staff member, Joe Kelso, who took a long road to ultimately participate in an ultra-endurance event, a 50-mile run. This month Analisa Naldi shares their fascinating stories in her article, Runners Recap.

And no doubt, you have heard that endurance athletes often use caffeine to enhance their running performance on race day. In his article this month, Scott Kolasinski offers insight, and cautions, with the use of caffeine for training, performance and fat loss. You will now look at our cooler full of sports drinks and no longer have to wonder if you should have one that contains caffeine or not.

We have been very fortunate to be a fitness company in our wonderful community, and have slowly positioned ourselves as a hub for all things fitness. We intend to be here for the long haul, so that you can be healthy and fit for the long haul.

Thank you for reading our monthly newsletter, and for being part of our family.

Runners Recap

by Analisa Naldi

For many, the end of the year is a time of reflection, a time to review and celebrate those accomplishments that occurred during the months previous. For a few, however, it is a time to squeeze in every last challenge, every last race, and every last mile. We've chosen to spotlight two of our FIT family members this month who've both covered quite a bit of ground (literally) during the latter half of this year. Here are their stories.

* * * * *

Pam Kochman – New York City Marathon
November 4, 2007
Time: 4:53:13

I have never enjoyed running and never considered pursuing it as a cardiac exercise. In addition to my negative attitude about running I had foot problems, which made running and other exercises impossible. However, quite miraculously these foot problems suddenly disappeared and just as unexpectedly I decided to run the New York marathon. I wanted to make sure running would not negatively impact my feet, so I first consulted with a well regarded podiatrist. He made me a pair of soft orthotics and told me to hit the road. I followed a marathon training plan for rookie runners. Of course this was for first-time marathoners who seldom run or race beyond six miles. I neglected to read that last part and figured this program was written for me, a person who has never run even one mile.

Upon receiving my orthotics in June, I started running. Beginning from ground zero was no easy task, but over the last year Analisa had really slapped me into shape. I went from 3 days per week and ran 4 to 5 days per week. At first it wasn't bad but when I started to run 25 - 30 miles a week I became really exhausted. Analisa kept track of my mileage and adjusted my strength training to compliment my running.

In less than five months I went from not running one mile to completing 26.2 miles in 4:53:13. I even enjoyed running the marathon, taking in all the sights of the five boroughs. But one of the most amazing aspects of this rise to victory was the fact that I did not get injured. It is not recommended that someone with no running experience take on such a condensed training program because an overuse injury is almost certain. I truly attribute Analisa's training over the last year to be the single reason I completed this course without an injury. I not only was injury free but also recovered very quickly after the race. It is pretty amazing that weight training could actually help that much even when you are 58- years old. It was a memorable run and a big part of my success is due to Analisa. By the way my finish time has been corrected. If you can

imagine they had some problems with the start time of a lucky few runners and I was one of them. They have deducted 3 minutes from my time and my new time has been registered as my official time.

* * * * *

Joe Kelso – Helen Kelin Ultra Classic 50 mile Footrace
November 3, 2007
Time: 11:16:33
“My Path to 50 Miles in less than 12 hours, by foot”

The title is long, but so was the journey. It started August 5, 2007 with the Skyline 50K, which was my first ultra footrace. By definition, an “ultra” is any footrace over the marathon distance of 26.2 miles. 50K is around 31.06 miles.

On that painful day, I completed my first ultra in 5:17:32. The ultra task is simple: just run, eat, drink, walk, stop, and try again. If running fails, then keep walking or hiking. The 7-11-like aid stations pose a crucial role. You don’t want to run out of sugars or salts. You don’t want to run out of energy and bonk! During an endurance event, eating simple sugars is vital to success. Cramping and spasms are prevented by continually replenishing the electrolytes and salt lost through sweat. My end results: I almost cramped 12 times, flirted with spasms the last 6 miles and could barely move after the race. But instead of yielding, I signed up for the Cowtown Marathon in Sacramento, Ca., held on October 7.

Rather than being an easy 26.2-mile “training” run at a relaxed 8-minute-mile pace, it was a walk-shuffle-wince for the final 12.2 miles, complete with a bum right knee. Did my slowest marathon time (3:51:23) slow me down? I had the running blues for three days after the Cowtown Marathon and decided not to do the 50-mile footrace that was coming up.

After some ice and rest, and an attempt at running for 30 minutes, I had changed my mind. The day would finally arrive: 50 miles in less than 12 hours, by foot. Honestly, I dislike driving 50 miles and now I was at the start line of the Helen Klein Ultra Classic 50 mile footrace.

My strategy was to take the first half easy. I ran, walked, and stopped at aid stations for 18 miles. Then the wheels fell off. I managed to walk to the turn-around point at mile 25 point and the first cutoff... and I was quickly deteriorating. I sat down at mile 25 for a couple minutes and felt like my journey was finished. But I peeled myself off the ground and limped for the next 5 miles. I don’t remember being in more pain: a blister the size of a baseball, right knee pain, right Ilio-tibial band insertion pain, and severe shin splints pain in both ankles. I finally made the 30-mile mark, changed my socks and shoes, popped a few Aleve, drank a Red Bull, and was on my way, still limping. Two

and a half miles later, I realized I was second to last. Something had to change. I popped another Aleve and decided it was now or never. I ran for the first time in over 12 miles.

One by one I passed runners, offering encouragement and Aleve. The pain was still enormous, but my adrenaline, Aleve, and Red Bull rush helped me run the hills – none of which was bigger than 350 feet but all felt like climbing a steep mountain.

Then: I crushed the last 20 miles! I never would have imagined the second wind and was entirely surprised to feel better the second half. Mind over matter, I was on a mission.

I finally made it in 11 hours, 16 minutes, and 33 seconds. Almost finishing second to last, or even dead last, I actually finished 107th out of 128 finishers. I was well under my “12 hour” goal, and in the last 20 miles I steadily passed 20 runners. With patience and determination I was able to persevere.

A race director once said, “You can do more than you think you can, and you are better than you think you are.” I proved that to myself on this day.

* * * * *

At the end of the year, a time of celebration, reflection, and achievement, our FIT family would like to thank both of you, Pam and Joe, for sharing your journey, your stories, and your success with us. We are proud of and impressed by you, and we look forward to the many miles yet to be covered by you and your feet!

If you have a story of achievement or personal accomplishment that you'd like to share with the FIT family, please email Analisa Naldi at analisa@focusedtrainers.com.

Best wishes for a healthy, happy, active 2008!

Caffeine's Potential Hazard on Exercise Performance

by Scott Kolasinski

For years many people use caffeine to boost their workouts, as well as to burn fat. Supplement companies – including reputable ones – proudly advertise that their products include caffeine. But a recent study shows that using caffeine before your workout could be a bad idea. How can this be so? Let's look into this apparent contradiction.

A study investigating the cardiovascular safety of caffeine was published last January in the Journal of the American College of Cardiology that showed ingesting caffeine decreased blood flow

to the heart during aerobic exercise compared to those who did not consume caffeine. Blood flow to the heart must increase during exercise in order to match the increased need of oxygen.

While ten subjects rode a recumbent bicycle, this study used positron emission tomography, or PET scan, with radioactive-oxygen to measure heart blood flow at rest and immediately after they rode exercise protocol. After the initial protocol was completed, they were given 200 mg of caffeine, approximately 2 cups of coffee, in a tablet, and the exercise test was repeated 50 minutes later.

This same exercise protocol was followed in a second group (8 subjects) who exercised in a chamber simulating the air at about 15,000 feet altitude.

The caffeine dose did not affect blood flow within the heart muscle while the participants were at rest. However, the blood flow measurements taken immediately after exercise were significantly lower when the participants had taken caffeine tablets.

The ratio of exercise blood flow to resting blood flow, called the myocardial flow reserve (MFR), was 22 percent lower in the group at normal air pressure after ingesting caffeine. The MFR was 39 percent lower in the high altitude group.

The decrease in MFR may be because caffeine may block certain receptors in the walls of blood vessels, interfering with adenosine receptors. Adenosine normally causes coronary blood vessels to dilate in response to exercise. However, if a large amount of caffeine is present inhibiting the adenosine receptors to cause the blood vessels to dilate, the MFR decreases and less oxygen gets to the heart.

Because of these results and even considering the small subject size, the researchers were very confident that caffeine prior to exercise would not improve cardiovascular performance and they would not recommend caffeine prior to any sports.

This study would appear to be in stark contrast to a number of sports supplements marketed today as "pre-workout" supplements. Many of these contain at least 200 mg of caffeine and are purported to "enhance performance." Do these statements make these companies false advertisers?

Maybe, but not necessarily. There is some confusing research out there.

Caffeine has been shown to improve carbohydrate availability in cyclists when mixed in a carbohydrate-containing sports drink (amount of caffeine unknown).

It has been shown to improve stamina. This study found improvements in stamina with the small amount of caffeine in a diet soda, and they also used one cup of coffee, which is half of

the dose of the "caffeine blunts blood flow" study. This same study suggested that an improvement in stamina may improve weight loss as well.

Other studies have found that caffeine taken during exercise can delay the onset of fatigue by up to 60 percent.

I heard a lecturer recommend 5 mg caffeine/kg (bodyweight in lbs./2.2 lbs. = kg) bodyweight for endurance events. For anybody over 140 lbs, it becomes a very large recommended amount of caffeine to handle per day – more than the RDA's recommendation of 300 mg per day.

However, if caffeine really has any sort of "benefits" then why was it removed from the World Anti Doping Agency's (WADA) list of banned substances in January 2004? This suggests that a definitive link between caffeine use and performance enhancement has not yet been established by the research. Various famous athletes have been reported to use caffeine for what they believe is performance enhancement. Hmm....???

Lets try clearing some of the confusion. Caffeine has been shown to be an effective cerebral stimulant, making us feel more awake, alert and focused, which may let us believe that we are performing better, but this is only subjective. The reality is, when exercise demands are at a high intensity, certain amounts of caffeine should be avoided.

It is practical: During a moderate to high-intensity workout, your heart rate is going to increase. If you do a high-volume Crossfit workout, you do not want to have a feeling of suffocation or chest pain because of caffeine and a decreased MRF. It would not make sense to take a large coffee's worth of caffeine prior to your workout.

This is contrary to the recommendations of a number of weight loss supplements on the market and in the fitness magazines, such as Hydroxycut Hardcore, Xenadrine Hardcore, Nutrex Lipo 6, etc. These types of products usually recommend that you take their product prior to exercise in order to have more energy and a better workout. On Xenadrine Hardcore's label it says:

"Recommended Use: As a dietary supplement: In the morning, take 2 capsules with breakfast or 30 minutes prior to training, and 2 capsules mid to late afternoon."

The total caffeine content in one serving, 2 capsules, is 360 mg! That's 720 mg per day if you were to take it once in the morning and afternoon. Recall, the RDA of caffeine per day is 300 mg.

On Hydroxycut Hardcore's label, it says:

"Recommended Use: As a dietary supplement take 3 capsules with an 8 oz glass of water 2 times daily, approximately 30 to

60 minutes before meals. On days of your workout, take 1 of these servings before the workout."

Nutrex Lipo 6's label says:

"For Increased Energy: Take 2 liqui-caps 30 minutes prior to workout."

Unfortunately, the words "workout," or "training," (as well as the laymen's version of "exercise") are very general terms that do not convey the intensity of your exercise. Some people may say that they "workout" and their definition for the workout is a 2-mile walk or a low-sweat-producing weight routine. That is fine for them. Those individuals could take a product like Hydroxycut Hardcore and not worry about their heart rate getting too high. But for the individual who has been doing high-intensity weight training in conjunction with high-intensity sprints and weight circuits, there is a different definition to the word "workout" or "training."

Many of the pre-workout and weight loss products are marketed to the ever-popular bodybuilding population. These workouts usually involve a moderate-intensity weight set of anywhere from 8-12 reps with 1-2 minutes of rest following the set. During this set, an individual's heart rate can come down. Therefore, they may not feel the potential ill effects of taking a caffeine-containing weight-loss or pre-workout supplement during these exercise routines.

Also, a number of these companies have you take their product 30-60 minutes prior to a meal instead of prior to the workout. Trim Spa and other versions of Hydroxycut and Xenadrine have done this. This is because caffeine and a number of other stimulants in combination with caffeine have an appetite suppressing effect, causing you to eat less and/or feel satisfied sooner. Whether or not these products succeed in improving body composition goes beyond the scope of this article, but it is useful for you to understand why these companies make their recommendations.

I have seen the ill-effects of these "fat burner" supplements first hand. I was coaching a one of FIT's Crossfit classes, and the workout was three rounds of: 1000m Row, 50 Thrusters with 45 lbs., and 30 Kipping Pull-Ups - an enduring metabolic workout. A fit man in his late 20's was complaining to me about how he just could not push himself as well as he wanted. He said he felt like he was not getting any oxygen into his lungs. He could not explain why. After the workout, he felt horrible, he took a long time to finish, and he later admitted that he took Hydroxycut (I do not know which version) prior to his workout. He was shocked to learn that it was probably the Hydroxycut that made him feel like garbage when he thought he was doing a good thing by taking something that was supposed to help him have a "better" workout.

An individual's sensitivity to caffeine must always be considered. The textbooks say the half-life of caffeine —the time required for the body to eliminate one-half of the total amount of caffeine consumed at a given time —varies widely among individuals according to such factors as age, liver function, pregnancy, some concurrent medications, and the level of enzymes in the liver needed for caffeine metabolism. In healthy adults, caffeine's half-life is approximately 3–4 hours. In women taking oral contraceptives this is increased to 5–10 hours, and in pregnant women the half-life is roughly 9–11 hours. Therefore, some trial-and-error must be used when individuals are trying to determine the ideal dose to enhance their training. They must consider the type of training (such as Olympic-weightlifting versus high-intensity metabolic training) and not get set on a single dose, such as a dose of a pre-workout supplement, as the "end-all-be-all workout enhancer" for every workout. Perhaps it would be better to take after their training to wake them up from the exhausting workout they completed.

Summary

Caffeine can be beneficial for enhancing a workout, but it is largely dependent on the intensity of the exercise, the individual's sensitivity to caffeine, and the amount of caffeine ingested. The original study I cited only used a single amount of 200 mg caffeine to blunt blood flow. Lesser amounts of caffeine (as found in a single cup of coffee or a diet soda) might still bring about the mental focus for the workout without a feeling of suffocation while improving exercising performance, depending on the type of exercise.

Also, the subjects in the first study were at various fitness levels that performed the exercise test at 78% and 98% of their predicted workloads. More fit individuals might be able to handle the higher intensity of a workout with caffeine versus other less fit individuals.

Both of the above points need further research to make a conclusive statement on the recommendations for using caffeine to individuals while exercising.

In 2005, only 1 year after taking caffeine off of the banned substance list, WADA started re-investigating caffeine's effects in sports. WADA is said to be alarmed at the increasing use among sportsmen who say they are using it for its performance enhancement. It makes one question: if caffeine doesn't work, why are so many competitive athletes taking it to get an edge? As of now, caffeine is still off of the list, so it is a legal substance for international athletes to take.

The take home message is: Be aware of the amount of caffeine you are ingesting in relation to your workout. The caffeine may be in the form of a tablet or powder or a beverage, such as coffee, energy drink, or soda, but it may have deleterious effects on your exercise performance.

Below is a list of common nationally-marketed sodas with their lesser known caffeine values:

IGA Cola = 4.9 mg/12 oz
Sam's Cola = 12.7 mg/12 oz
Coca-Cola = 33.9 mg/12 oz
Sam's Diet Cola = 13.3 mg/12 oz
Diet Coke = 46.3 mg/12 oz
Dr Thunder = 30.6 mg/12 oz
Pepsi = 38.9 mg/12 oz
Diet Dr Thunder = 29.9 mg/12 oz
Diet Pepsi = 36.7 mg/12 oz
Mountain Lightning = 46.5 mg/12 oz
Dr Pepper = 42.6 mg/12 oz
Diet Dr Pepper = 44.1 mg/12 oz
Mountain Dew = 54.8 mg/12 oz
Diet Mountain Dew = 55.2 mg/12 oz
Vault Zero = 74 mg/12 oz

Source: Chou, K.H., Bell L.N., J Food Sci. 2007
Aug; 72(6):C337-42.

For any questions or a list of references, please email at scott@focusedtrainers.com.

Until next time...

Client of the Month, December: Joseph Van Valen

Name: Joseph Van Valen

Age: 23

Q. What were your short- and long-term goals coming here to FIT? Have you obtained them?

A. My primary goal when I started at FIT was to prepare myself physically for my new career as an Air Force pilot. I specifically wanted to work on bringing my run time down, improving my upper body strength, and learning physical training techniques that I can use in the military.

I have obtained these goals and exceeded my own expectations: my 1.5 mile run time is consistently under 11 minutes, I've more than doubled the number of push-ups and sit-ups I can do in a minute to 46 and 56 respectively, and I can do 10 strict pull-ups from the hang with no break (an improvement from not being able to do even a single pull-up).

In addition to these improvements, I have a newfound interest in Olympic-style weightlifting, and I've made significant progress in it. I've set another goal of competing in the Golden West Open hosted here at FIT.

I placed third at the Golden West Open in the 69kg weight class with a total of 128!

Joseph's Persona Records:
Snatch: 62.5kg (137 lbs.)
Clean and Jerk: 80kg (176 lbs.)
Front Squat: 90kg (198 lbs.)
Back Squat: 100kg (220 lbs.)

Q. What do you enjoy about FIT?

A. The vibrant atmosphere makes for a very motivating training environment. Danielle's creative workouts always keep me on my toes, and I continue to be challenged with each one.

Q. What exercises do you like and dislike?

A. Likes: Olympic-style weightlifting, and the sound of weights hitting the floor.

Dislikes: The Fight Gone Bad workout, and anything like it.

A. What is the key to your success from training at FIT?

A. Showing up consistently and giving each workout 100% have been the number-one driving factor in my fitness success. For the Olympic-style lifts, watching and listening to the advice of the trainers and other lifters have helped immensely.

Keys to the client's success (as told by his trainer, Danielle Durante):

Joseph began his first training session at FIT in a CrossFit class wanting to prepare himself physically for the Air Force. He realized the class was not for him and decided to start personal training sessions three times a week. Joseph was very committed and consistent with his training. He would train three days a week at FIT and two to three days on his own. While training at FIT, Joseph has learned how to do strict push-ups, pull-ups, sit-ups, Olympic-style weightlifting, and much more. He has excelled immensely in weightlifting and will most likely continue his training in the future. Joseph's hard work and dedication prepared him for the Air Force and has taken him to an improved level of fitness. Joseph is heading to Alabama to start his new career and will be missed by everyone at FIT. Congratulations and good luck!

An Interview with Coach Rob, Part 1

by Johnny Nguyen

No other textbook is more curious than Arthur Dreshler's *The Weightlifting Encyclopedia*, which dedicates all of its 550 pages to only two sporting lifts – the snatch and the clean and jerk. How is it that an entire book can be filled with information about just two exercises?

The snatch and the clean and jerk are two of the most complex whole-body tasks a person can undertake in sports and athletics. Demanding a series of neuromuscular relays, interplay and reflexes, these lifts offer nothing natural in motor skill acquisition, and is certainly nothing like learning to walk, run or open a book. It can take years of training to reach only near perfection in each of the lifts, and the struggle may still lie in lifting only a few kilograms more than the year before. The snatch and the clean and jerk are as fantastic as they are frustrating, and their complexity in biomechanics and the detail of their training program can easily take up a volume double that of a 550-page book.

And, how is it that one man can tirelessly dedicate so much of his life to only two lifts? I am talking about Coach Rob Earwicker. He recently was one of the main organizers for the 44th annual Golden West Open, the oldest yearly weightlifting competition in the country. It is written on a popular Internet weightlifting forum that this year's was one of the best Golden West Open ever. But on the day of this competition, Coach Rob was so knee-deep in the mechanics of the meet that he didn't have the time to realize he was helping to run the best show in town.

And that was OK. As far as he was concerned, what mattered most on that day was the performance of his weightlifting team, and so he spent the entire day coaching his lifters through the complex task of timing warm-up sets and then through the contested lifts themselves. Coaching at a weightlifting meet is both a science and an art, requiring experience and a certain mental sharpness to time a lifter's attempts within the complicated order of lifting among other contestants. The pace of the competition is controlled by a clock, so miss-timing the warm-up means that the lifter must do it twice and become fatigued or go out to lift while still cold – each case a likely devastation, if not to the lifter's psychology then certainly to her physiology. If your name is called, you are up, whether you're ready or not.

For the above reason, and for others, coaching one lifter through a meet is challenging. Rob, on this day, was coaching several. And he did so nearly the entire day with the fluidity of someone who has done it for years. And in between he also oversaw the flow of the meet, the warm-up area, the athletes,

the schedule of lifting sessions, and the many little things that came together to earn positive comments from spectators, lifters and people from around the world who watched the entire Golden West Open live on the Internet. All this effort came from a coach who, at the end of a very long day, mustered enough energy to also slip into a lifting suite to compete among the day's best.

Even being on his feet all day, coaching to the point that his voice became hoarse, Coach Rob walked out of the warm-up room, paced briefly behind the platform, and then stepped in front of the judges and lifted a lifetime best in the snatch. 128 kilograms. 281.6 pounds.

At the end of the day, Coach Rob not only achieved a personal best, but also coached several lifters to breaking their own records, and coached one lifter into qualifying for the American Open. The lifter who qualified for the American Open is our very own FIT Trainer Danielle Durante (if you ever see her lift in the gym, you'll note the raw talent she displays with speed, brevity and seriousness). Coach Rob knows to keep a close eye on this new talent. "This girl is amazing," Coach Rob said during one of Danielle's many training sessions. "She's a machine, and I need to make sure she stays healthy, but also push her hard enough to make gains. She's got a lot of years in front of her."

Danielle is not Rob's first talented lifter to be coached to a high level. There have been other lifters, all members of the FIT Barbell Club that Rob coaches every night and on Saturday mornings. The club is scheduled for one hour each, but it often goes well past the hour. Everyone trains thoroughly and no corner is cut, meaning Coach Rob often stays past the hour on his personal time.

I asked Rob why he commits himself beyond the scheduled one-hour session for Barbell Club. He has a tendency to answer a serious question with a rhetorical question. "Do you think that anyone can snatch 95 kilograms and clean and jerk 130 by training only three hours a week?" Point made, but I think he missed the point that I was trying to get him to tell me about his love for the sport, his soft side for the barbell, his extension beyond business obligations and his occasional acceptance of lost salary in order to travel with his athletes to out-of-state meets. Instead, he took my question as an opportunity to talk about the practicality of what he does. He pointed out that you don't spread the sport by telling people about how much you love it – you spread it by producing great lifters out of normal people.

[Look for part 2 of this interview next month, in which we'll learn about Rob's 17-year journey from his first weightlifting experience, in which a weightlifting coach forbid him to ever wear lifting gloves.]

For more information on Coach Rob, please visit:

http://www.focusedtrainers.com/about/staff_robert.htm

The Rep

Plyometric Exercise
by Johnny Nguyen

Plyometric is a type of exercise that utilizes explosive movements with abrupt and acute changes in directions. It involves a rapid stretching and shortening of muscles. The transition between this stretching and the shortening cycle – called the amortization phase – must be rapid. Plyometric training usually involves making a fast contact with something – such as the floor or a medicine ball. For example, bounding across the floor or catching and throwing a medicine ball.

The effect of plyometric activities acts at the muscle, tendon and neural levels. It is the rate of the stretch, rather than the magnitude, that determines the rate of shortening. And the greater the total rate of this stretch-shortening cycle, the higher the output of power. This phenomenon is said to have both mechanical and reflexive properties: Muscles contract to create force, the tendons and connective tissues absorb and release forces, and the stretch-shortening cycle provides a strong stimulation to the nervous system, which then activates large muscle forces. The sum of these processes can create power output much greater than that from its parts.

Power is a strength trait that is trainable, and one effective method is through the use of plyometric exercises. As with all methods of training, proper progression in plyometric should be used for the safest and most effective application. The result is a more agile and athletic body that can quickly change direction and resist injury. Increasing power is a great way to enhance not just sports and games, but also work and life.

FIT Announcements

Giving Back

While celebrating the spirit of giving, the FIT family would like to offer you one free training session, one free massage, or one free week of FIT KIDS or FIT TEENS training for every friend or family member that you refer to us! We will be happy to credit your account upon the completion of their first session.

Please take a moment to check out how FIT has celebrated the spirit of giving throughout the year with postings of our charity event involvement, words from our staff, and fun new photos around the gym!

In addition, we will be participating in a month-long "TRUCK OF LOVE" food drive in order to contribute to a more fruitful holiday

season for those less fortunate in the city of Mountain View. Please direct any questions regarding this project to Analisa Naldi at analisa@focusedtrainers.com.

Everyone here at FIT would like to wish you, our FIT family, and all of our extended family a very healthy, happy, memorable holiday season.

FIT Barbell Club Produces and Sends Great Lifters to Big Meets

Recently FIT Barbell Club -- operated and coached by Rob Earwicker -- sent three of its members to a couple of distinguished weightlifting meets. Lifter Kate Corbin flew to Quebec, Canada, to compete at the USA vs. Canada weightlifting competition for school-age lifters. A week later Danielle Durante and Dana Lee flew to Alabama to compete in the American Open. All three performed outstandingly. Congratulations to all three FIT Barbell Club lifters. We can't wait to watch you progress further under the diligent coaching by one of the best, Coach Rob.

For more information on the FIT Barbell Club program, please contact Coach Rob at: rob@focusedtrainers.com or visit: http://www.focusedtrainers.com/ee_test/index.php/services/bbc

For more information regarding FIT:
Visit - www.focusedtrainers.com
Call - 650-947-9831