

# The Paleo Solution

## Episode 94

Robb Wolf: Hey folks, Robb Wolf here, Episode 94 of the Paleo Solution podcast with the ever large, ever intimidating John Wilburn. John, how are you doing?

John Welbourne: I'm well, thanks. How are you?

Robb Wolf: Thanks. You're totally saving my bacon here. Nicki and I were trapped on the East Coast, trying to get home from Boston, 24 hours of travel to make it home, so the podcast was obviously not going to go up tomorrow, but John is basically saving the day here, so thanks dude.

John Welbourne: Awesome. I was up saving the day.

Robb Wolf: Indeed. Well, you do it well. Anything new? What's going on with you?

John Welbourne: Oh nothing, just been working a ton and trying to get my knee better and you know the babies are cooking well and it just seems like everything is going good. We're going to Ireland on Wednesday. We got to do a CrossFit football seminar in Belfast on Saturday and Sunday, so we'll leave Wednesday, get there Thursday and have a day or two to hangout in Dublin and then head up to Belfast for the seminar and then come home.

Robb Wolf: Any slots still left for the Belfast seminar?

John Welbourne: Oh yeah. We're probably half full. I was hoping for a much bigger response in Belfast but we'll take what we can get and I'm sure it would be great anyway.

Robb Wolf: Well, people who want to get big and strong and fast in Europe, fucking step up and go check this thing out. So you know you still have time. This is going up on Tuesday. You can still buy a slot and get in on that, so do it.

John Welbourne: Oh, that would be awesome. Thank you.

Robb Wolf: Oh totally dude. Well, let's see here. We actually put together a really good episode. I think it has got a potential to be good considering I've been up for 24 hours straight and just had a margarita. We'll see how it actually turns out. But lots of power strength, getting big, hypertrophy type of things.

John Welbourne: Oh, nice.

Robb Wolf: So I figured it was either Nicki, my wife who is intimidating but not necessarily large, whereas you're both intimidating and large. so I figured you would have the upper end on that one so...

John Welbourne: Thanks. I appreciate it.

Robb Wolf: Totally. So I did e-mail you the things, so if you want to crack that open or if you just want to follow along here. I can read these guys but the first one is power strength or hypertrophy and Gareth says, "Hey guys, love the podcast and I'm really enjoying the input of Greg in the new series. I'm 75kg, reasonably lean, 80/20 paleo, fit and strong-ish. Any progress has really stalled for me for a long time now. My goals are to get strong and powerful. I used to do CrossFit fulltime but I have been focused on strength and speed this past year."

"I went through 5 cycles of Wendlers with some gains on my already strong lifts (deads and squats)," John will have a good comment on this -- "While my press and bench press really didn't improve much at all. I've always been strong in the legs and butt but weaker up top. I have made good progress in pull-up strength but anything press related I seem to get nowhere! I'm now cycling into more of a Westside type gig where I'm doing max loads (3x3, 5x3, 3x5, 5x5) and speed work."

"My main question is where does hypertrophy work come in, is it important and is it vital to increasing strength and power? While I want to look good naked (we all do) I'm not willing to work on hypertrophy if it's not going to result in strength or power gains. So are the assistance exercises I was doing in the Wendlers program a good idea? Or should I be focusing on other things? I'm worried that I'm going to remain a 75kg forever, averagely strong dude. I put so much work into all this that I feel my efforts aren't targeted enough. Thanks."

John Welbourne: Wow! That's a mouthful there.

Robb Wolf: And some. A mouthful for a very a depth porn star I think and even more so for us so...

John Welbourne: I want to say that question I think has been answered in 300, 400 and 500-page books, so that kind of reminds me of the deal where somebody asked Matt to pull all the information for endocrinology and as it relates to stress for exercise.

Robb Wolf: Or fat storage yeah.

John Welbourne: Yeah, or fat storage. I know that's a ton of stuff. So what do we know about hypertrophy and it seems to be kind of a dirty word in the CrossFit functional fitness community. But if you think about it, the larger the cross section or the cross sectional size of a muscle the more weight it should be able to support. So yes, theoretically hypertrophy should result in an increased strength. You know for a lot of groups like weightlifters or whatnot that are in body weight type or in weight categories that had become something that's not necessarily useful. But if you're trying to get strong, it always helps to get bigger.

Robb Wolf: And with these guys we've got -- well, we probably -- I think most people will consider an intermediate athlete is well beyond a linear strength progression of a beginner, got a little bit of juice out of the Wendler and like what you and I have both seen with this is that squats and deads, people usually get a little bit of juice out of Wendler but unfortunately it just doesn't seem to be enough volume or stimulus on the pressing side of things to really make some progress. Would you agree with that or are you seeing something different?

John Welbourne: No, that's pretty accurate. I think gym stuff works really, really well. I mean we've seen it work at our own gym. We've done I think probably about 12 cycles of it in my gym, at strength day because it was just one basic lift today, it's super easy and you can plug and play it very easily with a lot of the CrossFit stuff. What we've seen is people's squats and deadlift go up and we haven't really seen much out of the pressing or the bench. So what we ended up doing is we ended up cycling a lot of assistance work and a lot of extra volume.

What we found is that actually pressing up to 3-4 days a week and going overhead actually dramatically help the press, and maybe 2 days on the bench but the problem with the bench is your shoulders get beat up if you start doing more than -- you know maybe one max effort, one heavy volume day 1, kind of intensity day. So it's definitely something we've seen but I think the secret or the magic to a gym's program is the assistance work and you got to -- people always want to cut it short and necessarily don't want to do it, and I always tell people whenever they ask me about his stuff. He said "You know do the 5 sets of 10."

Grab a set of heavy dumbbells, knock it off for as many reps as you can and just focus on getting a ton of assistance work and try to put on some decent size with it."

Robb Wolf: And you know Matt Lalonde and I have been talking about this, like he's been doing some tinkering with backing off of the intensity side of things, actually more staying out of that 85% to 90% range and actually doing some volume work in the -- say like 65% to 80% range for the most part and then about every 3 to 4 weeks, so kind of test like a 3 -un match and do some other tinkering. But it's pretty interesting -- he's making some pretty good progress on that, I'm making some good progress on that. I definitely have a tendency to burnout a little bit.

And so doing some volume work that's well within your capacity, but you're just kind of getting the work done, it definitely seems to be helpful. So this dude 75 kilograms, it doesn't say how tall he is so obviously probably going to be some food issues to consider here also. But if you're structuring this would you have him go back and give the Wendler a shot and just do 5 sets of 10 and just kind of give that a run for maybe a 6-week block and then maybe drop in with more of the heavy more intensity oriented stuffs?

John Welbourne: No. Yeah, what I would look at is I would take that first squat day and I would actually do as prescribed and then I would have a second squat day where I would do the 5 sets of 10 and try to linear progress it or work up to a 10 RM and then the last 4 sets of 10, you know maybe back it off 10% and see about getting the reps, and actually have 2 squat days and then end up having one max effort kind of Wendler cycle kind of deadlift and then be able to pull another day where you were doing either power cleans or power snatches.

And definitely your heavy bench day and then supplement the max effort kind of Wendler press with 5 sets of 10 press on one day and then do a ton of dumbbells, whether it would bench assistance work or a seated dumbbell press or a seated incline with dumbbells and just look at myself like "Hey, you know what? I'm going to nail at least one conventional bench. I'm going to nail one dumbbell bench. I'm going to get 2 squats and one heavy pull, one dynamic pull and try to go overhead at least 3 days a week."

So when I played -- I was training the other fellow, I tried to go overhead at lease with either pressing or dumbbells. And I love to do seated dumbbell press at least 3 days a week. And that was some of the best stuff from my bench.

Robb Wolf: Interesting. And then obviously tons of assistance work on pulling, like dumbbells rows, pull-ups and all that?

John Welbourne: Yeah, I mean my rule of thumb was 3 to 1 pull to press. So for every 1 kind of frontal plane press I was doing, I was always trying to pull at least 3 reps so I would kind of add up the tonnage and just try to triple it. I mean at the very least double it, if not, triple it. So I've never seen anybody that got weaker by doing a ton of pulling.

Robb Wolf: Right. And it just helps posture, you don't get any of that really gnarly kyphosis from the over developed pecks and strenuous and all that from the bench only, no back work dude, so yeah.

John Welbourne: Well, you get those internally rotated shoulders and the kind of concave caving chest. And you know guys that don't pull usually don't really have big traps. I've never seen anybody that didn't developed massive traps by doing a ton of pulls. So it think to really balance out that physique and really balance out your back, you got to do a ton of pulls.

Robb Wolf: Cool, cool. I like it, I like it. Okay, the next one from Ty, building muscle. He says "Love the Podcast. I've listened to them all some twice. Greg is a great addition," and Didi is. Unfortunately we don't have him on this because he had to actually coach a bunch of Olympic weight lifters at this time. So we had John volunteer to pinch hit on that but -- "Just finished a great Olympic weightlifting seminar hosted by the amazing Greg Everett. I wanted to give him a shoutout and the recognition he deserves." I would completely second that. Greg is just phenomenal weight lifting coach. He has learned a ton from old folks that he has interned with, and then obviously the coaching.

"I learned a ton from Greg and his staff and feel that I now have a great foundation to build upon. After the seminar I couldn't wait to get back to my gym and show the people that I work out with how much I had improved. Before the seminar I could only "squat clean," a 16-pound medicine ball now, thanks to Greg I'm Squat cleaning the 20-pound ball with perfect form. The people at my CrossFit gym are blown away by my Squat clean and Squat Snatches."

"So glad to know that the difference between a snatch and a squat snatch and a clean and a squat clean!!!!!! Thanks for the help Greg!!! Oh yeah thanks for showing me how to low back squat too. Great seminar. I learned more in 2 days than I've learned in a year of trying to do these lifts. Can't wait to start throwing around a shit ton of weight. I've been doing CrossFit not at a bad gym (our coaches care about us) for about 1 year now and have been eating about 90-100% paleo for that time."

“I’ve done 2 30 day challenges during that time and have dropped my weight from an unhealthy 220 to 190 at 5’11”. Waist size has gone from 38 inches to 32 inches. Still no 6-pack but who cares. I have a 4-pack and am starting to see some riblets showing through as well. I would like to put some weight back on and build some more muscle but I don’t want to put on a lot of fat. I know doesn’t everybody. Just wondering how well it would work to still eat super clean and add some milk and cheese. I never really took the cheese out of my diet entirely and don’t have any reactions to dairy. If I do add more dairy how much should I add? Gallon a day?”

“The reason for this question is I’m not seeing as many gains as I used to in my lifts and I feel like I’m getting scrawny. I don’t need to be 70’s big or anything and I still need to be able to move fairly quickly not just for CrossFit but also for my job as a Police and SWAT officer. 10 pounds would be fine. I work out 5 days a week. 3 days I’m doing a Wendler lifting cycle with a short 5-10 minute metcon. 1-2 days are longer 15-20 minute metcons and usually one day of Oly Lifting. I really want to maintain my capacity but get a little bigger. I don’t weigh and measure, I just eat till I’m full.”

“Sorry if this is a little scattered I just got back from Oly Lifting my face off and am still in awe from watching Greg’s beasts throw around crazy weights. Thanks for everything.” So I’m guessing that the 16 to 20 med ball was ingest?

John Welbourne: Yeah, I think he’s making a little fictitious.

Robb Wolf: So John you comment on this. Like it seems like he’s doing 6 different programs here?

John Welbourne: Yeah, that’s -- I keep -- yeah.

Robb Wolf: So we’ve got Wendler, we’ve got some short metcons, some long metcons and he’s a SWAT officer.

John Welbourne: Yeah. When we see this over and over again, I get hit with a ton of questions like this on my Talk to Me Johnnie site. People are always looking to kind of blend the best of everything. I want to kind of take up - - you know a pinch of this, a pinch of this, a pinch through this and I’m going to make my own special secret recipe that’s going to somehow magically make me exactly what I want to be, and the invariably playing kind of musical chairs and all of a sudden the music stops and they’re not sitting on a chair. I mean it’s -- you know I remember somebody wants --

commented on some of the GPP stuff that -- oh God, I can't remember who the guy was, but basically the effect of about the trice's sit on too many seats, doesn't seat on any seat.

Robb Wolf: Nice.

John Welbourne: And I always related, I always thought about, hey that's kind of like musical chairs but I think if people can kind of just focus and say "Hey, you know what? I need to be in shape for my job. Let's look at the job description and what's the requirements of my job. I know I'm going to have to heavy -- carry some heavy stuff, kicking a door. I need to be strong and fast and pretty agile." I think the program, it gets pretty easy. I mean I've never seen a slow or un-agile Olympic lifter. So I think he's pretty good there. I think keeping the short heavy metcons and doing a Wendler like cycle is pretty good.

I think with the eating thing -- you know people think that there's some magic recipe to eating or leaning out or whatnot, and when we just looked at this stuff it was like you know you get a calorie surplus and if you're not training up to it, then you're going to put on a little bit or you know what we really looked at is -- and I know you and I talked about this quite often is supplementing with those branch chain aminos and especially that Lucien and trying to get those through the roof and it's amazing when you put on a little excess body fat and you start hitting the branch chain aminos can actually get yourself into a bit of caloric deficit. It's amazing how quick people start leaning out.

Robb Wolf: When people start calorie restricting one of the things that can happen, we're always trying to avoid it as some catabolism, some breakdown of muscle mass. The branch chain amino acids are kind of the first thing to go in that scenario. They're kind of the first ones to get sacrificed into the gluconeogenic pathway. So if you get the branch chain aminos and some Lucien like John said, and we've seen some pretty aggressive supplementation, like a 20 to 40 grams a day on that with the calorie restriction protocol and it really seems to hold muscle loss pretty significantly.

Matt Lalonde just shot us a paper which seemed to indicate that you could do some pretty solid calorie restriction with the significant branch chain amino acid supplementation and obviously also a baseline of just kind of mixed protein foods and it really, really curtails muscle loss. But that's one side of the equation. The other side of the equation is then trying to gain muscle which we're wanting to do a calorie excess but you know this is always that tradeoff of how do you get enough calories to

grow but not so much getting fat, with this branch aminos plus maybe some -- you know particularly heavy dose of Lucien with that maybe pretty helpful.

John Welbourne: Yeah, I know. I also think, just making sure you're getting at minimum 1 gram of protein per pound of body weight, hitting those branch chain aminos, and keeping a diet that's kind of avoiding -- we always talk about this stomach inflammation. Everybody wants to go back to the milk and definitely you know if you drink a ton of milk, you're going to put on some weight, you're going to put on some size and you're probably going to put on just some body mass and some fat.

But it's amazing how everybody wants to not only have this massive performance. "I want a 600 pound squat. I want to be able to do this in 2 minutes and I want to look like a Calvin Klein super model and I'm always like --" You know if you're 25 or 23 years old and you go into spring break, go forward. If you're 35-40 years old and you're a SWAT officer, I don't think you really have to worry about you know looking like a Calvin Klein super model unless you're heading down on the weekend to go and try to pick up dudes.

Robb Wolf: Because you have higher standards typically than the females.

John Welbourne: Yeah. Oh yeah. Well, I mean you know seeing it as we're both married, I mean obviously women must not have super high standards.

Robb Wolf: Well, and both of our wives are pretty good-looking and also they probably do a lot better than us. Oh yeah.

John Welbourne: That's what I always say. I feel lucky. But anyway you know everybody wants everything. Everybody wants their cake and eat it too. I want to have performance and I want to look the part. And we get a ton of questions especially about like the intermittent fasting and lean gains and what Martin does and he does some amazing work for training bodybuilders and if you look at his training cycle and you know the amount of volume that he's doing and the guys he's training, and you know you start adding a ton of metabolic conditioning into that and some calorie restriction and guys seem crashing out and I see more people crash and burn, trying to do a ton of metabolic conditioning with that type of work.

And I always tell people, "Look at what he -- suggest and look at what he recommends for his training." I mean the guys like I don't put in more than two hours a week in the gym, I'm in the gym for maybe 30 minutes 4



times a week and he does some heavy ladders and works up to this and then does some reverse pyramids, and he's pretty good and hits a ton of branch chains and gets rocking and rolling. So people have to look at what they're eating and I always say eat a necessary amount of food to match your performance.

You know if your job -- if you have a performance base job like you're a SWAT officer and believe me at the end of the day I much rather be able to move and lift something pretty heavy than worry about what I look at when I'm in the shower. I'll be a little bit more of a performance-based guy. But you know hey, everybody wants everything so I guess that's what we're here for.

Robb Wolf:

And I totally agree on that. And one other thing I throw out there is just try to have some sort of self-assessment on what your androgen levels are, like are you storing body fat in the mid-section? And I'm sorry this is kind of getting a little exclusionary to the female listeners to some degree but it's -- you know you wake up with morning erection? Do you have libido? Those things are pretty important. If those are not functioning well, then even considering some sort of a mass gain protocol as in my opinion a complete waste of time.

If you have some sort of cortisol issues, being a police officer, probably do, do the best you can to get that stuff short of making sure that sleep is good, you might do some adrenal support, you might go in and work with a natural path or a social medicine doc to get some help on trying to do every single thing you can to make sure that the testosterone levels are in a more optimized position because we know clearly that people -- like just going through puberty and also from what we've seen different form of logical scenarios, you can have people on marginal calorie intake do some pretty good muscle mass increase.

They can gain some muscle mass of that, just because the hormonal signaling is there and then the other side of that, you can stuff all the food down your pipe hole that you want, but if you don't have good energy levels, it's not going to go anywhere that you want. It's not going to be a favorably thing at all.

John Welbourne:

No. I know you're definitely working against yourself and I always love what -- I think it's coach Rodway, he says "Are you a recovery giant or a recovery midget?" And you have to kind of know where you fit in this thing and you know if you're not a kind of recovery and then you go out and you do too much volume and do too much, it's going to actually work

against you so you have to kind of understand who you are and understand what your training looks like and have a clear defined goal.

And if you don't have a clear defined goal of, "Hey this is where I'm starting, this is where I'm finishing and this is how I want to get there and this is the path that I want to get there. And this is how you know I'm going to do it and I'm going to stick to it and I'm going to stay doing this for at least 12-14 weeks and I'm going to see how it plays out." The problem is everybody does this kind of Johnny-come-lately deal where "Hey, this looks good today. Okay, well I'm going to try this. I'm going to do this for a week and I'm going to do this for a week and I'm going to do this for a week," and they end up never doing anything.

So my advice is just you know find one path, stay on it and give it a shot and actually run on its course and see how it works, and then reevaluate.

Robb Wolf:

Nice, I dig it. Cool. So I think you'll like this one a lot because you're been peeking out on a lot of all the Russian literature. So this one is from Keith, "No such thing as over training. I don't know if either of you have heard of John Broz," which I have. He's a pretty interesting dude. "He's an Oly lifting coach out in Las Vegas that trained with Antonio Krastev. He's got a lot of really strong athletes including Pat Mendes, who may be the first American Olympic champion in many years. Broz has a YouTube channel called BROZKNOWS, in case you or any listeners want to watch their videos. Be sure to watch Pat's videos, if you do! They are insane. Anyway, I'd just like to know what the two of you think of this post on John Broz's website" which there is a link to it.

And it's basically central nervous system and overtraining, and folks can click through that but I'll read a little more. "It'd be interesting to hear your takes on this, since Greg is an Oly coach and Robb is a Biochemist. John Broz is of the opinion that there is no such thing as overtraining, relating weightlifting to being a garbage man. If you were sore after your first day as a garbage man, you wouldn't call in, you would still go to work and suck it up. Same with weightlifting, apparently. I wonder if this has anything to do with the fact that Olympic lifting is primarily concentric lifting. But, then again, he has his athletes squat to max every day, then do working sets of doubles/triples."

So one thing I'll throw in there, you know there is this volume accumulation, work hard in the element. But Broz is pretty wittily about recognizing some things that will absolutely coat your nervous system and he's made a point that you can squat pretty heavy almost daily but you can pull heavy like as in like a max deadlifts maybe a couple of times a

year. So John if you followed his stuff, like what's your thought on all this? We've talked about it but --

John Welbourne: Yeah, I know. I'm a big fan of his. I think anybody is going to come out and try to revamp this stuff but it's -- you know when you look a lot of this kind of Bulgarian type attitude where it's like "Hey, you know we're going to do this and this is our life." I mean, that's exactly how it should be. If you want to be an Olympic lifter, you want to be the best in the world you should train 2 or 3 times a day. The problem is, is people are never really willing to commit to this stuff.

But the problem is, is that you need a huge cross section of the population and throw them all into this program. I think you're going to break a lot of eggs but that's kind of professional sports. I remember being in college and as a freshman or a sophomore in college, we had probably 20 guys in our offensive line and we went out to spring ball and it was tough, it was hard and our coach said "Hey, you know what? You get hurt, you go get surgery, come back next year and you know it's tough to make an omelet without breaking a whole bunch of eggs." But at the end hopefully I have 5 good eggs.

So I think with Broz stuff, I mean it's a demanding sport and it takes a demanding task master and the guy's got a plan. He's going to find lifters that are going to fit within his plan and he's going to make him the best, you know? I hope we get a ton of goal medals and the guy rocks it. You know I like watching the videos and seeing it, and I think what's going to happen at least kind of -- at least from some of the stuff I've read is he just ends up just beating the guys down so bad that they just end up always training hurt, always end up training and it doesn't really ever -- you know it kind of -- it's that kind of log, diminishing returns. I guess if you just beat them down then they never really know when they're hurt and they just kind of persevere through it.

I think I read a quote of his that said, the only time he really got hurt was when he took time off and he felt great, and then all of a sudden he hit a big lift and something ripped on him. So I guess the idea was, don't ever really let yourself ever truly really recover and you probably never really hurt yourself, so I think it makes sense and we'll see if it works. I mean it worked pretty good for the Bulgarians. Let's see how it works for John Broz.

Robb Wolf: Yeah. And I think I remember watching the Ironmind videos that we talked about. There were 10,000 registered competitive Olympic lifters in the town of Sofia Bulgaria, whereas we had fewer than like 2,000

registered lifters in totality in the United States, so it was kind of crazy, definitely a huge sample hold if they had to work with this. It's interesting too, like Broz will talk about some of the folks he has worked with or even with themselves where you will come in on your next training session and you're working with an empty bar or sometimes upward to an hour because you're broken and tossed but that's the best that you can do that day.

And I guess what some people talk about is just trying to plan that backing off or that periodization or whatnot, whereas what he is trying to do is just basically see where you go each day and find that maximum and if the maximum is an empty bar, and so be it and then you come back for your PM session and then you possibly PR on the DM session.

John Welbourne: Yeah, I know. I think it makes sense. The longer I've been training, the more do I realize the percentages or you know just kind of a guideline. You know the other day I did kind of an interesting experiment. We have a girl who is a pretty competitive tower racer. So they start at the bottom of a building and you run up the stairs as fast as you can, and it's pretty gnarly. I was watching some videos of her and it's a pretty intense sport. She was an 800-meter runner and triple jumper in college and is pretty strong and we came in and worked around up to a 10 RM on her squat and then dropped to 10% and let her go for max reps.

So she gets her 10 RM, we dropped it -- I want to say about 10 kilos and I watched her do 24 reps on her next set.

Robb Wolf: Which was just crazy.

John Welbourne: Which was crazy. And then -- she reps at 3-5 minutes and did it again and got 24 reps. And I remember thinking to myself like, I couldn't even put that into a percentage, you know? But most of the preliminary chart stuff is all done on Olympic weight lifters and males. And what we've seen is that these percentages don't really necessarily match up for women. The only thing I really ever seen percentages work for is hey, if I'm going to work up to 1 RM in let's say in my squat, then I want to back it off to do dynamic work, you know to be able to you know say "Hey, you have to do this percentage."

Well, if you can't move the weight as fast I need you to move it -- let's say on a dynamic day then you need to lighten the weight. So it's like we've played with it where Louie and those guys would be like, "Hey you need to do 50/50 560." We've gone as high as 75/85 or 80/85. And if the bar speed was slowing down, the guy couldn't move that weight this fast and

we just kept cutting and playing with the percentages and you know I kind of like even the idea of working up to, you know heavy 1 or 3 or 5 RM or whatever it is and then doing -- you know backing it off a percentage and doing reps and actually hitting it, just because it allows you to kind of find that daily matrix, which I really like for the Bulgarian stuff.

I mean, you know what's the heaviest you can lift on that day and I think people get caught up all the time between rep maxes and Personal Best or PRs, where yeah you know, you're not going to set a PR every time you lift but we're going to work up to that, the heaviest reps, you can do on that given day.

Robb Wolf: Which some days may be very, very light.

John Welbourne: Yeah, and then that's that natural --

Robb Wolf: And it's what folks kind of lose sight of and it's -- yeah, yeah.

John Welbourne: Well, I mean you know it's this idea that you have to test it ever day, that you have to somehow -- you know I was just -- I just clicked on Facebook not long ago and there were somebody that you know will ask me to like something and I clicked on it and the picture was better today than I was yesterday and I actually thought about that for a while and was like "Uhm."

I'm sure there were a lot of days I was better than I was yesterday, you know? It's one of those things where it's like I've never been in a situation where "Hey, I'm going to be better every single day that I was and it just doesn't work like that," you know?

Robb Wolf: Right, right. Well, and again it's that wild mind of a beginner, you know?

John Welbourne: Yeah, which you know ripped as a great job and that -- what does he call it? The Novice Effect, which I think is a great article. Where hey, you know -- and everybody knows it. Anybody is trained for anything at that time can always say, "Good." Remember when I went to the gym and I got stronger every single day and then all of sudden it came to a grinding halt and I realize this is when the training begins.

Robb Wolf: Yeah. And you just have to kind of knuckle it in and keep going. Sometimes you keep in mind too with a lot of the stuff and I think John kind of alluded to that. This Broz approach or the Bulgarian approach, this is -- if you're really taking this seriously as your sport, your competitive

sport and I do wish that we had Greg on this. We might revisit this. I know Greg is really not a fan of this methodology and so he'll play with a little bit of a classic Russian planning -- you know kind of plan de-loads and stuff like that trying to avoid the big burnout and whatnot.

But it's -- in a way, you know most of Greg folks that he's working with, like Amy is potentially going to the Olympic, he's got some other people who are hopefuls on the Olympic team. So these people are doing a pretty damn full time and so that's another thing to keep in mind. Like are you trying to emulate a training protocol that you would never consider doing unless you were a full time, essentially a professional athlete?

John Welbourne: Well, if you're a professional athlete, you put in a time. I mean basically you get up, you train twice a day, every meal is dedicated to try to increase performance, you get a massage, you're doing all the active rehab stuff you need to do and basically looking at this is your life and I always tell people, "If you're going to train, like if you want to try to -- you know be competitive in the CrossFit games or you want to be the best at something, you got to start putting in the hours and you know this thing is going to be by somebody just doing it on the weekends, or just because it sounds like it's fun."

Robb Wolf: Not anymore.

John Welbourne: No.

Robb Wolf: Definitely not anymore.

John Welbourne: No, it's past that. And you know if you want to be a great Olympic lifter and there were some guys out of Northern California that I ran into at the games that you know had taken our seminar and you know we stayed in contact and then actually move out to Vegas to go train with John Broz, because they wanted to be good Olympic lifters, and I thought that was awesome, that these guys "Hey, you know what? This is what we want to do. We really want to be good at it. We're going to go out and train who we think is the best and we're going to dedicate our lives to this." And you know I was so stoked for them. I'm like "Awesome!" I'm glad to see it.

Robb Wolf: Totally. Cool. Well, this will be kind of an interesting contrast actually. This from Tony, Conjugate Method and O-Lifting. "Greg and Robb, what are your thoughts on Louie Simmons' "Conjugate Method" and how it applies to Olympic Lifting? I feel like I am at a plateau right now. I just

started concentrating on O-lifting as my primary focus instead of CrossFit. I immediately had some major increases. At a body weight of about 175, I went from a snatch of 155 to 185, and a C&J of 215 to 250 in just a couple months.”

“But I feel stuck at these weights now. I’ve been struggling to get 195 in the snatch for a couple weeks and to tell you the truth I don’t get 250 over my head every time. I was following your “Classic Cycle” and I just switched over to your “Strength Cycle” from the Catalyst archives in hopes of shaking things up; avoiding “accommodation” if will a la Louie Simmons.”

“I just stumbled upon this Conjugate Method stuff via the CrossFit Journal and found it interesting. I am about a third of the way through your book and plan to purchase the DVD. I’m loving it so far and have learned a lot! I have never been coached in the O-lifts and am appreciating the technical insights into the lifts. In other words, what are the best strategies to continue to make improvements in the olympic lifts without leveling off or accommodating? P.S. I had deer heart for dinner last night. It was fantastic!” He must have hit some road kill.

John Welbourne: What’s -- wow! He’s struggling for a couple of weeks to make a PR.

Robb Wolf: Yeah.

John Welbourne: Yeah, I’m like “Wow!” I remember struggling for months. Yeah, I know that’s good on him. I think where people get a little confused especially with Olympic weightlifting and you know I don’t I claim to be great on Olympic weightlifting coach or even a great olympic weight lifter myself, but the thing I know is that -- actually the sport of Olympic weightlifting is the sport specific or the SPP and it just happens that the training actually is the same as the sport. So I think where people get a little confused especially with this conjugate method by you know it’s always changing the lifts, the Olympic sport is Snatch, Clean and Jerk and a Snatch.

So it’s like you know you can add all of these different lifts and start changing them every week and start doing you know max efforts dynamic work and at the end of the day the only way you’re ever really going to get good Olympic weightlifting is with reps. It’s not a brute strength, you know even though strength is a huge component of it. I just think that you know you’re going to need an X amount of reps and it might be upward, 25,000 reps a year and you’re never really going -- really ever learn the mastery or the skill of this whole deal unless you’re actually putting in the time to learning the movements, you know?

I mean I guess you could just brute strength, you know pull the bar off the ground and you know squat down as fast as you can with the thing crashing up on you and just stand up with brute strength but you know after a while that's not going to last. You're not going to last so...

Robb Wolf: Well, and this -- for a 175-pound dude, 250 Clean and Jerk, 185 Snatches, pretty good for kind of a novice hitting the --

John Welbourne: Well, for a guy who's never been coached, I mean that's --

Robb Wolf: For a guy who has never been coached.

John Welbourne: Yeah.

Robb Wolf: Absolutely, yeah.

John Welbourne: Who is reading it out of a book, I mean that's pretty phenomenal. I mean you know like -- I think this guy is either bullshitting us or he's being way too hard on himself, because I don't feel bad for this guy at all.

Robb Wolf: I think this is accurate but it's I think you could put nothing more important into this going and you know like, going to catalyst and spending a day with Greg or finding whoever is a qualified Olympic weightlifting coach near you and going in spending a day with that person and really allocating some funds and some time towards doing that once a month for a while or more frequently if you can pull it off. Like my gut senses that -- and this is exactly what John was saying. You need the reps, so you need quality reps. And so before you start looking for the next super gizmatic, you know program, make sure that you're snatch and clean and jerk are really legit.

It's more in to a tennis backhand or a standing back flip than it is on deadlights. You know it's not a brute force thing. It's a highly technical movement. So the technical coaching is probably where you're going to get. And with good technical coaching you could probably put 10% in very short work on both of these which would stick you to a 275 clean and jerk and you know getting upwards of a 100 kilo snatch. So a 225 snatch which is a huge improvement and really not any need to improve the engine you have just making everything fire the way it should.

John Welbourne: Amen.

Robb Wolf: Amen.



John Welbourne: Amen.

Robb Wolf: Okay. So let's see we've got Ben, "Back Squats Have Given Me Radiation." Let's see what the heck this is about. "Hopefully the subject line got Greg's attention, here goes: I do backsquats for 3 working sets of 5 reps each. Poundages are increasing no problems. Loving the results. Feel great, looking good, etc. I do have a problem though. Increasingly after each working set I develop a progressively worsening pain down my left arm. It begins at about the shoulder area and radiates down to the mid-forearm/wrist area."

"I often describe the discomfort as "hot." Or kind of like an electrical stimulation. It is painful but it's not straight pain. Hard to describe. I've Googled it and indeed there seem to be many on Tnation forums and elsewhere who experience something similar. I do many stretches to perhaps alleviate it but it sure enough it always returns. After the backsquats are done it slowly fades away. Within about 2 hours or so it is essentially gone. I backsquat Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. By the time I backsquat next I am always back at 100% but then of course it begins to set in with every session. Recently though the pain has lingered after my workout is fully done and even overnight while sleeping."

"Anything you could recommend to alleviate this seemingly somewhat common problem? I know this isn't directly paleo-related but with Ripp's popularity, CrossFit, et cetera I figure there are a lot of listeners back squatting. Your podcast is rad by the way.

John Welbourne: Oh, geez. It sounds like nerve pain. We've seen a lot of people especially when they're squatting, they kind of do some funky things with their elbows and with their shoulders and without actually seeing the person squat, I really couldn't tell you but from what he sounds like, it sounds like nerve pain. Either the bar is probably sitting way too low on his back and he needs to get it up a little higher or he's doing something funky. He's probably actually kind of pushing his elbows under -- I can only imagine what the guy's squat looks like but I'm imagining that he's probably not getting the bar in the right position and probably try to jack up his elbow so that he can kind of lock that thing in and he's probably not standing up at the big chest and he's kind of probably dumping his shoulder.

The other thing I'd look for is that the bottom of the squat -- I'd get a camera and try to take a picture or film the bottom of the squat and pause it and see if you're leaning to one side. I know when my right

shoulder gets a little -- is kind of dinged up. I know when I got to a squatting pretty heavy, as I would actually go to the bottom of the squat I would actually notice that I would kind of dip to the right and it was something that kind of came -- to be pretty pronounced especially when the weight got heavier and heavier. So it really forced me at the bottom of the squat to actually really work on pushing up on the bar.

Louie Simons also gave me a great pointer that I didn't really think about until a few months later when I was sitting with Dr. Romanoff and we were talking about physics and force and he told me that the first time he talked to Louie and Louie was talking about squatting a big weight and that you don't think about lifting with your legs. You're actually thinking about driving the bar off your back and Romanoff told me, he goes, "That was probably the most profound thing I had ever heard anybody really ever say when lifting weights because that's kind of -- in physics that's the point of the weight that you really just can't absorb the way you can kind of try to generate it off you with your legs. You have to actually drive it at the bar.

So I know that cue really helped me and the minute I sort of kind of -- to stand really erect and actually think about driving the weight off my back, it made a huge difference.

Robb Wolf:

Yeah. And to me it sounds a little bit like a possibly brachial plexus impingement which the brachial plexus is a big nerve bundle emanating out of the neck and going down under the arm, it dives under the clavicle and lots of times folks who first start overhead squatting particularly in this kind of high rep kind of CrossFit scenario is they can get some numbness on the pinky finger and the ring finger because that's the dermatome that primarily gets impacted on the lateral part of the brachial plexus. If they do some good mobility work, that can help a lot. I would recommend make sure your squatting form is dialed and all that.

I have noticed since I haven't been doing as much gymnastics and Capoeiras when I used to, I actually feel my shoulders now for the first time in my life when I'm squatting and then I started getting back in doing some of those work, doing a ton of back bends, back walkovers and stuff like that and like really got my upper thoracic mobility reestablished and I don't feel my shoulders at all. So making sure -- again, the technicality is good and make sure -- some mobility and some stretching is simply not enough like you might need to step up your game and gymnastics is a great place to start looking for the -- to compliment to the weightlifting.

John Welbourne: Nice.

Robb Wolf: Cool! Cool! Almost done, I think this is the last one, this one from Greg, "Weight Gain and Ketosis." "What's up Greg and Robb, I'm 6'1, 180 and have been lifting for about 4 years." And I'm guessing 180 is not in kilos, that's probably in pounds. "After years of being a skinny bitch, I decided to get serious about lifting. My first year I was doing the bodybuilding split – you can guess how that turned out. I might have gained 5 pounds."

"I then began doing 3 of 4 day a week splits consisting of incline bench with dumbbells, press, squat, dead. I haven't heard anyone call me "skinny" in about 2 years now, which is great because in high school I heard comments all the time about how skinny I was. I was the quarterback on my football team and was pretty embarrassed with how I looked in football pants and I'm not talking about between the legs, my legs in general are what was embarrassing."

"I made some progress off the squat, press dead and bench program but am still not where I want to be. I have been paleo for about a year and remember when Matt Lalonde said a Ketogenic diet is good for mass gain. This seems to be the opposite of what I've always heard which is Carbs will help put on weight. What are both of your thoughts on a Ketogenic diet for someone trying to gain weight? I plan on eating a ton of beef, eggs, bacon, coconut products, avocados, et cetera. I don't want to get too crazy with milk because the gallon of milk a day thing just seems like an obvious health risk. Love the podcast. Thanks guys, have a bitching summer."

So John, low Carb or not?

John Welbourne: Oh, boy. I would say no.

Robb Wolf: I would say no.

John Welbourne: Yeah, I would say negative on that. What Matt was talking about was that if you eat enough protein and get enough caloric surplus you will put on weight. The problem --

Robb Wolf: And he added one thing and they're also which was the significant amount of fat, particularly saturated, fat decreases sex hormone binding protein.

John Welbourne: Yes.

Robb Wolf: So you've got more --

John Welbourne: Available testosterone.

Robb Wolf: -- potentially available testosterone in circulation but we can do it in other ways too.

John Welbourne: Well, the thing is and Robb knows this -- I mean I tried the Ketogenic diet for -- geez less than -- I think it was less than 50 grams for six months and then actually I ate no Carbs for six months and all I'll say is that my muscles got kind of smooth and I just literally felt tired. I didn't have any energy, I know everything kind of went backwards and when I actually start adding the Carbs back in it was literally as if somebody was filling my muscles up with water. I mean, I'd literally put on size. I put on mass I got more to find. I felt better. I slept better.

It was as if somebody was walking around like holding me in a warm blanket. It was -- I mean I almost laughed at that day, right around New Year's when I was at your house, when we started eating those Japanese yams and when we finished about seven or eight of them and it was as if somebody just wrapped me up in a warm blanket. I haven't slept well in a year.

Robb Wolf: But John slept like 12 hours that night.

John Welbourne: Yeah. It was great!

Robb Wolf: I don't even think we had booze with the meal. Yeah, it just knocked you out. You know the interesting thing with the whole Ketosis gig and I'm probably guilty of perpetuating too much low Carb too often particularly early in this CrossFit scene and all that stuff but I think a lot of people tend to run on either too many Carbs or kind of the wrong Carbs and so they dialed in into kind of Ketogenic phase. They do get a performance on the plate. Matt saw this, I saw this, John you saw this the first time that you kind of went in to Ketosis but then after a while once your body adapts to that.

And once you're not really inflamed and you're not really metabolically broken anymore, it's maybe a cool thing to dip into occasionally, there's some arguments for some health benefits and whatnot. But if you're doing any type of hard training and really if you're trying to gain muscle mass you need to eat a lot of protein, you need to eat a lot of calories and at the end of the day you're going to either bum out on your

digestive ability like you're going to get diarrhea, basically you're going to start shitting yourself because you have too much fat in the mix.

And so you need more Carbs and somewhere yams, sweet potatoes -- starchier type of squash and stuff like that are a great place to enhance your digestive potential because you got something besides that protein that you're eating and it'll just kind of break things up and you won't be so bored with it. So if you really want to tackle this thing, I would definitely keep -- I don't know maybe a gram to a gram and a half of Carbs per pound of body weight per day. And then maybe even a little bit more than that. Try to stick the bulk of it post-workout.

Again Martin from Lean Gain has talked -- you know go read some of that stuff like the nutrient partitioning we've talked about it a lot around here. But Martin does a really good treatment on that stuff. And just think about getting the bulk of your calories post-workout, particularly the Carbs, lots of protein, make sure you're taking a de-load week every third week and you should do pretty well with that.

John Welbourne: Yeah. Now that's spot on man. That's exactly how I definitely look at it. It's as if we discussed this before.

Robb Wolf: It's almost like we've talked about it before. John share the e-mail that you got from the dude that -- no, you've got two stories. I'm just -- I'm mixing two of them up. The other guy that was -- or won like a national championship in Judo and yet another guy recently who just kind of wrote you like, "Hey man thanks. I want to let you know how it's going." The guy was doing the CrossFit football program -- both these guys are doing the basic CrossFit football program and then using it to augment their grappling and share the success these guys had.

John Welbourne: Yeah. Well, I ended up getting a question back in March, there was a BJJ guy who was competing in some different stuff and he actually had some questions about game day and nutrition so I kind of shot him what I had done and kind of what my protocol was when I played in a post called game day and nutrition on my Talk To Me Johnnie site and he ended up giving me some pretty decent feedback.

He had gone in and --actually let me pull it up. He -- let me see he said, "Per your suggestion I now get up early in tournament days and eat two chicken breasts, a whole avocado and a large yam about four hours before the fight. By the time I'm on the mat I'm usually feeling hungry again which is perfect because I prefer like you to compete on relatively empty stomach."

That was something through my entire career I remember one time I played on a full stomach and I played terrible. So my idea was that I would always get up a couple of hours before the game and I would always eat a little bit of chicken, a little bit of avocados, you know a little bit of fruit, you know something and I always wanted to be hungry by the time it was game time. And I always felt that I played much better when I had -- when I didn't have a full stomach.

So I passed it on to this guy and he said -- let's see he said, "Yeah, by the time I was four hours scheduled to fight, by the time I was on the mat I was feeling hungry again which was perfect." And he goes, "I was able to compete on a relatively empty stomach which allowed me to -- you know definitely feel pretty good." They said during the breaks he would now bring along container full of oranges which we know that the oranges and the fructose helps refit -- replenish those glycogen source pretty quick and then at the end he was pounding yams and kind of stuck with this whole thing and then he go home after the match and eat some steaks, some asparagus and have some more yams and wash down the glass of wine.

And he said he competed in three tournaments since putting your recommendation into practice and he said he won all three age and weight classes in all three tournaments and won the open division in the last two which was huge accomplishment, seeing it that he's 37 years old and a father of four. And he's competing against a lot younger, stronger guys who are fresh out of college training fulltime. So he definitely was pretty stoked and you know was very appreciative for the recommendation, so I was happy to help him.

And then the other one that you had mentioned was I had gotten feedback from a guy who had played -- you know was in -- was playing college football and kind of decided that he was over it and ended up kind of falling out and he'd kind of allowed his weight to blow up to about 330 pound and he had somehow kind of stumbled on CrossFit football and ended up kind of doing it and just kept doing it, kept doing it, kept doing it and he said he ended up slimming down to about 225 pounds and walking on and trying to play at West Virginia and he ended up finding that he wasn't able to walk on because of his eligibility.

But he was pretty stoked that -- you know here he was at 330 and now he's down on almost 100 pounds and he was in better shape than he was when he was in high school, so we always some pretty great feedback and I try to share it on Talk To Me Johnnie. It's always awesome when

you're doing this stuff to actually get, you know some quality feedback like this.

Robb Wolf:

Yeah. And you know it's just that thing again that the folks that kind of dig in to your program. You've got a really nice mix of some planned volume and intensity work, some mobility work, some brief conditioning bouts that it will really augment whatever it is that you're doing in your sport, and then if people fuel themselves properly then their crushing stuff on that so it's a good -- it's almost like a 10-year veteran of a -- one of the highest level sports in the world is putting the thing together or something so...

John Welbourne:

Well, I mean it's kind of interesting especially with a lot of these training stuff and I kind of always think about this, you know people always are so quick to throw around these terms like "Oh, I'm just trying to build up my baseline GPP and my general physical preparedness and there's SPP in sports specific," and everything you do in the weight room to some extent is GPP. I mean you might be able to take specific time domains like you do in football like, "Hey going on 5 to 7 seconds, 45 seconds rest, 70 times on a Sunday."

And you can take those time domains and kind of mix them with general strength training and that's where we get a lot of the metcon stuff and what we call our general specific training, but the specific training like putting heavy bar in your back or pressing a heavy bar overhead or doing assistance work it still fits in that general stuff, and I really wish I could say, "Hey you know what? We're going to train sport specific in the weight room but unless you're going out on the field or the mat or the pitch or the ice," you know training for your sport, that's the true sport specific nature of the stuff.

And all we're really trying to do is just sharpen, harden -- you know sharpen the tools harden the armor so that you have all these things ready to go so that when you need to adapt them, use them, train them, you're able to go out in the field and be productive. And I think people have really benefited from the program and that it's planned, it's smart, it's not supposed to kill people. It's supposed to get you in good shape, get you strong, get you stable, get you functional and get you out on the field to be able to go out and use this stuff.

And it's always great when we get good feedback where people are using the program to be successful. You know at the end of the day I could care less about the workout, are they working, is this player getting better, is he -- you know does he have success in what he's choosing to use it for?

And that's the greatest accomplishment or more importantly the greatest feedback I can get is that people are using the program to be successful then I know we're on the right track.

Robb Wolf: Yeah and if not then you have to burn the whole site down and start over so -- yeah, that's cool.

John Welbourne: Yeah. And that's easy. I mean it's like I'll be the first one like -- you know I purposely never married myself to anything that I think what gets really hard is when strength coaches or people marry themselves to one idea and they are backing that play and if it doesn't pan out then they're basically standing on a house of cards or thin ice. And I think when I looked at that programming in my training I had done a lot of different stuff and I knew when it bailed -- boiled down to is like lift heavy weights, move as fast as I can and run my ass off and you know get my body in shape and be strong and stable and healthy when I got out to the field and could I use what I learned in the off scene -- off season, was it successful?

And I think what people get into trouble is like "This is all I am and this is who I am and I'm not allowed to change." What if it doesn't work? What if you know you can't adjust, what if you can't bring in somebody and not everybody is going to be the same. If somebody comes to me and they can't do something, am I going to spend six months teaching him to back squat? No. I'm not. You know we'll try something else. We'll try safety squat, we'll try a backsquat. We'll just keep trying things to get them to do the work because at the end of the day -- you know my goal isn't to make them better weight lifters. The goal is to make them better athletes on the field and I have to be able to change that in any which way.

Robb Wolf: Nice!

John Welbourne: And that's me and my soapbox.

Robb Wolf: And you're even taller on your soapbox. Well, cool dude. Well, that's it for this time and you saved my bacon Johnnie, thanks man.

John Welbourne: No problem, no problem. I'm sure you'll make it up to me.

Robb Wolf: I'll do something. I'll get you something super snazzy from the twins so...

John Welbourne: Thanks man. I appreciate -- well you guys already got something super snazzy.



Robb Wolf: Did it make it there on time? Okay, cool.

John Welbourne: Yeah. Yeah, you and Matt and Nicki and Jimmy Juice all a part of them and got us some car seats for the kids so that's awesome dude. Thank you.

Robb Wolf: Well dude, we know how you drive so if the kids had to be protected right from the get-go -- they were like the best car seats money can buy so...

John Welbourne: Yeah, I think they're going to go in Kate's car. I don't think I'm going to be able to -- I'll be allowed to drive around with the twins, I don't think.

Robb Wolf: Shocker, not to look like 15 so perfect. I'm still waiting. I'm waiting for the day when the first gig comes to take one of the Welbourne girls out on a date. That's going to be hilarious. I think it's going to be fun, like nobody has ever run it.

John Welbourne: Oh, yeah. I know. I kind of was thinking by that time hopefully we have weights in the garage and the girls would be like "Oh, you want to go on a date? You have to come over and lift weights with my dad and his brothers in the garage." And hopefully by that time --

Robb Wolf: And the garage door just closes and the kids were like "Call the police!"

John Welbourne: Yeah, that's what fits when you're a little kid. He was like "Ah" you know, kind of like I was 15. I'll be like "Yeah, I'll meet your dad," and then he shows up and you're like, "What did you say your dad did?" "Oh, he played 10 years in the NFL." "Oh well that's good." "And he and his buddies lift weight in the garage." "Oh, that's good, that's good." "He didn't get all those tattoos in prison, did he?" "No, no." But there's a weird --

Robb Wolf: There's always a game later.

John Welbourne: Yeah, I know. It was something else. No, it will be -- it definitely be interesting. Hopefully you know. Hopefully it won't be like your son or Lalonde's son that shows up, because then I definitely had to beat the hell out of them.

Robb Wolf: Totally, totally. Yeah, because you know that they'll show up arms, so yeah.

John Welbourne: Yeah. Well, I'm hoping that they come out looking like Kate more than me because if -- I don't know what this is going to look like on 2 twin girls.

Robb Wolf: I don't know. I mean given that Kate is pretty short and you're pretty tall that they may be remarkably average at the end of the say, we'll see so... You mean exactly like 5'9" for -- oh well, you're having girls so you know they're probably like 5'7" so let's see.

John Welbourne: Well, that's a good height and I told Kate that you know average in mediocrity doesn't live in my family. So it's pretty much like either they're all like win a gold medal or a Nobel piece price or it will be like crash and burn. So we just don't have mediocrity in my family.

Robb Wolf: Oh, it works. It works. Dry out the weak elements so I like --

John Welbourne: Yeah. Hey, you know what? We would say it's better to burnout than fade away.

Robb Wolf: That's right. Awesome job. Well thank you man. We were planning on getting you back on here anyway. We just got it sooner than I anticipated so thanks again for the save.

John Welbourne: No problem.

Robb Wolf: All right man, talk to you soon.

John Welbourne: See you.

Robb Wolf: Bye.