

Paleo Solution - 150

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Robb Wolf: Hey folks, Robb Wolf here. Episode 150 of the Paleo Solution podcast. I am actually hanging out in Seattle in a very active but very cluttered office with my good friend Dave Werner who is the founder not the CrossFit affiliate in town or in the state but in fact in the world. Dave how are you doing?

Dave Werner: Affiliate number one. Things are going well.

Robb Wolf: Before we get going too far remind folks that the sponsor for the Paleo-Solution podcast is Evolve Foods, evolvefoods.com. If you put in the coupon code `wolfpack12` then you will get a 15% discount on the chow that you buy so Evolve Foods `wolfpack12` and you get a discount.

So I'm hanging out in Seattle with Dave and his wife. It's interesting like this is almost to the day 10 years ago when we first started working out in your garage. So tell folks about that background. I think I mentioned once it was almost the toe tapping deal at a rest stop kind of gig when you rescued me off of Dragon Door, but tell folks about that.

Dave Werner: Early days in this online fitness community scene and I was just struggling at home working out. I had a work out partner that I kind of arm wrestled into coming over periodically but I need somebody to help keep my motivation even, kind of smooth up the ups and downs and my work out partner at that time was just not cutting it so hanging out like you said on a Dragon Door forum back in the day, kettle bell land.

Robb Wolf: This was in 2001, 2002?

Dave Werner: It was like this time of year 2001 I want to say and I read a post from some guy in Seattle and he's going I was trying to do some squats at the YMCA and some D bag was using the squat rack for curls and I ask to work in and he was snarky about it wouldn't let me - so I sent this guy, you, some guy I never heard of, Robb Wolf, an e-mail out of the blue.

Hey Robb I know you don't know me, but I couldn't help but see this complaint of yours about working out and I have a little set up in the garage. Why don't you come work out here?" Which was a really weird thing to throw out there to somebody unknown. It's like an Internet stalking kind of a thing.

Robb Wolf: Before internet stalking was cool to so yeah.

Dave Werner: Yeah so I'm a leader in many ways but you didn't respond unsurprisingly. I felt weird in sending that out but I still needed a workout partner. I think I pinged once or twice more.

Robb Wolf: I think it was the second one that I replied to you. I ended up traveling or something like that off the first one.

Dave Werner: Yeah and we ended up meeting in a park at one point. Just meet up in the park with Tyler Haas and doing a little bit of kettle bell work out. A couple of occasional things but finally you saw that there was in fact a crude little gym in the garage and it wasn't too creepy a vibe.

Robb Wolf: I didn't see any human skin dresses in the garage or anything. So I figured it was cool.

Dave Werner: So you started coming over 6 AM a cup of coffee in hand, and we head out this cold unheated garage and had a very primitive set up. I had an old concept 2 model B that I traded my brother-in-law for half a cow, our pull-up bar if you recall was a loose closet dell no rolling around on the rafters making pull-ups kind of spicy. We'd run in the neighborhood, had one little set of bumpers, a squat rack that I've rebuilt.

Robb Wolf: And a couple of kettle bells.

Dave Werner: Two kettle bells yeah but really a program minimum there. You were teaching me some stuff about squatting and basic barbell stuff and I still was very much in back rehab mode at that time so I wasn't interested in working out hard but I was trying to be consistent.

Robb Wolf: Tell folks a little bit about like you had a pretty serious low back injury, had some perennial nerve impingement and stuff like that. Tell folks a little bit about that.

Dave Werner: Yes sciatic hernial - I ruptured three discs in my time in the SEALs, got out after having had some back surgery, removes some disc material was where it didn't belong and that caused some nerve impingement, a lot of right leg issues and the surgery fixed some problems but it caused some other problems.

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Caused some problems in the sense of scar tissue building up and instability but the worst thing of all I think was the medical advice I got at the time was you're damaged goods now so you need to take it easy and I bought into that for a while for a number of years probably 10 years altogether of going down a different path, going to college, being an engineer which made me fat, weak and just chronically in pain. At the end of that time I was hurt.

I started trying to turn that around about a year before I met you and my earliest work outs were at Y, also I get on a stairmaster I can handle, cross country ski machine those little Nordic tracks, I get on that thing some. I do some kind of just sketchy fooling around in the weight room curls and triceps extension kind of stuff.

If I was feeling ambitious I might sit down and do some leg extensions but I'd also get in the pool and just try to get moving again and that actually was a decent start. The stair master thing it kicked my ass after 10 years of inactivity.

Robb Wolf: A shocker yeah.

Dave Werner: It was brutal. I'd go 40, 50, 60 minutes grinds on the stairmaster which was unbelievably mind numbingly boring. A modern gym with TVs up on the wall and people are bringing in magazines and prom them up. I didn't do that. I was trying to get after it so I'd actually take my hands off of those guide bars.

Robb Wolf: Use some upper body.

Dave Werner: Tried to act like I was climbing stairs but still you're charging away for 40 minutes in one place or something and this is hard to-

Robb Wolf: Stomach that yeah.

Dave Werner: But I was focused at that time on the goal of burning calories. I had a bit of a lard belly and I wanted to - I bought into that time into the whole calories in, calories out thing. There was much I didn't know but my start it was reasonably effective. I get my self moving. All that hip work was actually pretty helpful. I dropped probably 30 lbs that summer and got started.

And then quickly realized that I was weak as a kitten and needed to and I actually found kettle bell training via the public library, one library book, just at random found the RKC book, kettle bell book, thought that sounded cool, went online and bought a kettle bell.

Robb Wolf: So you found the whole dragon door gig in the public library before even finding it online. Okay. I've been to drag Dave on line and into social media for a decade so this just proves how fucking hard that's gonna be. That's awesome.

Dave Werner: I did. I think I told you last night am officially member of the Twitter tribe now as -

Robb Wolf: Greg Everett calls it Twatter. So you're a twatter right now. So we met, we started doing some weight lifting, doing a little bit of kettle bells and then was in the 2001, beginning of 2002 and that's right when I found CrossFit online. I was doing some Googling around, I kept looking for Art DeVany's book to be published which they have been claiming, he had claimed that he was gonna publish a book since 1995 and every once in a while there would be some new information on it and CrossFit.com at the time they usually had a workout of the day which I thought looked goofy - this high rep Olympic lifting stuff.

I of course had not tried it and felt the bite that that stuff at that point but they had some usually a very very good lengths. They have lengths til like Mike Mencer high intensity training or like Olympic lifting or whatever but they had some inks to Art DeVany and then we told Nick Nibbler about this website. Nick was doing a little bit of training with us also.

Dave Werner: Nick's another local guy. He's a King County sheriff and a friend and he got sucked into the be a workout partner gig also.

Robb Wolf: And then we really didn't see Nick for about a month and then he came back and his neck was bigger. He was moving way different.

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Dave Werner: Our mouths fell open.

Robb Wolf: Yeah we're like what the hell have you been doing? He's like I've been doing this CrossFit stuff and so Dave and I kind of sacked up and started doing it although I have to say that whenever the running based workouts to usually either didn't happen or we're much shorter and we tended to tweak some of the programming like instead of doing a full 50 pull ups or 50 dips we would do lathers, and dips and pull ups.

So even back then it was kind of a little strength biased, a little more Pavelesque in trying to push things more sets few reps in a set kind of strength oriented deal.

Dave Werner: That time period was very eye opening like I remember doing our very first attempt at overhead squat with a barbell you kind of have to snatch it overhead out in the driveway cuz we didn't really have room to move around like that in the tiny little garage. If I remember right that particular day we pulled out the Erg and you were maybe grinding away on the rower, and I was trying to do some overhead squats and it was just a train wreck which now we've seen thousands of these train wrecks I understand.

But at the time I'm having a hard time keeping my feet planted and my hips are sliding around and my shoulders are collapsing. I have no idea what's going on and just humbled by how brutally challenging that was with no weight on the bar at all and the next day I remember feeling like somebody had worked my ribs with a bat or something.

It was just an immense wake up call but experiences like that where you have this competitive power lifting background and you're used so in the garage squatting and I didn't know how to squat. I knew my squats weren't very strong but I can look at your hips as you're squatting and realized I don't really understand what's different but you don't look like how I feel when I'm moving.

So I started to get an inkling that there's a lot more to this than I had realized and you started teaching me some rudiments of Olympic lifting, some clean technique trying to clean that up

before that best I might have to power curl and we actually used to do cleans in the teams. I thought they were fantastic power cleans for reps. An incredible workout you can brutalize your self -

Robb Wolf: In now time flat yeah.

Dave Werner: 40 reps and you're cooked but looking back I can't even say that my technique was bad. It's like that Richard Fightman you're not even wrong. I wasn't even doing a bad clean but moving the barbell through a particular range of motion and in doing some work so that even that it was okay but you started trying to clean things up and I had a strong emphasis at that point or a strong motivation if you will to not aggravate my injury, not make things worse.

Daily life was still kind of touch and go at that point so real heavy focus on technique at that point and kind of real eye opening period so as you said these lengths that CrossFit.com and have up those space you dig back in the archives in those early days there are some pretty interesting little conversation going on.

Good times digging like cracking open this Pandora's box of exercise technique and fitness methodology.

Robb Wolf: And definitely I think I've mentioned this in other podcasts but it plugged some gaps in my game that I was unaware of having like I was 28-31 year old guy trying to do some capoeira which really isn't - we were old old dudes doing capoeira by that point but that's when I started getting consistent standing back tucks. I had really consistent straddle press to a handstand like the CrossFit work obviously we kind of grown and evolved with how we perceive a lot of that stuff but I've got to say it plugged some holes in my game. It did some really miraculous stuff for me at that time. It's like sinking deep.

Dave Werner: Yeah I'm a big fan of GPP. It's a great concept what we found. I started noticing even back then you came into this little game we were playing with more of a strength background better between the capoeira and the power lifting as opposed to my background I wrestled and I have been a SEAL so I was good at long distance grinding.

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If I could do something for a few minutes I could keep doing it but to dig down and to get the max effort kind of output no concept, no awareness of that really had no background. Even my weight training in the teams and prior to this had been - looking back it was all just body building.

Robb Wolf: Strength endurance type stuff.

Dave Werner: Yeah it's just body building. That's all I knew and so but what I started to notice right away is that you were progressing in some of these CrossFit challenges like getting to a muscle up hand stance, hand stand push ups, actually balancing on your hands, pistols - all these kind of little more acrobatic or demanding of strength and range of motion you've progressed through a lot faster than I did and that became a theme and it's still a theme. People would come into this with more of a strength background thrive where people who come in weak don't thrive.

Robb Wolf: Particularly if they kept the emphasis more of a GPP and not layering in that strength base and the neurological base and the movements and all that stuff.

Dave Werner: Yes so my understanding of GPP exactly is just now skews towards the strength side like based on what I've seen for the 10 years now of training people as up many folks maybe most are literally too weak to actually often to do any work or any significant work perhaps or some of this CrossFit workouts are real serious challenges like just pick one. Jackie.

Just fairly basic Jackie row a thousand meters, 45 thrusters and 30 pull ups. For people who lack the strength you get into a good solid front squat rack position and drive the thruster up off their shoulders they just can't do it right at all or never mind 30 pull ups. I think it's actually an awesome test, that kind of a work out can be an awesome test but you have to bring some strength and capacity to that before we try doing it for time.

The other thing we'll notice is that to pick that same workout Jackie as an example if that's what you're trying to do all the time like you run Jackie once a week and you keep cycling through these different work outs you're not ever gonna get better at any of that stuff. We have to step back, identify the weak points, why aren't you very good at pull ups, build the strength required to as

you said earlier fill those gaps and then occasionally jump in and test these capacities and that stuff.

Robb Wolf:

Which OPT talks a lot about the difference between training days and testing days and I think that that gets lost a lot with folks, with trainers and just an awareness that if you step back a little bit like Dave plays the cello in addition to doing a whole bunch of other stuff but it's kind of looking at movement like learning chords or something like that.

If you have pieces of this game, if you have an alphabet of movements that we could start stringing together words and sentences and paragraphs and stuff like that but if you still fundamentally don't have the grammar, if you're not getting scapular retraction on pull ups whether they're kipped or dead hang then we got a problem brewing which we've seen that growing over the course of time.

Dave Werner:

Yeah and just to follow that shoulder rift a little - what we see with almost everybody including strong people. We've got plenty of folks come in who are pretty good. They can do first day in the gym they can do 10, 12, 15 pull ups. They've got a pretty decent military press.

They've got some decent upper body strength. Push ups are not really a problem but they literally don't have - we started working on say something like a nice proper support position for an L sit and their shoulders have caved in forward and they can't find the traction to lever themselves up and get their straight legs up significantly above their hips and they can't feel what the problem is.

Ins pita of having some upper body strength they don't know what their shoulders are doing ever. They can't feel them and then you start looking deeper and you realize they're losing shoulder position in everything they do and a lot of times they're strong enough to pull it off anyway up until that point where they come over the chronic impingement type deal and then they're mystified.

A lot of times people then will get discouraged when the extent of their problem is shown to them you demonstrate how bad they are at positioning their shoulders to begin with and they're like ah man. They feel like a complete beginner again.

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Robb Wolf: Which they are in a lot of ways.

Dave Werner: Partially I see it , but it's used in this way of filling the gap. Take two or three steps back, fill in this gap and then you'll be able to progress further. I don't know. To me it seems better to understand what the holdup is than to have a hold up and not know what it is.

When I run into these things myself I don't really see it as a set back. It's like cool I get to fix this and move on.

Robb Wolf: Well for the ego like when I work some stuff in jujitsu and I realized that I've developed bad habits and I may have allowed athleticism to motor me along instead of getting technical and using my legs more instead of my upper body and stuff like that and so I've developed some kind of patterning that was frustrating to let go of and then go back and get it going but that's the only way that that game is gonna get better.

Dave Werner: Really similar analogy though isn't it with jujitsu you're on the mat with an opponent and you don't want to loose ever even a little drill you'd like to dominate your opponent even if it's just some kind of half speed drill. You don't want to be the stooge on that.

So that becomes the goal and every moment and every drill, every work the goal is to beat your opponent and you take whatever steps are necessary to reach that goal when maybe if I pinned you down in a bar some time and say why are you doing jujitsu you might rattle off a list that doesn't include beating your opponent at all maybe down toward the bottom of the list you might want to get in shape, be more mobile, have fun.

This is the kind of thing that goes on in CrossFit a lot these workouts. It's a great deal of fun to set ourselves up as some kind of little competitive structure and 3, 2, 1 go - that's fun. But then that becomes the goal all the time and it's fine. It's fun. There's a place for that but if the goal is to be healthy, be strong, keep our joint integrity, that kind of stuff and especially if the goal is to solve some problem like my back hurts cuz I sit in a desk for a living or I've got these tight hips that keep firing up and my knees hurt when I distance running and my hips are -

If I'm trying to solve problems and retain health and capacity overtime it's gonna be a big mistake to get hang up on the goal of competing ever day. Throw that in occasionally for spice for a reality check and then the programming has to reflect what my goals really are.

Robb Wolf: Which is progress.

Dave Werner: Progress and again for a lot of us if there's some problems to be solved I want to make some progress too but yeah got to solve some problems.

Robb Wolf: So the evolution of this whole thing physically, you started off in the garage like literally maybe 50 feet away from where we're sitting right now and then I shot the Glassmans e-mails saying, "Hey!" Basically, we started working out in the gym in your garage and then we started getting people saying, "Hey, I'd like to work out with you, guys."

[Cross talk]

Dave Werner: Yeah.

Robb Wolf: Like some coaching.

Dave Werner: Asked you first if I remember right, and you started training somebody and Nick started training somebody and I was kind of last on that bandwagon but pretty soon, we have a little two or three folks each of us were training and the garage is getting too small, right? We could get three people in there working out but four is starting to be-

[Cross talk]

Robb Wolf: Seriously dodgy, yeah.

Dave Werner: That's like being in a tent with somebody so that you're gonna like each other a lot. So, yeah, we started looking for more space.

Robb Wolf: And we shot the Glassmans and e-mail, asked for permission to call it Crossfit gym because we definitely want to pay some homage to the folks that we're getting some all these great

information from and then we moved into a mini storage of all things.

Dave Werner: Yeah.

Robb Wolf: The next step.

Dave Werner: Yeah. As moving up goes, it wasn't much of a step. This was a pretty crude little...

Robb Wolf: One light bulb in the top of the thing.

Dave Werner: One light bulb, unpainted walls, unheated space, which suited us fine. And it allowed us to train. We could train two people at a time, three on a day it wasn't raining.

Robb Wolf: Right. Right. Which happens all the time in Seattle. So, yeah.

Dave Werner: Yeah. And along about then, Nick and I kind of, since you're kind of push in the beginning, I think you'd said something about "Hey, we outta got to do some training and think about steering toward maybe doing an O lifting competition just for the heck of it, just to go down that path a little bit."

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And I had a long way to go when you first suggested that but at some point in there, Nick and I bought a book and an incredibly crude video tape from Jim Schmidt.

Robb Wolf: Right.

Dave Werner: Was that Palace?

Robb Wolf: Yeah. Strength Palace. Was that it?

Dave Werner: I think he's actually moved now but Jim Schmidt is old school weightlifting coach and he laid out a program and Nick and I did this for that first pass I think 3 months of focus on Olympic Lifting which was understood at that time to be part of a Crossfit approach.

Robb Wolf: Right.

Dave Werner: We're burrowing down into one of these areas that we thought was generally applicable to athleticism and so that's all we did was weight lifting workouts for I think three months that first time. It was tough. It was tough. Those workouts would take two hours and just leave me knackered.

Robb Wolf: And then you guys figured out later that these workouts weren't scaled - intended largely for like youth.

Dave Werner: Yeah. 17 year old boys with nothing- High school and sleep and mom and dad-

Robb Wolf: 1500 testosterone levels.

Dave Werner: Yeah. Yeah, so what we found is that the volume after weeks of doing this would just brutalize us. I mean we can do any given workout just as prescribed and move up but what we had to do is start working some periodization and we had to take some deliberate back off time and we could work it but we couldn't push quite as hard.

So at that time I was 41 or something like that and Nick I think was probably, I don't know, later 40's at that time 46 or 47, something like that. We weren't kids anymore and just we can do that work, our strength was getting better but the volume would add up and we needed a little more recovery time than this programs had call for.

So just something we'd learned to factor in - allow for recovery time or your body will insist that you take some recovery time.

Robb Wolf: Right. You'll recover one way or the other. Yeah. So you guys have moved multiple locations. Now you're in this huge 10,000 square foot facility and kind of broadening out the program offerings and stuff like that but that's all in extension of this observation that you had 2005, maybe, with the skill levels. Was that 2005?

Dave Werner: I started working on them 2005. I got that first version out, I think, March 2006, something like that; early 2006. Yeah, those athletic skill levels, there were a lot of questions. The whole point, it is general physical preparedness thing, this whole GPP deal was to bring out these various areas of fundamental to being athletic, to being healthy, having broad capacity, to bring them all up in some kind of a rough equilibrium so people naturally start to ask.

How much should I be running? How much should I be lifting? How good do I need to be at this parameter or that parameter?" And prior to this, you start digging around for what are some meaningful milestones. What are some useful yardsticks here? It was easy to find yardsticks in specialties.

For instance, so I could dig around for lots of college weightlifting program, strength training programs would have like beginning, intermediate and advanced levels of the basic barbell lifts, squat, dead, military, bench although if I remember right, most of those list did not include the dead lift the but bench press was definitely on there.

But you could find out if your squat was X, then your press should be Y and your bench should be - and beginning, intermediate levels for that. And then of course the calisthenics side of things, I've seen many such examples in the military, and again in lots of sport or conditioning programs, there's kind of beginning, intermediate, advanced levels of calisthenics; push-ups, pull-ups, sit ups, squat-- that kind of stuff.

But I've never seen even those two, the calisthenic and the barbell training, the external strength training kind of stuff. I'd never seen those two correlate.

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And especially you throw in like a running or endurance or work capacity stuff like how fast should you be able to row? How fast should you be able to run? What kind of distances, which we'd be working on. And then one of my favorite tools, I don't know like quite as keen on this, but just kettle bell, 10 minutes of kettlebell work or 7 minutes of kettle bell work. I've always loved that kind of- feels to me like going out to the woodpile and splitting wood, just old fashioned hard work.

But how much should you be able to do? How does this stuff all correlated? And never mind the other a little more specialty pursuits like swimming or something. So I started trying to find meaningful ways to correlate these different- because, CrossFit, we are trying to develop this all ten areas of physical fitness, all at once and I tried to define this with specific milestones that related to each other.

Robb Wolf:

Right. And I remember Dave shot me this idea and similar to when Michael Rutherford shot me the idea that you should be strong before you- strength as it kind of lays the foundation of strength, endurance. I hiked my leg on that one, I hiked my legs on Dave's for suggestion, and then it was maybe six months after that, five months after that, that you shot me some more refined pieces to this thing.

And I really started looking at that and interestingly now, a huge part of the success of our gym is predicated on multiple program offerings that are direct extensions of your skill levels. So we have like in elements, a level I, a level II, Olympic lifting, gymnastics, what he call Lift Low Intensity functional training, but all of these stuff had I not had an awareness or a template thinking about stratifying people into different levels almost like a belt system and jujitsu or karate or something like that I don't think our business would be merely as successful as what it is.

So, I did eventually come around and definitely credit the success of our athletes and then the success of the business itself. Ironically, people don't think, in my opinion they don't think enough about what is the training doing for your folks and then what does that gonna mean for your overall business success, and that's been something that's been huge for us.

Dave Werner:

It's not trivial to implement this. These ideas can be pretty straightforward when we're talking about training one person or a handful of people that have really similar abilities and you build skills and strength and ability and all build it step wise and develop your athleticism. It's like not rocket science. The challenge comes in.

It actually gets very complex, though, even with individuals and you start realizing like there's this gaping hole for instance in scapular stability or that some kind of chronic hip impingement issue and we have to sort through and understand how to deal with an individual that has an issue like this, but more importantly, how do we work to develop our progressions, so that we're not causing this things which over the years, there's some kind of standard hangups.

Military presses it gets heavier and heavier, but often people will start complaining about oh my god. I kind of feel that on my low

back, right, because we- and if you fail to insist on proper shoulder positioning, they'll end up sort of over arching, overextending their low back to compensate in dumping.

So this is something that if programmers aren't careful they'll miss and again solving those kinds of problems on a one-to-one or small group basis is one thing, developing meaningful programming for a growing population, you'd start getting 100 people or 200 or more athletes that you're working with. How do you structure your programs so that you're bringing these folks along in a reasonable fashion?

It's very easy to throw beginners in over their heads. Some folks kind of like that feeling. But most people would just pack up and leave cause they know you're not doing them any favors. And then on the other end, as folks get more advanced, if you keep cycling this same kind of heavy just MetCon workouts, people will advance nicely for a while and then stop advancing and then eventually get bored and move on.

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So programming has to change for the beginners, intermediate, the advanced, you kind of hit them differently you task them. One example would be beginners often, like I said earlier, lack the ability to actually work hard by our standards, we'd look at- I've had people stop in the middle of a workout and report to me that they just can't go on and it's kind of surreal experience because the person will be telling me this without any obvious signs of exertion.

No sweat, no elevated respiration, no physical sign of strain. The first time this happened I laughed cause I thought the guy was joking. And then I realized, he looked at me kind of quizzical, and realize like he's serious. And he wasn't being just a crybaby. He thought he was done. He hadn't even started yet, but he thought he was done. Just showing that he was, this particular guy, I'm thinking of how to yoga and endurance, long-distance running back, strength stuff and hard work was so foreign to him that he didn't even know what it felt like.

And his body started telling him to stop as he was getting started. So that's often the state of beginners. We have to introduce them to the concept of pushing your boundaries a little and in there,

start weaving in some basic strength skill, just the ability to coordinate their self and work towards a goal like pick up this heavy thing.

It's a different skill than endurance type work. So in the beginning, that's that. But as people become more advanced in their training, and had a few years to work on their strength development they're no stranger to pushing hard for a one rep max or three rep max or pushing themselves really hard for reps 18, 19 and 20 and a set of 20 rep squats, that's just where you're seeing spots and struggling to keep standing up.

These folks know how to push themselves and they know how to work hard and they often with best serve go back to the basics again and revisit movement patterns and really kind of polish the way they move and extend that strength to their full range of motion and develop balance and fine tune timing and fine tune all these athletics elements.

But you can't do that kind of stuff with beginners. You'd loose them in the detail and then they get bored and it just doesn't work. So, at a minimum you have to have a beginning an advanced variation of your class; beginning or intermediate.

Robb Wolf: Right. And you guys, it's interesting, like Dave developed the skill standards and stuff like that, you guys had a really successful gym but you guys were operating in about 1700 foot for a number of years and so-

Dave Werner: We're five years in this 2000 foot² building. The 300 ft.² of that was the bathroom locker room gig. We had up to 500 people training out at that little-

Robb Wolf: Tiny little box but that-

Dave Werner: And of course some crazy energy in there during Fight Gone Bad or something. It was nuts.

Robb Wolf: But that is the one push back that I've had when I talked about say like the first five program offerings like being able to run and elements on level 1 class at the same time make some people just don't have the square footage to be able to pull that off. That's a whole other challenge to contend with.

Dave Werner: Yeah, the truth is, I did not do a good job at that when we're in that small space. The space consideration is real. You can segment what we did some was we'd had two and three, and some of our class has got to be pretty big, pretty crowded, and even in that small space, it was hard. One trainer just could not do a good job, especially when you have two or three complete beginners and then five or six folks at the other end who're really pretty darn good athletes.

They're kind of fire breather's and then beginners and then of course the bulk of the pack is in the middle somewhere. And we would work hard to throw tougher variations of things at the more advanced people and put people at different spots in the progression, but there's only so much you can do in one class. We doubled up on instructors for a while which just kind of confused everybody as to who is-

Robb Wolf: Actually running the show.

Dave Werner: Who is actually running the show and the fact is we work together nicely and that it was okay, but it's better if you can find a way and this is why we moved because it was driving me crazy the fact that we were not taking as good a care of our advanced athletes as I wanted to or as good a care of our beginner athletes as they wanted.

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Both ends were suffering a little compared to what I wanted to do.

Robb Wolf: Right, which is the same experience we had, absolutely.

Dave Werner: They all were having a good time and business was good. But, I wasn't seeing the consistent progress that I wanted to see. So this move to a bigger facility - we had to do it. It was just like there was no question. It took Nancy and I a while to figure out how to do it.

But for - it was like 2 years when we knew like it's we're trying to find a space. We have to move which brought a whole new set of problems. Getting more instructors up to speed and doing a good job expanding in programs sounds nice but doing that and keeping your quality is a challenge too.

This definitely is a step wise process of building a good practice both in terms of your coaching knowledge and then putting systems in to place. Because of that space thing, NorCal were ahead of me in implementing our skill levels. You incorporated that in your class structure sooner than I did. It's been a big change and good thing that's coming out of the move, allowing us to expand and really fully develop the Level 1 and the Level 2.

And then what we see in the Level 2 athletes is still a lot of people stuck in ruts of bad movement patterns so we had to add some movement skill classes and not so much about the mobility wad approach of unkinking tissue and learning to release yourself and all that kind of self-maintenance that Kelly Starrett talks about.

That's all a good stuff but the movement skill class that we do incorporates a little bit of that kind of stuff as maybe a warm up or cool down element and then a lot of emphasis on strength training but strength training with a great deal of attention on the skill and the particular movement you're trying. Also that we get like chest to bar pull-ups were we're holding ourselves against the bar at the top and really work in that full range of motion, full shoulder flexion at the bottom.

Robb Wolf: And dead hang in these things. Yeah.

Dave Werner: Yeah. Control leaning a little more toward an acrobatic or a gymnastic or that kind of some controlled full range of movement with full control at every point in the range of motion which is a significant game changer.

Robb Wolf: And so, tell folks a little bit some of the push back that you've had with that when you've had some folks maybe run into a blind alley. They're not really progressing. You start analyzing their movement. And you're like, hey we need to work more dead hang pull-ups. We need to work some chest to bar with scapular retraction and then you get some push back from that. What's all of going into that now when you dealt with that?

Dave Werner: Yeah. This whole thing of raising the standards if you will, it's uncomfortable. And people hate to be told that what they're doing is not good enough. But, anybody who's coached anybody - if you've coached for a day, you've run into this. Like you're supervising some people doing squats and they're not squatting

as deep as you ask them to. Right? And it happens every time you turn your back. And that's just part of the trade we're in, part of the process of bringing people along. There's an element of buy in required from the athlete.

They have to understand or believe that this thing you're asking them to do has a value. There's a reason for it. But for instance pull ups - a lot of times people we get started with pull-ups and maybe they lack that. They didn't really ever have any good dead hangs but they got started with pull-ups by using momentum, learning a little bit of kipping technique and so now they're kipping out sets of eight or ten pull-ups when they can't really do one what we would call a nice straight dead hang.

So what we have there is a situation where they're really lacking some fundamental strength. Therefore, stability and their scapula structure, the whole shoulder structure is weak. But, they're cycling work through that area of their body.

[0:45:00]

And they're on a fast track to injury at the worst and often what happens is they just plateau. They just plateau. There are things they can't do. You start trying to throw in another some kinda other stunt like doing an L sit and it's just out of the question. Or a classic one is the very beginning progression toward leverage start with some skin the cat skills and people can't get started. They can't pull themselves off of the bottom on its skin the cat type motion at all.

We have to fix that problem. We have to go back and develop some of these fundamental strength in the shoulder area, means go back to dead hang pull-ups and then define at least getting your chin up, your throat near the bar. Never mind getting eight inches away from the bar and kinda crank in your neck. A common sort of deal. Use momentum to get most of the way and then throw your chin off to finish the movement out. Again, that's all I'm asking this kind of fundamental weakness that will stop you in your tracks as you try to keep developing.

Now you don't have the strength to get a military press lock out over head. So then when you start trying to do push presses or push jerks or full jerks, split jerks, it's just a problem. I've seen in

our gyms and other gyms many many cases of people in the big CrossFit community we've been part of for a long time.

Many times it happened somebody's working on jerks, their technique is getting better, their timing is getting better and then their shoulders hurt because they never had the right positioning in that lock out and never got a good stable, just a scapular stability. They start driving loads over head that they - maybe it feels like they can support with their arms straight but they actually can't. And the moment their elbows' flexed, shoulders are moving and it's just kind of a train wreck once you learn to look for this, it's a problem.

So, convincing folks that we're not making these requirements up. We're not talking about chest to bar pull-ups or full up squatting or full range of motion push ups or dips, we're not doing that just to be difficult. We're doing it so that you're building these foundational elements so you can keep progressing and with cooler stunts.

There's so many work outs that had led to do like muscle ups and hand stand push ups and all those 2 rounds of that. And I just lost 98 percent of the population. I can't even have that conversation. So that's what I'm trying to fill in.

But as you said earlier push back - push back really at every point along the way. Your squat's not deep enough, grumbling. People hate to hear that. You have to convince them or teach them, educate them, lead them whatever, demonstrate, somehow get the idea across that this full range of motion in the hip is a useful thing to have.

Robb Wolf:

Well, in this push backing grumbling not just from clients but occasionally from staff too which we've had - we've had that problem in NorCal at various points where talking about the need for different standards and maybe diversified program offerings and stuff like that versus just come in and hit like a Fran, Helen, Diane kinda gig which is falling in relatively easy to implement but there's bigger systemic issues to think about like the progression, keeping clients for multiple years.

You guys are coming up on your 10th year in business. And you guys have clients that have been with you virtually the whole tenure of that trip so far. That's a bid deal. Like, you've got to

really have an interesting program and a safe program to keep people's attention for a decade doing this stuff.

Dave Werner:

Yeah. That's been - it's humbling. I remember years ago kinda, you coming up with a really good work out one day and feeling like I've hit that class out of the park. And then thinking, oh my gosh, get a little moment of panic like how many times can I do that. But it turns out the subject is huge and there's tons of things to work on and never really run out of - can't really imagine running out of things to improve, things to teach and ways to get these points across.

So part of the problem is you see an issue in your clients, in your athletes, you see a movement issue maybe it crops up in a handful of people. You start to notice it in a dozen people the same kind of glitch in the movement. And you realize like there's some element in the programming that we're not fixing this glitch. It can take a long time between that realization and then understanding how to fix the programming to address this issue preferably before it really comes up.

[0:50:09]

And then implement it like you said not just with us as coaches but with the trainers we're working with. And along the way, nobody, client, trainer, nobody really enjoys being told that what they're doing today isn't good enough. I'd like to always be in this mind set of thinking about what I'm doing and trying to do it better, continuous improvement to use some kind of a manufactured lingo.

But, given that we're not perfect and not ever gonna be perfect, and then it's incumbent upon us to keep trying to get better. But you've told your trainer maybe his work for you for six years, and you're like, this aspect of what you're programming is not working for the clients, it's not good enough, we've gotta change. Usually what you get is push back at first [Laughter].

Robb Wolf:

Right, til' you sweetened it up and convince them. I think it's worth pointing out like if you kinda boil CrossFit down to gymnastics, Olympic lifting and sprinting - those are three of the most popular Olympic sports that exist. People dedicate whole lifetime's to those endeavors. And then we're trying to expose a general population 2 elements of these things. I think it's easy to

become complacent, t forget about, okay I can go out and spend a whole lot of time learning some track and field technique and learning like just reading Charlie Francis stuff about how he trained his sprinters and what you do with that. There's a big big world out there to learn all that stuff.

Dave Werner: You could dive down that sprinting rabbit hole for 10 years at least.

Robb Wolf: And still be a novice at it, yeah.

Dave Werner: Yeah, and become an adept maybe of somewhat familiar novice.

Robb Wolf: Right, right.

Dave Werner: And then if you get into the aspects of coaching track and field expertly, trying to set a really high standard for your abilities as a coach, you can take anybody that comes to the door. This is one of the challenges, very challenging and really the most rewarding I think about this whole CrossFit gym movement and what we're doing now is the idea that we're not selecting for some kind of elite or talented group of people. We're trying to take anybody that comes in and make them a bit better. And if they're willing to work out it for a while and work hard at it, then we might make him a lot better.

But, they might come in more than a few years under their belt. They might have some extra weight. They may have some old injuries. They may have all that stuff going on at once. And they may not have been a very talented ever. And they're still not talented now they're old and overweight too. And the more still gonna try and make them better. I think that's a super ambitious goal on our part.

Like you said, it's nothing to be complacent about. This is a serious undertaking. Not least of which because if we're careless in our approach or too kinda glad handing and are like throw people in over their heads and yell at them to try harder, it's not hard to screw people up pretty seriously. I think maybe this is one of our biggest advantages as a facility just pulling from my own background of injury.

And when you and I started, I didn't care about performance at all in those days. I was interested in getting healthier, recovering

some of my lost function. And the idea of competing with fire breathers out wasn't on my radar at all. I wanted to not need my cane anymore. And what ended up happening is that I got back a lot more function than I thought was possible, was safe and had fun in the meantime and never suffered any big setbacks in spite having this kinda preexisting back deal.

And that has been my goal or my road map for all of our client's sense. I want them to progress. I don't really care if they progress quickly or slowly. It's up to them, whatever they're willing to bring to it. But I wanna guide them in ways that's not hand handed. And take them along as far as they're willing to go. and hopefully, open the door and show them that they're capable of really quiet a lot more than they had thought, sort of change their internal story a little bit like you're capable of a lot more. We just have to be smart about how we get there.

[0:55:00]

Robb Wolf: Right

Dave Werner: And that comes down I think to - back to our coaching perspective again. We're not gonna ever approach the skill with running of some kind of track coach with 20 years experience. That's not reasonable to even think you could. But, we can gain enough experience with running technique and agility drills and some sprinting training that we can do a pretty serviceable job of getting folks started bring them along to a good intermediate level and point them at the right resources if they wanna become experts in that area and do a really good job at that kind of beginning the intermediate level for a broad population and then extend that conversation, the weightlifting, and power lifting and gymnastics and tumbling agility movement kind of stuff and you have a - we just mapped out a career.

Robb Wolf: Right and a pretty fun one too.

Dave Werner: It's immensely rewarding. It feels so good to see somebody who arthritic hands and wrist and frozen shoulders, and after a few years of kinda bringing her along through a careful progression, she can kick up against the wall in a pretty respectable hand stand.

Robb Wolf: Right

Dave Werner: Outstanding. Right, it's just outstanding. And recover a lot of function. Again, all pretty ambitious agenda, trying to general physical fitness, general physical preparedness for a very broad spectrum of the population and serve all this people pretty well. That's a pretty ambitious deal.

Robb Wolf: In addition to the skill levels, I feel like one of the other big contributions that you've had to the whole scene - I know a ton of people won't be aware of this. But before the CrossFit games, there was the CrossFit championship. You had three go rounds of yearly competition where you were wanting the kinda throw out this idea that we should put together a game day and see who is best on that given day. What was your idea with that?

Similar to the skill levels like that never really popped up on my radar like that. Never seen like a compelling element that we needed to push. You saw that and now probably the biggest reason that CrossFit is continuing to expand is the CrossFit games. So you had the CrossFit championships three years in a row before the first CrossFit games. What was this seed idea for that?

Dave Werner: One of the main draws for even just you and I back in the early days, we'd stand up a little bit of a workout, some kinda lift, some kinda rowing or running and some calisthenics or whatever we'd stand up a little circuit and then race each other through. You and I never cared too much about who won but its still was fun to throw down and see what you have on a given day. And that competitive aspect is baked in, and this of course was one of Greg Glassman's really good ideas that I think is responsible for a lot of CrossFit 's growth. It's just fun to compete a little bit. So that was an element of what we're doing almost from the beginning, well from the very beginning.

Just earlier we were talking about the work outs in terms of like taking a test at school or something. You study Calculus. You study this and that operation in Calculus. And then comes test day you have to see what you can figure out and produce. It just seemed natural to me that once a year so have this kind of reality check. Bring what you got and throw down. I envision something that was a pretty low barrier to entry, open to scaling, given that this folks scaling weren't gonna win.

But, kind of allow beginning and advanced people to throw down together and preferably end up with a barbeque at the end. Just field day. Just have fun. The idea that it hurt a little bit, that's fun too. We did that in the gym. Being the first affiliate; there was a long period when we're kinda out in the dark on our own. That whole first year when we called ourselves CrossFit Nor there were no other affiliates. During the second year, think we ended the second year with something like 20, or 24 something, around the country.

[1:00:03]

And then in the third year, I think ended up being almost 60 after that third year. The rate of growth was pretty big but still 60 gyms around the country was nothing.

Robb Wolf: Nothing.

Dave Werner: So the community was very small and reaching out it was just natural to kinda throw it up there on the web talk about a little and open the door, say anybody who wants to come. And the idea of having a fun workout day was validated 'cause we'd have folks drive up from Portland. We'd have folks driving up from Fort Louis. Folks had come down from Vancouver, Canada. They'd drive over from Idaho for our little throw down to which they're kinda tongue and cheek I just called, hey this is the national championship, CrossFit championship. Greg and Lauren Glassman were cool with that idea. They came up one year. There was an article in the journal back in, I think 2003 or 4, about our, I don't remember right now, second or third.

Robb Wolf: I think it's the second one, yeah.

Dave Werner: Yes. An annual championship. It just seemed a natural outgrowth of this kinda competitive general work out thing that we were doing. And it was fun. My idea of the games again was to keep very much on a - was it calling at the games with the championship was to keep it very much on an amateur athletic level. I wouldn't have wanted it to get even as formal as like a high school football game as today which almost looks like pro sports to me nowadays because I wanted it to be fun for the folks who really aren't elite, they're not at the top tier, I wanted them to feel welcome enough to come throw down and do their best and fail

with the task assigned but get a good workout, have fun and not be too embarrassed about it.

Robb Wolf: Right, which is a little bit of the genius of the open, the way that they do it now where you have this online community. You can have 50 or 100 thousand people.

Dave Werner: That captures back to some of what we were trying to

Robb Wolf: Yeah. I think that there's been some genius in putting that open together. Yeah.

Dave Werner: When this started growing and we had our first national games in Irimos there weren't any qualifying for that first year. But still, travel cross country, throw down, it was already to be some of the heavy hitters. The following year, they'd throw the regionals in there. So now there's tens of thousands of people in the Seattle area doing this kind of workouts. And the opens, as you said, that's pretty fun. A lot of people play in that area even though they know they have no remote chance of qualifying for regionals.

But by the time you get to regionals, you've got a pretty select group of athletes already. This is like smaller than one percent. And the course of that groups are really tiny subset goes to the games. So now, the flavor's very very different. These are serious athletes, combination of talent, hard work, lots of hard work and careful programming. Now, to be competitive at that level, you pretty much dedicated your life

Robb Wolf: You're professional athlete, yeah.

Dave Werner: Yeah. That's really the serious deal, which is fine, that's cool. And I'm super impressed by all of those people and really respect what they put in to that. And it's fun to watch them throw down. But it have very little to do with the athletes that are on training.

My gym has a whole bunch of middle-aged professional people. They've got kids. They have some old injuries from this or that and they're trying to stay healthy. The games have become so elite, so advanced, compared to their skills that it's not even a good motivator anymore. Again, I think that games are awesome. I think those athletes are awesome, truly awesome. But, having a kind of a grass roots sort of a lot less formal competition, there's

still places for that in this world. It's fun to throw down and have a test again.

I remember one particular time I've been training this woman for couple of years. She was a Noah scientist in her tiny little I, silver hair, grandmother looking, late 50s.

[1:05:02]

Dave Werner:

She might have been just been 60 but very petite, small person and a scientist at the Noah station that was just across a field from us at that time. She had a lot of fun with the workout and worked hard and didn't have any particular strength. She's a tiny woman with no strength training background. But she worked hard and didn't ask for any kind of special treatment.

So we have one of these championships and our crew of green berets came up from Fort Louis and young heart charging strong go-get-them like had to bring a wheel barrel for all of the testosterone that came with him. They were friends of ours and we knew them. They kinda came up and threw down and we're having a good time.

But one of them was hangover, pretty badly hangover. One of their younger members was kinda wingin' it on the stand and he showed up and threw down. His commander made him come and compete in spite of the hangover. He was kind of visibly ashen-looking when we started. And it was a really tough work out. And he ended up as the combination the way the work out was structured. And as he started to fall apart toward the end, this was like a thirty minute chipper kind of workout. It was brutal and involved loading sand bags into wheel burrows and trucking around with that, rope climbs and rowing and there was a complex on the bar of hanging leg race and pull up complex. It was some tough stuff.

He ended up neck and neck with this little Noah scientist lady and started falling behind. Her kinda steady production way, she was starting to beat him. He had to run outside and puke his guts out and come back in and try and catch up with this lady. His unit was given him a massive pile of grief. They were all done and in his face. But that kind of stuff, this sort of random competition got set up between these two unlikely people. My Noah scientist end

up winning, that outcome. It was just a lot of fun. A bunch of people got spawn up and were cheering. It was just good fun.

So that kind of field day thing is - it's so valuable that I kinda got sidetracked on the whole big games for a long time but we're bringing back kinda annual championship.

Robb Wolf: Nice

Dave Werner: And bring it back down to the gym level. I think we'll open it up to, if other folks feel like coming in, or just drop in and compete with us. Local and formal enough to be fair and that's all. No more formal than that. Formal enough so that the rules are clear and everyone's doing the same thing but otherwise not formal.

Robb Wolf: Right, that's cool.

Dave Werner: People have actually being clamoring asking for the folks that remember those early competitions. They've been saying like, can we bring that back. There's value to that. That was one of the genius things of this whole cross-fit deal was bringing competition back down to this amateur sport level. We all are motivated by, like okay it's on, let's see what you got. If it's not too overwhelming, it's fine.

Robb Wolf: Right, very cool.

Dave Werner: I think that stuff, that kind of fun competition has a definite place in my mind. Just keeping all the stuff head resting. Keep it as far away from grinding us, days of grinding away like a hamster at the YMCA. That is - grind away in your own little world is awful [Laughter]

Robb Wolf: Yeah. So we probably won't see any Stairmaster in the competition. Or who knows, what may come out of the hat.

Dave Werner: Hold a hundred pounds sand bag in your - clutch it to your chest and grind away in a Stairmaster.

Robb Wolf: 20 flights of stairs? That could be good.

Dave Werner: There's ways to spin that for good effect. I would never want those kind of machines to take up their chunk of real estate in a gym.

Robb Wolf: Right, maybe a one day rental or something oneday, one day adrenaline or something like that

Dave Werner: Bring him in on a flat bed and string them up. You have to kind of volt up on the flat bed and do that.

Robb Wolf: Stagger off, yeah.

Dave Werner: Yeah

Robb Wolf: Potential, potential.

[Laughter]

Robb Wolf: So Dave, before we wrap up, you've been putting kind of a fresh coat of paint on the skill levels. Tell folks a little bit about that.

Dave Werner: So those skill levels, they've been out on the web for 5 years now, almost six years, I guess.

[1:10:04]

Dave Werner: And I've got a continual feedback that whole time. I never really promoted them or anything, I just stuck them up on our website and folks have found them and found use to them. And I get feedback from all over the world. A lot of people have found out that those series of tests to be meaningful enough that they can use them as you were talking about as a yard stick for their gauging their own progress or their client's progress. And also in a way to kinda set some goals. Like, what goals should I be working on next? The skill levels suggest an order for that. And that's been really fine as far as it went.

But, I also had a constant stream of questions about how do I do this, what does this mean, how do I do that, what are the standards. And I never did a good job articulating how you get to any particular milestone. That wasn't the goal when I wrote those. I wasn't trying to be prescriptive or - it doesn't allow you to either direct your programming for instance one of the level 3.

One of the first requirements is ten single leg squats per leg. But in level 1 and 2, there's not a single word anywhere about how you might accomplish that. I just said that, by this point in your

development, you should know how to do this single leg squats, and have that ability. And if you can't, then go solve that problem. Now is the time to do that.

But, over the years, I realized that, that whole scheme is not really good enough. We need a teaching methodology here. We need more of a prescriptive set of morbid teaching progression. More stuff articulated that helps folks figure out how to get to a particular goal at a particular time. And part of what drives this is I have to pick a classic example in our world of muscle up.

When folks start working on muscle up typically they just grab the rings or bar and pull and they just try to do a muscle up. And prior to that, they probably didn't spend a lot of time thinking about what qualities do I need to develop that will enable me and time to do a muscle up for instance that's just a bar pull up. We're working on making sure dips are really legit, full depth hands in the armpits kinda dips.

Countless times, folks have asked me for help and like, hey can you teach me the transition for a muscle up 'cause I can do a lot of pull-ups, I can do a lot of dips but I can do a muscle up. So my approach is always to be like, sure I'll help you, let me see a pull up. Like, get on grab the bar and pull really deep, pull chest to bar. They can't do that. I'm like okay well let's check out your dips. And I see some all those at 90 degree kinda dips. So we then - if their chin is cranking to get above the bar on the pull up and their elbows are at 90 degrees on the dip, we've got a good -

Robb Wolf: Two foot.

Dave Werner: Yeah foot and a half of discrepancy between those two positions. And you're not gonna make that up with some kind of hanging Cuban press type movement, press through a - learn some magic trick of the transition. What's happened is we failed to develop the qualities that would allow you to develop a pull up, right - a muscle up, excuse me.

So, we need to have these kind of things in mind from the beginning, from day 1. And take step by step by step in a way that allows us to keep building our skills and keep adding more complex stuff to the mix. And I needed to articulate this whole thing in a lot more details. So what I've done is completely rewrite the skill levels. Most of the tests still exist in the same place but

the levels themselves are much more fleshed out. There's a lot more to it and many more tests or criteria at each particular level.

Like for Level 1 for instance, I've divided it into three parts, A, B and C. And 1A has a laundry list of stuff that you should work on first. And 1B builds on that laundry list and maybe drop some simpler movements and add some more complex movements and adds weight or range motion and build on what we started with 1A. And someone through the list and the ideas that there's actually a lot more of teachable progressions baked into the skill levels.

[1:15:00]

Dave Werner: To have some really meaningful milestones, we've developed some real like one-hour test for Level 1, like a test day for Level. Like a, here's an event, there's actually 3 events but three different elements to the test. But, we're gonna - on one day, test your capacity. And if you could actually do all the stuff, if you went through the levels, the progression in level 1, come test day for your level 1 test, you will there find. And so previous studies, the whole level 1 was a test.

And again, I change the basic concepts. From just being a test to being a very detailed progression with some meaningful test throw in there were appropriate. And then breaking progressions out into their individual parts as well. It's like a detailed pull up progression, detailed dip progression.

Again, with both of those, in the back of our mind as we start developing our beginning athlete, overweight, weak, elbow problems. I still have in mind that someday I might get this person to be able to do a muscle up. So we start developing those qualities from the beginning. It doesn't mean that, I might have a 75 year old lady with a frozen shoulder. She may very well never do a muscle up. Doesn't matter, I'm still developing qualities that could in theory at least eventually lead her down that path if she's willing and able to go that far. Again, kinda starting with the end in mind, if you will.

Robb Wolf: Very cool.

Dave Werner: Well maybe matching our methods toward goals.

Robb Wolf: What time the timeline before people see some updated details on that stuff?

Dave Werner: The revised skill levels had began through final revision and copyright stuff in the next month, month and a half, mostly fully flushed out. That stuff will get up on the web fairly soon then. I'd say within, say before Christmas.

Robb Wolf: Okay, so end of the year, beginning of the year, we're gonna see this stuff most likely.

Dave Werner: Definitely by then. The formal skill level testing stuff is being rolled out in our gym next month.

Robb Wolf: Nice

Dave Werner: Next month, and that's a - we have a pretty good hundreds of people at that point have kinda gone through that. We're actually gonna get formal about this. You've passed that level 1 test; you're certified as being this fit, having developed these skills, full formal piece of paper and the whole deal. Partly to make it fun but partly to be strict and rigorous about what we're teaching and how that develops.

So formal testing and flushed out skill levels, in the next month or two. And pieces of that detail progressions on all these different areas will be coming out in more and more detail over the next year. We're all culminating in a - I'm gonna say this on a public consumption here but to fully flesh out the subject, 'cause it's a book linked subject. That's what I'm working on. Developing these ideas good enough, depth and complexity and completeness and showing pictures and video and being really clear what we're trying to accomplish and how that it's a book like subject.

Robb Wolf: So we get to hold Dave's feet to the fire now. He's officially made the public declaration. But I've seen some of the outline for the book, and I'm super excited for my own training and my own coaching to check this stuff out. I hugely hugely credit Dave with a bunch of what we do in our gym, a bunch of what I do as a coach, a bunch of what I've learned, Dave is definitely one of my - not just one of my dear friends but a mentor on all those stuff. I'm honored to have you on the sesquicentennial 150th episode of the PaleoSolution.

Dave Werner: Yeah, thanks for having me. This is awesome. And then in the course in our gym are a lot of our success and progress comes from helping folks keep their diet dialed down and all of that goes back to you and you are pushing me from the early days. And gentle not just here and there, clean up my diet. This Paleo approach has truly changed people's lives. It's a major part of what we do. The training side of it is important, but as you've been shouting from the rooftops for years that the diet stuff has to be there.

[1:20:05]

Robb Wolf: Well, I've always said even with all the other drama and stuff like that, smartly programmed CrossFit plus some Paleo save lives. It absolutely saves and transforms lives. That shouldn't be a controversial topic at all. That's easy easy easy.

Dave Werner: We've literally run thousands of folks now through some level or another buying on that. For me, daily weekly, people come up and praising, giving credit to us for their progress and a lot of them has to do with this stuff you've put out. Lot of folks progress but being able to develop strength, being able to clean up their sleep, all this stuff that supports training and dieting, I can't overemphasized that.

Robb Wolf: That's cool.

Dave Werner: We're in fact in the middle of a leaning challenge now.

Robb Wolf: Nice, and then that wraps up the testing start if I got the timing to that right.

Dave Werner: The skill level testing, big day, big skill level test day, that will be a lot of fun.

Robb Wolf: Yeah, that's 29 days out.

Dave Werner: 29, yeah. People are excited about it too.

Robb Wolf: Cool

Dave Werner: And pestering me everyday about details and they're worried and concerned. I can see the adrenaline is pumping. [Laughter]

Robb Wolf: Nice, very cool.

Dave Werner: Yeah, it's cool.

Robb Wolf: Well Dave, thanks for being on again and we'll get you on again soon

Dave Werner: Thanks Robb.

Robb Wolf: Alright. Thanks.

[1:21:46] **[End of Audio]**