

Paleo Solution - 213

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Robb Wolf: Howdy folks, this is Robb Wolf. This is episode 213 of the Paleo Solution podcast and I am incredibly excited to welcome our guest host Christopher Sommers, the founder of the Gymnastic Bodies System and website. Hey, coach, how are you doing?

Chris Sommers: I'm doing well, Robb. Good morning.

Robb Wolf: Good morning. So we both—you were getting ready to load your family up for breakfast and I was elbow deep in working on my certs that I've been writing for, seems like, ages now so.

Chris Sommers: We're both busy, huh?

Robb Wolf: Yeah, we're launching into this from a pretty good spot. Coach, I had a heck of a time tracking down bio information on you. I know you personally as a close friend but you've sent several athletes to national and world championships in gymnastics?

Chris Sommers: I have been a former collegiate gymnast, personally a long time national team coach for USA gymnastics. My responsibility was preparing athletes for our level of national team that was just under the Olympics. So they almost all the way prepared and then someone else, they hit about 18 takes one plus their final, polish on. Of course trained the national champions, national all-around champs. We've done our international assignments, pretty much except for Olympic level about as high as it's possible to go on the sport of gymnastics.

Robb Wolf: Fantastic. Coach, I don't know if you realize this but I believe March of this year will be the 10 years that you and I have known each other, at least. You know, we first met in Golden Colorado with the huge crossfit fitness palooza that they had there in the Colorado police setup.

Chris Sommers: Wow. Ten years already. My goodness.

Robb Wolf: Holy smokes. Yeah so. My how the time has flown. I know that virtually, you know, we mentioned you frequently on the podcast, particularly and interestingly, when I'm talking to someone like Jim Leard or John Wellborn, when I start talking about periodization, planning,

progressions, all of that type of stuff. You know we had an initial kind of meeting around the crossfit scene because of the inclusion of at least in theory of gymnastics, Olympic weight lifting, sprint modalities and stuff like that then we all kind of migrated and gone various directions from that initial meeting. But Coach, you've been working on these gymnastics bodies. You have a whole online curriculum, you have books but I think that the first time that you really had some significant kind of online exposure, was it a two-part piece that you did covering the planche and the front lever for T-nation?

Chris Sommers: Yeah. Pavel had contacted me and I was neck deep in our national team training and he asked me to write a chapter for a book. He's a good friend so I told him, no. I'm busy, I don't have time for this and he's a persistent guy and finally I caved and I said okay. So we threw together a little 10-page chapter for him. Went out took a little bitty handheld camera, shot some photos real quick with my athletes. Sent it off to Pavel and promptly forgot about it.

Robb Wolf: And so that went up on Dragon Door originally.

Chris Sommers: Well they went up on Dragon Door and the story goes that Pavel sent me a note. I had done nothing on the internet at all at that time. He sent me a note letting me know that it was too good; he didn't want to include it as a chapter. He was going to do a standalone article and I said okay, you know, whatever, that's fine. I went back to training. A couple weeks later, I opened my e-mail one morning and I had 300 emails in there. Everyone asking about this dogone article that Pavel had published as a separate instead of a chapter and that was the beginning.

Robb Wolf: And that was probably like 2002, 2003.

Chris Sommers: Right in there. Yeah, it's been a good long while ago.

Robb Wolf: So you know for some folks, particularly if they come from a more barbell-oriented background. I'm clearly biased in this. I don't have like any type of legit gymnastics background. I've tinkered with some ring work, you know, my main I guess kind of exposure to something that would be kind of gymnastics derivative was doing some Capoeira which was a ton of handstand work, handstand balancing, back bends, some really basic acrobatics and stuff like that. But even that level of exposure that I had, I feel like it provided such an advantage for me, both from kind of structural integrity particularly like in my shoulders and my thoracic spine and all that.

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Now I'm doing some competing in old dude Brazilian Jujitsu and it's remarkable how much mobile I am and I'm willing to do some things that, you know, most people are not willing to die while grappling. I'll do cartwheel passes and if somebodies almost has like a some sort of a collar choke or something like that on me, I'm totally comfortable, you know popping up onto a headstand and spinning on a person's belly and then coming back down.

For the folks that I roll with, they're kind of like holy cats, you know it's almost like some Spiderman type stuff and I mean my skill set is a thimbleful at best of what would be, you know, the great lakes of what you produce in people. But, you know, what's your compelling argument for including some basic gymnastic skills work for virtually any athlete or even just somebody who's not necessarily athletic but they just want to be fit and healthy?

Chris Sommers: Well I don't even know that I need to make a spill. I'll say, you know, the numbers speak for themselves. We have athletes who in the past on first day of high school weight lifting pulled a triple body weight deadlift, never touched a barbell before in their life. Double body weight squats, not unusual at all, first time they go. We had one young man hit college and got involved having some fun with some friends weight lifting and I think it took Dylan -- now he weighed in in about 145, so not giant, but he was benching 300 lbs in I forget if it was two or three weeks.

Robb Wolf: Wow.

Chris Sommers: We had experimented a few years back. We brought Jeff Servin from Triton athletics in Takoma Washington down, were considering implementing some Olympic lifting with the guys seeing if there was a way to do it without getting neck deep in the programming and becoming lifters.

Robb Wolf: Uh-hum.

Chris Sommers: And he pretty much had most of my older guys jerking body weight in a half in about 45 minutes.

Robb Wolf: Wow.

Chris Sommers: He also insulted us at the same time. He said that amazing. He said my god, your guys' technique sucks.

Robb Wolf: [Laughs]

Chris Sommers: So, you know strength wise, I just don't know that it can be compared with. We can breakdown all the plyometric forces and that the body's exposed to, probably for adults, but we found out over the years is mobility. In fact, it's almost—whether or not adults have poor mobility, I'll go so far and say that they have no mobility whatsoever.

Robb Wolf: Right. Right.

Chris Sommers: They are crushed. They are just crushed from their deskwork, which is why the foundation courses, you know, alternates half mobility work, half strength work.

Robb Wolf: And you know that's been an interesting progression for me. Having gone from pretty athletic and even when I've worked in a lab I was typically on my feet and then transitioned out of doing that type of work into sitting and writing and blogging and shockingly developed some hip pathologies, some L4/L5 disk dysfunction. It's taken the past maybe, you know, interestingly about six months constructing a standing workstation, really dedicating myself –

Chris Sommers: Right.

Robb Wolf: --in doing that and then also motoring through a lot of the progressions that you have throughout the day and lo and behold that low back pathology is kind of going away. I don't have the same issues but you know it's so interesting to me. I would agree that probably the number one problem that we see it at North Cal strength and conditioning when we get somewhat older folks like they can have some metabolic issues, you know, their diets poor, they're generally inactive but just the lack of mobility and the fragility I guess that people have from that.

Chris Sommers: Yes.

Robb Wolf: It's almost like they're made of glass.

Chris Sommers: Absolutely.

Robb Wolf: Like there is nothing resilient about them, like if they fell, they would break and so it's interesting. Coach, something that's always impressed me with your methodology, you get these people very, very, very strong going through the different progressions but what was interesting to me is how conservative you are in progressing people.

Chris Sommers: Right.

Robb Wolf: You know the exposure—like we may not see a loading increase for weeks from people. Could you talk a little bit about that? Particularly within—you know, like a lot of the listeners kind of go in and out of the crossfit scene. There's always a pushing towards, you know, this sense – to quote Greg Glassman, you know, the greatest returns that we see are found with intensity

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Chris Sommers: Yeah. Sure.

Robb Wolf: But I think that once we passed that office stage.

Chris Sommers: I would love that one.

Robb Wolf: Yeah. Yeah. You know I think that once we pass the novice stage or even when we start looking at, you know, to steal something from Pavel to look at strength as a skill. It seems like that progression needs to be very, very metered monitored to avoid burnout and to really just get to these highest levels. Could you talk about that and really give people a sense of how slowly you progress people with regards to volume and intensity but then how quickly they actually get very, very strong from that.

Chris Sommers: I think it's important for people to—like you said, that it's important for people to understand that there's a difference between games as a raw beginner and games as a seasoned athlete. The higher your level of training, the fewer times you can peak for athletic competition during a year. So for example, I can peak an athlete once maybe one and a half times a year and that's at a world-class level. To do more than that per year, it just won't work. The body will blow up. My concern that we see constantly with crossfitters who are taught with a low level of strength to want to go to the well over and over and over and over is that there's only so much tread on the tires and if you come sliding to a stop sign every single time, then your burning yourself out.

Robb Wolf: Right.

Chris Sommers: We're going to have joint issues. We're going to have central nervous system issues. We're going to have adrenal failure. I mean it just goes on and on and on. I will say that in the United States, to make the US national team and you'll see it with our world in Olympic athletes, you're

automatically once you make that team, one of the best athletes in the world.

Then back stepping that, there's only a handful of people who are producing athletes at that level in the United States and we all get there by being conservative. We don't leave things to chance. Perhaps it helps people understand that intensity only works within their individual levels of recovery and then that in turn has biological limits that you can adapt to. For example, you know, muscle tissue replaces itself every few months. There's nothing you can do to speed it up. Bone tissue's going to completely regenerate over a period of a couple of years. What we found is that the stronger an adult athlete is, probably the more brittle and the least mobile they are, the more apt they are for injury. Especially a lot of crossfitters we have coming in, we have to handle them with kid's glove because they're just an injury waiting to happen.

Robb Wolf: Maybe let's talk about, you know, what you do to get the mobility kind of matched up for that person but then also let's go through a little bit of a progression. You're reasonably famous now for like these front lever and planche progressions in getting people to do these but I don't think people really understand like how incrementally and slowly you will progress people in that loading. And maybe we can even use like the example of like a standing barbell press just so that people -- you know, like if we start a person and say like the one rep max was hundred pounds on the standing barbell press -- actually let's tackle this one first. You know, how would you progress that person to getting, you know, and let's say their body weight is a 150 lbs or something like that. How would you progress that person to that body weight standing press and then like a body weight and a quarter standing press?

Chris Sommers: With the barbell?

Robb Wolf: With the barbell and using that kind of -- analogous to the way that you progress people say like I'm planche working and rings and stuff like that. I just, it's always when you and I have talked on the phone, it's just so impressive to me how incremental and relatively slow the increased volume and intensity layers on with that.

Chris Sommers: For something as simple as that barbell press, I would drop them to 70% while we test. Find out what their max is, drop them to 70% and then I break their increments. I'll say that was just for make it easy we'll call it that there was a -- their max was going to be 36 pounds, 106 so we've got a 36-pound window. We'll just break it up so we'll add just 3 pounds per week. We do that over a 12-week training cycle.

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Robb Wolf: Okay and what type of you know, sets and reps and frequency of exposure would the person see?

Chris Sommers: It really depends on what training effect you're looking for whether you're wanting mass, whether you're wanting strength and stay light. You know, if we want just to build strength then we're going to go two or three sets of two to three reps. If we're looking for middle of the road, we might go 5 x 5. If we're looking for build more mass, we might go up to a 3x8.

Robb Wolf: Okay.

Chris Sommers: And then it just kind of depends on the athlete also. Well probably two to three times per week.

Robb Wolf: Okay. So reasonably high frequent and you would probably have that exposure two to three times a week regardless of what the – whether it was kind of a mass oriented protocol or a more strength oriented protocol. Would that be correct?

Chris Sommers: Well it's important to remember too that that barbell training is relatively simplistic.

Robb Wolf: Right.

Chris Sommers: You know, we've got an isolated muscle group makes life easy. Gymnastics strength training on the other hand like breaking rings apart you know, Maltese said is it pressing strength or is it pulling strength.

Robb Wolf: Right.

Chris Sommers: And the answer to that is yes.

Robb Wolf: Right.

Chris Sommers: It's both and so training gets a lot more involved. So we just had a young man where our forum is huge now. We've got over 9400 members and there is always someone who is pretty sure they found a new way to reinvent the wheel.

Robb Wolf: [Laughs]

Chris Sommers: You know, they are like well you know, I just want to jump hard into ring strength, it's not going to happen big man. You're not prepared. You're then ready to hit some heavy tendonitis because you haven't done your preparatory work first.

Robb Wolf: Right, right.

Chris Sommers: I think the thing that people need to understand as far as gymnastics strength training is concerned is they look at the body as just a set load that this is just my body. I can kind of do what I want when I want. It's a big buffet, I'll get to choose and nothing could be further from the truth. We have to start from the exercises that have the greatest mechanical advantage with the best leverage and then gradually over time as they master those, we decrease mechanical advantage. We decrease the leverage they have.

For example in iron cross, we get people all the time especially with we'll get Navy Seals and Special Forces And Delta, they're used to being studs and they'll try to get up on rings and they'll try to go right to a cross and they blow themselves up. What they don't realize is that an element like that we measure in torque which is inch, pounds and depending on your body weight and the length of your arms, you could be looking at over 4000 inch pounds of pressure coming down on those joints.

Robb Wolf: If you've got a little bit larger and lankier of an individual, sure, sure.

Chris Sommers: Sure. Yeah depending on that. The formula for it is pretty simple. We're going to take from center of the chest out down to the end of the wrist. We're going to multiply that by half body weight and go times two.

Robb Wolf: Right.

Chris Sommers: So fairly straightforward but where people get caught is then they don't realize that there's specific physical structures that have to be adapted as well so that they can support that training. You know, brachialis is usually the weak link coming through the elbow there and what we've found is the stronger the guy, the more out of balance their body is. The worse their mobility is, they have no straight arm strength, they have no balance. They have no proprioception. There's just nothing there and we have to just baby step them.

Robb Wolf: Coach what's the –you know, a little bit of the diagnostics that you use for you know, when you say straight arm strength, I've talked about that a bit on the podcast but can you give folks some examples of you know,

what are some straight arm strength moves and then also how you assess that and maybe a little bit of a progression with that?

Chris Sommers: Okay. What we've found as far basically straight arm strength is anything that's going to be performed with the arms completely locked. It's important to understand that almost straight is bent.

Robb Wolf: Right.

Chris Sommers: We go through that constantly. Excuse me. We'll get people who do bent arm crosses on rings and they're doing bent arm maltese and they're so proud and they say I'm almost there coach. I say don't straighten your elbow, it's not ready and sometimes they listen, sometimes they don't. One of our old students Johnny Sapinoso before we got him had come up with a good, with bent arm cross and people were fussing at him, he's a strong boy. They said you know, straighten your elbows and he listened and the elbows went. I think he was down for a good year and a half.

Robb Wolf: Wow.

Chris Sommers: And things just have to be done correctly. So what we didn't understand way back when we started working with the adult market was how out of shape they were. That they had no core strength. So over working with them for seven years, I think we've got a pretty good handle on it now. I mean there's a lot of squawk and they say we're so hard, we're so brutal but actually we're being pretty sensitive and easy.

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Robb Wolf: [Laughs] Otherwise the oldsters don't come back so yeah. Yeah.

Chris Sommers: Yeah. It's simply because they don't have a correct frame of reference. So we just finished a nice seminar in London and good people, bright people, hardworking, talented and they were mentally, they weren't aware they were mentally shutting down far long before they were physically shutting down. They just didn't know how to work.

Robb Wolf: Right.

Chris Sommers: So that was an eye opener for them. They're like coach I'm getting ready to die. No it just feels that way you're fine.

Robb Wolf: [Laughs] So Coach would a front lever and possibly this is why you introduced front lever in the planche as some of the first exposure. So

these would be kind of examples of kind of complementary straight arm work?

Chris Sommers: What we found is you know, front lever as far as gymnastics strength is concerned we rate our strength elements A through G with G being the most advanced and a front lever it's an A, a back lever is an A. A planche is barely a B. I mean these are the most introductory of levels. A muscle up doesn't even exist.

Robb Wolf: Right.

Chris Sommers: You know, a muscle up is not even considered strength. What we've found though is that when an athlete is younger and they come in they physically are in perfect balance. Their mobility, their dynamic strength, their ability to jump, move, their maximal strength are all in excellent proportions. There's no imbalances. Adults when they come into us the imbalances are just everywhere, they're everywhere.

Robb Wolf: Interesting.

Chris Sommers: So what we have to do is we with a young athlete I can start training all of these components at the same time but with adults we have to rebuild which means we start with mobility first then we go into building foundational strength. We're going to do introductory bent arm work. We're going to do introductory straight arm work. Once we're going to start rebuilding shoulders, we're going to rebuild hips, we're going to rebuild knees. Once we have all that under control, that's the only time we're even going to consider moving them on to ring work and for the record our idea of beginning strength is probably quite a bit more than most people's. But if you haven't mastered climbing the rope with no legs, you can't do a hollow back press, basically a handstand, lower to a bent arm planche and press back out you're still a beginner in terms of gymnastics strength.

Robb Wolf: Right, right. Which those things are almost super human for most folks. Like I know for myself the rope work would be relatively easily that hollow press would be a pretty tall order for me right now.

Chris Sommers: We have found well it depends on the training and the progressions they've gone through.

Robb Wolf: Uh-hum.

Chris Sommers: We have found for most adults a huge discrepancy between their pulling and their pressing strength.

Robb Wolf: Interesting and typically the pulling strength being significantly stronger?

Chris Sommers: Being stronger. What tends to happen though is they're unaware that a metabolic rate of tendons and connective tissue is one tenth out of muscle tissue. So they'll go and they'll start climbing the rope and their muscle will be fine but they've overloaded their joints. We get this all the time so they say you know, Coach I'm climbing the rope. I know it's really good for me, I got to master this. My elbows are killing me what should I do? I say well stop climbing the damn rope.

Robb Wolf: Right. And what typically then is –you know, how do you back folks up on that and how do you start addressing specifically like the bicep insertion that typically is getting inflamed in that situation?

Chris Sommers: We would rub their nose in it. You know, basically what we always come back to is they're excited. The next thing you know we've really got rings mastered and as I hit guys here's the deal and I said rings now been popular for coming up on almost 15 years in the fitness industry. Despite all that amount of time, no one had jack as far as ring strength is concerned.

Robb Wolf: Right.

Chris Sommers: We weren't – we should be neck deep in crosses and planches on rings and reverse muscle ups and we're not. It's simply because they don't know how to use the tool properly. They don't know correct progressions, they don't know how to prepare the joints and all the hours and hours and hours and years they've spent doing keeping muscle ups and all this other silly nonsense is simply set them back further and further.

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Robb Wolf: So I mean what is the – you know, let's say the person like they have very Spartan access to gear. You know, they've been tinkering with the climbing a rope. They're getting some bicep tendonitis, what's a thing or two that they could continue doing that's helping them feel like they're doing something? I mean you know, --

Chris Sommers: Right. They've got to step off. They've got to go all the way back. See what they've done is they've tried increase intensity and volume at the same time.

Robb Wolf: Uh-hum.

Chris Sommers: That's simply playing the Russian roulette. It's not a question of if you're going to get hurt. It's simply a matter of when.

Robb Wolf: Got you.

Chris Sommers: It's inevitable. You're going down. Once you have tendonitis you've got to ride it out. Remember there's one tenth metabolic rate so that means that there was injury that in muscle tissue would have taken a day to heal. Connective tissue is ten days. If it's muscle tissue, it would have taken a month. If it's connective tissue it's ten months. It's metabolic rate. There is nothing you can do to speed it up. There's no therapies. There's no supplements. There's nothing you can do. Once you've fallen off the edge of the cliff, all that's left is to wait for the bottom.

Robb Wolf: Interesting which is similar to what we see with adrenal fatigue and all the rest of that stuff so.

Chris Sommers: Exactly.

Robb Wolf: Interesting.

Chris Sommers: So you've got the best way is just to do it right right from the beginning.

Robb Wolf: Well I often wish that that was the case with nutrition but then my --you know, I guess somewhat jaded now I guess I'm looking at it is the fact that people goof this up all the time. It's just job security in a way.

Chris Sommers: [Laughs]

Robb Wolf: So it's a very Mac Lavelian way to look at it but it's like well --

Chris Sommers: That's a good point.

Robb Wolf: Right.

Chris Sommers: We feel the same way. Like I said we're at over 9400 members and the reason they end up with us is because all those things went wrong and they got tired of it and they got tired of being sore. They got tired of being hurt and they got tired of having no progress.

Robb Wolf: Right.

Chris Sommers: At the end of the day there's really only one place to end up and that's us.

Robb Wolf: Right. Right. So Coach, you know, a lot of the listeners I think that they have somewhat of a similar background to myself in that they're doing some you know, Brazilian jujitsu, they're doing some MMA, maybe they're doing some crossfit. You know what actually I'm going to not try to orient it towards everybody. I'm just going to orient it towards myself so.

Chris Sommers: Perfect, perfect.

Robb Wolf: You know, so I do Brazilian jujitsu three to five days a week. I've typically been doing two days a week in the gym and I'll do some – actually some straight arm and some bent arm work and then a little bit of Olympic lifting and I pretty much call it good. But this is I have not been following your online course but this is some stuff that --

Chris Sommers: Shame on you.

Robb Wolf: Shameful, shameful and I --

Chris Sommers: Shameful.

Robb Wolf: I have access to it and everything but you know in my head I've had myself convinced that I don't have time to go deeper on this stuff. What type of time commitment--

Chris Sommers: Time commitment?

Robb Wolf: - am I talking about to motor through the course and really do this thing correctly?

Chris Sommers: Well goodness we're talking a minimum of two to three hours a week.

Robb Wolf: Okay.

Chris Sommers: So spread out over two or three days that would be warm-up your main work maybe having some fun moving on, experiment not training but becoming familiar with a little bit of more advanced elements. Something that we've seen over and over and over as people from outside the gymnastics community will try – they will look at what we do on a daily basis. They will see four and five hours of training a day. My senior

athlete right now Allan is probably doing six, six per day. He's in the pipeline right now for Rio. He's doing very well. We've got our fingers crossed. You need some luck right. You got to stay healthy.

Robb Wolf: Right.

Chris Sommers: But what they'll do is they'll look from the outside in and they will assume that that large block of daily time, those multiple hours is all strength training. It's not the case. It's not the case. I think Allan we're going to be looking between even at a world class level, he's probably doing eight or nine hours of physical prep per week and that's a world class level. Then the rest of that is skilled training.

Now what we run into is we get people who don't understand that break between skill training and the physical preparation so they just look at the total volume and they come up with all these ridiculous programs where they want you to condition for three or four hours a day. They want multiple training, da, da, da, da, da and that they really just don't have a clue that that's not how we got strong in the first place.

Robb Wolf: Right, right. You know, you and I talked about this a lot because and you know funny enough to really dig back in history Mark Twight, you know, he came into this scene early and we were all I think trying to figure out if there really was a shortcut to the promise land. Like you know, for --

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Chris Sommers: Uh-hum.

Robb Wolf: For you on the short time index side, you know very explosive high technicality. Not to say that mountaineering isn't highly technical but you know, just a very different type of technicality.

Chris Sommers: Right.

Robb Wolf: You know, we're talking about technicality over days typically with these situations. But you know you and I talked early on like you mentioned that when you were still doing lots of volume of gymnastics training like you had to run to a girlfriend's house or something and it was like 20 miles away. You just ran, you know?

Chris Sommers: Sure.

Robb Wolf: Like I basically ran a marathon and you know other than like doing tumbling passes like that's what you did you know. But because of the volume of work you were doing there was this really --

Chris Sommers: Well I'm going to interrupt just a second.

Robb Wolf: Oh yeah.

Chris Sommers: It wasn't the volume. What it was was the dynamic strength. It was the plyometric effects on the body. So for example we found the two things that gymnastics strength training offers that there's no other exercise modality offers is the plyometric work that we do on the body, the tight joints, the rebounding, the repulsion work and our straight arm strength.

Robb Wolf: Okay.

Chris Sommers: So when I was a competitive athlete what we found of course long time national team athlete. We're at Olympic training. I've spent more time in Olympic training center the last ten years almost and in my own house, which is kind of crazy when you think of it.

Robb Wolf: Right. [Laughs]

Chris Sommers: A lot of sports medicine, a lot of sport science that goes on. So we've had athletes on pressure plates and telemetry on them and measuring on even such a simple thing as a round off back handspring. Right when the legs punch off the ground into a backflip even if it's just a simple single backflip 14x body weight.

Robb Wolf: Right.

Chris Sommers: Monstrous, monstrous amount of pressure that happens over and over and over and over and over. And what we've found is the best way to strengthen tendons and connective tissue is very short, very high intensity microbursts of load. It has to be that kind of repulsion work. So that's why when I was young we could go out with no effort and basically run 21 miles and not notice it.

Robb Wolf: Right. Right.

Chris Sommers: Everything as far as a gymnast comes from there and then we've actually found that muscular training that we do is secondary as far as athletics are concerned.

Robb Wolf: Interesting.

Chris Sommers: Yeah there is – you look at the bicep development on a ring net that’s all from straight arm strength.

Robb Wolf: Right. Which is so counterintuitive for folks yeah, yeah. But I mean --

Chris Sommers: It’s got to be done right.

Robb Wolf: And I mean clearly there’s rope climbing and there are some bent arm elements in there but then the really you know, like once you start getting from a Maltese and beyond that and planches on the rings and whatnot then that’s really the stimulus that’s causing that really significant --

Chris Sommers: That’s where the body blows up. Well we’ve got rings 1 or rings 1, we have four ring courses that are being released. Rings 1 comes out next month and you know, people will be excited. It’s as far as ring strength is concerned t’s our first rings strength course but where they’re having trouble wrapping their head around is that it’s not an introductory gymnastics strength training course. They have to have done their foundation work first at least through a moderate level before they should plan on being successful with rings.

Robb Wolf: Coach, you have several movements that are part of the foundation. Can you talk about those?

Chris Sommers: As far as which skills they’re working on in the foundation courses?

Robb Wolf: Yeah, yeah. Yeah.

Chris Sommers: We broke it out into fundamental straight arm strength, fundamental bent arm strength, fundamental leg strength. So fundamental straight arm strength we focus on developing. These are over the span of four different courses, which are extremely detailed and exactly programmed out. There’s nothing left to chance. We’ve learned the hard way that with adults it’s best if we spell it out.

Robb Wolf: Right.

Chris Sommers: We work on planche, we do side lever, we do front lever and mana. So that’s our straight arm work and those are not advanced straight arm strengths. Those are what we could consider introductory straight arm strengths.

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As far as bent arm strength we work on developing we start from you know, someone barely can't hold themselves up. We take them as far as pressing strength up too hollow back presses and we start the pulling strength from basically they're strong enough to hang on some rings at a tilted angle and not fall off all the way up to rope climbs.

Robb Wolf: Okay. And once they progress through that then we kind of have enough of a foundation laid with the strength, connective tissue integrity and whatnot to start thinking about say like the rings 1 course.

Chris Sommers: Well you know, rings in a perfect world we'd like them to go through foundation 4 in reality. I understand, see I'm personally a very impatient person, right? I'd rather have it today.

Robb Wolf: Right.

Chris Sommers: However the reality of what I have done for a living for decades was putting athletes on national team, winning national championships, training for the Olympics. So in order to get what I want I had to learn to control my impatience. So that means that in training I'll appear to be very, very patient but simply I have to go through those steps in order to get what I want.

Robb Wolf: Because otherwise you're just backtracking and dealing with injuries and taking longer to get there or maybe not getting there at all.

Chris Sommers: Exactly. What happens is you fail.

Robb Wolf: Right.

Chris Sommers: I mean the bottom line right? Do it right or you fail.

Robb Wolf: Right

Chris Sommers: It's that simple which is why ten years of ring strength in the fitness community and nothing to show for it. If I had spent ten years and had the ring strength to show the fitness community as our Olympic coach would have thrown my tail off national team coaching so fast it would have been a sonic boom.

Robb Wolf: Right, right. So I mean it's again the you know, the instant gratification and not really you know having a little bit of a longer term goal with this stuff. So actually I was going to ask you how you – you know, you

motivate people to look at that longer term but it sounds incredibly similar to how do you get people to want to eat better and my only answer I've had with that with basically about 15 years of coaching peoples. I really had no idea like they've got to have some innate desire --

Chris Sommers: Sure.

Robb Wolf: -- to do it, you know, and no amount of cheerleading on my part I've found to be particularly effective for that.

Chris Sommers: Yeah. And this might be for being a national team coach for so long but people decide on their own level of success.

Robb Wolf: Right.

Chris Sommers: You know, if they're serious they're going to find a way to make it happen. They're going to find the time, they're going to find the intensity, they're going to find the resources. If they're not serious then there's not, no amount of handholding in the world that's going to make it happen.

Robb Wolf: Right, right.

Chris Sommers: It's just not so you know, you'll find that those who at least me personally, those who are dedicated and sincere we'll support them 24/7, and those who are kind of wishy washy and just aren't into it or asking for shortcuts, you know what this we've given you the best programs in the world. There's literally nothing better than what we have on the market. If they're not willing to trust their reputation and calm down and take care of their business there's not a lot we can do for them.

Robb Wolf: I was going to ask you, you know usually when I'm trying to get people to do tweak their diet and they're like I don't know what about this paleo stuff, does this really work. I give them, you know, try it for 30 days, see how you look--

Chris Sommers: Okay.

Robb Wolf: -perform, track some biomarkers of health and disease and see what happens. Typically --

Chris Sommers: I'd say 12 weeks.

Robb Wolf: Okay, 12 weeks is a good – because I was going to give the caveat there that we don't know how broken and dysfunctional somebody who is going in and --

Chris Sommers: Yes, yes we do. We know how broken --

Robb Wolf: Just assume that they are and that's all there is to it, okay.

Chris Sommers: Yeah.

Robb Wolf: Okay.

Chris Sommers: They're zombies. They should be trying out for the next World War Z movie.

Robb Wolf: Okay, perfect. Okay, okay that makes it easy. So you know, for me doing old dude Brazilian jujitsu get in, take advantage of my access to the fundamentals course and get going on that is basically I'm smelling your shoe polish on my breath because your foot is so far up my ass right now.

Chris Sommers: [Laughs]

Robb Wolf: So is that the takeaway?

Chris Sommers: I've been a little – I've been awfully kind and gentle right now.

Robb Wolf: [Laughs]

Chris Sommers: But you know, basically what we run into is you know, from that first article that we did all those years ago for Pavel, you know, we pretty much we opened the door for gymnastics strength training in the marketplace. To quantify and lay everything out correctly was a massive, massive endeavor. Our first book came out in '08 and I assume that people....things that were second nature to me from all the years of being a national team coach I mistakenly assumed were second nature to everyone else.

[0:40:13]

Robb Wolf: Uh-hum.

Chris Sommers: That in turn led to now all these courses we have released. We've got 16 courses that are coming out. There's for whatever reason how this came about a lucky circumstance I am not the best coach in the world nor am I the best writer in the world, but as far as a world class coach who can

write in gymnastics strength training, I don't have any in my peers as far as national team coaches you know, that had that same combination of talents. Plus interesting, I don't know how to explain this without it coming across rude but most of my peers their life revolves around working with Olympic level athletes.

Robb Wolf: Sure, sure.

Chris Sommers: If you're not at that level they don't have any time for you at all.

Robb Wolf: You know, and I've found this interesting even just trying to sniff up some adult gymnastics classes.

Chris Sommers: Uh-hum.

Robb Wolf: At gymnastics facilities. I could be wrong because I'm not on the --

Chris Sommers: No, you're not wrong.

Robb Wolf: But you know, looking in I see actually a really remarkable opportunity for gymnastics facilities to – I mean just as both a revenue stream and also you know, doing good by folks. because I think if you can take somebody who's never, ever, ever done like handstand to a front roll and they can do it or you know, being able to do using a rebounding floor and do a backflip and do a foam hit that's more fun than any amount of bicep curls or you know, anything. Like doing basic gymnastics stuff is really, really fun but it's a bugger to find any facilities where you can do it.

Chris Sommers: Right.

Robb Wolf: This is to some degree I think where the crossfit scene it's the only place you can find a ring, you can find a rope.

Chris Sommers: Sure.

Robb Wolf: Occasionally you find somebody doing some you know, lever work and stuff like that and it would be interesting if we could light the fire under some of the gymnastics facilities to offer some more adult gymnastics work for people. Once or twice in Seattle there was a really good place that offered a great adult gymnastics class and I got a lot out of it and it was a lot of fun. You know, I would totally prefer doing that and then maybe Olympic lift one day a week just because I really liked doing that and I feel like it does a lot for my athleticism. If I could do that I think I would be you know, I'd be in hog heaven then.

Chris Sommers: [Laughs] What we do, what we found with adults is that it's very important to separate their strength, their physical preparation work from movement training.

Robb Wolf: Uh-hum.

Chris Sommers: Remember as kids we went everywhere. We bounced off everything. We didn't plan what we were going, we didn't ever look at our watch and say you know, it's Tuesday morning, I'm not going to go to Billy's house and train today or play today because it's my day for recovery.

Robb Wolf: Right, right.

Chris Sommers: You know, we went where we wanted when we wanted our whole life until we hit high school and then we started adding structured athletic training on top of this huge matrix of just general activity. The body was prepared for it. Now as adults we've gone the other way. They're trying to do very specific training but we now have no outside matrix of general movement in most cases. The body is not prepared to move. The collagen is breaking down, the muscle tissue is breaking down, range of motion is gone, strength is gone. What they have done though is they've done strict barbell work so in a very narrow range of motion they're strong but they're also rigid and they're also brittle which means they can generate enough force that if they get outside their knee doesn't track over that foot. They can generate enough force to actually break themselves.

Robb Wolf: Right, right.

Chris Sommers: Weekend warrior syndrome.

Robb Wolf: Coach I've never seen much on this. How many you know, gymnasts that say don't make it to a world caliber competitive level, how many of those folks continue doing gymnastics later in life like just as a way to kind of stay in shape and just have some fun? Or is the fun done like they've done so much of it they're like I'm playing tennis, I'm getting out of this.

Chris Sommers: Well in the '60s it was common. There had been a photo from maybe 1968 showing a man who was in his 60s doing an iron cross at a competition. It wasn't a big deal. They simply had him listed as oldest competitor in the meet.

[0:45:05]

Robb Wolf: Right.

Chris Sommers: Part of it that's why gymnastic bodies exist as it is because after I stopped my competitive career, you know, you were supposed to gymnastics is done now you're going to go run, now you're going to go lift. You know, I hit the gym, I hit running and I was this big stud. You know, I'm a little guy 135, 140 pounds and I'm training with the big guys who are 200 and 220 because we use the same weight on the bar.

Robb Wolf: Right.

Chris Sommers: They got the biggest kick out of that. I thought at the time it was because you know I was gifted. I had nothing to do with me being gifted. It had to do with 30 years of gymnastics preparation that allowed me to be that athletic. But as time went on, athleticism began to decline because as I didn't know then connective tissue starts to decondition. So I had maybe a ten-year window where everything was good and then after that performance drops substantially.

Robb Wolf: Interesting. Interesting. So what does your daily regimen look like now or weekly? Like do you still do some tumbling? Do you hit some ring work? Like what does your program look like right now?

Chris Sommers: I wouldn't want to share that per se because what will happen is people will – it would be like looking someone who's a high level lifter or a high level jujitsu player and they're going to want to go and they're going to want to do the same.

Robb Wolf: Right.

Chris Sommers: So my best recommendation for them would be to start with their foundation work, start with their handstand work, build a physical structure that can actually handle the demands that you're going to place upon it.

Robb Wolf: Very cool.

Chris Sommers: So for those guys you know, we've had with older population we found that mobility work is their workout.

Robb Wolf: Right, right. Right.

Chris Sommers: Just quivering and now for our mobility work is different though. We're doing active flexibility where everything is strength related and we found that's probably the 70% of what most adults need to do in terms of

mobility because they're so tight. If they try to do passive flexibility, nothing is going to happen.

Robb Wolf: So talk a little bit about that. Like I remember when we spoke earlier, you said that you mainly use weights to get mobile like --

Chris Sommers: Absolutely.

Robb Wolf: --talk to people about that.

Chris Sommers: Well we're break it apart for them. So we have a dislocate. I think most people are familiar with a dislocate using a long dowel.

Robb Wolf: Uh-hum.

Chris Sommers: You know, they'll grab the bar maybe double shoulder widths, some guys longer and they're basically going to rotate it over their head back behind them to their hip and then back over the top. Most people get very, very little bit of benefit from that. What we've found is we have to add load to that movement. So we will start with two, maybe three kilograms on the bar over time. Full dislocates we're looking at slow controlled five-second reps. Over time probably a period of months, we're going to bring the hands in so they're maybe -- even if they're extremely tight shoulders they should be able to get just a hands' width on each side outside of shoulder width on their grip.

Robb Wolf: Okay.

Chris Sommers: Once they reach that narrowness we go back out wide again. We increase the load and we begin the process again. We have found that weighted shoulder dislocates like that are just a panacea for their shoulders. In my opinion they are the best shoulder exercise bar none. Nothing comes close.

Robb Wolf: Interesting. Even more so than say like a skin the cat or something I guess because of the ability to progressively load that?

Chris Sommers: Absolutely. We've got athlete that does those dislocates with a 45-pound Olympic bar.

Robb Wolf: Wow.

Chris Sommers: We've got people on the forum who are doing goodness, usually at a minimum 10 kg and we've got a few who are up at 20 now.

Robb Wolf: Wow.

Chris Sommers: But you know, that was calm, that was gradual, that happened over an eight, nine-month period.

Robb Wolf: Right.

Chris Sommers: What we're finding is we're starting to get a lot of I won't call it low back but a lot of feedback from physical therapists around the world because a lot of what we do is – or I shouldn't say, I said everything we do is pragmatic. Right? It's to get a result, which is to have a superior physical performance, which is to make a national team, which is to go to Olympics, which is to win an Olympic championship. Everything we do has a reason. There's nothing we do that's opinion based. It works or it doesn't work. If it doesn't work, it's gone, we don't have time for this. We find something else, we put in this place, this worked good we're keeping this. Something better comes, we'll replace it but until then this is what we do.

Robb Wolf: Right.

Chris Sommers: So we found with this active flexibility that's what allows you to increase your athleticism. So for example someone has extreme shoulder mobility and we get this in some women, but they only have a partial range of strength, that deficit between how hard, where they can be strong and then how far past they go back just being kind of open and loose that increases their chance of injury tremendously. So we want to close that gap. We don't want a giant deficit. We want everywhere their body can move to be expressing itself through strength. Now they're stable and now they're safe.

[0:50:41]

Robb Wolf: Through the full range of movement?

Chris Sommers: And full range of motion.

Robb Wolf: As long as there's not a gap in there --

Chris Sommers: There's no gap.

Robb Wolf: Right. You know, I'm thinking like six different things here and one of them and it's a little bit of a leading question but you know, in a way I kind of feel like if one is at that spot where they cannot do say like the

reasonably hands close together you know, dislocate then that's kind of a sign of shoulder pathology and potential problems.

Chris Sommers: Yes.

Robb Wolf: I think that one of the things that crossfit brought to the table was actually talking about the kip you know, like – I found that I've --

Chris Sommers: You're going to make me go down this road.

Robb Wolf: We're going to go down this road a little but --

Chris Sommers: Okay.

Robb Wolf: --you know, I felt like as a diagnostic criteria if one could not kip then that was a sign of shoulder pathology and we had to do some things to be able to get the shoulder to --

Chris Sommers: Sure.

Robb Wolf: -- a spot where they could do it but then the thing was was is with that kipping movement was a means to an end. It was not the thing to do hundreds potentially of specific repetition just in say like a kipping pull-up format. Like I mean do you kind of agree with that? I mean you and I are -
-

Chris Sommers: I want to approach it a bit different.

Robb Wolf: Okay.

Chris Sommers: Now to my mind a kipping pull-up is something that should not be done by beginners for a variety of reasons.

Robb Wolf: Agreed, agreed, totally, totally.

Chris Sommers: One we're taking someone who is generally not strong enough to do a dead hang pull-up and when they hit the bottom of that movement the muscle tissue isn't enough to control it they're going to hit the bottom of the range of motion with two to three times body weight. Muscle can't handle it so now we're bouncing off connective tissue in the shoulders.

Robb Wolf: Right.

Chris Sommers: When they also hit the bottom because of all that pressure, we have someone who's tight and brittle. The very movement that they're doing is going to force the shoulders to go past their natural range of motion. So we have a load that's too high. We've gone too far past their natural range of motion and we're bouncing off connective tissue. There's a reason that beginners and then we're putting them in high volume and high intensity, I've never until then a kipping pull-ups became widespread seen a rash of slap tears and adult fitness people ever until they get exposed to that prematurely.

Robb Wolf: Right.

Chris Sommers: I know some people noticing, you know, there's no evidence, there's no evidence, there's no evidence. Guys there's evidence. This is our bread and butter, this is what we live for. Bottom of a ring swing we hit ten times body weight, seven to ten depending on your technique but--

Robb Wolf: Could I throw something in there on the evidence thing?

Chris Sommers: Sure.

Robb Wolf: Because I've done a couple of pieces on like evidence based medicine and stuff like that. It's ironic in some ways because on the one hand if we use say a coaching methodology like you said you know what you're doing is for a dedicated focus goal of like going to the Olympics winning an Olympic championship and there's not really randomized controlled studies that dictate what you're doing. Right? I mean it's learned --

Chris Sommers: No, yeah because it's --

Robb Wolf: It's empirical--

Chris Sommers: --kind of science.

Robb Wolf: Yeah.

Chris Sommers: It's empirical.

Robb Wolf: It's largely empirical but then when we start and that's okay and that will run the gamut from like Olympic lifting to power lifting. You know, all those different stuff. That's okay but when we start raising some questions about injury potentiality and it's like I have observed that you know, unprepared people have more shoulder problems.

Chris Sommers: Absolutely.

Robb Wolf: Then we start, the detractors on the other side of that starts saying well where's the randomized controlled trial. To me it's a bit disingeniune. It's like well if we need an RCT for that then we need an RCT to describe everything that we do as a coach otherwise we have no validity in trusting our coaching at all. Like you're creating a double – people are creating a double standard. They're like if coaches are competent enough to bring people to a reasonably high level doing something and then they say you know I really feel like there's some problems with jumping people into this progression in the way that we're doing it. There's probably as much validity in that observation as the observations that brought them to the success that they've had if that's not too convoluted the way to say that.

[0:55:08]

Chris Sommers: Man it's to my mind it's the blind leading the blind. You know, we get people who have a background in general conditioning but no background in plyometric work, which is what a kipping pull-up is.

Robb Wolf: Right.

Chris Sommers: Right? It's plyometric work but they have no background in how to safely build the body up to handling that. They just jump into it. To my mind that's ludicrous. That's the same as laying someone on a bench, loading 300 pounds on the bar, taking the bar off the rack and handing it to them saying you know, good luck to you buddy, I'll see you in a minute.

Robb Wolf: You know, what I so wish that I have still some video of you speaking at that Golden Colorado piece. I have some video of Mark Twight speaking at that Golden Colorado piece. There was another individual there that observed that they saw endurance athletes who were getting chronically injured in the hips and in the knees and --

Chris Sommers: Sure.

Robb Wolf: When these individuals were tested for just doing an air squat, they could barely do an air squat.

Chris Sommers: Yeah.

Robb Wolf: And they certainly can't do 10 or 20 air squats and so the argument was made that these people needed some basic strength work and mobility work and you would do that --

Chris Sommers: Uh-hum.

Robb Wolf: --before doing the dynamic loading of running.

Chris Sommers: Sure. Absolutely. Because if you think about it, the same thing that what makes running possible is the same thing that makes acrobatics or all athletic movement possible is the structure, the arch in the foot, the thickness of the Achilles tendon, the oversized knee joint we have, the strong disk that run up through the back even the ligaments that hold the head steady as we move all of that's job is to accept and then repulse impact as we're moving around in this world, in this environment that we're in. So you have to first build a structure that can handle absorbing those forces before they can repulse those forces.

Robb Wolf: Absolutely. I completely agree. It's just interesting to me that there are still some kind of pushback at the argument that doing some sort of a strength oriented progression on the pull-up is somehow a fallacious argument. But there's still --

Chris Sommers: Wow.

Robb Wolf: -- the same crew of folks will argue that --

Chris Sommers: It's marketing. I look at it that it's just like a jean commercial right?

Robb Wolf: Right.

Chris Sommers: When they put a jean commercial up did they ever now talk about the wonderful material and the strength of the teaching and look at these quality of rivets? They never ever do. That's not interesting. So the commercials come on and what do they show? They show good looking, athletic sexy people having fun and by the way they just happened to be wearing these jeans.

Robb Wolf: Right, right.

Chris Sommers: To my mind, that's the appeal of the kipping poles for someone coming in. You take someone who has not a prayer in the world of doing a regular pull-up, you throw them on there, you let them bounce off some connective tissue a few times. Their eyes light up, this is a lifetime goal. They're so happy they're pumped where do I sign.

Robb Wolf: Right, right. Right.

Chris Sommers: It's disingenuous. You know, what we want is it's not enough to train them today. We have to plan for that. We need to train them next week and next year as well. We want to do no long term harm. It's not enough to have a customer and you get a few months out of them before they blow up.

Robb Wolf: Right. Right. Absolutely. Well Coach, we've chat up an hour. I told that we were going to do a quickie but I don't get to chat with you that often and I've considered you one of my mentors for a long, long, long, long time so.

Chris Sommers: Thank you very much.

Robb Wolf: I'm sure everybody else enjoyed it too but this was basically an hour with Coach Sommers so. Is there anything else that we missed that you want to talk about? I definitely want to let folks know about your ongoing seminar series particularly the one that's going to be at NorCal Strength and Conditioning in Chico March 22nd and 23rd and I'm going to be doing a little, probably about an hour, an hour and ten minute nutrition piece in addition to the gymnastics body seminar. But is there anything else that you want to cover?

Chris Sommers: Well I know you're saying an hour but I don't think you can talk for only an hour so we're looking forward to more.

Robb Wolf: [Laughs]

Chris Sommers: We're looking forward to more.

Robb Wolf: Yet again I'm sick of hearing me talk so I want to do as little as possible so I can listen to you guys so. I will do whatever folks want but I'm way more interested in what you're doing than what I'm doing so.

Chris Sommers: Well I think the main thing is I want people to get in the habit of vetting their sources of information. We get a lot of people coming into the floor who are broken because they took advice from someone who once hung on a pair of rings. You need someone who has produced someone up at the highest levels as far as strength. Remember we separate our skill training from our strength training and then backstepped it down. How do you get there?

[1:00:18]

I think if they'll put things in perspective of not trying to bench a hundred pounds but how long would it take to get to benching 300 pounds? They

wouldn't expect it tomorrow and gymnastics strength training is no different. We're looking depending on the athleticism they're bringing to the table when they start, the mobility they're bringing. We're looking at a four to six-year window to have cross on rings, plunge on rings, you know, all the rope climb, all the things that are under it. We're looking at a four to six-year window which if you think about it for Olympic lifting, for anything that's a high level athletics is about how long it takes the body to physically adapt to the new demands that are being placed on it.

Robb Wolf: Right.

Chris Sommers: So I want them to start approaching gymnastics strength training with that same degree of patience. They don't expect a 300-pound bench, they don't expect a body weight snatch overnight. You can't expect cross press handstand, planche on rings overnight either. It's just the same way that an Olympic will bring them in and put an empty dowel in their hand. We start at the very, very basics with us. We'll get people who will look at the courses and they'll glance at the course and they'll say well that's so simple and they'll blow it off.

We don't need them to glance at it. We need them to get in there and actually try to do the mastery sets. Usually that opens their eyes and they find out that they're not nearly as studly as they thought they were.

Robb Wolf: Right. Right. Well you know, I think it's worth mentioning with that too, something that I've always liked about gymnastics, weight lifting, sprinting but I guess specifically gymnastics even more so than the Olympic weight lifting is the characteristics, I guess the attributes that you get from gymnastics you won't get those attributes from just weight training. Now and you know, everybody --

Chris Sommers: That's true.

Robb Wolf: You've got different people have different needs and all that stuff and everybody needs to find their own way to do things. But it is interesting that you could product a 300-pound bench from doing gymnastics strength work but then you also have all of these other characteristics including just the structural integrity and the soft tissue integrity and the --

Chris Sommers: Uh-hum.

Robb Wolf: -- the balance that you won't get from these other endeavors. So I think that that's kind of --you know, even though and this is kind of a

realization I'm having even as I'm talking about it when you start talking about a return on investment even though it looks like it may be a long term you know, process to get to say like a planche on the rings or Maltese or something like that, all of these other attributes that go along with that how much time peripherally would you need to do while doing barbell press and bench press would you need to do to be able to get the shoulder integrity and whatnot. Really it's not even a legit question because you can't really get there by doing things other than kind of doing the gymnastics stuff. But at the end of the day even though it looks like a long investment kind of slow return really when you look at everything you're getting out of it not just simply the ability to do that one particular technique but all of the joint integrity and the proprioception and the injury prevention then you're getting an enormous amount out of that.

Chris Sommers: Oh it's huge. Now I do want to clarify too that I'm not against weight training and I'm not against people doing barbell work. I like it when it's the right time in their training. For example to my mind if they can't do all the knee mobility that we do with our athletes if they haven't mastered single leg squats I don't understand why they're putting weight on their back.

Robb Wolf: Right, right.

Chris Sommers: If you haven't taken care of first things first what are you thinking or if you haven't mastered a rope climb with no legs, why are you adding weight to your pull-ups?

Robb Wolf: Right.

Chris Sommers: It just boggles my mind. I think people are premature. Now I will say that without exception over the years, for example at seminars my athletes have out jumped everyone always. No one has even come remotely close to them. We always crushed them if they only trained a single modality. If there was the recon marines they were so happy when we finally got. We did a private seminar for them, when we finally got to legs they were like oh we're so tired of getting our nose rubbed in this and failing. This is our moment to shine and we crushed them.

[1:05:00]

Robb Wolf: Uh-hum.

Chris Sommers: We crushed them. Now that being said, two people over the years have out jumped my athletes and the ones who did were doing that combination of Olympic lifting and gymnastics strength training.

Robb Wolf: Hmm.

Chris Sommers: That's what I'm interested in exploring now you know, as we're not –you know, I'm not responsible now for putting people on national team. You know, I have more free time. I think that might be the sweet spot done correctly.

Robb Wolf: Right, right.

Chris Sommers: Done correctly. That could have some very, very interesting athletic returns.

Robb Wolf: Right. Very cool Coach. Well everybody should – we would have links to the GymnasticsBodies.com website. We'll have links to the upcoming seminars.

Chris Sommers: Check out our Facebook page, our Facebook page is cranking lots of great information there, some beautiful graphics. I think goodness we've been exploding. We have not worked it except since this summer. I think we started at 400 likes and now we're over 22,000.

Robb Wolf: Nice, awesome.

Chris Sommers: So.

Robb Wolf: Cool.

Chris Sommers: We're coming along. We use that for a lot of announcements. Basically how we work is we use Facebook for general announcements and then our forum is where we have our in depth conversations and discussions.

Robb Wolf: Very cool. Awesome. Well we'll get links to all that. I'll make sure that Squatchy and Corey or Orench get connected on that so that we have links for all that stuff.

Chris Sommers: Excellent.

Robb Wolf: Awesome, Coach.

Chris Sommers: Perfect. All right.

Robb Wolf: I'm looking forward to seeing --

Chris Sommers: Thank you Robb.

Robb Wolf: -- you in person in March and you have thoroughly lit a fire under my backside to get in and start going through the foundational--

Chris Sommers: Sure.

Robb Wolf: --programs. So I --

Chris Sommers: Should I bring a fire extinguisher for you?

Robb Wolf: We'll see, we'll see if I've blown up and I've failed miserably by then. But you know, it's- I think it's again worth mentioning I'm 42 years old, I'm still at the early cycle of this whole Brazilian jujitsu thing. But the little bit of gymnastics type exposure that I've had via Capoeira, via some of your work and I almost hesitate to even mention your work because I've been so spotty at implementing the legit progressions. But that said like I've been very fortunate --

Chris Sommers: Even then.

Robb Wolf: -- in injury prevention. I have great athleticism, really good mobility on the mat. You know, I'm rolling with guys that are 60 pounds heavier and 20 pounds younger and I'm doing fine with that.

Chris Sommers: Okay, hang in there.

Robb Wolf: It's hard work.

Chris Sommers: Nice.

Robb Wolf: But you know, if I didn't have this mobility and kind of strength background, and the proprioception I'd be getting crushed. It wouldn't be nearly as much fun.

Chris Sommers: Absolutely.

Robb Wolf: So it's -- I'm actually excited and I've been very much in a rut on my strength and conditioning so this is the perfect argument for me to get and do something different and follow an actual coach so that I'm not making this stuff up on my own so there you go. [Laughs]

Chris Sommers: Perfect. Perfect.

Robb Wolf: I think Dan John said he has himself as a coach has an idiot for a coach so it's time to hand over the reins --

Chris Sommers: Right.

Robb Wolf: -- to somebody else.

Chris Sommers: [Laughs] I'm not sure I want to call myself an idiot.

Robb Wolf: [Laughs] Well just say that your wife does your coaching then so you can always kind of wink, wink, nod, nod that one so.

Chris Sommers: That works for me.

Robb Wolf: Yeah. Well awesome Coach. Thank you so much for being on and I'm sorry I held up your family from going to get breakfast but this was really good.

Chris Sommers: [Laughs] I appreciate it Robb. No, I enjoyed it myself.

Robb Wolf: Okay. Will talk to you soon.

Chris Sommers: All right.

Robb Wolf: All right.

Chris Sommers: Bye.

Robb Wolf: Bye-bye.

[1:08:41] End of Audio