



## ► Training Ideas

# Physically Strong and Mentally Tough: Strongman Training for Athletic Strength Development

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**Note: Consultation with a qualified strength and conditioning professional is recommended prior to attempting this training program. Incorrect use may lead to injury due to the nature of the material presented in this article.**

## Introduction

In the never ending quest for greatness and superior athleticism, strength and conditioning coaches the world around are always on the lookout for new tools and exciting new training ideas that will give their athletes the edge both physically and mentally. Both of which are essential components in elite athletic performance. The following article outlines the use of strongman training and provides the reader with a sample training program.

## The Strongman Phenomena! Or Not?

Strongman or Odd Lift training over the past few years has become extremely popular amongst some of the world's leading strength and conditioning coaches. Although presently popular amongst the top coaches it isn't a new training phenomenon. In fact some call Strongman Training "Old Time Training", according to the guru of strongman training Josh Henkin, having been performed previously for many years by athletes and coaches alike especially by those from European and Eastern bloc countries.



The use of strongman training promotes functional strength and improves range of motion (4), as these lifts force the athletes to stabilize and control the load through the entire range, which can be limited at times with more traditional lifts and provides greater physical and mental challenges for the athlete (3). Training strongman style can involve numerous implements or objects such as those generally found in a junkyard or at the local hardware store and from Bodymotion, such as truck tyres, powerbags or sandbags, sledgehammers, weighted sleds, logs and even cars for the extreme athletes. You are only limited by your imagination and creativity. The use of these types of training and equipment will vary depending on the specific goals of the athletes and aims of each session either it be for explosive power or muscular strength endurance (2).

This type of training is extremely challenging but can be modified to suit most athletic populations especially contact sports (5). It is recommended that athletes undergo a general preparation or prehabilitation training phase or have a sufficient training age to ensure both mental and physical preparedness prior to performing maximal strongman training to help minimize risk of injury (1).

It is important to note that although these training activities can be beneficial and provide variety and should be incorporated in any strength and conditioning program, but a traditional and scientifically sound strength training program should be the basis of any athletes training regime and never be neglected over strongman training. A great way to introduce strongman training into your athletes programs may be to add one strongman exercise in their weekly strength training session and varying them so the athletes become familiar with each exercise. Then for progression and variety in training, full sessions can be planned based on odd lifts similar to the sample session provided below and can be utilized as part of an athlete's training program weekly, monthly or only occasionally depending on training schedule and needs.



### Sample Endurance Workout Circuit

1. Farmers Walks - Walk 100m with 2 x handheld objects (kegs)



2. Tyre Flip - Perform 10-15 Reps



3. Sandbag Clean and Press- 8-10 Reps



4. Sandbag Zercher Lunges - 10 Reps Each Leg



5. Sledgehammer and Tyre Hit – Using an axe chop action perform 10 Reps each side



6. Bear Hug Walk (Swiss ball filled with water) – Walk 100m



7. Log Overhead Press – Perform 15-20 Reps



Each circuit rotation will be performed 3-4 times with 4-5 mins active recovery between.

**Note:** Each Exercise is alternated between a stationary lift and a walking activity and was performed on the beach for added intensity.

## References

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