Natty Power

by Old Oak

2. Basics

Simple, Effective and 100% Natural Way to Become Powerful, Strong, Fast, Agile, Muscular, Lean, Energized, Conditioned, Healthy, Self-Confident and Generally More Capable!

012. Basics of Natty Power

What Nature expects?

Let's lay down all the basic principles of training for Natty Power. Let's see how Nature wants you to train for power and live your life in general. The truth is Nature wants you to build a powerful body, but also to eat well, sleep well, breathe well, avoid injuries and many other beneficial and useful habits for training and everyday life. Even if you decide not to train the Natty Power way, these basic principles will bring an ultimate well-being in your life, you will feel better and be healthier.

013. Nature Don't Want You to Use Steroids

Forget steroids and stay natty!

First and foremost, Nature wants you to be natty and stay natty. Nature don't want you to use steroids, roids, juice, gear or whatever is a current trendy slang. Also, their usage in sports (also known as doping) is forbidden by law. Beside steroids, there are many other performance enhancing drugs and the list is very long. Some of the most common drugs among athletes are:

- Anabolic androgenic steroids
- Testosterone replacement therapy and boosters
- Human growth hormone
- Insulin
- Diuretics
- Cocaine and other narcotics

Yes, chemical substances can make you big and strong in a very short time, but there are many negative aspects of their use and your health is way too precious to play such dangerous games with it.

Therefore, you should leave steroids to professional athletes, those who regularly compete or break records for a living. They have to take risks and gamble with health, because their sport career directly depends on achieved results. Heck, even they should forget steroids, find another source of income and live a healthy life. No money and no success can compensate for ruined inner organs and premature death. This should be all clear by now and no further explanations are needed. Just take a quick look at negative side effects of steroid use:

- reduced sperm count and infertility

- erectile dysfunction and decreased sex drive
- shrunken testicles
- breast development in men (gynecomastia)
- increased risk of prostate cancer
- heart attack or stroke
- liver and kidney failure
- high blood pressure (hypertension)
- diabetes
- blood clots
- high cholesterol
- hair loss
- severe acne
- aggressive behavior
- depression and mood swings
- anxiety and paranoia

014. Nature Don't Want You to Use Supplements

Forget supplements, natural food is all you need.

If you eat a high quality food regularly and in sufficient amounts, any kind of supplementation is totally unnecessary. Steroids are harmful, but at least they really work. Supplements are less harmful, but they usually don't work. In the year 2016, the American Medical Association summarized 20 years of scientific studies and found no benefits of supplementation, but unfortunately there was a huge amount of evidence of negative effects. Keep these facts in mind if you get an idea about buying supplements, they bring practically no benefits, just a bunch of negative side effects.

Yet, the supplements are selling like crazy. In fitness magazines you can always find an article claiming some supplement to be a holly grail of strength and muscle gains. In reality, the same supplement probably won't bring any significant results, while it may be actually toxic. The truth is that a few big fitness companies own everything, from nutrition factories to fitness magazines. Therefore, they can publish any article they want and promote all kinds of garbage. It is hard to say if those articles are of any relevance, since it is just another way of advertising and nothing else. It would be the best to forget supplements all together and focus on eating high quality real food. More and more cyclists and Iron Man competitors are switching from energy gels to bananas and other fruit. Natural food is the best and you can't go wrong with choosing banana over man-made gel.

Even if a supplement eventually produces some positive effects, those results are usually insignificant or temporary. For example, creatine can improve strength, speed, power, muscle gains, energy supply and help faster muscle recovery. Most of the time, it won't

cause any negative side effects, since creatine can be found in natural foods, like meat and milk. However, if consumed for a long time and in large amounts, the following can be experienced:

- unwanted weight gain due to water retention
- muscle cramps
- diarrhea
- high blood pressure
- liver dysfunction
- psychological issues

Although majority of creatine consumers have no negative side effects, when they stop consuming creatine, positive effects disappear quite quickly.

Protein powders are probably the safest supplements of all and can be consumed as a meal replacement or to increase total protein intake. For example, if you are too busy to prepare regular meals several times every single day, sure you can include a protein shake or two in your daily diet. Another situation that requires adding protein shakes to your diet is when you are unable to provide enough protein rich food in regular daily meals. However, if you plan to use protein shakes to overload your body with proteins in hope to get bigger and stronger, then please don't do it.

It is well known in weightlifting communities that you need 1 gram of protein per pound of body mass per day (which is approximately equal to around 2 grams per kilogram). Then it went further to 2 grams and 3 grams per pound of body weight (around 4-6 grams per kilogram), where things started to get ridiculous and potentially harmful. Unless you are Mariusz Pudzianowski, 5-times World's Strongest Man, you really don't have to eat 10 eggs and 2 pounds of bacon for breakfast. In reality, you will rarely need more then 1 gram of protein per pound of body weight per day (around 2 grams per kilogram). Only if you train extremely hard for hours every single day, then ramp up to 1.5 grams of protein per pound of body weight per day (around 3 grams per kilogram). This should be your absolute upper limit, because anything above that can be dangerous for health, will heavily overload your digestive system and probably will never get into muscles. Period of such high protein consumption should not last longer then few weeks. On the other side, you must eat at least 0.5 grams of protein per pound daily (around 1 gram per kilogram), if you want any progress in power, strength and body mass. That would be a bare minimum for a weekend warrior. Here are the recommended daily amounts of protein depending on training intensity, frequency and volume:

- **Minimum** for low intensity/frequency/volume training: **0.5 g/lb** or **1 g/kg**
- **Normal** for medium intensity/frequency/volume training: **1 g/lb** or **2 g/kg**
- **Maximum** for high intensity/frequency/volume training: **1.5 g/lb** or **3 g/kg**

Commercial protein powders may be full of toxic chemicals, so it would be much better to make your own protein powder from natural ingredients. It is easy, cheap and healthy solution, plus you can adjust content to suit your taste and needs. Take dried milk powder

and fruits of your choice, put everything in the blender and mix it with water or liquid milk – that's it. Alternatively, you can choose dehydrated eggs as an even better source of protein then powdered milk.

Considering vitamins and minerals, they are beneficial only as elements of real food. Separate them from food, add chemicals to form pills and capsules, and they loose most of the nutritional value, become mostly useless or even toxic in higher doses. The only proper way to use vitamins and minerals in addition to real food is when you have a medically diagnosed deficiency and doctor prescribes the exact type and amount of supplementation.

015. Nature Wants You to Eat Healthy

Eat only natural food. Eat only when you are hungry. Eat enough, but not too much.

Do you recall "Twin Peaks", the famous early '90s series? There was a character who decided to change his life and among other things, he stopped smoking. He replaced a big Cuban cigar with vegetables, so from that moment he shows up chewing an orange carrot or a green celery rib. That is exactly what you should do: replace unhealthy habits with healthy ones. If you smoke cigarettes or drink alcohol, stop right now and eat healthy food instead.

Eating healthy means eating more vegetables at the first place, especially in their fresh natural form. Add meat to your diet for power and muscle building nutrients, and you have already covered the majority of your menu. There are successful vegetarian and vegan bodybuilders, powerlifters and strongmen, but they are in minority, so you can draw the conclusions by yourself. Even if you decide to go vegetarian or vegan route, you don't have to follow it 100% strictly. A piece of meat here and there will help you a lot in training process. While meat may not be an eponym for healthy food, you will have much more success in achieving power if meat is included in your diet. Nature created us as omnivores, but just like carnivores, we have canine teeth for ripping and tearing meat apart. That's the best evidence if Nature wanted us to to be vegetarians or not.

It is very sad that all food today is contaminated with herbicides, pesticides, insecticides, vaccines, antibiotics, hormones, heavy metals, radio active elements, microplastics and who knows what else. Whenever possible, choose food in organic natural form, but you will still get all those toxins from the farmland, from the food animals were eating, water they were drinking and injections they received. Furthermore, if the food is packed in plastic and you buy it in the supermarket, then it can not be completely healthy, that's for sure. You additionally get toxins from the plastic package, preservation chemicals, additives, artificial colors and other unhealthy stuff. After all, GMO food is now very common, but negative effects are still unknown. Please avoid all GMO food, because those organisms are not created by Nature or God himself, they are man-made in a

laboratory. If you are going to train in tune with the Nature, first you should eat in tune with the Nature, so stay away from any GMO food.

The best thing we can do is to grow our own organic food. More and more people are becoming farmers for the sole reason of eating healthy and they are absolutely right. Second best solution is to carefully choose the healthiest food you can find. Private organic farms, run in traditional way are excellent source of healthy food. If you live in a city and buy food in a supermarket, which is not healthy from the start, then do your best to reduce amount of toxins you eat. Buy fresh fruits, vegetables, nuts and seeds, preferably in their natural form. Buy raw, unprocessed meat, never heavily processed products like sausages, salami or pate. Avoid products packed in boxes, glass jars or cans. Avoid any food mixed with other foods and unknown ingredients. For example, you should eat bananas and drink milk products, but banana ice cream or banana milk shake – not so much. Also, avoid frozen food, unless you can not find the same food in fresh state.

What to Eat

Eat only the real natural food, if possible. To give you some ideas, here is a short list of foods that you should eat:

- **animal meat**: beef, pork, poultry, fish, shrimps…
- **animal products**: eggs, caviar, milk, yogurt, kefir, cheese…
- **green leaves:** spinach, nettle, Swiss chard, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, cale…
- **vegetables**: cauliflower, broccoli, zucchini, celery, peppers, cucumber, tomato…
- **fruits**: banana, apple, pear, plum, orange, grapefruit, apricot, peach, cherry…
- **berries**: strawberry, blueberry, raspberry, blackberry, cranberry…
- **nuts**: walnuts, hazelnuts, almonds, pecan, pistachio, cashews, Brazil nuts…
- **seeds**: sesame, pumpkin seeds, flax, chia, sunflower seeds…
- **grains**: rice, oat, rye, barley, quinoa, corn, wheat (in small amounts)…
- **legumes**: chickpeas, beans, green peas, lentils…
- **roots**: beetroot, ginger, curcuma, onion, garlic, potato, carrot…
- **fat & oil**: lard, tallow, fish oil, olive oil, coconut oil, sesame oil…
- **herbs**: basil, parsley, oregano, rosemary, cinnamon, turmeric…

Never eat highly processed junk food or at least, try not to eat it too often:

- donuts, cookies, candies, cakes, sweets, biscuits...
- ice cream, sweetened yogurt, pudding...
- snacks, pretzels, bagels, chips, French fries...
- processed meat, hot-dogs, sausages, pate...
- carbonated drinks, fizzy drinks, soft drinks, energy drinks...

Note #1: There are lots of coaches and pro athletes who advise throwing away the yolk and eating only the egg white. That is the most stupid mistake you can do, because the

yolk is considered to be a superfood which contains the best nutrients in high percentages and in proper ratios. So, why would anyone throw it away? Well, once before the yolk was wrongly accused for producing fat bodies due to a high level of cholesterol. That is not true and you should never throw it away - always eat the whole egg! Keep in mind that organic eggs from the free range chickens are one of the best sources of protein.

Note #2: Sea fish is healthier then freshwater fish, because the 20th century industrialization has polluted rivers and lakes. Unfortunately, seas and oceans are getting polluted nowadays too. Furthermore, almost all sea fish you can find in supermarkets is actually farmed, not caught in the wild. Finally, the most serious problem with all saltwater fish is related to mercury accumulation. The bigger the sea fish, the more mercury it contains in percents. This means you should choose smaller sea fish, like sardines or herrings and limit fish intake to no more then 3 meals per week.

Note #3: Soy is the main protein source for vegans and vegetarians. It is also used for feeding cattle, although that is not natural for them and can cause sickness. The main problem with soy is that almost all soy you can find today is GMO soy designed in labs, which means not a natural organism. Avoid GMO soy and any other GMO food at all costs. If you occasionally eat organic soy or use soy powder to make protein shake, there should be no negative consequences. Just don't consume too much too often and you should be fine. Supposedly, soy may increase estrogen levels, but a healthy body will probably handle soy just like any other food, thus, without problems.

Note #4: Fruits are excellent food, but should be consumed moderately, due to a high amounts of fructose (sugar). Eating lots of sugar brings numerous negative effects and could make you fat. Always wash fruit with plenty of water, to get rid of sprayed chemicals.

Note #5: Probiotic foods are restoring and improving the gut flora, which is necessary for healthy digestive system. These foods contain live bacteria and yeasts, so they are also called a "good bacteria". The best sources of probiotics are fermented foods: yogurt, kefir, sauerkraut (fermented cabbage), kombucha, kimchi, miso. Eat these foods on a regular basis and your gut will always be healthy. There are also probiotics in the form of supplements, but you should use them only if you can't find any real probiotic food.

Note #6: Fats are good and healthy, but there are some fats that should be avoided. Basically, if the fat is in natural and unprocessed state, you can eat it, regardless if it is of animal or herbal origin. The fats that should be avoided at all costs are fats exposed to chemicals for extraction and fats cooked at high temperatures. Generally, seed oils are extracted with highly toxic chemicals and can not stand cooking temperatures without toxic degradation. Even if a healthy natural fat is cooked at high temperatures, it becomes unhealthy. For example, any oil fried in the pan or cooked in the friteuse cooker should not be consumed. When you put the oil in a pan, it is liquid and greasy, it makes the bottom of the pan slippery. When you fry it, oil becomes sticky and glue like, it binds to the pan so you should dig hard to wash it off. Guess you don't want such a garbage in your bowels, right?

Note #7: It is very important to avoid all junk food, because it won't do any good for your training, neither for your health. All it can do is make you fat, poison your body in a long term and eventually get you sick. If you eat a piece of chocolate every other day or a whole cheat-meal once a week, there won't be any negative consequences.

Note #8: Healthy food is not always tasty, but you should eat it anyway. Cookies are very tasty, but you should not eat them. Anyhow, there are ways to make bland food more tasty. For example, you can boil broccoli, Swiss chard, Brussels sprouts or any other unpalatable veggie and then add garlic, olive oil and lemon juice. Be creative.

Note #9: Nettle is a fantastic green leafy vegetable. It was used as a food and for healing purposes since the ancient times. Egyptians treated arthritis and lower back pain with nettle, while Roman troops rubbed it on themselves to help stay warm. Be careful not to get burned: Nettle is covered with stiff tiny hairs that are stingy and release chemicals when touched. It is not dangerous, but the burning sensation is certainly unpleasant. Pick them up with leather gloves and you will be safe. When the nettle is cooked, steamed, dried or frozen, it becomes safe for consumption.

Note #10: Ketchup, mayonnaise and other sauces and dressings, always contain added sugar, preservatives, additives, artificial colors and many other toxic chemicals. Try to avoid them whenever possible. On the other side, you can eat home made sauces and dressings, because you will put only healthy ingredients inside.

Note #11: You can eat some milk products like butter and all kinds of aged cheeses. Unlike other milk products, butter and aged cheeses contain very small amounts of lactose (milk sugar), which is one of the most common allergens among adults. Examples of low lactose cheeses with less then 1% of lactose, are: Parmigiano-Reggiano, Grana Padano, Romano, Muenster, Cheddar, Camembert, Brie, Provolone, Emmental, Gouda, Gorgonzola, Roquefort, etc.

Note #12: Here is the list of perfectly healthy snacks: walnuts, pecans, hazelnuts, almonds, Brazil nuts, cashews, pistachio, pumpkin seeds, sunflower seeds, etc. Eat them in a hurry and carry them in your backpack wherever you go. It will be much better to Chew on them instead of eating a donut or slice of pizza, it will be better beyond compare.

How to Eat

First and foremost - slowly! For a proper digestion, eating slowly is essential. Each bite needs to be chewed properly. Softer foods like banana or potato need to be chewed 5-10 times. Dense foods like meat or cabbage should be chewed 20-30 times before swallowing. Otherwise, food won't be prepared for further digestion in your stomach and nutrients won't be completely absorbed.

If you have a hard time eating enough food or you are experiencing digestion issues, try separating protein, carbohydrates and fat dominant foods from each other. This should help you in eating more food, digesting meals more easily and even in reducing possibility of acid reflux (aka heartburn). Here is how some typical foods are sorted by content of dominant macro nutrients:

- **Protein**: meat, eggs, caviar, milk, milk products, legumes…
- **Carbs**: grains, bread, pasta, potatoes, sugars…
- **Fat**: butter, animal fat, oils, avocado, nuts, seeds…

Even if you don't have problems with eating enough or digestion issues, still it would be wise to implement one basic food separation: avoid mixing fat dominant food and carb dominant food in the same meal. To maximize training progress, improve muscle synthesis, bring up energy levels and loose fat, follow this simple eating pattern during the day:

- **protein & fat**: in the morning (eggs & bacon)
- **protein & complex carbs**: around 1 hour before the training (meat & brown rice)
- **simple carbs**: in liquid form during the training session (natural fruit juice)
- **protein & complex carbs**: right after the training session (meat & potatos)
- **protein & fat**: in the evening (fish & olive salad)

Proper utilization of carbohydrates in athlete's diet is usually the main problem, but this is a very good general approach for establishing good eating habits. On days without a training session, don't eat carbs at all or at least don't eat a lot of carbs. Try this approach and get used to it. If you haven't tried such eating patterns before, you may be pleasantly surprised with the results. There are many other, more complicated diets for different goals and specific needs, like "carb loading" and "carb cycling", but you probably won't need them. If you wish to experiment with carbs, read about these diets on the Internet.

If you wonder which foods are rich in complex carbs and which are rich in simple carbs, here are the typical examples:

- **complex carbs**: fruit, vegetables, whole grains, legumes, bananas...
- **simple carbs**: fruit juice, chocolate, honey, candy, cookie, cake, ice cream...

Simple carbs should be always avoided. If you feel weak during the training session drink some fruit juice or eat a piece of chocolate. The same applies if you get sleepy while driving long distances or studying science the whole night. Simple carbs are refreshing and give instant energy. You can also consume simple carbs prior to hard training session to boost energy in advance.

To make things perfectly clear, it is not forbidden to mix protein, carbs and fat in the same meal. Actually, these 3 macronutrients are already mixed together in almost all natural foods, just in different ratios. If you want more efficient, easier and faster digestion, together with less accumulation of body fat, then separate fat dominant foods

and carbohydrate dominant foods in different meals. Enzymes should have an easier job to do and it is possible that nutrients would be better absorbed. Further separations are also possible, like eating protein foods on their own in a meal, but that may not be practical and effective. As stated before, you probably don't need to go that far, unless you are experiencing digestion problems or have difficulties eating enough food. On the other side, if you want to eat less and feel fed for a longer time or to slow down the digestion, then you should mix all 3 macro nutrients in each and every meal. After all, it won't hurt if you experiment and see what works for you personally.

When to Eat

Eat whenever you are hungry - it's that simple. Like everything else, Nature has regulated this mechanism perfectly. If your body need nutrients, it will send you a hunger signal and you should start eating as soon as possible. When you have eaten enough, you will receive a filled up signal from your stomach. Quite simple indeed, but it is amazing how people tend to neglect these natural signals.

You should pay a special attention to next few details if you want to maximize the results of your training:

- As stated above, to boost energy for training you should increase carbohydrates intake prior to workout, during and after the workout. For example, you can eat rice 1 hour before the training session, then drink fruit juice during the session and finally eat rice again right after the session. Avoid carbs in all other meals during the day. This way you should have more energy, be able to train harder, build more muscle and loose fat at the same time.
- To have protein readily available for muscle synthesis, you need to eat some protein prior to training session. Finish that meal around 1 hour before you start to train or you may end up with mess on the floor.
- Trigger for protein synthesis and muscle growth is a high intensity training. Time frame for protein synthesis opens up immediately after the training session and lasts for about 24 hours. Then it decreases gradually, but somewhat elevated ability to synthesize protein may last up to 2 days. You should take advantage of this time frame to eat highly nutritious food full of protein.

It may happen that you have a hard time falling asleep or waking up with feeling of a brick stuck in your stomach or you are experiencing heartburns. First thing to try is to avoid large meals in the evening, especially those rich in carbs and fats. Rather eat the last big meal earlier in the afternoon. Later in the evening, eat only protein dominant food with salad. Ideally, it would be a lean steak with salad or green leafy veggies. Forget eating pizza or pasta late in the evening.

Another eating habit worth experimenting is eating protein before carbohydrates in the same meal. This means you would first eat the beef steak or chicken breasts and then proceed with eating rice or potatoes. Proteins may be better absorbed and glucose and insulin levels may be lower if you eat this way.

How Often to Eat

Eating 3 times a day is the most usual eating regime. Adding 2 snacks between these 3 meals would make a nice frequent eating pattern for athletes, Lots of muscle building programs are advising eating even more often, like 6-8 times a day. On the opposite side, there are athletes and coaches propagating only one meal a day. This may sound crazy, but there are results as a proof of effectiveness. You should test everything between these extremes and find out what works for you.

Eating too often may not be productive, because you will never feel hunger, which means body doesn't need more food and probably won't use it to build muscle and fill energy depots. Getting hungry first and then eating a meal is more natural and should work better for majority. Anyway, you can experiment and listen to what your body is saying.

How Much to Eat

Again, listen to your body signals. Eat when you are hungry and stop when you feel fed up. You have to eat enough if you are training hard, because your body will need a lot of nutrients, but you should never force-feed yourself. There are no benefits in overeating and you will never get stronger or powerful that way. Your body will use only the amount of nutrients needed for building muscle and restoration of energy reserves, while the rest of the nutrients probably won't be utilized. If there are not enough nutrients, a hunger signal will be sent to your brain. Nature regulates this process on the best possible way and all you have to do is listen and comply.

There is always some kind of duality in the Universe, like night and day, Yin and Yang, war and peace. For every beneficial aspect there has to be some down side. This is especially true when you push to the extremes from the equilibrium. For example, the more weight you put on the bar, the greater the risk of injury will be. As far as the food, the more you eat, the more fuel you get to train harder, but your inner organs may get overloaded. If eating a lot of food is prolonged, regardless if it is a healthy food, it may cause some damage to inner organs and serious health issues.

Pay a special attention not to eat too much protein. While eating enough protein is necessary for progress in power, strength, speed and muscle mass, consuming more then necessary in unhealthy and can lead to numerous health problems. It can put a strain on your kidneys and liver. Car engine oil filters are changed on regular basis, but your liver and kidneys never get a replacement. Take a good care of them, avoid overeating and eventual dysfunction. Too much protein can also deplete calcium reserves and eventually lead to osteoporosis. Certainly something to think about. If nothing else, eating too much protein will make you fat. All natural sources of protein are accompanied with fat (meat, eggs, milk, cheese). If the fat is not utilized for energy, it will be stored around your belly. While fat is essential for production of testosterone and vitamin D, you probably don't want a chubby body.

As a general guideline, around 30g of protein in a single meal is the maximum body can absorb and use for protein synthesis. This means you don't have to eat more protein then it is necessary. If you train regularly, aim your daily protein consumption at 1 gram per pound of body weight (or 2 grams per kilogram of body weight). Less then that would be ok too, but more then that is not necessary. Fats and carbs are basically two forms of fuel: slow burning and fast burning. Regulate their intake to feel energized, but avoid gaining too much body fat.

Common Food Intolerances

Unlike food allergy, food intolerance or food sensitivity is not dangerous for health, but certainly could cause some serious digestive and metabolic problems on the long run. Lots of people have some intolerance, but simply don't know it yet or can not correlate symptoms to a specific food in a diet. Read this paragraph even if you don't have any gastric issues. By eliminating some of incriminated foods you can do wonders for your health and significantly improve quality of life. It will cost you nothing to test yourself with a very simple food elimination method: pick any of the most susceptible foods, don't consume it for a period of time, then reintroduce it in large amounts and watch for the reactions.

Food intolerance can occur suddenly at any age and with no special cause. Also, it can occur after viral or bacterial infection. Sometimes intolerance suddenly disappears without any treatment. Symptoms could begin immediately after eating the food or could be delayed and manifested after a few days. Symptoms can last shortly or for hours or even days, but sometimes may not be obvious at all. Everything depends on the type of intolerance, degree of sensitivity and amount of the eaten food. The most common symptoms are:

- diarrhea
- loose stool
- smelly stool
- sticky stool
- bloating
- rash
- headache
- nausea
- fatigue
- abdominal pain
- runny nose
- acid reflux
- flushing of the skin

Quite often it is difficult to be sure which specific food is causing problems. The easiest method for detection would be through the following procedure:

1. Completely remove from your diet one of the susceptible foods, commonly associated with food intolerances.
2. Don't consume it for a week or a month, depending on the type of tested intolerance.
3. Reintroduce eliminated food back to your diet and this time consume it in large amounts for a whole day.
4. Monitor your body reactions for typical intolerance symptoms.

Here are the 3 most common intolerance and foods that are causing them. Experiment with the method described above to find out if there is any influence on your health or mood. If you find a culprit, search the Internet for further medical information or talk to a qualified nutritionist. There are many other food intolerances, but checking these 3 would be a good starting point.

1. Lactose

Around 70% of World's population have lactose intolerance, but it goes up to 98% in Vietnam and other Asian countries. It is caused by loss of lactase enzym, which normally occurs at some point in adult age. That is a Nature's mechanism to protect newborn calves from starvation, because adult humans should hunt and gather food, instead of stealing milk from young animals. Lots of people have no clue about being lactose intolerant and can not recognize symptoms, especially if they are mild. Symptoms usually start to appear around 1-3 hours after ingestion of milk or milk products: stomach cramps, bowel movement with loose stool or explosive diarrhea.

- *Food*: Milk, milk products (yogurt, cheese), products containing milk (chocolate).
- *Symptoms*: Abdominal pain, bloating, smelly stool, diarrhea, gas, skin rush.
- *Test*: Eliminate all milk products for 7 days. Then reintroduce milk and milk products for one whole day and in large amounts. Monitor for symptoms.

If you are lactose intolerant, there are many milk products that are completely lactose free or very low in lactose, so you should be able to eat them with no problems. For example, any mature cheese with carbohydrates less then 1% like Parmigiano, Pecorino, Feta, Mozarella, Brie, Gorgonzola, Roquefort and many others.

2. Gluten

Unlike a full blown celiac disease, gluten sensitivity can be very subtle and may pass unnoticed for decades. However, it could be dangerous to consume something that your body can not digest properly and can cause bowel inflamation. Unusually foul smelling stool is a sure sign that something is not properly digested and one of the main suspects is gluten, a type of protein found in wheat and grain products.

- *Food*: Wheat, spelt, barley, rye, oat, bread, pasta, cookies, cereals, beer, sauces.
- *Symptoms*: Loose stool, sticky stool, smelly stool, abdominal pain, bloating, diarrhea or constipation, headaches, fatigue, joint pain, skin rash, depression.

- *Test*: Eliminate all grains and grain products for at least 30 days. Then reintroduce wheat in the form of white bread and pasta, start eating it in big amounts and monitor for symptoms that may manifest in the next several days.

If you are gluten intolerant, avoid all above mentioned food. Grains that are gluten free are corn, rice, millet, quinoa, buckwheat and few others.

3. Caffeine

Caffeine sensitivity is state in which common effects of caffeine are manifested more strongly then usual. It can be caused by genetics, medications and lifestyle factors such as smoking or it can come with aging and decreased efficiency of metabolic enzymes.

- *Food*: Coffee, carbonated fizzy soda drinks, energy drinks, tea, chocolate.
- *Symptoms*: Rapid heartbeat, arrhythmia, anxiety, jitters, insomnia, nervousness, nausea, headache.
- *Test*: Eliminate coffee and other drinks that contain caffeine for a while. After several days reintroduce coffee in larger amounts and watch for symptoms in the next 24 hours.

If you have a caffeine intolerance, you can drink caffeine free coffee or decaffeinated coffee. The same goes for tea.

Beside these 3 common intolerances, there are many other foods that may cause food sensitivity, intolerance or allergy. Some of them are peanuts, soy, eggs and shellfish (shrimp, crab lobster, octopus, oysters, mussels, etc). You should also pay attention to apples, pears, plums, grapes and other fruits, since they can cause diarrhea when eaten in larger amounts. Testing procedure is always the same: eliminate food for a while, then introduce it back in large amounts and watch for symptoms. This type of testing is very reliable, won't cost you a dime and you can do it without any medical supervision.

Acid Reflux

Acid reflux is a very common digestive disorder among sportsmen who need to eat large amounts of food. It is also known as heartburn, although it has no direct relation to heart. It can be manifested as an unpleasant burning sensation in chest and/or throat, when acidic stomach content evaporates back to esophagus and throat. Much worse manifestation is when highly sour-bitter stomach acid flows back to throat and mouth. It can be painful and can cause serious health damage.

If you occasionally experience the acid reflux, it may be a sign that you are eating too much food high in carbohydrates and fat. Try reducing amounts of carbs and fat until an improvement can be noticed. Also avoid eating too much carbs or fat in the evening to prevent acid reflux during sleep. Particularly avoid eating large meals before sleep. Pizza or bowl of pasta are examples of food that should be avoided late in the evening. If you must eat large meal before the bedtime, at least avoid drinking a lot of water right after

the meal. If the stomach content is not too liquid, it won't flow back easily. If you always experience acid reflux lying on the bed no matter what, then avoid eating anything within 2-3 hours before the bedtime. If you feel hungry, try eating just a tiny amount of food, low in carbs and fats. The perfect evening meal is a lean meat with any kind of non-starchy vegetable salad. Eat that and you will be sleeping like a baby. Another advise would be to stay awake at least two hours after the supper. For easier digestion of a large meal, light walk may be an excellent solution.

Instant solution for acid reflux is a tea spoon of sodium bicarbonate (aka "baking soda") dissolved in a glass of water. Drink slowly. Even if you have eaten a huge meal of hard digesting food, you can drink a small amount of baking soda with water and unpleasant acidity will disappear from the throat. Keep in mind that this is just a temporary remedy, not a cure for illness. If you regularly have acid reflux, you should visit a competent doctor.

016. Nature Wants You to Drink Healthy

Clean water is the best. Plain and simple.

The healthiest liquid you can drink is water. All other drinking liquids contain water, but you still need to drink a pure water. Therefore, milk, coffee, tea, iced tea, fruit juices, lemonade, beer or any other beverage, can not replace drinking water. Always drink a lot of water, especially on training days and during summer. Some of the benefits are:

- Aids functioning of digestive system.
- Flushes waste and toxins throughout the body
- Boosts energy and athletic performance.

The big problem today lies in the fact that all drinking water you can find is polluted to some degree. As expected, the cleanest water comes directly from the Nature itself. Since the majority of population is living in urban areas, different ways of water distribution have been invented. Here is the list of main sources of drinking water:

- **Mountain springs**: Source of the cleanest water you can find. Spring water still has to be tested for possible high acidity and alkalinity. Springs are Natural source for people living on mountains.
- **Water wells**: Typical water source in the countryside. Water wells can contain a high quality underground water, but they have to be dug far away from latrine pits and other soil pollutants. Well water has to be regularly tested for pathogens like giardia and shigella.
- **Rain water**: It is usually clean and safe for drinking, cooking and bathing, but testing for germs and chemicals is mandatory. Rain water quality highly depends on levels of atmosphere pollution and how the collection system is set up and which materials have been used.

- **Tap water**: It is ready available and costs almost nothing, but it usually contains different toxic chemicals. The most dangerous are heavy metals like lead and mercury, but there are other chemicals too, like fluoride, chlorine and phenols. Prolonged exposure to these substances may lead to cancer, high blood pressure, kidney failure and many other serious medical conditions.
- **Bottled water**: This option can become expensive in the long run, requires regular shopping at the supermarket and carrying heavy water bottles back home. If you have a large family, you will probably give up at some point. Another downside are plastic bottles, which is certainly not healthy way to package anything.

For all of us living in urban settlements, tap water is the optimal and practical option. While you can drink it directly from the tap for a whole life without any problems, there are several ways to make tap water cleaner and healthier:

- **Reverse osmosis**: This solution may be an expensive investment, but will pay off in the form of a very clean drinking water. Maintenance will cost some money too and you need a space for the installation of the whole system.
- **Filtering**: Water filtering jugs or pitchers are very cheap and you can buy them in big supermarkets, so there should be no excuses - start using them now! Filters are also very cheap and all you should do is to change them regularly. Filtering is not effective as reverse osmosis, but will eliminate a lot of harmful chemicals from the tap water. Just keep the pitcher covered all the time to prevent dust and insects falling into water.
- **Boiling**: Easy and 100% effective method for elimination of the live microorganisms in the drinking water. While tap water can contain bacteria in very rare cases, because microorganisms have been already killed with chlorine in the water facility, there are still some benefits of boiling. It evaporates chlorine, reduces hardness and very successfully dissolves and eradicates dangerous microplastics. Therefore, it would be wise to boil tap water, even if you use filtering jugs.
- **Sitting**: The oldest way of mechanical purification is to let water sit for a while, until it becomes visibly clear. Sand and heavy metal particles will fall down and settle on the bottom of the container, but lighter substances like chlorine, fluoride, phenol and others can not be removed this way.

Beside pure water, you can drink lactose free milk, yogurt, kefir, fruit juices, herbal teas, coffee, etc. Excellent probiotic drinks are aloe vera juice and kombucha mushroom. Glass of wine occasionally is ok too. Avoid drinking carbonated fizzy drinks, diet soda, energy drinks, sport drinks, vitamin drinks, chemical juices, beer, whiskey, vodka, etc.

017. Nature Wants You to Sleep Well

Good night sleep is irreplaceable. Go to bed early in the evening. Turn off all light and sound sources. Make sure your bed is hard and flat.

Muscles grow when you sleep, so it is essential to have enough of deep sleep at night. First of all, it is important to quickly fall into a deep sleep and stay uninterrupted in this first phase of sleep for at least 3-4 hours. Make your room dark. Open windows and let the fresh air in. Turn off all sounds that may wake you up. Go to bed early in the evening. Sleep for as long as you need and let your body decide when is enough. You can let the sunlight wake you up, that is natural. Sleeping longer then 8 hours is not necessary, but adapting to sleeping less has been proven to be healthy and sobering.

If you feel tired and sleepy during the day, take a short nap, but no longer then 1 hour, because anything longer will ruin your night sleep. Short afternoon nap will be refreshing and will energize you for the rest of the day.

During the day, try to spend as much time outside as possible. You will fall asleep quickly and easily. Be active outside and soak the daylight, especially sunlight. Of course, you should never directly expose your bare skin or eyes to dangerous rays of strong sunlight. Overexposure to UV rays can lead to skin cancer and cataract. Only early in the morning and late afternoon you can safely take off the clothes and enjoy the bare skin sunbathing. If you are interested in sungazing, play it safe and sungaze only in the late sunset and with eyelids shot. Also, keep in mind that any type of physical activity during the day will highly improve the quality of sleep.

Never eat large amounts of food prior to sleep. Also avoid heavy sauces and spicy foods in the evening. Especially avoid foods high in fat and simple carbs.

The best sleeping position is on the back, particularly for heavy athletes. Sleeping on side is also fine, but try to alternate the sides. Avoid sleeping on the stomach. Choose pillow of adequate size and firmness, then test it. If you have wide shoulders and sleep on the side, pillow should be thick enough to keep your head in neutral horizontal position or slightly upwards.

As far as the bed types, the traditional Japanese “futon” bed placed over “tatami” is very natural and very practical option. This kind of bedding is not popular in the Western world, so it will be hard to find in retail stores, but you can always buy it online. Even better, make an improvised version by stacking a few thick blankets on the floor. The main characteristic of this type of bedding is the firmness, which is good for spine and back muscles. If it feels too firm, you can make it softer by simply adding more blankets. Beside firmness, another advantage of this bed is the straightness or the uniform flatness. There will never be a “valley” in the middle of the bed, which is a standard problem of all mattresses after a few months of use. Furthermore, you can make your bed as large as you like. You can easily move it around. You can pack it and take it on a trip. You can wash it easily in a washing machine. You can not fall down from it. You will never hit

your shin on the pointy wooden corner of the bed. So, give it a try and you may be pleasantly surprised.

018. Nature Wants You to Have a Good Posture

If you walk, squat and lift heavy objects, your posture will be perfect.

Having a good posture and standing straight is natural, healthy and beautiful. Good posture projects power and dominance. Good posture is sexually attractive. Unfortunately, modern humans quite often suffer from numerous muscle weakness which can result in poor body posture and eventually, in permanent skeletal deformities. Strengthening weak muscles to prevent deformities is possible and probable, especially in adolescents and young adults. There are 3 common conditions that have direct influence on posture:

- **Pes Planus**: aka flat feet, caused by weak foot and calf muscles.
- **Genu Valgum**: aka knock knees, caused by weak leg and hip muscles.
- **Thoracic Kyphosis**: aka slouching, caused by weak back muscles.

These conditions can be easily prevented in advance, stopped in progressing further and even fully reversed, with specific strength training and activities.

Pes Planus

Ever since the modern humans started walking less, their foot muscles got weaker and weaker. Instead working in the fields and farms, people are now working in factories and offices, which means standing or sitting the whole day. Children are sitting for hours in school, as well as at home, usually playing games on the computer. Beside walking less, wearing footwear is additional problem. Thick soles are preventing natural movement of toes and ankles, which in turn causes muscle atrophy. When foot and calf muscles become inactive and weak, foot arch can not be supported anymore and the result is condition called **pes planus**, also known as **flat feet**.

Solution to this problem is quite logical and obvious - **walk more**! Walking is probably the most natural human activity of all. Neglecting such a fundamental body motion could be very dangerous for health in numerous aspects. Due to importance of walking, it must be practiced regularly. Whenever possible, walk barefoot. If walking barefoot is not possible or there is a danger of injury, choose footwear with thin soles. For example, try neoprene socks used by divers, water shoes or beach shoes. Be aware that thorns can easily penetrate through this type of footwear, so wear something more substantial in wooded areas.

If you didn't practiced walking for a long time, start walking for a few minutes every day, to get your body adapted. Try to prolong walking times and distance every week. When

you get used to regular walking, switch to 5 miles walk once a week or at least once a month, which would be a bare minimum for everyone who wants to stay healthy.

Beside walking on the flat ground, occasionally walk on uneven terrains to wake up all tiny muscles in your feet. Sandy and pebble beaches represent an ideal surface for this purpose, so always walk barefoot on beaches. Mountain trails are harder and riskier, but you should take a cross country hike from time to time. To simulate uneven terrain at home, you can practice heel walk and toe walk.

Good posture starts at the feet level. Only strong feet can provide a stable basis for the body to stand straight. Without strong feet you won't be able to efficiently perform basic natural movements, like walking, running, jumping, load carrying, etc. Weak and flat feet can cause many other problems and deformities throughout the body, so importance of keeping your feet strong is enormous.

Genu Valgum

This deformity, also known as **knee valgus** and **knock knees**, can be caused by genetic factors, skeletal deformation, metabolic disease, obesity, injury, but quite often the cause is simple - weak legs and hip abductors (gluteus minimus and gluteus medius). Knee valgus is one of the most common leg deformities among young population and manifests with knees caving in or medially collapsing during standing, walking and squatting. While it may not be present in standing position and not so obvious in walking, it will clearly show up in squatting, especially under the heavier load. This clearly implies specific leg and hip weaknesses, which sometimes disappear without any treatment. However, with regular strength exercises, knock knees could be corrected completely or at least to some degree.

The best exercises for correction of knock knees are:

- **Deep squat** with knees wide apart and circular rubber band around thighs.
- **Forward squat walk** with knees wide apart and resistance band around ankles.
- **Lateral squat walk** with knees wide apart and resistance band around ankles.

These are light correctional exercises and certainly won't make you strong and powerful. Practice them often and over long period of time to schieve results. During execution, try to place weight on the outer edge of the foot and pay attention on keeping feet arched all the time. This will help with correction of flat feet as well, because flat feet and knock knees are often manifested together. Just like with any other deformity, it would be the best to start correction exercises as early as possible, preferably in the childhood. While there are many other exercises for knee valgus, they probably won't be effective as those described above, but you are free to try them out.

Thoracic Kyphosis

Slouching is a new normal among youngsters, especially since the cellphones became their obsession. Everyone who spends hours sitting and looking at the phone screen, will at some point get a pronounced forward curvature of the spine and excessively rounded upper back. If not treated on time, slouching can result in serious medical condition called **thoracic kyphosis**. Fortunately, this deformity can be easily prevented, halted from advancing and even reversed. All you have to do is to strengthen weak back muscles, particularly the spine erectors. Of course, you must always pay attention on forcing your body to stand straight and hold straight stance for a long time.

Internet is full of different tools for fixing body posture, like belts, braces and other awkward apparatuses, but their efficiency is highly questionable. Modern day people prefer to spend money and hope to solve problems that way, the easy way. In reality, you will have to work hard to get strong back muscles, because there is no other way to stand straight on your own, without any additional device.

Anti-Slouching Exercise No. 1

First and foremost, you must **lift heavy objects** from the ground up to the overhead position. This is probably the best overall movement for the whole body in all aspects and among many other benefits, it will build a good posture for sure. Ideally, you would do it in Olympic weightlifting style, but no worries if you can't copy such complicated motoric pattern. There is no need to waste your time on learning correct technique and seeking technical perfection, because you won't compete in the Olympics. Just choose some very light object, slowly pick it up from the ground and lift it to the overhead position and hold it there for a few moments, with straight vertical arms. Then slowly put the object back down to the ground. Repeat this lift several times and do several sets in each training session, several times a week. As far as the object, it could be a medicine ball, a sandbag, a wooden log, a barbell or whatever. To build strength, progress slowly from light objects to heavier ones. Lift in style that feels comfortable to you personally and over time, the Nature will take care of improvements in technique. At the beginning, the movement may look clumsy and that's ok, but later on, when you grease the groove and become familiar with the movement, try to copy Olympic weightlifters. Their technique will enable lifting of heavier weights. If one day you manage to lift half of the bodyweight to overhead position - then kudos to you!

Anti-Slouching Exercise No. 2

Y raises is an exercise which directly targets weaknesses at the neck and upper back region. You can perform it on 45 degree hyperextension bench or Roman chair, but if there is anyone willing to hold your feet, then you can also do it on a Swiss ball, edge of the bed or on the floor with pillows tucked under your hips. Lie down on your stomach, take a pair of light dumbbells and lift them forward and up to form a Y shape. Hold it for a short moment while squeezing your back muscles hard, then repeat. If you don't have dumbbells, use water bottles. Alternatively, do it lying on the floor: lie down on your back and spread arms to form a Y shape. Lift your shoulder blades off the floor while

supporting the body on glutes, back of the head and back side of your hands. This variation involves neck muscles to a higher degree, which is very beneficial for solving hunch back problem. Do several reps in several sets, several times a week.

Anti-Slouching Exercise No. 3

Third exercise is an isolation exercise for strengthening neck muscles by lifting weight with thing called **head harness** (or neck harness). When you put it on your head, the attached weight will hang in front of your body. Bend your neck forward until your upper body gets a form of a question mark symbol ("?"). Then lift the weight by lifting your head up and then proceed with bending your neck further backwards. Hold that position for a moment while squeezing neck muscles hard, then repeat the lift. Several times a week, do several sets of several reps.

Anti-Slouching Stretch

Exercises will not be as efficient as they could be, if you are inflexible and locked in hunchback posture. Reversing this anomaly will also require stretching muscles, tendons and ligaments on the front side of the body, so some form of thoracic extension will be mandatory. While there are many different numerous thoracic stretches, the best ones are those in which you can spend a lot of time without discomfort. Remember, you are trying to counteract negative effects of years spent sitting and starring into the screens of various devices (TV, computer, cellphone, etc.). Perfect stretch for this purpose is **thoracic spine extension** on a foam roller. Lie on the floor and place a foam roller under your upper back. Let your head and arms fall back to the floor. Spend as much time as possible in this position. Additionally, change the roller's position up and down the spine to target different areas. More advanced way to perform the same stretch at a higher amplitude is to lie with your upper back on sofa's armrest or on the edge of a bed, with head and arms hanging down towards the floor. Finally, proceed to the most advanced variant of the same stretch in style of dumbbell pullovers while lying sideways on the bench. Focus on holding the dumbbell as far back as possible for as long time as possible. Since this is a stretching exercise, there is no need to lift the dumbbell up, just hold the stretch.

Anti-Slouching Habit

Here is a very beneficial habit for all-day-long application of forces that will strengthen the erectors and straighten the spine. Take an ordinary backpack and load it with a light weight. Instead of carrying it in regular fashion on the back, place it on the front side of your body, thus on your chest, so the backpack will become a **frontpack**. It is relatively comfortable to wear a backpack in this reversed manner, so muscles surrounding your spine will be active for a long time. Don't forget to keep straight torso, head lifted up high and shoulders pulled back. For the start, take a short 10 minutes stroll 3 - 6 times a week and increase strolling time gradually. After a month of short strolls, you can start planning a longer mountain hike route with 5% - 10% of bodyweight in the frontpack. Whenever your back muscles become tired, move your backpack from the front side to

the back side of the body and vice versa. If this style of wearing a back pack becomes your regular habit, there is no doubt that your back muscles will be sufficiently strong to hold your body straight. Beside, there are other benefits of wearing a backpack on the front side of the body. For example, thieves can not steal your backpack or things packed in the backpack, reaching inside on the move is easier and you won't unintentionally hit people with the backpack on the crowded streets and in the buses.

Anti-Slouching Mentality

These 3 exercises, 1 simple stretch and 1 beneficial habit are all you need to reverse the most common modern day deformity - thoracic kyphosis. Be persistent and after a few months you should be able to notice some improvements in posture.

Finally, the most important thing is to be mentally focused on maintaining a good posture all the time. You must always think about holding your spine straight in standing and sitting positions. This is essential and crucial for achieving permanent correction of thoracic kyphosis. If you actively think about maintaining a good posture and force your muscles to hold your spine straight, it will eventually become normal to you and your slouching problem will be solved for good.

019. Nature Wants You to be Muscular

Train for power and you will be muscular for sure.

The main goal of Natty Power training program is development of a powerful body with the most natural approach possible. Becoming powerful also brings many other physical improvements, like becoming stronger, faster, energized, etc. It will bring health improvements as well, like being more resistant to injuries, sleeping better, etc. Finally, there are positive side effects of Natty Power training method, which are purely aesthetical.

While training for power does not imply hypertrophy right away, anyone who trains for power will certainly become bigger and more muscular. Regardless if big muscles are important to you or not, it is a very desirable side effect. Considering the magnitude of this side effect, there is nothing wrong if you make hypertrophy a priority goal of Natty Power training method. Heck, you may be pleasantly surprised how quickly muscles can grow, especially if you have always trained the usual bodybuilding style: slow and controlled lifting, isometric holds, spending more "time under tension", squeezing at the top, stretching at the bottom, high training volume, etc. If you never trained the usual bodybuilding style, that is even better. Start with Natty Power method, train for power one year or at least several months and when you achieve some basic power, then switch to bodybuilding style. Alternation between different training methods can initiate a whole new muscle growth, because completely different muscle fibers will be activated, engaged and developed with each of the two methods. For everyone who wants to stay

natty, this alternation is probably one of the best approaches for building more muscle quickly.

Go on and try Natty Power even for hypertrophy goals. It costs nothing and you have nothing to loose. On contrary, you can only benefit in numerous distinct ways. Besides, there is always a space for new muscle growth, regardless of age, training preferences or already achieved muscle mass. Well, Natty Power can fill that space easily.

020. Nature Wants You to be Lean

Eliminate all junk food from your diet. Reduce amount of carbohydrate intake. Start regular practice of intense aerobic activities. Be persistent and results will come.

Excessive body fat is not healthy and certainly not natural. After all, it doesn't look nice either. Too much junk food and lazy lifestyle are the main causes why many of us are overweight. While it may be easy to conclude what are the causes, elimination of junk food from the diet and regular physical activity may be a hard task for some of us. Establishing this as a lifelong habit may be even harder, but it will pay off for sure. Just don't choose the "easy solutions" offered by modern chemistry, rather stay natty and stay healthy. So, regardless if you train for power, strength, speed or any other goal, the war against body fat will occur on two fronts: diet and physical activity. Each of these two fronts will consist of two smaller battles. Here they are:

1. **Elimination of all junk food**.
2. **Reduction of food high in carbohydrates**.
3. **Regular training for power, strength and speed**.
4. **Incorporation of aerobic conditioning**.

If you win these 4 battles, there is no doubt that you will be lean. Even if you don't care much about good looks or physical aesthetics in general, keep in mind that being lean is both, natural and healthy. Remember that we are all built differently, so do not attempt to forcefully change your natural predispositions to be lean, no matter what. Sometimes it may be too hard, but sometimes it may not be possible at all. Anyway, investing some effort to become lean would be wise and well worth sacrificing a few bad habits. Now, let's explore all 4 prerequisites to a lean body in more details.

1. Elimination of All Junk Food

We all know this one, it is logical and wise thing to do for general health, not just getting a lean body. Simply eliminate all junk and highly processed food from your diet and never look back. It may well be the best single thing you ever did for your health and the lean body will an award. So, you have to stop eating donuts, sweets, candies, cookies, cakes, crackers, biscuits, snacks, corn flakes, icecreams, milkshakes, puddings, chips,

snacks, peanut butter, sauces, ketchup, mayonnaise, sausages, mortadella, hotdogs, etc Also, stop drinking alcohol and all drinks with added sugar.

2. Reduction of Carbohydrates

Eating too much fat and carbs will cause accumulation of excessive body fat. In contrast to fat, carbs can be easily eaten in very large amounts, which in turn may become a very dangerous addiction. Therefore, lowering overall amount of consumed carbs will bring numerous health benefits and eventually, muscle definition of a bodybuilder. For most people, reduction of carbs can be carried out relatively easily and without any problems. On the other side, drastic reduction or total elimination are almost impossible to sustain for longer periods of time and could be potentially dangerous.

Not all carbs are created equal. Simple carbs represent the bad guys and complex carbs represent the good guys. Simple carbs are the main ingredient of junk and processed food, so the same recommendation applies for them as well - completely eliminate all simple carbs:

- All kinds of sugar and food containing added sugar.
- White wheat flour and products made of white flour.
- Beverages containing added sugar.

Complex sugar can be eaten in small to moderate amounts:

- All kinds of vegetables.
- All kinds of fruit.
- All kinds of legumes.
- All kinds of grains.

If you decide to reduce carb intake, you should eat more protein and fat to counterbalance carb reduction. In this case, adding vitamin and mineral supplements during the diet regimen may prove helpful. Rest and sleep whenever possible to recuperate and save energy.

First and foremost, your diet should mainly consist of lean meat and non-starchy vegetables. Eat that in high quantities. For variety in protein sources, add eggs and lactose-free milk products. For energy and health, add some nuts, seeds, superfoods and spices. This will make your carb reduction diet complete:

- **Meat**: beef, pork, bacon, chicken, turkey, fish, squid, shrimps…
- **Non-starchy vegetables**: spinach, chard, kale, ruccola, lettuce, valerianella, grape vine leaves, cabbage, sauerkraut, broccoli, cauliflower, cucumbers, tomatoes, green onions, mushrooms, celery, asparagus, peppers, olives…
- **Eggs**: chicken eggs, duck eggs, goose eggs, caviar…

- **Lactose-free milk products**: milk, kefir, yogurt, aged cheese, butter…
- **Nuts and seeds**: all kinds of nuts and seeds.
- **Superfoods and spices**: ginger, curcumin/turmeric, garlic, kombucha, tamari, aloe vera, oregano, basilico, rosemary...

Occasionally and in smaller amounts, you can also eat the following foods:

- **Starchy vegetables**: potatoes, carrots, beets, pumpkin, squash, peas….
- **Legumes**: beans, peas, lentils, chickpeas, soy...
- **Fruit**: all kinds of fruit.

Rarely, in small amounts and only on training days prior to a training session, you can eat some grains and grain products:

- **Whole grains**: all kinds of whole grains.

Lowered carb intake will lead to a metabolic state called ketosis. Such diet is called keto diet. Ketosis occurs when body runs out of glucose and starts to utilize fat for energy. Extreme version of this diet would be a total carb elimination. While it may bring very quick results in loosing body fat, such a drastic diet must not be maintained for a long time. One week should be an absolute maximum. Be aware that you may experience weakness, dizziness, mind fog, depression, disorientation, constipation, nutrient deficiency, etc. Some muscle mass and strength will be temporarily lost too. You should never force any diet regimen, including this one too. Rather listen to body signals and be prepared to prevent total psycho-physical collapse early on. Besides, no one will blame you if you give up on total carb elimination and get back to consuming some. A cheat meal from time to time is not going to ruin the final results significantly. Maybe it will kick you out of ketosis for a while, but you can always easily get back to it after a day or two. On the other side, low carb diet can be safely maintained for months or even years without a pause, so it could be a wise option for most of amateur athletes.

It is important to gradually lower the carb intake, so give this process a little time to avoid any metabolic shocks. That way your body will be slowly accommodated to using fat as a source of energy instead of sugar. Sudden reduction or elimination of carbs would be much more stressful and could prevent you from successing. Take your time and establish low carb diet as a healthy lifelong habit. Then let the lean body be a final reward for your efforts.

Another approach which could be less stresful and even more productive for fat loss, is **intermittent fasting**. While occasional fasting is natural and beneficial, be careful to avoid negative consequences. Use common sense and don’t fast for too long too frequently. Aim at 24 hours once a week as a proper fasting period for ordinary people. Also, don’t push yourself hard in weight training during fasting.

3. Regular Training for Power, Strength and Speed

This one is easy. Train regularly for power and/or for strength and speed, and you will be on a good path to a lean muscular body. We learned earlier that regular training for power will build strength and speed as well, but it will also build big muscles and burn fat at the same time. Can not get any better than that.

4. Incorporation of Aerobic Conditioning

This is 4th and final prerequisite for a lean body and it is much more important then 3rd prerequisite, because regular training for power may not be sufficient physical activity for initiation of fat burning process. That is why it would be very beneficial to incorporate some kind of **aerobic activity** which will make you sweat, gasp for air and your heart beating fast.

General name for aerobic activities is **conditioning**, although a more popular one is **cardio**. Both terms refer to the same type of training, but conditioning seems to be more appropriate. Cardio alludes to heart and its increased beating rate, but lungs are going to work as hard as heart, so why naming it as "cardio"? The proper equivalent to conditioning would be a combination of two Greek words, "cardio & pneumono", but it sounds ridiculous. One may ask, what about vascular system and blood in it? What about the muscles involved? Aren't these organs engaged too? Well, to stop this pointless word game, let's use the term "conditioning" as a more appropriate one.

To rip all the benefits of fasting during night and start burning fat for energy, always practice conditioning on an empty stomach, like early in the morning. This means no breakfast, no snacks, no protein shakes, no juices… no food at all. You can drink water as much as you need. If you simply can not stand the hunger, eat a boiled egg or two, but absolutely no carbs of any kind.

Conditioning sessions have to last long enough to start burn fat, but never too long to make you exhausted for the rest of the day. Depending on the type of activity, 10-30 minutes every other day would be optimal or 30-45 minutes every day for someone who is full of energy and rushing to get lean fast. If you are already training for power regularly, one or two aerobic conditioning session per week should be enough for maintenance of healthy cardiovascular system and fat burning state. Since the conditioning activity has to be performed for some time, it must not be too hard to carry out. You can choose any of the following activities or alternate them from time to time, for variety and avoiding boredom:

- **Steady Pace Activity**: This is ancient and quite simple approach to a shredded body. Typical fat loosing activity is jogging or fast pace walking, but you can also try cross country running, bicycle or mountain bike riding, swimming, rowing or any other similar aerobic activity. Since you are going to breathe a lot, it is always better to choose outdoor activities and breathe fresh air. If you must stay indoor for some reason, then run in place or punch & kick a heavy boxing bag. Go as fast

as you can and preferably without rests. If you push yourself too hard and start gasping for air, slow down a little bit until you find an optimal pace. Steady pace activities are the easiest form of conditioning and can last longer then other more intense activities, so theoretically, can burn more fat. Average steady pace conditioning should last between 20-30 minutes, but you can adjust session time to your current condition.

- **Tabata, HIIT, EMOM**: For some people these conditioning methods may work better then steady pace. Basically, they are structured as alternating time intervals of high intensity activity and low intensity activity or rest time. Comparing to steady pace activity, these methods could be more effective, but also more demanding and lasting shorter time, so may end up being less effective. If you are overweight, older, injured, recovering from injury, out of shape, chronically tired or anything similar, rather stay with steady pace activities. Here is a modified Tabata training: sprint for 5-10 seconds and then switch to relaxed jogging for 25-20 seconds. Repeat these 30 second cycles 8 times for 4 minutes total. Feel free to modify intervals the way you like. Since these methods of conditioning are more intense then steady pace activities, they should not last longer then 10 minutes total. This makes them an excellent choice when the time is tight. If you have difficulties to accomplish the cycles, make sprint intervals shorter and jogging intervals longer or simply slow down the sprinting speed to a fast pace running and/or replace jogging with walking. Tabata method can be applied to all other aerobic sports as well, because all you have to do is alternating high and low intnsity intervals. For example, you can mix jumping, bodyweight squats or burpees with jogging, shadow boxing or situps. If you want more variety, read about bodyweight exercises bellow and perform them in the form of Tabata or HIIT (High Intensity Interval Training), which are practically the same method or try EMOM style (performing something Every Minute On the Minute).
- **Aerobic Weightlifting**: You can use your regular weightlifting program and modify it to become an aerobic activity: combine light weights, high repetition numbers and very short rest times between sets. This method could nicely complement your regular weightlifting program, just keep the total volume low to avoid exhaustion and overtraining. Do up to 10 minutes total of aerobic weightlifting.
- **Bodyweight Exercises**: If the weather is bad and you have to stay indoors, there are more options then just running in place. For example, you can experiment with these bodyweight combos for sets or time or EMOM style:
  - 5x Aussie pullup, 5x pushup, 10x squat, repeat combo to failure with no rests.
  - 10sec squats, 10sec situps, 10sec jumping jacks, 10 sec rest, repeat.
  - 1min run in place, 1min shadow boxing, 1min wall squat, no rest, repeat.
  - 8x roll back, 4x squat jump, 8x burpee, 4x squat jump, rest & repeat EMOM.

  Do these combos up to 10-15 minutes of total time. You can do these combos with rests or with no rests in between, but if you start gasping for air, include short rests immediately or prolong the existing ones.

Early morning aerobic conditioning should be an additional program to your main training program, which will be performed later in the day, probably in the afternoon or

in the evening. Forget about breaking records, implementing high intensity techniques, large volumes and long training sessions, while you are on exhausting aerobic program, because aerobics drain a lot of energy. Focus your main training sessions solely on maintaining current levels of power and strength, not progressing.

Some people recommend strongman type of training for fat loss, but it seems to be a little bit crazy. While strongman training may have some potential for getting a lean body, it could be achieved only if you are on a very strict diet. If you are on a strict diet, then your strongman training will greatly suffer. This an obvious and fundamental contradiction. Not eating enough of everything and training like a strongman could literally kill you. You should ask yourself: "What is my priority at this moment? Is it to be big and powerful like a strongman or lean like a sprinter"? There is no point in getting a lean body with heavy farmer walk, while the stomach is empty and energy levels are depleted. Why risking a twisted ankle and years of recovery, just to get lean the wrong way? There are numerous sports with super lean athletes, but strongman are not among them, because they need to eat enormous amounts of food to enlarge energy capacity. Rather do it the safe way: aerobic conditioning in the morning on an empty stomach and then only maintenance of strength and power in the afternoon.

021. Nature Wants Your Teeth to be Healthy

Eat only a high quality natural food and your teeth will be healthy.

Modern medicine tells you to wash your teeth several times a day, preferably with a tooth paste that contains fluoride. Supposedly, fluoride will prevent dental caries and tooth decay and the more you wash your teeth, the healthier they should be. But modern medicine also says that fluoride is neurotoxic, nephrotoxic and generally unhealthy, even in smallest doses. It was proven that fluoride is bad for bones and particularly for teeth. That is why fluoridation of drinking water has been banned long ago in many parts of the World. Now you may wonder, isn't this contradictory? Well, yes it is. Think about this and draw conclusions yourself.

On the other side, our ancestors lived healthy lives for centuries and had healthy teeth without washing them with fluoride toothpaste and plastic toothbrushes. There were no supermarkets or stores where they could buy such things as toothpaste and toothbrush. But that seems to be a good thing, because they couldn't buy and eat any of the industrially processed and chemically treated food. They ate only natural and nutritious food. They ate plants and animals that were living free in Nature, not genetically modified organisms. Their diet was rich in alkaline foods, while highly acidic foods, like processed grains and sugar were totally absent.

Now, let's take a look at wild animals. They eat only what is natural to them and their teeth are perfectly healthy, without any washing at all. Even domestic animals will have healthy teeth if they are properly fed with their natural foods, be it a raw meat or plants.

Therefore, a healthy natural diet is the answer to teeth health. Occasionally, you can wash your teeth with baking soda. It is an excellent natural way to clean your teeth and alkalize saliva. For gum health and prevention of inflammation, take olive oil in your mouth, swish it around and through your teeth for a few minutes. Another natural method for fighting bacteria and fungi in your mouth is by holding or slowly chewing a clove of garlic. However, keep in mind that healthy natural food can not be substituted with any kind of teeth wash. If you want a more scientific proof of nutrition importance, read a book named "*Nutrition and Physical Degeneration*" by Weston A. Price, written in 1939. There is everything laid out nicely with examples and statistics.

022. Nature Wants You to Breathe Naturally

Experiment with different breathing methods and choose what feels natural to you personally in each particular situation.

Breathing is a must during any physical activity, so the general rule is to avoid constricting or stopping your breathing during any physical activity. It is very important to breathe the way it feels natural to you personally. In other words, let the Nature guide you how to breathe in each and every situation. Be open to try different styles of breathing, but never force yourself to accept anything uncomfortable. Here are a few breathing methods you can experiment with.

General Breathing Methods for Pushing and Pulling Movements

Pushing means generating force directed away from the body, like benchpress, overhead press, dips. Pulling movement means generating force directed towards the body, like in bentover row, upright row, pullups. Inhaling means filling lungs with air and exhaling means letting air out of the lungs. There are two general breathing methods for all pushing and pulling movements.

Method 1. Exhale whenever you generate force (part of the lift that requires more effort) and inhale during the reverse part of the lift (part of the lift that requires less effort). For example:

- Push and exhale, reverse and inhale.
- Pull and exhale, reverse and inhale.

Method 2. Exhale whenever shoulder girdle and rib cage are shrinking and inhale whenever shoulder girdle and rib cage are expanding. For example:

- Push and exhale, reverse and inhale.
- Pull and inhale, reverse and exhale.

As you can notice, breathing pattern during pushing movement is always the same and the only difference occurs in pulling movement. First method is more common and it applies well to all exercises. However, second breathing method seems to be more natural to some athletes, especially during aerobic high repetition pulling, like boat rowing, but also high rep barbell row, upright row, high pull, Aussie pullups, lean back pullups, etc. Even if you are not a boat rower, be encouraged to experiment with the second breathing method, because it may feel more natural and you may achieve better results.

Breathing for High Repetition Sets

Start a high repetition set with any of the normal inhale-exhale methods described above, but later in the set, when you need more oxygen, try to incorporate short pauses between reps to take a few shallow breaths before continuing the set. To make breaths short and shallow, you can control breathing by slowly sipping air through the teeth. Avoid large deep breaths, because they can cause dizziness.

Here is an example of breathing pattern for sets with high number of repetitions:

1. Take several shallow breaths.
2. Grab the bar, brace your abdomen and inhale.
3. Lift and exhale during lift or hold breath and exhale at the end of the lift.
4. At higher rep numbers, make a short pause and take a few shallow breaths.
5. Inhale while reversing the lifting movement, when the bar goes down.
6. Repeat.

If we take a deadlift as an example, you would inhale when the bar goes down and exhale when the bar goes up. When you start lacking oxygen at higher repetition numbers, you will make a short pause at the top amplitude position (when you stand straight), take a few shallow breaths and then proceed with another rep. You will continue using these breathing pauses after each rep and probably prolong the pauses towards the end of the set. Legendary Peary Rader believed that breaths in between reps help generating more force and enable use of heavier weights. Try and see if this applies to you.

Breathing for Heavy Lifting

If a heavy weight has to be lifted, breathing is never easy. Basically, you have 2 options here, to hold your breath during lift or keep on breathing normally. The question is when to hold breath and when to continue breathing. The answer is - do what feels natural to you. For example:

- If you perform just one heavy repetition, you will probably hold your breath during that single rep and get back to breathing after the lift.
- If you have to execute 2 heavy repetitions, you can still get away with holding your breath, although it would be better to breathe.

- If you have to execute 3 or more heavy repetitions, then some form of breathing would be necessary.

Prior to lifting a heavy weight, you should first take a few shallow breaths. Then inhale and hold your breath while bracing your whole body. Finally, execute the lift. At the moment of lift execution, you have 3 exhaling possibilities:

- Exhale during the lift (during execution of concentric part of the lift).
- Exhale when the lift is finished (after execution of concentric part of the lift).
- Keep holding breath and exhale when the lifting movement is reversed to the starting position (after execution of concentric and eccentric part of the lift).

Beside heavy weight, Olympic lifts are also bringing the longest barbell trajectory - from the ground up to the overhead position. Snatch technique is executed in a one smooth motion and weightlifter will probably hold his breath during the whole lift. On the other side, clean & jerk can be divided in 2 or 3 phases (clean-jerk or deadlift-clean-jerk). This division allows short pauses between phases, which are ideal for a few shallow breaths and strength recuperation. If you try heavier clean & jerk lift, pauses with breathing will probably come to you naturally, even if you had no intention to incorporate them in the lift.

In most cases, breath is predominantly inhaled and held in the abdomen area, not in the chest area. This is also called diaphragmatic breathing due to the engagement of diaphragm muscle which contracts to allow downward lung expansion. Only if you perform exercises for development of ribcage size, like pullovers or lat pulldowns, then you should focus on breathing with chest expansion, not with abdomen expansion.

WARNING: Holding breath and building abdomen pressure will improve the rigidity and stability of your trunk, which enables greater force generation. However, you should be aware that holding breath, building pressure in abdomen and compressing blood vessels inside the body may have a strong impact on blood pressure, heart beat and can cause dizziness, unconsciousness and even a blood vessel burst. Dizziness could be also caused by deep breathing, so it should be avoided too. There is a thing called Valsalva maneuver, which is popular among powerlifters, but it could be quite dangerous. Basically, you inhale and then intentionally prevent exhalation to build up pressure in the abdomen. It is a step further from ordinary breath holding and carries much higher health risks.

Breathing for “Time Under Tension” Style of Lifting

Spending more “Time Under Tension” has no purpose in training for power, but it is crucial for hypertrophy goals. Typical tools for increased TUT are slow lifting tempo and prolonged isometric stops along the lifting trajectory. Here is the usual and well known lifting-breathing style, with an example of possible timing:

Time:	1.sec	2.sec	3.sec	4.sec
Breathing:	inhale	exhale	inhale	exhale

Lift part:	eccentric	concentric	eccentric	concentric

This breathing cadence can not be applied in case of increased TUT, because lifting tempo is way too slow to be followed with synchronized breathing equivalent. Therefore, lifting and breathing will loose their typical correlation and we will end up with some asynchronous lifting-breathing sequence, which may look something like this:

Time:	1.s	2.s	3.s	4.s	5.s	6.s	7.s	8.s
Breathing:	inh	exh	inh	exh	inh	exh	inh	exh
Lift part:	eccentric ……..				stop	conc	stop …….	

Prolonged eccentric part of the lift is very common among bodybuilders and it requires breathing frequency to be independent of the lifting tempo. As we can see, lifting and breathing patterns significantly differ this time. Numerical translation of the described tempo is 4-1-1-2, where each number represents number of seconds dedicated to each part of the lift (eccentric-bottom-concentric-top).

Breathing During Rest Intervals

For power and strength goals, it would be the best to allow your breathing and heart rate to get back to normal, before proceeding with the next lifting set or next exercise. Optimal rest intervals between sets should last long enough to allow this, but not longer than that. If your heart still beats fast and your lungs scream for more oxygen, you should give them time to fully recover, to be able to give the best possible performance in the upcoming set. There is no sense in cutting rest short, while you still puff and pant. Rather focus all your efforts on lifting heavy, lifting fast and squeezing as many reps as possible.

However, if you want to improve cardio-pulmonary condition or experiment with HIIT method for fat loss, then short rest times are welcome and highly desirable. Of course, you won't be able to break any strength records, but elevated heart rate and breathing will certainly be beneficial in other physical aspects.

023. Nature Wants You to Avoid Injuries

The most important thing for every athlete is to stay injury free throughout the whole training career.

The importance of health and injury free body is clear and well known. Without a broader elaboration of this theme, let's list several basic instructions for avoiding injuries:

- Always warm up before hard and heavy weightlifting sessions.
- Go very light and very slow with new movements.
- Be especially careful with explosive movements.
- Avoid weird, unnatural and uncomfortable exercises.

- Never test the ultra heavy 1RM, unless you are a competitor.
- Increase your maximal weight on the bar in small increments.
- Never drop or throw weights, especially indoors.
- Strengthen your muscles and connective tissues gradually.
- Build well balanced strength of the whole body.
- Stretch your muscles occasionally to maintain flexibility and mobility.
- Watch for symptoms of overtraining.
- Do not push yourself too hard, too often, for too long.
- Avoid high intensity training when you are tired.
- Always pay attention on what your body is signaling.
- Stop training if you experience any pain or dizziness.
- Immediately go to hospital if you experience chest pain or arrhythmia.
- Don't hesitate to use gloves, straps, knee pads and all other protective gear.

024. Nature Wants You to Use Your Brain and Think

Always think for yourself about everything.

This paragraph continues on the last instruction for avoiding injuries from the last paragraph. While it is a simple encouragement for using protective accessories in training, it is also a call for rational thinking about everything.

Here is the answer to all boneheads bragging about being too tough to wear gloves. If you are a professional athlete and gloves are forbidden in your sport, then it is understandable why you are not using them. However, if you have a delicate skin prone to calluses or small hands with fragile bones or you are a musician or do other delicate works with your fingers or you have palm tissue collagen deficiency, then gloves may be very helpful. It's interesting that lifting with gloves is actually harder then without them, because the grip diameter becomes wider and therefore, stronger squeezing is needed to maintain the grip. Also, gloves allow some slack and slippage between palm and the bar, which additionally makes handling of the weight even more difficult. Therefore, you can only get tougher by wearing gloves. Those of us who experienced heavy barbell grinding directly against finger bones and joints, know very well how helpful gloves can be in reducing friction and preventing calcification bumps. To summarize, train without gloves if there are no problems, but use them if you need to.

Something similar goes for the lifting straps as well. You can read on the Internet that "*real men don't use straps*" and "*straps are for sissies*". Hello there, strongman competitors are using straps, so would you dare to call them sissies, huh? Supposedly, straps interfere with grip strength progress and it always stays weak. While this is fully valid for professional powerlifters, it is not applicable to ordinary people and amateur deadlifters. Grip is quite often the weakest point and no matter how hard one trains, it will never strengthen enough to keep up with the rest of the body. In that case, deadlifter has 2 choices:

1. Use straps and continue improving deadlift and whole body strength.
2. Stagnate while waiting for the grip to catch up with rest of the body.

In other words, would you prefer to lift 300lbs with straps or 200lbs without straps? What would be more beneficial for your general strength and power development? Honestly, this is not a dilemma at all. If your grip is an issue, just use straps, continue improving your deadlift and never look back. Believe it or not, even your grip will became stronger over time, due to a sheer weight on the bar!

Now, let's think about lifting speed. Majority of couching info is coming from bodybuilding world, so you might think lifting slow and under control is the only proper way to lift weight. But, if you watch Olympic weightlifting and strongman, you will see lots of fast and explosive lifting. Actually, it would be impossible to lift huge weight slowly to overhead position or for numerous repetitions or throw it in the air. Nature often expects live beings to act fast and move explosively, so it will be very natural to train fast and explosive lifting. Each of two lifting style has it's own role in physical development, so it would be wise to practice them both.

You should always think for yourself and do what you think is right. Feel free to use gloves, straps, belts, bandages, wraps, protection pads or any other requisite you like or find useful. If those accessories do any good for you, it's all that counts. Of course, this is not written in stone and some equipment should be avoided. For example, think about barbell pad for back squats. It should relieve pain on the shoulders, but will also distance barbell from the back, displace gravity centers, mess with squatting technique and compromise stability of the bar. Now let's engage our brains and start reasoning: is there any other solution to prevent barbell from hurting shoulders? How about wearing a thick hoodie or maybe two hoodies layered one above the other? Sounds like a nice idea indeed and should be better in practice. After all, if a squat pad works fine for you, then go on and use it.

To cut it short, among other benefits of thinking for yourself, first and foremost, you will avoid injuries. The reward will be a healthy body, ready for all demanding tasks, like hard training for power.

025. Nature Wants You to be Patient and Persistent

Take your time and never give up.

How many times you have heard about some miracle method or a supplement that will make you big and strong in shortest imaginable time? We are constantly bombarded with this kind of lame marketing, but in reality, there are no shortcuts to strength, speed and power. You can always resort to steroids, but they are unhealthy and dangerous. So, it is

clear that you will have to invest time, effort and energy to become strong, fast and powerful. Be patient, be persistent and results will come.

There are many different training methods and some are better then others, but absolutely the best methods are always in tune with Nature. Staying as close as possible to natural methods should be your only "shortcut" to success.

Nature wants you to become powerful, but safely. Nature wants you to advance slowly over long period of time. Therefore, don't rush. Give your body enough time to adapt to hard training, to rest, recover and grow. Don't compare to others, especially to professionals. Take your time and enjoy the process. You must enjoy training or you won't be persistent. Try to feel the power. Be happy with the weight you are able to handle and the speed you are able to achieve. Be excited about the power output you are able to generate. Encourage yourself by yelling "*I am a beast!*" or something like that. You should "celebrate" every pound added to the bar. If you are patient and persistent, the wonders will happen: you will become big, strong and fast. Above all that, you will get a great looking physique and healthy body.

026. Nature Wants You to Train Naturally

There is nothing truly new under the sun, so let's get back to Nature. Lift weights and move your body the way it feels natural.

We are living in the age of so called "progress". We are bombarded with "innovations" and "improvements" in all areas of life. Take a look at the number of scientific researches conducted in the physical training domain. It is huge and new ones are emerging every day all around the globe. Their purpose is to decode principles of Nature and results may be valuable, but unfortunately, way too many of them are sponsored by companies with direct interest in getting specific results. We can witness new stuff popping up all over the Internet, new training methods, new fitness machines, new diets, new supplements, etc. Majority of these "discoveries" are just aggressively advertised useless junk, with only one goal in mind - to take your money away! If you are not born yesterday, you are probably aware of all these frauds.

So, what is not a fraud in these crazy times? Well, things that are tried and tested in the past, probably are not a fraud. Be careful with anything that claims to be "innovative", "advanced", "hype", "modern", as well as with stuff that is heavily advertised. After all, Nature is not a fraud. Real natural things and real natural principles are certainly not a fraud. Therefore, it would be wise to always ask yourself:

"Is this natural?"

If something is not natural, you should forget it, whatever it may be. If something has been proven to be really natural, it is more then welcome and you should embrace it. This

is valid for food you are eating, training methods you are practicing or anything else for that matter.

Here are a few examples of this logic applied to foods in your diet:

- Is a beef steak natural? Yes ⇒ Eat it.
- Is cheese natural? Yes ⇒ Eat it.
- Is a sausage natural? No ⇒ Don't eat it.
- Is ice cream natural? No ⇒ Don't eat it.

Natural food means direct product of Nature in it its natural form. Steak is product of Nature. Cheese is natural product from natural processing of natural milk, so it is predominantly natural. On the other side, sausage and ice cream could be made from natural ingredients, but some chemicals are probably added in form of artificial flavors and artificial colors. Such products have been industrially processed and conserved, so should be avoided. Of course, no food today is truly natural, since some chemical substances are always present, coming from modern packaging or food growing process. That's a whole another problem which falls far beyond our scope of interest, so we won't elaborate it any further.

Here is a million dollar question:

"Should you lift weights slowly or explosively?"

It would be the best to practice both styles since each of them has its own benefits: slowly and under control is perfect for strength and size, while explosive lifting is excellent for power. Anyway, explosive lifting is better for covering all bases at once. Also, it is more natural and more effective. Just ask any Olympic weightlifter if he could lift the same weight slowly. Therefore, the conclusion is:

Lift explosively for power development.

Now let's see how this logic applies to different pullup variants and physical training in general. Pulling yourself up with the power of your arms is very natural movement, necessary for climbing trees or getting out of ground holes you might fall in. Here are the variants:

- Are strict pullups natural? Yes ⇒ Do them for strength.
- Are strict pullups behind neck natural? No ⇒ Avoid them.
- Are kipping pullups natural? Yes ⇒ Do them for power.
- Are butterfly pullups natural? No ⇒ Avoid them.

While strict pullups present a very natural movement, doing them behind the neck is weird, unnatural and potentially dangerous variation. Keeping pullups could be considered as even more natural movement, because of the explosiveness which comes naturally and makes exercise perfect for development of pulling power. However,

butterfly pullups are also explosive exercise, but the movement itself is not natural at all, because has no practical functionality in real life. This variant requires less power and much more acrobatic skill, which makes them inferior to regular kipping pullups in terms of power development. Forget them.

So, which exercise to implement in your training program, strict pullups or kipping pullups? Both would be the best, but if you have to choose, then kipping pullups should be your choice. They are more natural, because you surely wouldn't do them slowly and under control, if you had to climb on a tree to escape a lion attack. They are also better for explosive power development, which will certainly include significant strength development in the process. Eventually, if they feel easy, simply add weight and do them to failure. Anyway, kipping pullups are the winner in all aspects, hands down.

Here is a true story… Once when I was young and macho, I spent a whole summer at the beach, doing ultra wide grip pullups behind the head. It seemed to be a perfect exercise for showing off and impressing onlookers. Since the grip was very wide, range of motion was quite short and I couldn't do more then 10 reps that way, but the point was that others couldn't do even a single rep. The problem is top position, which is very uncomfortable or even painful to some people. Somehow, I managed to touch the bar with back side of my neck in every rep. It was more about flexibility, mobility and acrobatic skill, then real strength, but I enjoyed the fame while it lasted.

One day, a giant Konstantin Konstantinov look alike came to the beach and saw me squeezing pullups behind the neck. He was brutally muscular and heavy, probably somewhere between 240lbs-260lbs, so I smiled at a thought of him struggling with pullups behind the head. But he didn't bother with such a weird motion. Instead he jumped on the bar and literally exploded with a set of 30+ standard grip kipping pullups, full ROM, from arms fully extended to chin above the bar, in very fast pace, zero rest time. Wow, the whole steel construction was shaking, swinging, twisting and almost breaking apart, because it wasn't built for such a huge mass moving explosively up and down. I thought "Gee, what a beast!", while slowly walking away ashamed and acting nonchalant. We didn't spoke a word, but it was obvious what was his answer to my cheap, short range, flexing trick – a tonload of explosive pulling power. In my head, I was arguing with myself:

> *"Meh, kipping pullups don't count as real pullups, that's cheating!"...*
> *"Oh please, kipping is normal, natural, builds explosive power and… looks SCARY impressive!"...*
> *"But it was easy, because jerking and momentum helped him do 30+ reps in a single set!"...*
> *"Nah, no pullup variation is easy when you are that heavy, he's a beast indeed!"...*
> *"But, but, pullups behind the head are very hard to perform and I saw gymnasts practicing them!"...*

"Yes, they are hard mainly because they put you in misaligned and unnatural position, but doing 30+ kipping pullups over full ROM are much harder in terms of total power output!"...
"But, but, he probably can't do ultra wide grip pullups behind the head!"...
"Maybe, but why would he bother with such useless motion, when he can generate so much pulling power which is highly functional and will perfectly transfer to sports and activities!"
"Ok, ok, but he is ugly, hairy, SOB and walks like an ape!"
"Well, I look the same, but he is obviously more powerful, so shut up, wise up and start training explosive kipping pullups from now on!"

A few decades later, a real Konstantin Konstantinov became famous on the Internet, mainly as a World record holder in raw beltless deadlift. Believe it or not, he trains only explosive kipping pullups, regardless if there is additional weight, rubber bands or just a bodyweight. He does them as explosively as possible and at 50+ rep range. For him, explosive kipping pullups are a foundational deadlift assistance exercise. There you have it, a World champion powerlifter and Mother Nature are telling you the same thing: train kipping pullups. On the other side, awkward and unnatural pullups behind the head are mostly useless, you may get injured or even embarrassed, just like I did on that day at the beach :)

To resume, you should train only functional natural movements. Train hard, use heavy weights and lift explosively to develop power. There is no point in training weird unnatural movements, with no real functionality or practical purpose. Also, never do anything batshit crazy, it probably won't bring any benefits and you can end up injured. For example, Nature don't want you to perform heavy barbell squats on a Bosu ball. Maybe it looks like fun, but it is absolutely useless and dangerous. Rather leave all crazy exercises to YouTubers who are trying to entertain the audience and collect subscribers.

027. Nature Wants You to Perform Natural Movements and Motions

It is in human nature to move and be physically active.

Movement is a change of body or body part position. Motion is a series of movements performed in succession. For example, lifting leg from the ground up is a movement and walking is a motion. In this paragraph we will list all basic natural movements and motions.

Basic Natural Movements

There is a huge number of movements our body can perform, but when it comes to generating force to move large external objects, only 4 of them are fundamental and crucial:

- **Hinge**: picking up objects off the ground.
- **Squat**: lifting up body or object with the leg press.
- **Push**: moving objects away from the body with arms.
- **Pull**: moving objects towards the body with arms.

Whatever your goals in athleticism may be, you must train these 4 movements regularly, thoroughly and comprehensively. All other movements could be considered as accessory and therefore, they are optional.

These 4 movements are basis for development of **pure strength** and in case of faster lifting pace, development of **strength dominant power**. You can train them through powerlifting disciplines: deadlift for hinge and pulling power, squat for squatting power and benchpress for pushing power. Training all 4 movements at once is possible with Olympic lifts. Beside training all 4 movements in a single lift, Olympic weightlifting is ideal for development of **strength dominant peak power**, which will be perfectly balanced throughout the whole body.

Basic Natural Motions

Prime natural movements listed above are short and simple, but they are fundamental building blocks of more complex natural motions related to moving our bodies, as well as external objects:

- **Walking**
- **Running**
- **Jumping**

Walking is low intensity body motion, best suited for older people, overweight persons and those who are recovering from injury. Running means moving body over distance as fast as possible, so it is perfect for development of **pure speed**. Running can be practiced in different forms, from relaxed jogging to super fast sprinting and everything in between. In case of carrying additional weight or resistance attached to the body, running will be leaning towards development of **speed dominant power**. Jump is a consequence of a very short and very intense burst of leg power, which propels body upwards in the air for height or forward for distance. Such instant power eruption requires development of explosive **speed dominant peak power**.

Combination of body motion together with displacement of heavy external objects, results in essential and probably the most important human activity of all:

- **Loaded Carries**

Strongman style loaded carries combine strength and speed at the same time and require a lot of stamina and endurance. This makes them a perfect activity for development of high **continuous power** output levels and all other physical qualities altogether. Beside strength, speed and power, strongman loaded carries will enlarge muscle energy depots and improve cardio-pulmonary condition.

As we saw earlier, jump is a manifestation of explosive leg power applied to body weight. There are other manifestations of explosive peak power applied to external objects. For example, humans are capable of transferring upper body power to external objects in the form of kinetic energy:

- **Throwing**

Throwing a heavy opponent in wrestling or judo or keg toss in strongman, leans toward exhibition of a strength dominant peak power. Throwing lighter objects, like baseball ball or a spear, leans toward speed dominant peak power.

Furthermore, humans can generate and absorb high impact forces which occur when our body, limbs or hand held objects collide with other bodies, limbs or objects:

- **Impacts**

Bodycheck in ice hockey is an example of full body impacts. Kicking and punching a heavy bag or opponent in Muai Thai are examples of limb impacts. Wood chopping or hammering nails are examples of impact transfer from one object to another.

Training for power carries an evident possibility of injury, but athletes should be particularly careful with throws and extremely careful with impacts. These two actions can easily hurt the performer and everyone else around.

In conclusion, all moves, motions and activities described above are very natural and essential for complete power development. They are also interconnected and complementary to each other, so try not to skip or neglect any of them. Human beings have performed such activities everyday from the ancient times to modern day, so it is obvious that Nature created and constructed our bodies with practical functionality in mind. Remember, you can't go wrong if you do what Nature wants you to do. Complying with Nature's design and intentions will result in powerful body, capable to deal with all possible challenges.