

The Best Exercises for a Strong AF Lower Back

[music]

0:00:13.4 Mike Vacanti: Hello, Jordan.

0:00:13.5 Jordan Syatt: What's up, Michael?

0:00:13.6 Mike Vacanti: I just had a terrible workout.

0:00:17.0 Jordan Syatt: Oh, that's why you're not in a good mood, that'll do it.

0:00:19.2 Mike Vacanti: I'm in a great mood.

0:00:20.6 Jordan Syatt: You're actually in a better mood than I would anticipate for having a terrible workout, that's for sure.

0:00:29.4 Mike Vacanti: Yeah, yeah. You never know, some days, it's the day before the workout, you're gonna have to put yourself back a few years for this, but the day before the workout, you're looking forward to it. You're like, "I'm squatting tomorrow, I'm benching tomorrow," whatever it is. You go to sleep, you're like this... "Tomorrow's gonna be awesome and then it just sucks."

0:00:44.8 Jordan Syatt: Yeah. Yup.

0:00:46.2 Mike Vacanti: That was today, unfortunately. And some days, you dread going to the gym and you really don't want to, you're tired whatever the reason may be. And then you kinda get in the zone during the workout and it ends up being an amazing workout, so you never know. That's why you keep showing up.

0:01:00.5 Jordan Syatt: What made it a bad workout? Did you just not feel good? Was the strength not there? What was going on?

0:01:05.0 Mike Vacanti: Strength was probably there, nothing was grooving, even on warm-up sets. And it's very clear why. I was outta town for a week. I was sleeping in a different bed. I was on an airplane yesterday. I was carrying heavy luggage, I... Didn't get great sleep last night, I was telling you, I made the mistake of leaving my house on 80 degrees, thinking that [chuckle] when I came back, that it would cool off instantly. [chuckle] And we got back here at 8:30 last night and...

0:01:33.1 Jordan Syatt: Ugh.

0:01:33.2 Mike Vacanti: It was about 79 when I was trying to go to sleep instead of the normal 64. So that was suboptimal, just a lot of factors went in there and I got through it. I cut off one working set on squat and bench, and I didn't progress either and went down on bench, but it's like live to see another day, you know?

0:02:01.6 Jordan Syatt: Yeah, yeah, that sucks. It's definitely not fun, part of the process though. I'm glad you got it in.

0:02:07.0 Mike Vacanti: Well, and I'm bringing it up partly just because it just happened, but also because this is something I've had clients deal with, which is frustration around having bad

workouts or not progressing all the time and getting really down about it or beating themselves up about it, or feeling like there's an expectation that every workout needs to be better than the last one. And that just isn't going to happen. Like if, if that was...

0:02:29.4 Jordan Syatt: I bet you didn't eat a power breakfast. Did you?

[laughter]

0:02:36.4 Mike Vacanti: I had a scoop of protein with some creatine and toast with almond butter. It was not eggs, that's for sure.

0:02:45.9 Jordan Syatt: Yeah. Yeah. That's where you went wrong.

0:02:47.3 Mike Vacanti: No, where I went wrong was yesterday with the Oreos, the gummy Life Savers, the [laughter] poor posture, the lack of hydration and the lack of blackout curtains and...

0:03:00.2 Jordan Syatt: The heat in the house, yeah. Yeah.

0:03:01.4 Mike Vacanti: Yeah, all of the... All of the above.

0:03:03.1 Jordan Syatt: Yeah, that's actually an interesting point. It's like what you did yesterday really set you up for a shit workout today.

0:03:08.4 Mike Vacanti: A hundred percent.

0:03:10.2 Jordan Syatt: It's not like anything that happened immediately before, it wasn't like, even if you had an amazing pre-workout before, it still probably would've been a shitty workout.

0:03:21.4 Mike Vacanti: Yup. Yup. Yesterday's nutrition, yesterday's movement and behaviors, yeah.

0:03:25.7 Jordan Syatt: You know what's interesting? Sometimes on the days that I think I'm gonna have the best workout ever, it sucks. And on the days that I should have... It's not even, I think. I should have terrible workouts or days where I sometimes have the best workouts and I haven't done what I'm about to say in a while. But I remember when I was younger, whether it was college or whatever, I would just get blasted, super drunk and I would never miss a workout, [chuckle] and I would be like...

0:03:56.1 Mike Vacanti: Hang on, would you call it getting blasted? Was that the words you would use?

0:04:00.3 Jordan Syatt: Yeah, is that not a thing that you would say? You didn't say that?

0:04:01.7 Mike Vacanti: I don't think blasted was in my vernacular. It might have been an East Coast thing.

0:04:05.9 Jordan Syatt: Well, what would you say, trashed?

0:04:08.6 Mike Vacanti: Drunk.

0:04:09.5 Jordan Syatt: Drunk.

0:04:10.2 Mike Vacanti: Wasted.

0:04:11.2 Jordan Syatt: Wasted. Okay, wasted. Okay. Well, you know, I'd be whatever...

0:04:18.3 Mike Vacanti: Blasted.

0:04:19.5 Jordan Syatt: Highly, highly intoxicated then one night. I'd go in for my next workout and I would... Have you ever been on the verge of you can't tell if you're hungover or still drunk?

0:04:29.5 Mike Vacanti: Yeah.

0:04:30.9 Jordan Syatt: Yeah. So like I vividly remember there would be times where I'd like be in that situation and I'd be like, "This is gonna be the worst workout ever." And I hit a personal record. It's like, this is crazy how that happens sometimes. Where, when you sometimes you go in and you feel incredible, and then you have the worst workout, and other times you feel like shit, but you have an amazing workout, you just... I remember JC Deen saying many years ago, how you feel is a lie. And it always stuck with me that sometimes how you feel is just completely and utterly irrelevant to how you'll perform.

0:05:02.3 Mike Vacanti: I think there's a lot of truth to that and I think there's a lot of placebo baked into that, that if you can overcome your feelings or if you can have a stronger mindset than your feelings, you will end up having a better workout. If you believe you're gonna have a good workout, like I can overcome this or at least mediocre, then you will. Whereas if you're like, this is going to suck and you go in with that mindset, then it will. Yeah, I've never had a good hungover workout. I'm also soft when it comes to alcohol.

0:05:32.4 Jordan Syatt: I wouldn't say you're soft, I would say you're a lightweight, you are just very easily...

0:05:37.9 Mike Vacanti: I'm not... I'm not a lightweight at all. [laughter] I'm soft. Couldn't be less true. You and I have not known each other in any era of my life where I've drunk alcohol.

0:05:53.7 Jordan Syatt: That's true... Well, now you're a lightweight because you don't drink very much.

0:05:57.4 Mike Vacanti: Yeah, but a few days of drinking, you get your [laughter] enzymes primed and you're like normal but that's absolutely false. I'll drink you under the table.

0:06:09.0 Jordan Syatt: Oh, good luck. [laughter]

0:06:12.4 Mike Vacanti: No, I... I am... I might actually be allergic. I don't know, but I would... In college, I would get very hungover. And the... What you just described, getting blasted and then hitting a PR never even was in the realm of happening. I would go to the SERF, which was the gym at Wisconsin...

0:06:32.6 Jordan Syatt: Okay.

0:06:33.2 Mike Vacanti: Hungover, and do one set and walk out, and [laughter] be like "no, no," multiple times.

0:06:43.2 Jordan Syatt: Did they have a good gym?

0:06:44.6 Mike Vacanti: Yeah. Yeah.

0:06:46.0 Jordan Syatt: Man, I was just thinking about my college gym. I don't know why this memory just popped into my head. I'll never forget one time I was in my college gym. I don't know if I ever told you this story. I probably have 15 times and just forget that I've told it to you. But I remember being in my college gym, there were two gyms, and in one of them, there's a kid there and out of nowhere, we're at the benches dumbbell rack area, I just see him spit on the floor. Just spit. And I lost my shit. I was like, "what are you..." And dude, almost, not immediately, but very soon after, when I'm losing my shit, the dude starts having a seizure. And I felt so bad because I had just learned within the last week, I had a whole class on signs and symptoms of seizures coming on soon, and one of them was excessive salivating and often spitting. And obviously, I couldn't have known, I just saw this bro spit on the ground, I don't know he is about to have a seizure, but it was wild. And I had like lost my shit. I was like, "the disrespect, you're just spitting on the ground in a public gym, da, da, da." [laughter] And then I think he was fine. We called the paramedics and they treated him, and he was okay. But I don't know, as soon as I thought college gym, that was the first thing that came to my mind.

0:08:17.9 Mike Vacanti: What? So did he go down to the ground?

0:08:21.0 Jordan Syatt: Oh yeah. He fell hard and just was seizing.

0:08:25.2 Mike Vacanti: While you were yelling at him?

0:08:26.6 Jordan Syatt: No, I had like, let him know I was upset. I walk away and then boom, and then I hear him fall and he wasn't really paying attention to me. I could tell he was really out of it. I don't know if he had had seizures before or not, but he was clearly trying to figure out what was going on while I was very upset with him. And I was just like, whatever, I turned around and then boom, hits the floor. Probably hit his head really hard. And then we turned him... I believe we turned him on his side just in case, 'cause if they start throwing up, you don't want them to choke on it, but yeah. Yeah.

0:09:02.6 Mike Vacanti: What life takeaways do you have from how you reacted to him spitting and just the situation in general?

0:09:09.3 Jordan Syatt: If I saw someone do that now, I'd probably have the exact same reaction. Like someone just spits in a public gym. Like I'll probably do the same thing, but it's just you never know what someone's going through, right? But if someone spits in the public gym, the chances of it being a seizure is probably pretty low.

0:09:26.9 Mike Vacanti: It's funny because you're such a P. I've never seen anything resembling that behavior from you.

0:09:33.9 Jordan Syatt: What? Me getting angry? You've seen me get furious.

0:09:38.0 Mike Vacanti: No, no, no, no. I'm not saying that, but add a stranger who's doing something that doesn't really involve you, to put yourself in a situation and scold someone, I don't know that I've seen that. Someone you don't know.

0:09:55.6 Jordan Syatt: Well, I mean, dude, you're in the gym...

0:09:57.8 Mike Vacanti: I'm with you. I don't... Hey.

0:10:02.0 Jordan Syatt: I'm powerlifting Jordan. T is super high. I'm fucking like... and I just see this kid spit on the ground like that's, as soon, like, seizure aside, let's say this guy didn't have a seizure. You just see someone just spit on the ground in the gym. I'm gonna get pissed.

0:10:14.8 Mike Vacanti: Especially when it's such a, dare I say, sacred place to you.

0:10:18.2 Jordan Syatt: A sacred place.

0:10:19.0 Mike Vacanti: Yeah.

0:10:19.3 Jordan Syatt: Yes, exactly. [laughter]

0:10:20.2 Mike Vacanti: Wow. We're just... Yeah.

0:10:25.1 Jordan Syatt: Dude, the gym is a sacred place. It is a temple.

0:10:28.6 Mike Vacanti: I can't tell if you have any degree of sarcasm in that. But I can...

0:10:32.1 Jordan Syatt: Zero sarcasm.

0:10:33.0 Mike Vacanti: But I completely agree.

0:10:34.7 Jordan Syatt: It is an absolutely sacred, I mean, it's... We look at sacred places as places you go as an opportunity to find yourself, to improve yourself, to improve others. I don't... That's what a gym is for. The gym is for self-improvement and for being a better person for yourself and for your community. I think it's pretty much the definition of a sacred place.

0:11:03.4 Mike Vacanti: Yeah. And I think you can even take it further than that. I agree.

0:11:09.0 Jordan Syatt: Take it further.

0:11:10.3 Mike Vacanti: And I think what you just said applies to everyone regardless of what you believe in. But I certainly, I've probably felt closer to God during a workout than I have or in nature than I have in a traditional sacred place like a church.

0:11:28.4 Jordan Syatt: Interesting.

0:11:30.1 Mike Vacanti: Tom Platz would talk about how the squat rack was his...

0:11:34.1 Jordan Syatt: The preacher, right? That was like...

0:11:35.6 Mike Vacanti: Not a pew, but like, yeah, like the, I forget what the word he used was, but yes. Like... now I want to know... Hang on. "The squat rack is my... altar." There's the word.

0:11:51.0 Jordan Syatt: Altar. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

0:11:54.9 Mike Vacanti: Throw 500 pounds on your back and try to do 15 reps, and tell me that's not a metaphysical experience or 25 rep... I think he did 545 for 25 reps.

0:12:07.1 Jordan Syatt: That's unbelievable. That's disgusting.

0:12:09.6 Mike Vacanti: And it's a two-minute set. And he's taking all these mid set breaks, like

what you're physically putting your body and mind and soul through to reach that end is... Yeah.

0:12:22.2 Jordan Syatt: Yeah. If we're all in agreement that our body is sacred, then the place that you go to improve your body would also be sacred, in my eyes.

0:12:34.6 Mike Vacanti: You're so good at making correct arguments. You're very good at winning debates. [laughter] You just took this like loose idea that like had 16 holes in it that I just threw out there and you were like, let me just make this air tight for anyone who disagrees with this. [laughter]

0:12:52.8 Jordan Syatt: I very much think that it's growing up with my Jewish lawyer mother, who we would always debate with, it's like that's, I think it's, that's very much part of Jewish culture as well. But like, yeah, it's absolutely like, debates, debates, debates, debates, debates. And also, honestly, learning about logical fallacies was very helpful as well, which I think, I remember Nick Tumminello was on a huge kick on this probably about 10 years ago now in the fitness industry. He was writing a lot of articles about logical fallacies and, I think every, it's, every coach should really spend time learning about logical fallacies because they, it helps not even every coach, everybody, but especially since this is the personal trainer podcast, if you don't understand logical fallacies and you don't understand, I mean, you talk about them all the time. You talk about red herrings, you talk like all of this stuff about how it's very easy to be led astray by something that might appear to be correct, but actually doesn't hold water. I think it can help you, not only with when you consume information, but when you relay information, to make sure that you're not committing one of these fallacies as well. I think those are some of the most important things anybody can learn.

0:14:06.4 Mike Vacanti: Should we dive into some Q&A?

0:14:07.8 Jordan Syatt: Dude, let's do it. You want me to pull it up or you have some?

0:14:09.9 Mike Vacanti: Pull 'er up.

0:14:11.0 Jordan Syatt: All right. So here's, [chuckle] I'm gonna go through some of the DMs that we've gotten, just 'cause, I just went to the personal trainer podcast account. So Kerry Fellows, 3:40 PM yesterday.

0:14:22.4 Mike Vacanti: What's up, Kerry? Shoutout Kerry.

0:14:24.1 Jordan Syatt: She said, "Regarding content, I may not be your target audience because I'm not a personal trainer nor do I have any desire to be one. I listen for the fitness talk and you two shooting the shit." That's awesome, Kerry, thank you so much. And she sent her power breakfast: 40 grams of oats, 123-gram egg whites, 60-gram banana, 12-gram peanut butter. Yeah, that's a power breakfast. I love that.

0:14:46.0 Mike Vacanti: It's a power breakfast.

0:14:47.7 Jordan Syatt: Okay, so I'm gonna read, I haven't read this, so we're just, I'm just gonna, I'm gonna read it for the first time with you. It's from Katie Jacobs, yesterday, 10:54 AM. "Hi Mike and Jordan, I just wanna say I love the podcast so much." Thank you, Katie. "The information is always so amazing and helpful, and I love all the humor and good energy you both bring. My question is, in a recent podcast you said that you should have only one page for social media, not to make one personal and one professional. I've been an in-person trainer for three years and I would love to start moving online. My Instagram page is all personal stuff, pics of my daughter, vacations, et cetera, because I have never treated it like a business page. I've shared some workout content just

because I love working out and I share that in some of my fitness journey. But I would say, 95% of the page is not fitness content related. My page has also always been private because, well, again, it was never a business page. Would you still recommend the one page and how would you recommend going about the transition from personal to more business content? Thanks in advance, Katie." Great question. This is gonna be the play going into the personal trainer podcast DMs. I love this.

0:15:52.2 Mike Vacanti: This is one that we get a lot, that we talk about a lot in the mentorship. I'll let you run with this.

0:15:56.2 Jordan Syatt: Yeah, I mean, I'll start with this, early on in your, when you're becoming a coach, whether it's in-person or online, but I think especially online, the vast majority of the people who are your first paying clients are gonna be people who are in your close social network, whether it's friends, family members, previous roommates, previous classmates; the vast majority of people who will be your first paying clients are people you know very closely. So it doesn't make sense to make a separate page that will then further distance you from those people because yes, some people will follow you on that page just 'cause they support you, but a lot of people won't. Maybe 'cause they won't see it, they don't wanna follow another person, whatever it is, or another account. So if you already have the attention of people in your close social network, I don't care if it's 50 or 100, 150, how many people you have, that's the attention that you need to really make the most use of.

0:16:53.8 Jordan Syatt: So, when you start posting on your personal page fitness stuff, you're essentially talking to your closest friends and the people who are closest to you in your whole life. So you can actually be super personal with them and say, "Hey, listen, I'm gonna start making this account more about sharing my coaching expertise. If it's helpful, please let me know. I'm here to help you in any way I can. If you can share any of the content that's helpful to you, that would mean the world to me." The most important thing you can do is utilize the audience and connections that you already have, the attention that you already have. And by creating another account, you're gonna diminish that, you're diluting it dramatically. So stay on the one page, make it public, don't have it be private.

0:17:33.5 Jordan Syatt: And I would say, in terms of, you said how would you recommend going from the transition from personal to more business? I would make one post that's just you explaining what it is you're about to do. Say, "I've been a coach for this many years, I've been a PT..." You said you've been a PT for three years and you wanna start coaching online. So I would make a post saying, "Hey listen, what's going on? I'm a personal trainer, I've been doing it in-person for three years, I wanna start doing it online. So I'm gonna start posting free, helpful information for you here on this page. If you have any questions, let me know. I'm always here to help for free, if you wanna talk about working with me online, feel free to shoot me an email. I'm more than happy to discuss," have 'em shoot you an email, not a DM. That's, we talk about this all the time in the mentorship. Emails are much more important than DMs. Have 'em send you an email, and then just explain what it is you plan to do and how you want to help them. And that's it. And then the next post is an educational post on whatever topic you want.

0:18:27.0 Mike Vacanti: Nailed it.

0:18:27.8 Jordan Syatt: Anything you wanna add or are you good?

0:18:29.6 Mike Vacanti: It would simply be redundant for me to speak any thoughts because you nailed it.

0:18:35.5 Jordan Syatt: Okay, perfect. Melissa Hambuchen, I'm sorry if I mispronounced your name, "to answer your podcast question, I like the fitness side much better than the business topics."

0:18:43.8 Mike Vacanti: Very cool. All right.

0:18:45.9 Jordan Syatt: Thank you, Melissa.

0:18:46.4 Mike Vacanti: Yeah, it's interesting because within the mentorship, most business courses that I have seen or that I've been privy to see the inside of, are almost exclusively business, whereas if you take today's Q&A, we have a live stream with everyone right after this podcast, it's probably an equal mix of business questions but also coaching questions, specific client examples, like coaches who really want to help their clients make amazing progress, which is actually business...

0:19:20.2 Jordan Syatt: Yeah.

0:19:22.8 Mike Vacanti: Business gets you money in the short term. Being a great coach gives you a business that is gonna support you forever or as long as you want it to.

0:19:32.3 Jordan Syatt: Yeah.

0:19:32.9 Mike Vacanti: But I think it's interesting and cool, and I'm a fan of the fact that there's much less get rich quick, kind of like wanting that type of business stuff and a lot more fitness, client psychology, coaching, programming, nutrition, interest around that stuff.

0:19:48.9 Jordan Syatt: Yes. Some of my favorite questions in the mentorship Q&As are, when a coach will put a video in of one of their clients doing a technique, whether it's a squat or whatever, and they're... Like for example, they're having trouble getting them to hit a lower depth. So they'll post the video in there and then will discuss, "Hey, here's what you can do. Here are progressions." But I love that stuff. Okay. Heather, your client, Heather, Inner Circle member, Heather, who I met up with in Manchester, she sent a funny message from when you were talking about railing. Remember when we were talking about that?

0:20:23.1 Mike Vacanti: Uh-huh.

[laughter]

0:20:27.9 Jordan Syatt: She sent a screenshot from... I think it's Urban Dictionary.

0:20:33.7 Mike Vacanti: Uh-oh.

0:20:34.2 Jordan Syatt: I don't know if I should read this out loud.

0:20:35.4 Mike Vacanti: Read it.

0:20:35.9 Jordan Syatt: All right. So she said, "Mike, railing isn't a bad word," laughy face. And then, "Rail, f***** somebody's brains out, f***** somebody hard for a long time. Example, I'm scared because my girlfriend posted on her story that she wants Madelaine Petsch to rail her."

[laughter]

0:20:56.2 Mike Vacanti: That's one definition of railing.

0:21:00.2 Jordan Syatt: What was your definition of railing?

0:21:01.9 Mike Vacanti: Well, when we're talking... I don't remember the context we were talking about, but it definitely wasn't in like a sexual... Like it was railing work or railing... Like going hard at something. I'll say going hard at something was the working definition that I was working on. But Heather, I appreciate that Urban Dictionary callout. That's... [laughter] I don't know who Madelaine Petsch is, but...

0:21:32.4 Jordan Syatt: Okay.

0:21:32.4 Mike Vacanti: That's good to know. That's good to know. Maybe we'll be careful about re-inserting the word railing back into the zeitgeist.

0:21:37.0 Jordan Syatt: No, let's do it. Let's absolutely do it.

0:21:39.3 Mike Vacanti: Okay, good.

0:21:40.4 Jordan Syatt: Okay, next question. "I realize I need to strengthen my lower back for deadlifts. What is good for lower back?"

0:21:49.3 Mike Vacanti: Cool.

0:21:50.9 Jordan Syatt: What do you think?

0:21:52.7 Mike Vacanti: At a high level, it seems that strengthening the lower back has been ignored or even pooh-poohed by a lot of people over the last five to 10 years. There's... Everything should be focused on stability with... Forgetting that we have muscles there that we can actually take through a proper range of motion safely and have them become stronger, which is gonna provide more stability on not just the deadlift but other exercises as well. What movements are best for strengthening the lower back?

0:22:34.1 Jordan Syatt: Yeah.

0:22:36.1 Mike Vacanti: So I like a traditional back extension. I like a reverse hyperextension. I don't hate... Both of those require specific pieces of equipment. I don't hate the isometric hold of a lying bodyweight Superman. I know that's got shat on a lot over the years. I like the movement personally. Deadlifting is a good way to strengthen your lower back for deadlifting with proper technique. Good mornings are a good exercise for strengthening your lower back. Yeah, that's like a solid starter pack, I would say.

0:23:20.2 Jordan Syatt: Yeah. I mean, I love how you kickstarted this whole discussion around people pooh-poohing training the lower back. It's such horseshit. I hate how there are... There are coaches out there. And I'm not making this up. There are some big coaches out there who are like, "If you feel a pump in your lower back..." Like, "You should never feel a pump in your lower back." I'm like, you feel a pump because there's muscles there. The only reason you would feel a pump is because of muscle. That's where a pump happens. And you've got these two huge fucking muscles, erector spinae, running up your entire back on either side of your spine, and you don't think it's important to train those? What the hell... What is wrong with you? Of course, it is.

0:24:04.7 Jordan Syatt: So anyone who says you shouldn't train your back or your lower back, I think is an idiot. I will say I completely agree in terms of, I think it's not you need to strengthen

your lower back to deadlift, it's that deadlifting will strengthen your lower back. And if you are hurting your lower back from deadlifting, then either your technique sucks and or you're lifting too heavy from the beginning. So I think deadlifting would help. I think personally, Romanian deadlifts are probably the best deadlift variation for strengthening your lower back just because it keeps a little bit more constant tension on them.

0:24:39.9 Mike Vacanti: Mm-hmm.

0:24:41.1 Jordan Syatt: So I do love Romanian deadlifts. I love back extensions. I love reverse hypers. I love all those. I do like Supermans as well. I think those are great, especially in like a warm-up capacity.

0:24:52.2 Mike Vacanti: Or a beginner or a limited equipment.

0:24:55.2 Jordan Syatt: Yeah. Yep, yep. And I actually... You know what I love. So we've got good mornings and all that stuff. I love taking a sandbag and picking up and putting down a sandbag.

0:25:09.7 Mike Vacanti: With a rounded back intentionally?

0:25:11.7 Jordan Syatt: Yes, absolutely. I mean, you squat down... It's impossible to squat down and pick it up without rounding your back. Right?

0:25:17.7 Mike Vacanti: Mm-hmm.

0:25:18.0 Jordan Syatt: It's like when you squat down on the toilet, people are rounding their back. There's nothing wrong with this. You squat down, you... Watch the Strongman competitors. When they go down and pick up an Atlas stone, their backs are rounded over and they have freakishly strong backs. Now with a sandbag, it's like what? 15, 20, 25, 35 pounds. I don't know. Depending on how heavy the sandbag you're using. You don't need to be lifting a hundred pound sandbag.

0:25:40.8 Jordan Syatt: But you bend down, put it over your shoulder, put it back down, pick it up, put it over your other shoulder. It's called shouldering. I think that's one of my all time favorite back exercises. It will light your erectors up. So if you have access to that, I think it's a really, really, really good idea. And then I also like Jefferson curls. I think Jefferson curls are one of the most underrated exercises for intermediate to advanced lifters. I would not give them to beginners. But to an intermediate to advanced... High intermediate to advanced... Keeping in mind though even an intermediate to advanced lifter is not supposed to be using a lot of weight with them. It's like when I do a Jefferson curl, I use at most, 25 pounds per hand with dumbbells. That's at most. I don't really do much more than that. So if you've never seen a Jefferson curl, feel free to look it up. I think it's one of the best exercises for mobility, flexibility and for increasing the resiliency and strength of your lower back as well. So, huge fan of all of those.

0:26:46.9 Mike Vacanti: Yeah. All the above. And then, I know this wasn't part of the question, but for someone who is deadlifting or performing any movement where they feel like they might be feeling it in their low back more than they should, you mentioned errors in technique and one specific error in technique that can lead you feeling it more in your low back is improper breathing and bracing. And making sure you're taking a big breath in before the rep, bracing your core is going to protect, for lack of a better word, your low back.

0:27:20.5 Jordan Syatt: Especially with very heavy lifts.

0:27:23.6 Mike Vacanti: Correct. Well, yeah, we're talking about a barbell deadlift. We're talking about a heavy bent row and RDL. Movements where your lower back is loaded and not vertical, like it doesn't have to be completely horizontal, but you know, if it's between here I'm... For the video, you can see what I'm doing. But when you're between 90 and 45 anywhere in there, making sure that you are very stable is gonna help prevent injury.

0:27:55.5 Jordan Syatt: And again, I'll say especially with the heavy stuff, even for something like a Jefferson curl, because that's such low weight and because there are other aspects of it that I want to focus on, I deliberately will breathe out and fully exhale and inhale, like just mainly 'cause I don't want the extra bracing, but like for a heavy lift, for sure.

0:28:16.9 Mike Vacanti: Because you're going through a range... I'm talk... Sorry, sorry.

0:28:20.2 Jordan Syatt: Yeah. Exactly. Exactly.

0:28:22.8 Mike Vacanti: I'm talking exclusively about movements where we want a neutral lumbar spine...

0:28:25.6 Jordan Syatt: Yeah, yeah. Got it. Yep, yep.

0:28:27.6 Mike Vacanti: Where we don't wanna be taking the lower back through a range.

0:28:29.7 Jordan Syatt: Yeah. Yeah. Agreed, 100%.

0:28:32.5 Mike Vacanti: Yeah. On a Jefferson curl, on... You know. Yes. Anything where... A Superman, right? Your breathing and bracing isn't necessary.

0:28:42.9 Jordan Syatt: Yeah. All right. Here's one. I'm actually very interested to hear your thoughts on this. You and I, I think it was our last podcast or one of the last ones, we were talking about the weight loss injections and the food noise that it can sort of help quiet. So someone asked, "How do I turn off the food noise? I'm constantly thinking about my next meal, food, calories left, etcetera. Aside from the weight loss injections, do you have any strategies or tips that can help reduce the food noise or no?"

0:29:14.2 Mike Vacanti: That's not even a term that was in my vernacular until the last month or two and isn't something I've thought about enough. I am fascinated by the anti-addiction properties of Ozempic and similar drugs and the number of people who are quitting smoking, who are quitting drinking, who have shopping, like all addictions, all impulse control actions are coming down on these weight loss injections, which is crazy. Whatever is leading to overeating and also causes those types of impulses in the brain, is being quieted clearly by these. But natural ways of reducing food noise, you can riff on that.

0:30:06.5 Jordan Syatt: I think that the one thing that just stands out to me is, she said... The last thing she said, "I'm constantly thinking about my next meal, food and then calories left." If she hadn't said that, it would've been a little bit more difficult for me. But because she said calories left, this is something I see a lot in people who are obsessively counting their calories to the point where, from the moment the day starts and the moment that they start eating their food, it's no longer, a, like, "Oh, I get to eat this much." Every bite is a countdown of, "I only have this much food left." And if that's the case, then I would recommend taking time away from calorie counting. 'Cause essentially, for this person, when they're calorie counting, they're unable to separate the number of calories they're eating from the enjoyment of the food.

0:31:00.3 Jordan Syatt: It's like one thing. And I think that creates a lot of mental and emotional issues for people, where it's like, it's constantly thinking about food and how many calories they have left. And if you're struggling to separate those two, then take time away from calorie counting. And if that scares you, then that means that you probably really need to. People who can calorie count and have a really good relationship with food at the same time, they don't get scared at the thought of not calorie counting. This is, I think, a really important concept to understand. Someone who's calorie counting and has a very healthy relationship with food and calorie counting, it's not like if they had to take a week off, it wouldn't worry them. It's not a big deal. If you can't take a day off of calorie counting without getting worried, that's a really good sign that you need to take some time off because that's not what a normal healthy relationship looks like.

0:31:52.1 Mike Vacanti: And people who have, who can calorie count and feel good about it, and make progress while doing it and not have that extra worry or anxiety around running out of calories, those people don't care if they go over by 300 calories for the day. I think that's a big unlock for some people is...

0:32:13.3 Jordan Syatt: Great point.

0:32:14.2 Mike Vacanti: The feeling of, "Oh my gosh, I'm so hyper fixated on how many calories I have left because if I go over, I really screwed up." Internalizing the fact that you're gonna go over many days. If you're trying to lose fat and you're targeting 1700 calories, like there will be many, many, many days where you go over 1700 calories and that's okay. And you can still make progress while doing it. This isn't an all or nothing game. And so one day might be 1800, one day might be 2200, the next day might be 1690. The next day is 1900, the next day is 1750. The next day is 2480, the next day is 1750. And it normalizes. You're not, you can eat 2450 and be like, aw, shucks and then just be right back on track the next day and think of the next day through new eyes and as a fresh start. Yeah. I think a lot of it is the fear of I screwed up, that leads to hyper fixation on how much you have left.

0:33:16.1 Jordan Syatt: That was a great clip. I think that's a really good way to put it. Another very important message. Okay, here's a... I know you're gonna like this question. Alright, @sarahumanoid asked...

0:33:33.5 Mike Vacanti: Sarah.

0:33:33.7 Jordan Syatt: "What are your thoughts on single arm chest flies? Is it a waste of time or energy? Thank you."

0:33:43.3 Mike Vacanti: How did you know?

0:33:43.8 Jordan Syatt: I knew you'd like this. I knew you'd like this one.

0:33:46.0 Mike Vacanti: How did you know? Okay.

[laughter]

0:33:50.3 Mike Vacanti: Single arm chest flies. [chuckle] So there's a belief that the fly is a beginner's exercise. And I don't know where this stemmed from. But a chest fly is actually like a fairly advanced movement pattern. And one that a lot of people struggle, myself included, to complete without some kind of discomfort or even potential injury at heavier loads. I'm so excited about this question. I can't even get my words out. On the flip side, there are times where a... I'm

trying to even visualize what a single arm dumbbell chest fly looks like. I can't even picture like how you can be stable on that movement.

0:34:41.4 Jordan Syatt: You can't.

0:34:41.7 Mike Vacanti: But a single arm machine pec-deck, especially like... And I remember doing these with Gary, to teach mind muscle around the pec firing, it's a great exercise. So you can use it to feel your chest and or to teach a client to feel their chest. If doing pushups, I just feel it in my shoulder, on a dumbbell bench press, I don't really feel my chest. I don't know how to feel my chest. A single arm fly in that place or cable crossover, like there are movements where you can actually use it to feel your chest better. But outside of that, I don't know. I'm trying to visualize how you would do a single arm dumbbell fly.

0:35:36.9 Jordan Syatt: You would have to inherently have a very light weight because if it's any semblance too heavy, you're going to be flying off the bench, you're gonna be... Your whole sides... You're gonna be rotating your core, it's gonna be... You're gonna be... It actually would be a better core exercise than it would be a pec exercise. If we're really examining this, a single arm dumbbell pec fly would make a somewhat decent anti-rotation core stabilization exercise better than it would an actual pec exercise, which I think is funny. Whereas the exercise you brought up, like a seated single arm pec-deck, which oftentimes you'll adjust how you're sitting, so that you're not worried about your core stabilization, you'll adjust and hold on to something so that you really can just focused on that single pec, that is a great pec exercise for that one working pec. So if you're...

0:36:36.6 Mike Vacanti: And in either scenario... With either movement, you need to hold on to something with your non working arm.

0:36:42.8 Jordan Syatt: Yeah, exactly. I will caution strongly against even trying the single arm dumbbell pec fly because even though I think it could potentially make somewhat of a semi decent core exercise, it's at the great risk of your shoulder health. And there are so many other better anti-rotation core exercises you can do like a Pallof press, for example. So don't do it. I think it's a waste of time to answer the question bluntly. I think it's a waste of time for your pecs, for your core, for everything. I can't do dumbbell pecs, period. Dumbbell pec flies, excuse me. I can't do pec flies with dumbbells because, no matter what... And I have very healthy shoulders, no matter what, it always hurts. It always hurts. Like I, and not to mention, it's hard to keep tension on long enough without... Once you reach the end range of motion, as you really abduct your arms out, it's very difficult to keep enough tension on the muscles. I would rather just use a machine or a cable, or do a different exercise altogether. I think the dumbbell pec fly is one of the most overrated chest exercises and actually, exercises in general, overall.

0:38:02.9 Mike Vacanti: Boom. Well said. We got a mentorship Q&A in five minutes. We got to hop off. Thank you very much for watching, for listening. Please leave a five-star review. Spotify, iTunes, wherever you're listening. Five stars would help us a ton. We'd really appreciate it. We'll be paying attention to the comments out there, might do a couple of shoutouts on comments of recent reviews. And if you enjoyed this episode, text it to a friend. Coming with a couple right hooks, back to back here. Send a text maybe to your group chat. "Hey, great podcast here, not just for personal trainers. Enjoy."

0:38:36.7 Jordan Syatt: Send us questions on the personal trainer pod Instagram. We're going through those. Make them good questions. Really good questions...

[laughter]

0:38:44.7 Mike Vacanti: You know what we should do? Hang on. No, let's not do the DM. Let's put up a question box because what that does is creates... You need to refine your answer or your question.

0:38:54.7 Jordan Syatt: Ah. Okay, cool, cool. Cool cool cool. Okay. Yeah, yeah. Make it... All right. We're going to throw up a question box...

0:38:57.6 Mike Vacanti: We'll throw up a Q&A.

0:38:58.5 Jordan Syatt: I'll do that right now. I'm going to get a picture of us and then we're going to throw this up right now. Leave a five-star review, five-star, fully five-star and...

0:39:08.8 Mike Vacanti: Are you taking a picture right now?

0:39:09.6 Jordan Syatt: Yeah, I just took a picture.

0:39:11.2 Mike Vacanti: Oh, nice.

0:39:11.8 Jordan Syatt: Cool. All right. I'm gonna post it. All right. That's the end of the podcast. Love you. See you.

0:39:16.7 Mike Vacanti: Goodbye.

[music]