

Westside Barbell for Personal Trainers: Lessons From Louie Simmons

[music]

0:00:06.8 Mike Vacanti: Hello Jordan.

0:00:12.8 Jordan Syatt: What's up Michael?

0:00:15.8 Mike Vacanti: I had to unfollow you on Instagram.

0:00:18.8 Jordan Syatt: That's not true, but okay.

0:00:20.8 Mike Vacanti: Yeah, yeah, I did. I had to do it, because you're an anti-vaxxer.

[laughter]

0:00:29.8 Jordan Syatt: Where'd you see that?

0:00:29.9 Mike Vacanti: I just saw it, I saw your post of this anti-vaxxer doing push-ups, and decided, I left a comment, said "you better educate yourself" and I said "I'm unfollowing" and then I unfollowed.

0:00:41.7 Jordan Syatt: Well, we can't win 'em all. I did get people saying that. I got a number of people, not a lot, not a lot. It was actually, I was blown away by the overwhelming response. There were a few people who were upset, but he's not an anti-vaxxer anyway, but like...

0:01:01.1 Mike Vacanti: Correct.

0:01:01.7 Jordan Syatt: It's like, that's not accurate. They're painting him as one. We're talking about RFK Jr., by the way. He like, he's, if you actually listen to what he says, he's not anti-vaxx.

0:01:13.2 Mike Vacanti: And by the way, it's June 29th when I feel like when we're talking about like relevant cultural moments.

0:01:19.5 Jordan Syatt: Oh yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

0:01:21.3 Mike Vacanti: Because I think this is going to be a July 18th pod, I want to say, maybe July 11th. I'm actually not sure.

0:01:24.6 Jordan Syatt: The overwhelming response was people really enjoyed it on both sides of the political spectrum. There were a very minuscule number of people who were upset about it, and they made their voices heard and they were like, "going to have to unfollow this POS." As soon as I see that, I just block them. If they say, if they publicly say "I have to unfollow this POS, I'm blocking you." Like, I don't, you're not getting back. Like there's, you're never getting this free content ever again, bro. So.

0:01:54.9 Mike Vacanti: Quick with the block finger. You got to be.

0:01:58.8 Jordan Syatt: Oh yeah. Yeah.

0:02:00.8 Mike Vacanti: It's great to see a 69-year-old man out there lifting, and trying to be healthy and obviously like exemplifying health.

0:02:11.6 Jordan Syatt: Dude, he looks so good. It's crazy.

0:02:14.6 Mike Vacanti: Yeah, he does.

0:02:15.4 Jordan Syatt: What. Well, what? He looks amazing.

0:02:18.2 Mike Vacanti: Well, right, but the devil's advocate is like TRT at a minimum, which is great. He's 69.

0:02:26.0 Jordan Syatt: Of course. But for me, it's like, dude, that doesn't to me make it any less incredible how good he looks from like a physique standpoint, muscle standpoint, because a lot of people around his age are on TRT, and they don't look or act physically anything like that. It is...

0:02:48.0 Mike Vacanti: True.

0:02:49.7 Jordan Syatt: It's, I think when people hear like, oh yeah, but he's on TRT. I'm like, and like that doesn't magically make you physically fit in any way, shape or form. It can help with it... It can help with recovery. It can help with muscle growth and strength... It can...

0:03:06.8 Mike Vacanti: Hang on, hang on. Not it can. It does help.

0:03:09.1 Jordan Syatt: It absolutely does. Yes.

0:03:10.2 Mike Vacanti: Yeah.

0:03:10.9 Jordan Syatt: But not, people think that you just take it and then you look like that.

0:03:13.5 Mike Vacanti: No, no, no, no.

0:03:14.1 Jordan Syatt: You're out of your fucking mind.

0:03:15.4 Mike Vacanti: Of course, you still have to put in the work. A hundred percent.

0:03:17.5 Jordan Syatt: Yeah. An insane amount of work. Yeah. For, yeah, it's... He has blown me away with his level of fitness, and it shows that he's kept up a certain level of fitness. Like it would have, I don't think that if he had just been lazy and not done anything his whole life, and then started taking TRT, he would look the way he does now.

0:03:41.5 Mike Vacanti: Correct.

0:03:42.1 Jordan Syatt: Like it's, there's clearly a...

0:03:44.1 Mike Vacanti: A base there.

0:03:44.7 Jordan Syatt: A huge lifetime of staying physically fit and active that goes behind this, that I think is super important to understand.

0:03:53.6 Mike Vacanti: Yeah. It was a good content idea by you. It was a good seize the moment, green screen push-up technique. I liked it.

0:04:02.6 Jordan Syatt: Just did it again with The Rock, with his recent Bulgarian split squats. Anytime I see a post on Instagram that I know I'm...

0:04:12.1 Mike Vacanti: When are you gonna review a natty, Jordan?

0:04:14.2 Jordan Syatt: Dude, when nattys start posting their lifts on social media that people care about.

0:04:18.3 Mike Vacanti: Okay, okay.

[laughter]

0:04:21.8 Jordan Syatt: Anytime I get a, I see a post on social media that I don't I want to comment on, I just DM it to myself, and I just have a huge running list of posts, and DMs that like I have content for days. It's just, it's been super helpful. But that was actually one of the people who were upset that I post RFK. They were like, "You're promoting an anti-vaxxer. He's a dangerous man." And she was like, you could have just done this video without using him. And I was like, well, "No, I couldn't." Like I could have discussed the technique. Yeah. But in terms of like so many people are watching this video just because he's on it, that's it. So in terms of actually helping people, I would have reached far fewer people if I didn't use this prime current event example. It's like, it's a, yeah.

0:05:10.6 Mike Vacanti: Yep. What else is happening?

0:05:14.9 Jordan Syatt: I had to unfollow you.

0:05:17.2 Mike Vacanti: Why'd you unfollow me, Jordan? I was posting too much? I know.

0:05:18.5 Jordan Syatt: Yeah, not enough, not enough.

0:05:20.8 Mike Vacanti: I was bombarding the feed, and you were just sick of it. I understand.

0:05:26.6 Jordan Syatt: Yeah. I was just, I was going through and I was like, man, this guy hasn't posted in so many years. I was like, I just, I got to clean it up.

0:05:33.5 Mike Vacanti: That's not true. One year. [laughter] Come on. Just one. And who knows? I might be back with the vengeance. Who knows? You never know.

0:05:47.2 Jordan Syatt: You never do know. You don't.

0:05:50.3 Mike Vacanti: I might start enjoy posting.

0:05:52.4 Jordan Syatt: What would you like to post about?

0:05:55.1 Mike Vacanti: I don't, if I wanted to post about anything, I would have.

0:05:58.4 Jordan Syatt: Got it. Cool.

0:05:58.7 Mike Vacanti: Yeah. But never say never.

0:06:04.1 Jordan Syatt: What would it have to take for you to start posting? Would it just have to

take you enjoying it all of a sudden?

0:06:12.9 Mike Vacanti: I think I would just have to want to or have...

0:06:14.8 Jordan Syatt: Yeah.

0:06:15.6 Mike Vacanti: I would've to have some kind of either need or desire.

0:06:18.8 Jordan Syatt: Do you ever have any inkling of desire to post?

0:06:22.4 Mike Vacanti: No.

0:06:22.8 Jordan Syatt: Any teeny tiny inklings? No?

0:06:26.5 Mike Vacanti: Not even remotely. I guess the closest to an inkling I'll ever get is if I see someone make a piece of content who I'm like, that was actually cool and original, and I could see myself making something like that, which is once in a blue moon and, yeah, respectfully, tell the content creators out there. [laughter] But...

0:06:55.4 Jordan Syatt: Literally everybody listening.

0:06:57.5 Mike Vacanti: It's, but look...

0:06:58.9 Jordan Syatt: I mean, you posted for years. You posted for, and you built your business, and you don't need to post anymore.

0:07:02.2 Mike Vacanti: Look, I don't need, I don't even need to I'm fine not falling back on that at all. Yes. That is what happened, but I just don't want to, and...

0:07:10.7 Jordan Syatt: Yeah.

0:07:11.0 Mike Vacanti: And if I have to or if I want to at any point, cool. It ain't gonna be about The Rock though, that's for sure. [laughter] Fake natty...

0:07:23.1 Jordan Syatt: You don't like The Rock?

0:07:23.8 Mike Vacanti: I don't like Hollywood...

0:07:24.5 Jordan Syatt: Or does he say that he's natty...

0:07:27.5 Mike Vacanti: He took the route of like, "Oh, back when I was in high school, I did a little something, but I don't really know what it was, but that was it... "

0:07:37.0 Jordan Syatt: No way, he said that?

0:07:39.0 Mike Vacanti: Yeah.

0:07:39.2 Jordan Syatt: Okay. Yeah. For, it's funny, for him to...

[overlapping conversation]

0:07:40.7 Mike Vacanti: The Hollywood, Hollywood actor chicken and broccoli life, like adding

tons of muscle in short periods of time, or just being way past your genetic limit at certain ages and denying it, especially at this really at any point in time, but especially at this point in time when you're monetizing your physique, when you wouldn't be getting these roles without, it's just, it's scummy. And you can be oh, well, everyone knows. All of us know. But in terms of the entire population, or in terms of someone like Dwayne Johnson's entire fanbase, like him or anyone like him, no, they don't know.

0:08:16.9 Jordan Syatt: No. I would say most people don't know. And I think the easiest way to understand that is when the Liver King was, "exposed". You go into his comment section and the number of people who are like, "Man, you really let me down. I really believed you. I thought you were..."

[laughter]

0:08:35.5 Mike Vacanti: And that guy wasn't on a little something. That guy was on all of the steroids, yeah. [laughter]

0:08:41.5 Jordan Syatt: Like \$15,000 a month worth of steroids.

0:08:43.8 Mike Vacanti: Yes.

0:08:44.9 Jordan Syatt: That's crazy. And I get a lot, even when I'm out, at Jiu Jitsu or something, my, people I roll with be like "Hey, do you think the liver king is natural?" And I'm like "Are you serious?" It's like, so if they think that he could potentially be natural, then obviously people would think The Rock would be natural as well. And they're like, listen I have nothing wrong with people who use it. I think it's just, it's an issue when you pretend to be it and you outright lie and say that you are not when you clearly are.

0:09:11.9 Mike Vacanti: Correct.

0:09:12.7 Jordan Syatt: That's the biggest issue.

0:09:13.9 Mike Vacanti: Correct. And then the step further is monetizing.

0:09:17.1 Jordan Syatt: Yeah.

0:09:20.2 Mike Vacanti: And we have seen that a lot in the fitness industry over the years, which is basically like, "Buy my program and eat my meal plan. And you'll look like me, by the way, don't ask me about my steroids." It's like, all right. Whatever. [laughter] What else do you wanna talk about? I can't imagine that the bulk of our listeners care as much about this subject as I do.

0:09:38.7 Jordan Syatt: Dude, I think they probably care just as much as you do.

0:09:42.2 Mike Vacanti: I don't. Hang on, let me see what I got here. Oh, I got a show for you.

0:09:47.8 Jordan Syatt: To watch?

0:09:48.9 Mike Vacanti: Yeah. Oh, I told you about this.

0:09:50.3 Jordan Syatt: Suits?

0:09:50.9 Mike Vacanti: No, not Suits.

0:09:53.2 Jordan Syatt: No, what?

0:09:55.2 Mike Vacanti: It's new. Jury Duty.

0:09:57.3 Jordan Syatt: Oh, Jury Duty... Yeah. You did tell me about that. Got it.

0:10:00.2 Mike Vacanti: I told you about this. You didn't check it out yet. Amazon Prime?

0:10:02.7 Jordan Syatt: No, not yet.

0:10:03.2 Mike Vacanti: You're gonna like it.

0:10:04.2 Jordan Syatt: Okay. Is there a bunch of seasons, or is it one season?

0:10:06.9 Mike Vacanti: No, one season just came out.

0:10:09.5 Jordan Syatt: Okay.

0:10:09.6 Mike Vacanti: It's the most creative show perhaps that I've ever seen. The concept of the show is the most creative thing I've ever seen.

0:10:18.1 Jordan Syatt: Really?

0:10:18.9 Mike Vacanti: Yeah. That's all I'm gonna say. Because...

0:10:20.4 Jordan Syatt: It'll ruin... It'll ruin the surprise.

0:10:23.7 Mike Vacanti: Yeah. You'll just see when you start it.

0:10:27.2 Jordan Syatt: Yeah. Okay, all right.

0:10:27.9 Mike Vacanti: It's eight episodes. Eight episodes, 30 minutes each one season. It goes like this. [snapping fingers]

0:10:33.0 Jordan Syatt: Got it. Okay. I'll, I need to put that on my list. I have so many shows I need to watch. I've been watching a lot of standup comedy recently, but, all right. I'll watch that one. Also, I've heard Suits is really good.

0:10:45.1 Mike Vacanti: Yeah. Suits is a drama. This is comedy. You'll like this.

0:10:49.4 Jordan Syatt: Oh, this is com... Okay. All right. Perfect.

0:10:51.8 Mike Vacanti: Yeah you're thrown off by the name Jury Duty, because you're like, Jury Duty, Shawshank Redemption. This isn't good.

0:10:57.2 Jordan Syatt: Prison...

[laughter]

0:10:58.0 Mike Vacanti: It's, yeah. Prison Break. It's comedy and it's awesome. And it's very, the concept is genius.

0:11:06.0 Jordan Syatt: Okay. All right. Okay. That'll be my next one that I watch. I'm almost done with the, this season of, I've also been watching the old seasons of the Ultimate Fighter. So when I'm done with this season, I'll watch that.

0:11:17.4 Mike Vacanti: I have a question for you, Jordan.

0:11:19.0 Jordan Syatt: Okay. What is it, Michael?

0:11:21.6 Mike Vacanti: What are, we'll call it some of the biggest lessons that you learned from Louie Simmons when you were interning at Westside Barbell?

0:11:33.9 Jordan Syatt: Dude. That's a great question, especially for the people who say that they really like the fitness content. This is, man. Okay. This could take up...

0:11:42.5 Mike Vacanti: Cool.

0:11:45.2 Jordan Syatt: 12 episodes.

0:11:46.5 Mike Vacanti: Oh.

0:11:46.7 Jordan Syatt: This could be a lot. So...

0:11:48.3 Mike Vacanti: Well then maybe we'll maybe just pick one or two, or maybe it, maybe we just riff on this. We'll see.

0:11:53.8 Jordan Syatt: All right. So Louie, without going too much into his history, is he somewhat recently passed away. The owner, creator of Westside Barbell, the strongest gym in the world. When I trained there, their weakest guy, aside from me, squatted 800 lbs, that was their chump lifter.

0:12:14.9 Jordan Syatt: He is the reason that we know so much about strength and conditioning now, because so much of what we know about strength and conditioning actually comes from Eastern Europe, specifically Russian weightlifters. Louie served overseas. He, and so much of the, they called these, the Russians dominated the weightlifting world for years and years and years. You look at the Olympics, the Russians, Bulgarian, they dominated, and they called them the Russian training secrets. And no one knew how they were getting so strong. And Louie literally took training books from Russia, brought them back to the United States, and paid someone to translate them, which is just wild.

0:12:53.0 Mike Vacanti: That's cool.

0:12:55.0 Jordan Syatt: And Louie is the reason that we now know so much about strength and conditioning, and why the United States is one of the leaders in strength and conditioning now because of the ground work that Louie paved the way with. And he created the Westside Barbell conjugate system. And there are many different styles of program design. There's linear periodization, there's undulating periodization, there's conjugated periodization, there's many different types. There's block periodization, there's all different types. And Louie saw so many faults in these, in the other types of periodization, whether it was linear or undulating or whatever. He didn't, he never thought they were bad. He actually thought linear was best for brand new trainees, which I completely agree with. Like linear periodization is the best for someone who's brand new to strength training. But what Louie noticed was, whether it was block periodization or

undulating periodization or any other type of periodization, as you went from intermediate to advanced, they had serious faults that were un-reconcilable.

0:14:08.7 Jordan Syatt: And that's how he came up with a conjugate periodization approach, which essentially took the best of all of them, and eliminated the worst of all of them to make this ultimate periodization model. Which is still the periodization model that I use with the Inner Circle. I use it with all my clients except for brand new beginners. So actually, the first starting program in the Inner Circle, I call it the Unicorn Strong challenge. That program is linear periodization and then everything else switches more towards, conjugated once people are done with that 12 week phase. So as people start with linear and then progress to conjugate.

0:14:43.1 Mike Vacanti: Do you have off the top of your head, no worries if you don't, but an example of something that Louie didn't like about DUP or block periodization?

0:14:53.7 Jordan Syatt: Yeah. Block periodization for an example, is basically your training gets separated into blocks. That's where the name comes from. So you have maximal strength block, you have a hypertrophy block. You have a power block. And each block, it depends, the length of that block depends on where you are in your training. Where you are relative to maybe your competitive season, if you're an athlete. Are you immediately post competitive season? Are you immediately leading up to competitive season? Are you in the competitive season? The blocks will change based on where you are, and what your goal is when you want to peak all of that. But the major issue with block is it, it's very good at increasing whatever it is you're trying to increase in that one block. So if it's a power block, then you'll get way more powerful as long as you're programming it correctly. You'll get more powerful, you'll get more explosive, quick, more agile, all of that.

0:15:50.4 Jordan Syatt: But because the entire block is focused just on power, you radically de-train everything else that you've done. You de-train your maximal strength, you de-train your hypertrophy, you de-trained so many other strength qualities and characteristics. And so that was his major qualm with block. I've never used the word qualm in my life before that.

0:16:13.0 Mike Vacanti: I think that was right.

0:16:14.6 Jordan Syatt: Linear. Louie loved linear, and he did linear for many, many years. The issue is if you spend a few minutes watching Louie talk, you'll see that he had some insane injuries throughout his lifting career. And this guy, he was out of his fucking mind. And I love Louie to death. He treated me like a son. He, there are stories where he would go to the gym or he'd go, he'd have to go to the hospital, get a knee surgery or get something like a, something put in his neck. He'd have to get like a trach in his neck, and he would leave the hospital and he would just go bench press or he'd go lift immediate, like immediately while he still has the trach in his neck. Something it's wild, the stuff that he would do.

0:16:56.1 Jordan Syatt: So with linear periodization, Louie would just, the whole goal is to essentially try and increase strength and lift more as often as you possibly can. And when you have someone, especially as crazy as Louie, they're gonna be doing it way, way, way too much. But even if you don't have someone who's crazy, it's like it's, you need a certain amount of recovery, and linear after the point of newbie gains, after the beginner stage, it can be very difficult to recover enough. And so you'll notice a large increase in injuries, burnout, fatigue, you'll see a huge increase in CNS fatigue. You'll see a huge increase in lack of desire to actually want to train. You'll notice a lot of twinges and pain and aches and injuries cropping up. So that was Louie's major issue with linear periodization.

0:17:47.1 Jordan Syatt: So essentially what he did is he created conjugate, which the whole

purpose is you have one main focus, but instead of de-training everything, you do just enough to maintain all of your other strength qualities, while you really improve one at a time. So maybe this one focus is maximal strength, or this one focus is speed, or this one focus is hypertrophy, and that's your main focus for whatever this macro cycle is. But you still include the other things in relatively small amounts so you don't completely de-train them. I think it's one of the genius things about what Louie did is, he realized you didn't need to do a lot in order to maintain. You didn't need to have a huge amount of volume, a huge amount of intensity in order to maintain strength, in order to maintain hypertrophy, in order to maintain speed, you just need a little bit. And as long as you include a little bit here and there, you'll at the very least maintain it, so that when you come back to it in two months, three months, four months, you get right where you left off as opposed to having to build back up from ground zero again.

0:18:51.0 Mike Vacanti: I love it.

0:18:52.2 Jordan Syatt: So that's conjugate there're... There's three main lifting methods within, not just conjugate, but within any lifting method. You have the maximal effort method, the dynamic effort method, and the repetition method. These are the three main methods that he describes. I think the dynamic effort method is what's missing from most modern strength programs, that most people don't include enough, but maximum effort is very basic. And now I'm gonna transition from talking about the way Louie describes it to the way that I apply it with my clients and everyone.

0:19:25.2 Jordan Syatt: Louie, when he talks about maximal effort, he means lifting a for one rep max, that's not what I'm discussing. I'm talking about just maximal strength, which could really be between anywhere from one rep all the way up in my mind to 6-8 reps realistically. I think it's a little bit on the higher end, but that's how I program it. Maximal effort method is making sure you're lifting very, very heavy, and you're including that within your training. It could be for bench press, it could be for dead lifts, it could be for lunges, it could be for chin-ups, it could be for rows, but anywhere in that 1-8 repetition range of super, super heavy.

0:20:00.7 Jordan Syatt: The dynamic effort method is a method to improve your speed, your rate of force development, your power, your explosiveness. These are things where you will lift lighter weights, but you'll do them more explosively and more rapidly. These are nowhere near very, very heavy, but they are enough to where you can feel it, but you really wanna be able to focus on exploding and powering through and really improving your speed and acceleration. You could do box jumps as one example of that type of moment, you could do speed dead lifts, you could do sprinting, you could do clap push-ups if you want, which I'm actually not a big fan of clap push-ups, I can talk about why in a second, we can do medicine ball throws. There are so many types of exercise you can do, kettlebell swings you can use for this, but it's generally lighter weight, it's also relatively low repetition, so more sets, fewer reps for speed.

0:20:58.6 Jordan Syatt: And there are many reasons for this, but if you're programming someone three sets of 12 for speed, by the time they get to rep 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, they're fatigued and you can't consistently produce a high amount of force, and with that higher repetition rates. So rather than doing three sets of 12, I'd rather do 12 of three. Essentially, you're keeping the same total amount of work, but you do 12 sets of three reps, and each of those three reps is as explosive as you possibly can. You take a sufficient rest, boom, then you go back into it. You do another set of three. Again, same total amount of work, but this way you get higher quality repetitions within those sets when the main goal is speed. And then the last... Sorry.

0:21:45.1 Mike Vacanti: Real quick, in terms of percentage of one rep max for that speed work, what range are you falling in? Because I assume you're not programming like... Even if you're not programming the exact percentage for Inner Circle or clients, where do you want people?

0:21:58.6 Jordan Syatt: Yeah. It's a great question. It really does depend on the movement.

0:22:01.9 Mike Vacanti: Is it 90%?

0:22:05.6 Jordan Syatt: No. No. I would say if we're using... The reason I'm saying depends on the movement is because something like a box jump, you could just use your body weight, right? Whereas something like a speed deadlift, that's where anywhere between 50%-75% one rep max at the highest. And generally, the newer you are to it, the higher percentage you can go. The more advanced you get, the lower percentage you should use, because the more advanced you get and the more weight you lift, if you can deadlift 800 lbs and you're using 75% one rep max, that's a considerable amount of weight. What's 75% of 800? I don't know.

0:22:49.1 Mike Vacanti: 600.

0:22:51.0 Jordan Syatt: 600. Cool, that would mean you're using 600 pounds for your speed work, that's a lot of extra stress in your body. If you can deadlift 800, I'd rather you use 400 because it's only 50% one rep max, it's far less stress on your tendon, muscle, ligament, central nervous system, all of that. For someone who maybe can "only deadlift 400," I'd be more okay with them using between 60, 65, 70, maybe even 75% one rep max, because it's not nearly as stressful relatively. Generally, somewhere between 50%-75%, the more advanced you are, lower percentage, the less advanced you are. You can use a little bit higher percentage, but there are some movements, whether it's a speed push-up, medicine ball throw or a box jump where it's just body weight. You don't need to add any extra weight for that.

0:23:41.6 Jordan Syatt: The last method is the repetition method, and I think everyone knows what this is. This is you just do higher repetitions with moderate weight. Generally, anywhere between 10-100 repetitions potentially, depending on the set. You could do 100 repetitions sets. Louie was a huge fan of this, especially for tendon and ligament strength, where he used to have me lie down on a big foam pad, and put 10 lb ankle weights on me, and just I do 100 light curls, just with the ankle weights, just for the tendons. Obviously the muscles get impacted, but it's more for the tendon and ligament strength. He would have me do sets of 300 band tricep press-downs for my elbows, and ironically, that's when my elbows felt the best they ever felt, or I would just do hundreds and hundreds of reps, never going to the point of muscular failure, more just to flush my joints full of blood. And that really, really helped a lot.

0:24:45.3 Jordan Syatt: I never program this stuff for my everyday clients and Inner Circle members, but if I'm working with a higher level athlete, I definitely have these types of things included, because it's actually really important. But the repetition method generally, I would say is between 10-30 repetitions for moderate weight and you could include this for hypertrophy work, which is really what it's the most commonly used for, or endurance work as well. So those are the three methods, maximal effort, dynamic effort and repetition.

0:25:16.5 Mike Vacanti: Was there any take away in terms of... Because this Westside Barbell was in the middle of nowhere, right? Like, you almost couldn't...

0:25:28.6 Jordan Syatt: Yeah. Columbus Ohio.

0:25:29.1 Mike Vacanti: Find it unless you knew where like there's no sign on the door.

0:25:32.4 Jordan Syatt: Yeah. There's no sign on the door, yeah.

0:25:33.7 Mike Vacanti: You don't pay.

0:25:35.9 Jordan Syatt: Correct.

0:25:37.6 Mike Vacanti: Louie's fronting everything, but is very selective about who he's taken on in terms of lifters. Was there anything about like, almost like secluding yourself from the outside world and the effect that that environment has on your mindset, on your approach to training, really on your approach to anything, but specifically like lifting, being around those guys every single day and how that impacted you?

0:26:05.5 Jordan Syatt: I almost got Westside Barbell tattooed on my chest.

[laughter]

0:26:11.4 Jordan Syatt: Dude. It was like a different world. Nothing mattered more than lifting, nothing. And it wasn't just for me, it was for everyone. And Louie, he has the sweetest wife. She's still alive to this day. She's so sweet. She would always, she, yeah, Louie told me as soon as we met, like lifting comes first. I come second and she would laugh, like, yeah. And like, she's just so sweet. And like she just knew like Louie's, like true love was lifting, and anyone who lifted there, like lifting came first. There were no holidays. If it was Monday, 8:00 AM max effort, lower body Wednesday, 8:00 AM max effort, upper body, Friday, 8:00 AM dynamic effort, lower body, Saturday, 8:00 AM dynamic effort, upper body. And if it, if one of those days fell on Christmas or Thanksgiving or a birthday, it didn't matter. You were there every single day and he didn't miss it. And he often, it would be multiple times a day, it would be two days and he'd be there constantly. But it was at least that one session, every single scheduled day. And if you didn't show up, there is a big problem.

0:27:20.9 Jordan Syatt: Even if you were sick, you were supposed to show up and do what he called, not what he called, but the term is GPP, general physical preparedness. Like just, maybe it was just walking around the industrial park dragging a sled behind you. You do something, you always show up. So it's like its own world. I mean, dude, some of these and these guys, like, they were so nice to me and they were incredible guys. These are scary fucking dudes. They've been in prison, many of them, or their prison guards or like, bit like, do they three over 300 lbs squatting well over a 1,000 lbs. Like, scary dude. The cops wouldn't go anywhere near this area. It was a well known, this is a scary place where you don't wanna go around. So my mom was scared shitless that I was going there. She was not happy. But you get really wrapped up in it, and almost like it's, you get like mind warped. You get like I don't even know what the the right word is? You get so wrapped up in what's going on here that literally nothing else in the outside world matters.

0:28:26.3 Jordan Syatt: The only reason I left is because Louie wanted me to leave. He was like, he said, I want you. Louie was tattooed head to toe. He'd spent time in prison and he was like, listen, I'm never gonna be able to speak at a university. Even though every single strength and conditioning coach in the world knew who he was and looked up to him like he was a supreme being. There's no way he would ever be allowed to speak at a college campus, even though he was taking kids for free from the Ohio State Football program. And they were coming to train with him and the Ohio State football coaches were trying to funnel him students to like train with him. He would never be allowed on the college campus. And he knew that. And so he was like, "I brought you here, because I see a huge potential in you to teach people. So you're gonna be here, you're gonna train every day, you're gonna train 11 times a week, you're gonna take my certification, and then you're gonna teach people the right way to train when you're done." And like, that was the deal. That's why he was like, you gotta leave everyone else there. AJ Roberts, Brandon Lilly, everybody there was like, "Just drop out of school and stay here." And I was ready to drop outta

school...

0:29:30.6 Mike Vacanti: I believe it.

0:29:31.4 Jordan Syatt: Get Westside tattooed on my chest. And I would, dude, you would not believe how close I was to getting Westside Barbell tattooed on my chest.

0:29:37.9 Mike Vacanti: I believe it.

[chuckle]

0:29:38.5 Jordan Syatt: So yeah.

0:29:39.0 Mike Vacanti: Wait, 11 workouts a week?

0:29:43.2 Jordan Syatt: Yes. Yes. So...

0:29:44.9 Mike Vacanti: How did that work?

0:29:46.3 Jordan Syatt: The main workouts that I just described, those are four. But what we would do is it, that was the main workout of like four times a week. But on the days where we had main workouts, Monday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday, we actually had two workouts. So we did the main workout in the morning, then we would come back in the afternoon at 4:00 PM for a GPP workout, general physical preparedness workout, whether it was sled drags or rope, like battle ropes, but we didn't use ropes. Louie had these huge thick chain links that weighed a lot. And like Louie would be out there in the a hundred degree heat holding onto these blistering hot chains for 30 minutes. Just chink. Chink. Chink. Chink.

0:30:31.1 Mike Vacanti: What a legend.

0:30:32.4 Jordan Syatt: Just crazy. And we would train your neck, train your arms, do a GPP workout in the afternoon, and then on Tuesday, Thursday, Sunday, you have another GPP workout that you'd come in as well. So you're there seven days a week. You're there seven days a week, multiple times a week, multiple times a day, for the main workouts. And then on the off days you have another workout as well. And it was actually really incredible, because what that's, that's eight no, yeah, 11 workouts. Eleven workouts in the week.

0:31:02.7 Mike Vacanti: And what are you doing on those three off days? Are those GPP or...

[overlapping conversation]

0:31:07.4 Jordan Syatt: More GPP stuff, yeah. That these are the days where, and it would depend on the goal, right? Let's say for example let's say this is a good example of how you can incorporate conjugate or how we incorporated conjugate into this approach is, let's say the main goal was maximal strength. Like you're peaking for a competition, peaking for a power lifting competition. And you go so hard during your maximal effort training that you are just so burned out, you don't have enough time to get your hypertrophy work in. Well then you can go in during the GPP sessions and get your hypertrophy work in once you've had a day to recover, right? So you can get these, the extra work in, not necessarily during the main workout. Like if you just maxed out on an insane lift and you did a couple accessory exercises, and you're burned out, cool. Call it, come back the next day and now you have your GPP session to get the rest of the work in.

0:32:03.4 Mike Vacanti: Sounds like a real summer.

0:32:05.8 Jordan Syatt: Yeah. I added 300 lbs to my total that summer, which is like between my squat, bench press deadlift, it's just wild. It's one of those things where if like, if you've never powerlifted it's, or really experimented...

0:32:15.1 Mike Vacanti: An insane number.

0:32:16.7 Jordan Syatt: The big three lifts, yeah, it's crazy.

0:32:20.4 Mike Vacanti: I heard that, I don't know where I heard this, if this was Louie saying it or someone saying it about him in the conjugate method. But that he basically wouldn't design programs like a four-week or a six-week program for his lifters. Like you don't know what you're doing three weeks from now. I mean, you might...

0:32:39.7 Jordan Syatt: Correct.

0:32:40.0 Mike Vacanti: Know the movement that you're doing, but you go in and it's like, okay, today, like the variety that we're adding is chains, or like today we're adding, like today it's slow eccentric on bench press.

0:32:52.4 Jordan Syatt: Correct.

0:32:53.3 Mike Vacanti: And everyone's, for the most part doing the same thing. And when you show up, Louie tells you what you're doing.

0:32:58.7 Jordan Syatt: Yeah, that's exactly right. So everyone does the same main move. The main move, so like, let's say it's max effort bench press day. Everyone knows that the first thing you're gonna do is max out on a bench press variation. You just never know which variation it's gonna be. Is it gonna be a board press variation? Is it gonna be a chain variation? Is it gonna be a board and chain variation? Is it gonna be a verse band or reverse band? Is it gonna be a floor press? You have no clue what variation it's gonna be. You decide when you show up, and usually it's Louie is saying, this is what you're gonna do today. And then everyone does it. And it's really nice cause you all work as a team. You spot each other, you load each other's plates, all that stuff. But then the accessory work, that's what's individualized.

0:33:41.4 Mike Vacanti: I see.

0:33:42.0 Jordan Syatt: And not everyone does the same program for that. That is like completely individual dependent. And that was one of those where... And that was one of the most fun experiences for me was learning about the individualization of accessory work, specifically in relation to an individual's weaknesses. So learning how to understand, okay, well this person is very, very strong, but they're lacking explosive strengths, so they're gonna be focusing more on something more explosive right now. This person is very explosive, but doesn't have as much strength as they need. So we're gonna go more towards max effort work. This person has tried for a long time to increase their bench press using dumbbell bench press, but that hasn't really worked in their accessory work. So we're gonna start trying weighted dips, see if that has a carry over to their bench press. Like there's, it's so individualized. So after the main move, everyone would go and do their own thing. And that was a really cool experience.

0:34:40.2 Mike Vacanti: I would imagine on that first max effort move of the day. First, how many sets were you doing? Do you remember? Like how many working sets?

0:34:48.8 Jordan Syatt: Of max effort?

0:34:49.9 Mike Vacanti: Yeah.

0:34:51.5 Jordan Syatt: So you just work up to one max effort set.

0:34:53.5 Mike Vacanti: I see.

0:34:53.8 Jordan Syatt: And there is an exception to that, but it's like you just work up to one of the heaviest sets. Difference...

0:35:00.5 Mike Vacanti: Like a 1RM.

0:35:00.6 Jordan Syatt: Yeah. You work up to a true one-rep max, every max effort day. So two max effort days a week. The only caveat to that in Louie's gym was, let's say it's like a bench press. And for me, like my bench press was my worst lift. And so I wasn't getting enough volume with heavy weights by only working up to a one-rep max. So I would do three heavy singles or sometimes even like a 3 x 3, as opposed to just like a single lift. My squat and deadlift was fine. I got plenty of stimulus and work working up to one-rep max on those. But my bench press, I need a little bit more volume. And that is one of the bigger changes that I've made to my own conjugate model and to my own programming it's, I need a little bit more volume for most people. So rather than working up to just a single one-rep max, its working up to 2-4 heavy sets of somewhere between like 4-8 reps. That's the initial max effort work.

0:36:04.8 Mike Vacanti: I would also imagine that one of the benefits that all of you lifters saw from that variety, you're not just doing like a standard barbell bench press whatever it is, Wednesdays as your max effort move for 16 or 20 straight weeks, because you have a different variation every week. You're seeing a down tick in injuries.

0:36:29.2 Jordan Syatt: Oh yeah, absolutely. I had zero injuries that entire time, which is wild.

0:36:34.9 Mike Vacanti: It's crazy to people. You added 300 to your total and you didn't get hurt.

0:36:39.7 Jordan Syatt: Not once.

0:36:40.3 Mike Vacanti: Insane.

0:36:40.7 Jordan Syatt: No tweaks, no nothing. And I was training 11 times a week. And that was another really cool aspect is, so much of the information we hear now is like, oh, you're over training. Oh, you're over training. Oh, you're over training. Very few people really know what over training actually is. It is incredibly difficult to over training. I'm not saying it's impossible. There are people who do, usually the people who are truly over training are freak athletes, who are training much more than you could ever fucking imagine. It is unbelievable. Most of like the Instagram post now, it's like, "Oh yeah, you're over training, because like you're doing like, I don't know, like... " I don't like, you're doing a little bit too much cardio and I don't know, you're doing a WOD every day and... You're not over training. Maybe you're tired because you worked hard, but you're not over training. "Oh my god, your HRV score is down, you're over." No relax. Your HRV score is down for a number of reasons. Maybe it's because you had two bottles of wine last night.

[laughter]

0:37:38.3 Jordan Syatt: It's not because you're over fucking training cause you did an extra five minutes of hit.

0:37:42.9 Mike Vacanti: Yeah. And one way to think about it is a lot of people are probably under-recovering. It's not that you're doing too much work, it's that you are not sleeping enough that you're drinking every single night. So your sleep quality is shit, your nutrition doesn't support what you're doing. So maybe you're trying to be in a deficit all the time on top of doing super high volume. But yeah, very few people are actually over training by definition.

0:38:12.1 Jordan Syatt: Yeah, exactly. I think there are so many symptoms of potential over training, but it's sort of like one of those things where when people say like, they think they go into a deficit for two days and then they have a bad workout and they think they've lost muscle. It's like, no, you didn't lose, you've been in a deficit for less than 48 hours. Like you didn't lose any muscle yet. It's like sometimes workouts aren't gonna feel as good. Same thing with training people will be like, oh my God, I heard that a symptom of over training is being really tired and I've just been exhausted. It's like, yeah, well you're also scrolling on TikTok until three in the morning. And also just sometimes you get tired. Like that also happens.

0:38:51.1 Jordan Syatt: I think one of the most telltale signs of over training is number one is, you're getting sick very easily. Like your immune system is down, getting sick way more often than having trouble recovering from sickness. I'm hesitant to say this one just because a lot of people will think that they have it. It's just like brain fog fatigue. Like it's very real and it's different than I think a lot of people experience when they think that they've been overtrained. It's like when you're truly overtrained it's pretty, intense. It's very difficult to focus. And then also...

0:39:23.8 Mike Vacanti: From baseline, like if you generally have a hard time focusing and that's who you are.

0:39:27.8 Jordan Syatt: Yeah. It's not like ADD like that... It's like a brain fog. It's very difficult. And the other one is severe, severe delayed onset muscle soreness where you just feel like you're never recovering. You just feel constantly sore. And again, that doesn't mean like sometimes there's times where I'll be really sore from a lift four days after that lift. That doesn't mean I'm over training. That's... It's pretty common. But if chronically for weeks and months on end, you just are never not sore. That could be a sign that you're over training.

0:40:05.8 Mike Vacanti: Yeah. There's also, it's just like physiological over training, which is much harder to do. And then there's psychological over training, we'll call it whether or not it's a real term. But if you are someone who loves lifting and for whatever reason, like you just absolutely don't wanna be in the gym, that's probably a sign to back off.

0:40:28.1 Jordan Syatt: Yeah, that's exactly right.

0:40:29.5 Mike Vacanti: Which is something I've seen with people who wanna do more, wanna do more love being in there, love being in there, and then they like hit a day or two or three or four days stretch where they don't wanna do anything physical. They don't wanna go to the gym at all. It's like, cool, this, let's take a week off. Let's take a little training break here, and that's a real issue too.

0:40:52.8 Jordan Syatt: That for me is if you know weather permitting and where you live, like I don't live anywhere near a beach, but if there was ever a time where like I just didn't want to go to the gym, 'cause I was over training, like psychologically going to the beach and getting some sun, getting your feet in the sand and going to the water, I think is like the best, I've found like in any

situation which I've had, that ability is the best thing I can do. And since I don't have the ability now, I live in Dallas, Texas, there's no beach nearby, but like, just going out and getting out in the sun or sitting by the pool or going in a hot tub, it's just like, that regenerates me very quickly.

0:41:27.7 Mike Vacanti: Absolutely. Although per my recent dermatology appointment, I'm not supposed to be in the sun ever.

0:41:35.7 Jordan Syatt: So weird that they said that.

0:41:37.2 Mike Vacanti: It was. Yeah. It was strange.

0:41:39.7 Jordan Syatt: It's so funny, because the people like, you know, people, I'm a personal trainer, here's what I think. And personal trainers disagree on stuff all the time. Doctors disagree on stuff all the time. I've been going to dermatologist for years, 'cause I've had moles that they thought were cancerous. And so I go once or twice a year just to get checked, and my dermatologist is like, yeah, get out in the sun. Just make sure you use sunscreen like that. Like, they encouraged me to get out in the sun.

0:42:06.2 Mike Vacanti: So what's funny, I had never gone to a dermatologist my entire life. You put me on to dermatology, and like, "Oh, I didn't know this was a thing that I'm supposed to be doing." And I'm still not entirely convinced, because I went there and the... I guess nurse was like, "Do you have any spots you want us to look at specifically?" I was like, "Nah, nothing I've noticed. I'm just here for my annual checkup, my second annual checkup that I've ever done." She was like, "Oh, okay." And then when the doctor came in, she's like "Do you have any spots you you want me to look at?" I was like, "Nah, I don't think so. I just, you know, I'm here for my annual checkup." And it like seemed weird to them. So I don't know if this is an actual normal thing for people to do once a year.

0:42:47.4 Jordan Syatt: It's normal. I don't think people do it as much as they should, but I... Because I know when I go in, just because I get new like moles and stuff popping up all the time, I'll be like, yeah, I got a new one here I want you to look at. I think it's just the people who tend to go also tend to have new spots. And people who don't have new spots crop up are probably like, why would I go? But it's actually a really good idea to go just so you can, they, it's one of the important things about going to a dermatologist is they get a baseline for what your spots currently look like. Because some of the issues with spots is if it's changing size, changing color, changing texture, that's when it can be an issue. So I don't like how they almost like put you off and they're like, they should have been like, oh great, I love that you're here to get a baseline. That's what they should have done. It's... I don't like a lot of what they did with you.

0:43:34.3 Mike Vacanti: Well, and then, [chuckle] then she's like, "Yeah you have some sun. Have you been outside recently?" I was like, "Yeah, I played golf the other day. Like, you know, I try and get a walk in every day. I go outside." She's like, and I'm like, "I always wear sunscreen 'cause I do." She's like, "You should really cover up out there." I was like, "yeah, like what do you... " She's like, "Yeah, pants, sleeves." And in my mind I'm like, it's 93 in Minnesota and humid. I'm not wearing full winter clothes on the golf course. I was like, and then I'm playing dumb. I'm like, aren't there some benefits to getting sun exposure? She's like, what serotonin, like vitamin D, but you're fine. Your vitamin D is fine. You get enough from like the sun hitting your hands, you'll be fine. And I was like, yeah, first of all, what if my vitamin D is not fine? Because we didn't do any blood work. Second of all.

0:44:25.1 Jordan Syatt: Yeah.

0:44:25.4 Mike Vacanti: Yeah. It was a strange experience.

0:44:27.9 Jordan Syatt: That's the worst experience I've heard of at a dermatologist. I've never had a dermatologist say any of those things. They encourage me to get outside. They're just like, yeah, make sure you're putting sunscreen on and like yeah, that, I don't know. I didn't like that at all.

0:44:41.2 Mike Vacanti: Have you seen the hats that have like this long thing back over the neck?

0:44:47.8 Jordan Syatt: Yeah.

0:44:48.3 Mike Vacanti: It's like a hat, but...

0:44:48.9 Jordan Syatt: Yeah.

0:44:49.5 Mike Vacanti: She wanted me to buy one of those.

[chuckle]

0:44:54.4 Mike Vacanti: I'm like, I'm open to the idea, but my understanding of sun exposure was you don't wanna get burnt, like when you burn, When you get too much exposure, that's what's dangerous and then like repeated burning over a lifetime increases chances of skin cancer. Like, I don't know. This is... I'm going with my intuition and...

0:45:15.8 Jordan Syatt: You got to go to a new derm.

0:45:18.1 Mike Vacanti: Yeah. I don't think I'm going to a derm for a while, and when I do, it'll be a new derm.

0:45:22.4 Jordan Syatt: Come to my derm. I have a great derm here in Dallas. She's awesome.

0:45:25.0 Mike Vacanti: Okay, I'll try yours out next visit. All right. We're gonna give a couple quick shout outs from people who left reviews recently. Spotify/Apple reviews.

0:45:38.3 Jordan Syatt: Oh let's go.

0:45:38.4 Mike Vacanti: This is from ChrisChrisFitness. Shout out ChrisChris who said, "Found this podcast in February after virtually watching Jordan at the Raise the Bar, and was on a mission to listen to every episode at that point. Love the information that both Mike and Jordan provide as an in-person trainer for 10 years, and just starting to dabble in the online training world. I'm grateful to have come across them. When I did, when I was starting to look into guidance for my online business. The podcast is the reason I pulled the trigger on joining the mentorship. Great stuff. And keep it coming." Let's go ChrisChris.

0:46:09.7 Jordan Syatt: That's awesome, Chris.

0:46:10.1 Mike Vacanti: My man.

0:46:11.3 Jordan Syatt: Thank you so much. That means the world to us.

0:46:15.6 Mike Vacanti: And then PepperPeridot said, "Not a coach. Learning a lot. I love listening to you guys banter, but also educate. I'm not a coach maybe someday, but I learn a lot from you guys, understanding how you coach people and what it is to be a good/desired client as well."

Oh, cool.

0:46:32.7 Jordan Syatt: That's amazing.

0:46:33.8 Mike Vacanti: And Pepper also says, "Funny banter and sarcasm is icing on the cake." Thank you very much.

0:46:38.4 Jordan Syatt: Thank you.

0:46:39.5 Mike Vacanti: Pepper and Chris for those five star reviews, we really appreciate it. Helps us get seen, get, reach, grow the pod. Good episode. This was fun.

0:46:49.1 Jordan Syatt: Yeah, that was very fun. Thank you everyone for listening. Hope you enjoyed the Westside Barbell ranting. Louie was like a father to me, so anytime I can pay homage to that guy, I would not be where I was without him. So thanks Mike, for asking. Please leave a five star review. A written review would be amazing, just like ChrisChris and Pepper. And have a wonderful week. We'll talk to you soon.

0:47:10.9 Mike Vacanti: See you next week.

[music]