



# Doctor Strong

## WEEKLY

By Adam Palmer

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RTS: Tell me about your background; how you got started with powerlifting.

**Kristopher Hunt:** I got into powerlifting pretty early in High School. I was fortunate to have a very experienced powerlifter in my home town named Judy Gedney. She was the first female inductee into the USAPL women's hall of fame. She had us working out at the local Salvation Army. They were only open for two hours a day.

RTS: Two hours a day? I'm guessing you guys had some pretty intense sessions!

**KH:** Yeah we for sure did. It was the basement of a Salvation Army, and anybody could come. Judy was all about having the folks that had been there a bit teach others how to lift, especially the new folks. I think she did that because she knew that there's no better way to learn that teach something yourself. The gym had

**no heat, no AC. It was awesome. We eventually got AC, but it didn't feel the same for me.**

RTS: Was she one of your first coaches then?

**KH:** Yep. She was great. She was always about technical aspects. I never squatted deeper than when I was lifting with her. She happens to have a PhD in exercise physiology. So I had the benefit of learning from a PhD -- for free!

RTS: So how old were you when you started powerlifting and how old are you now? Were you always a 198 lifter?

**KH:** I was 16 when I started. I'm 31 now. I actually started at 220. I was kind of a roly-poly fat kid growing up - wrestling and powerlifting helped me lose close to 100 lbs., so I don't think I'll ever stop lifting.

RTS: Where are you from originally?

**KH:** Macomb, IL. It's literally in the middle of nowhere. It's basically a small farming community with a large state school. So all the strong farm kids would come to work out with Judy.

RTS: So I heard you just got engaged. Congratulations by the way! Tell me about her and how you guys met and whatnot.

**KH:** I grew up with Ashley. We went to the same grade school and we were friends in high school. We never dated until I went to college, but she ended up breaking up with me, right after I found out I got into med school. It happened because her brother committed suicide, and she didn't want to hold me back. Late last year she found me again, and we knew we still loved each other right away. The whole situation was the reason I became an ER doctor in the first place and she ended up going into law enforcement and graduated with a 4.0, so now she's a hot cop.

RTS: That's awesome. Sounds like it was meant to work out. Best of luck to both of you. I didn't realize you were a doctor. That's awesome that you are a doctor that's actually into being strong. Not a common theme I find.



*Train like an animal. Think like a human.*

**KH: Oh for sure. Which is unfortunate. For some reason the medical community has this idea that resistance training is hard on knees, shoulders, etc., yet tons of docs are into marathons and triathlons which are way harder on your legs.**

**RTS: And I'd argue is probably much less functional in the long run.**

**KH: Exactly. I don't understand it. Strength is far and away the most basic functionality that humans need. How often in our modern lives do we have to run from a predator? Never. But how often do we get back pain, hip pain, etc. from deconditioning. ALL THE TIME.**

**RTS: Yeah, it's actually really interesting. I had a buddy who herniated a bunch of discs in his back (I've also herniated a lumbar disc) and I kept telling him he should**

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## **Strength is far and away the most basic functionality that humans need.**

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look into rehab through bodybuilding and powerlifting. I used Westside method and reverse hyper work to rehab my lumbar.

**KH: Exactly. It's ubiquitous almost that all human beings get some form of back injury during our lives. The upright positioning lends itself to disk herniation eventually, and if you do MRIs on folks in their 70's, almost everyone has at least one herniation. Strengthening the muscles of the back is mission critical to continued functionality with the human condition.**

**RTS: So would you consider yourself a doctor who powerlifts? Or a powerlifter who happens to be a doctor?**

**KH: A doctor who spends a ton of down time between patients reading training articles about powerlifting. I've always felt like powerlifting keeps me balanced and sane. I've walked into ridiculous situations in the ER, babies dying in front of me, teenagers overdosed on smack, fathers shot in the mouth in a botched up drug deal, spitting out their own throat tissue and, in dealing with those situations, I've had the conscious thought, "I got this, I hit 600 for a triple yesterday on deadlift. Or, conversely, walked up to six plates and thought, "This is nothing. I just told a family their 45 year old dad just died of a heart attack."**

**RTS: One helps you balance the other then because both activities carry an inherent level of intensity.**

**KH: For sure. It keeps me sane for sure. There's a lot of ER physicians that burn out if they don't have an outlet, and there's many that have alcohol and drug**

**problems if they don't have an outlet. It gives me the balance I need.**

**RTS: This is kind of tangential, but I'm a big fan of chiropractic and physical therapy; where does that sit with you as an MD?**

**KH: I think as a western scientist, I'm torn. It is difficult to study chiropractic in any randomized, controlled fashion, but I think it's widely understood that many have benefitted from it. So would I recommend it? Sure. Because I don't think traditional medicine has figured out the best way to treat chronic back pain either. If you look at folks that get a back surgery, the studies are pretty clear that those that want to get back to work the soonest do the best. So maybe some of those people would benefit from an education direction into PT, massage, etc. and resistance training. It's an interesting question that I think a lot of powerlifters have answered for themselves, myself included - I've herniated a disk.**

**RTS: How did you hurt your back?**

**KH: Squatting. I did it when I was 24. Didn't stop me from setting a national record later.**

**RTS: Speaking of records and training and whatnot, what are you sitting on lift wise right now and what's the next big meet you're training for?**

**KH: The next big meet is raw nationals. It's always a fun meet. I have my sights on the national squat meet record. It sits at 282.5 kg, and I hit an easy 280kg on my second attempt at the Arnold.**

**RTS: How did the Arnold go for you this year?**





and there were maybe 6 guys in my class at the geared, and about 50 at the raw.

RTS: What are your current best lifts in competition (both raw and equipped) ... and what are your best training lifts?

KH: Raw meet - 280, 157.5, 282.5 / Geared meet - 317.5, 202.5, 290. My best training lifts in pounds were 625, 360, and 635 raw. Geared I did 710 x 2 (squat), 455 x 2 (bench), and 635 (deadlift). I never maxed out on squat and bench geared and I'm quickly realizing though that I'm a better raw lifter anyway.

RTS: It looks like your raw numbers are rapidly approaching your geared lifts.

KH: Yeah, but I think that also has a lot to do with switching over to RTS mid last year.

RTS: How did you meet Mike and what does your training look like right now?

KH: I met Mike at seminar in Indy in 2012. Probably the nicest powerlifter I've ever met, and super humble. I have nothing but good things to say about the guy. Plus, he's scientific about his methods, which I appreciate. I'm always interested in the data, and he has tons of it to back up why he does what he does.

RTS: What's a great piece of advice you would give to new and intermediate level powerlifters looking to become more advanced lifters?

KH: The best advice: you will probably get injured. Don't stop. And protect yourself from injury with good form.

RTS: How has RTS and working with Mike changed your training?

KH: In more ways than I can answer in a few sentences, but the biggest way is that it forced me to think about how the sets felt each time. Previously, I did a linear periodization scheme, and I had a "do or die" approach to each workout. I hit my goal weight that day or injured myself trying. It was dumb. But somehow I got far with it. I got all the way to become an MS lifter. But there's an edge that MSIC lifters have, and it's that they are consistently listening to their bodies so they remain injury free. It wasn't something I did before. Hopefully I can inch myself there now with RTS.

RTS: Thanks for your time!

**KH: No problem!**

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KH: It was as good as it could be. I went 8/9. I wanted the WR pretty bad in raw squat and thought about it day and night. I showed up and Matt Gary pointed out that I only had 6 guys in my flight. He forewarned me that my recovery would be close to nil. So we changed the plan a little for my attempts and went 265, 280, and 295. The first two were fine. Beforehand I told Matt it wouldn't be a problem because I train pretty fast because of my time constraints with my job. However, I was sorely wrong. I got off my second squat and my coach took off my belt. No sooner than I sat down, he came back up and told me I was in the hole.

RTS: Oh man, that's brutal.

KH: I walked out with 295 and it felt awesome on my back, I hit beautiful depth, but I ran out of steam. Just goes to show you that there are a lot of variables in this sport and you can always learn more.

RTS: So it seems like the squat WR is yours for the taking at some point, is there anybody else on the international scene that might even be close?

KH: Dave Ricks for sure. He hit 300kg at raw nationals last year but came up with it so fast that he took a step forward. I was hoping to hit the WR before Dave went to raw worlds. Either way, this is my first year in the raw game. I've always done equipped. So this is actually a big transition for me. I think my squat will continue to grow.

RTS: So why the switch to raw over equipped?

KH: Lots of reasons, but the biggest was that the best competition is now at the raw. Just look at the numbers. I did raw and equipped nationals last year