



CONSISTENCY

WEEKLY

By Ian Bell

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I was 15 years old and had just got home from school. Football season was over, I didn't have any homework, and all I wanted to do was play Madden for the rest of the night. I heard my dad enter through the garage door and a few seconds later he passes by my room. He asked me if I wanted to work out; I thought about it and decided that I didn't want to go. He said alright and proceeded to change clothes and head off to the gym. Before he left he said one line that would stick with me for the rest of my life, "You can't make-up workouts. Once you miss one it's gone forever". He then told me to clean the kitchen before he got home and walked out the door. I didn't correctly process that statement when I was 15, and it was only a year later, when I seriously started training for powerlifting, that I felt the full weight of it. The key to getting better at anything, especially powerlifting, is consistency.

Consistency of the Mind

Being consistent in powerlifting isn't just making it to the gym when you are supposed to; it is also being consistent in preparation. You should have a plan every time you go into the gym, and each workout should have a purpose. Whether it be to work on a specific part of your lift, a distinct muscle group, working on your form, or even hypertrophy; there should be a plan and a purpose. If you don't have a purpose and plan, then you can't set goals, and if you have no goals then what is the point of going to the gym? Know what you're doing, know why you're doing it, and do it to the best of your abilities.



Consistent preparation also applies to preparation from meet to meet. I was training for Junior Worlds over the summer and a friend asked me when I was going to start "really" training for my upcoming meet. I told him I am always "really" training. I treat each progression cycle like I'm going into worlds, whether at the end it's the Arnold, a local meet, or even no meet. You have to treat every cycle the same, because that is the only way you get better. The plan might change, but the preparation remains the same.

Consistency of the Body

Every rep counts. You've heard this before, and if you played football you've probably heard it too many times. But no matter how many times you say it, it remains true. I would say that last rep of that last working set is the most important repetition of that workout, and you have to make it count. If the weight is too heavy, drop the weight and make the rep count. On a side note, when you step into the weight room you have to check your ego at the door.

"Excellence is an art won by training and habituation. We do not act rightly because we have virtue or excellence, but we rather have those because we have acted rightly. We are what we repeatedly do.

Excellence, then, is not an act but a habit." –Aristotle

Train like an animal. Think like a human.

You can't be afraid to drop the weight down if you're having a terrible day, the most important part of training is making every workout, every set, and every rep count.

Along with making everything count in the gym, you also have to make everything count in your diet. If you don't eat right then you are taking away from the progress you are making in the gym. Your diet is something you should keep track of, regulate, and change depending on your goals. As an athlete you have to eat for performance and taking breaks from this will only hinder you from reaching your goals, and if it hasn't hindered you from reaching your goals then imagine what you could do if you focus on eating the right things. Consistency with your supplements is also important, because if you aren't consistent, they don't work. A lot of supplements require you take them for a week or two before you see any effects, so skipping a day is only going to increase the time before the onset of the benefits of what you're taking. Your diet and supplements work hand in hand and help your body in the same way, so when you have both on point you are helping yourself that much more.

Consistency of the Spirit

Things will go wrong in life, and things will go wrong in your training. You will get injured, you will have a bad meet, you will miss lifts, and you will lose. It's part of the game and you have to accept it, and realize what you can control and what you can't. With the setbacks that are inevitable for everybody, one thing that can help you bounce back and keep you going in this sport is a positive attitude. Yeah, it's corny, but it works and when you bounce back or beat that



person you've been competing against for years, it makes it that much more sweet because even when you were at your lowest, you still believed in yourself, and put in the work to attain your goals. In just about every sport they say that the game is some ratio between mental and physical, and it's true, if you don't believe in yourself then why should you go up to the bar. If you don't believe that you will kill whatever is on that bar, you are only hurting your cause. There is no room for doubt in powerlifting. Every time you step on the platform in training you have to exude that confidence in yourself, and if you don't have it--practice it. That is the only way it can translate to competitions and you can truly see the benefits of having a consistent positive attitude.

How It Translates

So consistency is key, and I hope everybody has that down by now. But why is it important? It's because you don't have to be the strongest, you just have to make the most lifts and you do this by practicing consistency. You approach 135 the same way you approach 805, you pay attention to your diet 2 weeks out from a meet the same way 4 months out, and you don't let yourself get too high or too low in a meet, and no matter what happens you stay positive. All of these things are practiced and become habitual and have their greatest effect when you face the adversity that arises within a powerlifting meet. You missed your first squat, you have to be able to shrug that off and move on to the next lift. You have to dig down and pull 20 lbs over your PR; you have to have that self-confidence when you approach the bar. The more you practice and exhibit these traits and habits in training and in life, the easier it will be to draw upon them when things get hard.

About the Author

Ian Bell is 22 years old and resides in San Antonio, Texas. He recently graduated with a Bachelor of Science in psychology from the University of Texas at Austin while also coaching the Longhorn Powerlifting team and competing in the 93 kg class. He was introduced to powerlifting through his father and multi-time world champion, Gene Bell, at the age of 12. To his credit, he has won four collegiate titles, four GNC Pro Deadlift titles, five Sub-junior and Junior world titles, and holds two current world records. His best numbers are 821 lbs squat, 501 lbs bench press, 821 lbs deadlift in single-ply equipped lifting. Aside from powerlifting, he enjoys fantasy football, music, and cooking.

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