



Legendary Strength Episode 5

Bodyweight Training

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Hello Logan Christopher here and in the podcast today, we're going to be talking about going deep into [bodyweight training](#). Really since I've began in my fitness career, I've always had a big base of doing bodyweight exercise. There was a time when I thought it was the only and the best way to go but after getting introduced to kettle bells and then going on to lift barbells once again and [feats of strength](#), I realized it's just one very good way to go. By no means is it the only way you could possibly go and by no means is it the best either. That being said, I still think it is one of the very best ways to go. Everyone that wants a good level of fitness, whether this is your average show or elite athletes, I think having some good base of bodyweight training, because this shows how you could control your body, is going to be a good thing to have.

Now of course at the elite levels, if you're doing powerlifting, bodyweight exercises would be a good thing for balancing and for your health but it won't necessarily help you add to your bench, your squat, or your dead lift. Of course, there's going to be some need for specialization but overall, for most people, I think it's a very great way to go. It shouldn't be the only thing you do but it's a great thing to have in there, at least a good portion of how you work out just for the average person.

This is sort of what happens with people with bodyweight exercises. A lot of times, they come into bodyweight training as an alternative to what they're exposed to. So the average person on the street

isn't really familiar that there are people out there that train exclusively with bodyweight exercises. When they think of bodyweight exercises, if they even understand the term, sit ups, pushups, you know nothing really beyond that, the average person will think that you can't get strong with bodyweight exercises. They're just for endurance once you get beyond 50 reps. Even then, ask the average person to do 50 pushups in good reps and it's not likely to happen.

People may get hurt doing weights or they're just looking for something different and that leads them to bodyweight training. That's what happened for me. I'm sure many people listening to this, that's what happened for you. Once you get into bodyweight training and realize that you can really build phenomenal strength with it, stuff like handstand pushups, one-legged squats, pull ups, one-arm pull ups, that sort of thing, and even higher level gymnastic feats on top of that, you realize you can go very far with this. It goes even deeper and deeper from there. You get into the more specialized areas where people are doing really insane stuff, areas like hand balancing, gymnastics, doing parkour, breakdancing, and different things we'll be talking a little bit about as we go along here.

In my recent training, I've been spending a lot of time with the bodyweight stuff. Some of my main goals right now are working for the one-arm chin up, being able to do a straight arm press into a hand stand, and a few other moves like working toward the human flag, some different pressing movements, stuff like that, levers. I've been working on these for a while, playing around with some different things.

Just recently, the past weekend before recording this, I was down south where I conducted one day my How to Become a Ninja workshop. After realizing I was in Beverly Hills, I was driving down there and I realized, *"Oh, it's the Beverly Hills Ninja Workshop."* I thought that was kind of funny.

Anyway in this workshop, it was really concentrated on bodyweight skills, the whole idea with the ninja just being able to have that great control and having acrobatic abilities. So we worked on [handstands](#). We talked about all sorts of different flow and movement, as well as digging into the mental and energetic side because these are things that you can do to really help you and get you pass the blocks. Most people, even though they may say they consciously want it, we worked quite a bit there with motivation and getting people beyond the steps, the things that block them through to the next level.

I had my one-day workshop. That was a whole lot of fun. The following day, I was at a different workshop with my friend Mike Fitch from Global Bodyweight Training. He was putting on his Animal Flow Certification and he invited me down there. It was a lot of fun to get to enjoy that, to go in much more depth on the animal movements and specifically how he uses them. Seeing these in more detail—because when he released his video, which I highly recommend you check out, you can find it on [Global Bodyweight Training](#)—he has very different uses of the animal movements.

Most people when they're working with animal movements, it's travelling in straight lines, all sorts of different animals. Some people use more than others but it's great as a workout with that. But with Mike, it's more of a focus on one, the form of doing them and doing them in correct form. You know I'm not a big form guy but depending on what you're going for, there are specific uses for that and using them as corrective exercises, as really movement patterns that you can look at and work on, working on them in correct form. The main thing that I really loved about it was how he incorporated the

breakdancing art into the transitions with the movements that allows you to flow, hence the name animal flow, from one movement to the other.

It was really cool stuff. It was really great to get to go in depth on these. Just working with the movements, I also saw how much of a crossover to hand balancing they had as well. They're great in building the strength and bodily control that you need in order to do handstands. In fact, after the workshop, I did a short interview with Mike. I got it [on video on YouTube](#) but I'm actually going to play that clip for you right here just so you hear what he has to say on this subject.

Logan: Hello, I'm Logan Christopher from [Lostartofhandbalancing.com](#). Today, I'm here with Mike Fitch.

Mike: Pleasure to see you, man.

Logan: Mike Fitch is from [Global Bodyweight Training](#) and he has some really awesome stuff. We just wrapped up a two-day workshop on Animal Flow. You want to tell us a little bit about how you got into bodyweight exercises and how that led to the animal flow stuff?

Mike: Absolutely. I was at a point of my journey, I've been in the fitness industry for 13 years, and I was at a part of my life where I was just lifting a ton of weights and I wasn't really enjoying the way that I felt, the way that I moved. So I started finding some other disciplines. I found lost art of hand balancing. I've gotten into gymnastics, free running and parkour, breakdancing, circus arts. I started finding all these different branches, different disciplines, and the transformation in my body, and the way that I moved, and the way that I felt was so astronomical. It was such a huge impact in my life that I wanted to share it with other people and that's when I started Global Bodyweight training, which actually this guy helped me get started. So thanks for that, Logan.

Logan: You're welcome. I'm glad to see how successful it's become.

Mike: It's an exciting time. It really is.

Logan: So with the animal flow, like I said, we just finished up a two-day workshop where we're going through all these different animal movements and it's really a different spin on the animal movements. Actually, there's some literal spins in there as well that you don't see in normal animal movements. One of the things I saw with a lot of these I movements is how they transfer directly towards hand balancing skill, how it could be a great way to get started with movements that build up that foundational skill level you need in easier manners, I mean somewhat easier. Some of these are very hard movements.

Mike: You're absolutely right. The cool thing about it is rarely do we get the opportunity to be in what we call the four pillar position and that's where we have hands and feet in contact with the ground at the same time. A lot of these transfers and movements require so much scapular and shoulder girdle stability, strength, power, mobility, flexibility that has a direct carryover into hand balancing.

In a lot of the more advance exercises, you'll see that there really are points where you do just hand balancing. As we transfer through one movement to another or we have these what I call levitating movements where we actually stick and stall and then hand balance as you transfer through to another movement. It's a great prep discipline for hand balancing and also, as most other bodyweight training

disciplines, the carryover is just easy. It happens automatically, so the animal flow is definitely a great plug in to hand balancing.

Logan: Yeah. So you've definitely done some specific hand balancing practice yourself. Can you tell us a little bit about that? Obviously, where you got your start and how do you structure your own sort of training? I know you're focusing on all these different things. What do you typically work on these days?

Mike: You know the funny thing about it and we mentioned this in our workshop when it's kind of like how you get good at hand balancing, you do hand balancing. It's one of those things where I'm still very much a student as much as an instructor and I think I will be until the day I die. Hand balancing really is one of those things that if I don't keep it as part of my regular routine, then I'll lose this skill or my skills become diminished. So what I usually try to do in every single workout is I start with the most neurologically demanding exercise first or skill building exercise. If that happens to be hand balancing, then I'll find that threshold movement or skill that I want to work towards and that's where it will start off my workout for the day. If it's something that's more based on free running or parkour, maybe flips and maybe whatever it is—

Logan: Only high skilled movement first.

Mike: Exactly, where our neuromuscular system is nice and fresh. But the hand balancing is one of those things where, like we also talked about, there are movements like the planche and like other movements that I hope to achieve years from now and that's where we get to the whole idea that this really is a practice. It's a discipline, hand balancing and all these other bodyweight routines, kettle bells, whatever it is, is something that we can get better at, at all times but we have to keep practicing. We have to keep that flow going.

Logan: So if you had say one tip for people on how they can really improve in all those sorts of bodyweight, just learning how to move better, what would you suggest to them?

Mike: Consistency. Consistency. Consistency. Consistency. How do you get better at hand balancing? You do hand balancing. How do you get better at muscle ups? You do muscle ups. How do you get better pistol squats? You pistol squats. Human flag, same thing. Consistency.

Our bodies are amazing machines and they will adapt to almost any given stimulants. We just have to keep those repetitive stimuli in there or else we have no reason to adapt. So consistency.

Logan: All right. Once again, Mike Fitch from Global Bodyweight Training. I highly recommend you check out his Animal Flow DVD or video you can get online as well and I understand you're going to be having a hand balancing product shortly as well.

Mike: Yes. So we're starting to work on our second DVD which is Hand balancing DVD which is cool. It's going to have some of the basics, like in Logan's stuff, but also we're going to get into some of the B-Boy stuff like some freezes. It will be a mix of kind of different disciplines and how they approach hand balancing.

Logan: Once again, it's a cross-over of the different ones. I'm looking forward to it and you should be too. Like I said, there should be a link somewhere around this video. You can click, go to this guy's

website, check out his stuff and be sure to follow him, Facebook, website, everywhere he's at. Thank you, Mike.

Mike: Cool, man. Thanks so much, Logan. See you guys.

So like I said, into my recent training, I've been working on hand balancing. I recently joined a rock climbing gym. This was an idea I start to have then my friend Matti Marcel from FerociousStrength.com was talking about it, that elite climbers have such great hand strength. They're able to do a one-arm chin. Many of them could do one-arm chins with single fingers. Of course, these are the elite level performers at this sport but I figured that this may be a gap in my training. It'd be something fun and new to try so my friend and I joined the gym. I have to say I'm having a blast. Rock climbing is a lot of fun. I'm both doing the bouldering as well as belaying so I'm climbing the big walls and the short walls.

Quickly, my skill is improving with it. Even though I have quite a good level of strength, this is something that is completely new to me and to my body so I'm not able to immediately apply that strength into the movements. Specifically, I felt like, having gone into this that before my fingertips were weak. Yes, I did the grip strength stuff, all sorts of things there, so in some levels it was but it didn't feel as applicable into what I was doing.

Now I did feel like I have a base in learning some of the technique then I'm better able to transfer those skills, the strength in my hands from doing feats of strength and grip work, that sort of thing, over into the bouldering and the rock climbing, but it is somewhat different. It did take some time and I'm still quickly improving.

Along with that, of course, I'm taking some classes to learn the skill of the movements like learning how to place your hands, how to place your feet to make the moves so they're actually able to do it. If you're not familiar with rock climbing, they have different paths, both while you're belaying and while you're doing the bouldering that are rated different difficulties. On the bouldering, I'm still working through V1s. I can do a good number of those but not everyone that they have there. I haven't hit a V2 yet but expect to be able to do it pretty quickly now.

So I'm having a lot of fun with the rock climbing and having started to work on that, I feel like now my fingertips are much stronger than they were. I'm building up the tendon strength in the fingers so that they're stronger so it's going to be interesting to see how this carries over into the other grip work, the feats of strength when I start doing that more regularly. I'm doing a lot here and with the hand balancing, it is quite a lot of volume on the fingers and the wrist so I've got to keep that all balanced. I can't work on everything all at once.

I'm working on that and we're talking about going deep into bodyweight training. There are a couple of other areas that I mentioned before that I haven't really gone deep in. I've done some gymnastics, so I've learned some of the tumbling acrobatic skills, doing some basic stuff along those lines, and even recently, leading up to the ninja workshop, I wanted to regain some of the skill I had like the back flip. I'm getting to the point or I'm at the point now where I can do it pretty much anywhere, anytime, easily do a backflip but there are levels beyond that I can go and working back up with the other skills so front/back handsprings pretty easy. If I work on it some more, I could probably get my aerial back and get that to a good level.

Some of the areas I haven't got into are the break dancing or the b-boying. This would be something interesting and in the future I could see myself doing it, taking some beginner basic classes with that because it is phenomenal to watch and like my buddy Mike Fitch, once you have a base in that, then you could see if there's connections you can put into anything else. That's a very important point.

Another one is parkour. I've just minorly dabbled in this. Once again, watching other people do it is phenomenal. I have some friends and know some people that do it a whole lot. At this point, I haven't done much with it. In the future, I definitely could see myself doing so. Having the foundational tumbling skills that I have, having some ability in that is pretty close in some ways to parkour. If I decided to move into that in full force, I could probably get some decent results and get some good abilities pretty quickly doing it. So that's a couple of ideas. There are some other things like capoeira, that people talk about, that handstand acrobatic correlation there.

There are all sorts of different areas of bodyweight training that you can possibly do. This is what happened. I was taking about an introductory person getting into bodyweight training realize that you can really go far with strength in this. Then they may see that people are doing stuff like [handstand pushups](#). This is what started me on learning how to do a handstand. I was doing handstand pushups or working toward those because when I started, I couldn't even do one. It took a long there, a good amount of time, but eventually I was able to crank out handstand pushups against the wall. Somewhere around that time, I've told this story before, my friend did a handstand. I was like oh, I really want to do that. Having gotten that base in bodyweight training, has led me into doing handstands. It led me into doing hand balancing.

Some people having started in one area may choose then to go very deep to specializing in one of these areas I've talked about. You may wish to then really go far with your hand balancing practice, really go far with just some of the basic strength moves, may decide to go very far in rock climbing, may decide to go very far with breakdancing or parkour. If you choose to do that, by all means go for it. Go really as far as you can go because if you do want to become the best in the world, you are on quite a big level going to have to specialize.

But there's also a good amount of value in doing basically what I'm doing, dabbling in all these different sort of things, taking some time to specialize to some degree for a short period of time before moving onto the next. This way you learn how to control your body in all sorts of different manners. You get a good base level of skill in all sorts of different things and then you have good connections between the different areas.

For instance with the animal flow that my buddy Mike Fitch came up with, he took some animal movements and he basically added some breakdancing elements. As you heard in that interview there, he is going to be coming out with the Hand Balancing DVD. I'm very much looking forward to seeing what he has to do on the subject and he's going to be incorporating once again a little bit of the breakdancing elements into it as well so that should be a lot of fun.

Having this base now that I have with rock climbing, if I can even call the base, I may be able to apply that strength into doing some of the gymnastic feats that I've been working on. One of the reasons I got into it specifically was to build that fingertip and forearm strength, hoping that that would help me

along with specific practice, of course, towards the one-arm chin up. It's still early to say what the end result on that is but I'm working on it.

I'm also spending a lot more time in my hand balancing practice and choosing right now to go further with that. When you get to these really high levels of bodyweight training, for the most part, it's more skill-based. To do tumbling, to do parkour, to do rock climbing, to do hand balancing, all takes a heavy amount of skill. In order to build that skill, you need a lot of consistent practice.

Of course with this stuff, it also takes a high level of strength, some things more than others so what you need to do is actually be able to combine, to build your strength without going into over training and also build your skill levels, again without going into over training. If you can really get these two things up, then what you accomplish is really up to you as far as where you want to go with these different areas of bodyweight training.

We've talked about quite a large area of different things you can be working on in the realm of bodyweight training, which is of course just one realm of physical culture. In the future, we'll be going into more depth on bodyweight training. If you do have specific questions or would like more details on specifically how I'm approaching these specific movements, be sure to ask and I'll be happy to answer in the future podcast.

Like I said, in my training, lots of rock climbing right now and lots of hand balancing practice. While working on these two things, I am not doing as much of the regular strength training with bodyweight exercises nor lifting weights nearly as much because it's working so much of the pressing, both straight arm and bent arm, as well as pulling strength from the rock climbing, and grip strength involved in there.

Now with the legs, that's a little bit of a different manner. For the most part in the last few years, I felt you can't get quite the same workout for your legs with bodyweight exercises as you can for your upper body, both pushing and pulling. Yes, there are great things like doing any sort of jumping movements, hill sprints, one of my favorite exercises, pistols, one-legged squats, those things are great. Still, the same level, I don't feel like it's quite there so I do and am currently still working on deadlifts as that happens to be one of my other goals as far as doing some more leg training. Yeah, I should do and do some squat exercises as well but how you're going to approach it is all up to you.

We've covered a lot of the things here. I'm going to be releasing some videos soon, some from the workshop, some just bonuses I put together, some areas I haven't really covered before in bodyweight training as far as a basic level of acrobatic ability, a basic level of hand balancing ability, a basic level of just basic bodyweight movements, movements that I feel if you call yourself an athlete, you should be able to do. This may sound a little haughty to some that I say everyone should be able to do these but like I said before, it's the idea of being able to control your body, to get it to do what you want to do. There's really a level where you can't do anything and I've seen some people that can't even do a somersault for instance. There's a level really you can move in all sorts of basic ways that the body should be able to move, basic strength level to do pushups, pull ups, flexibility involvement there, being able to control the body for just basic foundational skills, and then of course there's another basic level of acrobatic ability on top of that. If you're interested in this, just be sure to watch my emails. I'll be releasing these all soon.

That's going to wrap it up for this episode. I'm going to cut it a little short today. I do want to mention in the next podcast I'll be covering my whole [30-day raw vegan experiment](#). It's been interesting. I'll be wrapping it up in just a couple of days and be able to report to you all the details on that, what went well, what was easy, what was difficult, some things I learned out of it, and just be able to tell you all about so look forward to that in the next podcast.

For now, we're going to shut it down. Like I said before, if you have any questions, comments, or would like more details on any of these, just be sure to let me know. Comment somewhere on the website. Shoot me an email at Logan@LegendaryStrength.com. I hope you've enjoyed this podcast where we talked about going deep into bodyweight training. Thank you.