



Legendary Strength Podcast

Questions & Answers

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Hey, it's Logan Christopher with the [Legendary Strength podcast](#) and I'm going to be trying something new today. I've been receiving a whole bunch of questions when people come to my site. One of the first things I ask them is what is your most burning question about training, any part of it at all? I got a lot of very interesting questions. I always like to reply to them and I find that these questions are helpful for other people. So lately I've been doing a lot of videos but I've got so many questions and haven't even gotten through them all that I figured I would do a Q & A for the podcast here to cover this episode. If people like it a lot because we're going to cover ground in all different sorts of places I'll do this on a somewhat regular basis. That being said, let's launch right into it.

Our first question comes from Michel and I'm sorry if I got your name wrong. *"I'm 23 years old. I always admire people who are big, strong, and have cat-like agility. I'm also a football player so fairly fit but not strong or big enough. I always wanted to be strong in some kind of skill so that I can protect myself and my loved ones in case of any danger. For obvious reasons, I also want to have a great body. I have seen your videos and must say that you're one of the guys I admire most. I have not been able to achieve my goals because of lack of resources or lack of intensity in my dreams. I promise that I'll have greater intensity for my goals but the problem is where do I start? I want to be strong, a toned body, to be big, skills, martial artist, agility. I know I can't get it all at once. I wanted to start. Can you guide me towards my goals? I have to start with something, being strong, toned body, anything. I need your advice on this."*

So this is a very fun question. I'm going to have some fun with this and thank you very much. I'm happy to be admired. Everything that you said here as far as what you want is non-specific. What I mean by

that is what is big? How big do you want to be? What skills do you want? What sort of agility? What is strong to you? If you have nonspecific goals, it's really hard to be motivated to achieve something that is fuzzy, an unclear picture of what you want. You have some general idea and you can work in that way but the first thing I would say for you to do if you want these things is decide on a concrete specific goal you wish to achieve.

Just looking at all the stuff I have available on my site, what really do you admire most? What is it that you want, seeing the stuff that I do? Is it doing the [handstand](#)? Is it [deadlifting](#) heavy weights? Pick something specific. Pick a few things specific. If you do that, if you say okay, I want to deadlift 100 more pounds that I can currently do and you want to find out where you're at or I want to be able to hold a freestanding handstand, then you have concrete specific goals that will put you in line toward these bigger goals, towards having a greater body, towards having more strength. By making it specific, then that's likely going to increase your motivation just because you have something you want to work for that is specific.

Now there are a lot of other things that go into motivation but that, for many people, if you're able to go there, find what works for you, what you want to do because I'm not going to say oh you should be able to deadlift twice your body weight. If you don't care to deadlift at all, don't bother with it. If you want to be strong, the deadlift's a great exercise. So are squats. So are some of these basic exercises. If you want to do bodyweight stuff, [handstand pushups](#), [pull-ups](#), [learn pistols](#), you get those down and you'll be good to go. So decide what you want to do. Get a little more specific and then focus on those goals. I've got tons of training information available. You can ask questions specifically about how to go towards that but I'll tell you that is the number one thing you have to do. If you don't have a clear idea of where you want to go, you're not going to be able to go there.

Next question: "I've never been one to complain about the fat that I do have because I'm still relatively thin however or years now I just can't get rid of that stubborn fat around my stomach. I've cleaned up my diet but it's not like I was eating out before this or anything. Same home-cooked meals I'm used to. I just added in more fruits and veggies. What do you recommend really to get rid of that stubborn unhealthy fat? I'm not looking for six-pack abs from this though it would be great. I just want to get rid of that stubborn fat because I know that it's the most dangerous fat."

This is a fun question as well. I think all these questions are fun. What I would say here is 1) this isn't really a problem for me so if it was then I would definitely have gone into more research on this but I've definitely come across this issue. You say you eat clean and I really have no clue what that means to you because one person can be meaning one thing when they say that and another person can mean something completely different. What may be clean may still not be right for your body. There may be something in your diet that is helping to keep that fat right there.

In general, I would say stubborn fat there are most likely two things going on. One would be hormonal issues if you're hormones are out of whack even to a small degree. For instance, cortisol, that's going to have a lot to do with your fat storage. If you have too much of that from too much stress, not good enough sleep quality or quantity, different factors in diet definitely play into this, how you train plays

into it, that can definitely keep fat on your body that you may be looking to get rid of. Certainly all the other hormones, especially the sex hormones, testosterone, growth hormones, those sort of things, you're going to want those high. Those help to burn fat all across the body. So get your hormones in check. If you really want to see if this is the issue then blood testing can be done to see where those hormone levels are at.

Another issue that tends to happen with stubborn fat is some sort of toxicity in the body. Even if you're eating clean, your body does detoxing to some degree, getting rid of stuff at all times but that doesn't mean that it doesn't need some additional aid in doing this from time to time where you don't need to do things like [fasting](#) every once in a while to help the body to kickstart because we're being bombarded by toxins all the time, regardless of whether we eat clean or not. It's just in the environment we live in. The body is working and hopefully the body is working well still. You get in a position where you don't get sick and that sort of thing where your body really needs to have that immune response and to help clean out more stuff.

So there may be some toxins that can help keep that fat there, that actually keep it in place because fat is where we store most of the toxins in our body. This can be a big part of that stubborn fat issue so you may look at doing some sort of detox, some different cleanses. There are all kinds of different things out there. You can buy supplemental kits. You can just do things like a little extended water fast. You definitely want to go and seek out some information about doing these things but that would be one other approach I would take that can help to do that. Hopefully that gives you enough ideas on what you want to work with here.

This next one isn't really a question though it could have been. I have to share this because it is awesome. This specifically refers to the [previous podcast](#) where I was talking about neurolinguistic programming and the program that I just finished up last week. This comes from Tanner. *"I had a big competition this weekend. Leading up to it, I was using your NLP exercises and every time I got to the point where I told myself how I deserved to win, the voice inside me told me otherwise. I sincerely appreciate you bringing this block to my attention. When exercising affirmations previously, saying the same thing, I had the same feelings but did not recognize them. Physically and mentally I felt that I could not have been better prepared, all things considered. Thank you so much for giving me those exercises as I always continue to work on my mental development. What is so frustrating is that I know how talented I am but I've yet to experience a greatness that I know lies within."*

This is awesome because this is one of the things I was talking about. These limiting beliefs are what hold us back from achieving the goals we happen to have and just becoming aware of it, awareness is the first step to being able to do something about it. This illustrates perfectly why affirmations often times don't work because if you're just saying affirmations over and over again, sure at some point, depending if there's not something blocking that there, and you say, *"I deserve to win,"* if you say that every time and you're not aware of the voice in the back of your head that's saying that you don't then every time you are trying to affirm that you deserve to win what you're actually affirming is that you do not deserve to win.

But if you become aware of this—it's very interesting, it was a voice specifically that said this—here's a question for you, Tanner: Is it your voice or is it someone else's voice? If you look closely, you may find it's not your own voice. It could be someone else's that was established at some time in your past. It's just something to look at. There are a lot of fun things you can play with but often times just with awareness some things can start to shift but there is a whole bunch more. I think I did cover some stuff. It's hard to remember everything I covered in those podcasts as well as all the training I went through. There is a lot you can do with this.

Really you can build up that belief that you do deserve to win, especially if you can look back at past times when you have felt that you really deserved to win something. If you can get in that state again, feel that deserved-ness, notice how that is within your body, what those voices are saying in your head when you did really deserve to do something then bring that over into whatever competition. You didn't specify what it is but I do want to hear more from you, Tanner, so be sure to let me know how this goes for you.

All right, next question. We're going rapid fire here. Hope you're enjoying this. *"What sets and reps did the old-time strongmen use?"*

They did singles, sets of five, sets of ten, as many reps as they could. They did one set. They did many sets. They did tons of sets. They did chain sets. This question is not focused on the right thing. I understand why people are interested in this topic. People are always looking for the magic number of sets and reps that is going to get them to their goals but the truth is there is no magic number of sets and reps. Sets and reps really don't actually matter all that much. Yes, there are some things that you can do with sets and reps that can help with certain goals. For instance typically but not always, higher volume, which means more sets and/or reps, is going to lead to more muscle mass gain whereas lower reps is more strength-focused. That is just a ballpark type of thing, something you can play with a little bit. Let's say you want to get stronger, you can do [squats](#). Squats are a great exercise for doing that. You can do the famous squat routine, sets of 20. Sometimes it was just a single set. Sometimes there are two or even three sets of 20 squats. There are also squat routines where you do five by five or even heavy singles. It all works. It all gets you stronger.

So what did the [old-time strongmen](#) use? They used all kinds of different things. Different strongmen used different things over their careers. They used many different sets and reps. There was no magic number. I mean some guys will give you a general indication of what they recommend but it doesn't matter as long as you understand the principles of progressive strength training then you apply that to whatever you're doing. It doesn't matter whether you're doing singles, sets of three, doubles, sets of five, sets of six, sets of eight, ten, twenty. It really doesn't matter that much as long as you can continually do more. This is how you get stronger.

So these sets and reps don't matter so much as long as you are doing more than the last time and there are several different ways to do more. What I personally like to do, and I talk about this a whole bunch because I think it's how the body operates and it certainly works very well for me, and I do it in everything that I do, I don't stick with a certain set and rep scheme and just always try to increase the

weight. I work with whatever weight I'm doing and I try to do a little more next time. Sometimes there's more weight—that's not the usual thing—but it's easy to add volume to whatever you're doing.

So let's say I did three sets of five. The next time if I happen to be working with that same weight, which I don't necessarily do—actually, I never really go same weight from workout to workout. I will always do a higher or lower weight and then I come back to that weight at some later workout. When I do that, it's easier. I may hit four sets of five. Typically, it's bigger gains than that. Usually I'll do more value on a per set basis and also overall as well. That is how I like to train. Like I said, I do this with everything.

So the answer to the question of what sets and reps did the old-time strongmen use is it does not matter what they did because it was all over the place. There is no secret that they had in their set and rep schemes that allowed them to get their strength. They were progressive with it like you need to be.

Onto the next question: *“Should you build a foundation of bodyweight training before lifting weights?”*

This is going to depend on what your goals happen to be. I'm obviously a big fan of [bodyweight training](#). I'm also a big fan of lifting weights. If you want to get stronger—and this entirely depends on your goals—you can get stronger both by doing bodyweight training and by lifting weights. I think ultimately to be strong, you need to handle your own bodyweight and you also need to be able to handle outside weights.

I think it could be a good thing and it could be a great place to start, doing bodyweight training for some of the benefits that bodyweight training. It's going to give you a little more I'd say overall increased coordination. It's not that weights don't do that but I'd say with bodyweight training, depending on how you do it, you get a bit more of that. And with that, a little more body awareness because you're using your body as the weight so that is great. It doesn't require any equipment so if that's stopping you, by all means do bodyweight training.

It depends on the exercises—this can be done once again with weights—you may get some of the other things like endurance and flexibility along with the strength that you're going for. It does depend on what sort of exercises you're doing so that can happen with both weights and with bodyweight training. Once again, it really depends on what you're going for. I can't give a solid answer that yes, you should do this, because that's not true. If I were to say that, I'd be lying because what if your goal was to be a powerlifter? Then throw out bodyweight training. It's not going to matter to you.

I think if you want to be like me, if you like the skills that I have then yes, starting with bodyweight training that's really what got me serious about training in the first place is a great place to start. Then as you develop, I think it will carry over into the weights as well. So I think it's a great foundation and a great way you can get started, absolutely, and I would recommend it to people but it does depend on what you want to do. And there's no reason you can't properly mix the two from the beginning, to do bodyweight training and lifting weights at the same time.

“How do you approach your training?”

A very broad question so let's see, how shall I answer this? I already talked about it a little bit before but I'll give you a sort of general big overview of this. I select the goals that I want to go for and these goals are not based on what anyone else says that you should be able to do. Sometimes I may get an idea from someone and that encourages me to do it but it's really based on what I want to do. In the beginning where you don't really have a base of experience, just looking at what some of the other people, some top trainers recommend can be a great place to start. But for me, how I approach my training, I decide on the goals I want to achieve. Then I figure out how I can put them together because I want to achieve a wide variety of things. Doing hand balancing, acrobatics, sometimes lifting heavy weights like doing feats of strength and others, I need to figure out how these go together. Depending on where my motivation lies at the moment, which goals I really want to pursue, that's going to reflect how my training is structured.

Basically I train I'd say five or six days a week. I take days off when 1) I'm too busy to work out. Sometimes that does happen. I can always find the time but it's not a big problem if I do miss a day but I'd say in general five or six days a week I am training. I listen to my body when I train. That is a big part of how I program my training. In doing that, I can train more regularly. I don't get over-trained. I don't get that sore from my workouts. I still get sore, depending on what I'm working on, but I can train with more frequency by doing that.

Then some of the stuff I talked about a little bit earlier, I waive the loads in the all the exercises. I go after those main exercises that are going to help me get towards my goals. When I do that, I make progress. If you're not making progress every single workout, you're doing something wrong or close. Sometimes, you can't do it every single one. You can't force your body really to adapt. You have to do just do the right things and the adaptation is going to take care of itself. There are certainly things that can speed it up but overall that's really how the body is going to work.

I suppose that gives you an overview. So once again, select the goals, what I desire to go after, have some sort of plan on what I need to do, and by understanding the principles of progressive strength training or progressive skill training, depending on what it happens to be, you just got to be progressive with it. Then I train as frequently as I can possibly can towards that goal while increasing what I'm doing. Basically, I'd say that's it. [Listening to my body](#) along the way keeps me injury-free. That keeps me relatively balanced in what I do because I like to do a lot of things. It's not like I'm only working on this one thing at a time. I usually have, I'd say, six or so goals that I'm really focusing in on at any given time. If you have more specific questions along those lines, be sure to ask.

"Regarding the biofeedback thing, does your biofeedback training have a relation to the Maxalding system, albeit minus the blatant fear of anything remotely strenuous physically?"

Let's talk a little bit about these, [biofeedback](#) and [Maxalding](#) system. Maxalding is basically the most popular form of muscle control, if you're not familiar with the term. What are the common things between biofeedback and Maxalding? I would say the main thing is they're different approaches but both are sort of awareness of the body. In the biofeedback, you're leaning to get signals from the body that are going to inform you—it's not like you have to do something—whether doing a specific exercise

is good or not to do for your body at that given time. With [muscle control](#), it's not so much awareness in that sense but you are learning by being aware inside how to tense up and relax muscles specifically by themselves, isolated, or in groups. So they're both forms, I would say, of awareness training and internal awareness but they're very different approaches in how they do that.

In Maxaliding, even when they took that muscle control and applied it to outside weights, they would advise not to get overly tense. The idea is to use exactly as much tension as is needed to accomplish the exercise and no more than that. In fact, the big idea there is that often what is stopping us in exercises isn't that we're not creating enough tension but we're actually creating too much as one muscle is antagonistic to another. For instance, if you're trying to press a weight overhead if your bicep is overly tense, that tension is stopping the tricep from firing completely so you need to learn how to relax the appropriate muscles and tense up the other ones.

Now the biofeedback approach doesn't really go as in depth as that into it but it is all about you don't need to get overly tense because if you do you'll find that your body tends to contract up and the signals don't indicate that that is usually as good. The idea is once again the same, to use as much tension as is necessary for the exercise. So in that way, they are very similar.

Differences between them are quite huge. In muscle control is you're focusing on tensing and flexing muscles whereas biofeedback, the approach, the [Gym Movement Protocol](#) as I learned from [Frankie Faires](#) and [Adam Glass](#) is all about doing movements and not doing isometric contractions. Muscle control is a form of isometric training. It's all about movement. The body likes to move so doing something like that can certainly have benefits but it is an entirely different approach. There are some ways you can blend it. You can certainly do muscle control exercises and test them via your biofeedback. Go ahead and try that out. Those are some of the differences and similarities of those two.

"Is there a way to develop your tendons at the same speed as your muscle growth?"

According to what I have read regarding this, the tendons, ligaments, all the connective tissues, they adapt slower than muscular tissue does. It's just that slower cell turnover. I don't know the specific details of why or how this is but that's just what I've read about it thus far. So I would say no, based on that knowledge, if that is true—like I said, I haven't read a whole bunch on it—I would say that it's going to take longer to train those tendons.

If you were doing proper strength training though, it's going to be training tendons the whole time it's training muscles. It just takes longer for them to adapt so they may adapt at different rates but with the proper training, you're going to be adapting them all the whole time anyway so it's not really necessary to focus on this.

Next question, *"Convict conditioning seems awfully slow but is that just the way it works for bodyweight conditioning? Also, when do I know when to transition to more difficult exercises?"*

Interesting question. Strength training, I'd say in general, it can seem very slow. Here's the thing. If you're lifting a weight and you can just slide a couple more pounds on the bar, you can see that more

often. If you're doing something like bodyweight training, especially working with some of the harder exercises, it can take quite some time to make jumps from one progression to another, depending on how your progressions are set up. With [Convict Conditioning](#), if you haven't seen that book, I'd definitely recommend it, great book, and there's more to it.

I would say one of the issues with that where it could be better—I'll put it that way—there are ten steps for each exercise and many of these steps are really good. You're going to be able to progress pretty easily through these. Some of these steps are huge jumps, very huge jumps, especially in the one-armed chin up and the one-armed handstand push-up. They're very big jumps. In doing that, yes, you're going to have to train a lot at one step before you can even do a single rep in the next. Like I said, this is just in some steps.

What could be done in order to make the progress seem less slow—it's still basically going to take about the same amount of time but it really depends on how you approach it—is for you to come up with more steps in between these steps in Convict Conditioning. So I talked about, for instance with the one-armed chin up, linking your hand down your arm to use as an assistance exercise. You can make this into very small jumps in progression and do it that way.

Here's a cool thing about progressive strength training. The smaller you can make your progress, those jumps, the less where your body can even tell the difference between. Even if it's weights, they use those fractional plates sometimes. It's the same thing with bodyweight training. If you can just make tiny, tiny jumps instead of big, big jumps, you're often going to get much better progress doing that.

Here's an example, the ab wheel rollout what I've been working on if you saw [a video from a little while ago](#) of raising and lowering a platform that I can do standing rollouts on. In doing all the rollout training before, the jump from the knees to the feet is huge. You can do a bunch of things in between but this, where I can just do slight changes in the grade of the rollout, seems to be working far better than anything else I've ever done. This is really taking that incremental approach and applying it to the standing rollout.

So yeah, it can seem a lot of time and it's going to take some time to train. People are always, especially in American society—I don't really know how it is in the rest of the world but I think it's the worst here—people want instant gratification, instant results. They want to be able to get things instantly or it's not worth doing. Strength training takes time. To build true strength is going to take years and years. That's one thing you have to recognize.

If you want to become truly strong, old-time strongman strong like modern day professional strongmen like [Dennis Rogers](#), [Bud Jeffries](#), if you want to include me in that category, it takes years to get to that point. It's going to take some time but if you look at the picture in the long haul, long term results, if you just be progressive and consistent with things, you're going to get great results in that time span. You're going to be able to make progress and accomplish a lot of things. If you just make small jumps at a time, it's going to make a big difference down the road.

The follow up question was, *"When do you know to transition to more difficult exercises?"*

You can place benchmarks but there's nothing certainly clear. I'd say you're ready to go to more difficult exercises when you're ready to go to more difficult exercises. Can you do the more difficult exercises? If you can do it, great! Starting working on that. If you cannot do that exercise then yes, you need to pull back. You're not ready for it. Do some prior step to doing that. I always like to push the limits of what I can do. I'm always working on a heavier weight or can I achieve this form of progression in a bodyweight training exercise. If I can do it, great! That's a new PR right then and there. I'll start to work on it and start to work where I can make it a better form to be able to do more of it but I'm always coming back to easier ones and working in that range, too. So you're ready when you're ready. You're ready when you can actually do the next form and then you can start working on it from there.

So I covered quite a few questions here. I hope you found this interesting. I would love to get your feedback on it. I still have a lot more questions I can go through and I'll continue to answer your questions via videos as well. I just figured some are easier to do talking and some I need to do demonstrating so I may continue to do this. I would love to get your feedback on that. That's going to wrap it up for this episode. Like I said, send me your feedback. I'd love to hear from you. Thank you very much and I will talk to you next week.