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CROSSFIT MONCTON

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Newsletter



DEADLIFTING WILL NOT GET YOU LAID BUT IT WILL MAKE YOU AWESOME: 8 COMMON DEADLIFT MISTAKES

BY DAN RUNION | COACH AT CROSSFIT 77 (TABATATIMES.COM)

I have a love/hate relationship with the deadlift. On one hand I love it for its simple brutality – no other lift has the potential for generating more work output in one brutal workout. Yet all one does is pick a weighted barbell up off the floor from a full stop to full extension. It is absolutely beautiful in its simplicity: pick it up, put it down. It's simple...but it ain't easy. Besides the heavy weights involved, there's a lot that can go wrong, and this is why I also hate it. I look around my gym or at a CrossFit competition and see folks making some common mistakes that put themselves at risk of some serious injuries. And why? Ignorance might be a legit excuse, but that's little solace while recovering from hernia surgery...or worse. I've been deadlifting for a while and I'd argue that I'm pretty good at it. It's "my jam," you could say. Still, I consider myself a beginner yet so I'm usually surprised to see others making some very basic mistakes. Therefore I feel compelled to compile the things that I've learned over the years that have helped me

increase my deadlift weights and remain injury free (knock on wood). I consider these tips to be the "The Basics." You should know these too, and you should be preaching it to your clients with the vigor of a cheetah chasing a gazelle.

1. Pulling Heavy Weights Without a Stable Neutral Spine

You need to make the lift safely or not at all.

Contrary to popular belief, the spine is built to handle heavy loads so long as it is in a neutral position. What it is NOT built for is to handle heavy loads while not in alignment and/or while in flexion or extension. What this means to a deadlifter (and a squatter, for that matter) is that it is critically important to get set up in a neutral position and HOLD IT THERE for the duration of the lift. When the spine moves under load is when bad things happen. If you can't hold your core/spine while performing the lift, then you need to stop. Check your ego. Lower the weight and don't go up again until you

can hold your core stable at the higher weight. Talk to your coach about how to get there. You might be strong enough to make the lift, but that doesn't mean you should. You need to make the lift safely or not at all.

Speaking of setup, one thing that I see a lot of folks doing that drives me bonkers is that whole "look where you want to go" thing. They get down in their setup, which includes a gaze toward the space where the ceiling meets the wall. What this does is immediately put their cervical spine (the neck area) in nearly full extension, and as we just discussed we want the spine neutral right? Right. Why do it? Don't. Just...don't. Instead, let your gaze be about 5-6 feet in front of you on the floor and allow it to move up to straight in front of you as you perform the lift. This will keep your cervical spine neutral for the duration of the lift.

2. Jerking the Weight Off the Floor

How many times have you seen someone set up for their deadlift, and then bear down before violently ripping or jerking the weight from the floor? They get down, grab the bar, set their gaze, take a breath... then in one VIOLENT movement they drop their shoulders or raise their hips suddenly before ripping up on the bar and letting out a grunt and/or yell while pulling from the floor. You've seen it. It's a train wreck and literally it frightens me every time I see it. In your gut you know it doesn't look right, and it's not!

The problem is twofold: not only are they moving out of their setup position (which may even have been a good one), but then they are applying force to their body in this now suboptimal starting position. You work hard for your setup for a reason, so don't ruin it! Moving out of your presumably good setup then violently ripping the weight from the floor puts massive amounts of shear force on countless parts of the body while in a bad position. I'm not an anatomy expert, but you don't have to be a doctor to know that this is a recipe for disaster. Slipped/herniated discs, hernias, muscle strains/pulls/tears; none of it is fun. Find your setup position and stay there as you begin the lift.

I approach the deadlift like drag racing a car: I want to apply as much horsepower to the wheels as I can without burning the tires off or breaking parts. If I pull up to the starting line in my car and just mash the pedal to the floor, I'm only going to spin the tires all day long; if by some miracle the tires hook up, then parts on the car are going to break. Deadlifting is much the same: I get down in my setup, take a breath (more on that later), and I apply force in a smooth yet fast manner. It starts as a little and

QUICKLY increases until the weight starts moving. Once you get the bar moving from the floor you can put the pedal to the metal and hold on for dear life. But if you apply all that force all at once, smoking tires or blown up spines are what you'll reap. Neither wins the "race."

3. Incorrect Breathing

When it comes to breathing, I incorporate two methods depending on the rep scheme. For example, if I'm going for a 1-rep max, my breathing technique is different from a heavy set of 5. That said, the goal of each is the same and that is to breathe only when I'm not straining to pull the weight from the floor. Why? Well try this: Take a deep breath and hold a tight core. Now let the breath out. What happened? As soon as you let the breath out your core became less stable, right? And what do we need to hold our spine in alignment and avoid nasty injuries? That's right, a tight core. This applies to more than just deadlifting, obviously, but with the heavy loads of the deadlift it's just that much more important.



For 1-rep max attempts or heavy singles, the lift starts before I even approach the bar. I start to take some deep breaths and get myself moderately hyperventilated. Not to the point of passing out or feeling light headed, but just enough to have a slight excess of oxygen in the bloodstream. This insures that I'll have enough air in my body while performing the lift without having to take a breath until I'm complete. Only then do I approach the bar and get set. Once I'm set I take a breath and hold it until I begin the lift. My diaphragm will not relax again until I've completed the lift and set the bar down. This keeps my core tight, helps me stabilize my spine, and keeps any number of possible places in the gut that could get herniated from moving unnecessarily while under load. There are no guarantees, but why increase the risk unnecessarily? For an added "crunch" of the core I find it helpful to let out a grunt/groan, or a slight, controlled, or "pursed breath." You may not realize it, but your core tightens when you grunt or yell. That's the goal here. Remember under no circumstances should the diaphragm relax. So if you're going to let out a little bit of air (however you choose) just make sure that you do so in a way that doesn't relax the core, but rather tightens it up even more.

For sets of multiple reps I follow the same breathing method as above, but since the weights are lower I allow myself to take a breath at the top of the lift only. You can take a breath at the bottom if you want, but I feel that takes too long and increases the likelihood of resting too long. This is particularly important if you're a CrossFitter, but is still appropriate for strength training. Wherever you choose to take your breath, just make sure to utilize the tips above before starting the next rep. Safety first!

4. Incorrect Use of a Belt

Can I get something off of my chest for a second? It's not a "back brace." There — I said it! Whoa that feels better. Most people think that the weight belt is to support your back during heavy lifting, but this is only marginally accurate. I like to joke that the belt is really there to hold your guts in, and it's partially true. The belt does prevent the abdominal walls from expanding beyond the belt. But mainly the purpose of the belt is to give the lifter something to press into, and in turn, further tightening the core and supporting the spine. (I did mention that a tight core is important didn't I?) Does it feel good to have the belt on? You betcha. But the reason for that is because having a belt tight around your midsection helps you increase the pressure around your spine making your core tighter. Bearing down against it only helps the matter. When your guts are held in, your core is more

supported. When your guts are not held tight is when you mess something up. So you could say that the belt "supports" the back, but the reality is that the belt helps the lifter support their own back.

That's why I say that the belief that the weight belt supports your core is only marginally accurate.

Don't rely on it as a crutch. Don't use it as a brace. Put it on and put it on TIGHT. If you put the belt on and can push your belly out at all then it's too loose. Tighten that \$#%^ up! When you perform the lift, flex down and hold on! You should be able to feel a noticeable increase in pressure when used appropriately.

I like the leather belts that Rogue is selling now. I have the Ohio belt and love it, but the Econ belt is a great option as well. I receive zero compensation by recommending them and there are other great options out there, but this is what I have the most experience with. Whatever you get, get thick leather with metal rivets and a single pin buckle. The double pin buckle requires too many holes in the leather and can weaken it. Over time it can wear through and break. I don't expect to ever have to replace my Rogue belt anytime soon.

5. Deadlifting in Oly Shoes

Speaking of equipment, I see a lot of people deadlifting in Oly shoes. I've done this and I'll admit that it feels pretty good. The flat sole and stable footing make it feel good when you step up to the bar. The downside is that the heel lift in an Olympic lifting shoe makes it harder to engage the posterior chain. Since the deadlift is a pull much more than it is a push with the quads, wearing an Oly shoe is effectively handicapping you. There are exceptions to this "rule" but not when the weights are very heavy. You need all the help you can get.

Rather than an Oly shoe, get yourself a pair of Chuck Taylors. I wear a pair of elastic slip on Chucks, but you can go to Target and get the knock offs and save a little money. Same difference. The flat thin sole will give you a good feel of the platform and will be plenty stable. What about the new "Power Shoe" from Reebok? I haven't tried them or even seen them in person. I'd try them out if someone sent me a pair but I don't see myself paying for them. The Nanos are a great shoe for deadlifting as well, but I'd still give a slight nod to the Chuck Taylors.

6. Not Checking Your Ego

This could be applied to any type of lifting, but since the weights are so high and the learning curve so flat (I'd consider deadlifting a low-skill movement compared to a snatch, which is high-skill) with the deadlift, keeping one's ego in check is even more important. There's just too much that can go horribly wrong if you let your ego get the best of you. Comedian Eddie Lift says, "If it doesn't get me paid or laid, then I really just don't care about it." The last time I checked no one is getting paid or laid because they deadlifted 450 instead of 425. And the person that blew out their colon attempting a lift that they weren't ready for isn't doing much horizontal mambo either. They're lucky if they can go to work on Monday. Not paid. Not laid. Not cool. So keep things in perspective. If the pot is hot and you want to go heavy, then by all means — hit it, baby! But if you're just not feeling it that day, or if something feels off, or you feel weak, then dial it back or stop altogether. Listen to your body. If someone tries to goad you into doing something you're not ready for, get away from them. If it's your coach, fire them. I'm being totally serious.

One last thing: don't max out all the time. Deadlifts stress the central nervous system so much that if you don't give the body enough rest you'll just go backwards. Train smart. Don't try to be a meathead everyday. You'll just get hurt and not make progress anyway. Listen to your coach and follow the programming to the letter. I once hit a 550# deadlift PR to take the gym record, and I held that record for all of 12 hours because my coach hit 555 the next day. (I know — what a jerk, right?!) So about 3-4 days later I figured I'd try to eclipse him and go for 560. While warming up I hit a mid-400's lift and just knew I didn't have another PR in me yet. My body had been taxed hitting the 550 earlier in the week and it needed the rest. Listen to your body and don't be afraid to be "good enough" on any particular day.

7. Not Respecting the Weight

Deadlifts are typically the heaviest lift an athlete will perform. There are some folks who have a back squat that is heavier than their deadlift, but it seems to be the exception rather than the rule. Given this fact and given the severity of the injuries that can occur, make sure that you respect the weight. Know the difference between a warm-up weight and a working set. Know at what point you need to really focus on what you're doing. Respect the fact that the weighted barbell on the floor in front of you doesn't care if you have your head in the game or not. It's HEAVY and if you don't pay attention it will hurt you! Get your head right and stop goofing off. Run through this list and make sure you're not forgetting something. One mistake could

cost you dearly, and as we all know, injuries suck. Serious injuries suck worse.

8. Dropping the Weight During Training

Some might disagree with me on this one, but I think it's a missed opportunity to not train the eccentric portion of the lift during training. That is, to not only pull the weight from the floor but also to lower the weight back to the floor in a controlled manner. Sure it looks and sounds cool to pull that weight from the floor and then drop it. That thunderous crash is impressive! You look like a man among boys! The reality is that you've missed an opportunity to get stronger. Think about this: Do you only stand up with a squat or do you have to lower the weight also?

So there you have it — a short little list of common mistakes that deadlifters make. If you correct all of these you'll be 80% or more of the way towards a lifetime of happy, healthy deadlifting.



GRILLED PINEAPPLE BURGERS WITH AVOCADO CREAM

Ingredients:

- 1lb Grass Fed Ground Beef
- 1 pineapple, cored and sliced
- 1 yellow onion, sliced thin
- 1 tablespoon chipotle chili powder
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- ½ teaspoon onion powder
- ½ teaspoon coarse sea salt
- ½ teaspoon black pepper
-

For the cream:

- 2 avocados
- juice of 1 lime
- juice of ½ lemon
- 1 tablespoon hot sauce (your favourite will do)
- 1 teaspoon chipotle chili powder
- 1 teaspoon olive oil
- pinch of salt



Directions:

1. Light your grill! I love grilling season.
2. Now you should first slice your pineapple. I have no idea how to cut a pineapple very well but I try, so you can look at my pictures if that actually helps.
3. Use a big knife to cut off both ends of the pineapple, then stand the pineapple up and slice the sides off. Then cut the pineapple in hamburger slices (remember hamburger vs hotdog in elementary school? good). And finish the pineapple slices off by using a smaller knife to cut out the middle and press it out. Like a donut hole. Cute.
4. Then slice your onions.
5. Place meat in a bowl, add seasonings and mix thoroughly. Like hard core. Get in there.
6. Make 4 burger patties and flatten them out a bit.
7. Place onions, burgers, and pineapple on the grill at the same time. Try not to place pineapple over direct flame because it can burn pretty easily, being sugar and all.
8. Flip when grill marks become present, after about 5 minutes and cook about the same amount of time on the other side of until burgers are cooked to preference and pineapple is a bit charred and soft.

While the ingredients are on the grill, make your avocado cream!

1. Cut avocados in half, remove the seed, then scoop out the insides and place in your food processor.
2. Turn food processor on and let the avocado begin to break down. After about a minute, while your food processor is still running, add the rest of the ingredients for the avocado cream and keep pureeing until smooth: about 1-2 minutes.
3. Place a burger down, top it with pineapple, then a grilled onion, and then a dollop of avocado cream on top!

From PaleOMG.com

When did you start CrossFit?

I started my prep course on April 2nd 2013 and my first regular class was May 5, 2013.

Do you have an athletic background?

Growing up I was always involved with minor hockey in the fall and winter and baseball or soccer in the summer. Once I got into High school, I started to join more competitive sports like football, olympic wrestling, and rugby in grade 12. I continued with men rugby after school but had to take a few years off due to injuries.

What made you decide to join?

I decided to join CrossFit Moncton after coming to watch the 2013 open at the gym on Alcock St. My buddy Jeremy had invited me over to come watch and was telling me I should join. I was hesitant at first but after seeing the energy in the gym and the shape some of these athletes were in how could I say no. I had come to a point in my life where I was over weight had high blood pressure and was on a continual health decline. My fathers side of the family had all of my uncles and my father pas away before the age of 65. I knew that if I did not change, I would meet the same faith. I signed up for the prep course and decided that I needed an overhaul on my lifestyle and my fitness.

Were you a member of another gym before? How does this compare?

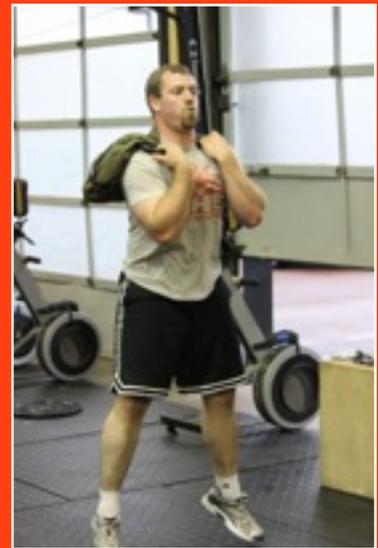
I had tried different gyms in the past but only lasted 2-3 months before the repetitive cycle drove me to boredom and I would quit. The results were minor for the time invested. There was also no team aspect to any other gym I have been to. The trainers had to be requested or even paid extra for and the little knowledge they had did not really help. CrossFit has not only kept me interested and wanting to come back, it also has made me stronger than I have ever been before. The trainers are always available and constantly making me better. I am excited to see what another year of this training will bring as I continue to learn and develop in this sport.

What are your goals? Have you reached any yet?

Being able to do a strict pull-up was one of my initial goals. It took several months to accomplish but felt great to finally get it. I then started to look at the some of the more complex CrossFit moves: the muscle-up, the handstand push-ups, and the walking handstands. I am starting to get some of the advanced moves but I still need to work on them a lot. My goal for the coming year is to see a WOD on the board and know how long it should take me to do it and be able to beat that time. I also want to be able to complete the WODs as they are designed.

My long term goal would be to go to regionals but with the best getting better each year this is something that will not come easy nor soon but a goal to work towards none the less.

CRAIG HATTO



Stats

- 500m row: 1:27.1
- Push jerk: 225#
- Front Squat: 275#
- Back Squat: 315#
- OHS: 185#
- Squat clean: 245#
- Snatch: 175#

Do you have an accomplishment that you're very proud of?

My greatest accomplishment so far is the overall healthy lifestyle I have attained since joining CrossFit. From changing my diet to consistently working out, I have almost made it back to my peak physique I once had. This is a lifestyle for me now and not just something I do for an hour a day.

Do you remember your first workout? What was it like?

My first workout was on Sunday May 5th. Row 800m, 30 burpee over bar, 21 thrusters, 15 pull-ups. I sat down and strapped in next to Terry and thought here we go let's see what I can do. I came off the rower the same time as Terry moved to the burpees. I was ahead the first 10 reps until I hit a wall. I could not catch my breath and thought « how is this guy still going? ». I then dragged myself through the rest of the WOD struggling for each rep. I loved and hated this WOD all at the same time but knowing someone else could cruise through it meant I could as well with time. This is what keeps me motivated most days. Knowing there is always a way to do it better or faster and pushing for that success.

Describe the atmosphere at CrossFit Moncton.

The atmosphere at CrossFit Moncton is very friendly and uplifting. There is never any negative comments made to people about there performance or there ability. We all encourage each other to be better each day and that is what makes it enjoyable to keep coming back.

What do you tell someone that's hesitant to try CrossFit?

I have had a lot of people tell me that they have to get in shape before trying CrossFit. I tell them that is what CrossFit is for and that not matter what your skill or starting point is anyone can do it. That is the beauty of the system. It is scalable for anyone. Even injuries can be managed by modifying the WOD's movements. The other option is buying a prep course for someone and dragging them in like I did for my brother.

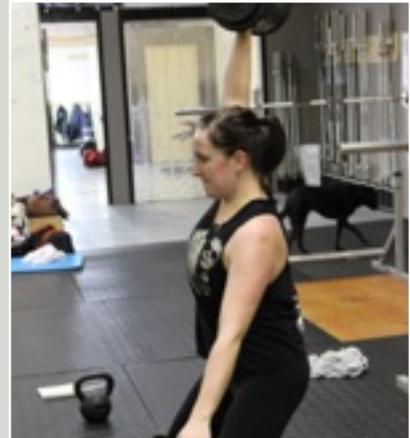
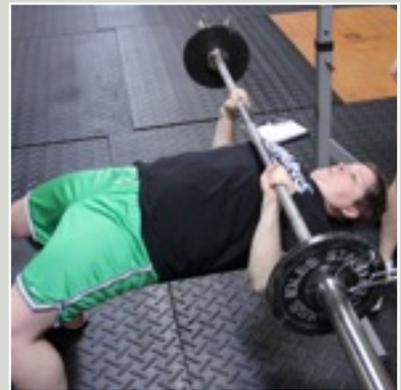
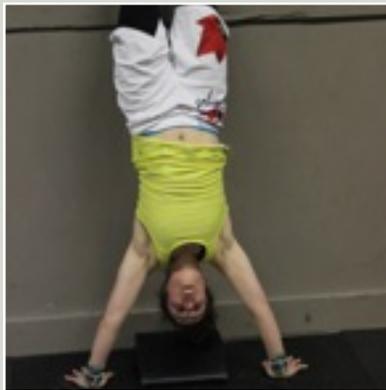
Favourite lift?

My favourite lift is the full squat snatch. It is the most complicated lift and has been the hardest to get but once you nail one it feels amazing.

Favorite workout?

My favourite workouts are what we refer to as grinders. I do not have a favourite one yet but if it is over 20 minutes and involves lots of reps I am going at it.





Interested in joining?

Come try a **FREE** workout on Saturday morning at 9am. Leave your money at home. We don't want to sell you anything; we just want you to feel the difference CrossFit can make.

Contact Kevin Wood at info@crossfitmoncton.com to confirm your **FREE** session, or call (506) 962-0710.

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359 Baig Blvd.
Moncton, NB