The Personal Evolution Journal

Personal Evolution™
Health, Fitness & Personal Development

April 2009

Welcome to our first PDF issue of the Personal Evolution Journal. So far we have covered many things on our site and through the sporadic emails you get from us. I thought it was time to add some structure to the free journal we send out. So we have created a jam-packed new format as a PDF document that you can download, save and keep so you can refer back to it whenever you wish. It's like a mini-magazine except there are no ads, no postage and it's FREE!

The topics we will cover in each issue are related to three areas of concern…

1. The first area is elite physical conditioning. The reason behind this as a primary focus is because in terms of human potential you can't be outstanding and achieve extraordinary things without the physical capability to carry it out.
2. Secondly we work with the psychology of behaviour and thought. What makes a great person great? This is what we focus on. So through our constant study and consultation with other experts in this area we aim to bring you cutting edge tools and techniques for shaping your psychology for amazing achievement.
3. Last but not least, nutrition, the essential building block for life. Without adequate nutrition everything else is a waste of time.

These are the three areas covered in each and every issue of the Personal Evolution Journal. More on these later in this issue when we explain the hierarchy of concern.

<u>In this issue</u>

- The effect of indoor rowing on cardiovascular fitness and anaerobic capacity.
- Creatine: The super-supplement for superhuman strength and anaerobic power.
- Back to basics: The science and importance of natural human movement patterns.
- Exercise of the month: The back bridge.
- The hierarchy of concern explained.
- Plus we will be covering some new additions and features coming to the site over the next few months.

It's exciting to bring you the first major issue of the Personal Evolution Journal. I hope you will apply the advice and methodologies. Please share your experiences with us by sending through a quick email.

The Hierarchy of Concern Explained

Previously on our site we explained the Personal Evolution method. In that description was included a hierarchy of concern. This hierarchy contains the major components of Personal Evolution in their order of importance. Every individual thing we do can be categorised into one area of the hierarchy of concern. Without this hierarchy everything is random and unstructured. With it we can get an overall view of areas of importance and where they fit. Each area is important. Neglecting each preceding component on the hierarchy will effect the current one.

The following explains each individual component of the hierarchy of concern…

PSYCHOLOGY

Ok, so you've heard many so-called NLP experts and sports psychologists speak of psychology. Everyone has a different method. Freud believes everything you now think and do can be explained by your childhood and your relationship with your parents. Others reject this theory. So there are many ways of approaching the topic of psychology.

So first of all, why is psychology so important? I mean why master this area before all else?

Think of it this way; if you are not psychologically prepared for extreme effort then it will wear you out. Eventually you will burn out. This is because everyone has certain perceptions of pain and discomfort. This is all a matter of individual interpretation. When I train I like to experience effort that is so extreme that my lungs burn and my legs are like jelly. For many others this means pain. So much so that they often can't muster up the will to carry it out. Same stimulus, different psychology, totally different outcome.

So it's not the actual circumstances and events that really determine how you experience things, it's all a matter of perception and psychology. Your limitations are only imagined mostly. To what extent is determined by your individual psychological conditioning.

If you're a white man who once thought of winning gold in the Olympic 100 metre sprint, forget it. What were thinking you raving lunatic? Are you kidding yourself? Well actually you are kidding yourself, now not then. Guaranteed you held a belief that says only West African men have the physical make-up to run that fast. You then believed "what's the point?" you will never ever run under 10 seconds in the 100 metres. Why? Self-fulfilling prophecy. It was psychological conditioning that made that impact on your entire future and possibly a future world record holder.

This is one example, maybe even a clichéd one. But think about it this way; if you did everything you knew you should do but don't do, do you think you might have what you want? Of course you would. Those who actually do everything within their power consistently always get what they want, always, without exception. The reason you don't are psychological anchors that tell you it's too hard, it's too far in the future, it requires risk etc.

Without being psychologically conditioned to apply maximum effort and commitment to everything you want to do there is simply going to be a half-arsed result each and every time, guaranteed. Personal Evolution is about elite performance and achievement. This is what we're interested in and in this area we are expert because it's our focus. There are already enough ways to be average and mediocre, we're not interested in them. There are already plenty of people who will treat you with kid gloves and foster an environment of complaining and excuses. This is not an area we specialise in.

I bet you've already "tried" right? You've tried to excel, you've tried to give 100%, you've tried to fully commit. You're just not cut out for it. Sorry, back to your average life with your average abilities. I apologise for being the one to break the news to you, but you're mediocre and there's nothing you can do about it. There is no chance for you. You're the exception, everyone else can do it but not you.

BULLSHIT!

Psychology is developed, you are not born with all your limiting thoughts and behaviours. That's why we focus on psychology at the top of the hierarchy of concern. With a limiting mind-set and weak will you simply won't apply all the effort required. All the sports science and success secrets in the world can't make up for the absence of courage and commitment. It all means nothing.

So in this highest area of concern we use several methods to prepare people psychologically for maximum effort and realisation of potential. It sounds like wishful thinking but really it's simply voluntary modification of limiting thought and behaviour patterns.

Some of the tools applied to this area include…

- **Classical Conditioning:** You remember Pavlov and his dogs right? He rang a bell every time he gave a dog food and eventually the dogs neurologically linked the bell to food and they started salivating even when there was no food present. Same principle applies to humans, we call it anchoring. So here's the process in its simplest form.

STEP ONE: Analyse the limiting state, behaviour, thought or belief. What is it and how is it triggered? Then analyse the desired state, behaviour, thought or belief. How can this be triggered? What elicitation technique needs to be employed in order for this state to be experienced?

STEP TWO: Elicit the limiting state and anchor it. Break state then elicit the desired state and anchor it. Now you have two conflicting states both neurologically wired.

STEP THREE: Fire the anchor for limiting state so as to experience it here and now. Create a doubt pattern that begins to weaken the foundations of that state. Then gradually tie an anchor to the changing of that state as you slowly introduce the alternative (I.e. the desired state) and link it with a certainty anchor.

STEP FOUR: After that you can collapse the negative anchor and replace it with the new one. That means you will resort to the desired state as first preference in the same situations.

By modifying a state on a neurological level like this you essentially create a complete shift in all related behaviours.

It may sound complicated however this is just an explanation. Learning to do it requires a little more practice and practical demonstration.

- **Repetition, Repetition, Repetition, Repetition, Repetition:** Repetition is simple; apply a stimulus over and over until the brain adapts and accepts it. Repetition is the mother of all skill. There are several ways in which we apply repetition. The first is related to skills, we get people to repeat skills over and over and correct along the way until they master it. The second is applying a stimulus such as extreme effort until a person raises their comfort zone. Eventually the extreme effort becomes easier to handle because it's familiar, you know what's coming.
- **Emotional Context:** Sports, martial arts and just about everything else is generally applied in a clean, comfortable and controlled environment. This is out of context. How can a person learn to defend themselves when there is no adrenaline? How can a person learn to deal with pressure when they have all the time in the world? Emotional context conditioning is putting people in the same emotional situation they would likely encounter outside of the training environment and then applying the same skills and effort.

DIET

Diet lays the molecular and chemical foundations to support life. The only person exempt from this area of concern are robots. So all my robot subscribers can ignore this, everyone else should take it on board.

Many people believe that physical conditioning is all about the training. Many think that a good fitness regime negates a bad diet. I mean you're training hard consistently, surely you can eat what you want right? Dead wrong! What you put into your mouth is the fuel and the building blocks that support movement, re-growth of new tissue such as muscle, energy metabolism, hormone production etc. Without the right nutritional intake you might as well give up on the physical conditioning aspect.

First up we discussed psychology, you can't get anywhere if your mind is not willing to follow through with enough effort. Well psychology is always the reason for apprehension towards a good diet. So get that right and you're more than halfway there.

The following are a few diet tips for getting this area right…

- Avoid packaging and only eat whole and natural foods. Cut out sugar and any other garbage your body doesn't need.
- Get over the deprived mindset. You only feel deprived because of addiction, not because you need that block of chocolate or that Big Mac. Simply restrain yourself, there are no magic methods. Eat some sushi instead of fried dim sims. It's not hard, it's just repetition. An ape doesn't feel deprived because it only eats fruit and vegies, that's all it has known and it like these foods because they nourish.
- Speaking of nourishment, change your relationship with food. Eating is not just a way to fill your stomach and gain pleasure, it's a means to nourishing your body. Hunger and cravings are a result of hormones and enzymes in the body sending messages to your brain to eat so as to store fat in preparation for famine.
- Ditch as many agricultural foods as possible. This includes mostly grains and processed food. Think of it like this; humans naturally had very little access to corn fields, wheat, sugar cane, dairy farms etc. Ever since the agricultural industry started people started having heart attacks and getting fat. It's mostly full of empty calories that provide little to no nutritional value. Speaking of which…
- Cut out as many empty calories as possible. By empty calories I mean foods that provide plenty of energy content but no micro-nutrients or quality protein and fatty acids. If it's just a carb overload then avoid like a disease.

METABOLIC CONDITIONING

Metabolic conditioning is the training of your body to operate efficiently in each of the three metabolic pathways. Those pathways are…

- **Aerobic:** Aerobic means with oxygen. Anything you can sustain for a prolonged period requires oxygen to process energy. Conditioning this aspect results in greater endurance. However if the other two systems are poorly conditioned then your aerobic system suffers.
- **Lactate:** The lactate energy system is used for near maximal effort for a period of several minutes. This system utilises the substrate glucose, which converts into ATP. An example of this system is a 400 metre sprint. However the lactate energy system can be partially activated whilst the aerobic system is in primary use. Increasing your lactate threshold (the point of effort at which you go from aerobic to anaerobic) results in increases in overall endurance.
- **Creatine Phosphate:** Creatine phosphate is the substrate of energy used for absolute maximal effort over a short period of time. An example is a 100 metre sprint or maximum weight lifting attempt. Despite popular belief, the style of weight training used by body builders is primarily lactate, not creatine phosphate.

Metabolic conditioning is applied by working at maximal effort for the energy system is in use. For aerobic you would train just under anaerobic threshold, for lactate you would train at maximal effort for as long as possible or repeat efforts with as little rest as possible and for creatine phosphate you would apply maximum effort over very short durations for the conditioning of strength and power.

Metabolic conditioning is important because it's the way your body functions. You are always using all three of these energy systems at any one time. If they do not function optimally you will be performing at sub-par levels in everything you do. The more conditioned the three of

them are, the more efficiently your body operates and processes energy.

Metabolic conditioning means less fat storage, more available energy and increased performance in sports and everyday activities.

BODY AWARENESS

Body awareness applies to the control of your own body through space. In this context it refers to strength, speed, power, endurance, coordination, balance etc, as it applies to movement of your own body. The better able you are to move efficiently the more efficient everything physical becomes.

A gymnast displays amazing body awareness. They can hold their body in a positions requiring enormous strength, they can throw themselves through the air and upside down and land perfectly. Developing body awareness is important while you're young because it allows for greater control and efficiency of your own body. It is equally important as you age because it allows for greater independence and quality of life.

EXTERNAL OBJECT CONTROL

External object control refers to the control of external objects such as heavy weights, throwing implements and control over anything else that is not a part of yourself. It goes without saying that everyday life and sports become easier when you have physical control over your external environment.

Day to day activities often require that we lift something heavy or repetitively. Sports require strength and stability that can only be developed when you can lift heavy objects effectively and with total balance, strength and control.

This area of concern is developed through Olympic weight lifting, power lifting, medicine ball exercises, athletic throwing practice and lifting and manoeuvring other people.

Think about the value this ability has for athletes, fire fighters, military personnel and even elderly people who need more independence.

ATHLETIC ABILITY

Athletic ability may be seen by most to be only for those interested in sports. In this instance however it applies to everyone. Human beings are naturally meant to be athletic. Think about it, people in tribes need the ability to run to catch food or away from danger, those from small villages need to be able to lift extremely heavy objects for a prolonged period of time due to lack of technology. We were born to be athletes.

So what if you don't want to be an athlete? You don't have to become involved in a specific sport to be athletic, the definition of an athlete is simply physical competence in each area of fitness. Athletes in their 80's enjoy far better health than most non-athletes in their so-called prime at age 25. Athletes develop a certain amount of resistance to the ravages and common ailments that affect the general public. It is the loss of strength and power that most often puts people in nursing homes, it is poor cardiovascular function that leads to heart disease and high blood pressure, frail bones increase the incidence of hospital visits for those over 60, balance issues affect the elderly and result in falls. All of this can be prevented through the development of athletic ability.

So what is athletic ability exactly? It is simply the development and maintenance of physical competence in power, strength, balance, endurance and flexibility. Simple as that. This is developed through bodyweight resistance training, all types of weight training, running, climbing, throwing, jumping and coordination drills and games. All this scaled to the current abilities of the individual.

Super Cardio: The Indoor Rower

There is not much to be said for performing cardio on the common machines you find in the gym. Quite often they lead to injury through overuse. There is however one machine that will torch body fat, develop maximum oxygen intake, increase cardiovascular fitness, increase anaerobic capacity, work a large range of muscle groups through a very full movement pattern and condition the metabolism to function more optimally than any other form of single-exercise cardiovascular training.

That's right, the indoor rower. I'm not talking about those silly hydraulic machines either. What I am referring to is rowers like the concept 2. So how and why is this a superior piece of gym equipment?

Maximum Output

Running is thought by many to be the modality of exercise that burns more calories and promotes greater output per minute than any other form of cardiovascular training. Even research papers suggest this. The problem is that this research is flawed. The researchers are testing the rower and treadmill both at a steady state maintained over a prolonged period. It is easy to set the pace on a treadmill, if the person drops off they will simply fall off the back of the thing. With rowing however, the person can slow down and speed up as much as they like. What we are referring to here is interval training, not steady-state aerobic exercise.

So here's a little run-down on how and why rowing allows for more output per minute than almost anything else…

Lets compare rowing with running. When you run you are using certain muscle groups to drive you forward, whether that is sprinting or jogging, the movement pattern is similar. You run with your legs. Your heart rate and need for oxygen increases proportionately to the effort being applied. The reason this increases is because the muscles involved in the activity are working hard and need to metabolise energy in order to keep contracting.

The muscles used in this motion are limited, there is only so much energy stored in the working muscles and it can only be replenished at a rate your body is capable of. You can't call on reserves from other areas of your body because that is there for the muscles it is contained in for the most part.

Now lets look at rowing for output. When you row you first drive hard with both legs at the same time, you then follow through with muscles in the back (a large number of them) and then finally with the arms. You repeat this motion over and over. There is a huge number of muscle fibres being recruited within each single stroke. This requires an increase in heart rate to deliver needed oxygen to working muscles in the same way that running does. The only difference here is that the rowing is using almost double the number of muscle mass to produce movement. So what does this mean? it means more available energy per minute to be consumed.

So although over an hour of steady-state rowing compared to the same with running might show running to be superior in terms of output, rowing allows for greater intensity anaerobically. As we have mentioned before, intensity is the most important variable in producing adaptational responses.

The Final Word On Rowing

Since we have provided this article on rowing, it is only fair that we follow through with a few tips on how to make the most of it.

Workout One

Set the rower for intervals of one minute and a rest period of 20 seconds.

Row flat out at 100 percent intensity for each of the one minute intervals. Repeat three times at first then increase to 10 intervals once your fitness increases.

Workout Two

The following is referred to as the Tabata Protocol. Tabata can be performed with any mode of exercise and is great to apply to the rower.

Set the rower with 20 second intervals and 10 seconds rests in between. Complete eight total intervals at maximum pace.

Workout Three

Set the rower for 2000 metres. Alternate between rowing at max effort for 10 strokes and half effort for 10 strokes. Continue in this fashion for the entire 2000 metres.

Workout Four

This is a complete power workout. Set the rower for 10 second intervals with 10 seconds rest.

Row at 10 percent effort for each interval and repeat for a total of 100 intervals. This should take 33.5 minutes in total when taking rest periods into account.

Creatine, The Super-Supplement For Superhuman Strength & Anaerobic Power

Creatine is a high energy nitrogenous compound that helps to maintain a constant flow of energy into the muscle during contraction. Rather than provide a scientific, difficult to comprehend explanation we will just say this; creatine phosphate within the muscle cell allows for rapid and powerful muscular contraction over a short period of time.

So where does creatine supplementation come in? a muscle can only store so much creatine. Once the muscle's creatine stores have been depleted, the muscle is then forced to produce lower velocity and force of contraction using the lactate energy system. It takes approximately seven minutes for a muscle's creatine stores to be totally replenished after maximum effort has depleted them.

Creatine supplementation has been shown since the early 90's to allow for greater storage of creatine in the muscle cell. This results in a number of things.

1. First, there is more creatine available for singular and very short-term maximum muscular effort. This results in greater force of contraction, which translates to greater strength.
2. Second, increased creatine stores allow for the body's natural creatine stores to be somewhat spared during repeat maximal efforts, resulting in faster recovery between efforts and a higher volume of work produced.
3. Lastly, increases in a muscle's creatine storage allows for a muscle to recover faster between training sessions and allows for a muscle to remain in a an anabolic state. This results in greater long-term and short-term strength and hypertrophy gains.

Creatine is not just for athletes. Indeed, sprinter Linford Christie was one of the first athletes to demonstrate the enormous athletic advantages of creatine supplementation back in the 1992 Olympics where he won gold in the men's 100 metres. However, creatine is now also used for just about all types of people. Those with degenerative muscular disorders are prescribed creatine to slow the process of muscle degeneration, and it works. In Japan elderly people with limited capacity for physical independence are prescribed creatine to increase muscle

strength and power and thus increase mobility and efficiency in ADL (activities of daily living). Those wishing to lose body fat are shown to do so a much greater rate when more muscle mass and density is present. Creatine allows for more rapid gains in essential muscle mass for metabolic purposes.

Basically creatine, through much research, has been shown to be a super-supplement. There are so many dodgy supplements that promise massive muscle gain in minimal time, rapid fat loss etc. Creatine is among an elite group of supplements. It has been proven through independent research, not only through research sponsored by the companies that make and sell the stuff.

The final word on creatine from me is that it can benefit anyone. It doesn't matter if you don't want to be a body builder or elite athlete. Creatine will make all fitness training more effective and lead to more rapid and greater results. It has even shown to help people not engaged in any exercise to gain strength, anaerobic capacity and anaerobic power.

Exercise Of The Month: The Back Bridge

We all like something we can do for our fitness that requires no equipment, can be done anywhere and works a large range of muscles all in one. The back bridge does just that. This super-movement has applications in rehabilitation, core strength, strength development in the lower, middle and upper back and increased strength in any movement pattern requiring powerful back/hip extension.

So here it is…

 Yes, that is me performing the back bridge. Sorry to disappoint but I didn't want to pay any good looking models to pose for the shot, so you're stuck with me.

Place feet about shoulder width apart and palms on the ground with fingers facing forward or slightly diagonal. Lift your pelvis high into the air and hold in a tabletop position.

This can be done a number of ways. Firstly you can simply hold this position for a set amount of time. You could get a partner to place a weight plate on your midsection for added resistance. You can try to bridge higher than a tabletop. Tilt back on your arms while keeping them locked straight, this provides for higher resistance on the upper back. Or, my personal favourite, back bridge crab crawl. This is done by starting in the back bridge and crawling sideways, first to one side then the other, this provides some dynamic movement.

The muscles involved include: Hamstrings, gluteus maximus, lower and middle trapezius, rhomboids, latissimus dorsi, erector spinae, multifidous and most of the muscles involved in the rear rotator cuff.

Back To Basics: The Science And Importance Of Natural Human Movement Patterns

All animals have evolved in a particular way, to move in certain fundamental patterns. Outside of those patterns the animal moves less efficiently. A tiger is not going to run very well on just two legs, a turtle will not travel efficiently by jumping. The same applies to humans. We were meant to move in certain ways. Anything outside of these movement patterns causes either inefficient movement or injury due to overuse of a bad pattern.

Knowing this, why is it that the modern fitness approach, even with athletes, is to stick people into the most unnatural positions and movement patterns and expect them to perform better? This is insane. When is the last time you saw someone at the gym doing heavy back squats correctly? Contrast that with the number of people doing leg extensions. What about bicep curls? In what natural environment or circumstance will you ever require the use of a bicep in isolation from all other muscles? Never! Muscles function in groups, not on their own.

So it's time to get back to the basics of human movement. The gyms will hate me for this one. Essentially I am eliminating the need for just about every piece of expensive gym equipment, except the ones designed with natural human motion in mind.

This back to basics of movement is simply getting people to familiarise themselves on a neurological level with the movement patterns their bodies were designed to use.

So what are the "primal movement patterns"? Primal movement patterns include the following…

Squatting, jumping, running, walking, freestyle swimming, pressing (predominantly overhead or in front whilst standing), pulling (external objects from the ground and one's own body being pulled upwards as in monkey bars and chin-ups), throwing objects and sitting up.

These patterns of movement are natural. Squatting for example is possibly the most neglected and most important movement pattern in human motion.

The message here is to train naturally. Train to lift things properly, correct your gait for walking and running, learn to squat etc. Apply these patterns in exercise, ditch the crappy machines and isolation movements, use compound movements, ones that require balance, stabilisation and real strength and control.

Coming Up On www.endlesshumanpotential.com

Our site is undergoing some major changes in the next few months. Everything needs to evolve and move forward. Some of the new additions to the site include…

An Amazon store for all books that we believe are relevant to your learning process.

Supplement reviews and discounts on quality nutritional supplements.

A digital products store with discounts from our affiliates.

Plus resources to help you set up your own indoor or outdoor training area.

We hope you enjoyed our first major issue of the Personal Evolution Journal. Each month you will get an issue just as packed as this one.

For any questions or anything you would like covered in future issues, feel free to contact us using the contact form on any of the pages on our site.