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Life is not perfect.

Ever get a slump in your pump or suffer depressing bench pressing? Are you slipping in your dipping? Is your chinning less than winning and do you hurl when you curl? When you squat, would you rather not; that is to say, your squattin' is rotten? Is your deadlift adrift? Your bentover row, has it lost its flow?

Remarkably, when these things happen in the gym, their equivalent happens on the street, at the job and in the home. The gym is a barometer of our life, a measuring device, a gauge. Things are good at the gym, things are good everywhere. Order in sets and reps, a tight pump, fine form, heavy weights, abundant energy, sharp focus, training finesse and enthusiasm correspond with high spirits, a robust attitude, clear thinking and smart decisions beyond the gym walls.

Low barometric readings and life is a bummer. High digits and life is a dream. Simple. But I don't know which came first. In other words, do bad workouts beget bad days or do bad days beget bad workouts? Which is responsible for which? Some afternoons you can catch me sitting in a corner staring at the wall in search of the answer. Such answers unlock the secrets of the universe and solve problems like where do we come from and what are we doing here... how do we build mondo arms.

Life outside the gym more or less happens. Oops, here comes a Greyhound bus heading my way in the fast lane. We have limited control, we exert our influence, we express our preferences, we try hard, but there are too many variables and life takes over. I mostly sit and wait for things to occur, random forces pushing and pulling as I lean to and fro. But in the gym, a contained universe, we have our hands directly on the immediate tasks, duties and deeds, and the implements and forces that affect them: squats, supersetting, barbells. That's not exactly control, but it is straightforward exertion. I can start when I please, select the bar, choose the weight, determine the exercise, affect the groove, arrange the pace, decide the intensity and stop anytime I want or need.

Always seeking control, I take this awareness and ability and apply my personal training formula: Maximum exertion per set multiplied by total sets and reps performed per exercise plus time on the gym floor equals maximum goal achievable minus injury, disappointment or loss of blood.

I'm out of control when trying to make things happen that cannot. It's good to be positive -- I can if I think I can and all that stuff -- but the dogface of reality must be recognized sooner or later. Bad days in the gym visit us when we insist on lifting more than we can lift and exceeding our limits: too many exercises, sets and reps.

If reps are missed or the weights are too heavy or our groove resembles the cart missing a wheel on a dilapidated rollercoaster, the gauges pop their springs. Lost control -- bad day at the gym. Oops! Shoulda used lighter weights and sought fewer reps, which would have assured righteous form and delivered a satisfying workout.

Control is the key. Take control.

Top Secret: There is more than one key, Bomb Squad, like maturity, commitment, purpose, consistency, knowledge and understanding, confidence, determination, persistence, commonsense, intuition, Bomber Blend, courage, desire, hope, Super Spectrim vitamins, encouragement...

Now to define control as it applies to the mastery of our workouts. It is the aptitude to determine our daily training capability and wisely regulate and apply it to serve our needs and reach our objectives.

I should be able to juggle those balls after all the years I've spent doodling in a gym. I know my parameters: do the best I can to develop and reserve muscle and might with what resources I have at this stage of my life (just made that up). Within a set or two of any particular exercise I can determine my blasting power for the day -- firecrackers and sparklers, snap crackle pop.

Taking control: This is where the rational mind comes into play. (Good luck.) A bad day is registered only if a crappy barometric reading -- a less than terrific workout -- is not accepted. It must be accepted cuz it's real -- it is what it is. If it is not accepted, the lousy workout exits the gym with you, a miserable companion, and you have a bad day in life as well. This is often worse for others than it is for you. You are on the verge of being a jerk.

Read meter, move on. Accept, go and grow.

Accepting low readings is not submitting to defeat. Where absolute weight training is concerned there is no defeat. There is just another hard workout, another tough day, another plodding step in the march toward inevitable achievement. Any number of causative effects contributes to less-than-superior workouts on any given day: overtraining, low fuel, too little sleep, general fatigue, nagging pain, injury, malaise, apathy, distractions, stress, haste, weather and people. These are real and need reckoning.

Note: I refuse to explain or rationalize, excuse or apologize for any contradictions you detect in my random postulations.

Back to the chicken and the egg. So, which came first, the bad day or the bad workout? Some will swear it's the bad day that follows them into the gym. I disagree. A bad day can be leveraged to affect a superior workout. Like a spark to petrol, loathsome daily experiences ignite and burst into flames. Stress from almost any source is like fuel for the exercise engine. Iron moves, muscles grow. Tempers are smoothed; headaches are mitigated; aches in muscles and joints disperse; depression vanishes; distractions take flight and broken hearts mend. You can count on it. The workout swallows them up and spits them out.

Real training doth fix what's broken, heal what's ailing, and soothe what's aching.

Do you realize with an authentic gym in every neighborhood, western medicine would go belly up, hospitals would vacate and doctors would once again make house calls? Health insurance

conglomerates would go broke, small business owners would have a chance at making a living and the world economies would soar like eagles. Grandparents would live in their own homes for a long, long time, without crutches to hold them up or their kids to hold them down. And their grandchildren would amount to something worthwhile. Less crime, less violence, fewer wise guys... if only everybody worked out, ate right and wasn't so selfish.

Self-centered training develops selfless souls. Basic Bomber Precept.

Expect too much from your training and you're expecting too much from yourself. Those high standards we set -- or someone sets for us -- are as good as the target on a dartboard. Aim carefully. Just don't hang the darn thing on your backside. Hitting the bull's eye can be very painful. Rookie Bombers.

Lofty goals cause disappointment and apprehension for ordinary, less driven and immature seekers, and they eventually dread their workouts. Anticipation is exhausting. They quit before they achieve. Bomber Wannabes (Bummers).

Seeking serious goals excites motivated muscle and strength builders. Pushing to the edge works best for this rare breed. Bombers.

People with realistic fitness goals have the best chance of survival. They stride with healthy pride. The Bomb Squad.

Well I'll be. That sliver down below looks like the ole' airstrip. My gauges haven't properly functioned for ages and I depend mostly on guesswork, instincts, commonsense, luck and a prayer to find my way around the skies. Now to guide this thing in the general direction of the runway and hope for the best.

Putt... sputter...putt... The Captain

2 - Laree here, taking over with online news

Skinny calves are the bane of anyone who wants to wear shorts in the sunshine, at least those bombers alert enough to recognize a Charles Atlas booklet. The guys in the forum tackle the problem with some ideas that with effort and consistency on your part will give you growth before the June rays.

<http://www.davedraper.com/go4x.mvc?ID=Calf-training>

Since the 50s it's been written that breakfast is the most important meal of the day, but did you believe it? Heck, if you're like most adults, you may not even eat breakfast. You're in a hurry; you're trying to lose weight... maybe you just got into a bad routine. Dave's forever nagging about having something to eat in the morning -- a protein drink is his favorite suggestion -- and now let's get Chris Aceto to explain why it's so important.

<http://www.davedraper.com/go4x.mvc?ID=Breaking-fast>

We'll never get far from the subject of hormone replacement, not in this group anyway. I mean, I just had major birthday milestone -- 50, if you didn't see the screeching headline in the forum last week that which was to be my life secret -- and the positives and negatives of hormones never get far from my mind. You dudes, you need to listen up, too. Decreasing testosterone often leads

to depression in both men and women, and it doesn't take much of a decrease to mess with your head.

<http://www.davedraper.com/go4x.mvc?ID=Hormones>

There's a high school wrestling newspaper reporter who wrote an outstanding blog entry cutting to the chase of a disturbing aspect of the feminist movement. The reporter, Bob Behre, took a bit of National Review contributor Kate O'Beirne's book, *Women Who Make The Word Worse*, and expanded on it to explain what's been happening in US athletics. For instance, did you know the incredibly successful men's swim team from UCLA has been shut down? I didn't. Here's the full column, uncovered by forum member Barney Shannon, including an agreeable bit of back and forth presenting both sides.

<http://www.davedraper.com/go4x.mvc?ID=Title-IX>

We welcome your thoughts in the forum about any of the discussions above. Questions and opposing viewpoints are how we learn, and the IronOnline forum members truly enjoy the camaraderie as we sort through our thoughts. We treasure each other, even.

Laree

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<http://davedraper.com>

IronOnline Forum:

<http://www.davedraper.com/go4x.mvc?ID=Forum>

IronOnline Health and Fitness Database:

<http://www.healthandfitnesswiki.com>

Dave's Top Squat:

<http://www.davedraper.com/go4x.mvc?ID=TopSquat>

Dave's new EZ curl thick bar:

<http://www.davedraper.com/go4x.mvc?ID=Thick-EZ-Curl>

Dave's thick bar handles:

<http://www.davedraper.com/go4x.mvc?ID=ThickBarHandles>

Dave's Bomber Blend whey protein powder:

<http://www.davedraper.com/go4x.mvc?ID=Bomber>

IronOnline bookstore:

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Super Spectrim, Anabol Naturals, NSP, NOW Foods, Ageless Growth, Udo's, Body Ammo:

<http://www.davedraper.com/go4x.mvc?ID=Supplements>

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