



Hanuman Power



A Modern Guide to the Ancient
Strength Traditions of India



The Quiet Power



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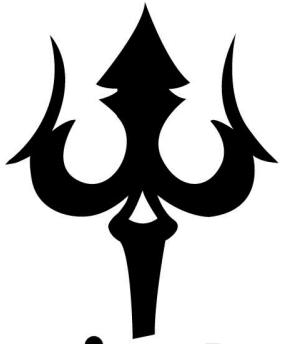
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The exercises and advice contained within this manual may be too difficult or dangerous for some people, and the reader(s) should consult a physician before engaging in them. The author and publisher of this book are not responsible in any manner whatsoever for any injury which may occur through reading and following the instructions herein.

Hanuman Power-A guide to the ancient strength traditions of India

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FOREWORD

Marcus Quijas' Hanuman Power, takes you on a journey of his personal discovery into the world of the ancient strength traditions of India.

His early inspirations for this book come from a mixture of sources like
Vincent Giordano's DVD series called The Physical Body and YouTube videos

VINCENT GIORDANO'S DVD SERIES CALLED THE PHYSICAL BODY AND YOUTUBE VIDEOS MADE BY WELLKNOWN MACE USERS.

Because he was deployed overseas, first of all in the army and afterwards in private security, Marcus found himself having to improvise equipment from items he had scavenged, scrounged, found and then build by himself.

First came the mace. Marcus started training with his own homemade mace following his observations from the videos that he'd been watching. The next step was to make a pair of Jori clubs and learning how to use them. Following his homemade mindset, Marcus created his first pair of Jori Clubs from a couple of traffic cones, steel pipe and a lot of concrete. Marcus recalled his experiences with these clubs during his visit to Perth where we first met. All I can say is that these clubs sounded like absolute monsters according to Marcus' description.

Varanasi in the northern India suddenly arrives on the horizon for Marcus Quijas, apart from being one of the holiest and most ancient Indian cities, Varanasi is also the home of the Wrestlers Akhara (gym).

Varanasi is also the home of the Gada (Mace) and the Jori Clubs that Marcus had discovered on videos recorded by Vincent Giordano and myself.

So Marcus decided to visit Varanasi where his passion and commitment to researching and writing about not only the use of the Gada and Jori Clubs, but the whole underlying culture of the Akhara.

'Hanuman Power' A Modern Guide to the Ancient Strength Traditions of India will introduce you to Kushti and Indian Physical Culture as seen through the eyes of a committed practitioner who has actively trained on-site, experiencing the bare foot connection with the earthen floors and simple equipment that the Pahlavans use in their daily training.

When I say the equipment is simple, I have to make it very clear that development of technique is crucial and instrumental in its successful use, and Marcus provides in-depth insights and explanations in all aspects.

To my mind I think that Marcus Quijas' commitment and personal proficiency in these ancient arts of India, gives him the authority to record and present the spirituality, history, mindset, diet and training methods of the Pahlavan in his book 'Hanuman Power' A Modern Guide to the Ancient Strength Traditions of India'.

In saying this I feel confident that all who take an interest in their physical welfare, will find valuable information in the following pages.

Paul Taras Wolkowinski

Owner of www.indianclubs.com.au and Indian Clubs Academy.



HANUMAN POWER

This statue became a familiar sight for me in my time in Varanasi and was my first encounter with HANUMAN. In this holy city, staues and portraits of Hanuman abound, depicting him ass holding his Gada and mountain or in devotion to Lord Rama.

To the wrestlers he is the ideal to live up to.

INTRODUCTION



This book is first and foremost a dedication to all the Wrestlers and Pahlavani from India. Without them this book would not exist. My intention was to bring to light and modernise the sparse and dated works on Indian Physical culture. By making it more accessible I hope to ensure that this form of sport, exercise and lifestyle gets the audience it deserves. I have researched and collected as much information as I can up until this point but there are still many unanswered questions for me. The guys I met in India had been so open and receptive I hope I can honour them appropriately with this book and not undersell their achievements in anyway.

Let me state there is nothing “new” or “innovative” in this book. As the old saying goes nothing is new under the sun. The exercises In this volume are the living example of this, many going back at least a thousand years or more. However I feel that practical information with regards to how to use these exercises and information is the missing ingredient. Many people are given examples of these exercises, but not how to implement them into their own training. This is the task this book has set out to at least partly addressed. I

personally have found being given examples to follow and then making up my own mind has helped in my own training evolution.

This is my take on the exercises from my own perspective. This perspective may be right or wrong, either way I hope it raises some questions in your mind as to how I came to these conclusions.

This book came about as I went through continuous trial and error trying to figure out how to use these exercises. Hopefully you can find something of use that strikes a chord and you agree with. If not, too late no re-funds haha!

I decided to write this book as I felt there was very little information on the exercises used by the Kushti wrestlers of India that could be used by every day trainers. Most of the information consisted of do the exercises for this number of reps with no real depth of thought behind the reasoning. There were no books written on how to perform the techniques. Much of what I learned was from analysing what videos there were of the movements and thinking why are they moving that way? Then I would apply these techniques to my own training. Put simply I copied what I saw. This worked well initially but I still felt I had gaps in my knowledge. This lead to me going to India, to the source so to speak to find the hidden knowledge...

Of course there was no such thing. Aside from a few technique corrections and pointers, I wasn't too far off the mark. What I learnt was that technique was the key and so was hard work much like in any effective training programme. Revolutionary stuff.

Many of the exercises in this book date back over 1000 years and may well even be older. When I first saw them performed in Vincent Giordanos excellent video series, The Physical Body. A quick search of the internet found very little information. Carl Gotch the famous wrestler had shown Jake Shannon the mace and from there people like Rik Brown and Kevin Wikse had begun to swing maces and put them in the public eye. Bruce Lee famously used the Hindu squat and Push up and mentioned them in his book the Dao of Jeet Kune Do.

Still there was not much to go off of. Eventually Paul Taras Wolkowinski went to India as part of his study of club swinging in all its forms. I decided that it was time for me to go and see for myself

I took up the mantle of my own quest for knowledge of the Physical Arts in India.

After arriving in India I was struck by a feeling of being in my own Indiana Jones movie. What would I find in the temple gyms of India, known as Akhara? Would I find myself barred by burly barrel chested giants as I attempted to gain the treasures of knowledge within? Images of massive boulders chasing me down the steps of the Ghats by the river Ganges crossed my mind. The first I found, Hanuman Akhara was no more than 5 minutes walk from my hostel. It would soon become my place of choice for training. I can remember clearly the excitement of walking to it and seeing through the barred glassless windows, a man performing swings with a Gada. As I ascended the short flight of steps I could feel anticipation in my chest. I entered the room. At once I was struck as how bare the place was. The floor was earthen, a small square pit was at the centre of the room. Old dumbbells and plates for barbells weighing up to 10 kg lay scattered in one corner. There were some bricks stacked on top one another, with a young man using them to get a boost onto a pull up bar secured high up in the roof. Another younger guy was performing a variety of push up on two blocks fixed into the ground. In one corner were what looked like massive iron braziers next to a non functional water pump. One area was bricked and open to the elements. There appeared to be a small shrine in the corner of this area, gaudily adorned with orange and gold. There was a lat pulldown machine that had seen better days, caked in rust. However next to this was what I had been looking for. A row of Jori painted predominately yellow with bands of iron at their ends painted orange neatly stacked against the wall. Adjacent to these were stone and bamboo Gada huddled in a tight group looking like the back of some kind of mutant porcupine. I was told to take off my shoes (not verbally but by pointing) by the man who had been swinging the mace. He was another young guy maybe in his early 20's wearing a vest top and shorts. I thought he wouldn't have looked out of place at the pool and gym my cousin worked at back home. For some reason when I entered I thought the guys training would stop to check out the new comer, either with hostility or curiosity.

I was met with neither as those present simply went about their own training. As I stood there flexing my toes in the dirt I felt a sense of deflation. This wasn't exactly what I had expected. Where was the secret hidden knowledge I had travelled so far to acquire gone? I contemplated momentarily and then went over to the Gada. The handles had been covered in some kind of varnish and they had obviously seen a lot of use. Some were pokey and tiny whilst others were simply huge. I thought whilst I was there I may as well give them a try. The first thing that struck me was how thin the handles were in comparison to my own creations. I took the Gada and swung back between my legs to initiate the movement when the man who had been swinging his Gada quite incredulously

movement when the man who had been swinging his Gada quite increasously, came over making a fuss at me. At first I thought he wanted me to leave. However he quickly ushered me over to the small shrine. As I stood facing it he pointed at the small orange figure held within and said "Hanuman". He proceeded to place his hands together in a prayer position and urged me to do the same. I did as bid, stood in front of a small orange vaguely apish effigy. To say I felt a bit odd was an understatement. At the same time however I felt a sense of serenity and joy. It was most odd. Images of the Kali worshippers in Indiana Jones popped into my head. Suddenly the man went to the shrine placed his head at the shrine and again gestured I perform this. Again I did as shown, at which point the man rang a small bell suspended from the ceiling and again I followed suit. Grinning at me the man gestured toward the Gada and followed me as I made my way over. Again, I began to take up the Gada, this time with no interruption. I swung back behind me and reversed the motion sending the weight up and over my shoulder and began the pendulum motion of the swing.

As I continued several other men entered the Akhara and began to talk amongst themselves. I continued to swing, mentally making note of how strange the thin grip of the bamboo felt in my hands. I completed several repetitions and set the weight down. Turning around I saw that a small crowd had congregated to watch, all with smiling faces. They cheered as I finished and came up to me, looking at me intently. The young man who had brought me over to the shrine came back with a small pot of ochre paint. He dipped one finger in it and then took it out to place a small orange dot on my forehead. I felt a great sense of honour as he did so. I later learned that this was a blessing from the Monkey God Hanuman. This deity was the one who resided in the shrine I had been stood before. He was the representation of strength, moral fortitude, devotion and right. He is also the God of the Akhara which also acted as his temple. Those that came to his temple sought strength not only of body but of mind and morals. All these things I would learn as I continued my quest which turned into a pilgrimage of not just strength but integrity and openness

I would travel and find many Akhara during my time. Many months later I returned and plan to do so again soon. I made many friends and learnt many things, most importantly that my own needs not come before others.

I came seeking knowledge to further my own power at the expense of others. My experience in the Akhara of Hanuman changed my perspective dramatically. Instead of trying to get ahead of others I found helping others along was the better way, not only from a moral perspective but a deeper personal almost spiritual one. This is a journey that I continue to this day and hopefully for many

days to come. Whilst this book is predominately about training I really want you to think about how you approach things in your own life. Is it through greed and avarice and false promises? I like to think Hanuman is watching me in my day to day life. He is a popular God in India, like a living embodiment of folklore. The person who attends the Akhara attempts to emulate him, not just in physical power but also his actions and thought. Such people are respected in the community they come from as being examples of people living a just and worthy life. I doubt many people consider such things from your average gym goer in the west. If strength can be tempered with humility, physicality combined with spirituality and ones own desires turned outwards to help others then you can embody the power that Hanuman represents.

A Quiet Power.

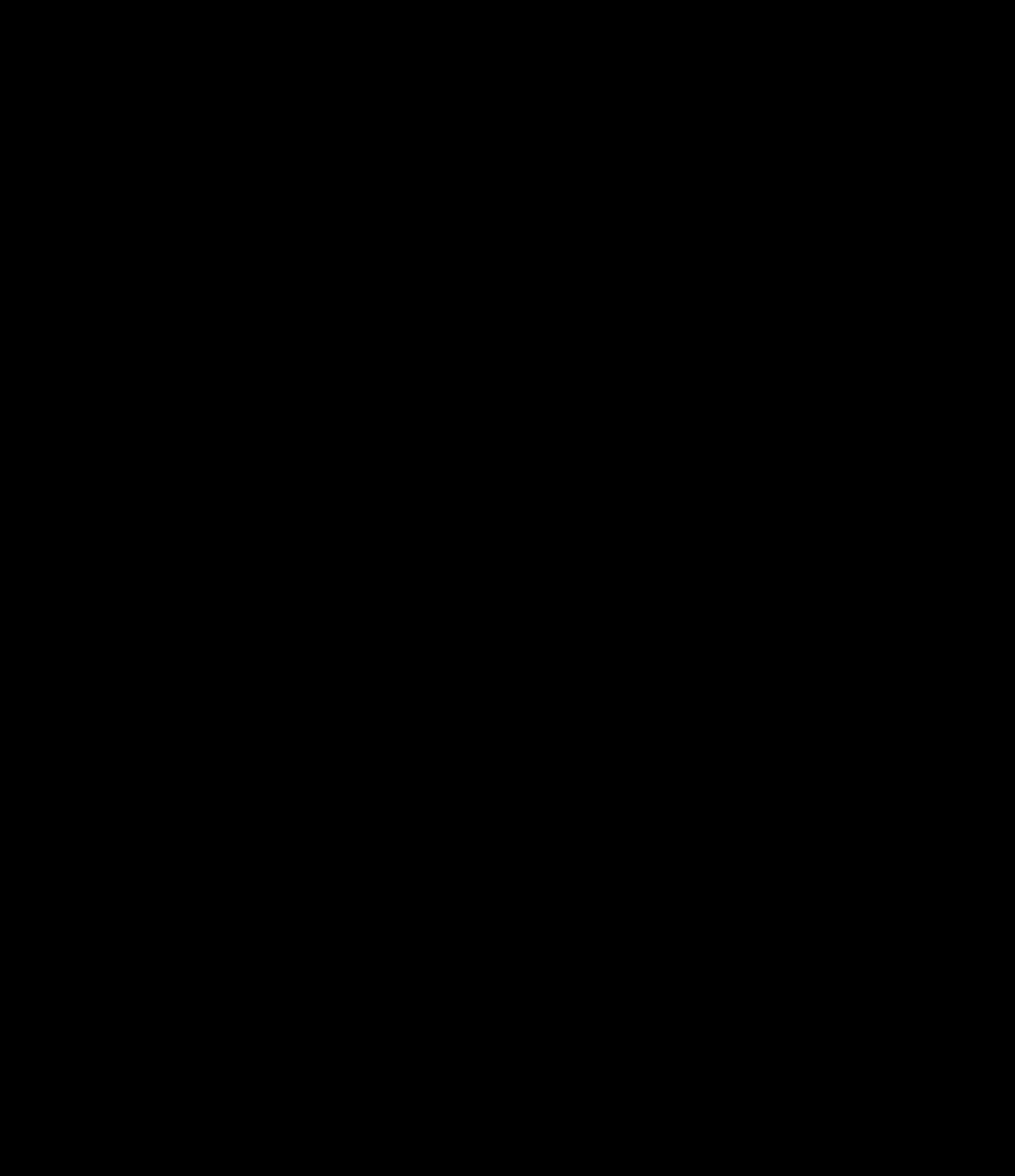


HANUMAN, HINDU GOD OF STRENGTH AND PATRON OF KUSHTI

WRESTLERS

CHAPTER 1

INDIAN PHYSICAL CULTURE



KUSHTI AND INDIAN PHYSICAL CULTURE

India has a long and deep history of physical culture and spiritualism. Yoga, possibly India's greatest export is practised world wide as a means of exercise and spiritual enlightenment. *Ayurveda*, the science of health in the human body has a extensive background going back at least 5000 years which has also spread

to other shores. Both of these sciences are concerned with the well-being of the body, mind and spirit, considered as not separate entities but part of a whole. Thus these are considered holistic practices, meaning they address the physical, mental and spiritual aspects of the individual without breaking them down or compartmentalising them.

Many of these developments came around because of the main driving force of all innovation: warfare.

Without a doubt the reason for many advances by humanity have been as the result of continued warfare between tribes and nations over the millennia. Even today war drives technology at a tremendous pace due to the fact there has always been people willing to fund the innovation of tools to kill or defend. As war itself became a science many nations developed distinct ways of fighting, equipment used on the battlefield, ways to heal the injured or prevent disease and the beginnings of physical preparation and training directly related to fighting on the field.

In the modern age soldiers undergo physical training to develop not just their bodies but also their minds for the rigours and horrors of war. Being physically able is only one component of their curriculum. They must learn how to use various weapons, use and maintain complex equipment and work cohesively in small groups as part of a greater whole to achieve their objectives. Mentally they must be robust, to continue on when exhausted or demoralised. As such, not much has changed over the centuries for the infantry man. To this day they must carry their own equipment on their backs and engage an enemy for hours at a time. Whilst hand to hand combat is not the norm, it is still a distinct possibility and still happens. At the end of the day, after you remove the technology, it comes down to man against man. The best prepared man will win the day.

Many cultures over the millennia have known this. As a civilisation grows and becomes more advanced its armies generally followed suit. As the armies became more advanced they learn and develop fighting techniques and tactics. Hand in hand with these advances comes physical training. To be able to fight longer and harder one must be able to endure hours of training wearing full equipment under testing conditions attempting to replicate actual warfare. Exercises would have been developed designed to strengthen the parts of the body most required to be strong for enduring combat. Lifting and carrying of heavy stones, body weight exercises (callisthenics), swimming, climbing, running with and without equipment as well as skill of arms training would develop a warrior's mind, spirit and body for the task at hand. Formation drill

develop a warrior mind, spirit and body for the task at hand. Formation would enable each man to become part of a whole and to work with others without second thought.

Many advanced cultures would have taken pride of physical prowess. A strong person was not only good at physical labour but would hold their own in battle. When all else in combat is equal it tends to be strength that prevails, whether that be man on man combat or two armies opposing each other.

ANCIENT CIVILISATIONS THAT VALUED PHYSICAL TRAINING

Ancient Greece is well known for its fighting men and the classical ideal of physical excellence. From 1100 to 700 BCE, athletic games were held in high esteem. Today these games live on in the Olympics. The Greeks developed the term *aesthetics*, meaning an ideal of physical beauty, art and taste. Many great sculptures depict the bodies regarded as the most pleasing to the eye by the Greeks and survive to this day, showing how much they idolised the physical body. Physical training was designed around producing capable individuals if the need for war arised with an emphasis on an individuals own prowess. All men of Greece were considered citizen soldiers and would be prepared at all times to take up arms if need be. The Spartans took this to the extreme, valuing physical training and a man's skill at warfare above all other qualities. Along side the arts of war individuals were taught many skills to develop a keen mind. Music, poetry, mathematics and oratory were all prized attributes that had many applications to both peace and war.

The Persians placed great emphasis on the training of their massive armies though this was of a more narrow vision than the Greeks. They developed fierce warriors through rigorous training though their ideas on expanding physical culture were limited to the battlefield.

Rome had a much more utilitarian ideal towards physical training, seeing it as a means to an end. It prepared a man for war and kept him healthy. Even so athletics and recreational sports were still popular, from traditional events to blood thirsty Gladiatorial games, physical ability was still held in regard during the time of the Republic and Empire.

China never developed a true physical culture for its people, even in times of war. However with the creation of martial arts at the Shaolin temple many techniques were developed to strengthen ones mind and body to the point of

supernatural extremes. Many of these techniques were known to a few masters and acolytes so as to preserve and emphasise the monks physical powers and knowledge. Secrecy in information is a trait of the martial arts still held to this day and masters tend to only pass on their entire knowledge to a single apprentice. The abilities they can perform are astounding to this day.

India developed great warriors who trained for both warfare and leisure. The warrior castes job would be to be physically prepared for any eventuality. When at peace they would grapple with one another to test their fortitude and skills. A series of organised activities intended to prepare a warrior, his training called *Vyayam* would be practised at the gymnasium/barracks called *Akhara*. Here they would perform many exercises designed to help them fight and wrestle each other to condition their bodies and minds for warfare. Much of the knowledge from both *Yoga* and *Ayurveda* would be incorporated into this system making it holistic in its approach. As such the Hindu warriors physical, mental and spiritual welfare would be covered making them the most complete of fighters. In later ages the de-emphasis on warfare was replaced by wrestling to be known as *Kushti*, which originates from an earlier form called *Malla-Yuddha*.

Malla-Yuddha is an ancient form of wrestling going back to the 6th century at least, where it is first described in the Hindu epic, the *Ramayana* when King Bali and Ravana have a wrestling match. It translates as “wrestling combat” showing its origins in the practical application of warfare. This original art comprised of not just grappling, but locks, punches and kicks. Wrestlers fought to win and injuries such as broken bones would be common with deaths not unheard of. *Malla-Yuddha* is considered a dead art but many of its traditions live on in the more modern art of *Kushti*, Indian wrestling. The men who trained in this art are called *Pahlavan*.

Kushti came into being around the 16th century when the north Indian kingdoms were invaded by the Mughals of central Asia. They brought with them the wrestling arts from Iran and Mongolia and these were integrated into the existing art of *Malla-Yuddha*. This lead to the birth of modern *Kushti*.

For the next few centuries wrestling became regarded as the king of sports in India. Competitions, called *Dangals*, became popular entertainment. Local rulers would have their own champion with which to contest against neighbouring villages or towns. At the same time, a physical culture renaissance came into being. Dancing, swimming, outdoor games, gymnastics and bodybuilding became popular pastimes and would be encouraged by the local rulers. They

understood that a strong populace would be able to work harder, defend themselves in times of war, prevent diseases spreading and create harmony in the community. Until the arrival of the British Empire, India's physical culture flourished.

With the advent of the British Empire a decline in physical culture ensured. With the arrival of British manners, etiquette and customs the old traditions began to fade away. Wrestling remained popular but there was a marked decline in the physicality of the general populace. Games for the most part remained popular, especially with the introduction of cricket (considered to be India's most popular sport these days). Yoga continued but with the introduction of western science and medicine many of the old ways were shunted aside, though there has been a resurgence of interest in recent years.

Through out this period up until the modern day, Kushti exists and is still practised at Akhara and Dangals are still held. The ancient *Vyayam* or exercise techniques dating back over a thousand years are still being practised to this day though with each passing year they slowly decline into obscurity. Hopefully with works like Vincent Giordano's "The Physical Body", Joseph Alters "The Wrestlers Body" and this book in your hands now will go a long way in preserving and documenting these ancient arts.

HANUMAN

India is well know for its plethora of seemingly strange and outlandish gods. Depicted with many arms and heads to the average Westerner they take on an almost alien appearance when compared to the more conservative images depicted in other religions such as Christianity and Islam. The Hindu religion has many Gods as equally diverse as their followers. Any one who has been to the more traditional areas of India can attest to this. Temples of the differing deities can be found everywhere. Of the many gods there are examples such as Shiva, Vishnu and Brahma who make up the Trimurti representing Destruction, Protection and Creation respectively. There is Ganesh easily recognised by his elephants head. The list is extensive covering both physical interpretations and elements such as fire (*Agni*), wind (*Vayu*) and the sun (*Surya*).

Each temple has it's own distinctive nature and features none more so than Hanuman the monkey faced god. Each wrestling gym or Akhara, is a temple devoted to Hanuman. He represents strength(*shakti*) and devotion(*bhakti*). These

traits are of paramount importance to the Kushti wrestlers for which there is no distinction between the two. Hanumans great prowess comes directly from his devotion to Rama the god he follows and worships. He is believed to be the son of the wind(*Vayu*) and an incarnation of Shiva. His stories told in the Hindu epic Ramayana depict him at the forefront of Ramas war against the Demon King Ravana.

Hanuman is depicted as a stylised monkey god. He has a body builders physique with massively powerful legs arms and chest. In his left hand he carries his mace or *Gada*, a symbol of both power and control. Ornamental maces given in competitions are similar in nature. In his right he bears the Dronagiri mountain. He was given the task of finding a sacred herb by Rama to aid save Lakshmana after a battle with Ravanas forces. This had to be done before the break of day. With time running out Hanuman wrested the mountain from the earth and brought it before Rama so he could identify the herb. His tail is arched upright as a sign of virility, strength and agility. He wears earrings made of five metals, gold, silver, copper, iron and tin. His clothing is a loincloth similar to that of the wrestlers who worship him. His image is always displaying either strength or devotion.

Hanuman is known as a mighty warrior without equal, a master diplomat, musician and student of the Sun (*Surya*) who is his Guru. He is known as a great yogi and has developed supernatural powers such as flight and the ability to change his size from the size of a thumbnail to that of mountain, both gained through his practice of Bramcharya (celibacy). In all his dealings he is renowned for not just his brawn but also his brains.

Hanumans life has been dedicated to service of others. He is a loyal servant of Rama and the personification of *bhakti* by adopting the attitude of the servant (*dasa bhava*). This attitude is said to remove the ego. It allows that person to perform their tasks humbly, modestly and with devotion to their master. In many cases Hanuman could have gone beyond the call of duty and bring glory to himself. For example he could have killed the demon Ravana and claimed the island of Lanka for his own as his mother said. Instead he refrained in doing so as he wanted to obey his masters orders without question. This may seem like a lack of ambition but its intention is to show selfless devotion to the cause one has taken up rather than act in a selfish self serving manner.

In modern day India he is a symbol of heroism and is very popular. Television shows art work and music are all dedicated to Hanuman. The *Hanuman Chalisa*

~~shows, art work and music are all dedicated to Hanuman. The Hanuman Chalisa~~
is a very popular collection of verses combined with distinct music. Very similar to a theme tune (this makes me imagine Hanuman striding up to a wrestling ring with it playing in the background!).

Having polishe with the dust of my masters feet mirror of my heart, I narrate the fame of Rama, who bestows life's 4 desires. Considering myself to be devoid of intellectual merits, I invoke Sri Hanuman, the son of the wind god.

Bestow on me strength, intelligence, and knowledge.

Remove my bodily ailments and vicious qualities.

(and allow me to write this book.)

Hanuman Chalisa by Tulsidas

Whereas many other deities are depicted and observed as being abstract, otherworldly and transient, Hanuman is considered to be more a part of this world and more approachable in terms of understanding. With Hanuman it is clear as to his purpose. He is seen as an example to be lived up to rather than a father figure or totalitarian power to be obeyed.

To the wrestlers Hanuman represents a method of conduct to be emulated. Strength, not just of body but mind and morales coupled with a devotion to ones God, Akhara, Guru and family. His worship is based in common sense. There are no mystical processes or colossal volumes of information to be read required to be his follower. The simplicity of his worship makes it highly accessible to the common people and his message is clear to understand.

The wrestlers pay much respect to Hanuman. Each morning in the Akhara the shrine dedicated to Hanuman is cleaned, his muscular statue repainted with orange paint, Hanumans colour, which represents strength and power and offerings of incense or *prasad*(sweets presented as an offering). *Ghi* candles are lit while til oil and flower petals spread before and over the shrine. *Ghi* is consumed by wrestlers to increase their strength and til (or mustard) oil is rubbed into the skin as a lubricant for massages and conditioning the skin. Upon entering and before leaving the Akhara each wrestler with out fail will go to the Hanuman shrine and pay their respects before commencing their training or conducting the rest of their day. It is before Hanumans eyes in which they train so each asks for the strength and mind of body that he represents.

Outdoor Akhara with large Nim trees also play host to gangs of Macaque monkeys who can be seen bounding from branch to branch. They provide a

~~MONKEYS WILL BE SEEN SWINGING FROM BRANCH TO BRANCH. THEY PROVIDE A~~ constant reminder of Hanumans troops, displaying athleticism and agility. They can also be a nuisance, throwing objects and causing mischief. Occasionally a stand off will happen between particularly riled up monkeys and the wrestlers which can be both amusing and slightly nerve racking. Several temples are dedicated to these monkeys and also serve as Akhara. These are amazing places to visit and train. There is nothing like performing your exercises to the rising sun surrounded by a troupe of monkeys swinging or lazing about. The monkeys are considered sacred but are also a nuisance. On two occasions food was stolen from me. One time the cleaner in my room left the door open on the balcony and a monkey swooped in and stole some of my almonds. Another time I was walking down an ally with a bag of bananas by my side and a monkey snuck up on me from behind and yanked them from my hand. Locals witnessing it laughed but also said it was a blessing. The monkeys behaviour is boisterous but not malicious and it is definitely amusing when they cause havoc on others!

Saturdays and Tuesdays are Hanumans day of worship and many Akhara will dedicate this time to cleaning and fixing the temple. Some hold a special ceremony where *mantras*(sacred words) are recited. It can be quite the spectacle! If wrestlers eat meat as part of their diet they make a point of abstaining from it on these days.

Hanuman plays a vital part in in the thinking and structure of the Kushti wrestlers life. He acts as the role model to live up to and exemplify. His qualities of strength and devotion paramount to the wrestlers discipline. Whilst in the West we can quantify the idea of strength in the gym. For many that is the reason they go. For the wrestlers strength is part of the process. By believing and giving themselves over wholly to the process of training through their Guru they relinquish their egos. All men of the Akhara stand as brothers and ones victories and achievements reflect on all, as do the failings. To the wrestlers Hanuman is the perfect Pahlavan embodying only the best qualities to be followed by example. To understand the Kushti wrestlers and Pahlavans one must understand Hanuman. He is the binding glue to the thoughts and actions of the men who train and compete in his name. He is the guiding force of their dreams and desires. Whatever actions they perform in the Akhara they know that Hanuman will be watching over them with temperance and guidance.

WHAT IS A PAHLAVAN??

The term *Pahlavan* (also written as Pahalwan or Pehlwan) denotes a wrestler in

India. It describes the person who bears the name as a wrestler who has trained since youth through to adulthood and continues to practice and adhere to the tenets of the wrestling lifestyle. This can include boys in their teens through to very senior men. They identify themselves as strongmen and wrestlers and the values that these paths hold in highest regard.

A Pahlavan is first and foremost, a warrior. Warriors can both win and lose in battle but take the lesson dealt and apply that to the next confrontation. The same goes for the Pahlavan. They must endure hardships and constant testing. Through the dual fires of victory and defeat on the earth of the Akhara their spirit is forged and tempered. They become hardened and can endure. Their edge honed to the finest degree, their character shines like a well polished blade.

Whilst hard and unyielding the Pahlavan is a kind man. They do not go around lording themselves over others or bullying the weak. They wish to show respect to everyone they meet and have that respect be given back in return. Family values are important as much as the ties between their brothers at arms in the Akhara. A Pahlavan is proud and honourable yet devoted to others.

A Pahlavan prays to Hanuman, for strength, wisdom and guidance. The Monkey faced God represents all the best qualities of a Pahlavan. The best way to understand these warriors is to understand Hanuman and all he stands for. Every Akhara is a shrine to Hanuman and every Pahalvan his disciple, learning his lessons and following his path to the best of their ability.

A Pahlavan is a man of tradition. The rules of the Akhara have been passed down through countless generations. Ancient wisdom is handed down from Guru to *Chela*(disciple). These traditions and knowledge are greatly valued for they are the story of the Pahlawan handed down on through the ages given life in the Akhara to this very day.

Being a Pahlavan is a way of life.

GAMA



Gama with ceremonial Gada.

No book on Indian culture worth its salt would go without a mention of the Great Gama, (also known as Gama Pahlavan and the Lion of Punjab) is a name that anyone who has any interest in Indian physical culture will come across. His wrestling career took place over 50 years during which time he was reported to have competed in 5000 matches and never having lost any. With such a long and prestigious career he is considered the finest wrestler to come out of India and is regarded as possibly being the best wrestler of all time.

The Great Gama (his real name being Ghulam Muhammed) was born in May 1878 Gujranwala, Punjab during the British Empire's reign in India. His family and the Punjab area were known for the quality of its wrestlers. He was trained in the art by his father, then his grandfather after the former died. When his grandfather also died he continued his training under his uncle.

His rise to prominence came at the age of 10. He entered a competition involving traditional exercises. There had been more than 400 contestants in a body weight squat competition and even at this tender age, Gama managed to keep up with the last 15 wrestlers. The contest was declared over and Gama was awarded victory due to his incredible stamina at such a young age. This level of intensity and ability to endure became a hallmark of his personality. His training was noted for its ferocity.

9 years later all his training and preparation came to fruition as he challenged Raheem Baksh, India's wrestling champion. Raheem towered over Gama at 6 feet nine inches. The would be usurper came in at only 5 feet 7. Gama and his opponent battled fiercely and the end result was a draw, only one of 2 times this would happen to Gama again. His showing secured his fame and he looked to the rest of the world for competition.

During this time he cemented his name in wrestling history. He challenged Stanislaus Zbyszko and Frank Gotch. He declared either he would beat them or pay them the prize money offered and go home. The first professional wrestler to take his challenge was the American Benjamin Roller. Gama pinned Roller in 1 minute 40 seconds the first time, and in 9 minutes 10 seconds the second.

Stanislaus Zbyszko then accepted to grapple with Gama on the 10th of September 1910. Within the first minute Zbyszko was taken down to the floor but remained there for the remaining 2 hours and 35 minutes that remained of the bout. He had developed a defensive strategy of hugging the mat, nullifying Gamas strengths and allowing the match to become long and drawn out. After nearly 3 hours the match was declared a draw. The two men were set to face off against each other again but Zbyszko failed to attend thus resulting in Gama being declared the victor.

During the remainder of his tour Gama defeated many notable wrestlers of the time including Benjamin Roller, Maurice Deriaz, Johann Lemm and Jesse Peterson. He also challenged world champion title holders such as Taya Miyake, Frank Gotch and George Hackenschmidt. Each one turned down his challenge.

On return to India Gama faced off against Bakhsh Sultani Wala who at the time was one of Indias greatest wrestlers. After a hard fought match Gama came out victorious and was named *Rustam-e Hind* or “Champion of India”.

Gama the had no contests until 1927 when he fought against Zbyszko yet again. The match was swiftly decided when Gama threw his opponent in 42 seconds.

The final match of the Great Gamas career was against Jesse Peterson. This match lasted one and a half minutes. After this Gama was invited to face the wrestler Balram Heeraman Singh Yadav (the Lion from Hyderabad). After a long fight the end conclusion was a draw. However Balram was a much younger man than Gama at this time. Gama could not find any more contestants and

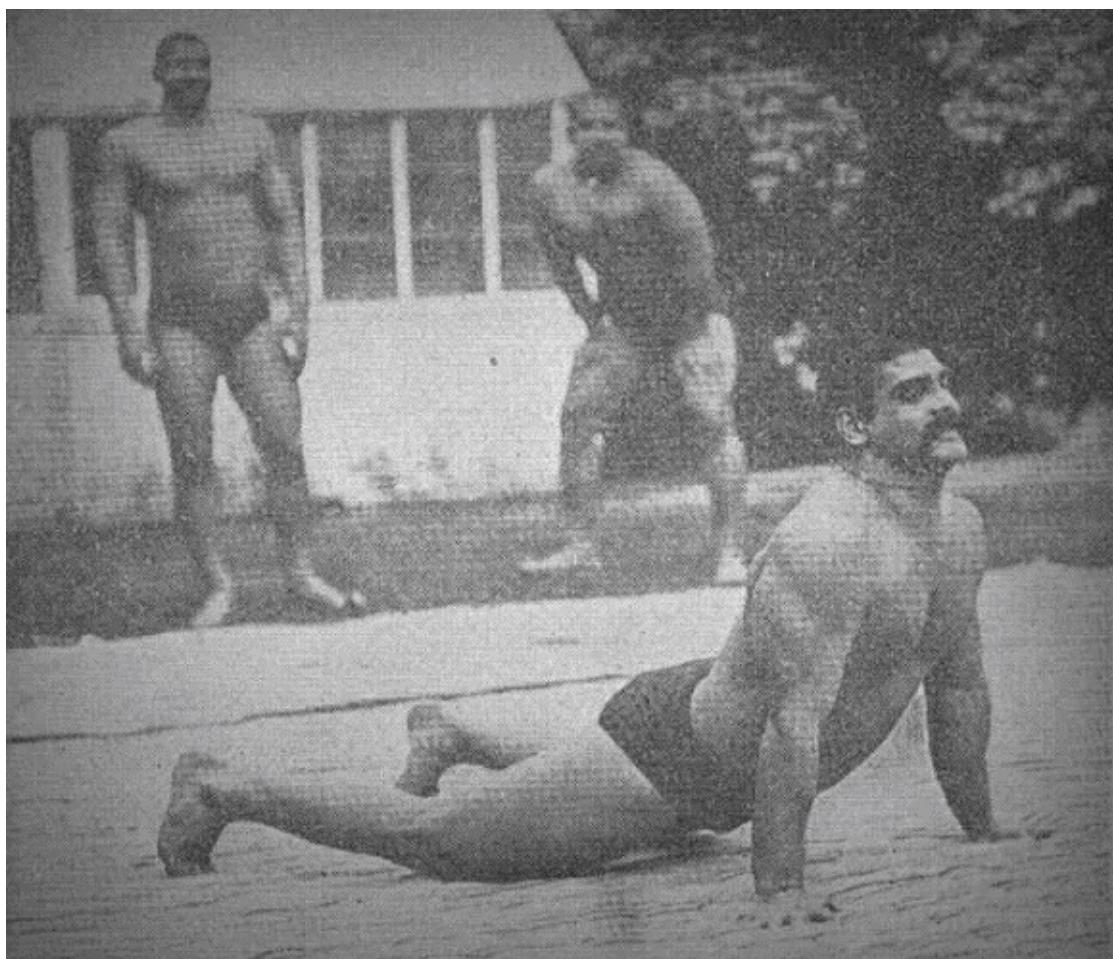
retired in 1952 and began training his nephew who would later become the Pakistani wrestling Champion.

Gama died in 1960 after heart complications. His prowess and skill are still remembered to this day the Akhara of India. All wrestlers know of him and his name is held in a particular awe. Whilst Gama was not a Hindu but a Muslim, he is regarded as a legendary Indian wrestler.

Gama's training has become the stuff of legends as much as the man himself. On a daily basis he would practice his grappling techniques with 40 other wrestlers. As one would tire a new one would step up to wrestle him.

It has been documented that he would perform up to 5000 *Bethaks* (Indian bodyweight squats) and 3000 *Dands* (Indian Pushups) per day as part of his daily regime. He would perform Bethaks with a huge *Gar Nal* (neck weight) weighing 95 kilograms, said to be so large a trench had to be dug between his legs so that when he squatted down it would not drive into the earth. This can be found at the National Institute of Sports Museum at Patiala. Gama may well have performed many other exercises and is known for pulling at immobile objects(such as fully grown trees) and massive stones. It is unfortunate that a more detailed account of his training has not been preserved but we can see that a mixture of high volume callisthenics, moderate to heavy weight lifting and isometrics played a part in his physical preparation.

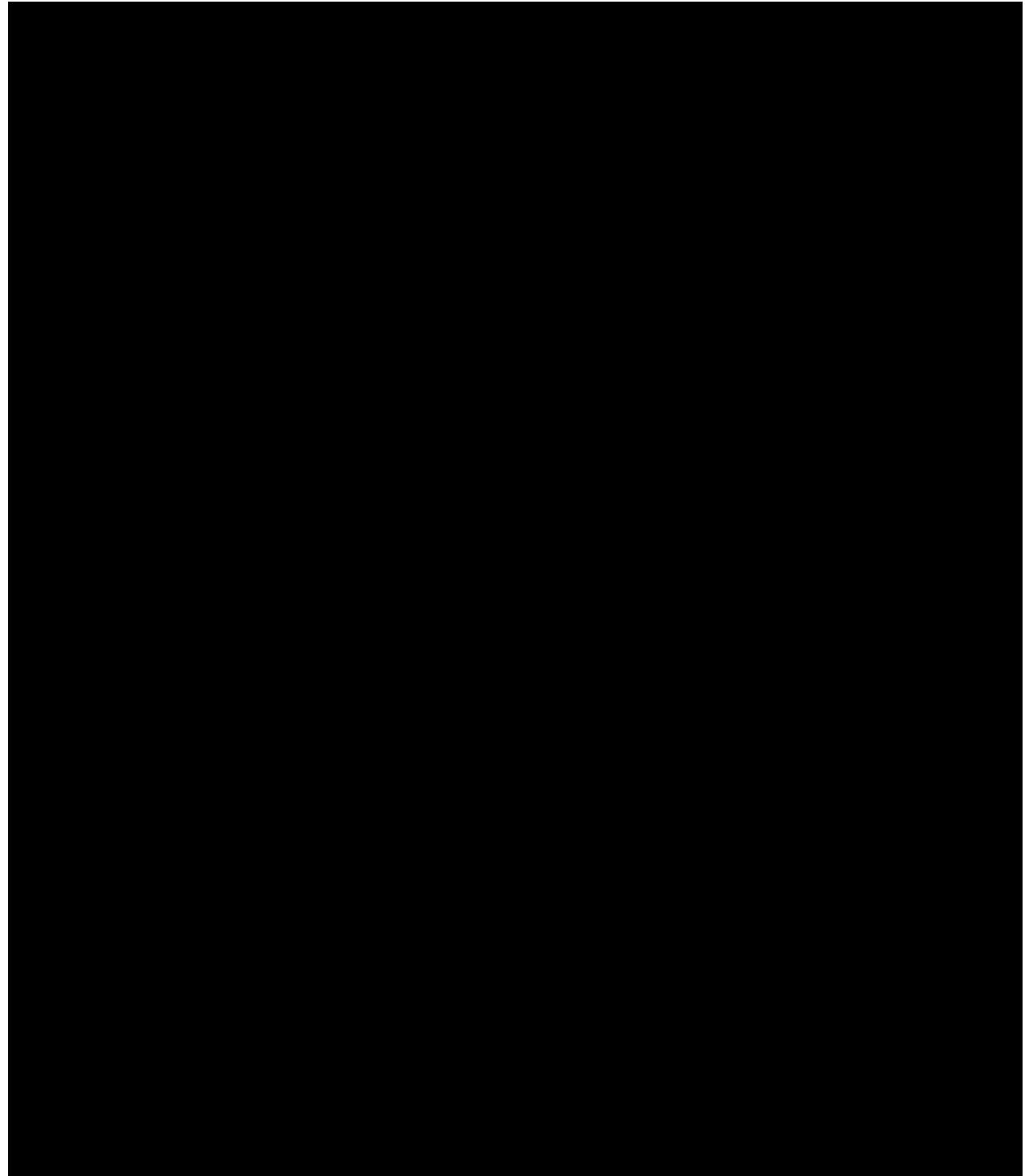
To fuel these intensive efforts his diet was of equally staggering proportions. 10 litres of milk, half a litre of Ghi, one and a half litres of bitter, one and a half pounds of mashed almond paste and two kilograms of fruit. This is a kingly amount of food, provided by his patron. Gama would have fought in his patrons name and any glory in contest would shine on both.



Gama
performing Dands.

CHAPTER 2

WHY, WHEN, WHERE AND HOW TO PREPARE



WHY TRAIN LIKE AN INDIAN WRESTLER?

Here is the part where I try to sell you a system that will get you ripped in 5 minutes, build guns like cannon balls and increase your sex appeal as soon as you purchase this book.

When I first saw Indian wrestlers and weight lifters I noticed that many were big

and broad. Big chests and prominent back muscles. Huge triceps. At the same time many carried a fair amount of body fat, making them look a bit like body builders who had taken a month off from competing in physique shows to competing in doughnut eating contests. Others were skinny but lean, akin to whippets. They almost seemed malnourished in some cases in need of a good meal.

This is part of the reason why Indian Physical culture has not really taken off outside of India. Most people surfing the internet are looking for physiques “experts” with ripped abs, cannon ball delts, guns like bazookas etc. Many just see at best average looking foreign men in what look like diapers performing strange exercises that look like they will either do nothing or just injure you. These people in my mind are looking just skin deep. Many people in fitness tend to be superficial, much is about what is on the outside. They focus on how they look and how they perform only. With the Indian exercises there does not seem much appeal for these people. This is a blessing in disguise! As marketing exercise which does not outwardly seem beneficial, it has no appeal to people who like to capitalise, market and exploit such a deep source of information. How can you sell a product to the masses that you cannot even lie well about? Or even vaguely comprehend?

This has ensured that Indian physical culture has remained as yet as pure as can be in the fitness world where ideas are twisted and warped to suit the needs of the person selling the product.

SO why train this way?

The Vyayam system has lasted at least a millennia. Many exercises may have evolved or changed total form their original inception and many more have probably been lost to the mists of time. Nevertheless a tradition going back 4000 years is still with us today. Ancient exercises and disciplines passed down through generations that have a proven track record on producing resilient warriors and world renowned wrestlers. In many ways this makes Indian physical culture the polar opposite of modern fitness. Nothing is designed to be “innovative”, “revolutionary” and “cutting edge”. In fact whenever I hear these terms bandied about with regards to fitness, I immediately switch off. If innovation means gimmicky and faddy then they hit the nail on the head. Products and ideas that have their moment of glory soon to fade into obscurity, designed to make money quickly by appearing sexy and flashy. Indian physical culture is none of this, it is the past, mundane and boring. It has also lasted

several thousand years and will probably last several thousand more. A system with this kind of longevity must have a certain truth to it. That truth is it's comprehensive and all encompassing nature.

EXERCISES PROMOTE FLEXIBLE STRENGTH

The one most noticeable thing about the exercises performed in the Akhara is their focus on building strong and flexible bodies. Wrestling requires high degrees of mobility but also the ability to resist excessive force and to produce it. Many of the exercises emphasise the flexibility of the shoulder girdle, spine and hips. *Gada* (mace), *Jori* (clubs), and *Sumtola* (Indian Barbell) exercises help open the shoulders and chest. Press ups called *Dands* help with the flexibility in the arms and spine. Squats called *Bethaks* help with opening the hips. These exercises help to build contractile strength whilst at the same time keeping the muscles supple and fluid. Being able to move well is of paramount importance. If a wrestler is stiff and muscle bound he is likely to be slow and prone to injury. Remember that the purpose of Vyayam is to create an efficient wrestler first. Even those who do not wrestle show uncanny amounts of flexibility. *Jori* and *Gada* swingers in particular seem to be able to articulate their shoulder blades back to the point where when the elbows are above their head, they almost touch each other. This looks like a form of contortion-ism but to be able to handle heavy weights travelling at speed requires strong tendons, ligaments, joints and muscles. Where the yoga practitioner often has flexibility without the ability to produce force, and a powerlifter is strong but really able to move fluidly the Vyayam system has both strength AND flexibility as the main component.

INCREASE INTERNAL POWER

Many of the wrestlers and Pahlavan I met do not look outwardly impressive at all. Some did have good physiques but the majority looked either big and burly but slightly overweight or just plain skinny. Even so they were all incredibly strong. Many who looked good, were in fact weaker than those that did not look impressive at all. After talking with many wrestlers, Pahlavans and Gurus it became clear that ones outward appearance was no indicator of the persons "internal power". The internal power can broadly be described as faith, spirit, mental determination and heart. A wrestlers strength not only comes from their physical frame but how dedicated they are to the process, their Guru and God. By being moralistic and forthright, the person is considered strong. This goes hand in hand with physical strength to the point where the two are inseparable, ~~one and the same To western thinking that likes to compartmentalise thoughts~~

and emotions from the physical this may seem a strange concept. To the wrestlers it is obvious. A Pahlavan with faith and devotion will be much stronger than those with less in the way of morals It also refers to how they can best manage and utilise what capabilities they have at their disposal, making maximum use of their body to be able to perform well.

The Vyayam routine is also designed to increase the wrestlers energy by increasing the amount of *Prana* they can hold. Prana is the cosmic energy thought to exist in everything including the air we breathe. Prana itself means “breath” By increasing ones ability to hold Prana in the body, one becomes much more resilient and stronger both physically and mentally.

MEDITATIVE

The exercises performed in Vyayam tend to have a rhythmic quality to them. Many such as the Gada and Jori have an almost pendulum motion to them. A sense of perpetual motion. This coupled with a relatively high number of repetitions performed results in exercise that is both strenuous but also relaxing at the same time. Performing these movements, many of which require high degrees of coordination and creates a deep state of concentration. Performing the exercises creates a near trance like state as all thoughts leave the mind save for those on the task at hand. This helps to create a near meditative state. In the Akhara exercise is performed in near silence. There is no music blaring loudly nor anyone screaming and shouting to psyche themselves up. Everything is performed in a dignified way as befitting a temple environment. The person performing the activity focuses solely on that and on their God. The wrestler goes within themselves.

Whilst you don not have to pray to any God, Hindu or otherwise, instead of turning the exercise into a outward display of force, try to turn it into an act of internal meditation. This goes hand in hand with the above point of internal power. By focusing inward, you can find a sense of clarity and self awareness that simply performing the exercise for the sake of more repetitions will never do. That does not mean you should not push yourself, rather it means shifting the focus from your body more to your mind.

GRIP EMPHASIS

Many of the Vyayam exercises have an emphasis on wrist and grip strength. This directly translates to the combat origins of these exercises. The person with ~~the strongest arm could hold weapons for longer or grab their opponent easier~~

the stronger grip could wield weapons for longer or grapple with opponent easier so these exercises emphasise this area. Swinging exercises, rope climbs, Nal stones all place a heavy emphasis on the grip strength. The Jori when performed in the strict no touch or nail variation primarily target the wrist as do Dands when performed with fingers pointing sideways. Performing these exercises for time, volume and weight means that you can have superior strength in the hands.

SHOULDER STRENGTH AND DURABILITY

As well as the grip strength, there is an emphasis on the shoulders in strength, endurance and flexibility. In wrestling the shoulders take a beating. Strength allows them to take and deal out punishment and execute throws. The strength at extreme ranges of motion means less injury likelihood and increased power generation from positions of compromise. Jori, Gada and Dumbbell swings really work the shoulders. The exercises have a great carry over to throwing and grappling with their pulling and pushing sensations. This is similar to an opponent grabbing your arm and trying to gain a position to strike from. Pullups, Nal and Dands all help to create flexible and strong shoulders.

SKILL AND TECHNIQUE FOCUS

Many of the exercises have a depth of skill pertaining to them. Being able to swing nail Jori takes immense skill, coordination, concentration and technique. Even performing the Gada swing correctly requires timing and rhythm. Many of these exercises just cannot be muscled with strength and be considered correctly executed. Finesse and flow are considered the hallmark of an expert rather than jerky, shaky and staccato movements. Making awkward physical tasks seem effortless is the hallmark of time invested in skill development. Again this translates into combat sports where technical ability always comes to the fore. Mastery of throws and take downs and knowing when and where to go when facing off an opponent require split second timing and skill. Whilst simpler than executing a throw, the exercises have their skill component which make learning such technical skills much easier. Learning a smooth technique is paramount to correctly exercising to gain the most benefits and lessen the chance of injury. Technique lets you take your performance to the next level and requires practice and patience to get it. As such many of the exercises are not as popular as they should be due to the learning curve involved. I think this is because of the world we live in where instant gratification is what most people want. They want simple solutions they can implement immediately rather than something they have to work on to perfect. As such it is not a fit for everyone. If you enjoy the

thinking and learning process then these exercises are for you. They engage the brain because of their highly complex nature which goes a long way to longevity and brain health. Performing complex movements under load stimulates the nervous system to a high degree creating smoother and more direct neural links from body to brain.

RHYTHM AND TIMING

Closely associated with skill and technique, rhythm and timing are integral to the many swinging actions as well as the callisthenics of the Dand and Bethak. The motions tend to be performed at a set rhythm by the individual training. Whilst initially taught and learnt as the practitioner develops, it becomes part of their personal physical expression. Watching an expert at these exercises you will notice that they are performed in an almost mechanical manner, the implements moving at a set pace, moving like clockwork. Timing relates to the punctuation of explosion and direction change within this rhythm, redirecting force or initiating a component of the action at the correct time. These two elements combined make the exercise seem effortless and make them easier to perform. Like steps in a choreographed ballet, practised to perfection they look clean and crisp, each dancer moving at the right time to make a seamless whole. This is how you should see your body, many components combined to make a smooth and seamless whole. Skill and technique along with rhythm and timing make these exercises requiring more than pure brute strength are essential if you wish to achieve a high level of competency in their execution. It is the difference between doing the exercise and doing it well. We go into rhythm in more detail later on in the book in the section called The Science Behind the Swing.

CONDITIONING

The wrestlers of India were world renowned for their staying power in matches. My of this has been attested to their training regime, lasting many hours through the day. This developed great stamina to last long and arduous competitions. The daily regimen of exercises would be slowly increased over time to near legendary proportions. Thousands of Dands and Bethaks would be performed daily along side their exercises and wrestling practice. Doing this over several days, months and years will develop extreme levels of endurance, mental toughness and work ethic. The exercises were designed to develop these attributes in such a way as not to crush the person using them. Many provide great cardiovascular benefits combined muscular endurance. If you wish to get into shape for any activity selecting a handful of these exercises and putting your

full effort into them will definitely go a long way towards getting you there!

CHEAP AND PORTABLE(MOSTLY!)

Many of the exercises are cheap and portable. To perform Dands, Bethaks and Surya Namaskara you need no equipment and a space the length of your body and slightly wider(think a yoga mats length and width). Other equipment is cheap to make if the time is put on or easily replicated with existing equipment (Nal exercises with dumbbells for example). Most items can be carried around at least in a car like the Jori and Gada. This means you can take your equipment out on the road and get a good session in the great outdoors However at the same time some equipment may be expensive depending upon the options you go with such as buying ready made equipment or buying specially turned Jori. It also depends if you want to drive with the equipment or walk with it! I talk more about making and acquiring equipment near the end of this book for ideas and tips. portable

SUBCATEGORIES OF INDIAN PHYSICAL CULTURE KUSHTI WRESTLING

Many of the training techniques are still employed today in the training of wrestlers. The Dand and Bethak as well as rope climbing. Ban, the digging and levelling of the pit remain a part of even the more modern thinking Akharas. Alongside these exercises, western barbell, dumbbell and machine exercises are used dependant upon the Akhara. The Gada and Jori are used but mainly in the North at the more traditional style Akharas. Even so the use of ancient exercise technique remains showing how robust they are. Many currant Olympic level wrestlers from India such as Sunil Kumar and Virender Singh started their careers in the mud and dirt of the pits. India is known for it's wrestling heritage and quality of it's competitors. The Vyayam routine with it's gruelling length and simplicity is part of their fame.

COMPETITION LIFTING

In North India during the summer months many holidays are celebrated. During these celebrations demonstrations of strength are held before crowds of people. Contests in Jori, Gada and Dumbbell swinging are held at local Akharas or public areas. Dands and Bethaks also make their place as numerous contestants will test their skill and strength against one another. These contests show case the exercises of the Vyayam routine and take them one step further: instead of

being used to increase ones ability for wrestling they are used as if they were a sport in and of themselves. It takes time and skill to swing heavy Gada and Jori. Many wrestlers train with relatively light weight implements feeling that it can slow them down. One wrestler that I talked to believed that he suffered a broken elbow during Jor because of excessive swinging. As such some Akhara are set aside purely for training with traditional implements. Whilst not everyone who attends these Akhara competes, there will be one or two exceptionally skilled lifters who can do very impressive feats of strength.

BODY BUILDING

Regardless of their focus many Akhara advocate a healthy lifestyle and eye towards aesthetics. Body building and sculpting is very popular and many attend an Akhara simply to build their muscles and build some strength. There is a lot of focus on push ups, dips, sit ups and pull ups. Dumbbell and barbell exercises are often performed (especially curls). Combined with these exercises, Gada and Jori will also be swung. The Gada is often used to build the back muscles up and the Jori for the arms upper back and chest. As Western culture becomes more endemic, many who wish to body build attend more modern style gyms fitted with the latest equipment and machines.

SOCIAL

Each Akhara can be considered a kind of social club. Young wrestlers and old mingle in a safe held space. Like minded individuals may meet and socialise. The roots of the local community are strengthened by this interaction. It allows these men to put their energy into something positive for themselves and their family. Much like any gym in the west you can find life long friends who will train alongside and support you. The social aspect is very important as it allows knowledge to be passed on and down through the years. The Akhara were originally a form of militant barracks for warriors and later stables for wrestlers. By keeping with this close knit style of socialising as well as a distinct hierarchy, a person who attends the Akhara gains a sense of self as well as a place amongst a group. Feeling like you are part of a community is very important and shows in how well group focused gyms or training systems do currently in the west. For the wrestlers and Pahlavan this has been the standard since their inception.

TRAINING CLOTHING

When practising wrestling or strength training at the Akhara, many wrestlers will

wear the traditional training clothing of the *Langoti/Kaupinam, Janghia* and *Lungi*.

LANGOTI

The Langoti or Kaupinam has been used for physical activity in India for around 4000 years and is still in use at modern Akhara to this day. In many ways it resembles a G string. It is traditional sports wear and is used by body builders, wrestlers, yogis and athletes of other sports. It is a rectangular strip of cotton cloth with strings at one end so it vaguely resembles a T-shape. The cloth is wrapped about the genitals to secure them and tied off around the waist securely with the two strings. This helps to secure the male genitalia and also acts as a lifting belt. The tightness of the Langoti about the waist helps to increase intra abdominal pressure during any exertion. This is similar to the martial arts sash used in Chinese martial arts. The sash protects the internal organs and spine during rigorous training. Indian Pahlavans tend not to wear lifting belts though they are common in modern gyms along with tank tops and lifting gloves. The Langoti allows maximum movement without restraint and also keeps the trainee cool during the fierce heat of summer in India. It is also the minimum requirement of training dress, with both the Lungi and Janghia being worn on top. Kaupinam/Langoti can feel uncomfortable at first due to being tight around the nether region but after a while you get used to it!

JANGHIA

Janghia look like a pair of briefs or Y fronts . They are tough wearing and worn over the Langoti. To all extents and purposes these act as a pair of shorts and are often worn when wrestling. They are common in the more modern Akhara and are often worn on top of a wrestling Leotard during practice.

LUNGI

My personal favourite! The Lungi is a large rectangular sheet of cloth, often brightly coloured and vaguely resembles a table cloth. Also known as a sarong, they are worn tied about the waist in a skirt like fashion. Many Pahlawan at the Akhara will wears these as well as the local populace. Their use comes from the fact wearing trousers would be uncomfortable in the heat and training environment. They are worn for physical exercise rather than wrestling as they can be easily pulled off by ones opponent. They are comfortable to wear due to being so lightweight and are worn over the Kaupinam/Langoti.



Pahlavan *Pratay Singh* wearing Lungi.

BELT

Many lifters will wear what they call a belt which looks more like a martial arts sash. It is a long piece of cotton about 1-2 inches thick which is tied about the waist near the hips. This is used to act as support for the internal organs and the lower back. This is utilised more when heavy weights are used.

OIL

In India wrestlers will rub Mustard oil onto their bodies to improve circulation, skin and aid during massage. Oil is also applied to bare back and shoulders when attempting heavy Gada and Jori swinging. It helps prevent any friction that may occur during training or competition. Oil may also be applied to the the Jori or Gada. This is done meticulously with a small paintbrush often overseen by the trainee/competitor. Too much oil can make the equipment too slick or run down onto the hands. I personally use olive oil, applying it to my shoulders but rarely to the training equipment. As I have to load the equipment myself if it were too oily I would probably end up knocking myself out! If you find you have to drag the weight across your shoulder then try out the oil, it can save you from rashes which could affect your training time. If you wear cotton t-shirts and drag the weight across your shoulder then you have a good chance of grazing or burning the skin. Trust me I know this by experience. If you have to drag the weight across your should then I recommend wearing a rash vest and performing your

exercises wearing this, not to show off your impressive 6 pack definition but for the practical reason of not ripping your skin open.

FOOT WEAR

In the Akhara everyone trains barefoot, unless wrestling mats are used in which case wrestling shoes are used. In the case of your foot wear, use something sensible and relevant to your training area. If I am outside I prefer to train barefoot. I do use Olympic lifting shoes or flat soled shoes(chuck taylors) some of the time. Like many things this is down to personal preference.

WRIST WRAPS

This is something I have taken from kettlebell sports. Having either tennis sweat bands or long bandage wrapped around ones wrist can help alleviate sweat coming down off of your arms and onto the equipment you are training with. This becomes more apparent when you perform a high repetition set in a very humid country! I don't suppose it helps that I get sweaty palms much either which leads me to...

CHALK

This is a personal preference thing. I use chalk because, as I said previously, my hands tend to sweat a bit especially during exercise. Using Gada with bamboo poles covered with oil and sweat is a recipe breaking something, either yourself or nearby property. I like a firm grip when I train and chalk helps with this. The main negative is it may dry your hands out which can lead to blisters or tearing of existing callouses. I recommend you experiment to find what works best for you in this circumstance. Personally I like to apply magnesium liquid to the handle of the Jori or Gada and use a magnesium carbonate chalk ball for my hands when attempting heavy or long duration sets. During warm up sets I will not use chalk, preferring to save it for my work sets.

ROSIN

The Indian wrestlers will make use of a substance called rosin which is a combination of oils,vinegars and spice. It is boiled up and ends up as a sticky substance, not unlike strong man tacky. It is applied to the handles of the training equipment to help adhere the grip. In combination with this the Pahlavans will use magnesium carbonate or rosin that has been set like bits of amber like rocks on their hands. They crush this up or rub their hands on a stone pitted block covered with this substance. When their hands come in contact with the Rosin they effectively become glued to it. This helps to maintain a firm grip during

long duration sets with heavy equipment. Having used it it feels a bit strange but feel free to try. You can use plain old strong man tacky but be prepared to stick to everything else around you to your hands! Keep baby oil or a degreaser to hand if you go with this option!

TAPE AND BLISTER PREVENTION

As with any exercise including repetition, blisters may occur. In fact I met the Pahlavan Fony from the Physical Body DVD series and he had a massive blister on his palm from training. I find that blisters may occur on the palm and at the base of the thumb when swinging Gada and other fingers may be affected. As such If I swing a Gada I always tape my thumbs as a preventative measure. Using chalk will make your hands dry and prone to tearing the skin so be aware of this. If you start to get “hot spots” stop and inspect your hand and the area. If you have it apply tape to the area. Ensure that you do not break the skin before hand as you may well not be able to continue training if this is the case. Once you become of your problem areas you can prevent further damage by taping up in advance.

CLIMATIC CONSIDERATIONS

COLD WEATHER

Cold weather can be split into a dry cold or a wet cold. Somewhere with low humidity but cold is not as bad as somewhere with high humidity and cold. The former is almost pleasant and bearable as it is cold enough to prevent your clothes becoming sodden especially your footwear. The latter tends to be miserable as it is warm enough to keep moisture from freezing so it can soak your clothing easier so you become damp and cold As you can see much of the clothing used for physical activity in India is lightweight and designed with keeping the wearer cool in a hot climate. If you live some where like the U.K. or Iceland you will not be able to wear just a Langoti all year round especially if you like to train outdoors. I live right next to the North Atlantic coast and 99% of the time there is a strong sea breeze. Coupled with damp and a not overly warm ambient temperature for over half of the year means I tend to be inside for my training a lot. I tend to really focus on much longer warm ups and wear clothing that can raise my body temperature like thermal wear with a wicking layer to keep most moisture away from the skin. Being too warm is better than too cold as the muscles and tendons are more prone to injury when not thoroughly prepared. You can always take layers off if you start to overheat.

Cold weather can be split into a dry cold or a wet cold. Somewhere with low humidity but cold is not as bad as somewhere with high humidity and cold. The former is almost pleasant and bearable, the latter tends to be miserable. If you travel abroad for competitions it would pay to look up the climate of the place you travel to. There is nothing like being unprepared in something simple as your clothing to throw out your whole game plan without you realising it. It would seem like common sense but some people need to be told!

HOT WEATHER

On the flip side you have hot climates, a dry heat and a wet, humid heat. A dry heat would represent a desert devoid of moisture and a wet heat the jungle which has plentiful moisture. A dry heat means you tend to sweat less and feels like you are trying to breathe in an oven. A wet heat means you sweat bucket-loads and is like trying to breathe through a sponge. Again you have to choose a combination of clothing appropriate to your environment Whilst it may be hotter on the thermostat in a dry heat it feels much hotter in a wet heat. India tends to have variations of both dependant on the season and location. The positive of being in a hotter country is being able to train outside in minimal clothing. The body will naturally be warm so injury is less common from that point of view. However you must maintain high levels of fluids at all times as it can become very easy to get dehydrated which leads to its own complications. Also it can become so hot that equipment becomes scalding to the touch and training in shade is a necessity. Being in exposed strong sunshine could lead to sunstroke or at least a dip in performance. It may even be so hot that training in an air-conditioned environment would be a better option.

Each person has their own preferences to temperatures they like to train in. If you live in California I would like to offer a house swap right now!

WHAT TIME TO TRAIN?

The Indian wrestlers tend to train either first thing in the morning around 4-5 am and in the evening around 6-7 pm. This coincides with the coolest times of the day and also when the air is freshest. The energy or *Prana* of the earth is considered to be at its greatest during this period. In yoga and other practices, early morning is considered the best time to meditate and find clarity of mind. The air is at its purest and a sense of serenity can be felt before the hustle and bustle of people coming and going to work and about their daily tasks. Many of the wrestlers also have full time jobs so being able to train early and late comes from necessity. Still at most times of day you can find one or 2 training,

performing bodyweight exercise or swinging Jori and Gada.

In your own life you probably know when works best for you. Some people like early mornings, others late at night. With work responsibilities and family commitments we sometimes do not have much choice in when we can train. As such there is no right nor wrong in when you train and it is down to personal preference, availability and weather conditions. If you were to train first thing in the morning in a cold country make sure you spend time on a suitable warm up to ensure everything is prepared for training. If you were to train in the evening in a warm country you could shorten the warm up as you will have been awake (hopefully!) most of the day performing tasks and the muscles will be looser. Again these are generalisations. When you don't have a choice when and where you train you have to soldier on. Being consistent in this can help. Maintaining a schedule means you are less likely to miss a training session but also you will become tuned in to that training time meaning it will be easier to get into the training rhythm if it is on a set day and time. Again this may or may not work for you, try it out and figure it out for yourself!

The Akhara usually have designated areas for training. The ground underneath can be earthen or concrete. During the Monsoon season the soil can turn to mud so training is taken under cover or on hard ground. Where you train, be it indoors or outside ensure that your area is safe to train in. Swinging Gada and Jori can easily damage yourself, others or any nearby property. If I train with heavy Gada or Jori I try to train outdoors. My house has wooden flooring and a 30 kg Gada hitting it would quite probably leave a dent but also damage my training implement. Bear this in mind when you train. Also ensure you have firm footing underneath, swinging heavy weights can easily take you off balance, if you should slip you could have to contend with a weight travelling at velocity in a direction you aren't prepared to go in so for your own safety be aware of your training environment. I like to pick certain areas and use them as they are both safe and familiar. Going to that one place I know it is time to train and I can focus myself a lot quicker. The area in effect becomes my sacred place or temple dedicated to the sole purpose of getting strong. If you are on the road or have to train in differing places you will learn to make do with what you have at the time.

Training conditions will not be perfect all the time, some times you have to push through. Consistency in your training is key, being able to come back time and again improving each time be it ever so slightly.

POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE ENVIRONMENTS

By training early in the day the Wrestlers gain several benefit of keeping themselves cool before the stifling heat of the day arrives to make hard exertion too taxing to the point of no benefit. By training when Prana is at its highest level in the day the wrestlers can take advantage of that energies abundance in their exercise. This ties in with needing the appropriate surroundings and atmosphere to train in. There is less noise and disturbance and the Akhara becomes a peaceful place for wrestlers to train, setting their minds to the task at hand. There is no shouting screaming or loud music blaring, just single minded focus dedication. Being up early also helps avoid negative interactions with other people. What I found interesting is that many wrestlers would say that they could avoid “people giving them evil eyes”. By this they further explained that people who had no respect for them and the Akhara, who were jealous of their physicality, or of dubious moral character would impart negative energy onto them.

This was point they seemed quite concerned with. This can be likened to dealing with life's “energy vampires”. Essentially these are people who like to impart misery and negativity upon others. An example would be having a conversation with someone moaning about useless things and after ward you felt drained and tired. Another could be driving in traffic and someone cuts you off and gives you the finger making you angry, fearful or frustrated. Someone else has performed an action sending out negativity actively or passively.

Again going to the point about thoughts being energy, someone putting that energy out onto you can be detrimental to your mindset and your health. For example you take away these thoughts with you to your training session. Previously you may have been highly motivated but now you feel less so and the session suffers as a consequence. However the actual process of training can be great for alleviating this stress. Feelings like anger and hatred can be successfully employed to have a great session. Feeling like, “I'll show them!” and hitting a P.R. Can change a shitty day around dramatically. On the flip side of this relying on your training as your only way of compensating for stress is and is lie feeding it not beneficial long term.

Training through negative emotion can further reinforce that into your personal and spiritual life and it almost becomes a crutch and habit. The wrestlers aim to have a peaceful mind as much as possible, free of negativity, anger, impatience,

avarice and greed. By always coming back to this they do not walk around with a “cloak of misery”, all of the thoughts and feelings we carry around with ourselves in our life which weigh on our minds. You feel mentally and spiritually heavy. This can slow you down, making you less, motivated and ambitious and much more self centred by . In India there is a great sense of *Karma* the spiritual principle of cause and effect. The premise being By acting in a righteous and positive manner and performing good deeds ,one will in turn receive positivity happiness back. If a person behaves with negative intent towards others then that is exactly what they will attract back to them. The person becomes a mirror of their own actions thoughts and feelings with everything reflected back at them in kind. Wrestlers believe strongly in community bonds and working together for the greater good of their peers.

CLOSING THOUGHTS ON CLOTHING AND TRAINING ENVIRONMENT

Ensure you wear clothing appropriate for your climate and training. Don't wear flip flops and oil when training in the snow for example unless you're some kind of maniac or from Iceland. Find what works for you. Some people use knee wraps and elbow sleeves if that is you knock yourself out. You should be in a comfortable environment as you can manage to excel at your training. After all unless you are a professional, it's just recreational so enjoy it for what it is and appreciate being able to have the gift of training in your life.

If you are able have a familiar training area set aside. I like to train in my garden sun trap when the weather is good. It is nice to train outside surrounded by wild flowers, birds and bees. For me this is the ideal training environment where I feel more connected to nature. For you a commercial gym may hold the same appeal. Wherever you train, make sure it feels right for you. Even if it is just a small area, make it your own as best you can.

THE WARM UP AND COOL DOWN

Whilst everyone wants to get straight into the exercises it is important to spend a portion of time on both a warm up and cool down. Both can help facilitate increased performance, prevent injury and assist in recovery between intense bouts of physical activity. Time spent on the warm up and cool down phases is a long term investment and should be routinely used in your training even when pressed for time.

The warm up and cool down play a vitally important role in all training modalities. It takes you from a resting baseline and ramps it up, gradually preparing you for harder and more intense exercise. Once you reach the summit of your routine, the cool down helps to bring you back down to the base level or as near as, at the beginning of your session. This ability to transition from rest to work back to rest is very important to your overall health and longevity. Just going straight into your training at full throttle is akin to snacking your nervous system around the head with a frying pan.

The warm up also helps to act as a self diagnostic tool. You may start going into your warm up feeling lethargic and tired. If this is the case perform a longer duration warm up and continue to run through it. If by the end of it you still feel sluggish and out of touch it may be a good idea to give today's training a miss or at most perform an abbreviated session. Yes you might be able to complete your workout but at what expense? You may well be drawing into your bodies energy reserves and by persevering could be risking injury or illness. That said I have had many crappy warm ups that led to a great training session! So just because you don't feel on point does not mean you should quit ahead of time, just be aware of your condition and if it fails to improve or dips, drop the ego and call it a day, ready to come back stronger next time.

In the wrestling Akhara time is spent on a warm up routine with all wrestlers, running through it simultaneously. Beginning with opening all the joints through their full range of motion before moving onto more dynamic movements like callisthenics such as the Dand and Bethak. Digging the pit is also used in this manner. From here wrestlers may begin with their Vyayam training or practice *Jor*,wrestling practice. These tend to be intermixed. If there are wrestlers waiting to perform Jor they may be performing exercises whilst waiting. These tend to be performed in a relaxed and unhurried manner mainly to keep the body warm and ready for when they begin wrestling practice.

If training for weight lifting competitions much less time is spent on warming up. Generally the trainee will begin with a few sets of Dand and Bethak before selecting a very light weight Gada and begin to swing 1 handed. The 1 handed Gada is used regardless of discipline. Then they will start to train their chosen exercise, beginning with a light weight and working up gradually until they reach their working weight. These lighter weight sets may still consist of a good number of repetitions to thoroughly warm up and perfect technique prior to the heavier weights. It also increases overall endurance.

Both wrestlers and weight lifters may elect to run to their Akhara prior to their training. This is considered a good practice and is usually performed after the individuals morning routines of cleansing and defecating.

The importance of a warm up, be it very simple or detailed should not be underestimated. There are several options you can choose for your own training. A good warm up can last from 5-15 minutes or more dependant on the level of conditioning and age of the athlete.

GENERAL WARM UP:

This consists of a low intensity rhythmic activity such as jogging, walking, stair climbing, easy skipping and cycling. Its purpose is to raise the body temperature and get the whole body moving. The general warm up should increase the pulse rate but not to a high degree. You should just start breaking out into a light sweat and begin to feel looser in the body. The general warm up does not address key areas, by its definition it covers a broad area of the body.

The general warm up should last between 5-10 minutes.

JOINT OPENING:

Opening the joints, also called joint mobility, is an important warm up exercise. It helps to open the joint capsules and bring in fluid for lubrication and shock absorption. It is also important to allow Pranic energy flow freely throughout the whole structure without impediment. A blockage in the joints restricts the flow of Prana (or the oxygen and nutrients in blood) in the body leading to a loss in performance. Joint opening consists of rotating all the joints in the body through a full range of motion. Joint Opening is a keystone to yogic science and as such is observed in the wrestlers Vyayam routine. Being able to have full range of motion in the joint helps to prevent injury especially in wrestling bouts.

Joint opening tends to be performed in a sequence, usually from the top of the head down, from the feet up or from the torso outwards. The order is up to the individual and may depend upon their exercise selection(i.e. Perform lower body joint opening if squats are your first exercise in training). Joint opening should be performed smoothly and not in a jerky manner. It may also be used any time during the day, the best times being the morning and evening. For long term benefits this is a great way to ensure joint health.

Another way to implement joint opening is during the rest periods in your

training. After you finish your set go straight into the corresponding joint opening exercise. This will not only ensure you get the full benefit of the lubrication to the joint but also act as a body loosening exercise. Instead of just stopping you keep the circulation flowing and the muscles active so they don't lock up. It's also a great way of getting your extra joint mobility in through performing a concurrent activity. This is a list of all areas to be opened.

Neck
Shoulders
Elbows
Wrists
Fingers
Thorax
Lumbar
Hips
Knees
Ankles
Toes

Opening the joints targets specific areas, whereas the general warm up focuses on the body as a whole. Opening the joints should take a minimum of 5 minutes to as long as 20. **DYNAMIC WARM UP:**

The dynamic warm up will consist of higher intensity movement than both the general warm up and opening the joints. Actions such as jogging mixed with callisthenics, tumbling, travelling movements (such as walking lunges, bear crawls etc.) or a combination. Joint opening exercises may also be used in a more exaggerated and ballistic manner. This component of the warm up should really get you fired up. Using large compound movements with an athletic component to them will engage your brain, raise your temperature and get all the muscles, tendons and ligaments ready for the work ahead.

This is where self diagnosis comes in. With the general warm up and joint opening you can get by if you don't feel great. The dynamic warm up will let you know if you are ready for the day. If you feel heavy or exhausted then it might be time to go home. However stick with what you have planned and complete the warm up before making your final assessment.

The dynamic warm up should get you to the point of breathlessness and a good sweat. However do not spend too long here or make it overly hard. It is just the

lead up to the harder work to come!

Here are some examples of dynamic warm up exercises:

Callisthenics (Dand, Bethak, Squat thrust, Burpee, press ups, squats, standing lunges).

Walking Lunges

Bear crawls

Leopard crawls

Tumbling (forward, backward, sidewise rolls).

Digging the pit or similar(light sledgehammer strikes).

Foot work drills.

Heavy bag drills.

The dynamic warm up should last from 5-15 minutes. Ensure you work up a good sweat and a state of breathlessness, without overly exhausting yourself.

SKILL SPECIFIC WARM UP:

The skill specific warm up relates directly to the activities to be conducted in the main training session. It can consist of exercise that warm up the specific areas and motions involved as well as exercises that are in opposition to the movement. Generally speaking this will consist of component drills that make up the main movement. For example if the main training exercise were Jori then a skill specific warm up could consist of 1 arm Gada swings and Dumbbell Swings. The Gada movement directly correlates to the Jori action, whilst the Dumbbell Swing is the opposite motion but helps preparing many of the same muscles and joints.

After this instead of going straight to the target weight you would use a light weight to practice technique and further prepare the body. By practising the groove of the movement and then increasing the weight at even intervals you help prepare yourself both physically and mentally for the harder sets to come. These are called warm up sets and are probably what you do in your own training

The skill specific warm up can be applied to each exercise in the training session, instead of just jumping straight into your top weight.

Skill specific warm ups can be extensive or brief dependant on the exercise being performed, the level and age of the athlete. A heavier weight may require

more warm up sets than a lighter one. It is important to ensure that whilst you warm up you pay strict attention to your form. Poor form with an easy weight can teach you bad habits that with a heavy weight may put you in the hospital. Even if the weight is light RESPECT IT!

THE COOL DOWN

Of equal importance to the warm up, the cool down should become a priority in your training. While the warm up prepares the mind and body for hard exertion, the cool down has the opposite effect, bringing down the heart rate, helping reduce soreness, tranquillise the mind and laying the foundations for the next training session.

In the Akhara the cool down tends to be spread over a period of time. Due to the fact that the wrestlers may spend several hours at practice twice a day there is not a defined cool down period. Some may perform perfunctory stretching routines but nothing overly extravagant. Many will perform Dands and Bethak at a slower pace or perform exercises with equipment in a similar fashion.

Regardless the wrestlers rarely stop dead in their training. Weight lifters tend to perform their heavier exercises and go back to their lighter weights, much like a reverse skill specific warm up. Many will lie on the pit and rub soil on themselves to help cool down and soak in the medicinal herbs and oils that it has absorbed. Massage may be also given at this time. After that they will clean up and then go about their day.

Whilst there is not much of an emphasis on stretching in the conventional sense we have to look at reasons why it is not implemented. Many of the exercises have an emphasis on flexibility. The Dand, Gada and Jori exercises are all great for shoulder flexibility and the spine. Bethaks help to open the hips and knees. If we look at the Indian culture there is an emphasis on cross-legged sitting on the floor so many of the common ailments that come from being sat in a chair, such as hyper mobile lower backs and tight hips are not an issue. Twice a day training means the body will still be warm and ready when it comes to the next session. India is a hot country most of the year and this helps to keep the muscles and ligaments warm. In a cold climate (such as the U.K.) the body stiffens after inactivity and muscles will shorten leading to tightness. Interestingly on the days when wrestlers do not train (usually days dedicated to Hanuman such as Tuesday and Saturday), they will give each other massage. Massage can be given during any day but on these days particular attention is paid.. This essentially means that each wrestler will receive a minimum of one massage a week. Anyone who

has had a good sports massage can attest to the benefits they felt (afterwards!). Massage is fantastic for the recovery process in ways that stretching just can not replicate.

For the purposes of this book I will present some ideas for cool downs you can use. I doubt many of you are living at an Akhara and can receive regular weekly massage due to the cost. You may be lucky and have a partner who is trained in massage (like yours truly!) who can be on call to massage you. Even if you do you should perform a cool down routine focusing on flexibility and bringing the mind and body to rest.

The cool down should move from most active to least (the reverse of the warm up).

The cool down should keep the body moving and be of a lower intensity than the training preceding it.

The cool down should last between 5-15 minutes and may be longer dependant upon the abilities, requirements and age of the athlete.

To cool down you can think of performing a reverse version of the warm up.

SKILL SPECIFIC COOL DOWN:

For this you can perform exercises that make up or will assist your point of focus during the session. As an example, Jori swingers will tend to perform 1 handed Gada swing swings with a light weight to move through the range of motion and smooth it out. It also helps with improving circulation and endurance.

As well as performing actions directly correlating to the exercise, full body activities that are slower and rhythmic can also be employed . Many wrestlers will also swim in the river Ganges or run. These last two activities are performed by wrestlers as these are both thought to help with speed and stamina. Similar activities could include a easy bike ride, easy skipping of rope and some tumbling performed in slow time.

Whatever exercise you choose ensure that it is low in intensity. The purpose is to slowly bring down your hear rate whilst keeping the blood flowing through the body which helps in removing any waste products produced during the session. Take your time with these exercises and make them leisurely rather than intense. Once your breathing has calmed down to an appreciable level to where you can hold a conversation and your heart is not pounding in your chest then you can move onto the next stage of the cool down. Spend a minimum of 5 minutes and up to 15 if time permits.

DYNAMIC STRECHING:

Here you will perform the reverse of the dynamic warm up. Instead of increasing the heart rate in preparation for training, dynamic stretching will help take the body back to normal resting rate.

Performing a series of exercises that can be considered part joint opening and part static stretching ensures the body is still moving but at a steadily decreasing pace. A good example of dynamic stretching comes in the form of Surya Namaskara and its equivalents. This practice takes the body through a series of postures for relatively short periods of time. The body moves from position to position, opening joints, stretching the muscles whilst still assisting circulation through the body.

Surya Namaskara can be performed fast or slow which makes this an ideal exercise to transition from activity to static stretching.

This can be magnified by performing 3 sets in the following manner.

Begin by inhaling/exhaling once in each posture during the first set (moving left and right sides counts as one set).

On the second set, take 2 inhales and exhales in each posture before transitioning into the next pose.

On the third set, take 3 inhales and exhales in each posture before transitioning onto the next pose.

By using this method you begin by moving through each posture fairly quickly and by the third set you will have pronounced pauses between transitions, lengthening the time of each set.

Less time is spent moving and more on stretching. The use of deep breathing is important here. At the beginning you may have a higher heart rate and rapid breathing. By concentrating on the breath and calming yourself down as you move from one posture to the next, you will find your body naturally begins to decelerate. Deep breathing means more oxygen which gets carried through the blood into the muscles helping to drop the workload on the lungs. The whole body becomes more still and tranquil.

As an alternative to the Surya Namaskara, you can perform a series of basic stretches, held for no more than 5 seconds at a time, moving from one to the next. Ensure that they work the whole body, top to bottom and front to back.

Wrestlers in the Akhara will perform dynamic stretches in a very basic manner. Like most of us this is not the art they enjoy! They still do it though and ensure they move through the whole body in doing so. Some will do Surya Namaskaras but this is less common amongst the younger men and tends to be more popular with the older Pahlavans. At this point the body is still warm but the mind is calmed. You can now move into the next phase of the cool down.

STATIC STRETCHING:

Static stretching helps to improve recovery, alleviate soreness and prevent tightening and shorting of the muscles. It also helps to promote flexibility and acts as a source of deep relaxation which is critical for the transition from high intensity activity back to a normal resting rate.

Selecting a number of stretches, work through them holding each position from as little as 10 seconds up to 2 minutes. Go through your selected stretches in sequence and if any areas still feel tight you can revisit them and perform the stretches again.

Select stretches that target the areas you worked. Areas to target should include:
Hamstrings.
Quadriceps.
Hips.
Shoulders.
Arms(biceps, triceps, forearms).
Back.
Chest.

Yoga is a great system incorporating breathing, meditation and stretching postures. I definitely recommend going to some yoga classes to gain some fundamentals that can be applied to your own stretching routines. However the focus here is not being yogi flexible, but on compensating and calming the body after hard exertion. Do not lose focus of your individual goal! Taking up yoga classes on non-training days is another great idea as this will help go a long way towards your recovery and longevity. Balancing out hard training with its polar opposite in yielding yoga will help you maintain a true life balance.

So there you have some outlines for your stretching routines. In my own training I usually perform full joint opening exercises followed by a few choice dynamic exercises. I then move into the skill specific warm up and main portion of my

training.

During my sets I try to move as I see fit, normally incorporating extra mobility exercises(mostly elbows and knees) before moving into the cool down.

I normally follow from skill specific, to dynamic stretches(Surya Namaskara) and then into around 6 yoga postures covering as much of the body as possible. Points to note, DO NOT SKIP THE WARM UP AND COOL DOWN!!

For your own performance, injury prevention, recovery and longevity these are essential components.

How much you do of each will truly depend upon the individual due to experience, level of conditioning, age, weather, conditions etc.

The length of the warm up and cool down should be relative to the training session. If you have only 30 minutes in which to train, 5 minutes of a warm up and 5 minutes of a cool down should be considered a must.

The longer your training time the longer you can prepare. However do not spend too much time in the warm up, your focus should be on getting to your main component in good time.

If you have the time do as much of the cool down as you can. This will help you recover for your next session but also get you back to reality. There is nothing quite as jarring as trying to get back to your real life responsibilities after training at maximum intensity! Enjoy the winding down process and appreciate what you achieved in your session.

SIMPLE JOINT OPENING ROUTINE

This routine consists of exercises opening the joints in the body. There are many videos and tons of information on the subject so you would do yourself credit by checking them out.

This routine can be used as part of a warm up but is of equal benefit if performed first thing in the morning upon rising or after a period of inactivity such as a long drive or sat at a desk.

Perform each exercise for 10 to 20 repetitions each, beginning slowly and increasing speed as you loosen up.

NECK TILTS



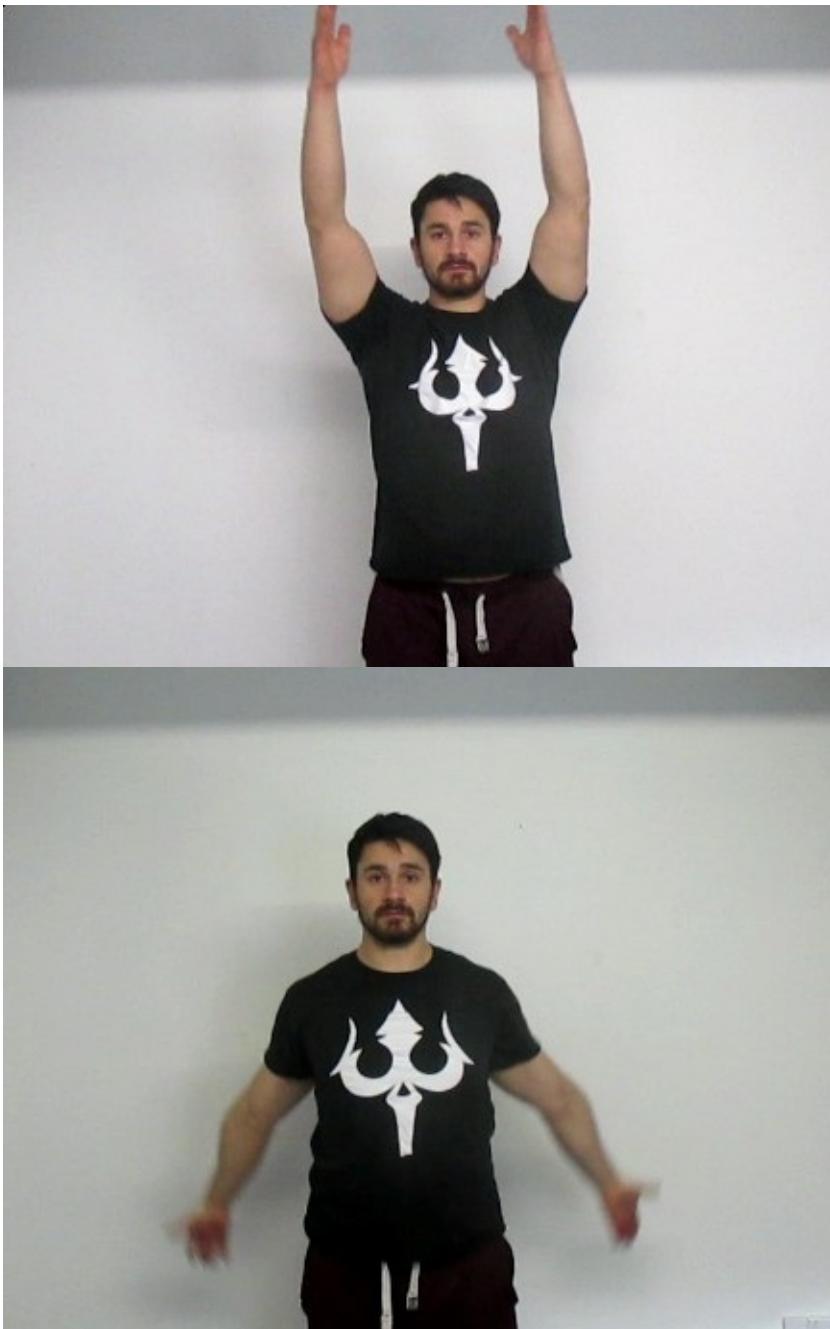
Look down, dropping your chin to your chest. Next lift your chin to the ceiling. Move slow and steady to begin with and pause briefly at each position. Exhale as you look down and inhale as you look up.

NECK ROTATIONS



Turn your head to one side as if trying to look over your shoulder. Reverse the direction. Exhale as you turn, inhale as your head faces forwards. Repeat for desired number of repetitions.

ARM SWINGS



Take the arms over head and swing them in circles, going forward and backward. Inhale as the arms rise, exhale as they descend.

ALTERNATING ELBOW STRIKES



This will require moving both arms simultaneously. Bring one elbow out to the side and pass the hand over the head. Now reverse the direction, bring the elbow towards your centre line and the hand back over.

Move the other arm at the same time, mirroring its opposite. This is the motion used for swinging Jori. Begin slow and increase speed gradually. This is a great way to warm up and mobilise the shoulders.

ELBOW EXTENSTIONS



Extend the arms in front of you, palms up. Keeping the upper arm straight, bend at the elbow and touch the top of your shoulders with your fingers. Reverse the direction and repeat. Inhale as you extend the arms, exhale as you bring them in. This is a simple and effective way of opening the elbow joints.

WRIST ROTATIONS

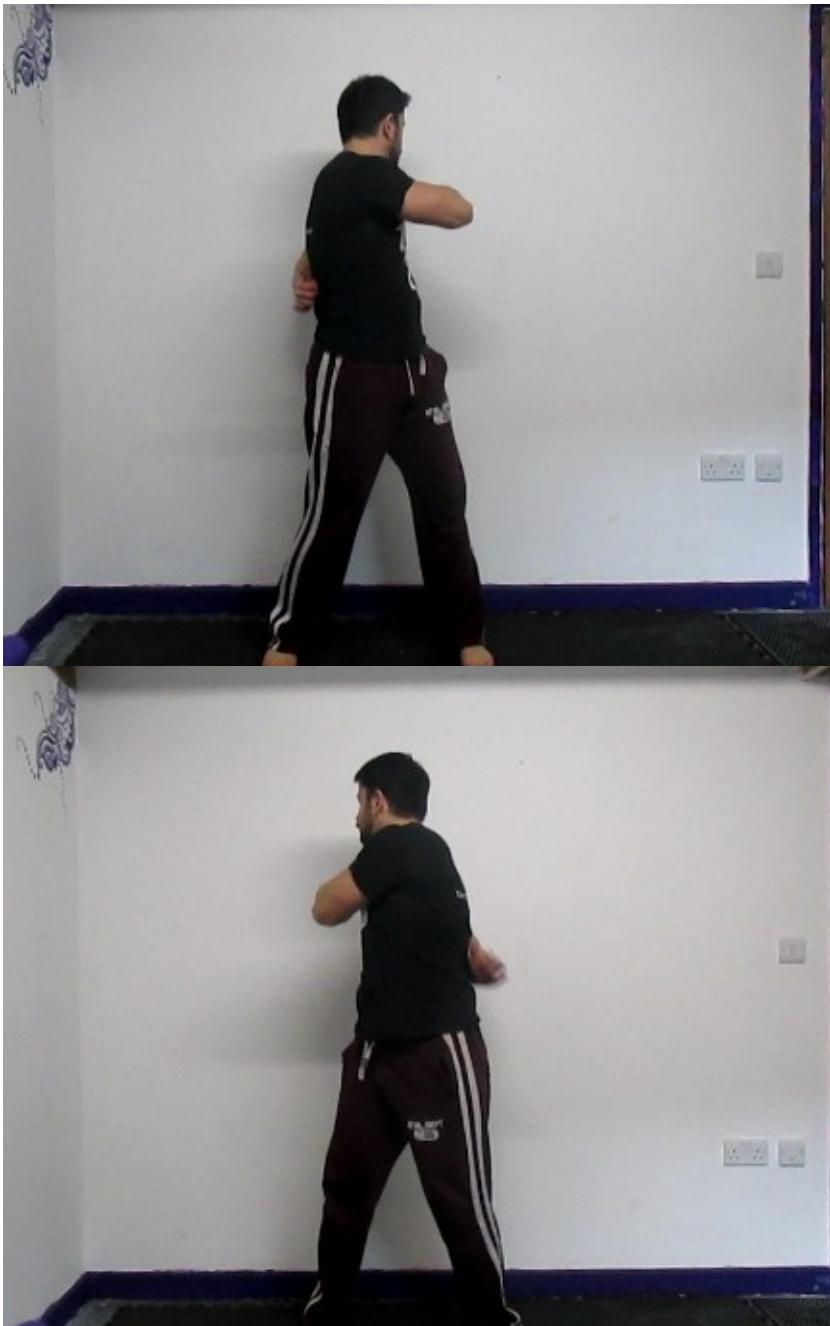


Clasp your hands together, interlocking the fingers. Rotate at the wrists going back and forth. Go as deep as is possible with this range of motion. Opens the wrists.

FINGER FLICKS

Ball your hands into fists, arms extended. Now open your hands as fully as you can. Really try to splay the fingers. Open and close the hands and pick up the speed. You can imagine you are flicking water off the ends of your fingers. Do with speed for circulation.

TAI CHI TWISTS



With the arms loose, swing from the waist. Allow the arms to move freely with no tension. When the hands connect with the body, ensure they contact with the clavicle and the kidney.

HIP CIRCLES





With hands on hips, make large circling motions. Ensure you move through the full range of motion. Push your hips fully forward, to the rear and the front.

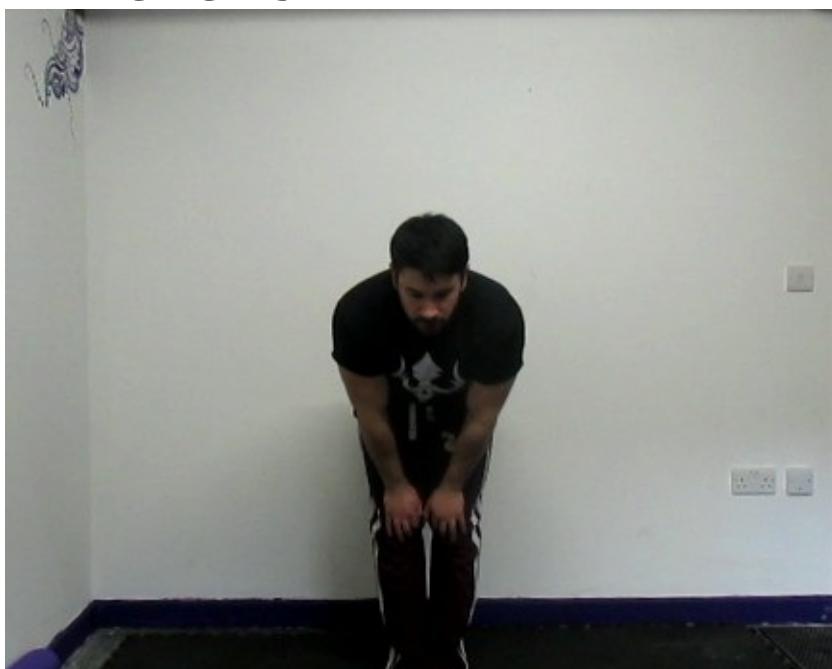
LEG SWINGS

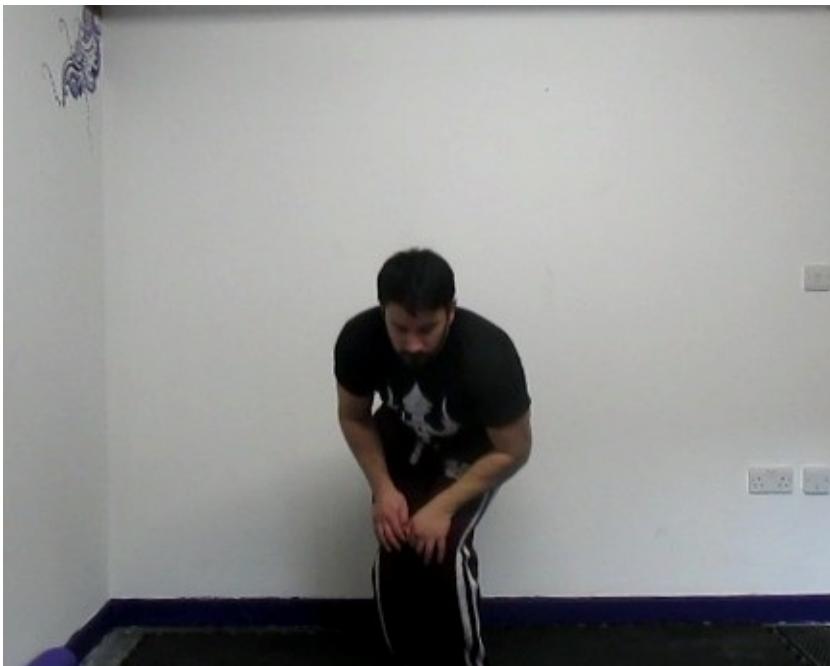




Maintain balance on one leg as you swing the opposite one forwards and backwards. Once complete, perform swings on the opposite leg. Focus on opening the hip joint.

KNEE CIRCLES





Place hands on the knees.

Rotate the knees in a circle. Attempt to push the knees to the sides,squat down, to the opposite side and then lock the knees backwards.

ANKLE ROTATIONS





Stand on one leg and hold the knee up. Point the toes and move the foot in circles clockwise and counter clockwise. Repeat on the opposite foot.

This simple routine will pay you dividends in the long run. Performing this upon waking and before training is a great way to go. This can also be performed at any tie during the day. I like to do these exercises if I have been sat down for a while, either at a desk, behind the wheel or on a plane. I always do them before a long distance flight which may get some funny looks but goes a long way in mitigating the stress the body is put on during flight. Being sat for so long restricts circulation and by performing a few exercises just before will help keep everything running smoothly.

SAMPLE STATIC STRETCHING ROUTINE

Performing stretching at the end of your routine can make a difference in how you recover as well as maintaining and building upon your currant level of flexibility. It also helps in calming the mind and alleviating stress.

The following is a simple routine you can implement. It is definitely worth researching and exploring the options available to you

Perform each stretch or pose for 30 seconds to a minute. If you perform the stretch on one side, perform equal time on the opposite side.

SIDE FROG/DEER POSE



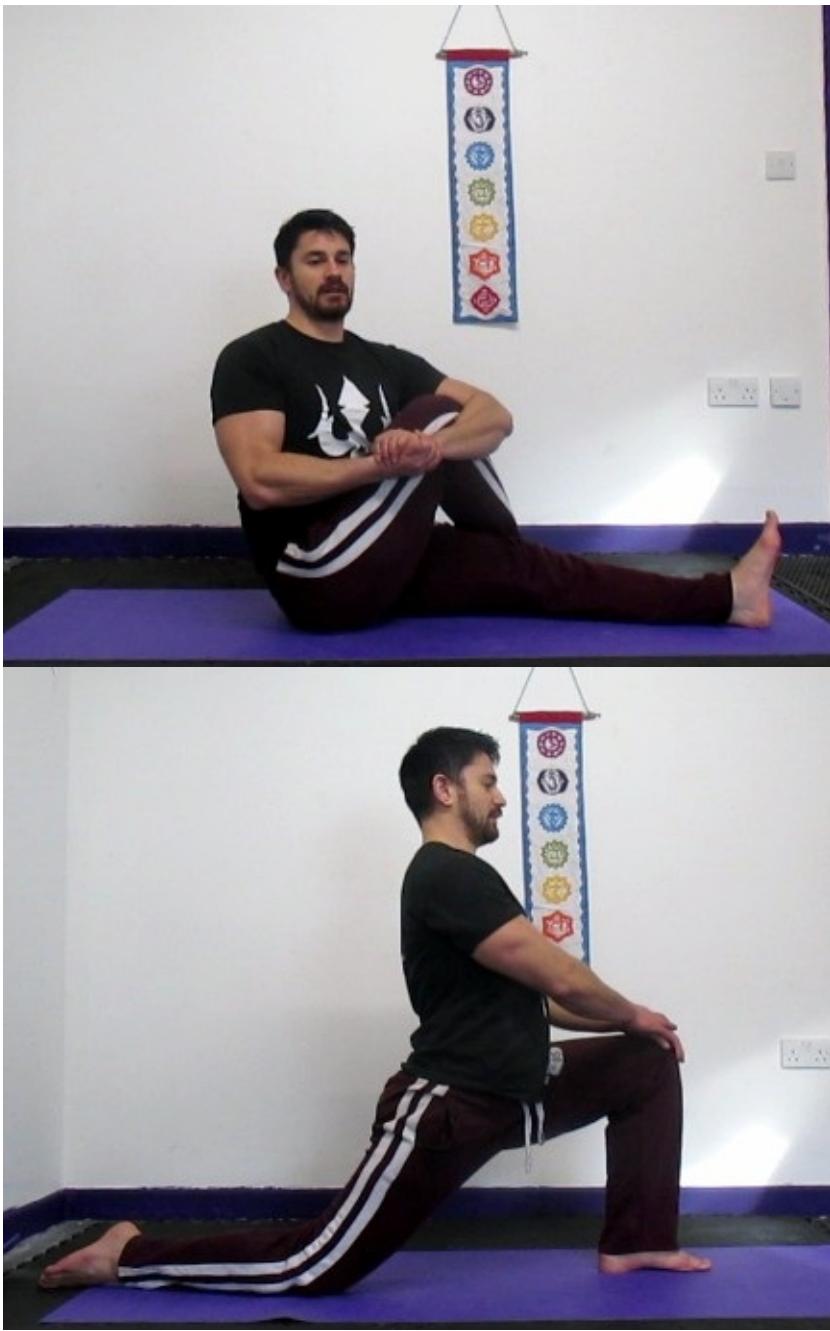
Sat on the floor, bring one leg in front of you and connect the knee of the opposite leg to the foot. Tuck the rear lower leg behind you flat to the floor. Sit up tall. Next rotate at the waist and fold over. Reach out but do not over extend as you place your forearms and head to the floor. Reverse the motion, switch sides and repeat.

TABLE



Begin seated on the floor, palms by the hips, legs bent at the knees. Drive upwards with the hips as you exhale. Hold the position, relax the neck, strengthen the arms and push through the soles of your feet.

SEATED SPINAL TWIST/ LUNGE

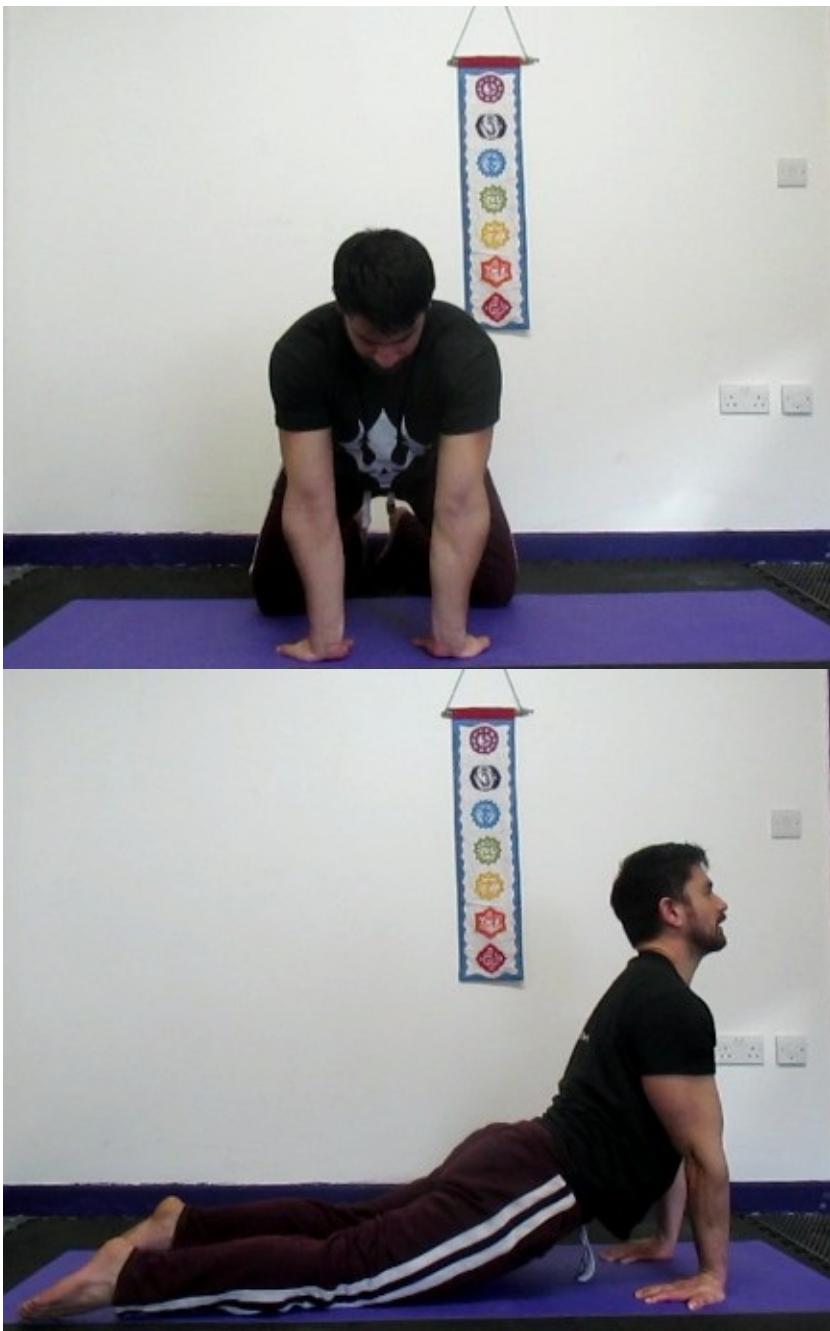


Bring one leg up and over by the opposite knee. Ensure the foot is flat to the floor. Clasp the hands over the knee and pull it in towards the opposite shoulder. Lift the spine tall. Inhale as you pull the knee in and extend the spine, exhale as you turn and twist slightly.

For the lunge, ensure your shin is connected to the floor. Bring the front leg into a lunge. Rotate at the hips to tuck the tail bone under. Raise the head up toward the ceiling to lengthen the spine. Push the rear knee into the ground and pull with

the front leg.

SEAL

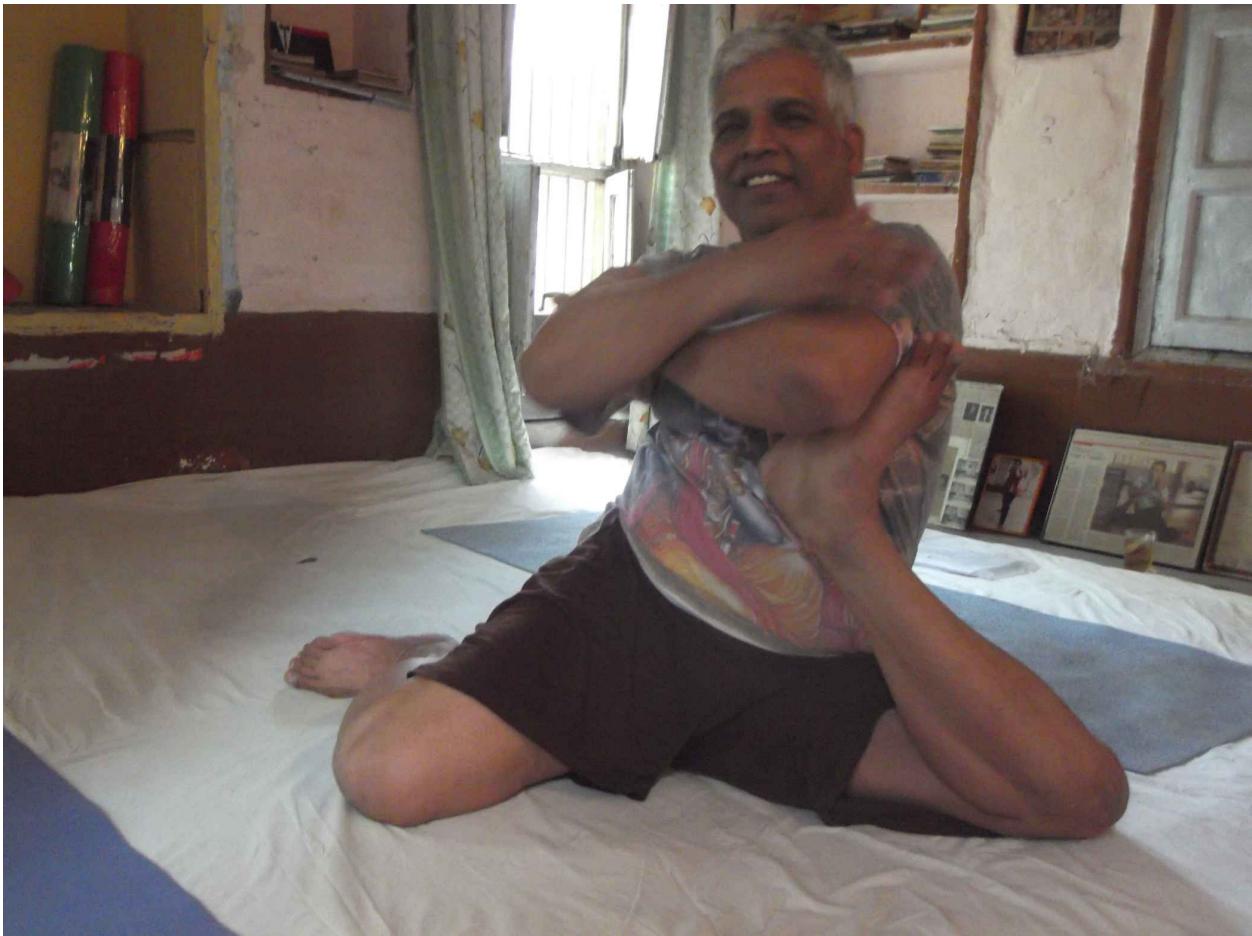


Begin by kneeling and turning the fingers back towards you. Feel a stretch in your forearms and wrists. If this is easy then extend your legs behind you, tuck your tail bone underneath and extend your spine by lengthening your head.

ARM THREAD



Kneel on the floor and push back so your glute muscles rest on your heels. Take one arm and thread it under the opposite arm. Reach under, turning at the mid back and try to place the shoulder to the floor. Actively continue reaching with the underside arm and push back with the arm in front of you. Switch sides and repeat.



Yoga teacher Sunil from Varanasi.
MEDITATION AND PRANAYAMA

Many traditional yogis begin their practices with a meditation prior to commencing the more dynamic breathing techniques (*Pranayama*) and postures (*Asana*). It allows the practitioner to deepen and expand the other aspects they wish to explore. Meditation is used to centre the mind and the bodies energy helping build focus and intention.

Many Kushti wrestlers will begin their days training with a simple meditation and Pranayama. Some may perform Mantras (sacred sounds and phrases) before the shrine of Hanuman. At the minimum each individual will pay their respect to the Hanuman shrine, taking a quiet moment before beginning the rigours of the day. As the practice begins early in the morning in the Akhara it is the perfect time and location to focus the mind and intention on the training ahead. The clean cool air of early morning combined with the smell of flowers and Nim leaves helps to invigorate the body and calm the mind. The Kushti wrestlers place great importance on performing their exercises at the right times and in the

right environment to optimise their whole being.

In my own training I believe meditation and Pranayama plays a vital role. Before I train I spend around 30 minutes or more going through various practices and after completion of physical training, will perform a shorter variation at the end. While this may seem like a lot of time “sitting around doing nothing” I truly feel it has affected not only my training and recuperative capabilities but also my mood and disposition to life.

Many people who like to hit the gym go in with an aggressive outlook which is needed for performing hard work. Being clear minded, singularly focused with a joyful heart for the task at hand I feel is better for you in the long run. Anger and aggression eventually give way as they cannot be maintained indefinitely, despite what numerous Spartanz and Warriorz would have you believe. I sincerely want you to challenge your concept of fitness. If you find benefit in these practices, great, if not that is great as well. But if you find the idea intrigues you why not at least try it out.

Meditation can be thought of as a simple exercise for health of mind and body. The focus should be on yourself bringing your attention inwards. In our hectic day to day lives it can be hard to find time to just “be with ourselves”. By performing very simple meditations and Pranayamas that can take only a few minutes both before and after your training you will feel better, recover quicker and have a calm steady mindset.

When performing meditations and Pranayamas with your training, you should consider using an “opening” and “closing” routine”. When you begin your training it is important to make the distinction between your “normal” every day activities and your physical/spiritual practice.

Opening and closing should be considered as a way to transition from one to the other. It is not complicated to do but helps to shed the strains and tensions accumulated through the day so you can focus your mind on what you are preparing to do.

Opening prepares and transitions you into your training whilst closing ends it and allows you to begin to move back into your days other activities.

The following two practices are to be performed before and after you train and combine elements of mediation and Pranayama.

OPENING MEDITATION AND PRANAYAMA

To begin you may stand, sit on the edge of a chair, kneel or lie flat on the ground whatever you find most comfortable. The Kushti wrestlers generally sit cross-legged, of which there are many variations. I like to sit in a kneeling position, *Vajrasana* or thunder bolt pose. To adopt this position simply kneel on the floor with your legs tucked underneath. I find this most comfortable for me and it has the added benefit of being great for digestion. The position you assume is not important but it must be comfortable to hold.

Now close your eyes. Take a deep inhale through the nostrils. As you do so feel a coolness and calmness enter into your lungs and being. As you exhale through mouth slowly but deeply imagine your breath leaving your body as a dark smoke or mist letting go of any tensions or stresses of the day. Continue to imagine that each inhale brings in a pure cleaning energy into your body eradicating any darkness stored there. Each exhale you expel this darkness leaving your body feeling lighter and healthier. Continue for several breaths anywhere from 3 to 36, becoming aware of all the sensations in your lungs, focusing on your breathing.

Now let your mind and awareness descend to your lower belly, just beneath the navel. Feel the sensation in your belly as it rises and falls. Breath into your belly feeling it expand and contract slowly with each inhale and exhale. Do not try to strain to change your breathing. Let it come naturally. As you breathe to your belly become aware of your body and any sensations such as the temperature of the air or sounds around you. Be aware of them without paying too much attention. Acknowledge them and let them be as they are. Continue breathing in this way again for 3 to 36 times.

Now move your attention from your belly to where your heart is and focus your attention and breathing here. Become aware of any emotions there. Try not to change your feelings but simply become aware of them. You may feel anger, sadness, frustration, boredom, happiness or joy. Just observe and acknowledge them without criticism. Allow a sense of peace come over you as you continue to breathe , with each inhalation and exhalation feel the heart become softer and lighter. Continue for 3 to 36 breaths.

Now bring your focus to the point between your eyes. Become aware of any thoughts, letting them come by but not paying overly much attention on them. Simply let them float by and through you as you continue breathing for 3-36 breaths.

From here you may slowly open your eyes and begin to start your days training. Hopefully you have a sense of calm and resolve before you begin.

If you find the mediation is too long then you can begin with the first practice of breathing into your lungs and just practice that. After that becomes comfortable you can add the next part, breathing into the abdomen and continue adding as you progress. Personally I have found in the beginning meditations can seem a long winded affair with lots of things to remember. By breaking them down into smaller more manageable parts learning them becomes easy rather than trying to do everything at once. Start with one chunk each week and then add another layer and soon the whole practice becomes second nature. The key is consistent practice!

CLOSING MEDITATION AND PRANAYAMA

Much like transitioning from your everyday life to training, you should transition from training into everyday life. The closing mediation should be performed right at the very end of your training session after any cool downs and stretching routines. After having exerted yourself with hard training, you need to balance this out and restore equilibrium to your physical organism and mental state. Simply stopping your training and going about your day is a shock to your body, if you train really hard you may find you cannot think clearly and your nervous system is over-firing. Your cool down will go a long way to alleviate that issue, the closing meditation will help you get back to your baseline resting rate or as close as possible. By being able to balance stress with rest you will recover quicker allowing you to progress significantly in your training and physical development

Immediately after you have completed these lie down flat on your back, palms facing up allowing the feet to drop out to the sides. The position is called Shavasana or “Dead Man” pose. It is performed at the end of yoga sessions and is of equal importance at the end of hard physical training.

Lie down and relax, closing your eyes. Inhale through your nostrils and exhale gently through your mouth. Focus on the rise and fall of your navel. As you inhale feel your navel rise and your belly fill with air. As you inhale count for 2 seconds expanding as you do so. After the inhale is completed, retain the breath for a count of 2 seconds, after which release slowly to another four second count. Finally once all the breath has left the lungs hold your breath for four seconds

before repeating the sequence this time with a 3 second count. Continue until you reach a 5 second count for each phase.

This can be easily visualised as a box, each side being of equal length. Your breath travels along the line of this breath as you inhale, retain the breath, exhale, hold the breath and continue the cycle. Initially this may seem difficult especially if your heart rate is still high. It is important to try and relax into this it is not a race. Let your breathing slow and slow and slow. If you need to stay with the 2 second count do so until you can achieve the 3 second count.

Once you reach 5 seconds continue to perform for a couple of minutes. As you do so feel your body totally relax and allow a sensation of gratitude and accomplishment enter your body for what you have achieved. Be thankful for your body and your health.

To exit this meditation gently move your hands and feet, your legs and arms and move your head from side to side gently. Slowly sit up. If you wish to meditate further now is a great time as the mind is receptive and open. If not then you should be fully balanced and at ease ready to continue your day.

TRANSITIONING BACK TO YOUR DAY.

After your training is completed it is beneficial to not just jump straight into what you have planned. Take a moment to reflect on your experience. Let it soak into your body. What did you feel what went right and what less so. If you have a training journal now is the perfect time to write how you think your training session went. Note how you felt, what you achieved and what you hope to attain in your next session. A training journal shouldn't just be a list of exercises and numbers but an expression of you at that moment in time. I like to think of it as the diary I never keep. Going back over my journals I can see some times I would be in a bad mood and after I would feel uplifted and motivated. The numbers help but seeing your own thoughts and aspirations written down can be just as motivational. Any thoughts or worries are noted down and simply writing them down can help reduce the stress of them. Getting it out of your system helps unburden the spirit . Now you can continue with your day with optimism and a great pump!

These are some simple techniques and there are many out there. If I were to list just the ones I use then I would have to write another book! There is a lot of information out there so if you are interested try to find a local yoga teacher who

can guide you or research some good books. What I find is that if a particular topic will interest you then finding what you need becomes a personal quest. If you would like further guidance on the subject do not hesitate to contact me!

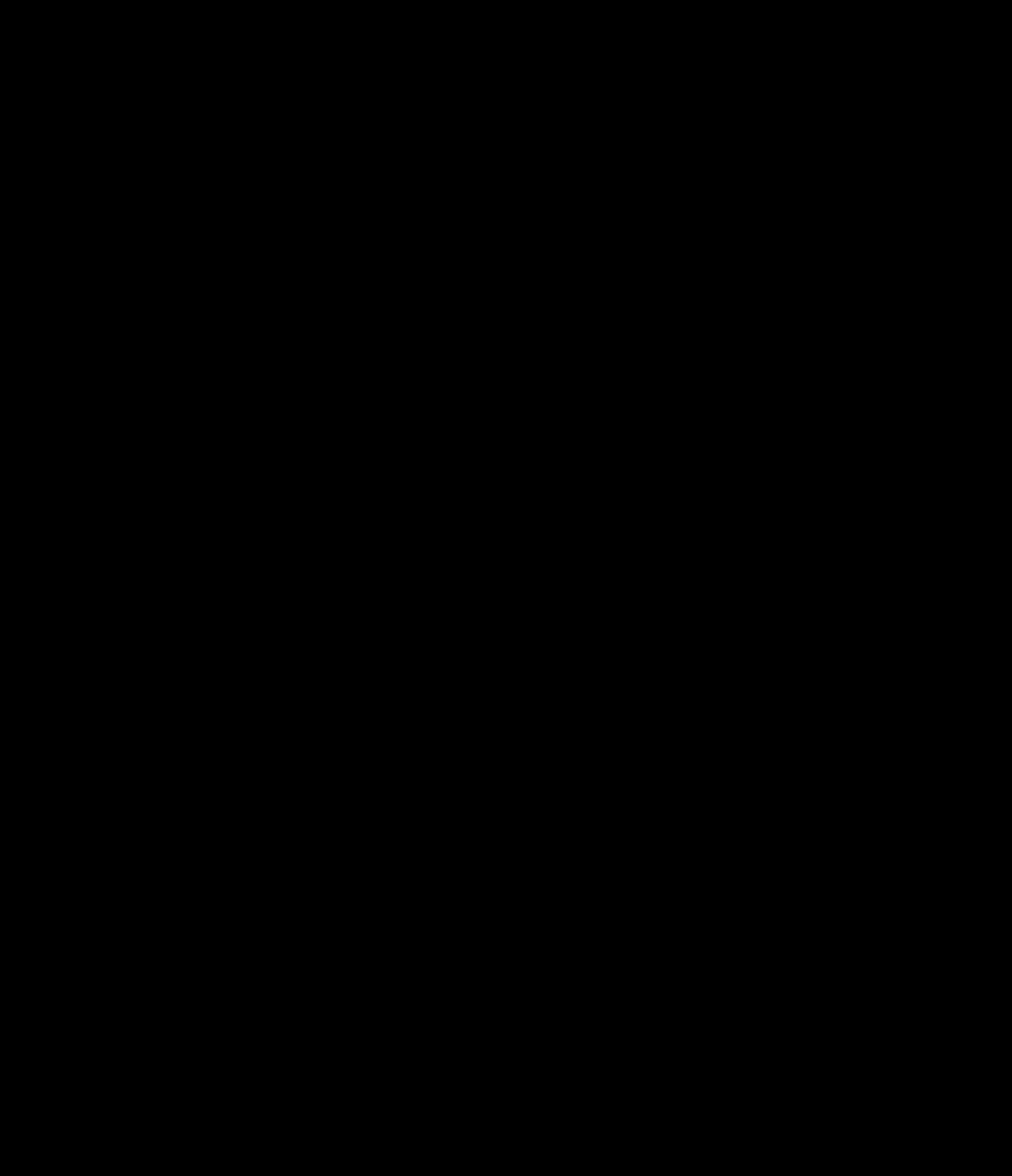
Of special note is the *Lingasana* training I practice. It consists of meditation, Pranayama and the lifting of weights with the genitals. It is practised by the Sadhus of India and is considered the hottest of yogas. It increases the body temperature creating *Agni* or fire, which helps eradicate illness and enriches the body with energy. It allows you to take the energies of the sexual organs and convert it into *Ojas* the subtle energy of the spirit.

Without fail I perform this practice before my main training. It requires mental discipline and full concentration otherwise there could be nasty consequences! Fellas, please don't just hang weights off your junk as you are liable to just injure yourself. Without the correct training and preparation your results would be less than impressive in any case. Women can perform a similar exercise which I have seen being abused on you tube. The people involved seem more concerned with the weight lifted and advertising than the actual practice. Like many of the exercises here, it is putting the mental intention not just mindlessly performing the action that will allow you to reap long term benefits. Ensure if you want to follow this practice you find a good reputable teacher.



Performing Lingasana with a 50 kilo granite block.

CHAPTER 3 KUSHTI EXERCISES



THE EXERCISES

The following exercises have been handed down for countless generations. By practising them you can tap into an ancient wisdom of health, vitality and personal power. May Hanuman guide you!

STANCES

The following are techniques you can employ in your own training. These were garnered through observing and then self replicating, trying to understand when, where and why they were being employed. These have been used by champion level competitors and so are worth implementing in your own training. By doing so you will see your own performance in training sky rocket.

RIGID STANCE

This is the most popular stance I seen taken in videos of Gada swings. The person stands square to the camera and swings from the arms only. The rest of the body is still until they realise they cannot handle the weight and must perform a cross between a limbo and the funky chicken to compensate. Others will dip at both the knees and almost attempt to jerk the weight up and over the shoulder and so the result is equally awkward looking. Do not be one of these people!

I am not sure why people tend to swing this way. I presume it is a lack of mobility and fluidity of the torso or that the movement just feels alien so they lack the confidence to perform it correctly. Regardless of the reason, if you are reading this then stop it! Unless you are injured and cannot perform the following techniques you have no excuse. If you are reading this then I assume you want to take your technique to the next level, in which case abandon the rigid body stance. Become like water, my friend.

TECHNIQUE POINTS

Don't do it.

SOFT KNEES

This is employed through all the swinging movements and is a perfect way to get out of using the rigid stance. For all swinging exercises, imagine your knees are like rubber. They will act as shock absorbers as you transition through the movements. In whichever swing style you use, you will have to catch the weight at some point to be able to perform the next repetition on the other side. It is important to actively perform a slight dip of the knees to absorb this force. If you keep your knees locked then you are not working with the forces being put upon your body, rather you are working against them. Throughout the duration of the movements try and keep a relatively low stance.

TECHNIQUE POINTS

Maintain "soft" knees throughout.

Absorb the force of the object with appropriate knee dip. Not too much, not too little, just right.

Stay low.

BODY SWAY TECHNIQUE

This stance can be applied to the Gada swing. Taking a solid stance with feet rooted through out with knees slightly bent swing the Gada. As it passes behind you, lean as much as is required in the opposite direction to that which the Gada head is travelling. As you pull the handle up and over the shoulder, return to your centre line, you should be in a more upright position. Reverse the motion. This movement is unique to the Gada swing and becomes essential to mastering heavier weights. By leaning away you effectively shorten the distance the weight has to travel as well as putting yourself into a more powerful position for the pull over. In motion you should be swaying from side to side, the movement coming from the hips. This will look like a pendulum when correctly applied.

Now you may say “I can swing the Gada from a rigid position, why should I apply this technique?” Well how much are you swinging? 25 kilos plus? Probably not and chances that if you are, you are probably applying this technique already subconsciously. This technique is about shortening levers and using forces to aid us in achieving our goals. I have seen a lot of people who fail to apply this technique, maintain a rigid torso as they swing Do not be one of those people! To reiterate, if you swing the Gada you must learn this technique to excel at it!

TECHNIQUE POINTS

Keep the feet rooted throughout. They stay planted and do not move!

Lean predominately from the hips and torso but uses the whole body as well. Think of this as a full body movement.

Even if you can maintain a rigid torso when swinging, apply this technique. Use it with all your Gada from lightest to heaviest.

Imagine your body is like a piece of bamboo flexible and pliable. In a strong wind it bends but always come back to the centre.

Be like water and flow!

HIP SWAY TECHNIQUE

This technique applies predominately to the Jori but can be used with the

Dumbbell swing. This is the Jori equivalent of the Body Sway. The focus is predominately in the hips, the feet again rooted to the ground. As the swing of Jori happens, the same side hip to the arm swinging will be pushed forward. As the Jori is brought down and to the front, the hips will roll back to a square on position to the front. As the swing on the opposite side commences the hip will roll forward again and repeat the motion. This when done correctly will look much like a figure 8 pattern and should be performed smoothly. The weight of the body will shift gently from side to side during this movement and the body will turn in on itself slightly. This helps in shortening the distance that the Jori must travel. This, like the Body Sway is an essential technique, especially when handling heavier Jori. With light Jori there tends to be less emphasis on this movement and the body can be held relatively motionless. With heavier weights this becomes a necessary movement and is great at teaching grounding and direction of force without having to move the feet, a useful skill for all martial arts. All of the points here apply to using the Dumbbell swing. When the dumbbell head comes down, push the hips forward, as it comes up to the shoulder, come to the centre. Again this is used mainly with heavier dumbbells.

As the arm swinging the Jori begins to come over, move the same side hip forward.

Come back to a central position and repeat on the opposite side.

Imagine performing a sensuous figure 8 with your hips!

Shift the whole body as you perform this movement from side to side. Use this technique with heavier weights

MARCHING

This technique is applied to the Jori swinger usually when using heavy weight or when nearing fatigue during a long set or both. This looks very much like marching in place and is similar to the steps performed by Perisan Meel swingers. The Jori swinger will take an aggressive step forward as the same side arm performs the swing. This forward motion adds extra momentum to the swing making it easier to clear over the shoulder. The foot is then taken back to the original position and the movement is repeated on the opposite side and continues throughout. This technique is applied sparingly unless required, typically seen in the heaviest work set of training or during competition. The steps can be small or large dependant upon the level of exertion required to accomplish the lift, starting small and getting larger and larger as the set continues in duration. A key point is that this movement uses Ground Reactive Force a technique explained in the Science Behind the Swings chapter of this

force a technique explained in the Science section in the swing chapter of this book. The swinger takes advantage of both momentum of their body to aid the swing, but also the energy forces created by the ground to create more power in their body. This is similar to the foot stomp though less focused in energy distribution.

TECHNIQUE POINTS

Take a step with the leg of the same side arm swinging the Jori simultaneously forward up to a foot away to assist in completion of the repetition.

Bring the foot back to the original position as you transition to the next swing.

Repeat on the other side moving back and forth.

Practice this movement so you become familiar with it but it should only be applied during your toughest training sets, do not make a habit of using it with lighter weights for example.

To increase the power of this movement , stomp your foot as you take a step forward, but not backward (see the foot stomp technique).

THE KNEE DIP

The knees dip is used mainly with the dumbbell swing in much the same manner as the dip in a clean and jerk. The distance is shortened and the force is absorbed as the dumbbell reaches the shoulder. It can be used in the Gada swing but should not be overemphasised, more a very slight dip of the knees and not overly exaggerated. This is very simple and involves dipping the knees as the weight comes to its still position, either in front with the Gada or on the shoulder with the dumbbell. This is used to maintain stamina during long duration dumbbell swings softening the shock of the force being transferred into the body. The energy is absorbed in the lower body and then redirected into the next dumbbell swing, giving it an extra little shove. This will look rhythmic when performed correctly. As the set continues the dip may become deeper and deeper as more exertion is required. This is the main technique to be applied if you wish to perform the dumbbell swing well.

TECHNIQUE POINTS

As the weight comes up to the shoulder dip the knees to absorb the force.

Stand up as you begin the next swing, using this standing up to add extra momentum to the swing. Repeat on both sides.

Use this with the Dumbbell Swing, Kushti curl as well as the Gada swing(to a lesser extent).

THE HEEL RAISE

This technique tends to happen when swinging heavier Gadas and is the only time it is permissible to move the feet during the movement. It happens Just as the transition from the pull from rear to front happens. As you lean away and begin to pull, elevate yourself onto the toes of the same side foot to the side the Gada is on quickly. This has much the same effect of the Marching technique by adding extra upward momentum and raising the distance of the weight. Once you have fully extended from the toes drop down quickly back to the heel. The distance you have just gained by raising your heel will be translated to to the Gada head position. By dropping down quickly you in effect gain an extra inch or 2 of clearance which makes completing the movement easier. This is applied to both sides of the body.

This is a technique I found myself using when moving up to heavier weights. The extra little shove it gives made all the difference. However, this is something you will have to transition out of. Use this technique sparingly and in much the same way as the Marching technique. Use it when the weight is heavier than normal or you begin to fatigue but do not make a habit of using it in all your training. Being properly rooted and grounded will give you more power think of these two techniques as turning up the dial. You do not want to be at the maximum all the time, use it when you need to and no more than that!

THECHNIQUE POINTS

As the Gada beings to travel up and over the shoulder rise up on the same side foot onto the toes just as the weight begins to ascend over the shoulder.

Drop down quickly but gently and gain an extra inch to your swing and complete the movement. Repeat on both sides.

Much Like marching, use this technique sparingly and when it counts

GADA

The Gada has a very special place within the the context of Indian physical culture. It has far reaching symbolism beyond being a mere tool for creating strength. It is mentioned in ancient texts and mythologies stretching back thousands of years. As a weapon I was wielded with deadly effect for many centuries. Ornamental Gadas are presented to the winners of a Dangal, or

wrestling competition as a symbol of strength, power and accomplishment. Hanuman. The Hindu god of strength is always depicted with a Gada. The God Vishnu also carries a named Gada, Kaumodaki.

In the north of India Kushti wrestlers and Pahelwan utilise this ancient training tool to this very day

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There is much symbolism involved with the Gada due to its prominent part in the Hindu religion.

Traditionally,to hold a Gada , one must have complete control over the following:

The Five Actions: Anus,sex,legs, hands and mouth. The Five Perceptions: Nose, tongue, eye, skin, ear. The Five Vices: Anger, greed, ego, lust and attachment.

Control over these instincts, thoughts and desires means only the most diligent and devoted were to hold the Gada. Purity of thought and deed were paramount. Lack of self control was considered a sign of weakness of the mind body and spirit. To master oneself was to show discipline and thus the honour of holding the Gada.

The shape of a Gada resembles that of a churning stick used in the making of butter and buttermilk. The use of the Gada has much the same effect on the wrestler as the churning stick has on milk. It has the ability to enhance the wrestlers potential. It is likened that when the wrestler swings the Gada he is churning his internal energies, specifically his semen into a higher form of energy. This energy called Ojas is used to aid with clarity of thought and a higher connection with all things. It revitalises the mind and body. This ability to

transmute sexual energy for other uses is theme found in the wrestlers practice of celibacy or *Bramacharya*.

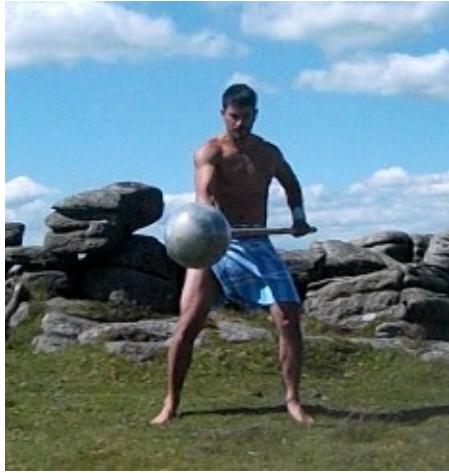
The Gada is often represented by past champions by being held in the right hand. This signified the wielders power to assert authority and control. Hanuman is often depicted with his Gada held in the right hand.

The Gada is a mace like strength tool, with a bamboo handle and either stone, concrete or sometimes iron for the head. The Gada is taken from the ground up and over the head to initialise the movement which looks much like a pendulum in motion, swinging smoothly from one shoulder to the other behind the body. The Gada works the grip, shoulder girdle, back and full body and can be swung using one or two hands.

GADA SWING(FERAAREE)

The move used with the Gada is ,known as the 10-2 in the west is called a *Feraaree*, meaning “repetitions of a swing”. This term is also used with regards to the Jori. Each repetition is counted in *Hath* or “hands”. A single *Hath* consists of a swing going over each shoulder once. Gada are swung in competition for number of *Hath* completed with increasing weights. Wrestlers tend to favour higher repetitions with a moderate weight, believing that too heavy a weight will make them too rigid and take away from their grappling skills. Those that train in the traditional weight lifting competitions place a premium on heavier weight swung for as many times as possible.

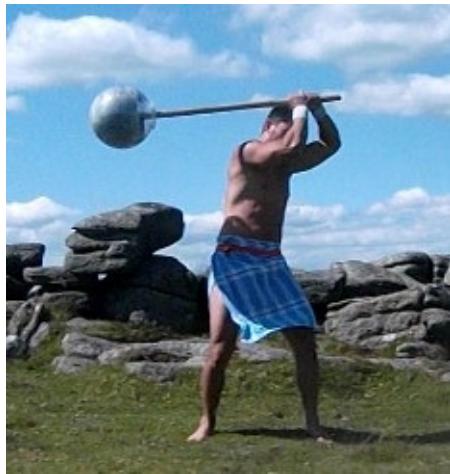




To get the weight up and in motion you must perform the Launch. This involves taking the Gada from the ground to up and over the shoulder in one smooth motion and instantly moving into the Feraaree. The Gada is held with one hand near the end of the pole palm down and the other near the head palm up.

Initiate the movement by swinging the weight back between the legs inhaling. Reverse the movement with an exhale, forcefully aiming to send the weight up and diagonally towards the same side shoulder as the hand nearest the head.





Around the point when the Gada head is in-line with the shoulder, release the hand to allow the weight to go unrestricted.

The free hand should quickly move to stack on top of the opposite hand, timing is crucial to allow the flow of the movement to happen. This concludes the Launch.

Once the handle is firmly grasped allow the weight to come down in an arc behind you.





Take an inhale. Once the arc begins, tighten up the elbows, bringing them close to each other as much as possible. The tighter the position the less chance thee is of injury. The shoulders must be pulled down and in their sockets, whilst still allowing the range of motion to occur.

Allow the weights momentum to swing behind the knees, turning it. As the weight moves to the opposite side, actively lean away from it to act as a counterbalance and begin to pull up and over the shoulder which side the weight is now on.





As the Gada reaches the end of its arc pull up and over your shoulder. You want to imagine pulling a rope attached to the ceiling down with speed toward your centre line around your navel exhaling forcefully. This should be a pronounced whip like movement. Whereas in the back position the arms lock the weight in place now they are performing the movement.

The correct end position will have both hands by the navel, with the handle facing you diagonally and the Gada head suspended above the shoulder. This position is held momentarily and there should be a brief contraction in the whole upper body.





After pulling the weight down, reverse the movement by pushing up and over the shoulder. Inhale as you begin the push.

Allow the weight to do the work as you lean away acting as a counterbalance. As the weight come behind your knees, turn the hand sin the back to act as a guide and prepare to lean away from the weight again.



Continue the inhale again leaning away from the weight to act as a counterbalance. Pull up and over the shoulder diagonally across your body. Bring your hands to the navel with controlled force. Continue the motion going back and forth . Imagine yourself as a human pendulum



To release the weight just let it go. Ensure you do this outside on soft ground so as to not break your Gada or any floors!

If you are indoors then grab the Gada near the head, much like in the launch position and bring it down to the ground under control.

TECHNIQUE POINTS:

Ensure you master the launch, this is a pivotal movement to complete this exercise. Send the Gada head over the shoulder and sideways, not backwards. To help with this imagine there is a pane of glass a foot behind you. Your mission is to not

hit this glass!

गदा ग्रासः

Pull down to the navel, do not keep the arms up near the chest in the front position. In the back position, ensure your elbows are high up, not flared out. Lean away from the weight, do not keep a locked core.

Keep your breathing calm and tension minimised in the face.

Look up at the head of the weight or down at the ground 4 feet in front of you.

There are essentially 2 ways to train with the Gada. One way is for strength and the other is for endurance.

Both ways have their own value and neither has to be mutually exclusive. Many of the wrestlers in India train primarily for endurance but they also incrementally increase the weight over time.

Start with a Gada you can swing for 10 Hath (hands).

Try to add 5 Hath each time you train.

Once you have reached 15 Hath, aim to get to 20 Hath.

Continue in this fashion until you reach 50 Hath (50 swings of left and right combined)

Once you reach this point, select the next weight up and begin the process again. This is a slow and steady way of progressing.

WHAT WEIGHT OF GADA?

Initially you may start with a light Gada from 5 to 10 kilos as a beginner. Learning the technique will feel very alien in the beginning and it takes time to get comfortable with it. As you gain your confidence and hone your technique you will find you can progress at a steady pace. Here are some recommendations for the weight of Gada you can swing in relation to your goals.

Beginner, flexibility or pre-hab. Not the main focus of your training/used infrequently: 5-10 kg.

Some experience, strength and endurance, part of a regular routine: 10-15 kg.
Experienced, increased conditioning and power, emphasised in routine : 15-25 kg.

Specialisation, focus on the exercise as the main component of a training: 25kg+



Pahlavan Gyanshankul Singh demonstrating the Gada swing.

Gyanshankul Singh was kind enough to show me around several Akharas and talk about training and the background to it all. He has also been instrumental to clarifying many points in this book. Without his aid it would be much less complete. So to that end, thank you Pratay!

1 ARM GADA





Using the same launch technique employed when using two hands first swing back between the legs.

Reverse the direction swinging the head of the Gada up towards the same side shoulder as the hand closest to weight.

Send the head of the Gada up and over the opposite shoulder to the hand holding the handle, releasing the hand nearest the head of the weight.





Ensure the weight clears the head!

Allow the weight to swing down in it's arc under control. Ensure you have a firm grasp .

As the weight travels to the opposite side, lean or turn in the opposite direction. This will help in closing the distance, act as a counter weight and protect your shoulder.





Pull the handle up and over the shoulder, try not to drag it up and over. To begin with you may have to slide the handle pole over your shoulder. In time you should be able to pull and place it on the gap between your clavicle. This is done

gently and should feel quite comfortable.

The weight is then pulled along then down to ensure a good position to swing from for the next repetition.





Push the head of the Gada up and away to initiate another swing.
Ensure a tight grip and let the weight fall in a pendulum arc.
Imagine drawing a circle with the elbow that moves in tandem with the weight
as it





completes it's arc.

To change sides bring the weight over the shoulder and hold with two hands. The hand you wish to transfer to can be either on top or beneath the current swinging hand.

Release the grip of the original swinging hand. Raise the arm explosively to send the handle upwards.

Ensure the handle clears your head, the weight should now be at the top position to begin it's downwards arc.





Allow the weight to continue it's arc,
As the weight comes behind and towards the opposite side, lean away from it to act as a counter weight.

You may well find one side is much stronger than the other! Be careful and start light initially. This is something you will want to build up to especially if you value your elbows!

TECHNIQUE POINTS:

Ensure you have a firm grip before attempting this movement.

You must lean away from the weight as it passes behind you.

Pull the weight up and over the shoulder, do not drag it over!

You may apply oil (olive oil, mustard oil) to your shoulders and upper chest to help

prevent friction burns.

Try and develop a rhythm as you perform this movement.

Calm your breathing and concentrate.

EXERCISE IMPLEMENTATION SUGGESTION:

Use this exercise as warm up to Jori and Gada practice.

Perform this exercise for one minute with one arm before switching to the other and

continuing. Do this 2-3 times.

Perform multiple sets(5-10) of low reps (3-5) to develop strength and explosive

power using a heavy Gada. Rest 30 seconds between sets.



A Guru and senior wrestlers resting in the shade.

1 ARM GADA SWING





Pahlavan Luchman of Mahmritjunje Temple Akhara performing 1 handed Gada swings with 32 kgs.

Pahlavan Luchman was kind enough to demonstrate all the lifting techniques of the Gada, Jori and Dumbbells for me. Such a kind and softly spoken man but with a ridiculously strong handshake, he is the Champion of his Akhara.

The 1 handed Gada swing is not tested in competition but is used more as a training aid when working towards using heavy Jori. It is the equivalent of doing a 1 arm dumbbell press instead of using 2 at once. You can focus on one side more, use more weight and so develop more power when you come back to using 2 implements.

GADA HAND TO HAND SWING





Begin with either the weight over the shoulder or launch straight into the exercise. Begin by swinging with one arm.



Pull up and over as in the one arm swing.

As the weight come over the shoulder be prepared to grab the handle with the opposite hand.

Aim to grasp the switching hand into an over hand grip *i.e.* stacked on top of the other hand.



Release the underneath hand and perform a swing with the opposite arm.
Reverse the motion of the previous swing.

Go back and forth between arms for the desired number of reps.

TECHNIQUE POINTS:

You must bring the hands to chest height or below. You must be quick to make the transition work. Get into a good rhythm that is snappy.

This may take practice but is definitely good fun!

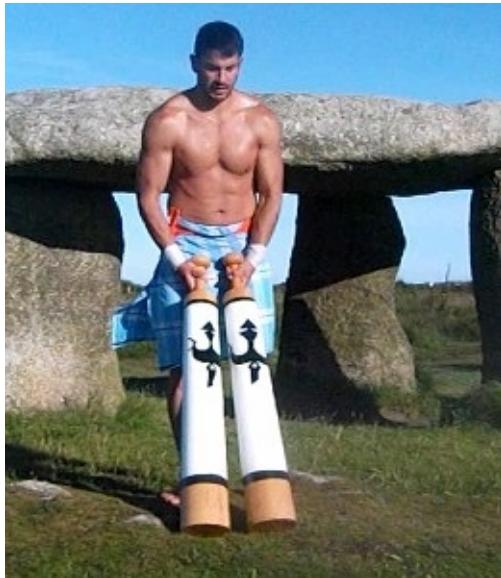
EXERCISE IMPLEMENTATION EXAMPLE:

This is a good exercise to perform for time. Perform swings for 1,2,3 or more

minutes continuously!

Use this as a dynamic warm up with a light Gada.

JORI



Jori, meaning pair is a set of two clubs that can be of varying size and weight used by wrestlers and Pahalawan to strengthen the arms, back and grip. However with an increase in weight it becomes a total body exercise as the body will shift from side to side to maintain balance and equilibrium. Jori are a common sight in the Akhara and as their name suggests, always used in pairs.

The Jori weight can vary from 5 to 45 kilograms with typical training weights between 10 and 20 kilograms for wrestlers.

Competitive jori swingers, Pahalawan place a premium on weight and in competitions the winner is the one who achieves the most swings with the heaviest weight. A repetition or "hath" (hand) is a swing of both left and right Jori. So one swing left and one swing right is "1" hand.

Jori Swings are one of the three competition lifts, the others being Gada swings and Dumbbell Swings.

Jori swings are called *Feraaree*, meaning “repetitions of a swing”. This term is also used with regards to the Gada swing.

Whereas the Gada is associated with the God Hanuman, the Jori is associated with Kaalbhilarava, Shivas aspect of destruction and darkness.



The Jori are swung behind, either side of the leg ensuring they do not drag on the ground.

Pull the hands into the waist and then under and upwards to drive the Jori towards the upper body.

The handles are flipped up and over to land on the shoulders.



The bodyweight is then shifted slightly to accommodate the clearance of the first swing.

The elbow rises with the hand outwards to send the Jori towards the opposite shoulder direction, staying close but not contacting the body.

The end of the Jori is allowed to drop under its own momentum beginning a semicircular arc behind the back.



As the Jori completes its arc, the shoulder will rotate through to allow the elbow and wrist to turn inwards, the opposite of to the start of the swing.

The elbow will come across the front of the body, the wrist cocked towards the wrist.

The weight is then pulled over the top of the shoulder to rest on the chest, the handle being pulled level with the waist. Simultaneously the swing will begin on the other side.



Now the opposite arm mirrors the action of the first, creating a arc behind the body. The hand must stay close to the neck and will rotate in place creating a small circle. The shoulder meanwhile draws a larger circle, with the wrist positioned at its centre.

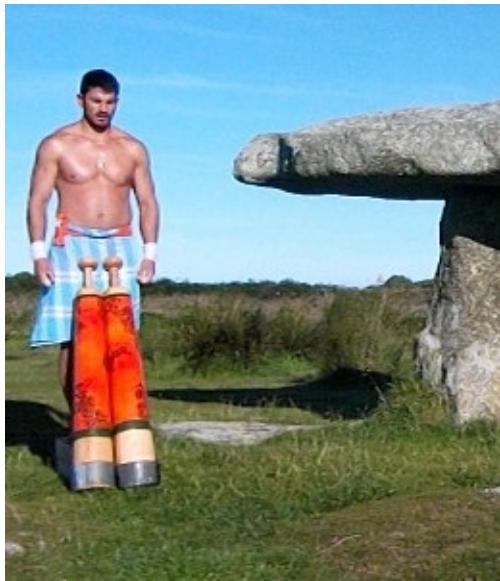


Again the weight is pulled up and over the shoulder, striving to maintain a close connection with hand, wrist and back of the neck.

The Smaller the circle the tighter it will feel and make the movement much smoother.

The action is repeated, during which the body will shift weight to accommodate the changes in weight in relation to which side is being swung.

WEIGHTED JORI



In India to increase the difficulty of Jori, bands of metal are often fastened onto the ends. This makes them much tougher to swing as now there is a greater concentration of weight at one end as opposed to it being more or less constant through the whole club. This makes the exercise even more whole body and is especially tiring on the upper body musculature. Total concentration, determination and a vice like grip will go a long way to achieving results with this exercise.





The Heavy Jori are swung whilst standing upon bricks or a elevated platform. This must be narrow enough to allow clearance to the sides, as well as tall enough to enable the Jori to clear the ground.

Swing the weight a few time to get the feel for it as well as to build momentum. Then bring the heads or the Jori up explosively, as they come to waist level hop off of the step, bring the handles in quickly and catch the weight on your shoulders.

Dip your knees as you do so to absorb the impact. This should be performed as a quick fluid motion. Care should be taken to avoid hitting yourself in the face as the Jori will be coming up and at you fast!



After establishing a firm grip and shifting the body weight, the Jori is swung, identically to the lighter version. With more weight at the end due to the metal collar and length increased, the arc will be much larger but also faster. Here grip plays a major part and the shoulder and wrist must turn with much more power than before.



The Jori must be pulled up and over the shoulder with the handle being drawn down towards the waist. Due to the increase in weight, the body will turn to counterbalance it so the handle will be brought diagonally down across the body. During this portion of the movement, it will slide across the shoulder but it should be noted that dragging the Jori over the shoulder through the whole movement is incorrect. The slide is merely facilitated to allow clearance for the second swing, not to get the weight over the shoulder to complete the repetition.



The body will

continually shift at the hips with a constant rhythmic dip of the knees. It will appear as if the body is swaying to some music only the swinger can hear.

Jori come in 3 varieties. These are:

THIN JORI:

These Jori tend to be long, thin and conical as their name denotes. These are the most commonly used Joir in the Akhara. They also tend to be the lightest and are used when beginning to learn the techniques required for swinging Jori.

FAT JORI:

Which are as long but much wider in diameter bears a passing resemblance to the Iranian Meel. These are much harder to swing compared to the thin Jori as

they are much heavier and wider, so there is more chance of them hitting each other and are more difficult to balance on the shoulder. These are used in competitions and can come in very heavy weights, up to and exceeding 40 kilos and many are fitted with bands of metal to increase the weight.

NAIL JORI:

These Jori are the most difficult variation to swing. These Jori have nails embedded along them which deters any contact with the body other wise you risk puncturing the skin. The technique of swinging nail Jori is different compared to the other two variations. Whereas with the thin and fat Jori you can rest or slide the weight across the body, there is no way to do that with nail Jori. Instead of the strength coming predominately from the shoulders, the nail Jori requires strength at the wrists to keep the weight free from the body. While the weight may be much lighter the technique is a lot harder to master. My Jori are based upon the nail Jori and I am currently training to learn this style. It is very difficult!!

TECHNIQUE POINTS:

The Jori can be an extremely challenging exercise to perform well. Each time you swing, you will be self analysing your technique, trying to polish it off. Out of all the exercises in this book I believe Jori swinging can be the most technically demanding.

Video your own performance to analyse what you are doing right... and wrong! Ensure the Jori moves laterally and not just pushed directly behind you. Cock the wrist as if you were arm wrestling someone as the weight comes over the

shoulder.

Dragging the weight over the shoulder does not count as a repetition. The weight

must be pulled over and then placed before moving on the upper body. Lift the head as you pull one Jori up and over your shoulder. This should be a short snappy movement. This is done as otherwise the button of the Jori may well hit you

in the face!

To help prevent friction burns on the shoulders, apply some oil(olive oil, mustard oil)

t the backs of the shoulder and upper chest. This helps facilitate a gliding motion.

Do not wear clothing that may cause the Jori to stick to it and pull at you. To really help you with the Jori, practice 1 handed Gada swings. Take your time to learn this movement. The rewards are well worth it!

EXERCISE IMPLEMENTATION SUGGESTION:

As this is a competition lift there are many ways to go about it as detailed in the competition training section.

If this is to be used as a grip conditioning exercise, select light Jori and perform *Feraaree* for 5-10 minutes at the end of your training.

JORI SWING



Pahlavan Luchman performing the Jori swing with heavy weighted Jori. The weighted bands of metal at the end make the Jori heavier and increase the down swing. This creates much more force making the feel similar to swinging a Gada. The conical shape also means that the weight increases the further down the handle you go.

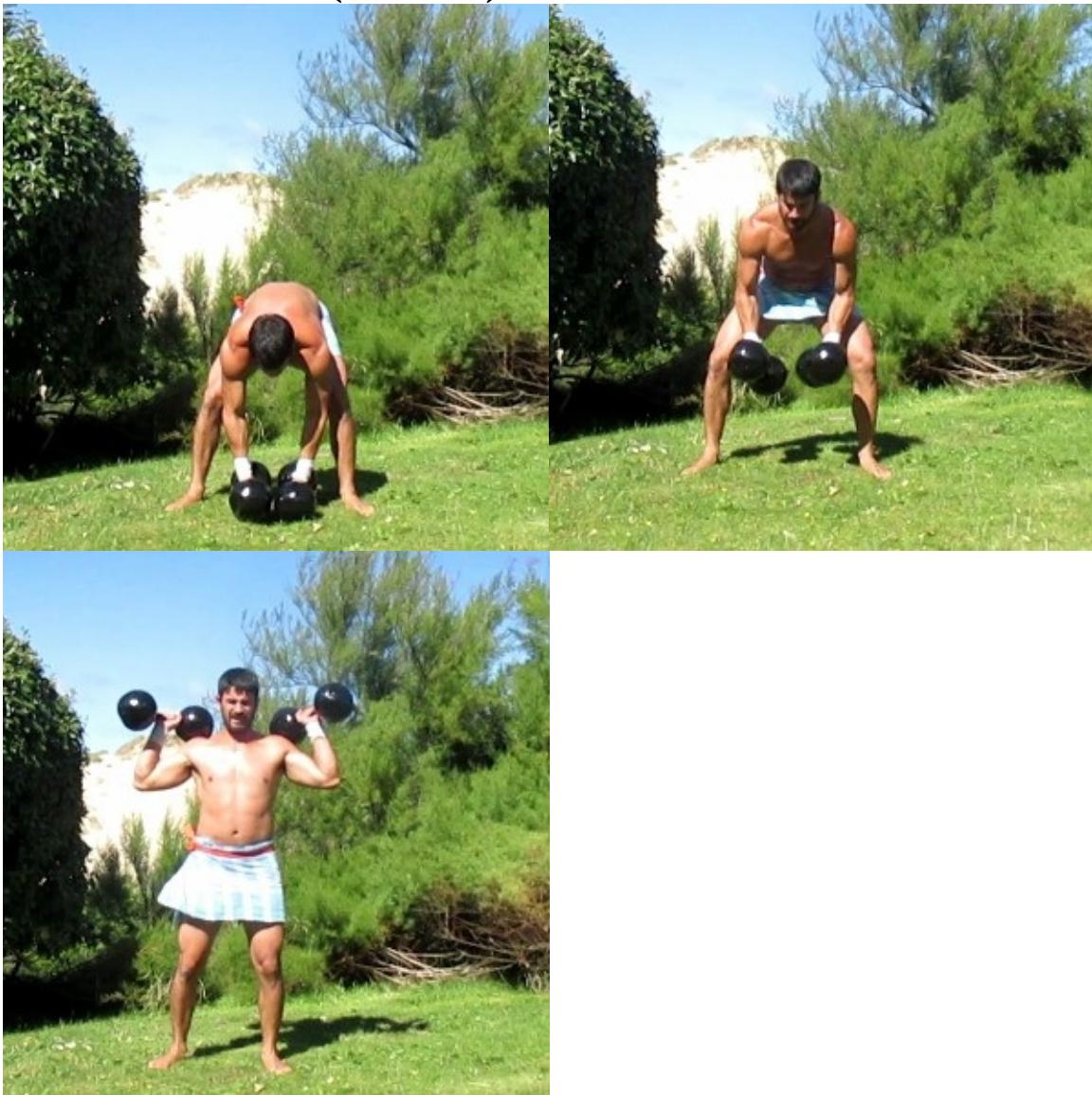
DUMBBELL EXERCISES

Weights can start from as little as 2 kilos all the way up to 55 kilos. Competition weights are typically 35 kilos and the winner is the contestant who can produce the most "*Hath*" (hands or repetitions). One *Hath* being a swing and clean per arm.

Breathing is with a placid face showing no emotion or stress and is through the nose deep into the diaphragm with the mouth kept closed to help keep internal power from leaking out.

Dumbbell swinging is one of the 3 main competitive lifts, along with Jori and Gada. The name of this movement is called *Rumali*

DUMBELL SWING (*RUMALI*)

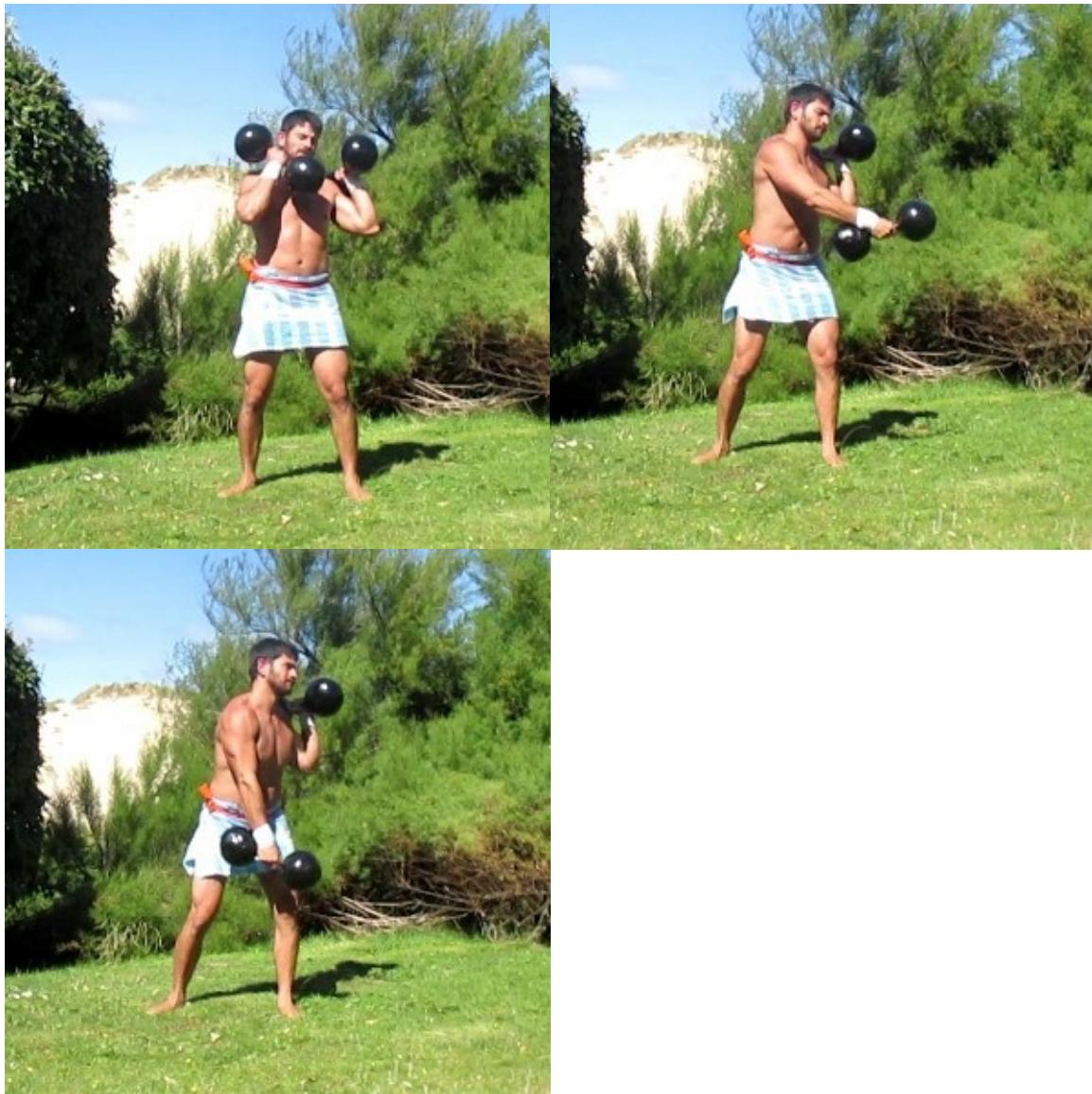


Take a firm grip of the dumbbells. They can be positioned either between or

outside the legs, whichever is preferable to you.

The dumbbells are cleaned from the ground to the shoulder. A pre-swing between or outside of the legs may be used.

Once the bells are to the shoulder, the palms face outward away from the body and be here during each swing transition.



Beginning with one arm, ,twist at the wrist turning the palm of the hand to face inward whilst simultaneously sending the dumbbell across the front of the body.

Rotate at the waist as you send the weight across the front of your body. Give the weight a push then allow it fall of its own accord.

The idea is to send the weight across your body to create a semicircular arcing motion from side to side and downwards.



Allow the weight follow through to the opposite side of the arc.
Turn the wrist and hand and begin to pull the weight in to the shoulder. As you pull the weight in, turn at the waist to meet it, shortening the distance it has to travel, acting as a counterweight and dip the knees to absorb the force.



As the knees dip, sway and turn the body to the opposite side whilst casting out the other dumbbell in the same manner as before.

Allowing the body to get into a rhythm allows for better performance. Being able to relax under the load will enable a greater number of repetitions to be performed.

The grip should alternate between tight during the downward portion to resting the weight when it is by the shoulder.

TECHNIQUE POINTS:

Being smooth as possible in the transitions will help save energy in the body allowing you to perform more repetitions.

As the weight comes down across your body imagine that you are hammering down on a table with the bottom of your fist. Try to let the weight fall rather than use force.

The head of the dumbbell should swing and carry itself through, requiring a minimum of effort on your part.

Ensure you lock out your elbow as the weight comes down to help prevent any injuries.

This is tough on the grip, get as much rest as possible when the weight is up by the shoulder.

EXERCISE IMPLEMENTATION SUGGESTION:

As this is a competition lift there are many ways to go about it as detailed in the competition training section.

If you wish to use the exercise on top of your normal training, include it after any pressing exercises and perform 3 sets of up to 10 reps per hand with a challenging weight.

Alternatively perform continuous swings for 60 seconds, rest a further minute and repeat up to 2 more times.

DUMBBELL ROTATIONS





The following exercise dates back to the old time strong men of the Victorian era.

The Dumbbells are held at arms length, the body bent over from the hips. The hands will rotate the weights as far as they can go, palms towards the body and palms away.

Turn the hands back and forth. This can be performed for many repetitions and is used to strengthen the grip, forearms and shoulder rotator cuffs.

TECHNIQUE POINTS:

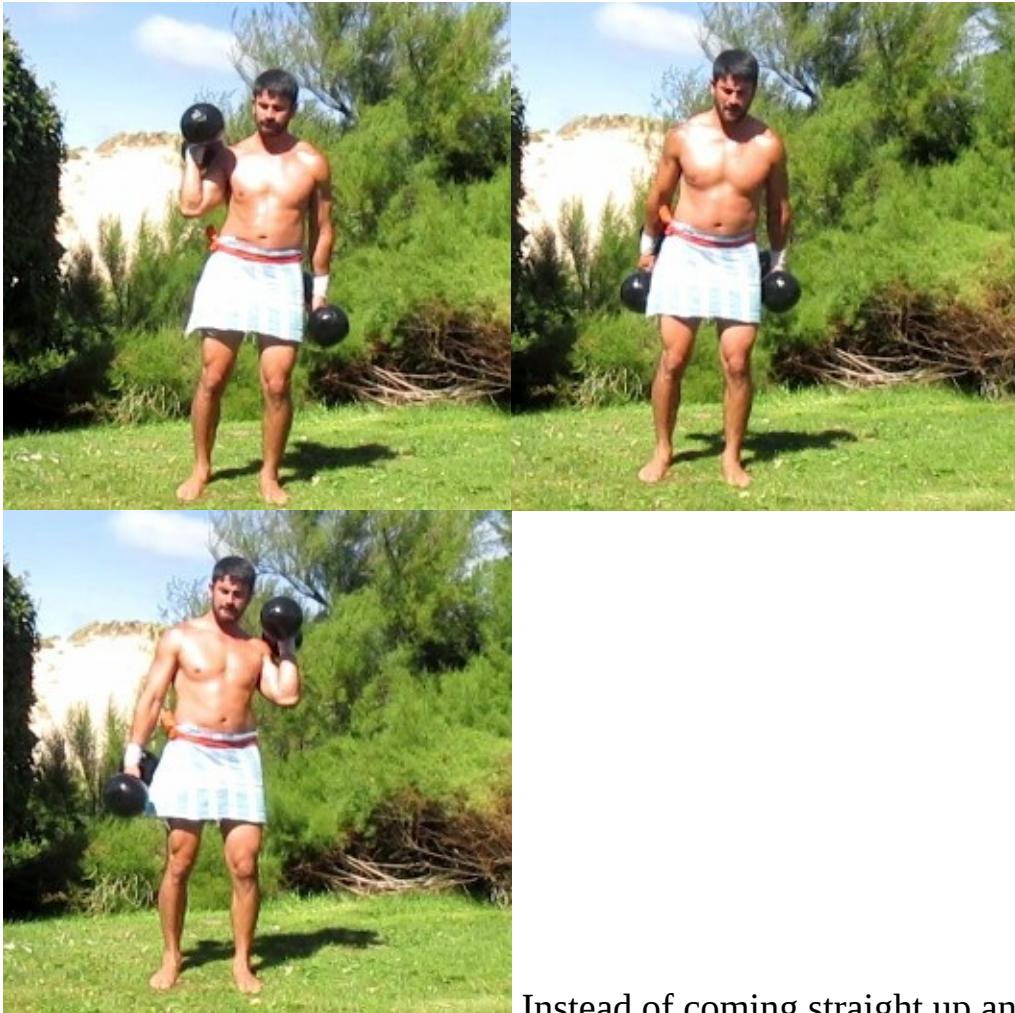
Maintain a flat back and a slight bend in the knees.
Ensure you move through the full range of motion.

EXERCISE IMPLEMENTATION:

Perform 2 sets of 15-30 rotations at the beginning or end of your session.
Alternately perform 5-10 rotations in between sets of other exercises.

DUMBBELL BALLISTIC HAMMER CURLS (KUSHTI CURLS)

Hammer curls are popular in the Akhara. They are performed with more of a swing than strict curl style and the weights tend to be lighter. The arm curls the weight upward with a hammer grip.



Instead of coming straight up and down the weight is taken behind the shoulder.

Each repetition is performed alternately. If a heavier weight is used then the lower body is used to assist in creating momentum.

The key point to take is the focus is not on controlled contraction but rather creating a flowing piston like action. This makes it feel similar to the dumbbell swing and really hammers the upper back grip and arms.

TECHNIQUE POINTS:

These are performed by alternately swing the arms back and forth. As such minimise the amount of tension in between reps.

Use the lower body to help piston the weight up and down.

Keep the breathing shallow and fast to match the movement.

EXERCISE IMPLEMENTATION SUGGESTION:

Perform 2 high repetition sets, aiming for 20-30 reps per arm with a light but challenging weight.

Perform 3 sets with a heavier weight of 6-10 reps per arm and 1 minutes rest in between.

DUMBBELL SWING



A Pahlavan of Mahmritunje Temple Akhara demonstrates the dumbbell swing with 35 kg champion weight dumbbells.

The dumbbell swing is commonly practised and is the easiest swing variation to pick up making it very accessible. In competition heavy dumbbells are used, the combined weight of which often weighs more than the competitor. Swinging 40 kilo dumbbells is a full body exercise requiring strong grip and wrist strength.

DAND

The Dand is the most popular exercise you will find in the Akhara. It can be performed anywhere by anyone at anytime. Its focus is on strengthening the arms, particularly the triceps and the chest. However it is a full body exercise and incorporates elements of stretching and lengthening especially for the posterior chain muscles of the back. Performing Dands can be extremely

demanding or highly therapeutic dependant upon the intent and vigorousness of how they are performed.



To commence the exercise place both hands shoulder width apart on the floor or elevated. The feet will either be shoulder width or further dependant upon your flexibility. The head is down aligned with the spine. Hips high aiming for a flat back. In yoga this is the downward facing dog.

From this position bend at the elbows and knees aiming to dip the head down. Pull the body forward with arm and leg drive whilst begging to inhale.



Continue to inhale as you come into a plank position continue pulling whilst push up, arching at mid back.

Imagine you are trying to wrap your spine around a large ball simultaneously pushing back through the heels of the feet.

At the top of the position press through the palms, pulling the shoulders down and back into an upward facing dog position from yoga. At the top of this position the inhalation will be completed.



From here elevate the hips coming through a plank position with the arms extended and push back with an exhale.

The arms to re-assume the downward facing dog pose.

The exercise is repeated in a cyclical manner. The Dand helps develop the upper body and is a staple to the wrestlers training regimen.

KUMBHAKA DAND



An alternative exercise is to perform a dipping motion on the ground alternating between a plank with the arms by the side to an up dog. The motion is like that of a wave, very smooth and seamless.

TECHNIQUE POINTS:

A great way to work into the Dand is to perform up/down dogs. This leaves out the pressing component but gets you into these two crucial positions.

Try to match your breathing with the movement, breathing calmly throughout. Do not place your legs too far away, you should get a nice triangle position in the down dog.

You can perform these slow or fast. These are great not just for conditioning but

also flexibility.

EXERCISE IMPLEMENTATION SUGGESTION:

Dands are usually paired with Bethak. Normally half the volume of Dands are performed compared to Bethak.

Perform Dands for 60seconds work, 60 seconds rest 5 times.

Perform Dands for a set period of time, say 5 minutes continuously.

Perform Dands throughout your day. Every hour or so perform a set number, between 10-50.

This exercise can be performed whilst retaining ones breath. Some of the wrestlers will aim to complete 50 repetitions in this way. It is considered a great exercise for increasing ones ability to resist fatigue during wrestling. The holding of the breath trains the body and mind to resist the urge to gasp for breathe.

BETHAK

Bethak are free standing squats, the wrestler will descend to the ground smoothly coming up on the balls of his feet before reversing the motion to stand tall, flat footed. During the motion the arms are swung loosely to increase momentum. Bethaks are done continuously and are the premier leg exercise in the Akhara. They help with endurance and provide great cardiovascular benefit.





Assume a standing position with the toes turned out slightly.
Begin the movement by inhaling and swinging the arms behind whilst
simultaneously squatting down, coming up onto the toes as you do so. Begin
slowly to find your balance point.
As you become more comfortable with the exercise you will be able to drop
down much more ballistic manner.





As you reach a full squat position begin to swing your arms forward to cause momentum and initiate the upward portion of the movement
Begin to stand up exhaling, remaining on the toes as the arms come forward.
As you assume the standing position place the heels down and pull your arms in towards your ribcage as if performing a rowing motion with the palms face up.
Repeating the exercise in sequence it should appear smooth and flowing.

TECHNIQUE POINTS:

The knees can point outwards or face forwards, whichever is comfortable for you. Ensure you come down to full depth on each repetition.

Try not to “stoop over” as you come down, maintain as straight a spine as possible. Matching the arm swing with the movement is important. It helps control the pace of

the exercise and also assists in standing back up. This is the secret to the ballistic nature of the exercise.

This exercise can be tough on the knees so start off slowly to build up the necessary strength on the tendons and ligaments. If this exercise hurts you do not force yourself, try flat footed squats instead.

EXERCISE IMPLEMENTATION SUGGESTION:

Bethak are normally paired with Dands. The the amount of Behak are performed compared to Dands.

Perfrom Bethak for a set number of repetitions. A good goal to aim for is 250 in a row.

Perform 25-50 Bethak with 30 seconds rest 4 times.

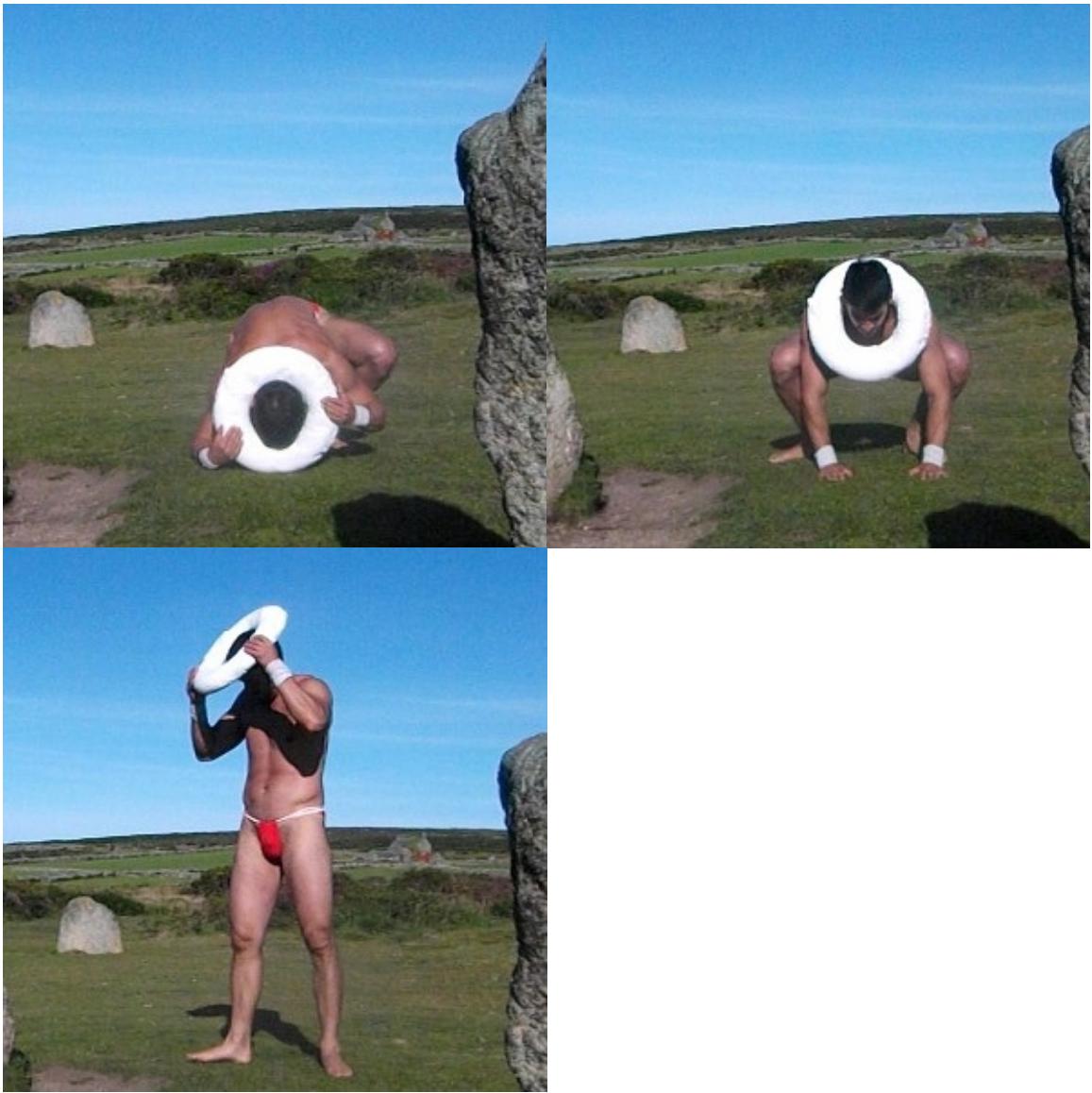
Perform Bethak with Dands for 6 minutes. Perform 30 Bethak and 15 Dands for the duration of this time frame. This is a good one to do first thing in the morning!

Set a timer for 5 minutes and perform Bethak continuously for that time period.

GAR NAL

The Gar Nal is principally used for performing weighted Dands and as a centuries old exercise goes to show the ingenuity of previous generations to find a method of gaining leg strength and power. They are also used for a clean and press style of movement, holding onto the outer rim with both hands or carried around the neck whilst the wrestler walks or jogs around the Akhara. The Gar Nal used as such will help increase leg strength and power as well as condition the back and especially the neck to being loaded.

The Gar Nal will test your will power and neck strength as it is extremely uncomfortable and does not sit well on the shoulders which is a testament of the mental toughness exhibited by those who use it as a regular training method and which is probably why they are rarely used. A popular story about Gama the great is that he used a Gar Nal of such immense size for his Dands he had to perform perform then surrounded by a trench to complete the full range of motion. He would also take a mile run with a Gar Nal around his neck to further increase his stamina.



The Gar Nal can be placed around the neck in one of two ways, either lifted from the ground or a platform around the neck or placed over the head from standing. The heavier the weight the more likely that it will have to be lifted from the ground.



Once placed and adjusted perform flat-footed squats flaring the arms outwards. Inhale on the descent, exhale on the ascent.

The flat footed stance helps to stabilise the body and maintain balance whilst

minimising the strain on the knees. The arms are held out to the sides, hands made tight which increases tension in the body and neck to resist the pull of the Gar Nal. Unlike the standard Bethak, these are performed with a wider stance with a focus of pushing through the heels and are performed for less total reps and sets.

TECHNIQUE POINTS:

Take a much wider stance than with non weighted Bethak.

Do not come up on the toes, maintain a flat footed position throughout. Do not hold the Gar Nal with the Hands, keep the arms out to the sides and flexed.

EXERCISE IMPLEMENTATION SUGGESTION:

With a light Gar Nal perform these squats in a tabata style for 4 minutes aiming to achieve 12 repetitions per 20 second interval.

With a heavier Gar Nal perform multiple sets of 5 reps within a ten minute time period resting as much as needed between sets.

If you are a true sadist, where the Gar Nal around the neck and go for a walk with it! You will soon find your neck is in lot of discomfort! Try to walk at least 1 mile.

NAL

Nal are heavy stone dumbbells unique to India. They are circular in shape with a hole in the centre. Passing through this hole is a cross piece which functions as a handle. They can come in progressive weights so as one may always progress onto the next weight. Not all Akhara are so equipped, though there will usually be a couple of Nal strewn about the training area.

Nals come in differing weights from very light (around 20kg) into extremely heavy (150 kg and upwards) . Lifts with lighter weights are done for high volume whereas the heavy weights are lifted for a few repetitions showing an inverse training paradigm. The Nal can strengthen the whole body especially the pressing muscles including shoulders and triceps. The thick handles will really work your grip especially as you have to overlap your hands when using heavy Nal.

The Nal has fallen in favour of the western style dumbbell and barbell. Favourite exercises are a clean and press, a hold of the weight overhead and holding the Nal behind the head to squat with. One Guru told me of PahalVan who would use a 300lb Nal to squat with!

NAL SERPENTINE PRESS



Begin by grasping the Gar Nal handle with both hands. One hand will overlap the other so only one will have full purchase. Be aware of this during the lift as you do not want to lose your grip with the weight over head!

Next exhale as you swing the weight behind you and inhale forcefully as you clean Gar Nal to one of your shoulders exhaling as you absorb the impact.



The weight will be slightly off to the side and you may rest it here. If the weight is brought up directly in front of you your arms will be too far away from your body to make the lift possible.

Next driving upwards with the arms push the weight up overhead to a locked out position. Reverse the direction and re-swing the weight behind you. Repeat on the opposite side going back and forth for repetitions.

TECHNIQUE POINTS

Ensure you have a firm grip before commencing this exercise as the overlapped grip is more likely to fail than a standard grip.

You may use leg drive to assist the press, much like a jerk or push press. After you complete your repetitions, lay the weight down gently, DO NOT drop it as it is likely to break.

Make sure you alternate the sides you clean the weight to.

EXERCISE IMPLEMENTATION EXAMPLE:

With a heavy weight perform 6 clean and presses for 4 sets.

With a moderate weight perform the exercise a set time, say 10 -20 minutes, resting

as much as need be.

With a heavy weight, press it over head and hold it for as long as possible. It may also be held behind the neck in a similar fashion.

(NAL SWING):

The Nal may also be swung between the legs much like a kettlebell. To do so perform the swing portion for the serpentine press continuously. This is a good exercise for the lower back and hamstrings.

NAL BETHAK



The Nal may also be used for squatting. After pressing the weight overhead, let it come down gently to rest on the upper shoulders.

From here squat as in the Gar Nal. You will need to engage your upper body and ensure the weight rests comfortably otherwise you may end up with a sore neck!

TECHNIQUE POINTS:

Be careful in getting the weight behind the head, take your time. Ensure the weight does not rest on the neck, compressing the cervical vertebrae.

This is very painful! Try and rest the weight on the traps.

Maintain as straight a back as possible. This is not a comfortable position so you will have to concentrate.

Maintain a wider stance than with Bethak and keep your feet flat to the floor.

EXERCISE IMPLEMENTATION EXAMPLE :

Perform 5 sets of 10 reps with one minute breaks.

Perform jump squats with a light Nal. 15 jumps followed by a 30 seconds rest.

Perform 1 set of 20 reps with a moderately heavy Nal and immediately finish with

50 no weighted Bethak.





Pahlavan and owner of House of Power and Soma and Body, Joohyun Kim posing next to hand Nals.

INDIAN GET UP



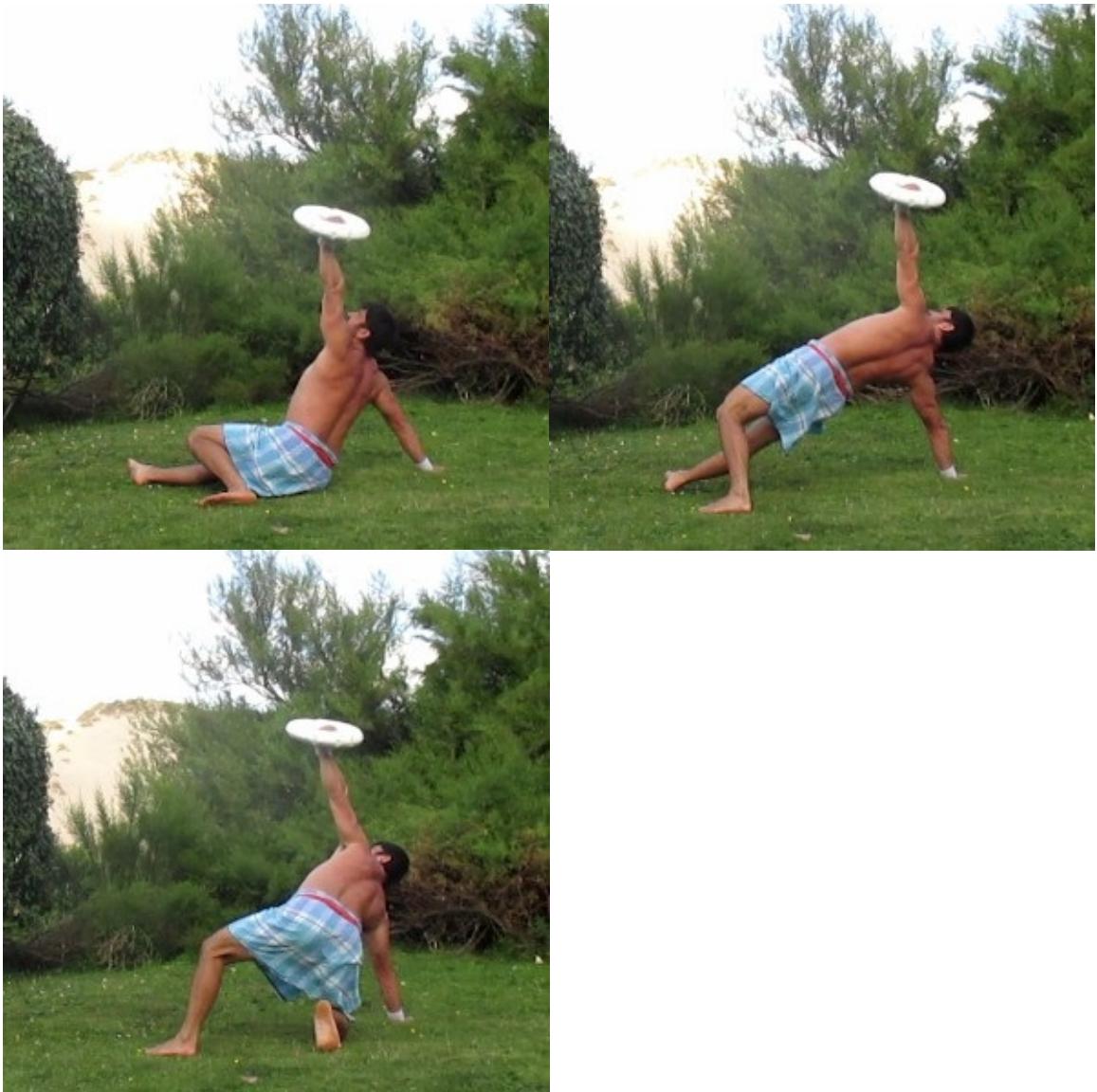
The picture above I found in a small temple Akhara. Prior to my visit to India I had implemented in my own training the Turkish get up with kettlebells. I found that practising the Gada movements with the volume I was using meant my shoulders were often highly fatigued for any sort of presses with a decent weight. I had worked up to a decent weight and felt that for the sake of maintenance and balance some overhead work was required. I figured that the get up would be a good exercise to use as it is well known for its injury proofing qualities, increasing shoulder stability and being a full body lift. During my training it was the first exercise I would use in my session to both warm up and prepare my mind as well as prevent any injury from swinging increasingly heavier Gada. When I found this picture it was almost like a confirmation that all my thoughts were correct. It does not necessarily mean that the lifter depicted even swung Gada or Jori but that the exercise was so universal had to mean something. Standing up with a heavy weight is such a basic movement that Indian culture had adopted it. As such I have added the Indian Get Up exercise for the sake of completeness.



Begin lying on your back.

Take the weight in one hand and press it upwards. Pull the same side foot up to the glute with the sole flat to the ground.

Pivot on the free elbow and hand, pushing through the foot to begin the sit up.



Push up into a seated position, maintaining the upright position with the arm holding the Nal.

Extend up and through the hips into a high bridge position.

The bring the leg down into a kneeling lunge position.



Push off with the free hand to bring the body upright.

Push off with the rear leg to come to standing.

Stand up to complete the movement. Reverse the process to come back to the

original position.

TECHNIQUE POINTS:

If you have never performed the Turkish get-up before (or the Indian one!), begin by practising the movement with no external load.

Ensure this exercise is performed in a safe environment or ideally outdoors. Take your time to master each of the transitions. Do not rush this lift!

There are many resources on how to perform get-ups on the internet. Do

yourself a favour and see this motion in action before attempting it!

EXERCISE IMPLEMENTATION EXAMPLE:

Perform Indian get ups one rep per side, increasing weight each time for a maximum of 5 repetitions at the beginning of the session.

Perform 5 minutes of continuous get-ups at the end of the session with a light weight, alternating sides each repetition.

ROPE CLIMBING



Rope climbing is popular in many Akhara and is seen as the main exercise to develop the upper body strength and endurance required for wrestling. It develops the grip and muscles of the back to an enormous degree. Wrestlers will take turns going up and down over a period of time. In between they will rest or perform Bethaks and Dands.

The rope climbing action is seen in the monkeys that inhabit India. This parallels with Hanuman, being the monkey faced God and the general athleticism of monkeys in general

The way the Kushti wrestlers train this exercise is by using the upper body only, leaving the legs to dangle freely during execution of the movement. This ensures they are working their arms and back continuously. This reminds me of my army days!

Rope climbing is simple to do:

- Find a rope.
- Climb it.

TECHNIQUE POINTS:

Do not wrap the rope around the legs to assist in climbing or for locking off. Ensure you have a firm grip before moving your next hand on top. Start with a

lower rope to gain confidence and ability.

EXERCISE IMPLEMENTATION SUGGESTION:

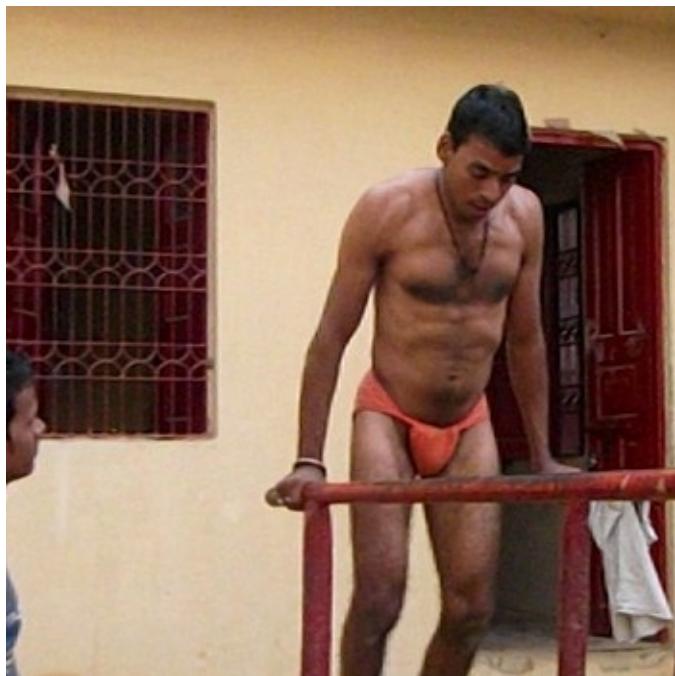
Set a time and complete as many trips up and down the rope as possible. Try to beat your score the following session. 5-15 minutes.

Perform a set of Dands(25), Bethak(50) and a rope climbs (5) in a circuit training fashion. Complete a set number of circuits or work this for time, 10-20minutes.

Rope climbing is simple but highly effective. It is the preliminary skill required for practice of the rope Mallakamb, a series of complex gymnastic skills performed whilst hanging from a rope. The idea of the Indian Fakirs rope trick came from this practice which was originally devised for use in guerilla warfare.

KUSHTI DIPS

Wrestlers use parallel bars much like their counterparts in the west, with a combination of dips and leg raises. However a special exercise , unique to the Akhara, is a ballistic swinging dip that for sake of simplicity I will name the Kushti Dip. It appears as a combination of a dip and a leg raise and has it's roots from the single horizontal pole exercise, similar to the Malakamb or wrestlers pillar.





The movement is initiated by jumping or pressing up onto the bars. The legs are then swung forward with momentum so they are parallel with the bars. This position will look like a leg raise or “L-sit”





The legs are swung back behind the body with the arms locked and grip firmly on the bars.

The upper body and upper legs should again come parallel to the ground. As the legs have swung back as far as they can, bend at the arms and yield

downwards letting momentum and gravity pull you.

As the body descends extend the legs to form a straight line with the parallel bars.

The chest should be fully opened, shoulder blades pinched and elbows tight.

Allow the legs to swing through in a semi circular arc.

As the pass in front of the body use the momentum to help you push up into the leg

raise position. Repeat for repetitions

EXAMPLE EXERCISE IMPLEMENTATION:

Perform normal dips as a warm up, then break into the swinging dips. Perform 2-3 sets max reps.

DIGGING AND LEVVELING THE PIT

The Pharsa is a hoe designed for ploughing fields by hand. It is used in the Akhara to dig the wrestling pit prior to Jor practice. This activity is one of the first carried out in the daily routine and normally by junior wrestlers though anyone may lend a hand if they deem it necessary. Preparation of the pit is done

anyone may turn a hand if they deem it necessary. Preparation of the pit is done in a methodical manner, working from a corner and working outwards to cover the whole expanse of the training area.

As an exercise it is similar in many respects to sledgehammer strikes or chopping wood. However the drag effect of the earth makes retrieval of the Phasra extremely tiring. It is a full body workout that is particular taxing on the back, grip and cardiovascular system if done at a good pace.

After the pit is dug into several rows of fur-roughs it is then smoothed over either by hand or with use of a block of wood or Sumtola and harness. The former can act as a dynamic stretch for the lower back, hamstrings and arms. In appearance it is similar to the push up series done in the Iranian Zurkeneh. If a harness is used then one wrestler will pull it with a rope tied under his arms so he can use his back as support. Other wrestlers may stand on the block to add increased resistance. This heavily works the legs and all levels of wrestler may do this exercise. This is comparable to sled or tyre drags done with a rope.

Wrestlers will then cover themselves in the soil prior to Jor. This aids in creating friction on the body where sweat would make grip untenable. It also acts as the Kushti version of exfoliation and skin care. During preparation of the pit and ceremonies, oils, ghi, flowers from Nim and Pipal trees as well as sweat of countless wrestlers, is mixed over and over. It is believed to be of great benefit to those who cover themselves in it. The earth is used to cover the body from head to toe to bestow Vibhuti (power).

The pit is usually 2 feet in depth and can vary in width and length. The daily digging and levelling means it is always fit for wrestling. Stones and twigs are removed to prevent any injuries. The pit is treated reverently and many have a Hanuman shrine directly overlooking it. Thus the wrestlers become inspired to perform well and behave in the correct manner in front of their God.



The action of digging is extremely simple. You can use a tool like a pick axe or azeda. A sledgehammer or an axe would work as well. Begin taking a wide legged stance and raise the tool over head. Bring it down quickly, bending at the waist and knees using maximum power.



Drive down onto the ground and pull the blade towards you to plough the earth. Extract the blade from the ground, step back and repeat. It is important to get your whole body into this exercise. By squatting down you work the legs and back more thus engaging more muscles.

This exercise can be performed in sand or soil. Hard ground like clay would definitely make it interesting and reminds me of my army days, digging trenches through several different layers of sediment. Not fond memories but I do remember working up a sweat!

EXERCISE IMPLEMENTATION SUGGESTION

5-10 minutes of digging like this should be more than enough to get you breathing hard!

Perform at the beginning of your session as a dynamic warm up.

Perform at the end of your session as a finisher

Try the interval style work out method here.

LEVELLING THE PIT

After the pit has been dug the wrestlers will level the pit to prepare it prior to Jor. This is done by looping rope through a large Sumtola and dragging it around. The rope is looped behind the head and goes under the armpits, trailing behind the wrestler who walks around with the Sumtola attached so it lies flat on the ground. Sometimes to increase the weight another wrestler or the Akhara Guru will stand on the Sumtola. This make the exercise much harder!

After the pit has been levelled, oils, ghi and flowers will be sprinkled liberally upon it. This consecrates the pit and also adds different ingredients thought to be medicinal and beneficial for the body.

Levelling the pit is similar to using a sled which is a popular method of conditioning. This focuses primarily on the hips and legs, strengthening them in a way very specific to Jor practice. Strong legs are essential for any wrestler. Some wrestlers will also push cars to build their lower body power.

EXERCISE IMPLEMENTATION SUGGESTION

After levelling the pit, flatten it by dragging the Sumtola behind you. Perform this exercise for intervals at the end of your session.

BAN

Ban is a partner exercise fundamental to wrestling skill. It is very similar to the pummelling drill practised in other forms of wrestling. It teaches the wrestler how to defend against upper body attacks as well as initiate their own. It allows them to get a feel for their opponents movements, learn timing and use leverage

or positioning to the best effect. As such it is a basic but important skill to practice to master wrestling.

Ban itself is trained as a skill drill and as a exercise to develop strength. The word Ban means “to draw the bow”. When practising this exercise the position and movement executed looks like that of drawing a bow. This movement is alternated by the wrestlers, both pressing against each other by leaning forward with their full body weight. One arm will be close to the body whilst the opposite pushes out on the opponents arm. The other wrestler will try and resist being pushed whilst at the same time attempting the move themselves. This pushing and pulling motion is used to condition the arms and chest specifically for this purpose. It helps in strengthening the grip and toughening the skin of the arms so they can withstand more aggressive movements practised in Jor. It also helps to massage the upper body to improve flexibility and circulation. Ban develops practical stamina and power and as such is an essential component of the wrestlers arsenal.



Begin by extending one arm out and keeping the elbow of the opposite arm bent and by the ribs.

You grab the crook of your opponents arm with your extended arm. They will do the same to your bent arm so you mirror each other. Step back and lean into each other.

To begin the exercise push against your opponents outstretched arm. They will be pushing against your extended arm at the same time.



You should now switch the position of your arms so they are reversed from the start position. One arm will be fully extended pushing against the opponents arm whilst the other will be close to the body having been pushed back by the opponent. Continue going back and forth increasing tempo and power.

TECHNIQUE POINTS

The aim is to try and dislodge your opponent. Finding a good rhythm and timing are essential components of this exercise.

Lean into your opponent, this will teach correct balance and grounding.
Start slowly to develop technique then increase power as you become proficient.
It may help to find an opponent of near equal height and weight.

EXERCISE IMPLEMENTATION EXAMPLE

Perform at the beginning or end of your training as a dynamic warm up or a conditioning finisher.

As a warm up perform for between 30n to 60 seconds, focusing on technique and power and slowly build up the intensity. Perform 3 to 5 rounds.

As a finisher perform several rounds at maximum effort, increasing intensity as you go.

You can drop the intensity and work on technique for several minutes. This is a great way to cool down and add in stretching for the upper body.



***Wrestlers practising Jor in rays of early morning.
SUMTOLA***

The Sumtola has been nicknamed the Indian barbell and can be used for many similar movements. Its name means "equal weight" depicting it is balanced. Triceps extensions are a common application as is pressing and other common barbell movements. However, the main use is in the serpentine swing pattern, used to condition grip, arms, lower back and hips and has a great deal of rotational and counter rotational elements to it. It is a good cardiovascular exercise and as with the large majority of traditional Indian exercises exerts effort throughout the whole body.

Sumtola are rarely used in the Akhara but many will have at least one gathering dust in a corner having been replaced by conventional barbells. This is a shame as while they may not produce the raw strength of the Jori or Gada, they have benefits to shoulder and thoracic mobility as well as a good conditioning effect.



Take up the Sumtola with both hands using an overhand grip.

Pull it up and other one side of the body.

The elbow closest to the body will be touching your ribcage minimising the distance

the weight needs to travel. Inhale smoothly as you move the weight behind you.



Start to pull the Sumtola around the back the of the head.
Pass it around the head toward the other side. Begin the exhale.
Bring it down and between the legs bending at the hips and waist .



Swing the Sumtola as far behind you as your reach allows.
Reverse the direction pulling up and behind the neck again.
Inhale as you initiate the upward portion of the movement.



Bring the Sumtola back around and down between the legs again. Reverse the movement for repetitions travelling from one side to the other in a serpentine pattern.

This will have a steady pendulum looking effect.

TECHNIQUE POINTS:

This move will require flexibility in the shoulders and chest. Work up to it slowly with a light weight initially.

Open the chest and shoulders.

Bend over fully using the hips.

Get into a nice smooth rhythm matching your breathing with the movement.

Do not use an overly heavy weight, this is not an exercise to be trained for a one rep maximum.

EXERCISE IMPLEMENTATION EXAMPLE:

Perform prior to your main exercises as a warm up and loosening activity as part of the cool down. Perform 10 reps left and right 2-3 times.

Alternately perform at the end of your session for time or repetition. Begin with one minute of continuous work working up to 2 minutes or more.

STONE LIFTING

Stone lifting is still practised throughout India. The stones come in many shapes from oblong to ball shaped. The balls are kept near temples on the earthen floor. They are called Gota. During celebrations and holidays the menfolk will test their strength lifting progressively heavier stones for either maximum weight lifted or maximum number of repetitions. The similarities between Indian stone lifting and the Atlas stones used in Strong Man training are obvious to see. The advantages of training with stones for wrestlers is conditioning of the whole body, specifically the legs arms and back. The rounded back position is considered favourable towards a wrestlers training as it helps simulate the positions they can find themselves in when pummelling or attempting a throw. The offset, non symmetrical effect it has on the body also helps in preparation for a sport that is rarely performed in a perfectly symmetrical stance.





Start by standing feet astride the Stone. Reach underneath the weight first with one hand then the other, rock the weight back in forth so as to get the hands as close to each other as much as possible, maintaining a locked arm position.

Next quickly dead lift the weight upwards onto the lap by bringing the legs in closer.

Explode up forcefully upwards, extending the hips, knees and ankles in triple extension. Use the force to help bring the weight up to one shoulder.

Once the weight is on the shpulder let it drop to the ground, then repeat the lift on the opposite side





Another exercise that may be performed is a Bethak with the weight supported on the shoulder. This is a great exercise for developing leg power in a non symmetrical style and goes a long way to strengthening the core as it must be maintained tight and braced throughout the movement.

The stone may also be carried for distance either on the shoulder or held with both hands at the chest. This is a great exercise to developing a strong back grip hamstrings and core as well as develop serious conditioning.

TECHNIQUE POINTS:

Shouldering the stone may place a lot of strain on the biceps tendon. Ensure that the area around the elbow and shoulder is thoroughly warmed up before lifting. Stretch the biceps after training.

Dependant on the implement you have to hand you may use a substance such as chalk to assist in your grip. Train out doors if you can, you do not want to be breaking your equipment or the floor!

When shouldering ensure you have a good grip before lifting.
Make sure you use your hips to drive the weight upwards.
With the squats, maintain a wider stance and do not come up on the toes. Make

sure you alternate sides to maintain balance and keep your spine as erect as possible.

EXERCISE IMPLEMENTATION SUGGESTIONS:

The lifting the ball can produce a great full body workouts by itself. Here are some samples you can use each is short in duration but intense if you work them hard!

Perform alternating shoudering for 90 seconds with a challenging weight.

Rest 90 seconds then perform 45 seconds of squats on one shoulder, and 45 seconds of squats on the other shoulder.

Rest a further 90 seconds and repeat the shoudering, followed by the squats. Set a timer for 5 minutes. Perform a shoudering, into a squat, stand up, drop the

stone and repeat on the opposite side. Continue to alternate sides. This is a fun one!

SHIRSASANA

Referred to in yoga as the “King of Asanas”. It's origin is from Hatha yoga which is a physically orientated style. It is known for it's many health inducing benefits. In yoga it is considered a powerful opener of the *Sahasrara* chakra situated on the crown of the head and is the abode of the highest forms of consciousness. Shirsasana invigorates the whole body as well as the mind. It reverses gravity on the body places less stress on the spine and reverses the flow of blood to the legs. Weight is put on the diaphragm by the internal organs which encourages deeper breathing which helps in carbon monoxide removal. Mentally it helps in relieving stress and anxiety.

The Kushti wrestlers use this exercise to help strengthen their necks and promote blood flow to the brain. It also is a favoured Asana for those who follow the path of *Brahmacahrya*, abstinence from sexual intercourse. It does this by taking “*Ojas*”, spiritual energy from the sexual organs and sending it to the brain to be utilised for creative or physical use.



Begin by kneeling on the floor. Forearms down connected to the elbows. Interlock the fingers and place the head, crown down to the ground between them.

Block out your legs to invert your upper body then walk your knees close to your chest.



Bring one heel up to your buttocks and prepare to spring upwards off the foot connected to the ground.

Launch one leg up, pushing through the middle of your foot.

Quickly bring up the other leg. The trick is to send up almost as soon as you launch off the ground.

Bring both feet together, push the hips forward and bring the heels back.

Maintain your balance.

To come down reverse the motion slowly.

TECHNIQUE POINTS:

Ensure you arms clasp your head tightly throughout, this will help you maintain

your balance and stability.

When you launch upwards, try and do so in a controlled manner and not too forcefully or you can flip over onto your back!

Should you begin to fall backwards, quickly bring your knees to your chest and round your spine so you look like a ball. Hopefully you will just roll on your back as opposed to land hard!

Train with some form of cushioning around you or on soft grass/mud/sand. Practice this exercise against a wall before you try it free standing. It will take a few attempts to master this.

Breathe deeply and calmly when inverted.

EXERCISE IMPLEMENTATION SUGGESTION:

Perform Shirshasana in the static stretching portion of your cool down. Hold the position for 1 minute and work up to 3.

Perform this exercise before bed or after your mediation practice. 1-5 minutes should suffice.

SURYA NAMASKARA

Surya Namaskara, or salutation to the sun, is a series of yoga postures performed in sequence dating back to the ancient Vedic period. It became a part of sun worship, for ancient man the sun represented life and light. This is seen in many traditions around the world but mostly lost through the ages. In India this practise has survived and Surya Namaskara is a vital part of this practice.

Surya Namaskara is said to have been created by Hanuman to honour his Guru, the sun Surya.

Surya Namaskara is a popular and versatile practice known for its many health promoting benefits. It is composed of 3 elements form, rhythm and energy. It consists of 12 powerful postures that stretch, massage, stimulates and strengthens the muscles and internal organs. As well as the physical benefits it acts as a moving meditation and breath control (pranayama) exercise. It is well known for promoting longevity. Once learnt it is easily practised yet hard to master. It requires no equipment other than a suitable surface and an area the length of your body.

As Kushti wrestlers are highly physical it is only natural that Surya Namaskara is implemented in their training to some degree. Many of the movements mirror

the action of the Dand and Bethak exercise and it is possible that they are derived from this practice. The wrestlers would have made the exercise more rigorous in nature to suit their training and develop the strength and power of their bodies. Due to this they are not regularly practised by the younger wrestlers. It is more popular with the older wrestlers but even they will perform Dand and Bethak over the Surya Namaskara. Surya Namaskara is recognised as yoga by the wrestlers rather than part of the Vyayam. It has a peculiar place in the Akhara straddling both worlds and having applications to both.

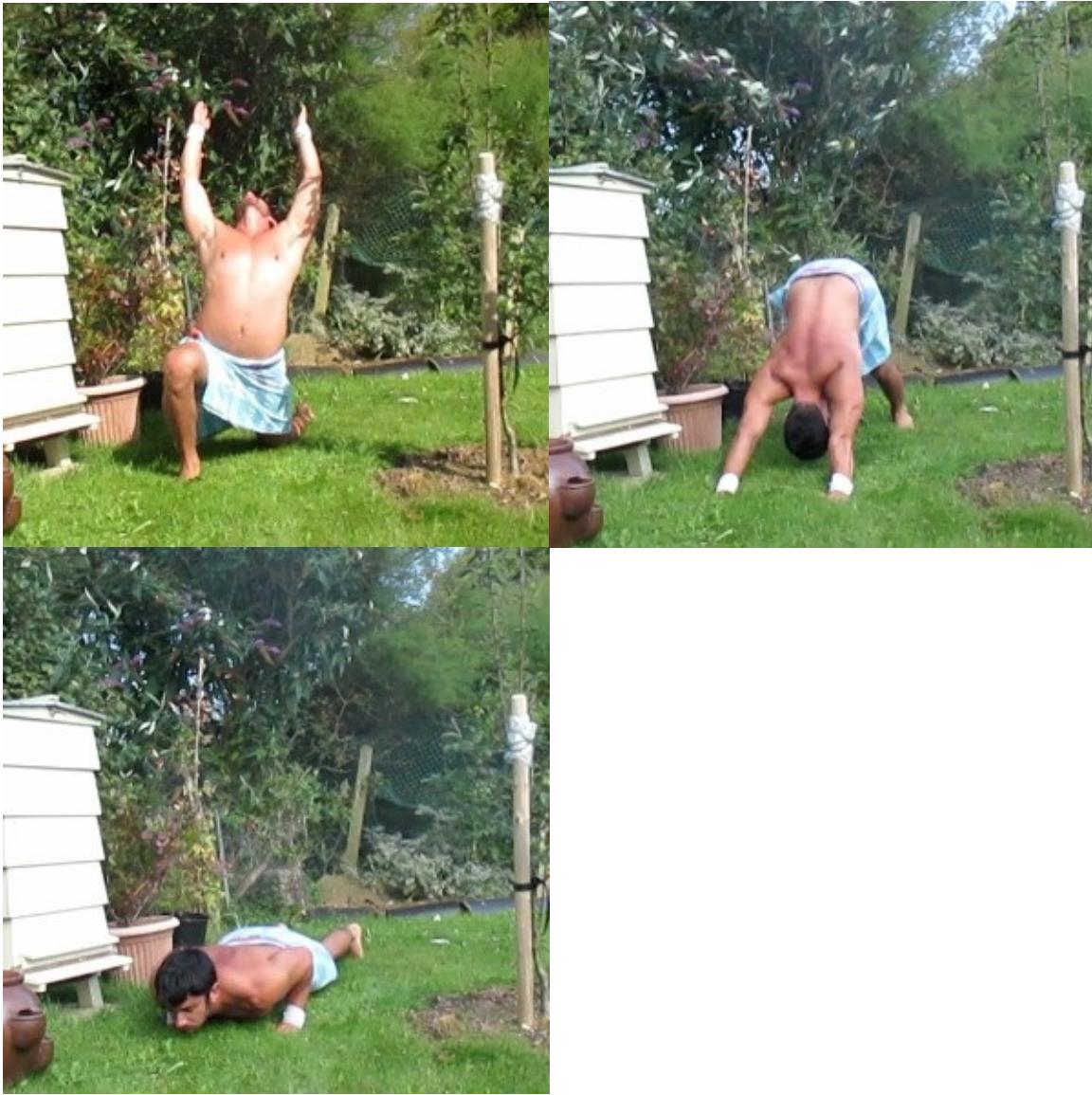
There are numerous texts with records of the great Guru Samarath Ramdas was noted to perform 1,200 Surya Nanmaskaras DAILY. Now having done the maths(of which I am quite rusty) if he were to perform each set (from standing to standing) of each posture at a rate of 1 set per minute then this would take 20 hours. If we half that time to 30 seconds per side we get 10 hours. And if we half that to 15 seconds per side we get 5 hours. The 15 second rate will be a fast pace to complete this exercise, however I have seen and performed this fast variation. I will tell you straight away after several sets you start to tire! The level of strength endurance and mental fortitude to complete such a regimen daily must have been immense to say the least!

THE 12 POSTURES

Position 1: Pranamasana (prayer pose). With eyes closed stand tall palms together in prayer position. Breathe normally. Relax the whole body.

Position 2: Hasta Utthanasana (raised arms pose). Separate the hands, raise and stretch both arms above the head. Bend the head arms and upper trunk slightly backward inhaling.

Position 3: Padahastasana (hand to foot pose). Bend forward at the hips exhaling, until hands or fingers touch the floor. Bring forehead to knees. Keep the legs straight but do not strain.



Position 4: Ashwas Sanchalanasana (equestrian pose). Here I perform (Ardha Chandrasana or half moon pose). The difference being in Equestrian position the hands come down to the sides. In half moon pose the hands are raised above the body. With either variation inhale deeply as you take one leg to the rear in a deep lunge and begin the back bend.

Position 5: Parvastasana (mountain pose). Bring palms to the floor and place the front leg to the rear exhaling. Simultaneously raise the buttocks and lower the head between the arms so the body forms a triangle with the floor and gaze at the navel.

Position 6: Ashtanga Namaskara (salute with 8 points). Lower the body, knees,

chest and chin drop simultaneously. Breath is held during this pose.

Position 7:Bhujangasana (cobra pose). Lower the hips and drive through the palms straightening the arms and arch backwards through the spine whilst inhaling.

Position 8:Parvastasana (mountain pose). Bring palms to the floor and place the front leg to the rear exhaling. Simultaneously raise the buttocks and lower the head between the arms so the body forms a triangle with the floor and gaze at the navel.

Position 9:Ashwas Sanchalanasana (equestrian pose). Here I perform (Ardha Chandrasana or half moon pose). The difference being in Equestrian position the hands come down to the sides. In half moon pose the hands are raised above the body. With either variation inhale deeply as you begin the back bend.





Position 10: Padahastasana (hand to foot pose). Bend forward at the hips exhaling, until hands or fingers touch the floor. Bring forehead to knees. Keep the legs straight but do not strain.

Position 11: Hasta Utthanasana (raised arms pose). Separate the hands, raise and stretch both arms above the head. Bend the head arms and upper trunk slightly backward inhaling.

Position 12: Pranamasana (prayer pose). Bring the hands back to prayer position exhaling as you do so. Take a few breaths, relaxing the body before repeating with the opposite side leg.

It is important to ensure you do equal work per side for the sake of balance. Both a repetition of left and right equals 1 set. So if you perform one series on the right leg you will perform the next series on the left. You can also perform half of your total sets using one side then perform the other half on the other side.

A recommended number of sets could be: 3 (3 left and 3 right).

6 (6 left and 6 right).

9 (9 left and 9 right).

12 (12 left and 12 right).

The Raja of Aundh who was known to be an expert on physical culture set a specific number of Surya Namaskaras that should be performed daily.

Ages 8 and below: 12-25 sets.

Ages 12 to 16: 50-100 sets.

Ages 16 to 40: 100-300 sets.

Ages 40 to 60: 300-100 sets.

After the age of 60 perform as many as your physical prowess allows.

It is stressed small amounts of daily practice is preferable to 1 day a week of large volumes. A little each day goes a long way to health and longevity.

There are many different variations on the sun salutation. For example the Chandra Namaskara which is the variation demonstrated in this variation. One of my favourite variations comes from Ashtanga yoga and is a very dynamic and powerful form. Another little tweak I learned from both wrestlers and a yoga teacher in India is to hold your breath during one whole sequence, from standing back to standing. This can be an interesting experience the first time you try it and I think I very nearly blacked out on the first go. It teaches the proper pacing of your internal energies as well as increased resistance to carbon monoxides negative effects in the body. As an exercise it is of great value. If there is but one you choose from this manual Surya Namaskaras should be it!

INTEGRATING OTHER EXERCISES

From my personal experiences with training I have learnt the hard way what seems to work best and what doesn't. I must note that this is particular to me. Many of these ideas and techniques may or may not be of particular benefit to you. I like to encourage creativity, critical thinking application of proven methods to further you training and personal development. Too many people blindly follow what is spoon fed them the equivalent of fitness fast food. While I can see there are benefits to this such as getting sedentary people moving, for the people who dedicate themselves to fitness as a lifestyle, being able to develop their own individual "way" of training is important. This requires nonbiased self evaluation of how your training progresses and whether you are achieving your goals.

Over time you will see what works and does not and if you track your efforts in a training log which I highly recommend you do, you will be able to see the ebb and flow of your physical self.

You will uncover exercises that are beneficial to you and others that are less so. Experiment with other training programmes and modalities but be sure to give them a fair shot. Don't try kettle bells for a week and say they did nothing for you. At the least try to stick with a particular method for 3 months to get a really

good feel for it and a year would be optimal. However we don't all have time to experiment at such a large degree. Regardless having a broad knowledge can only help deepen your favoured methods or sport. If there is one piece of information you can take and apply to your own training then the experiment has been beneficial.

My currant philosophy revolves around being able to do what I can do today, tomorrow. Basically this means I plan my training for the long term. I want to be as strong as I need as well as healthy and be able to continue training well into my 50's, 60's, 70's, 80's, 90's and beyond! This means finding exercises that you can do for a lifetime with the least deleterious effect. That does not mean you do not train hard but you apply some brain power to your selection. Now this is how I train, if you are a full time athlete or competitor you will doubtless have to sacrifice elements of health to succeed, this is the physical trade that you must decide to take.

So with out further ado I will list some instances where I have found things useful, where the idea came from and how to implement it in context of Indian Physical Culture.

FRONT PULL BAND PULL APART

Front pulls or band pull aparts are a great exercise regardless of the exercise methods you follow. I have consistently implemented these into my training as they are simple and highly beneficial.

To perform a pullapart hold a resistance band out at arms length in front of you. Keeping your arms locked pull your arms out to the side, so your arms are out in a crucifix position fully retracting the scapular. Return to the start position under control and repeat. During the duration of the exercise maintain a constant tension on the band as allowing the band to get go slack just makes it much easier! Perform between 10-25repetitions at a time.

The front pull is almost exactly the same and pre-dates the pull apart by a century or so. It was performed using steel spring cables or elastic by the old time strongmen. Handles were attached to the spring ensuring a neutral hand-grip position. The exercise would be performed as a feat of strength, with exceptionally strong cables. While this form of training is in it's own particular league, using heavier bands and cables can be of great benefit. I use front pulls after my main upper body work is complete using differing strength methods such as 5x5, 4x6 3x10 or 2x20.

In my own training I have alternated between band pull aparts and heavier front pulls throughout the year. The band pull aparts are easily implemented. If I am performing a Gada or Jori session I would perform as set of band pull aparts in between the warm up sets. This way they act as a supplementary warm up as well as conditioning the muscles of the shoulder girdle and upper back. Once I am at the working sets I would leave the pull aparts until I had finished my swinging work as I like to conserve as much energy as possible for the exercise at hand. Afterwards I would perform another set of pull apart. So if I was performing 3 warm up sets and the set at the end I could have achieved 100 pull apart. There is nothing to stop you from continuing to perform pull apart throughout your session. They are good as a pre-hab exercise in that they will help strengthen the muscles that are used in swinging but also approach it from a different angle. This helps insure balance is maintained throughout the musculature. Personally I fell these have been crucial for my shoulders staying intact after doing high volume heavy weight Gada or Jori swinging. They are not taxing and may be performed everyday out side of your workout, again strive for around 100 reps.

BAND PUSH DOWN/CURLS

Continuing with the band theme I will use a single band and perform push downs/ triceps extensions back to back with band curls with a hammer grip. I will perform 20-30 repetitions of each and do this 2 to 3 times usually at the end of upper body work or the training session.

These are done again as a prehab and restorative method. The area around the elbow takes quite a beating with heavy Jori and Gada work and where the pull apart assists the shoulder the pull down/curl helps the elbow by strengthening the tendons and ligaments around that area. They also help promote blood flow and circulation engorging the muscle creating a pump effect.

I use push downs and curls to help alleviate any pain in the elbow and prevent injuries. By directly training the muscles of the biceps and triceps they are additionally strengthened. Sometimes after heavy swinging I have found pressing or pulling to be too much for my elbows and that heavy pressing or pulling was out of the question. By using these exercises I could recover quicker with less pain or worry or injury. They are quick and easy to do and worth the small investment of time and effort.

HIGH REP 1 ARM ROWS

Also known as “Kroc Rows” after Powerlifter/ Bodybuilder Matt Kroczaleski who recently came out as a transgender female now called Janae Marie Kroc. Not to go off topic but I bet no one saw that one coming! The Kroc row is simple, grab a heavy dumbbell and perform as many repetitions as possible with it!

I use this immediately after my Jori/Gada work. As these two exercises work the back tremendously as it is. One arm high rep rows will help with building up the upper back and strengthen the biceps, grip and arm strength. Also working from another angle helps in preventing injury which can only be a good thing.

Performing band pullaparts alongside these increases the effect on the upper back development.

Perform a few warm up sets as necessary around 6-8 reps. I try not to hang around here as I like to get in and hit the rows and move on. As you are performing just 1 hard workset per arm it is important to stay mentally focused and concentrate fully on the exercise. With your target weight pull as many reps as you can. Aim for a target of up to 30 reps. Once you achieve your target increase your weight by the smallest increment you can and work back up to that number over the following training sessions.

PULL UPS/ CHIN UPS

Wrestlers in the Akhara perform pull ups and chin ups regularly and often do them in between sets of Dands. They are a basic exercise and foundational for upper back, arm and grip strength. I like to perform pull ups and chins on gymnastic rings as they feel much easier on the elbows than a straight fixed bar. They can be aggravating if your elbows are taking a beating. However otherwise they are an excellent component to your training. Like the high rep rows , I will perform these after the main swinging session. Again these can be super setted with band pull aparts.

Perform as many sets as it takes to get to 20 reps or perform 2-3 sets of maximum reps.

DIPS

Dips are popular in the Akhara and commonly paired with pull ups/chin ups. Dips work the chest and triceps in a way different to Dands. Dips are commonly performed with body weight for as many reps as possible. In my own training I like to perform dips weighted and with body weight. One example is perform 3 sets of 5 with a heavy weight and the perform a final set with body weight for as many reps as possible. Alternately performing 2-3 sets of maximum reps with body weight. This can be super setted with pull ups/chin ups and is a great way

to work all of the upper body muscles with two very synergistic exercises. If I focus on bodyweight exercises this pair will always get a look in.

DEAD LIFT

The dead lift is a fantastic exercise well known for developing all around physical strength and development. It comes in many variations, conventional, sumo, snatch grip, trap bar to name a few. It can be performed with almost any implement, if it's on the ground and heavy you can dead lift it. The dead lift allows you to lift a lot of weight which helps build raw power and size. If there were only one exercise I could be allowed to perform for the rest of my life, the dead lift would be it. It has so many far reaching benefits it cannot be ignored. I particularly like the trap bar as you can really load it up and it places less strain on the low back and a bit more on the legs. With whatever method of dead lift you perform there are many ways to programme it. With this exercise I don't think you can go wrong with basic strength training. 5 sets of 5, 3 sets of 3, 5 sets of 3, doubles etc. Work the lift hard and heavy as it was meant to be done to see the most benefits.

OVERHEAD LIFTING

If the dead lift were the only exercise I could perform then second place goes to the military press/clean and press. Taking a weight from the ground to over head is as ancient as the hills themselves. The upper body pushing power and muscular development gained from this exercise is something else. Personally I just love how it feels to move barbells, kettle bells, rocks, sandbags, ANYTHING over head. It is just a great movement and one traditionally considered the true marker of a man's strength. Other over head lifts, like jerks, push presses and even lifts like the bent press and get ups all fit here. The strong man log press is great as the neutral grip really lets you get a strong position to press from. In the Akhara many perform presses with barbells or the Nal. The Nal is a good example of the antiquity of over head pressing and something that has lasted so long must have some truth to it. If I am performing a lot of swings with Gada and Jori I will sometimes cut this out to save my shoulders. However if I can I will always try and work a variation of this exercise into my routine. Simple basic strength programmes like with the dead lift work best here.

STONE LIFTING

Speaking of old, lets talk about truly ancient! Stone lifting must without a doubt

be the oldest physical strength activity in the world. From moving rocks to create shelters to the Egyptian pyramids, ancient man had a close union with stone throughout the development of civilisation. Stone lifting has always been a marker of strength, with many cultures having rituals of man hood revolving around hefting and carrying massive stones. Stones are a true test of strength. You cannot cheat the weight it either budges.. or does not. Stone lifting has become more popular today as people grow tired of fitness cliches, seeking to get back to the bare bones rawness of strength training. Stone lifting is practised in India to this day and around the world. It is again a simple method. Find a big stone, pick it up, carry it press it shoulder it. There is plenty of stone lifting information out there so get to it!

FRONT SQUATS

I include front squats as I am not very good at back squats! Years spent in the army or abroad has meant little to no access to squat racks. Dead lifts became the exercise of choice. However having acquired kettle bells I like to front squat with them. I use these for reps of 3, 5 ,8, 10 and upwards for multiple sets. Holding the kettle bells feels really comfortable. In my own training I will perform several sets with a heavy to moderate weight. After completing these I will immediately perform Bethak for high reps or time. I find that this combination of heavier weights for lowish reps with ballistic high reps is good for developing strength and endurance.

FLOOR PRESS

I use the floor press with kettle bells. This feels particularly comfortable and means I can do these anywhere. I use this exercise to strengthen the chest and triceps. It is a nice retentively easy on technique exercise. Being very simple there is less room for things to go wrong. I particularly like it as it stresses the shoulders less than a normal bench press. With all the swinging of Gada and Jori, you need to save your shoulders as much as possible. I usually perform something along the lines of 3 sets of 8 reps or 5 sets of 5 reps with these. In the Akhara the bench press is very popular. Mostly it is trained with a moderate weight for as many repetitions as possible for a few sets, much like in a body building style routine.

ABDOMINAL EXERCISES

This is an area where I fall short. Having read that Vince Gironda did not like

direct abdominal exercises, I was sold! I am getting better now and perform an assortment “core” exercises at least once per week! In the Akhara the leg raise on parallel bars is popular as are basic crunches performed on the floor. Simple basic work will be of assistance here. I found that heavy Gada swings worked the core in a way that was highly beneficial. My advice is if you like to work your abs go ahead!

TURKISH GET UP

This is another great exercise that helps keep you healthy and mobile. It is especially beneficial for the shoulder girdle. It is a combination of coordination, strength ,stability and concentration A combination of pull apart, rows, pull ups and get-ups will strengthen your shoulders no end.

KETTLEBELL SWING

The kettlebell swing is a great exercise. Entire books have been written about it. It is a simple but highly effective movement great for increasing power and conditioning dependant upon what the individuals goals are. I like to use it at the end of my training sessions as part of a circuit or as an interval or tabata training. It does not take much to get the great benefits of this exercise. It strengthens the lower back and makes the hamstrings powerful and flexible, a great combination especially if you find yourself sat at a desk often! It can be performed with 2 hands, 1 hand, alternating hands or with juggling. There are many great resources out there on it so defiantly do yourself a favour and check them out!

SWIMMING, WALKING AND RUNNING

Swimming walking and running are considered highly beneficial exercises to the Kushti wrestlers. Running is highly thought of as a great way to improve stamina and speed and is often performed first thing in the morning. Many wrestlers will run to the Akhara as a way of warming up and getting in extra exercise. It is also performed after practice at a steady pace so as to act as a recovery method. Running may be conducted at the Akhara if the size permits, normally performed by running around the pit whilst performing joint opening exercises.

Walking is considered one of the very best forms of exercise. It is valuable for general health and well being. It builds stamina and helps to clear the mind. Wrestlers will walk to the Akhara if they do not run and many walk long distances to reach their place of work. Whilst walking is not considered a rigorous form of exercise it is still referred to by Guris. If a wrestler takes ill

then his Guru will recommend they take short walks to keep their bodies moving.

Swimming is very popular amongst the wrestlers and Pahlavan. Many will perform the morning ablutions in the river if at all permissible. It can be used for both rigorous training and as relaxation. Some of the wrestlers I was with would race each other to one side of the river Ganga and back again. This would be around 600 to 800 metres in distance.

MASSAGE

Massage is used by the wrestlers as a method of recovering from intense training. Massage is usually given on a set day which may differ from Akhara to Akhara. Some will give Massage on Hanuman's days of worship, Tuesday and Saturday whilst others will perform them at other times in the week. The days massage is given are usually days off from Vyayam and Jor. It is a time to relax and socialise with ones peers.

Massage is also an important form of bonding within the Akhara. It is an important factor in crossing the caste lines, much like performing Jor. Some castes may not interact with others during day to day life but in the Akhara this does not apply. It allows members of different caste to interact as equals. Wrestlers receive treatment in order of rank held, the particular make up of which may vary from Akhara to Akhara. The Guru and senior wrestlers receive massage from their juniors and so on. In most cases the wrestlers will take turns giving and receiving massage.

As long as there has been wrestling in India, there has always been massage to accompany it. Massage in India has its roots in Ayurvedic medicine and science. For over 5000 years the skill of massage has been refined into an art, one that still continues to this day. Massage clinics are commonly found throughout India as it is considered highly beneficial to ones health and longevity.

The massage performed in the Akhara follows Ayurvedic guidelines, seeking to return balance in the bodies 3 Doshas (Kapha, Pitta and Vata). By achieving this balance one becomes healthy and resistant to disease. An imbalance makes one more prone to injury and illness. By this token, massage is taken seriously as a preventative measure.

The massage is normally performed with the application of oil, which helps to avoid friction as the hands move over the body. Direct pressure is also utilised

~~Avoid friction as the hands move over the body. Direct pressure is also avoided,~~ pressing directly onto an area to manipulate it. Some wrestlers will even walk on their patients limbs and body to ensure they get in deep enough to the areas that need it. With the amount of regular training imposed on their bodies massage is a great way of removing working out out knots, improving circulation, stimulating the lymphatic system responsible for disease immunity, relieving physical/emotional tension, improving flexibility, reducing stiffness as well as removing toxins and metabolic waste in the body.

The sense of physical well being after massage is tremendous. If a person feels weighed down with stress then a massage is a great weight to lighten the load. All these factors ultimately lead to increased performance, durability and a clear mind essential for hard training. Fatigue from extensive exercise is alleviated through the invigoration of the nervous system.

The art of giving massage is taught over years of practice. It acts as a new skill, teaching not just how to apply massage, but how to diagnose injuries and learn about basic anatomy. This can then be directly applied to the wrestling pit, If you know your opponents weak areas then you gain an advantage.

Wrestlers only take their massage form other wrestlers or family members. This is followed along similar lines with regards to food. If someone of questionable morals and character or who harbours negative thoughts performs massage on the wrestler, then they may leave this imprinted within the wrestlers own psyche. As such pains are taken to ensure that those giving massage are of a peaceful mind, neither full of aggression or lust for the opposite sex. The Akhara, being a peaceful place away from the eyes of the outside world is a good place to find peace of mind to give or receive a massage.

By implementing massage in your own training you will find that your recovery will be much improved. Any aches or pains alleviated and soreness from training reduced.

EQUIPMENT NEEDED :

Oil for massage. There are many types of oils you can use. Baby oil is a good place to start. Mustard oil and coconut oils are used by wrestlers for their heating and cooling properties respectively.

Towel, mat or suitable flooring.

POSITIONS:

In massage the practitioner will typically adopt 2 main positions.

Position 1 is a kneeling position .

Position 2 kneel on one knee while adopting a lunge position with the opposite leg. If the person receiving a massage is sat in a chair or on the floor then you can either stand or kneel behind them to administer the massage.

The main areas and sequence of massage can be broken down as follows.

Back.

Shoulders.

Backs of legs. Feet.

Front of the legs Front of the body. Arms and hands. Head and face.

This is a simple way to sequence a massage practice. You may omit or change up the sequence how you see fit or just focus on a particular area.

I will now list a simple massage session you can practice. I definitely recommend getting the correct training if you can or pick up a massage book fully detailing the massage techniques. Some time in the future I may well produce such a book!

BACK

Start in position 1 at the head of the person you wish to massage. Apply warm oil to your hands and rub the back.

Perform 3 circular rubbing motions starting from the shoulder blades and moving down the back from the top, middle and bottom. Perform this 3 times increasing pressure each time.

Move to the side of the person receiving massage still in position 1. Rub the hands alternately along the width of the back starting from the base f the spine and moving to the top of the shoulders. When you reach the top run your hands back down to the bottom and begin again. Apply as much pressure as is comfortable.

Perform 9 times then switch sides.

SHOULDERS

In position 2,Take hold of one wrist and place it at the base of the spine so it forms a right angle. Holding the arm in position, with the other hand run the thumb around

the shoulder blade in large circles whilst holding the top of the shoulder. The

thumb should be doing the motion.

Perform this 9 times one way then reverse the direction.

Change sides and repeat on the opposite shoulder.

BACK OF LEGS

Take position 1 by the feet of the person receiving massage so you look down the length of their body.

Apply oil to their legs.

Using a circular motion like with the back, perform 3 circles starting at the bottom, middle and top of the legs with one arm on each leg. Perform this 3 times.

Now focusing on one leg perform the same circular motion 9 times whilst using 2 hand on the same leg.

Take up position 1 at the side of the leg and perform a wringing motion, like wringing a dish cloth, from the ankle up to the top of the hamstring.

Once you reach the top run the hands back down to the ankle and repeat 3-9 times.

Once you have completed the wringing perform 9 increasing circles.

Switch sides and repeat on the opposite leg.

FEET

Have the person receiving the massage turn over so they lie on their back. Take up position 1 by their feet.

Apply oil to the feet.

Rub around the ankle joint 9 times forwards and 9 times backwards.

Hold the foot with one hand. With the base of your palm, rub up and down vigorously on the sole of the foot for 30 seconds.

Gentle massage each toe between thumb and fore finger starting at the base.

Gently pull the toe before moving onto the next digit.

Repeat on the opposite foot.

FRONT OF THE LEGS

This is the same sequence as for the backs of the legs.

FRONT OF THE BODY

Take up position 1 by the head as if massaging the back. This is the same sequence as massaging the back.

ARMS AND HANDS

Take up position 1 by an arm. Apply oil.

Run your arms down the length of the arm, one over the other. Imagine milking a

cows udders!

Press the arms down using your palms into the floor by leaning forward with your

body weight. Start from the shoulder and work down. Repeat 3 times. Wring the arms like dishcloth. Perform 3 times.

Hold the hand by the wrist and using your thumbs, massage the palm. Squeeze the hand 3-9 times between your fingers.

Massage the fingers one at a time, starting by the knuckle and working your way

up. Gently pull the finger when you reach the top.

Repeat sequence on the opposite arm and leg.

HEAD

Ensure your hands are clean, dry and free of oil.

Have the person you wish to massage sit up right on a chair or on the floor. Place the palms of your hands either side of the head, fingers on top. Apply inward

pressure to the skull GENTLY! Do this 3 times.

Using the fingers and starting at the back of the skull, run your fingers back and forth like a zig-zag. Move from the back to the front, pull your hands about and repeat 3 times.

THE WRESTLERS BREATH

When I first trained with the Indian wrestlers and Pahlavan I noticed very quickly how they were breathing during training. At first I thought that they were not breathing! During exertion their mouths were kept shut. Their faces were passive aside from a pursing of the lips, as if they had just tasted something sour. This intrigued me as in many lifting sports forced exhalations seemed to be the norm, meaning aggressively inhaling and exhaling during execution of the movement. Even in more flowing activities, the mouth is kept open to allow the flow of breath. After asking about the reasons why and after some research I present the two main breathing techniques practised by the Kushti wrestlers for

practice and competition. They are *Ujjayi Pranayama* and *Kumbhaka Pranayama*.

PRANA

Prana can roughly be translated as “energy or vital force” but this is a clumsy groping way of trying to come to terms with its true definition within the context of the human mind which seeks to place labels upon all things as a way of rationalising and understanding the universe.

Prana is present in everything. From a blade of grass to a planet and the spaces between stars all things living or dead exist through the manifestation of Prana . Without Prana there would be no existence. If Prana were to leave the then the whole universe would collapse and disintegrate upon itself. Prana is both simple and complex in concept. Seers and yogis have spent millennia trying to discern the true nature of Prana.

The amount of Prana a particular vessel can contain relates directly to the vitality of that vessel.

Everyone is born with a certain amount of Prana which changes constantly. Positive thoughts, higher feelings and yogic practices are a way of increasing Prana.

Sexual energy which is a powerful source of Prana, may be transmuted through practice into Ojas, a subtler form of energy. This energy is cultivated and accumulated in the brain to be utilised for creative and spiritual development. The more Prana one can store within oneself is akin to the strength of a battery's charge. The more energy withheld the more powerful the output. Prana is also received by the air we breathe the food we eat. So by definition the correct foods and climatic conditions can have a great effect on a persons Pranic/energy level and the elements. An example would be if you live in a pollution dense city and eat low quality fast food you would not receive as much Prana as if you lived in the countryside eating fresh produce.

Prana is not just received from external sources. The individual can work within themselves to increase and harmonise their Prana to increase vitality, will, strength, cure disease and reach higher states of consciousness. The yogis say that to fully perfect any experience in life then you must work with your Prana. As breath is the external manifestation of Prana the ancient sages and yogis worked on mastering this.

Thus control of the breath is of paramount importance for those seeking to improve their physical and mental performance. The ability to control ones breath is known as Pranayama.

PRANAYAMA

Pranayam is a science formed around 3 elements of breathing. These are:

Pooraka-Inhalation

Rechaka-Exhalation

Kumbhaka-Breath retention

Pranayama means “life force control”. Essentially this means control of the breathe. It consists of a series of breathing techniques designed to increase the amount and quality as well as extend the Prana in the organism.

Pranayama is an integral part of yogic science. It is employed to increase vitality and mental clarity and to reach expanded states of consciousness suitable for deep meditation. At high levels of experience a practitioner can direct Pranic energy to where it needs to go within the body to heal and empower. Pranayam is very much an internal skill, requiring the ability to look inwards on oneself.

For the Kushti wrestlers it is a means to and end. It is utilised to improve performance in their chosen sport. It is used for practicality rather than spiritual ascension. That being said, it is hard not to notice the peaceful and meditative nature of the Akhara and the men who train within.

UJJAYI PRANAYAMA

Ujjayi Pranayama is the primary breath contro technique employed by the Kusht wrestlers. Ujjayi means “victorious” coming from the root word *Ujji* meaning to “conquer”. With such strong terminology we can see why it is the chosen method of breath control of the Akhara.

It is simple to perform and used extensively in Vyayam and Jor as well as in competition.

The mouth is kept shut, lips pursed and the tongue touching the roof of the mouth.

Imagine that there is a hole the size of a coin in your throat and that you are breathing through this hole.

As you do so, a noise will sound similar to a cat purring.
Allow the breath to flow through the nostrils on the inhale and exhale.
Throughout relax the face, do not scrunch the eyes or grit the teeth.
Do not force the breath in the throat too much, use as much as is needed and not more.

Ujjayi Pranayama can be used for deep breathing during exercise and is perfected by relaxing. Kushti wrestlers maintain a calm and composed look when training or competing. Relaxation is the key to maximise the way it manipulates energy in the body.

It is also known as “the psychic breath” as it creates a meditative state in the practitioner. This method of breathing is a natural companion to the cyclical exercises performed by the Kushti wrestlers. By performing rhythmic exercise alongside deep breathing the wrestlers enter a meditative state which lets them transcend their bodies. The exercise becomes a part of their whole being unifying body and mind and making exercise a profoundly deepening experience. When training at the Akhara, the Vyayam routine are the prayers given to Hanuman made manifest.

KUMBHAKA PRANAYAMA

This breathing style called *Kumbhaka* and is another Pranayama practice in yoga. Whilst many wrestlers do not practice yoga they are aware of its benefits. Kumbhaka has been integrated into Vyayam and Jor and is the secondary breathing technique performed by the wrestlers and Pahlavan.

It is one of the 3 elements that form Pranayama. These 3 elements are:

Pooraka-Inhalation
Rechaka-Exhalation
Kumbhaka-Breath retention

Kumbhaka exists in normal respiration(breathing) but usually for a minute amount of time. This pause is rarely noticed unless at rest. The pattern of inhalation, pause, exhalation seems more like inhalation and exhalation if attention is not put into the breath. Kumbhaka is not consciously controlled.

By training Kumbhaka and gaining awareness of it allows one to become calm and gain control over the mind and the body. Wrestling is a very physically demanding sport, yet when the wrestlers went about their practice few would be

breathing heavily with mouths open.

The wrestlers during training would tell me that by keeping their mouths shut they would keep the energy or Prana, in their system. By opening their mouths they would let this energy out and receive less benefits in their training. They would inhale and exhale as needed through the nostrils. However many pointed out that during exercises they would hold their breath, for example when performing Dands or Bethaks. They would set a number and aim to hit it before having to exhale or inhale.

If they could achieve the numbers set for them, they had increased their capacity to work whilst retaining the breath. Essentially they could hold their breath for a long period of time whilst performing exercise or grappling. The benefits were the ability to control the mind and body whilst not actively inhaling or exhaling. This helps in building up the ability to perform a lot of work on just one breath.

By retaining breath, metabolism is slowed down. As we inhale and exhale our bodies work much like furnaces. Our lungs act as the bellows stoking our internal chemical make-up. Khumbhaka essentially halts this fanning of the flames. Slowing the metabolism in such a manner controls the effects of the energy in our body used to fuel muscular contractions. In essence it allows the lengthening of these energy systems. Using the bellows as an analogy, normal breathing would be like a steady opening and closing of said bellows. Now imagine this effect on a fire. The fire will burn hotter and hotter in relation to the speed the bellows are pumped. If we are breathing rapidly we are fanning these fires quickly, making their heat intense. Now if we fan the flames once, then actively pause for a period of time before performing the action again, we would see that it would take much longer for the fire to heat up. It would more than likely stay more or less steady rather than intensify into a blazing inferno. As exercise increases in intensity, more oxygen is consumed and thus more energy is utilised or is required. By using Khumbhaka techniques the wrestlers can effectively extend their energy.

To understand these energy demands let's look at the different energies used in activity from the western perspective. Firstly we have the classifications of activity in relation to breathing. These are:

ANEROBIC ACTIVITY :

Without air. High intensity short duration activity lasting from a few seconds up to 2 minutes. Examples include, sprinting, boxing, wrestling and gymnastics.

AEROBIC ACTIVITY :

Requiring air. Activity with oxygen. Often referred to as cardiovascular activity. This usually ranges from light to high in intensity. Examples can include running, swimming, cycling, walking and long duration kettlebell sport.

Both of these forms of activity rely upon different metabolic pathways in the body to provide energy to perform the action or activity required. These are:

ADENOSINE TRIPHOSPHATE (ATP): Activity requiring ATP solely lasts for 3 seconds.

PHOSPHOCREATINE (Pcr):

Pcr energy use can last between 4 to 10 seconds.

GLYCOLYTIC SYSTEM (muscle glycogen):

Muscle glycogen kicks in after 10-12 seconds and is used primarily in activity lasting up to 2 minutes.

LACTIC ACID, FATTY ACIDS AND AMINO ACIDS:

In concert with muscle glycogen, the acids start to fuel the bodies energy demands after 2 minutes.

Oxygen is utilised for all of these processes, even the short ATP system. By extending the breath these energy pathways can be extended allowing an increase in physical output when compared to normal breathing techniques.

These exercises also allow the wrestler to deal with the increase of carbon dioxide build up in the body. Carbon dioxide levels are restored in the brain with Khumbhaka techniques and trains it to extract and utilise oxygen fully. Increases of carbon dioxide in the blood can also lead to altered states of mind, leading to expansion of consciousness. This is why it is frequently practised by yoga masters seeking enlightenment.

By training the ability to withstand the effects of carbon dioxide, the wrestler gains control of involuntary processes, such as gasping. Gasping for breathe is linked with a lapse of concentration and wrestlers will quickly admonish any of their number to do so. It often means that the person who performed the act was training beyond their means and capacity. It is often stressed that training must be done steadily and progressively to achieve the best effect.

By employing these techniques the wrestlers can stay relatively rested and so complete their mammoth training sessions. However it takes correct guidance and practice to be able to employ this breathing technique. As such only perform

these techniques if your doctor agrees you can do so and preferably under tutelage of an instructor. Yoga teachers will more than likely know this technique, however it may be stressed that you must master more basic Pranayamas before hand.

Kumbhaka should not be performed by people with high blood pressure, cardiovascular problems, cerebral disease, vertigo or mental defects.

The first time you perform these exercises, especially with movement, you may feel faint. These can feel very extreme. Ensure that you train comfortably. If you feel strain at all, exhale deeply and take inhalations through the nose and exhalations through the mouth until you feel calm and controlled.

KUMBHAKA PRANAYAMA:

Sit in a comfortable position or lie flat on the floor on your back. Relax. As you inhale count to 4. As you exhale count to 4. Perform this for several minutes. Now inhale and retain the breathe for 4 seconds followed by a 4 second exhale. Practice this for 11 inhales, retentions and exhales.

Slowly increase the retention and exhalations by a second at a time until you reach

a 4 second inhalation, 8 second retention and 8 second exhalation.

KUMBHAKA WITH JOINT OPENING:

After you have practised Kumbhaka Pranayama, practice the retention with movement.

Perform a joint opening routine. Inhale before you begin the exercise you have selected. We will use arm swings as an example.

Keeping still inhale, then retain the breath and perform the number of repetitions you have set in mind. 9 is a good number to start with.

Once you have completed your repetitions, bring the arms down to the side and exhale forcefully through the mouth with pursed lips. Take 3-5 deep breathes in through the nose and out through the mouth before repeating the exercise or performing the next in sequence.

If you feel dizzy at any point, ensure you can sit down should you need. Make sure you practice in a safe environment, preferably with supervision.

KUMBHAKA AND VYAYAM ENSURE YOU HAVE MASTERED THE

EXERCISE SO THAT IT IS SECOND NATURE BEFORE PERFORMING IT WITH KUMBHAKA. ATTEMPTING AN EXERCISE YOU HAVE NO ABILITY IN WILL ONLY LEAD TO DECREASED PERFORMANCE AND MAY BE HARMFUL. YOU HAVE BEEN WARNED!

Select an exercise you wish to perform with Kumbhaka. Dands and Bethaks are good exercises to begin with.

Perform Kumbhaka and begin the exercise. Perform several repetitions to get a feel for breath retention with exercise. 9-18 repetitions is a good beginning point.

Once you have completed your repetitions, exhale forcefully and either kneel or stand inhaling through the nose and exhaling through the mouth.

Repeat for desired numbers of reps and sets.

NOTE if using Jori Gada or other equipment train to a safe edge. Do not push yourself to the point of bursting. It is better to progress in these exercises slowly rather than race and potentially cause yourself harm.

Kumbhaka is performed intermittently during training. In wrestling it is used in positions of compromise, when breathing would expend too much energy. When used in training it develops the ability to resist those moments of compromise as well as increase physical capability. Ujjayi Pranayama is the main tool of the wrestlers breathing arsenal. The unique combination of deep breathing and concentration make it a breathe technique that can be used both for force and for relaxation. As such it can be used to demonstrate strength or for meditative reasons and often both.

It is this unique depth and attention to detail that marks the breath techniques of the Kushti wrestlers. The level of thought and depth toward the application of breath in physical contests, like the other training modalities, has evolved over a thousand years and more. Trial and error has carried these through the span of time as such they are time tested skills.

The practice of Pranayama is popular in the yoga community. Why not in strength training? Because the effects are rarely immediately seen and take time to learn, much like the other exercises listed in this book. These are exercises of patience, practice and looking inwards to one's own character. This means that it only appeals to certain types of people, I certainly hope you are one of them! Practice these techniques at your own pace and explore how they can deepen and enrich your own training experience.

HOW TO IMPLEMENT SWINGING EXERCISES INTO YOUR TRAINING

When I encountered many of the strongest Gada and Jori swingers, they did not seem overly impressive. Some were big others slight but none would have what you would call a body builder physique. To be honest if you met them in the street you would not even think they really even trained! However when they took hold of a Gada, Jori or dumbbells they could do very heavy swings for very high repetitions. These were objects that felt impossible to budge let alone swing.

These unassuming guys could do things that just seemed beyond comprehension. Asking about this many commented that the “power came from within” or was “internal power”. Some commented that trying to build excess muscle was of little practical use. Looks are not considered important, what is more important is the stamina, strength and power. Basically a premium is placed on athletic quality rather than the physique. Many of the wrestlers and competition swingers made a point of this, saying that a strong body can do more work to help provide for the family and its needs. By this I do not mean just physical labour but also performing mental tasks. Several Pahlavans I talked to worked in computing, one was even a lawyer. They all said that training at the Akhara and building their internal energy reserves gave them more energy for their everyday activities.

The wrestlers and Pahlavans aim is not to train the biceps, triceps to appear big and imposing but to be strong and healthy both outside and inside. Many noted that those who went to more western style gyms to work on their muscles may look good but were not strong both physically and mentally. These gym trainers had no soul or devotion to their training and so had only shallow results.

The concept of inner strength and power was continually referenced which is why I make such a point of it here. This is achieved through maintenance of a calm and peaceful mind during exercise is also important to get best results. By staying focused and at peace, energy is not wasted and exercise can be approached in the correct manner. This is accomplished through proper mindset, breathing and technique.

Another point they made was that training came from the heart. By this I mean devotion to both Hanuman and their family. To be a good person and to act accordingly. Each exercise is approached in this manner. The wrestlers believe that this will help make them stronger and able to perform better in the exercises.

~~that this will help make them stronger and able to perform better in the exercise.~~

By using the energy from within or internal power, they are able to perform better in physical tasks.

The wrestlers and Pahlavans believe that they are strong through overcoming gravity and other forces. Not only must the weight be moved but the various angles, speed, vectors and gravity itself applied to the body and the implement help to create enormous strength throughout the body.

To the Pahlavans and wrestlers strength is not just a physical feature. A muscular body or ability to move great weight is not just So to answer the question will these exercises make you strong I would say yes, dependant upon your reasons as to why you would want to train them. That is up to you to figure out!

SO WILL THESE EXERCISES MAKE ME JACKED??

If you want slabs of beef on your pecs and and that is your main focus, I suggest you go else where. Yes the exercises can build muscle but if this is what you are looking for primarily you may be wasting your time. However because his may not suit you as an answer I will break it down to you so you have a rough idea of what is being trained and worked.

GADA SWING: Works the grip, forearms, shoulders, traps, back muscles and abdominals primarily.

JORI SWING: Works the grip, forearms, upper arms, shoulders traps, chest and back muscles primarily.

DUMBBELL SWING; Works the grip, forearms, upper arms, upper back and shoulders primarily.

These are the main areas worked by these exercises, however the whole body comes into play from the feet up. Think of each of these moves more as a full body exercise rather than as body part specific.

A point to note is that many wrestlers in the south of India have more of a bodybuilder physique. This is partly due to their wrestling training and the use of more modern strength training. The more traditional training methods of the Gada and Jori have been mostly replaced with weights and machines. However many of the old ways are still used, Dand and Bethak are the most enduring exercises in the Indian wrestlers arsenal.

WILL THESE EXERCISES MAKE ME STRONG???

Yes and no. By practising these exercises you will get better at performing them and so will be able to use more weight. Being able to use more weight means you are getting stronger right? However if you mean “will this help me break my bench press plateau, break a deadlift record or squat 400 kilos then I can quite emphatically say no. Is there a magical carry over that will help you with other exercises? Probably not. Is this the magic bullet to all your training needs? I doubt it. The swinging exercises are performed to assist with wrestling training and as a sport in and of themselves. And whilst they will aid you in other areas, do not try and put a square peg into a round hole. If you want to get strong muscularly you **MUST** lift weights so do not try and fool yourself.

A more diplomatic answer would be it will make you strong, but in a different way to weights. This strength can be best employed in combat sports, which is where they come from originally. You will have strengthened joints, tendons, ligaments and muscles specific to grappling As such if you are a wrestler then these exercises come highly recommended.

SO HOW MANY REPS DO I DO??

With regards to swinging exercises there is no real set number of repetitions that is ideal. The most common idea amount these exercise is to perform lots of repetitions over an extended period of time.

The wrestlers and Pahlavan I trained with tend not to practice this way. Generally they are given a set number of repetitions that they need to accomplish and seek to achieve that number. The magic number here is 50 Hath/Hands, so a repetition of left and right equalling 1 rep. This is how the wrestlers will train as swinging weights is only a small part of their whole training programme as such they do not spend too much time worrying about doing many many repetitions. It has to be noted, however that this is the number of repetitions performed with the target weight of the day. Warm up sets do not count. If the number of Hands is not completed on the first attempt, the rest of the numbers are made up after a brief period of rest. This continues until the total is made. Alternately they may start with a smaller number of Hands, say 25 and seek to complete these. If that is completed the following session they will try for 30 and so on. If the total is completed in one go then the wrestler will move up to the next weight and try it out. From then on their goal is to hit 50 Hands with the new weight. This very simple progressive overload system has proven results and is easy to implement. If you wish to play around with the swinging exercises and not make it a main

~~If you wish to play around with the swinging exercises and not make it a main focus of your training this is an excellent way to go. It will not take long and will give you tremendous benefits in return for the small time and effort investment you put in for them.~~

Competition swingers are a different kettle of fish. The exercises for them are the goal. As such much more time is devoted to training and perfecting the techniques Whereas the wrestler will try and achieve a rather modest number of repetitions with a moderate weight, the competition swingers aim is to increase both the number of Hands completed but also the weight used. For this there is no set system and many different Akharas will have their own techniques to get better results. A common scheme would be to begin warming up with 1 handed Gada swings before swinging progressively heavier Jori or Gada. If using dumbbells they will swing only those The number of Hands varies from 10 to 50 dependent upon the weight and the lifter. Generally lighter Jori and Gada are swung for more repetitions than heavier ones. As the weight increases the lifter seeks to conserve their energy for their target weight so the number of Hands will drop significantly. This is up to the individual at the time, how he is feeling and their individual needs. Once they have reached their target weight, they will do one of the following:

Perform multiple sets for relatively low reps 10-15 hands each. This is to develop technique and power. Rest is usually around 3 minutes.

Perform 5 sets of maximum Hands with 3-5 minutes rest in between. This best simulates competition training.

Swing lighter weights for a period of time mostly for building muscular endurance, acting as active recovery and relaxation. A couple of sets may be performed usually with a good 5 minute break in between.

These are very general examples of training programmes that might be used. Many will mix or combine these training modalities to suit their own purposes. After completing these heavier sets, many will go to a lighter weight and perform 1 or 2 sets with that weight, working in technique whilst getting extra quality work in. After the main work session is completed, many will swing a light Gada with 1 hand to relax the body and act as a progressive cool down for these exercises. If they train in multiple disciplines then they may go between exercises alternately or complete all sets of one before moving to the next. Again this is individual preference or what the Guru decides!

OK SO WHAT SHOULD I DO??

If you are new to this type of training I would recommend training up to 50 hands on the exercises as per the wrestlers training. This will allow you to build the foundation from which to work on. Density training is great way to try this out as you start with low reps before building up to higher numbers. You work with technique gain strength and then competency. The best way to go about this is slowly. The results will come but do not rush. Enjoy the process! We all want to get to a high level of proficiency but that never happens over night. It takes time, patience and putting the time in.

Once you have the technique down which may take any where from several months to a couple of years then consider working with different training techniques.

SEVERAL YEARS, you might well ask! To put it bluntly, yes. The techniques of swinging will take a long time to master. I began sometime in 2010 I believe and I am no where near a great skill level. This is not something you pick up and just master. You may look like you are doing the movement but you probably aren't really doing it. It will take hours and hours of constantly shaving away at the rough edges of your technical ability as well as building the necessary strength, mobility and flexibility. This is certainly not a pick up and go style of training, which is why the wrestlers and Pahlavans spend years training to become as proficient as they are. They achieve this by constant persistent practice that takes the span of years, rather than weeks or months. Much like anyone who has managed to dead lift 300kgs or more, it took time and effort. This is no different, the focus is just different.

If you are in it for the long run then you may consider how many reps is optimal in your training. I would say anywhere from 50 to 150 Hands would be optimal volume for this style of training per session. Any more and you risk lowered technique and injury through fatigue. In my opinion less is more.

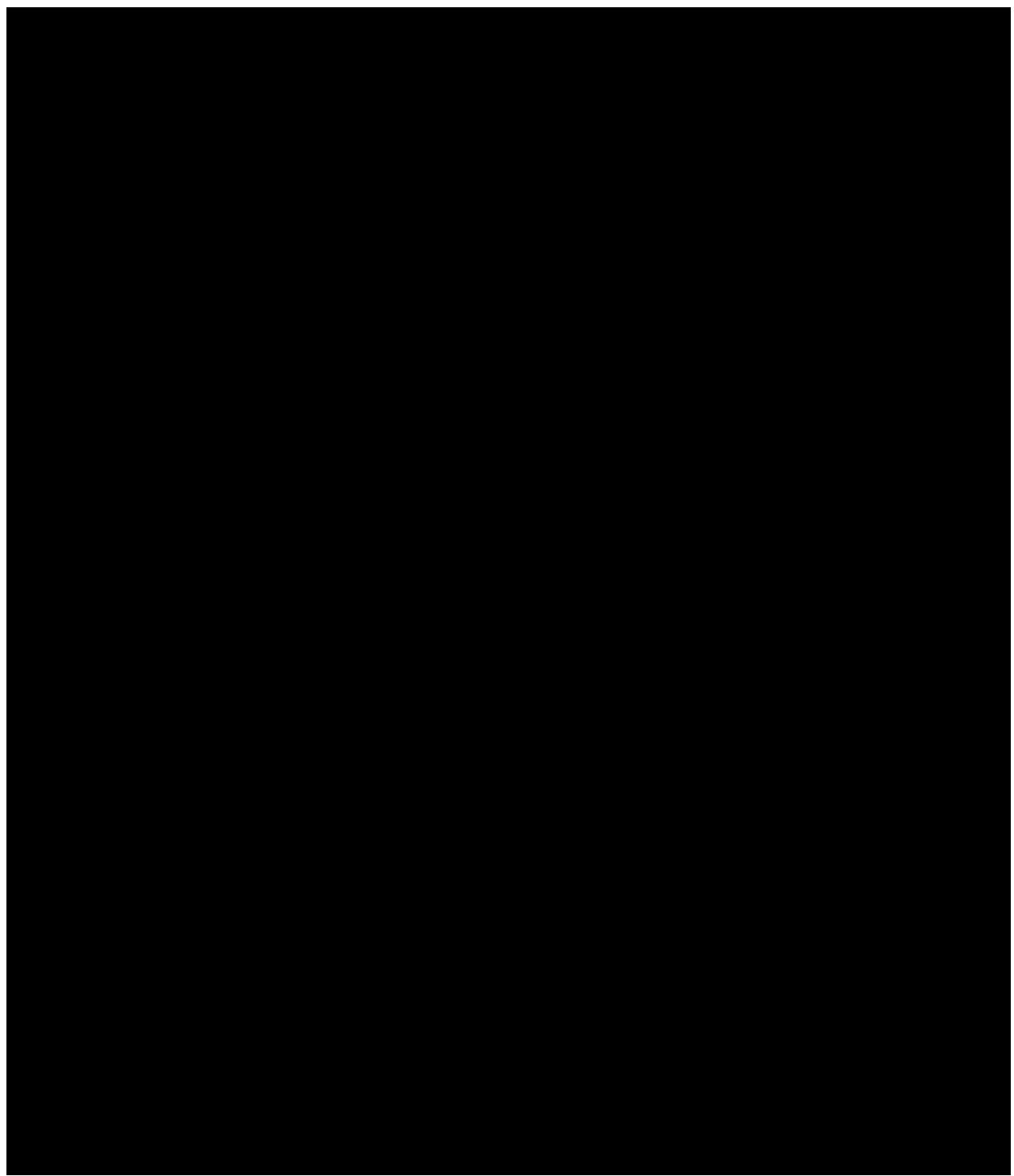
There have been times where I would perform 15 hands in total for a session. You have to listen to your body to see how it responds to the training. If you feel sore take some time off. If you feel fresh, push yourself a bit. If you use a heavy weight use less repetitions. If you use a light weight, use more. Train for YOUR goals no one else's and do what is necessary to achieve them.



Pahalavans performing their Vyayam routine.

CHAPTER 4

GOAL SETTING AND PROGRAMME DESIGN



GOAL SETTING

Determining a goal should be a top priority when designing your own training plan. In India the Guru of the Akhara tells each individual wrestler what they should be doing, from what exercise to perform, when to perform it, how often , what to eat and even when to drink! Each Guru has their own method of getting

results and one may prize certain exercises or techniques over others. This is the same in the western world where certain groups hold claim that certain exercise modalities are best for this or that.

Whereas the Indian wrestlers do not have much choice in the matter you do. You can and should choose what appeals to you, what speaks to you in your heart and impasses you. If you select something you are not particularly bothered with how can you expect to stick with it, let alone progress with it. With the amount of choices out there it can be hard for some to know where to go. If you have this problem, try some things out but ensure you dedicate time towards whatever you try. As with a programme try to stick with it for around 3 months to see if it where you want to go for now. You are not committed to that particular style for life and may change when you like but being consistent and happy with your selection is key.

Wrestlers in the Akhara have common goals and strive to work together to achieve them. If you are fortunate to have fitness minded buddies then you can help encourage each other in a similar way. Who you train with can have a huge influence on how you conduct your training.

Alternately you could hire a trainer to train you. They should have the knowledge to help you both plan and achieve your goals. You can even think of them as your own Guru. If you don't I am sure they will think they are anyway!

Remember that the goal should be personal to you, important and make you want to get training.

Here are list of possible fitness related goals or objectives

Physical appearance: Changing body composition be it increased muscle mass or loss of body fat

Physical performance: Improving physical attributes such as speed, strength, endurance, agility speed.

Training for competition/a feat of physicality: Training to perform in a sport or to perform in a competition or task.

Increased health and well-being: A focus on improving the overall health of the person, both physically (strengthening and conditioning the body), and the mind (through becoming active, stress release etc.).

Once you have selected a goal you can figure out what you will need to do to achieve it with regards to exercises selection, frequency of training, nutrition and the whole shebang.

Making Goals manageable:

If your goal is to become the next Mr. Olympia and you are 6'1 weight 150lbs soaking wet, then that dream of standing high on the podium receiving your Sandow may seem nothing but a dream. Even if your target is more modest, it can seem like such a long and rocky journey, why start at all? After all you will fail won't you?

Wrong!

You can only fail if you do not plan and act accordingly. In the army we had the saying “prior preparation prevents piss poor performance(other wise known s the 5 or 6 P's dependant upon what mob you were with)”. Essential it means fail to prepare, prepare to fail. So how do you do that?

D.U.M.B. GOALS TO REACH FOR THE STARS!

S.M.A.R.T.(Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-bound) Goals are a popular way of managing and organising objectives to accomplish a specific goal, It is regularly used for fitness programmes. By looking at what a person wants to achieve and breaking it so they become achievable. In this objective accomplishing driven society it would seem a good fit for a physical training regimen.

But who REALLY cares? S.M.A.R.T. Goals are a useful tool, they allow you to fulfil objectives and tasks however they also have a habit of limiting you. They tend not to be exciting more of a checklist of quasi life goals with no real long and lasting consequences. Setting the S.M.A.R.T. Gal of attaining losing 5 pounds of muscle really doesn't stir the imagination. Losing 5 pounds on the scale can be through lack of hydration or missing a few runs at dunking doughnuts. It is hardly inspiring enough to make you leap out of bed and be like “man I am going to really lose those 5 pounds! I am so excited to achieve this!” S.M.A.R.T. Goals by their definition are described as achievable and measurable. They can be quantified and you know when they will be finished. The goals are realistic. However where are the big goals of achieving the unachievable?

Do you think that when Christopher Columbus sailed to the new world he set it down as a S.M.A.R.T. Goal? The idea that the world was flat was considered common knowledge at this time, there was nothing smart about it! Or how about when man first walked on the moon? For much of humanity's history considered

an impossible feat. It had never been done before, there wasn't the technology, materials or evidence it could be achieved. Flying, now considered a everyday occurrence, was impossible! Nothing about these was , smart, achievable or timely about them!

These are fuelled by ambition passion and dreams. Someone would have had the energetic drive to challenge common knowledge.

So what does this have to do with goal setting for your fitness? Too often people start their training with what is a fairly common and pedestrian idea of what they want to achieve. I challenge you to think bigger, to dream and imagine something that seems impossible to achieve and achieve it! You owe it to yourself to be an amazing person.

D.U.M.B. Goals.

So how do we go about achieving the unachievable? S.M.A.R.T. Goals are, well, smart by their definition. I'm sure that some people have called your dreams dumb and you even thought that yourself so in honour of that we shall use D.U.M.B. Goals!

D-Dream or Destiny. U-Uplifting M-Method Friendly B-Behaviour Driven

So what does it mean?

D, stands for Dream or Destiny.

YOUR dream. YOUR destiny. What would be the most ideal, perfect, magical almost incomprehensible idea be that would really fire you up. If you achieved it, it would be like .a dream come true. This is what your goal setting should be about. S.M.A.R.T. Goals act like a checklist, you achieve your goal, tick it off move onto the next. This is a very grounded and realistic approach. Well we don't want to be realistic here! You need to take your thinking to a whole other level.

How can you achieve an impossible dream? This is what puts most people off when they dream big. Do not worry about that right now, the "how" will come later. In the beginning have the dream or destiny. Something that excites you no matter how ridiculous and write it down!

The idea here is to come up with the idea that when you achieve it you feel such a sense of accomplishment you look back on it in the years to come and remember it as a magical time. If you cannot do that, then why bother with goals

at all. S.I.V.A.K. 1. Goals just become a list of misadventures and detours, you achieve things but of no great consequence to your life so what is the point? Being busy and achieving does not necessarily lead to your life work or ambition. There are plenty of people who on paper have achieved many things but they are still unhappy. Why? They are not actively pursuing their dream and being true to themselves. Be true to yourself and dream big!

U, stands for Uplifting .

When people list their goals you could find something like I want to lose some weight. That is not uplifting, it is deficit driven by focusing on the negative. In layman's terms it is not a sexy goal! We need to make the goal attractive, compelling and important. A checklist is not sexy.

You need to create a word or phrase that is fun and attractive to you, rather than a dry boring term like I am going to lose 5 pounds. Rather say I am going become so physically fit and vibrant that everyone I meet will notice. My aura will literally be coming off of me inspiring others.

You need to word it in a way that will fire up your imagination and spirit! Word it in a positive manner. Rather than focusing on loss, ensure you gain. Instead of saying "I will lose 5 pounds" say "I will look great and feel great! I will be the best version of me!" Make it connect with you and align it with your dream. Make it positive uplifting. Do not focus on loss but what you will gain. Do not focus on the difficulty but rather how good you will become. Do not focus on what could go wrong but rather visualise and see what could happen if it does turn out well. By constructing your goals in this manner you are much more likely to take action rather than achieving something with no real meaning. Make your goal lift your spirits!

M stands for Method Friendly.

When you start on your path how can you set up a method, map or practice around the goal to make it easier to achieve? To get there you need to set practices that allow you to LIVE within that method. If you want to get sexy then go and practice yoga 3 times a week, or high intensity training. You repeat this method over and over again. Martial artists all begin at a low level. They are given a set of movements they perform over and over. . They start as recruits with the idea of becoming a master of their art. This is achieved by consistent practice and dedication. They work on their moves and forms repeatedly, building competence, skill and confidence over a period of time by attending their practices. You must do the same for your dream. If you wish to swing a 60 kg Gada you will not achieve that on your first day. You have to build up to it by

starting with a light weight and mastering that before building up to the next. How do you do that? Start the training and make it part of your life. Practice your dream.

B stands for Behaviour Driven.

This means you integrate triggers throughout your daily life congruent with your D.U.M.B. Goal. What do I mean by this? Well if you wished to eat healthily it could be something along the lines of each time I go out shopping for food I will only buy from the fresh produce isle and avoid anything that comes pre-packaged. It could be something like, when you pull up to your house after work, you will take a few seconds out to plan how you will use your time to advance your goal. It could be something such as prepare your food prior to going to the gym and ensure you have everything you need for your training. It can be a list of simple small things which all eventually add up aiding your goal. By incorporating little habits they soon become second nature. This is a behaviour driven trigger. If you are waiting in a queue or line that can be a trigger to feel energetic and positive in your mind. What are you focusing on now and how can you feel better? In India at the Akhara there are several trigger, from entering and paying respect to Hanuman and ones Guru to paying respect before lifting ANY weight, these are all triggers to centre the mind and set one to the task at hand. By repeatedly enforcing these you create habits which are directed towards you achieving your dream goals.

D.U.M.B. Goal setting is a different way to look at your own ambitions. Instead of limiting yourself to pedestrian ideas and values you should be aiming dizzyingly high for yourself. Not only will you push yourself more, you will achieve more than if you set “realistic” goals which whilst achievable, are they really pushing you? By this I do not mean just physically or mentally but as a person. In a cynical world we are often told to “get a proper job” and be “responsible”. Anyone who ever achieved anything great never did so by not bending the odd rule here and there. If there is a fire inside you I urge to unleash it for your own benefit and for that of the world.

MAKE YOUR DUMB GOAL SMART

So after blasting S.M.A.R.T. Goals lets see how we can implement them to make your D.U.M.B. Goals become a reality! S.M.A.R.T. Goals area useful tool for identifying and quantifying a goal you want to achieve. These can be big or small but are always subject to being quantifiable. Essentially this means you can track your progress which helps to ensure you are on track. If you are not

~~can track your progress which helps to ensure you are on track. If you are not hitting a certain number or target then you can evaluate what went wrong and fix the issue or start over.~~

Think of your D.U.M.B. Goals as the big picture, your ultimate ambition and life achievements.

The S.M.A.R.T. Goals are there to ensure you stay on track to achieving that life goal. Used in concert you will have a powerful series of tools that make dreams become reality.

So looking at S.M.A.R.T. Goals, they are broken down into:

Specific The goal should be clear and easy to understand such as I will lose weight.

Measurable Being able to track your progress. How will you know if you are losing weight? By monitoring yourself with the use of scales.

Attainable The goal needs to be something achievable. Setting a realistic number is important. If the task is too difficult it will become disheartening and you may abandon the project.

Relevant Set a goal that is important to you, not someone else. If you are using this in concert with D.U.M.B. Goals ensure it complements and does not conflict.

Time-bound Having a time frame to work with ensures you stay on track, keeps you motivated and lets you know how long you will pursue this goal for.

S.M.A.R.T. Goals really help you zero in on the minutiae and organise your priorities. Whilst not as exciting or far reaching as D.U.M.B. Goals they have their value for organisation dreams and making them concrete. Using a combination of the two tools can be a very powerful way of making your dreams becoming real in a measurable way that lets you track your progress. Whilst dreams are great if you do not take any action then a dream stays just that, a dream. By having your dream and then acting on it you will free yourself from thinking small and learn to live with lofty ambitions. Each time you achieve a S.M.A.R.T. Goal you know you are one step closer to achieving your D.U.M.B. Goal. This builds a foundation of not just success but confidence which will catapult you forward in your own life, thinking, relationships and well-being.

Now what if you want to look beyond a single competition and build upon that to further reach your D.U.M.B. Goals? This can be useful if you feel you now exactly where you want to go. This is the sort of planning that can take place over a period of years. It will consist of:

The D.U.M.B. Goal.

A series of big S.M.A.R.T. Goals taking place over a long period of time, each building upon the prior one.

A way to do this is to imagine a landscape. You have the near ground, middle ground and far ground. The near ground is immediately in front of you, all you have to do is take the step to reach it. The middle ground, is further away, it may take some time to get there. The Far ground is a long way off and seems like another world entirely. It will take time and effort to get there. The horizon can be your D.U.M.B. Goal or a particularly large S.M.A.R.T. Goal leading to it. Regardless it has to be an interesting journey if you are to stay on the path. Challenging but not impossible. With your sights set you can take your first step and begin this long process of self discovery.

Firstly you need to arrange your goal be it D.U.M.B. or S.M.A.R.T into a short term, mid term and long term plan of attack.

By breaking up your goal it becomes more manageable and seems like a less gargantuan task.

Your short term goals should be relatively easy to achieve .

Your mid term goals should be something you can see your self achieving with effort and time.

Your long term goals are what's all the training before hand was leading up to. This will feel a million miles away once you start down your path but with faith and courage in yourself as well as the prior manageable goals you will achieve it.

Here is an example in my own training. I wanted to learn how to swing Jori within a 3 month time frame in time for club swinging course running up country. I had not really used the Jori much before and had rudimentary experience in their use. I wanted to be able to swing 20 kg Jori proficiently by the time of the course. With my background in swinging Gada this would not be an impossible task. However swinging the heaviest clubs I had (14.5 kg) seemed near impossible. Their grip was much thicker than the handles of my other Jori. Also I could barely swing my lightest Jori without knocking myself out!

I constructed a plan using three stages. Short term goal, achieve technical proficiency with 2 of my 3 Jori pairs.

Complete successfully swing my heaviest pair of Jori
Build on from my previous work by adding weight and volume incrementally to hit my target goal of 20kg

This worked out well for me. The initial phase built my confidence in swinging the Jori and allowed me to predict any pitfalls that may come my way as the programme continued.

During the mid goal phase I started putting my technique to the test and pushing the weight. I felt confident I was performing the exercise correctly, and could now work on my strength and conditioning. I achieved my mid term goal of swinging the large Jori which at the start of the programme would have been impossible at that point.

The last phase , working toward my target weight and the course became more of a test of will as set after set and rep after rep was crunched down to hit that goal. I had to really focus my energy and concentration but it was still an achievable goal. Whilst I never hit my target during the training phase as loading my Jori with the weight was more difficult than it seemed. My fellow club swinging compadre Steve Angell brought along a pair of 20kg Jori to the course. I prepared myself for something I had never done and hoisted the Jori onto my shoulders and began swinging. It felt easy after all the time and training sessions. I had achieved my Goal on the day by staying consistent to the frame work of the plan. Whilst not an amazing sporting achievement it was a personal ambition fulfilled which lifted the heart and felt like a true accomplishment.

By breaking my goals down, it made a daunting task seem less so and much more manageable for my psyche. If something looms before you and your mind makes it impossible, it will be. Break the task down into manageable chunks and it will be a simpler task to achieve.

You can go a step further and break down these steps into what I like to call milestones. Each is a minor goal set from week to week and session to session. Once I complete a session I will note down that I must do more work, add more weight or complete the same training session faster. For this I manipulate the tried and tested methods of progression intensity, time and volume.

PERIODIZATION:

Periodization is used in many sports to build an athlete from a base level and rise them to a point where they can compete in their chosen field. It usually involves

the cycling of different exercises and attributes over a set period of time. This is usually planned backwards from the actual event. This way the athlete will know ahead of time what they need to achieve. From the goals they have set themselves they now need to plan to get to that point from where they are now, with the time allotted.

No matter what your chosen activity it can be wise to cycle or rotate your training whether this is for a competition or your own personal benefit. This can be planned out meticulously or done in a more intuitive style. Either way by making changes to your training can help prevent burnout, boredom, injury and help your performance in the long run. By switching your focus in training you can come back to it fresh instead of battling on with the same programme you have been using for the last few years. In many cases rotating or cycling can help the mind as well as the body. Dreading your training is a bad sign that you have done too much and your body is pleading that you take another route. If this is the case then it may be an idea to try something new or a while.

If you think you must keep on your programme to keep your gains, you may be surprised that taking a “break” from your normal training will help tremendously when you come back to it. The rest your body and mind will receive will allow you to come back to your chosen exercises with a vengeance.

With this you do not have to make overly drastic changes. I like the term, “similar but different”. So if you are training with a barbell military press and you feel you need a change, you do not have to give up pressing totally! Make a small change and see how that effects you. Maybe try 1 arm dumbbell clean and pressing or incline bench pressing. Lighten the load and try to perform more repetitions with a lighter load. By making a small change you can continue strengthening the area you are working on without flogging yourself in the process.

Periodization can be performed on large(macro) or smaller(micro) levels.

An example would be an upcoming competition. You have 6 months in which to prepare. Initially you may want to break it down so the first half portion is dedicated towards strength building and the second half dedicated toward competition training.

The first and second portions each consist of 3 months.

For each month you would break the training down into a smaller cycle within

each you would set yourself a specific goal to accomplish.
So it would look like this:

Macro-6 months to prepare

2 blocks of 3 months each focusing on a specific attribute. Each 3 month block broken down into 1 month micro cycles. This gives a total of 2 separate macro cycles with 12 micro cycles each.

This really allows you to plan out your training and ensure you hit your goals.

D.U.M.B. AND S.M.A.R.T. PERIODIZATION;

If you apply your D.U.M.B. Goal to periodization. You can also incorporate S.M.A.R.T. Goals within this frame work as well.

To do this think of your D.U.M.B. Goals as your macro cycle, your dream or end goal if you wish.

Your S.M.A.R.T. Goals make up your micro cycles, hitting specific milestones along the way.

To make this more understandable lets have a run through!

Starting with your D.U.M.B. Goal (your personal macro cycle).

Take some time to think about this. Maybe find a quiet place, meditate or go for a walk. Really ponder and think, what is your hearts deepest desire. Then once you have an idea go through the process. An example could be :

Dream Driven- entering a competition you never tried before in a foreign country you always wanted to visit and placing in the top 3.

Uplifting- “I will stand victorious on the podium in a fantastic place with like minded supporting people!”

Method Friendly- I will create practices that will allow me to achieve that dream. I will practice the required skills needed to compete.

Behaviour Driven- I will create a series of habits that will help me achieve my goal. These can consist of training several times a week, cleaning up my diet, studying my chosen discipline.

The D.U.M.B. Goal set here would seem a worthy challenge! Note however there is no mention of a specific time frame at all. That is where the S.M.A.R.T. Goals come in. For now we focus on the dream, the idea and passion that will propel you forward. If what you write down for your D.U.M.B. Goal really fires you up then you know you are on the right path. Do not worry so much about the

how, that will come later.

Your S.M.A.R.T. goals(breaking the dream into manageable micro cycles!)

Now you have your dream start to implement your S.M.A.R.T. Goals within that frame work. This can be done as broadly or as in depth as you like. For example, using the 6 month time frame we used in periodization, you may use your S.M.A.R.T. Goals to lay out a target at the end of a 6 month period and leave it at that. You can also go down each level to break up the goal even more by applying the S.M.A.R.T. Goals to each 3 month block and then to each of the 3 micro cycles within those 3 months. This way you can lay out a truly detailed plan of action!

Lets have an example.

Specific You want to enter the competition and get on the podium.

Measurable You know the numbers you need to hit podium placing. This is the number you must attain.

Attainable The goal is challenging but you believe you can achieve it with some effort.

Relevant The goal is in line with your dream goal (D.U.M.B. Goal). **Time-bound-** You have 6 months to achieve the goal.

So this portion will give you a specific goal for a specific event. Whereas your D.U.M.B. Goal tends to be a sweeping idea the S.M.A.R.T. Goal narrows it down, bringing it to earth and making it more practical.

With the idea that we have 6 months and a specific contest to enter now we can break the goal down yet again into the 2 blocks of 3 months. Looking at one of these blocks we could plan accordingly:

Specific Be able to bench press 150 kilos and squat 200.

Measurable The above numbers are what you need to achieve. Being numbers they are easy to quantify!

Attainable You can bench 135 kilos and squat 180 kilos. You feel confident you can achieve the numbers above if you work hard.

Relevant This goal is required to progress onto the next stage and begin specific competition training.

Time-bound You have 3 months to achieve this goal.

So now we start getting down to the nitty-gritty, the actual numbers and physical quantities required to get your end result. 3 months to achieve a very specific number makes this much more tangible.

Now we can go down even further within those 3 months down to a single month. Lets do this!

Specific- Be able to bench press 140 kg and Squat 187.5.

Measurable The above numbers are what is needed and being numbers they are quantifiable!

Attainable It is not a huge number to achieve and you feel confident you can surpass it.

Relevant By achieving the numbers you are on the way to achieving your goal.

Time-bound 1 month to complete this goal.

Again the goal is broken down yet further. This can even be applied to individual workouts, where in the above method you would strive to hit a certain number or reps or a target weight. You get the idea I hope from the examples above. Ideally by this point you should know what you need to achieve within each week and each session as this will be part of your programmes exercises, sets, reps, etc. You can really get into detail here so every element is mapped out.

It is entirely up to you how in depth you wish to go. If you go by a D.U.M.B. Goal and follow up with a S.M.A.R.T. Goal you should be all set.

Think of it as having your dream and then acting upon it! The detail you go into is up to you. Some of you may enjoy the meticulous planning involved whilst others will work better with a set of guidelines. Definitely use both tools and find the balance that works best for you. Ultimately you can plan all you want but if you do not take action you are wasting your time!

Now you have established your goals it is time to evaluate lifestyle, stress, nutrition and rest.

Lifestyle.

Are the goals you have set yourself compatible with your current lifestyle? If you are out partying all night, drinking and not resting every week do you really believe you will achieve the results you seek? Lifestyle can mean a change of habits, for example if you have a beer every time you come home from work, or

if you eat a chocolate bar when stressed and if you order fast food because you do not like to cook. The way you live directly impacts your results. You must learn new beneficial habits to help support your goals not hinder them. Some of these may be the result of living with other people. In that case you must do what is right for you and specify that you need encouragement and not hindrance on this path. If this goal is important to you then you and others around you must come to terms with it otherwise you are not in a strong position to complete your goals

Recovery.

As part of your planning process you must consider whether you are getting enough rest. Allow adequate recovery between training sessions so you can function optimally, not just in training but in your every day activities. It is no fun feeling absolutely destroyed and exhausted day in day out. Some soreness or lethargy may be natural if you train hard but actual acute pain and chronic exhaustion are not good signs for your progress or your health. Make sure you are getting enough sleep and relaxing when you can. If you feel particularly fatigued take some time off of training until you feel fresh. To ensure you recover between sessions make sure you adequately warm up and cool down so your body can reach equilibrium more efficiently.

Nutrition.

Hand in hand with Recovery is nutrition. If you are training hard then you need to fuel your body accordingly with a diet that covers all your needs. Fresh, whole foods being your best source of nutrients to help build repair and maintain a healthy function in the body. If your nutrition is not up to the level of your goals then you are only setting yourself up for failure. Having the right foods will go a long way to helping you recover and build upon each training session. In many ways this should be planned out similar to your physical goals.

Stress Level.

Today's modern world is incredibly hectic and the pressures of work, family commitments and everyday trials can begin telling upon the body. Stress is linked to causing diseases within the body. Living in a high stress state ensures the body creates catabolic hormones such as cortisol which erode the body slowly. Adrenalin running high all the time will lead to problems later down the road. The feeling of being wound up will start to affect your ability to rest and recover and your training will suffer. Being able to have time to yourself to breathe deeply, meditate and work things out can go a long way to helping here.

It is easy to react to stressful situations in a fearful or aggressive state both of which are not beneficial to the body. Instead of getting angry at the person who cut you up in traffic, take some deep breathes, calm yourself and let it go. Being angry only effects you, the person in the other care may not even be aware of your anger. The hormones pulsing through your body are affecting you, not them. By maintaining a calm and tranquil state of mind you will feel better, breathe easier and see progress in your training.

KEEPING A TRAINING JOURNAL

Keeping a training journal should become a habit. Tracking your training is vitally important to your continued success. By keeping the information you can see how much work you performed over a stretch of time. If your progress starts to slow or comes to a halt by going over your journal you can try and identify what may be causing this.

As well as becoming a way of monitoring your training you can use it as a way of documenting your day to day life and well-being. By including information such as nutrition and rest as well as day to day events you can create a personal diary that covers your whole being. Instead of thinking that what you do in the gym stays there and vice versa you can witness yourself developing through your mood, interactions with others, the food you eat etc. By observing everything, not just your time training you can build upon your physical activities and your day to day living.

Your journal should include the technical information about your training such as:

- Date and time of training.

- The exercises laid out in the order they are performed.

- The weight used for each exercise set.

- The number of repetitions per set.

- The number of sets.

- The time taken to complete each set(more important if training within a time frame). The amount of rest taken between each set.

- The time taken for the whole workout.

As well as this information you can list your moods and feelings. I will do this some time after my training session maybe an hour or so after. I will note how I felt going into the session during my opening meditation and how I felt during my closing meditation. By waiting after training I can have a more objective look at my performance after the adrenalin and endorphins have run their

look at my performance after the activities and thoughts have run their course through my body. I also do not make a note before going into my training as writing down any negative emotions or feelings will make it stick during the training session each time I go to record my numbers between sets.

In addition to this I may write briefly on how training felt, what went well, what can be improved upon and what I seek to achieve next session. This should be short and concise no need to write war and peace

I will also write a short part about how my day went in general and make a note of anything that stood out during the day. Any events that may have effected my training either positive or negative or both will be listed here as short bullet points. These allow you to self evaluate what effects you emotionally during the day. Try not to dwell on this simply note it down.

I will also include my nutrition and rest. I will list each item of food eaten and the quantity and you can list calories and macronutrients as well supplements if you wish. Number each meal and write next to it how it made you feel. Note how your digestion fared. By being in touch with your insides you can figure out what works well for you. If you suspect a food makes you feel lethargic or ill then by making a note of it you can help avoid a similar issue in the future. Pay special attention to what you ate before you train and how it affected you, if it made you gassy, bloated or acidic. By looking back over what you have eaten in the past you can see when you had your best performances and your nutrition at the time may be a component of that.

Rest is highly important. You can train all day and eat all night but if you are not resting adequately then your training will suffer. Making a note of the amount and quality of sleep can again show how your performance improves or falters. Simply note the time you turned the lights out and how well you slept. The best time to do this is in the morning when you awaken as you will either feel energetic and ready to go or drained and tired upon waking. You can even make a note of your resting pulse rate. Make a note of it each morning. By analysing this you can evaluate how rested or fatigued you are. Any drastic changes could be signs of too much training not enough food and rest or even the onset of an illness. If this is the case it may be a sign from your body needs to rest and you should drop your training load significantly or even take some time off of training. From personal experience you cannot fight your body on this, listen to it and enjoy this time from hard training and take advantage of relaxing.

This is just several ways you can approach your training journal. If you have any other ideas then by all means implement them! The idea of your training journal is that it is yours and should be personal to you. It is living proof of your gym history by making it as informative as you can will help serve you in the future.

By recording all of these parts of your training you can really begin to take charge of your own progress not just in the gym but outside of it. Documenting the ebb and flow of your exercise and your life you will see patterns emerge which you have control over and can change for your own betterment. People think that a training log is simply a list of exercises but it can be much more. You are only limited by your imagination!

TRAINING METHODS AND SAMPLE PROGRAMMES

Everyone loves training programmes! This is where you figure out your goals, form your battle plan and get excited for the work ahead. Training programmes provide the outline for the goals you want to achieve. Hundreds upon hundreds of books have been written on hypertrophy, weight lifting, conditioning *etc.* using every piece of equipment under the sun. However there is little if any information on how to programme traditional Indian exercises into a training session. A person with a back ground in strength and conditioning could easily adapt any training methodology they believe would work alongside these exercises to achieve the result they desire. I personally believe that self experimentation and instinctual training with the exercises will produce the best benefits, trial and error will allow the user to come to their own conclusions. This would be applicable to those with some time and experience in the iron game who are intimately aware of their own physical capabilities.

That being said having some guidelines and options is always beneficial, allowing you to test run ideas for yourself to see if it's a fit for you. As such I have provided several training practices that I have either used or would consider as useful. I will clearly state those that I have used and what the benefits and disadvantages are I have found for myself. This is from an individual point of view. You may agree or disagree with me as you wish. In fact I would prefer the later in many respects as you may well come up with an idea that seems too obvious and would be of immense benefit to all practitioners. **Ultimately** if you are reading this book I hope you have the same passion for training as I do and by helping each other along by sharing information we will all become much better at what we practice.

STRUCTURING YOUR TRAINING:

With your goals set we need to now go about accomplishing them. An important point I will begin with is when designing your plan, have balance in mind. By this I mean creating a well rounded programme that addresses your goal whilst help address any weakness or imbalances that may come about from any type of specialisation or preference. A way to do this is to break exercises down into movements.

Upper body push horizontal (Bench Press, Push ups). Upper body push vertical (Military Press, Hand stand press ups). Upper body pull horizontal (Barbell row, Inverted Ring Row). Upper body pull vertical (Lat Pulldown, Pull up).
Lower body push (Squat, Bethak, Gar Nal).
Lower body pull (Deadlift, Kettlebell swing, Sumtola). Core work flexion (Leg Raise, Sit up).
Core work rotational (Russian twist).

This offers a wide selection of exercise choices. Being able to use all of the within your training will go a long way towards your training and health longevity.

At the same time you should consider what makes factors will denote a balanced programme not just physically but mentally.

These are:

Muscular strength **Muscular endurance** **Speed**
Power
Agility
Mobility
Flexibility
Mental Strength **Spirit**

By examining your own capabilities, not just the physical, you can tailor a plan to complement your own disposition and individual make up. Whilst we all like to work on our strengths, paying attention to your weaknesses will only strengthen you further in the long run. The Indian Kushti wrestlers exhibit many of these qualities as is the nature of their sport. You must be quick and strong, able to reduce tremendous force with speed. You must be able to move well to avoid your opponent and have the necessary flexibility to escape and avoid injury. You have to endure in mind body and spirit. It is no wonder the older men still practice into a advanced age. With this age comes wisdom that has been passed down through the centuries through tried and tested methods. We

would do well to pay heed.

You will find that certain attributes will take precedent over others for your individual training. Being aware of this situation will enable you to make an educated decision

Along with the exercises you choose are the way you work them with regards to the goal at hand.

Again there are tons of books written on reps and weight and what gives what effect how. For the sake of simplicity and not going off of topic I offer a quick and dirty summary.

Strength

Weight: heavy

Reps: low (1 to 5) Sets: high (5 to 10)

Muscle Mass

Weight: moderately heavy Reps: high (6 to 15)

Sets: moderate (3 to 5)

Cardiovascular

Weight: light

Reps: very high (15 +) Sets: multiple circuits

Work capacity (Competition)

Weight: light to moderate

Reps: high to very high (20+)

Sets: Timed (Length of duration could be short to long)

Along with the weight and reps the execution of the lift is also important. An Olympic style barbell jerk is executed in a much different manner to a grinding barbell press even though the end result of lockout is the same. Some exercises can be performed smoothly and slowly whilst others are more aggressive and ballistic in nature.

The exercises of the Gada, Jori and Dumbbell Swing deserve a special mention. They tend to incorporate elements of static strength combined with a ballistic exercise. As such due to the lesser amount of muscular tension required during performance a higher load of work can be performed. Much of the time the weight is doing a lot of the work, the trainer is mainly in charge of controlling and redirecting the forces externally and internally. Again many similarities can

be drawn from kettlebell sport where the trainee attempts to minimise tension in the body to create superior performance in their event.

To understand the difference between lifting a normal weight and swinging one, we use the following.

High Speed Strength Exercises:

These exercises rely on acceleration to create force. These tend to use relatively light weights moved with speed through space.

Medium Speed Strength Exercise: These exercises rely on both acceleration and resistance in equal measure.

Low Speed Strength Exercise:

These exercises rely on resistance to create force. This means a heavy weight using tension to move it through space.

The simple way to look at it as two opposites. One requires acceleration to create force the other requires resistance to create force. In between these two poles are different combinations of the two. Using this method you can increase the force of an object being moved without adding weight but by increasing the acceleration.

The Gada, Jori and Dumbbell swing tend to lie between High Speed and Medium Speed Strength exercises. Momentum creates much of the force but there is still some weight involved. Portions of the movements feel weightless and it tends to be the beginning and end of the movements that has the most resistance. This is different to say a strict barbell curl where the resistance is constant throughout. With the swinging motions the sense of weightlessness during the transitions means more work can be performed as there is less muscular tension throughout the body. This gives a “tight-relaxed-tight” sensation.

The trick with the three aforementioned exercises is to be able to master this ability of tension and relaxation. If your body is rigid throughout then you leech out energy quickly. Tensing activates muscles that do not require activating. You must mentally learn to relax under strain. Even clamping down on your jaw will take muscular effort as this will travel down into the neck and upper body. The Indian wrestlers have mastered the skill of relaxation, looking for the most part nonchalant and unhurried in their training. This allows them to conserve their

energy and direct it to where it is most needed.

In the chapter The Science Behind the Swing we will look into how different forces affect us during swinging exercises.

SPECIALISATION TRAINING

If training to build up a particular lift for example pressing or Gada swinging then the exercise(s) you choose will become your main focus. Along with this you need to think how other exercises will support this training as well as adding ones in that will help in maintaining balance. Injury prevention should also be on your mind when training in this fashion. Ultimately as long as you cover all your bases with the movements above you should do fine, though you may need to drop the volume and intensity in some areas. For example heavy Jori works the whole shoulder, triceps and grip. Adding in too many or too heavy pressing exercises can really impact your shoulders so you may limit them to body weight exercises (Dands, handstand push ups, dips) and not in great volume or use heavier weights for a few “tonic sets” (floor presses, or dumbbell military press for 3x5 reps). On the flip side not doing any presses could also be detrimental.

Just think what is getting worked most on the exercise you specialise in, and think what exercises could be used to help strengthen but not take away from your specialisation? Personally I enjoy using heavy resistance bands or old time style chest expanders. I feel you get many benefits of pressing both heavy and for repetition with out the wear and tear that weights can impose.

Breaking it down further here are points you could consider if training with the Jori. Shoulders, back, grip and triceps are worked the most, in order of most to least. Limit pressing to what is going to give the most return for the least chance of injury.

Big compound movements are best to achieve the most work in the shortest time. 2-3 sets should be enough here.

Work the back in a similar fashion. Choose one pulling exercise and work it hard from the vertical or horizontal choices. Again train 2-3 sets.

Work the Lower body! Make sure you cover all your bases here. Using one heavy lift such as a dead lift or squat and follow up with a lighter exercise such as Bethak or kettlebell swings as a cardio finisher and you are all set. For your heavy sets you could use a 5x5 or 4x6 style training. For the lighter sets a tabata

set or set a rep limit to hit in a set time.

This is just a quick example of what you could do. When programming your own training make it brief and to the point. Achieve what you set out to do and do the work!

An alternative to straight sets afterwards is to perform circuit training. This works well as you can choose 3-6 exercises and work them several times over a set time. Again make sure you select exercises that are both going to assist and not impede your specialisation and cover all your bases.

A more detailed example covering Gada training is in the programmes section. Again it is just an example not a written in stone rule. Each person has their own needs, from their fitness goals, body type, mental disposition, lifestyle etc. If you have been making your journal then over time you will see what works and what does not. This is your life journey, do not expect someone to give you a cookie cutter plan that magically works. If you do not eat, sleep, lead a relatively stress free life and stick to the plan, no series of workouts will help you achieve your goal. Take responsibility for your own life and become master of your destiny!

(TRAINING TIP)

I like to use INCREMENTAL PROGRESSION in my training. This means I will take small baby steps in my training instead of rushing ahead. If a workout requires me to perform 3 sets of 3 reps , my next session would be 4x3 and after that 5x3 at which point I would add the smallest increment of weight I can and go back to 3x3. By doing this with tiny jumps in weight your progress is much longer lasting. I think of it as spending time on your foundations. If you rush you can get to where you want to go but at the cost of stability in the long run. Taking longer means you can enjoy the process and not risk injury trying to take leaps and bounds in your training. Slow and steady wins the race! A great example of slow steady progression comes from Dough Hepburn, an Olympic lifting great from back in the day. During his training he would increase each exercise in his workout by one repetition until he hit all his desired reps and sets , then increase weight and start over. While this may seem a very slow way to progress the results cannot be denied with numbers like presses from the rack at 440 pounds, a bench press of 580 pounds, a clean and press of 390 pounds a squat of 760 pounds and a dead lift of 705 pounds to name just a few. Bear in mind this was in the late 1940's and early 1950's drug free. If you desire strength then I believe following an example such as Doug's is the way to go for long

lasting results.

TRAINING METHODS

The following are examples you can apply to your training. Many may be familiar to you, others not. As I said previously, there is nothing new under the sun. There are many great ideas and philosophies out there with regards to training created by some very talented and strong people. By following the examples laid down by others you can apply those lessons to your own goals. The fitness industry has become a place where innovation sells. Old is new and new is old. Instead of looking for the best new/old thing out there, look at what gets the best results consistently with a minimum of headaches. Some of these programmes you may have tried before which will allow the assimilation of the information to come much easily.

LADDER TRAINING

Ladder training has become synonymous with kettlebell strength training. It is a great way of working with a heavy weight for a lot of volume while maximising recuperation. In practice you would select your exercise and perform 1 repetition. After a brief rest with the same weight you would perform 2 repetitions. After another brief rest you would perform 3 challenging repetitions. You would then go back to the beginning and repeat the process again 3 times so it would look like this:

1,2,3
1,2,3
1,2,3

Going from 1 rep to 2 reps is called “going up the rung of the ladder. In the above workout there are 3 rungs. Each sequence of 1,2,3 reps is called a ladder. So the above programme would consist of 3 ladders of 3 rungs each. On the next workout you could add either other rung to 4 rungs or another ladder or both.

This was one of the first programmes I ever used and I go back to it time and again. I love the fact that you can work up to one challenging set then back off to relatively easier sets. The easy sets allow you to focus on dialling in your technique to a high degree while the top rung of the ladder forces you to work harder and apply yourself more physically and mentally to the task at hand. You can perform a good volume of work with a challenging weight far easier than

performing multiple sets with the same reps per set. Used with barbells, dumbbells or kettlebells it can help build strength and muscle. So using Nals you could perform the exercise as above. However I have found it useful with the Gada and it can also be applied to the Jori or dumbbells. Rest would be dependant on how you feel but I rarely timed it, preferring to go when I felt I was ready and knew I could complete the reps required.

I have indeed uses the above, 1,2,3, style ladder with very heavy Gada when I had access to few materials or started to use a new heavy Gada. I would stick with 3 ladders however as remember when you train with the Gada you train both left and right so in reality you are doing double the amount of reps. From there I would build up to using ladders in this manner:

1stworkout:2/3/5

2ndworkout:2/3/5/2/3 3rdworkout:2/3/5/2/3/5

At this point I would either work up to another ladder or 2/3/5 or increase the weight. This would depend on how many Gada weights you have available. If you have incremental weight increases you could go up to 2 ladders and then increase weight. If you only have a to take a large jump between weights, I would work to 3 ladders and then go back down to 1,2,3 x 3 ladders and then work up to 2/3/5 again. It is much better to go slowly than to race ahead. Your results will be much stronger and longer lasting than taking massive leaps in your training.

Once you have reached a good level of strength then you could increase the rungs on the ladders further such as:

2,4,6,

2,5,10

2,4,6,8,10

You could go beyond this as well. Anything beyond 10 reps and you should think about adopting another programme. Also reduce the number of ladders performing 2 or even 1.

I have used this with Dumbbell swings but it would also be possible with the Jori and Gada.

BENEFITS OF LADDER TRAINING:

Allows the trainer to perform consistent quality work with a challenging weight. Lower rungs allow a focus on technique. Higher rungs focus on strength application. The trainer will remain relatively rested through the duration. Training can be increased by minute increments leading to long lasting steady progression

DISADVATAGES OF LADDER TRAINING:

Sessions can become long drawn out affairs especially with more ladders and rungs.

Focus is not so much on conditioning.

VOLUME TRAINING

This would involve a number of sets and a desired number of repetitions per set. The goal would be to complete these reps and either increase the load, sets, reps or decrease the time in between sets. As such this is a highly flexible approach and one most familiar with trainees. The basics will always apply! This makes volume training a great way to get started with any of the exercises in this book.

A number of examples would be:

3x3

5x5

3x10

2x20

These examples should be familiar to any body who has regularly strength trained. You would perform the number of reps, rest for a predetermined amount of time or when you are ready and go again.

In general the heavier the weight is, the less you'll be able to lift it. Conversely a light weight you could lift for many more repetitions. Rest would depend upon the weight and training effect you are looking for. If you want maximal strength then longer rests would be required. If you want a cardio effect, rest less. There is so much information out there on the subject it could drive you crazy! Just pick an example and have at it!

I found volume training to be of particular use with the Jori, Nal, Gar Nal, Dand and Bethak.

With the Jori I would have 3 differing weights. Initially I would perform a set

with the lightest weight, then a set with the next weight, then the last 3 sets with the heaviest weight. That would look like:

1stweight 10 hands
2ndweight 10 hands
3rdweight 3 sets of 10 hands.

On the following week I would either add weight to all Jori and repeat, perform more reps per set(i.e. 12 hands per set) perform an extra set with the heaviest weight up to 5 sets with that weight or reduce the rest time. That would look like:

1stweight 10 hands
2ndweight 10 hands
3rdweight 4 sets of 10 hands. The following week I would perform 5 sets with the heavier weight.

The factors I would change were:

Reps/Volume-10 hands up to 15 hands.

Weight-increase a small increment to each Jori.

Top weight sets-from 3 heavy sets to 5.

Increase density-diminish rest periods from say 60 sec to 45 sec between sets.

As you can see there are many variables you can play around with. I found that if I could not complete all the reps of the last set then I would stay with that weight and reps scheme until I could. I have tried the 1st3 methods(reps/weight/sets) and find that a combination of these 3 to be the most results providing. I do not use diminished rest periods and prefer to go when I feel ready or even wait a bit longer to ensure I am sufficiently rested to perform quality reps and work on technique.

However if used with solid technique shortened rest periods could be used to increase conditioning.

Training tip: Jori-performing a maximum of 5 sets with your work weight is optimal Indian Pahlavan training. Perform 50 hands. Once you can do that increase weight and repeat.

BENEFITS OF VOLUME TRAINING:

Gives a predetermined realistic workload that the trainer can aim to achieve.

Combines technical focus and conditioning aspects.
Customisable to the individuals goals, equipment and requirements.

DISADVANTAGES OF VOLUME TRAINING:

Does not simulate competition settings.
Dependant on the number of sets/reps/rest the session may become long.
Multiple sets over many sessions may induce a state of staleness.

TIME TRAINING

Training sets for time is a popular method with kettlebell athletes and with very little changes may be applied to Indian exercises. Essentially you are working for a set period of time, aiming to perform your chosen exercise throughout the duration. There are many ways this can be applied. A simple method is to begin performing progressively longer duration sets over the course of the session/sessions with the same weight. During these sets you will pick a number of reps that you will aim to complete per minute. Once you have reached the time you want to reach with the number of reps per minute you chose, then you could increase the weight and begin again.

An example would be.

Target time 8 minutes

Target rep per minute: 10 1stsession 2 minutes x4 sets 2ndsession 3 minutesx3 sets

3rdsession 4 minutesx2 sets

4thsession 5 minutes x2 sets

5thsession 6 minutes x1 3 minutes x1

6thsession 7minutes x1 2 minutes x1

Rest periods between 30m seconds to 3 minutes.

The above is a very linear approach. You would endeavour to complete all the reps and time before moving onto the next workout, staying at your current workout until you achieve your goal.

This can be taken a step further by utilising time ladders. This basically means you will increase the time of each set working up like the rungs of the ladder programme. This could look like:

Set 1: 30 seconds. Set 2: 1 minute. Set 3: 1min 30. Set 4 : 2 min.

Set 5: 1 min 30. Set 5: 1min.

Your total target time could be 4 minutes at 10 hands per minute. You would work up incrementally increasing the time while decreasing the volume to match the time until eventually you are able to complete a 4 minute set. This is a fantastic way of training for competitions for the jori and dumbbells.

BENEFITS OF TIME BASED TRAINING:

Simulates competition training.

Teaches pacing

Builds mental toughness

Can perform a very high workload in a very short time period.

DISADVATAGES OF TIME BASED TRAINING:

Can promote bad technique if the trainee pushes to get the reps/time required.
Can be overly tiring to the body/mentally draining.

3X5+ TRAINING

The 3x5+ has it's origins in strength training. Inspired by Jim Wendlars 5/3/1 system and adopted by kettlebell strength coach Mike Mahler, it is a deceptively simple method of training that I come back to time and again when I fell I have had enough. You will perform 3 sets of the exercise chosen(6 if/l/r grip) the first 2 sets you will perform 5 hands.

This is not written in stone you could perform 3, 6, 8, 10 reps etc. These 2 sets are to get some quality work in and should not take you to the limit. The final set(s) you will perform as many reps as you can in a “challenge” set. This will show you where you are at and is called your “personal record”. You want to set the goal of double the reps of the previous sets. However do not worry if you only get 1 rep over. That shows that you have made progress. You would endeavour to get more reps next time, to beat your personal record ideally at least 1 more than previously.

That could look like:

1stsession 2x 5, 1x6 2ndsession 2x5 1x7 3rdsession 2x5 1x8 etc.

Once you reach the double the number of reps goal you would increase your weight.

I personally love this approach. Whether I feel great or fatigued it is a great way to train. If I'm energetic and pumped up then I will aim to hit high personal record. If I am not feeling great I can do some quality work and then try to achieve a reasonable P.R. without going crazy about it. I will have pushed myself that 1 rep closer and achieved something in my session.

BENEFITS OF 3X5+ TRAINING:

Simple and short. Quality work in a short amount of time.
Only one set requires “psyching up” the first two should be considered technical warm ups.

Allows the trainer to perform how they feel on the day and still achieve when not on the ball.

DISADVATAGES OF 3X5+ TRAINING:

Sessions may be too short for some, you will need a degree of training under your belt for this to be effective.

Not enough sets to effectively work on technique.

DENSITY TRAINING

Density training was one of the very first styles of training I used in conjunction with the Gada. You will perform a total 100 repetitions over a number of sets and a time limit. Over the course of the programme the repetitions will increase and the time will decrease. Each set is performed on the minute so if you took 20 seconds to complete the reps you would get 40 seconds until the next set. As the density of work increases and time decreases the intensity factor goes way up as well. This is a great way to tackle an intermediate weight and really conquer it. From the relatively skill and strength aspect at the beginning to the torturous mental and muscular endurance demands at the end of the programme it gives constant changing variation while focusing on a single goal.

An example would look like this

20 sets of 5 reps in 20 minutes

17 sets of 6 reps in 17 minutes

15 sets of 7 in 15

13 sets of 8 in 13

11 sets of 9 in 11

10 sets of 10 in 10

1 set of 100

You would stick with each progression until you had completed all the reps. Then to ensure you have it completely dominated repeat that session the next session before moving to the next progression.

BENEFITS OF DENSITY TRAINING:

Allows narrow focus in a set time on one exercise

You cycle through multiple attributes of fitness, from strength to muscular endurance.

Steady rapping progression.

Training can be a short block of time.

DISADVATNATGES OF DENSITY TRAINING:

Use of extremely heavy weights is negligible due to the volume so does not take into account maximal strength.

Form can break down if not sufficiently prepared by prior training stages.

ESCALATING DENSITY TRAINING.

Escalating Density Training or E.D.T.(created by Charles Staley) is a great way to manage your exercises through use of time blocks. You would pick an exercise and a set amount of time, say 20 minutes and perform a set number of repetitions per set. You would perform multiple sets during that time, making note of each set you complete. At the end you would total up the number of sets and in the following session aim to beat that score. This is great system and atypically 2 exercises are chosen with the trainee going back and forth between them superset style. Rest periods are dictated by the score required to be beaten. This makes training fun and self competitive helping to keep motivation high. Use of a time block lest you know when the session starts and ends which aids in planning. Ideally the weight you want to use would be have of your 10 rep maximum though this can be higher or lower dependant on whether you value conditioning or strength. This would lead to performing 5 reps per set for the duration. The time block could be anything though 10,15 and 20 minutes are the most popular.

An example would be time :

15 minute density set

Exercise 1: Nal clean and press 5 reps per set. Total sets:10 Exercise 2: Gar nal squat 5 reps per set. Total sets:9

E.D.T's strength lies in it's flexibility. This is a system I have used regularly to great effect. I really like working within a time frame. This is your time slot, get to work! It means if you have a schedule to keep to then you will. I generally use this for compound exercises such as presses and rows or squats with swings. Performing heavy squats and dead lifts back to back will fry your back in no time so some times I use an upper body movement with the lower body one.

ADVANTAGES OF E.D.T.

Set time blocks allow proper session management.

Competitive nature makes you want to beat your score.

Compressed times means a lot of quality work can be performed in a short time frame.

Multiple goals can be achieved by altering weight time,etc.

DISADVATAGAES OF E.D.T:

By pushing for more reps form can be compromised.

Can lead to staleness due to high intensity of training as the programme continues.

ROUNDS/CIRCUIT TRAINING

This is a good system to use to ensure a well balanced training session. You pick several exercises, between 3 and 6 works best. You perform each exercise for a set period of time, from between 30 seconds to 90 seconds for example. During this time period you strive for as many repetitions as you can manage with good form. After the time elapses you will rest for the same amount of time as you worked before moving onto the next exercise. Continue in this cycle until you have completed all the exercises in sequence before going back to the first exercise. Repeat for between 2-5 cycles of exercises. It is important to ensure your exercises follow a logical path. There are many ways to set this up. You could train a total body session or a body part. Performing bench presses, then dumbbell bench presses, followed by flyes is targeted predominately on the chest muscles. Performing barbell, presses, rows, leg raises, front squats and dead lifts would be an example of a total body workout.

Examples:

Exercise 1: Dand

Exercise 2: Rope climbing Exercise 3: Bethak

Exercise 4: Nal swing Exercise 5: Leg raise

Work for 60 seconds with 60 seconds rest:1 to 1 ratio.

You can change the work to rest periods as well. 3 options are 1:1 ratio work and rest being equal, 1:1/2 ratio, rest periods will be the same plus half the time of the work period and 1:2 ratio rest will be double the duration of the exercise duration. Again these are just guidelines use your imagination and play with it!

ADVANTAGES OF ROUNDS/CIRCUIT/ TRAINING:

Highly effective for getting in a full body workout in a prescribed time period. Can be used for fat loss, conditioning, muscle gain and strength dependant upon the parameters you set.

DISADVANTAGES OF ROUNDS/CIRCUIT TRAINING:

May require multiple pieces of equipment which may be a hassle in the normal gym environment.

As the duration of sets and rounds continues form may break down, especially if trying to beat a previous record.

INTERVAL/TABATA TRAINING

Interval training consists of a period of work followed by a period of rest repeated several times with the same exercise. An example would be performing Bethak for 30 seconds work 30 seconds rest. The work to rest periods do not have to be a 1 to 1 ratio. A few examples could be:

30 seconds work, 30 seconds rest. 30 seconds work, 60 seconds rest. 60 seconds work, 30 seconds rest.

This breaks up the training in a way that allows you to come back rested before tackling the same exercise again. This is similar to time training except you will generally deal with shorter bursts of activity. This is a good system for conditioning movements, repeated over time. Swings with a heavy Nal, 30 seconds on, 30 seconds off for 5 minutes would be a good example. The shorter the rest the higher the intensity.

An example of high intensity interval style training would be **Tabata** training.

Tabatas became popular due to their short intense nature. The benefits of performing short duration exercise(4 minutes) being as beneficial as a 20 minute jog or equivalent. Tabatas are a great way to do conditioning work in a very compressed amount of time and can be very intense with correct full body movements. Tabata training is structured like so:

4 minute time frame.

20 seconds work followed by 10 seconds recovery. 8 rounds of this activity.

Tabata training is fantastic for finishing off your training. As such choose full body movements that are low on skill requirement. Bethaks, Dands and Nal swings would be a good example.

ADVANTAGES OF INTERVAL/TABATA TRAINING:

Short intense training blocks gets a lot of work done in a short time frame.

Great for muscular Endurance and fat loss.

High intensity.

DISADVANTAGES OF INTERVAL/TABATA TRAINING:

Not the best method for developing strength.

Too many intervals may be tough on the body due to their high intensity. Slow or skill orientated exercises not the best choice with this training method.

SAMPLE PROGRAMMES

Now that you have some methods to train with lets have some examples that you can use. These can be followed along or tinkered with to your own taste. I encourage creativity here as each person is different with different needs and requirements. As such try a programme which seems interesting to you and see how it affects you. After a month on that programme note the changes you have written down in your journal and also how you feel and look. What could be made better? On this note it is better to make small changes rather than sweeping ones otherwise you may end up with a totally different training programme!

HANUMAN POWER:

The Hanuman Power Programme was designed to help learn the one handed Gada swing. It was stripped down, bare bones in its approach. Performed near

daily, it consisted of 3 exercises with an emphasis on learning and developing the one arm Gada technique. The programme derives its name from the Hanuman the Hindu god of strength and patron of wrestlers.

Turkish get-ups: Perform 5 get ups each side, alternating sides each repetition. Increase weight after you complete a rep on either side. I chose this exercise as it is a good warm up and shoulder mobility/strengthening drill. Performing many swings one handed with the Gada day in, day out can be telling to the shoulders. The get up helps as a preventative manner plus you get some pressing work involved.

This exercise represents when Hanuman lifted the mountain Dronagiri.

One arm gada swing: 10-15 minutes of practice consisting of 3-5 sets left and right arm. The number one rule was to focus on skill acquisition and improving each and every time. As such you may be using the same weight for a long time, working on technique and not worrying about adding weight. It will come in time and at its own pace. The Gada is Hanumans symbol of strength and wielding it helps to impart this upon the wielder.

Kettlebell swings/Bethak : 4-5 minutes of tabata(20 seconds work, 10 seconds rest for 8 rounds) one arm swings followed by Bethaks. Switch hands after 5 reps. With the time allocated you should be able to complete 5 reps left and right in the 20 seconds. To progress increase the weight weight set at a time until you are using a heavier weight for the duration of the 4 minutes. Once you complete the swings rest 1 minute then perform Bethaks in the same manner.

This exercise represents when Hanuman chased the Sun mistaking it for fruit and his mighty thighs as depicted in his statues.

This programme is not designed to bulk you up or make you incredibly fit. It was designed to focus on a particular skill and the advancement of a particular trait, the one handed Gada swing. It will keep you moving and solid for when you resume a tougher programme. Seek to train 6-5 times a week, do not stress or psyche yourself up but go into the training session with a calm and positive mind. Each time you train it should not kill you. Test you maybe but not kill you. You could swap the 1 handed Gada work with 2 handed Gada, Jori or any similar exercise you seek to work on. As such this programme is good for working on a single thing and performing that well, with additional exercises that will not conflict with it and keep fit and ready.

KUSHTI CONDITIONING:

This programme is built on the fundamentals of the Akhara, Dands, Bethak, Gada or/and Jori. Similar to the Hanuman programme in that there are few exercises, the focus is now not on skill acquisition but on performing increasingly higher numbers of repetitions in the exercises selected. This will build endurance throughout the whole body. By working a few exercises hard you will get the most benefits from them.

Jori or Gada: Pick a weight you can perform at least 10 hands with. Perform this exercise using the century training protocol, starting with 5 hands(a swing of left and right side counts as one hand) on the minute for 20 minutes. The aim is to achieve 50 hands with this weight. Once you achieve this goal, increase the weight and begin the process all over again.

Dands and Behak.: You have 2 options here. The first option, pick a number of repetitions and seek to achieve it resting as much as need be to achieve this goal. Perform Dands first. When you perform your Bethak, ensure you do twice as many compared to the dand. Begin with a sensible number and increase by 5 repetitions for Dands and 10 for bethak each training session. For example begin with 25 Dands, 50 Bethak. The following training session you would perform 30 Dands and 60 Bethak. The one after that, 35 and 70 etc.

The second option is to set a time limit and work within that. Remember to used the 2:1 ratio of Bethak to Dands. A good time would be 5 minutes of Dands and 10 minutes of Bethak but feel free to decrease or increase as you see fit. Stick with this same time for a minimum of 2 weeks up to a month. Make a note of number of repetitions you make for each time slot. The following session seek to beat this score. This is a good option if you are pressed for time. It is also a great way to measure your improvements in fitness and technique.

With Kushti conditioning train up to 5 times a week. You may add in additional abdominal excises such as leg raises if you wish to wrap up your training sessions.

PAHLAVAN POWER:

The Pahlavan Power programme focuses on strength and size with traditional Indian exercises.

You will train 3 times a week using full body workouts. The first exercise will be either 2 handed Gada or Jori, both using heavier weights. This is followed up

by training upper body movements then training the lower body. You will use an A/B training method. You will perform 2 A workouts and 1 B workout in the first week. In the following week you will perform 2 B workouts and 1 A workout. An A workout should be preceded by a B workout and vice versa. Do not perform 2 A or 2 B workouts one after the other. You can organise it like this.

DAY WEEK 1 WEEK 2

MONDAY A B

WEDNESDAY B A

FRIDAY A B

A session:

Gada or Jori: Using the 3x5+ training protocol.

Dumbbell Swing: 2 sets. Begin with swinging for 30 seconds for each set. Rest 1

minute. The following session increase this to 40 seconds, then 50, then to a minute. Keep the rest at 1 minute. Once you can complete both sets comfortably drop down to 30 seconds, increase the weight and start over.

Nal: Clean and press a heavy Nal. Use a 3x6+ training protocol

Gar Nal: Perform flat footed Dands with a heavy Gar Nal. Start with 5 sets of 5 and build up to 10 sets of 5. Rest 1-2 minutes between sets.

Leg Raise: 2 sets of max reps.

B session:

Gada or Jori: using the 3x5+ protocol.

Stone Ball shoulderering: Perform 3 sets of max 1 minute shoulderering with a moderate weight. The following session increase to 90 seconds. When you can complete all 3 sets comfortably drop down to 60 seconds and increase the weight.

Rope climbing/ Pullups: Perform 2-3 sets of max reps. Rest 1-2 minutes between sets.

Stone Ball Squats: Shoulder the weight and perform squats. Aim to reach 20 reps on both sides. Rest up to 3 minutes between sets.

Nal Squats: Use a heavy hand Nal and position it behind your head. Perform 20

reps of squats with the Nal in this position. You can use a lighter Nal and perform jump squats as an alternative.

YOGA-VYAYAM:

This programme focuses more on obtaining flexible strength. By using specific exercises where movement is considered key as well as focusing on Surya Namaskara you will build a lean agile body.

You will train 4-5 times a week dependant upon your schedule. This will be broken down into two sessions, half that incorporate Vyayam exercises and other half focusing purely on Sun Salutations. You can organise this any way you want. If you train 5 days a week then the 5th session can be either style dependant upon your own needs.

VYAYAM:

Gada, Jori or Dumbbell swing: Pick one of these exercises and perform 3-5 sets up to 10-15 hands per set.

Kushti Dips: Perform 2 sets of as many reps as possible of these dips. **Rope climb:** Perform as many climbs as you can manage in 5 minutes. **Dand-Bethak** **Squat Thrust:** Perform as many as you can manage in 5 minutes.

Dands/Bethak: Perform 3 minutes of Dands and 6 minutes of Bethak.

Sumtola: Perform 5 minutes of the Sumtola serpentine pattern.

SURYA NAMASKARA:

Sun Salutation/Moon Salutation: Begin with 3, 6, 9 or 12 sets of the exercise. Build up in triples until you are performing 25 sets of either exercise. If you like you may do both , morning(sun salutation) and evening(moon salutation).

EAST MEETS WEST:

East meets West combines traditional Kushti exercise with modern barbell training. This is a great programme to use if you love strength and size with a high intensity full body blaster.

You will train 3 times a week with 3 full body workouts.

Training session 1:

Gada, Jori or Dumbbell swing, ladder style using 2,4,6 *hath*(hands) for 3 ladders. Barbell rows/ Back squat 5x5 volume training.

Nal or kettlebell swings for 5 minutes interval training, 30 seconds on 30 seconds

off.

Training session 2:

Gada,Jori or Dumbbell swing, ladder style using 2,4,6 *hath*(hands) for 4 ladders.

Weighted dips/Dead lift 5x5 volume training.

Perfrom Bethaks for 5 minutes duration.

Training session 3:

Gada,Jori or Dumbbell swing, ladder style using 2,4,6 *hath*(hands) for 5 ladders.

Rounds/circuit training, 60 seconds on 60 seconds off for 3 times through.

Exercise 1: Dand

Exercise 2: Rope climbing

Exercise 3: Bethak

Exercise 4: Nal/kettlebell swing

Exercise 5: Leg raise

Finally I present two examples I have used to further my own training.

Hopefully it will demonstrate how to think about your end goal and how to go about achieving it using your grey matter. I hope you find these useful in your own training!

JORI

Begin by practising the movement. This is important more so than setting a repetition range to hit. It may take a while to get the feel of the Jori. Spend up to 20 minutes playing around and seeing how it goes. Great way to begin working with Jori is to swing them at the beginning or end of your other training sessions. Perform 5-10 minutes worth again focusing on your technique. Do not get worked up or frustrated by the process but enjoy it. Each time you pick them up you should feel an improvement. Once you feel confident and proficient then you can begin to really focus on them in your training.

Training Jori 3 times per week:

Perform 3 sets of 10-15 swings with each hand. Next session increase to 4, session after that 5

Rest1-3 minutes once you have completed 5 sets on the following session perform 2 sets with the same scheme. After the, rest perform a swing test,

aiming to complete as many repetitions as you can with good form

Next training session begin with 3 sets with a slight weight increase and repeat the process over again.

Once you reach an appreciable weight you could train by performing 10swings l/r with a light weight. 10 swings 1/r with a moderate weight and then perform working sets with your top weight. In some cases 3 heavy sets may be enough. On the last set try and push reps.

Another system you can employ is to perform your sets for time. An example could be: Swings 30seconds(30 seconds rest).

Swings 1 minutes(1 minute rest).

Swings 1:30(1:30 rest).

Swings 2:00(2 minute rest).

Swings 1:30.

Performing 5 sets seems to be optimal for the Jori with your top weight.

After swinging Jori it may be beneficial to perform relatively light 1 arm Gada work, perhaps 30-60 seconds per arm for 2-3 sets

You should set an amount of time in which to complete your work, 15-30 minutes max. After your Jori training, select 3 exercises to work in a rounds/intervals style. Ensure you use a balanced routine. An example would be, using an A/B routine:

DAY WEEK 1 WEEK 2 MONDAY A B WEDNESDAY B A FRIDAY A B

A Session:

Nal clean and press. Nal swings.

Nal Bethak

B Session:

Rope climbs/pull ups. Dands. Bethak.

If performing 3 days of Jori is too much then substitute 1 day with 1 arm Gada swings instead. Warm up performing 10 one arm swings with a light weight and then drop down to 5s as the weight increases. Perform 2 sets of 5 and one set of challenge reps aiming to get 10. once you can get 10 increase the weight slightly.

GADA PROGRAMME:

2 hands Gada. As with the Jori it is best to play around with the technique of the Gada. It

2 hands Gada. As with the Jori it is best to play around with the technique of the Gada. It

20 minutes to just play with the weight and figure it out. A great way to work the Gada is perform the exercise for 10 minutes, 5 swings l/r on the minute every minute.

When you gain proficiency with the Gada start working up to performing heavier swings.

A good way to do this is by performing ladders:

Perform 2 swings l/r

3 swings l/r

5 swings l/r

or 2/4/6/8

Warm up: Joint mobility exercises (30SECS) paired with dynamic mobility exercises(30SECS same exercise increased pace) in general. If the mobility exercise is unilateral or reverses direction then it stays as a mobility drill and not a dynamic drill (example single leg knee to chest swings, do one leg first then the other at a constant speed for both).

Consider using Turkish get up as a warm up drill. Between 3-5 reps per side not rushing but focusing on the technique using a moderate weight. I like the fact you must concentrate on the exercise and it acts as a mental warm up in this department. It has added benefit of getting the shoulders ready by moving through multiple planes of motion. I find that the Turkish get up is not good after GADA practice due to the heavy involvement of the shoulder stabilisers .

If training GADA then begin with light weight two hands style for 5 hands using both grips. So right hand over left for 5 hands, rest then left hand over right for equal amount of hands

Switch to single hand perform between 5-10 hands per arm.

Increase weight, go back to two hand style then single hand style as above.

Continue the above steps until you arrive at your designated training weight.

Use the training paradigm for the day on this main exercise(i.e. ladders, density training, time sets etc.). Consider use of band pull aparts between all sets 10-20 reps.

Consider use of a drop off set or two. Use a lighter load, perform the same exercise for 5-10 hands per side and focus on technique.

Total training time on GADA no more than 20 - 30 minutes

Move on to accessory exercises and/or general physical preparation exercises, prehab *etc.* Example: KB Front squat 5X5, pull up/row 3xmax, KB swing 5 reps left hand then 5 reps right, 10 seconds rest repeat until you get 100 swings. Try and keep it short and sweet around 10-30 minutes work. Work on your weaknesses. Try and stay balanced so consider use of push pull upper body (both horizontal and lateral), push pull lower body, unilateral work *etc.*

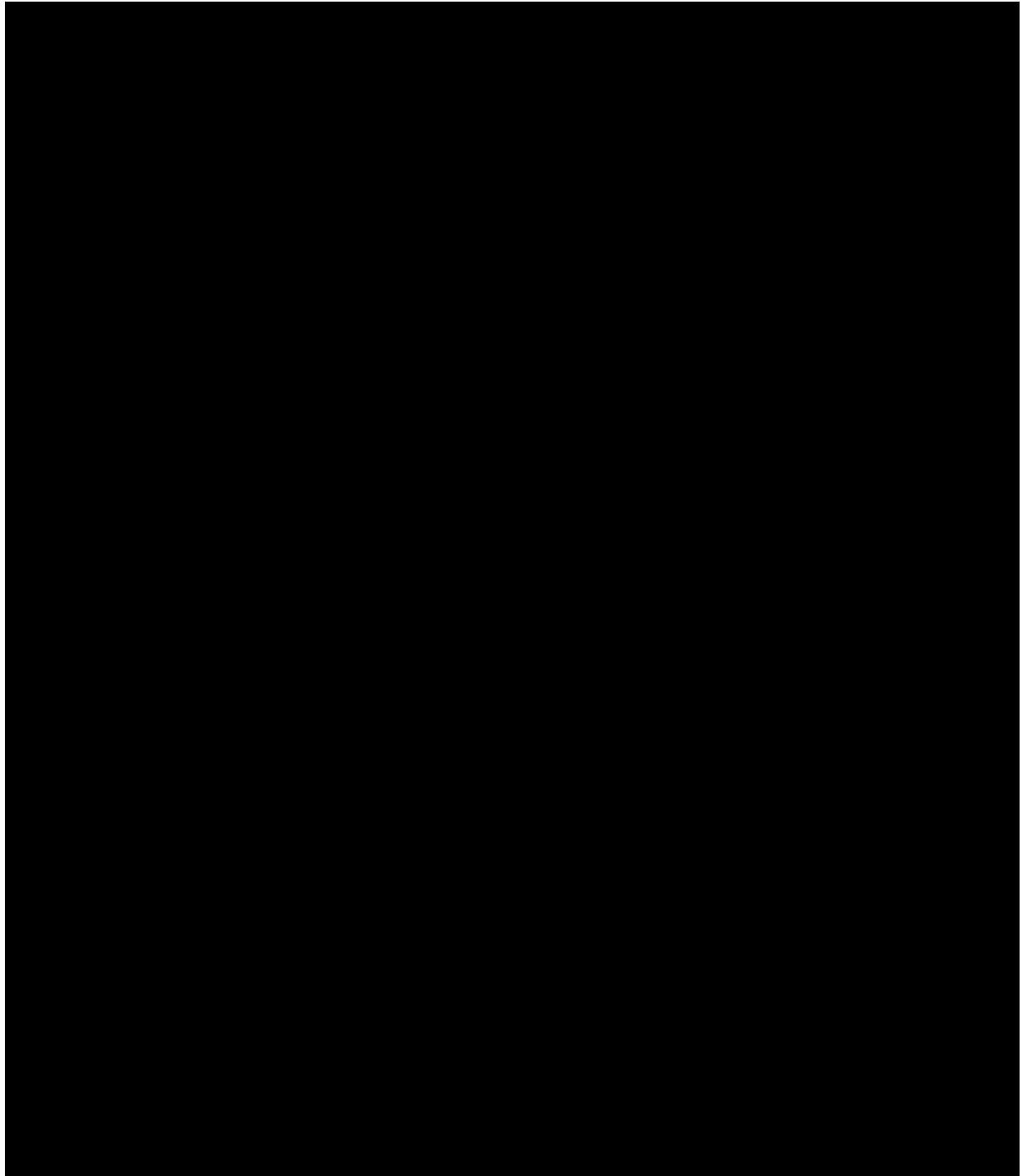
Instead of straight set exercises I may do a circuit with 4-5 exercises for 15-30 mins. Typically it would look like no.1 KB clean and press, no2 kb bent over row, no3 kb front squat, no4 kb double swing. 30 seconds work/rest move from one exercise to the next and complete from 2 to 5 circuits. If I do this I do not do a finisher(see below)

I like to end the session with a “finisher” a cardio focused movement that takes around 5 minutes to increase the heart rate to its near max. Kb swing, clean and jerk *etc.* Low technical lifts are best making the swing the ideal choice. Skipping sprinting *etc.* Full body exercise to help promote circulation and cardio respiratory system.



CHAPTER 5

SCIENCE, SEX AND FOOD



THE SCIENCE BEHIND THE SWING

To fully understand the mechanics of the swinging exercises is learn how and when to apply different elements of physics. While many people like to swing weights they do not understand the effects they are producing on the implement they use and their own body. Whilst a deep knowledge of the subject is not

crucial, having an understanding of the terminology will give you the tools and knowledge so you can apply it to your own training.

FORCE

Force relates to any action that when unopposed will change the direction of an object. It is also described as the push or pull on an object.

Force can cause an object to increase its acceleration to affect its velocity.

Ultimately force is an agent of change. An important formula when calculating force production is:

$$\mathbf{F(FORCE)=M(MASS)\times A(ACCELERATION).}$$

MASS

Mass represents an object, in this case the implement you wish to move. Mass is used to represent an object's inertia or resistance to changing its current state of motion including changes in speed, direction or state of rest. This means that if an object is not moving it will stay that way, whilst if it is in motion it will continue to do so.

This is mass can be changed by application of a force, in this case acceleration.

ACCELERATION

Acceleration represents the change in velocity of an object (mass). The object's acceleration is the result of all the forces used upon it including gravity.

This equation states that to increase the force of an object we can either increase its mass, acceleration or both. An example would be a heavy grinding deadlift compared to an explosive kettlebell swing. The deadlift manipulates mass whilst the kettlebell swing would manipulate acceleration. By doing this the body must respond likewise. This is a general example as many deadlifters will know that to move the bar you must use maximum acceleration and you don't necessarily need to use maximum acceleration to move the kettlebell. Essentially this means you can use any object to achieve the desired effect by using the $F=Ma$ equation. Whether it be barbells, dumbbells, kettlebells, your own body weight or any other implement all can be used to increase the amount of force production produced and put upon the body. Both will come into play to some degree or other. You cannot move an object without acceleration and an object with no mass would not exist to be moved.

Using the deadlift as an example you must move its mass. To do this you must overcome its inertia as it was currently in that state and was quite happy staying

where it was with no outside forces affecting it other than gravity. By applying FORCE ($F=M \times A$) we use acceleration to create motion. Once in motion the mass will want to continue to do so. As we increase acceleration, there will be less inertia to work against.

The more acceleration that can be applied to a mass results in a higher force output. Essentially the faster you can move a heavy object the more forces you can produce with your own body.

VELOCITY

Before moving on it is important to clarify the term velocity as it often gets confused with speed.

Speed determines how fast an object is moving.

Velocity shows how fast an object is moving(its speed) AND the direction it is travelling in.

MOMENTUM

Momentum is the mass and velocity of an object.

As such momentum is described as **MASS x VELOCITY**. This shows the tendency of an object to keep moving in the direction of travel. The mass(weight) and velocity(direction of travel and speed) will remain constant unless another force acts upon it. This could be gravity, the object hitting another object or interference from another outside force(a person).

Momentum often gets confused with velocity and speed.

If two objects are moving with equal velocity (direction and speed) the one with the greater mass(weight) will have greater velocity.

If two objects with equal mass(weight) are moving then the one with the greater velocity(speed and direction of travel) will have the higher momentum.

This is a crucial point especially when training with the Gada. Many people use a light weight Gada at relatively smooth and steadily. Contrast that with a heavy Gada swung with more mass and velocity, due in part to its weight but also by the external forces of gravity and those being exerted by the person training.

To perform the Gada swing the trainee must first take the weight from the ground, up and over the shoulder to initiate the movement.

To do so they must first

Overcome inertia.

To do this they use the force equation $F=M \times A$.

As the acceleration is applied to the mass it moves upwards and begins to take on

momentum = MASS x VELOCITY.

As the weight has been directed to go up and over the shoulder it will continue to do so.

HOWEVER as the Gada breaks over the shoulder, the amount of Force changes. The trainee will curb the ACCELERATION of the upward portion of the movement

by apply a slight reverse (DECELERATION) of force so the Gada head starts to lose momentum.

The mass begins to take on INERTIA.

Gravity and the trainee now apply ACCELERATION to the MASS, this time downwards.

The trainee does not need to apply much force to the mass as gravity will create most of the acceleration needed to produce the force.

It is the trainees to control the VELOCITY(direction and speed) of the MASS. Thus the trainee must control the Gadas momentum.

Under the trainees redirection the Gada head will continue to swing down and around up to the opposite shoulder. The trainee holding the weight means that it cannot just go straight into the ground.

The Gada continues along it's path of travel up towards the opposite shoulder and

will continue to do so until the momentum is stopped.

Here the trainee must actively apply force to change and redirect the Gadas VELOCITY.

The direction change is performed quickly. By pulling up and over the body which is

a FORCE the trainee has stopped the current momentum of the Gada. Doing so will

require an LARGER AMOUNT OF FORCE produced by the body to DECELERATE

that of the momentum.

A new direction of travel is determined by the trainee who pulls the handle down to the waist line.

An important point to note here is that as the head of the Gada comes up and over

the shoulder it begins to lose momentum. The momentum is now focused on the area of the hands where the handle is being held.

As the Gada head loses momentum, decelerates and gains inertia, the handle gains force from the body and momentum.

Essentially the hands move around the body, the head of the Gada does not have far to travel and does so with its remaining momentum.

As the hands come to the navel area the trainee puts the breaks on the handle as it

cannot travel through their body. Both the handle and the Gada head become inert. Now the mass of the Gada is inert.

The trainee must now apply force to the Gada to break this inertia(either that or let

gravity take control and let the weight fall out of their hands).

Using the example of the launch over the shoulder the Gada takes on a new momentum.

Thus the cycle continues.

Phew are you still with me here? Initially this may be hard to grasp but once you apply this to your training you will slowly see everything fall into place.

By looking at the terminology such as mass, inertia, momentum you can see there are many changes of force applied throughout the duration of the Gada swing. This constant changing and ability to control it make the Gada swing the ideal choice for grappler's. You are wrestling with similar forces that would be likely encountered in an opponent.

This example will also show that to move a heavier weight you must use more force from the body. The more force you can produce with your body the more you can apply that to lifting weights or opponents on the playing field.

Put simply the more forces you can produce with your body, the stronger you are! However you must also consider the total amount of work you can produce. For example you may be able to lift a heavy weight just once. This means you can produce a lot of force one time. You could then move a lighter weight multiple times which would mean more total volume and potentially even more weight lifted over a period of time. However do not get confused with lifting a 1 kilo weight 100 times means you are as strong as someone who can move that 100 once. Strength is the foundation of endurance. If you had no muscular strength you would not be able to move, much less perform activities. Having a base level of strength is important for endurance training activities other wise why would athletes cross train and lift weights? Do not confuse being able to lift

~~why would you do this cross train and hit weights? DO NOT CONFUSE BEING AWARE TO HIT~~
a light weight many times with strength as they are very different but at the same time not necessarily mutually exclusive. I recommend following the middle way and train both elements to as high a degree as you can.

GROUND REACTIVE FORCE

Another key to this training is the use of ground reactive force or GRF is the amount force exerted by the ground with the body in contact with it. The amount of force going into the ground will be the same as the amount of force the earth exerts back.

For example a person stood stationary exerts the amount of force as their mass. This is because they are INERT and so using the $F = M \times A$ formula, no acceleration is taking place.

Now take someone performing a depth jump off of a box. That persons mass will accelerate over the distance they are travelling before contact with the ground. This means that the force they produce will be greater than if they were inert. AS the impact the ground with velocity (speed and direction) the the ground will exert the equal force back. AS they are jumping down the force from the ground comes back up.

The earth's gravity means that what goes up must come down. This downwards direction is called a vector and the direction it is travelling is vertical (downwards).

Ground Reactive Forces are applied in martial arts. The saying the power of the punch comes from the ground is a common statement in the fighting arts. To be able to demonstrate the powerful punch one must be able to stay "grounded" or rooted to the ground. This includes the use of centre of balance, ability to produce force as well as vectors. Using the power of the earth to re-translate that energy through the body is vital or fighting.

VECTORS

Vectors represent a forces starting point (point of application) and the direction of travel (where it is going).

The differences between vectors and forces is the direction of travel and that impact on the body.

To explain this we will use the Gada swing from the inert front position with the handle pulled down to the navel.

Pushing the Gada to initiate force on the inert object and making it gain momentum sends it toward a particular vector(up and over the shoulder). The ground reactive force of the Gada changes. As the weight is moving upwards, it is against gravity and thus feels lighter due to the fact gravity has not caught up with it yet.

As the Gada changes momentum and is redirected, it changes its vector, *i.e.* on the downward portion of the swing. The force of the Gada increases as it moves downwards, this force is translated back through the body of the trainee and down into the earth and then back up. The trainee will have a sensation of being “pulled down” and will have to actively resist it by producing force equal to or exceeding that imposed on their body upwards.

As the trainee redirects the Gada by turning it in the back position up and over the shoulder, it changes its vector again. As it does so, on the upward portion it again moves against gravity, lightening the ground reactive force on the body. The body unloads this force and feels lighter.

From this example we see that the vectors have changed from the anterior (front of the body) to the posterior (back of the body) and then laterally (from side to side or left to right).

The ability to control the momentum of an object as well as vectors and gravity demonstrates even greater control of forces applied to and by the body. By contention with the mass, acceleration, gravity, vectors as well as ground reactive forces we can see that there is much more to swinging a Gada than meets the eye!

TIMING AND RHYTHM

Timing and rhythm are crucial if you wish to master all the above forces. When transitioning between two vectors, there is a point where the trainee can use the momentum the object has either to their advantage or disadvantage.

By catching the momentum of the weight at the right moment, for example when it begins to decelerate when coming up and over the shoulder, the trainee can use this change in force production to their advantage. They can quickly apply forces of their own to change the vector and work in concert with gravity and ground reaction forces. This would allow them to perform a repetition smoothly and seamlessly if they get the timing right.

If they mistime it, for example not applying the correct forces at the right time,

then they will be at a disadvantage. The forces of momentum, gravity and the vector will play against them. This could lead to pulling them off balance or out of alignment meaning they would have to correct by engaging parts of the body that were not keyed up to do so. This could take them through a more extreme range of motion, one which the muscles, tendons and joints were not prepared for and cause injury.

So having the correct timing is important if you wish to perform the movement both correctly and safely.

Rhythm is equally important. With timing you managed to perform the movement at the right time.

With rhythm you perform the correct timing in a recurring manner. There is a pattern to be seen by the observer. The action is cyclical in nature meaning that it moves through cycles. Cycles may have many components to them. The key is that they are repeated in sequence with the correct timing.

A correctly performed Gada swing is a perfect example of a rhythmic exercise. By getting into a rhythm, timing becomes easier. The easier timing becomes, the more quality repetitions you can do.

Rhythm can also be thought of as a beat. In fact having some music with a beat you can train to can be beneficial to your performance. In many cases it will allow you to figure out the exactly when to time the execution of the movement correctly. I personally do not train this way but it may work for you. I recommend checking out Paul Taras Wolkowinski's you tube channel for his video MIX IT UP for an example of the kind of beat you can follow. Having the correct music may very well help you maintain a rhythm where silence or music of the wrong tempo could throw you off.

Developing Rhythm and timing is crucial to many exercises from India. If performed correctly the person doing so looks like a machine at work. This enables you to perform a lot of work if applied correctly. By timing the transitions correctly over a period of time and using those forces we learned so much about you can develop tremendous endurance and strength when all are applied correctly.

THE ANATOMICAL PLANE

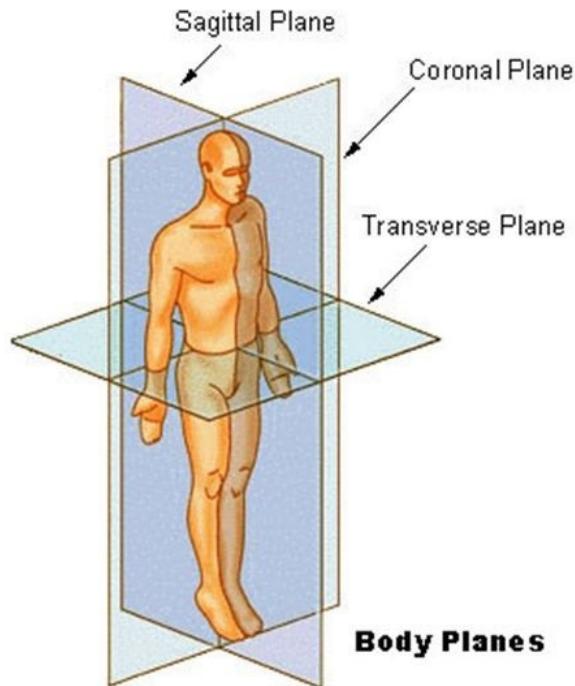
Due to the fact that many of the tools used in Indian Physical Culture move through multiple planes of motion it is important that we understand what planes of motion they move through in relation to our body.

The body is understood to move in three planes of motion, Sagittal, Frontal and Transverse.

Sagittal plane - in which forward and backward movements occur

Frontal plane - in which lateral movements occur

Transverse plane - in which rotational movements occur



Essentially the movements are going side to side, up and down and front to back. However we do not just move as if we were on tracks. We can move in spirals, circles and even more complicated patterns due to the ranges of motion afforded to us to our many joints and flexible vertebrae. The Indian swinging exercises move though all these planes of movement through one pass of the movement. This makes them incredible for control of external forces. This translates directly into combat sports, especially wrestling where you can find yourself at positions of compromise in the blink of an eye. Having training your body to withstand and manipulate forces that approach you from all directions will give you that advantage on your opponent.

In the fitness world a lot of people want to break down the 3 three planes of motion down into their component parts. Try to take your thinking away from this model. Understand it, yes but do not get hung up on the minutia. Instead of endlessly pondering, get out and do it and then apply the science to your own training.

BRAMACHARYA

Brahmacharya's meaning is composed of two words, *Brahma* meaning ultimate, and *Charya* meaning path. So from this Brahmacharya means path of the ultimate. In Hindu culture Semen is considered to be one of the most powerful and vital sources of energy in the human body. It is essentially the ability to create new life and is the source of a man's strength, knowledge, power skill and sexual energy. This ideal is echoed in Chinese traditional medicine where the ancient sages considered each man to have a certain amount of semen available to him throughout his life. They considered that with each expenditure, that individual was essentially losing his personal life-force. In India it is believed that the bones, muscles, veins, and capillaries depend upon semen for growth and strength. Its loss can lead to looking and becoming weak.

The sexual organs are considered a power house of energy. Testosterone and other sex hormones are created in the sexual centre and it is where the essence of life is stored. In this capacity a single ejaculation from a man has enough sperm to repopulate the whole of north America if each individually fertilised an egg. This just goes to show how much energy to create life is stored and produced by the sex organs.

Think of it this way, you exist because of semen!

Both cultures believe in saving and cultivating this great source of energy to enhance the body, mind and spirit. To this end Wrestlers and Pahalvan whose domain is strength and purity, many practice Brahmacharya.

Brahmacharya is the first of the four Hindu life paths, adopted during the beginning of ones life from birth well into adult hood. It is practised by the Kushti Wrestlers and is essentially a form of codified celibacy. Wrestlers know of the power of semen retention and that chastity brings fourth tremendous spiritual, physical and moral strength. Semen is said to contain *Shakti*(power).

The patron god of wrestlers, Hanuman is depicted as a Brahmachari (one who adheres to Brahmacharya) and Shiva was known for his ability to retain his seed to help empower his yogic and divine abilities. In India, temples of Shiva will always have a *Lingam*. This is a representation of Shivas phallus. It is not only a representation of the gods penis but also a symbol of his energy and cosmic potential. In yogic circles it is considered a gateway to the divine and Shiva

himself. The Lingam is always depicted standing erect in the centre of a *Yoni*, which represents *Shakti*, the cosmic energy and feminine counterpart to Shiva. Many cultures around the world have had at one time or another a special reverence for the penis and the power it represents. The equivalent of Lingams have been found in Britain and Ireland.

The wrestlers seek to emulate the characteristics of their God as such the deities represent not only a way of life but also an ideal to live up to and embody. It requires discipline of mind and control of the individuals baser instincts. It is not an easy path to follow especially in the modern age. People have always had an interest in sex as evident from depictions in stone age paintings. In the past it may have been difficult to approach a member of the opposite sex or even see a naked body but now with the proliferation of the internet and other media images of a sexual nature are an intrusive part of everyday life.

People have always had an interest in sex as evident from depictions in stone age paintings. Advertisements by their very nature promote and play upon an individual's sexual desires. Clothes, cars, music, films, books, holidays and many other products are described as "sexy". The people who are trying to sell you stuff you don't really need are very clever, using your own biological urges against you to part you from your hard earned money. Sex sells, literally. Pornography is easier now than ever to find. At a click of a button you can fill your sexual fantasies until your hearts content. So much so that it is becoming an underlying social issue. Whilst much ignored or brushed under the carpet it is there effecting personal and professional lives. Many believe it to be harmless, an image purported by the Porn Industry. Lets look at some statistics.

About 12% of Internet sites are pornographic.

25% of search engine requests are pornographic in nature.

35% of all downloads are pornographic.

Every second \$3000 is being spent on pornography.

Profits for the porn industry are estimated to be in the tens of BILLIONS!

If you need the proof of sexual energy you have it right there in terms of desire and money. The sheer amount of effort spent on looking for sexual images and producing sexual content is truly incredible. To my mind this is a way to elaborate on the power of sexual energy made manifest.

So does all this money and time spent on sexual imagery and living out of false fantasies help further humanity as a whole? I doubt it! It helps to promote

diminished normal social relationships, the objectifying of people, loss of libido, creates compulsive addictive habits, dissociation, lack of self esteem and shame. While many of you from the older generation may scoff at this, think how easy it is now for your children to go on line and view sexual images at any time and anywhere without your knowledge. Think what this is doing to their still developing brains, ingraining habits that may be harder to break as they become older. Pornography and increased sexual objectivity not only effect the individual but also those around them and society as a whole.

If you still have issue with my statements, think of sexual imagery as food. Some people have a compulsive habit of eating more than they need to and rubbish food at that. This is part of what drives the fitness industry. When someone eats and becomes out of shape, they start to exhibit many of the attributes described above. Lack of self esteem, self control and shame can accompany binge eating type behaviour. The eating satisfies a craving or need much in the same way as porn does. While eating affects the body outwardly, excessive sexual imagery or behaviour consumes it from within.

The human mind was not designed to deal with so much blatant arousing imagery. From cave paintings to the first erotic film shot in 1896, we have come a long way to having sex so easily and instantaneously available.

Are you shocked by this? Or does it not come as a surprise? I bet this was the last kind of topic you were going to find in a book on fitness! I use this as an example of the earthly temptations that face the wrestlers who take up the mantle of Brahmacharya. Whilst sexual imagery is not as much of an issue in India it is a growing one.

Ejaculation stresses the organs and glands of the body. With frequent ejaculation sperm quantity and quality drops. If hormonal secretions leak out then that persons vital life energies will follow suit. After the act one feels tired and like having a nap whereas before they were driven and passionate.

One for the men out there!

Have you ever attempted a 1 rep max with a squat immediately after sex? Or what about a hardcore crushing workout?

How did you feel? Did you dominate it or did you feel tired and drained? Now imagine a time when you had no sexual activity for a while and did the same. How did you feel? Empowered? Aggressive? In control?

Many modern day athletes have experimented with abstinence from sexual activity before a sporting event. Muhammed Ali has reportedly abstained up to 6 weeks before a fight. The English football team also was forbidden to have sex within a month of the world cup. The ancient Greeks believed it impaired physical power. Many in the fighting arts have toyed around with the idea.

So going back to the Kushti Wrestlers, by keeping their semen they believe they are furthering their own physical prowess. They socialise with like minded individuals with strong community bonds which help encourage and strengthen them. The wrestlers have a laid down system of following Brahmacharya is not just celibacy for celibacy's sake but a system designed to advance physical progress ,morality and spiritual advancement.

To follow Brahmacharya you should follow some basic tenets.

These include:

Brahmachari should avoid looking at a member of the opposite sex with lustful eyes.

He should not have the desire to touch them or go near them with evil intention.
He should not play, cut jokes or converse with them.

He should not speak to a woman in secrecy.

He should not praise a woman's qualities within himself or before his friends.

He should not think of the opposite sex at all.

He should not have a carnal desire to have sexual enjoyment.

A Brahmachari should, without fail, avoid sexual intercourse leading to semen loss.

You will note that only the last is the only tenet that results in semen loss. The thinking being the prior seven relate to a man and the opportunities for mental arousal. To the Wrestlers this is just as bad. Interestingly if a person is to take up Brahmacharya, then wrestling exercise is often prescribed as a way to maintain it. Again having a social environment which promotes this as well as guidance by seniors makes this goal much more attainable. Structured training and a strict lifestyle regimen that dictates many aspects of a wrestlers life such as hygiene and conduct become second nature in such surroundings. Many great champions have been Brahmachari, winning many victories and accomplishing great feats by living up to the ideal of their God of Strength, Hanuman.

BRAMACHARYA IN PRACTICE

Okay so are you ready to give up sex and pursue a life of celibacy?? I imagine many of you reading this will be like “whaaaaaaaaaat?? There ain't no way you stopping me from enjoying myself!??” Nor do I want to. I am certainly not judging nor condemning as that takes a far too extreme mindset. You are most certainly free to do as you wish either way as long as it doesn't hurt anybody.

Do you think I am a practising celibate? Hell no! I could tell you about my experiences about trying but I don't want to make this that kind of book! However I do practise regulation of the number of times I ejaculate in a month. In Chinese Traditional Medicine there is a formula called the Recipes Of Priceless Golden States. This pertains to the number of times that a male may lose his seed with regards to his age.

Men who are 20 leak every 4 days
Men who are 30 leak every 8 days
Men who are 40 leak once every 16 days
Men who are 50 leak once every 21 days
Men of 60 or more should not leak at all,
If a man of advanced years is still vigorous he may leak once every month.

This is a good system to test out your ability to refrain from ejaculation. Some of you may find how hard(no pun intended!) it is to adhere to this whereas for others it is easy.

I like to follow the advice on the topic of ejaculation restraint from the centenarian doctor Sun Ssu-mo. This Tang dynasty Taoist outlived three emperors by following his own advice. The “twice-monthly” rule of thumb that he recommended . In actual practice, however, he ejaculated only one time per one hundred copulations. Dr. Sun lived to be 101!

Here I must state abstain from ejaculation, not sex! Being able to have sex with your partner and not ejaculating may take more restraint than if you were to avoid it all-together. Dr. Sun Ssu-mo would practice sex however, he ejaculated only one time per one hundred copulations. Dr. Sun lived to be 101!

Diet also plays a prominent part in Brahmacharya. Pure foods are thought to make the mind strong and steady. Similarly certain foods are thought to work against Brahmacharya, being either stimulating or having a aphrodisiac effect if consumed. The ideal diet is comprised of Sattvic foods.

The ideal Sattvic foods are milk. wheat. barley. bread. ghi. butter. dried ginger.

green gram, potatoes, dates, plantains, curd, almonds and fruits. As you can see, the wrestlers specially prepared almond, ghi and milk drink (Badam) consists of purely Sattvic foods. Ghi is thought of as being especially potent for the creation of semen within the body. Milk from cows is also highly regarded. Almonds are thought to have benefits for semen, their shape similar to a male testicle is thought to empower them.

Foods considered to have a negative effect consist of highly spiced foods, chillies, meat, fish, eggs, tobacco, alcohol, narcotics, sour foods, oil of all kinds, stale food, roasted things, over-ripe and unripe fruits, heavy vegetables and salt. Onions and garlic are thought of being very offensive with salt having the worst properties of all foods. These foods are said to effect the senses of the tongue. Stimulating foods thus effect the brain. By controlling what you put in your mouth you can thus control your own emotional state and mindset.

The foods a Brahmachari eats should be pure and fresh. Packaged or fast foods are designed with little nutritional benefit and a lot of artificial taste, the anathema of the Brahmacharya diet. Even if you do not wish to follow the path of Brahmacharya, looking at the food consumed can show you how healthful and beneficial it can be by itself. Foods should be eaten in moderation. Overindulgence of foods follows the rules of gluttony which is considered a character flaw. Again if you cannot control your mouth how can you control your other passions? Stuffing yourself is also deleterious for the bodies digestion and taxes the body as a whole. Eating light, wholesome, nourishing foods will lend health and vitality to the body, mind and spirit.

This goes against much of what Brahmacharya stands for but also has its own benefits. Firstly this is not as severe a practice and can be easily achieved with patience and diligence. Whether you believe abstaining from sex or retaining semen makes any physical difference to your health and performance is up to you. But by practising some form of control over your sexual urges goes a long way to discipline in other aspects in your life. Have a routine you follow and believe in can help empower you in other goals. You gain the ability to take control of your ingrained compulsions and command your actions.

BRAMACHARYA IF IN A RELATIONSHIP OR MARRIED

Brahmacharya is followed by those married in India. Simplified it consists of moderation in sexual intercourse, primarily for the reason of having children rather than for pleasure. Becoming a householder is the second phase of the

Married man for pleasure. Becoming a householder is the second phase of the Hindu Life Cycle. Observing Brahmacharya during marriage is said to strengthen spiritual bonds between the married couple. By not focusing on lust but correct interaction they can progress together through life with a stronger love and devotion for each other.

From my perspective I can see the validity of these claims though it may not be a choice you want to make. If you were to follow this path I believe it would be best to follow the Recipes Of Priceless Golden States. It will give you a practice to focus on and keep your love life steady for a long time. By this I mean if you have too much of a good thing (doughnuts in my case) and eat them every day sooner or later you get sick of them. By saving the time you get to indulge until an appointed time you really appreciate it and it is much more pleasurable. Again it is a case of moderation. Don't think of having sex at the end of the amount of time you decided to wait as a reward. That will just promote the wrong kind of thinking. Approach it with the thought that it is just another part of your practice.

Being able to master yourself is the first step to mastering your own life(force)!

This chapter was designed to give you an insight into what lengths wrestlers will go in regard to their training. The sacrifice of sexual desire in return for physical and moral forthrightness is deemed a worthy exchange in the Hindu culture. In fact this is only the tip of a very large iceberg beyond the scope of this book. It is something I find highly interesting and have vested much time and research in for my own practice. My intent is not to preach in anyway, more to illuminate and offer a different angle that many do not even contemplate. If any one is interested on my thoughts on the subject don't hesitate to get in touch!

KHURAK, THE WRESTLERS DIET

Much has been written about the wrestlers diet with it's focus on vegetarianism and foods specific to them. The wrestlers diet is called Khurak and is geared towards optimal health, performance and unity of spirit. It is fundamentally based upon the tenets of Ayurvedic medicine/science. Ayurveda is a system that does not compartmentalise in the way western science and medicine does. Instead of separating emotional, mental and physical ailments it teaches that all of these things are intertwined and not independent of the other. Pain in the stomach may be related to emotional stress and disquiet. After all why did the pain start?



There are numerous stories of hard charging business people who due to the high stress demands of their job, suffer poor health, high blood pressure and heart attack. This is not just a physiological response but also one that goes much deeper into the persons spirit. It is not uncommon for Indian sages and Chinese Tai-Chi masters to live exceptionally long lives due to their knowledge of the body mind and spirit combined. They seek to maintain a healthy balance of all these areas. If one is out of sync it can effect the other. Even in explaining it, I am using compartmentalisation to express the idea. To those brought up on these systems there is little distinction. Thankfully in the West the idea of holistic medicine that which focus on the whole being not just the physical, is becoming more popular as an alternative remedy.

Ayurveda can trace its origins back 5000 years to the Indus Valley. It is here where the Vedas, the oldest writings on Ayurveda, originated. Its primary concern was harmonisation of the whole being. Therefore a prime tenant of the Ayurvedic system is not just to heal but to act as a system of proactive preventative measures to resist disease. The effect of diet, the seasons, weather, mood and mindset of yourself and those around you all have an influence on your well being.

The main focus of the wrestler is *Swastha* or “to be established in the self”. Health is moment to moment awareness obtained through the meditation, positive physical stress (eustress), food of good quality, a clean environment, rest in all its definitions and the company of a like minded, positive and encouraging community. To this end the wrestler will try to adhere to these tenets.

Meditation stills the mind, steady breathing and allows the individual to reflect and compose oneself internally. The benefits of meditation are numerous including reducing anxiety, alleviating blood pressure and help with depression. From the esoteric point of view it helps with achieving higher states of consciousness, control and regulation bodily functions and is key in cultivating spiritual energy such as *Qi*, *Ki* and *Prana*.

Positive physical stress which is the wrestlers main domain of concern relates to the correct incremental application of a physical culture training programme. Whereas in the west, and America in particular, there is a consensus that harder, faster and bigger is always better. The wrestlers are unfettered by such notions, although with the expanse and ease of which they can acquire western media has begun to make an impact. As such the focus is always on the quality. More is not better, better is better. It is this ability to restrain oneself until one is ready which

is a strong quality. The process may take years or a lifetime. There are no “become the champion of the Akhara in 60 days !” programmes. Only hard work and diligence.

While enthusiasm is encouraged, an egotistical and vain character is not. Wrestlers will chide those who think they are superior in one way or another or simply trying to get big muscles to appear impressive. A reserved and respectful nature regardless of ones physical prowess is regarded as the best attitude. When the individual respects his teachers and fellows from junior to most senior helping those that require it helps in building strong bonds between all those at the Akhara. This environment helps to nurture and grow the wrestler and through association they acquire the right mindset to become not just a great wrestler but also a good family person and someone who will be good for the local community and thus the nation.

The thinking behind physical culture in ancient India was that if the individual was physically capable, moral and upright with respect to elders, fealty to the local ruler and devotion to the Gods then the nation would also take on these qualities. A country of physically weak, self centred and selfish individuals would not be strong in unity of being. Correct physical training strengthens the body and mind. From the physiological point of view this would mean increased health and vitality which fitness is known to promote. By training with others in a group environment helps to promote competition and camaraderie. The body changes to adapt to the stress placed making it robust to injury and illness. Frailty is replaced with vigour. Exercise vitalises the body and makes the person feel good.

Food of the purest quality contains a much higher total of vital force (*Prana*) than that which comes in packages, is frozen chemically altered and produced with out undue care and attention. For the wrestler food is of the utmost importance for their ability to perform optimally.

A clean environment is important. Good air, weather, cleanliness and a well organised tidy surroundings do much to impact ones health and mental well being. In China there is a whole field dedicated towards this subject in feng-shui the harmonization of ones surroundings to promote health luck and increase vital energy (*Qi* or *Prana*). If you live in a place near nature in good surroundings devoid of pollution you will have much better health than if you live in the heart of a industrial city with a large population. You have to contend with being

surrounded by electric devices, smog producing vehicles and hectic bustling streets and roads. This makes being peaceful of mind and body difficult , though not impossible and we don't all have a choice. However by taking proactive measures you can alleviate some of the negative connotations such as increased stress. Having a tidy and clean home environment as a safe haven from the stresses of the outside world can make a huge positive difference.

Being in the company of like minded and encouraging individuals is not only hugely rewarding from a social point of view but also can keep one motivated, positive and also helps as a support base.

Being part of a group helps to make the person accountable for their actions, thoughts and feelings. If a group all moves in one direction then any stragglers can be picked up and helped put on course. With regards to the wrestlers having this community gives them a sense of belonging and commitment. Not only do they wish not fail themselves but also the Akhara community. I found that many would think of their Akhara before thinking of themselves. In the fitness community a certain fitness modality that cross trains is a good example. Love it or hate it this brand has surpassed other fitness modalities by having a heavy emphasis on the community. People enjoy feeling as if they are part of something and this sense of belonging helps to ensure they continue to show up. Pressure from peers ensures that fair-weather types tend to not fair well and a strong bonded group is created through shared experiences. Not only will they meet at the “box” but also intermingle in their private social lives. This is nothing radical or revolutionary.

In the Akhara this has been the model for over a thousand years. The wrestlers even take it one step further with many living communally at training camps in or near the Akhara. This is similar to military barracks and anyone who has served in the forces will relate to the common bonds that can be forged between people of differing views and opinion through joint testing experiences. This can enable those that would never normally intermingle to unite into one unit all with, again, a common goal and ethos in mind.

KHURAK THE FOOD OF THE WRESTLER

The food a wrestler consumes is of a special quality and quantity. It is generally vegetarian of nature with the main emphasis on promoting health and a calm disposition. In India the sages would look at animals in the animal kingdom and see what traits they have in relation to their diet. The Tiger for example is ferocious whereas the elephant is calm and steady. Wrestling being a strenuous

physical activity and India being a hot country, staying cool is paramount to health and disposition. It is unlikely that a person could perform well training in 50 degrees Celsius heat after consuming exceptionally spicy hot curries! Merely consuming the meal would induce a full body sweat. This is exactly what happened to me personally in the Philippines. I prepared oatmeal, it being a healthy meal. However the heat from the cooker and food itself turned me into a walking puddle. I had stripped down to my shorts and my heart rate was racing while my body was fighting to drop my temperature back down. I was sat in front of a fan at full blast and it was late evening. By the time I had finished I felt exhausted! However, take the exact same meal to somewhere cold like Scotland in the heart of winter and it would be absolutely appropriate. Hearty warming food would help satisfy the bodies need to maintain its temperature. Hot oatmeal would help with this in cold climates whereas in a hot tropical climate it makes things complicated!

By this token the Wrestles eat predominately for and from their environment. Core local produce and dishes evolved over time to suit the inhabitants from their early beginnings, lasting primarily because of their functionality. This is not to say there aren't flavoursome spicy and sweet dishes. As with any culture with continued expansion and modernisation come more time to focus on recreational activity. Experimenting with foods in differing ways has lead to some delicious food being created and this is one of the main reasons I love going back to India!

So we have concluded the wrestler must stay cool to function. His mindset must also be correct. A flighty mind or one filled with lustful thoughts of the opposite sex can be detrimental to the wrestlers capability. Preoccupation of things not in relation to the goal at hand can lead to being sidetracked, procrastination and lack of interest. Food can be a factor influencing attitude.

Freshly prepared food with knowledge of where all ingredients have come from and by whom it has been cooked ensures that the food comes from a good source and is prepared with good intent. It is believed that a persons thoughts and feelings can be transferred from them to that which they create, jealousy lust greed and any number of negative emotions could be imparted into the food a wrestler would consume. The thinking behind this is that as thoughts are an energy in and of themselves, and the ability to make food is also a thought that these are not mutually exclusive but combined to an intent, which is transferred into what is being prepared. Food does not just appear because we wish it to, we have to make it and that takes thought. The combination of thoughts is much like a combination of herbs and spices.

Bad thoughts are like rotten fruit in an other wise healthy salad. Food that is prepared lovingly with good intent will be of a much higher quality. Eating from a fast food chain and receiving a poorly constructed burger by a resentful employee would be the best definition of a bad meal both materially and emotionally, compared to cuisine that comes from ones loving spouse. This moves onto another point, in that meat can contain the emotions of the animal it came from. Unless the animal is slaughtered in a specific way that induces little to no pain and isn't in a stressful situation then negative emotions can be passed on. Any creature in fear and pain will generate stress hormones such as cortisol and adrenaline. These would be pumped around the body at time of death and do not simply dissipate, but remain dormant until consumed. Once in the body and being digested those same hormones would be released into the consumers system. There are numerous accounts of people having limb or organ transplants experiencing memories or emotions separate from what they have had previously. The flesh, blood and bone retains this information encoded in the nervous system, *Nadis* or *Meridians*. Once joined with a host these become integrated into their being. Still some wrestler eat eggs and meat. Those that do feel that the benefits outweigh the negatives.

Another aspect of the wrestlers diet is how the food they eat relates to the three *Doshas* and the three *Gunas*. A persons Dosha, or humour, can be influenced by the Guna, or quality of the food they consume. At a basic level these can be seen as one and the same with Pitta relating to Rajas, Vata relating to Sattva and Kapha relating to Tamas. This is a very simplistic way of looking at the system which is highly intricate and complex in nature and requires many years of study to fully comprehend. The following will explain the Doshas and the Gunas in as simple manner.

THE 3 DOSHAS

The Doshas are a form of biological energy covering mental, physical and psychological functions and tendencies. Generally one will be dominate in a person and this will dictate their personality appearance and outlook on life. They are a combination of 5 elements, fire, air, water, earth and ether. Your individual Dosha will be determined, initially by your lineage. Each Dosha exists within the body but the value of each is unique to the individual.

The Doshas are:

VATA

Is made from the air and ether elements. Its characteristics in individuals are like the wind, changing from one state to the next. Quick to pick up ideas but also as quick to forget them. Vata types tend to be flighty or nervous with a slim build and hyperactive nature. These can be thought of as an Ectomorph body type.

PITTA:

Is made up primarily of fire with a small amount of water element. It's characteristics are a keen mind and healthy appetite. Pitta types tend to be passionate and expressive with good focus and leadership skills. Physically they are of medium build and tend not to carry much in the way of fat. They can be considered as a Mesomorph body type.

KAPHA:

Consists of earth and water elements of equal measure. It's characteristics are of a laid back personality. Slow to memorise information Kapha types are physically strong but slow moving. As such they tend to have slower metabolisms and gain body fat easier and find it harder to shift than other body types. They can be considered to be Endomorph body types.

As a general rule of thumb each individual will have certain traits of each Dosha. These can be influenced by the food ingested which can be broken down using the 3 Gunas.

The 3 gunas are:

SATTVA:

Calm and composed it relates to cooling.

Potential energy coming from foods that are light and nourishing

RAJAS:

Passionate and active it relates to heating. Kinetic energy produced from energising foods.

TAMAS:

Inertia and inactivity it relates to dullness and lethargy. Inertia caused by foods heavy and hard to digest.

The aim of Ayurvedic science and diet is to balance the 3 Doshas within the body. Balance equals harmony in all things .So how can you apply this to yourself? Here are some ways that you can eat for your Dosha to help balance it

out. Through experience and experimentation you will find what works best for you. Through diet it is possible to change the level of a particular Dosha by a substantial degree.

DIETRY SUGGESTIONS FOR VATA:

Ensure you eat a balanced breakfast each morning.

Do not eat when upset, stressed or anxious.

Be mindful of poor digestion(gas, diarrhoea or constipation) and make a note of the

foods which may have caused it.

Limit sugar and caffeine.

Choose heavier grains such as rice, barley and oats.

Choose heavier fruits such as bananas, dates, and oranges.

Choose heavier moist vegetables such as squash and sweet potatoes. Be aware of issues digesting cows milk and cheeses.

Eat foods with sweet, sour and salty tastes. Avoid bitter, pungent and astringent foods.

DIETRY SUGGESTIONS FOR PITTA:

Eat a balanced breakfast and have an early lunch.

Limit sugar, caffeine and alcohol.

Do not conduct business while eating.

Choose grains like rice and whole grain pasta rather than corn, rye or buckwheat. Limit sour or heating vegetables such as garlic, onion, tomato, mustard greens and

eggplants.

Avoid peanuts, cashews, pistachios and salted nuts.

If you eat meat choose white and fish over red.

Eat foods that are sweet, bitter and astringent. Avoid salty, sour and pungent foods.

DIETRY SUGGESTIONS FOR KAPHA:

Watch the amount you eat(do not over indulge).

Have a light breakfast and evening meal.

Avoid eating snacks or late at night.

Cut out sugar and greasy food.
Drink warm liquids.
Eat toasted whole grains.
Eat light fruits such as apples, pears and berries.
Avoid sweet potatoes, tomato and avocado.
Eat pumpkin and sunflower seeds. Avoid coconut and all forms of nuts. Limit your dairy consumption. Choose goat milk products. If you eat meat choose white over fish and red.
Eat foods that are bitter, pungent and astringent. Avoid sweet, salty and sour foods.

THE 6 FLAVOURS:

In Ayurveda, the taste of foods can create an emotional response in the body. Each of the 3 Doshas can be affected or displaced by eating certain foods. In order to maintain a balance you must eat foods with tastes that correspond to your Dosha. You may otherwise find yourself having bad moods or feeling ill.

The 6 flavours are:

SWEET:

Positive effects: Love, compassion, care, grounding. Negative effects: Greed, attachment, temptation and laziness.

SOUR:

Positive effects: Alertness, realism and focus.
Negative effects: Judgement, criticism, drawing wrong conclusions.

SALTY:

Positive effects: Energy, enthusiasm and faith. Negative effects: Attachment, anger and grief.

BITTER:

Positive effects: Renunciation, celibacy and clarity. Negative effects: Isolation, loneliness and separation.

PUNGENT:

Positive effects: Ability to digest ideas and increase motivation. Negative effects: Anger, envy and hatred.

ASTRINGENT:

Positive effects: Stability, spirituality and surety. Negative effects: Fear,insecurity and withdrawal.

So now we have an idea of what foods are good for our body type. Next we will discover what foods are good(and bad) for what Doshas.

FOODS IN RELATION TO THE 3 GUNAS:

The following is a list of foods, broken down into their Gunas, Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. Using this list you can plan what foods would suit your Dosha most or what quality you wish to bring out in yourself. For example it is believed that by the food you eat you can change your Dosha. A person with a Kapha Dosha could, over time become more Vata by eating more Sattva foods.

SATTVIC FOODS:

Fruit: Mango, pomegranate, coconut, figs, pears, peaches ,apples, oranges, bananas, dried fruit.

Vegetables: Sweet Potato, lettuce, yellow squash, parsley,cilantro, sprouts, cauliflower

Grains: Rice, tapioca, barley

Legumes/beans: Mung bean, yellow lentils, lima beans ,kidney beans, chana

Dairy: Fresh milk, fresh curd,fresh cheese, paneer, ghi.

Spices and Herbs: Corriander, cumin, tumeric ,basil, cinnamon, cardmom, ginger saffron, tulsi, mint, licorice.

Nuts and seeds: Sesame seeds, mustard seeds, almonds, cashews.

Meat: No meats are considered Sattvic.

RAJAS FOODS:

Fruit: Apples,oranges, grapefruit.

Vegetables: Potatoes broccoli, spinach tamarind, winter squash, pickle

Grains:Millet, yellow corn buckwheat.

Legumes/beans: Red lentils, toor dal, adzuki beans

Dairy: Old sour cream, store bought yoghurt, buffalo milk

Spices: Chilli, cayenne, peppers, paprika, garlic, nutmeg, raw uncooked honey, salt, coffees, black tea,tobacco.

Nuts: Pumpkin seeds.

Meat: White meat such as chicken, fresh fish, shrimp.

TAMAS FOODS:

Fruit: Avocado, plums, apricots.

Vegetables: Mushroom, pumpkin, genetically engineered food. **Grains:** Wheat, brown rice, genetically modified produce.

Legumes/beans: Urad dal, black beans, pinto beans, pink beans. **Dairy:** Cheese(hardened,salty foetid) non organic dairy,eggs.

Spices and herbs: Raw onion, garlic, leeks, shallots, chives, cooked or heated honey

Nuts and seeds: Poppy seeds.

Meat: Pork, lamb, beef, dark meat chicken/turkey, lobster, canned, frozen processed meat products

Now, the wrestler tends to gravitate toward a Pitta Dosha, as they are highly active. As this comprises a fair amount of the fire element they seek to maintain a cool composure by eating mainly Sattvic foods. This enables their body to operate at a high level, maintain alertness and stay in good physical condition. External elements such as the heat can increase the fire in the Pitta Dosha, so by wearing appropriate clothing such as the langoti thong can help in maintain coolness. Overheating will result in lack of focus, attention and stamina. Appropriate cooling Sattva food choices will enable the wrestler to work hard at his practice.

FOOD AND THE SEASONS

With your diet you have to bear in mind seasonality and climate. Wrestlers that eat meat will abstain from it during the summer months but may begin eating it during winter due to its heating properties.

Eating with the seasons and in accordance to time of day is considered very important, especially if one wishes to remain free of disease. As the seasons change one becomes more susceptible to sickness. People catch colds or the flu. The wrestlers attribute much of this to the change in weather but also the alignment of the earth in relation to the sun and moon. By eating foods that are common place or suited to the particular part of year is considered common sense, as the earth provides what is required for that time. In this sense the Wrestlers, and Indian populace as a whole are generally much more in touch with the cycles of nature. There are few, if any supermarkets where the same foods can be bought year round. You eat what is available at the time. This helps to create seasonal variety in diet.

By adapting your own life to the rhythms of the seasons and natural world . As humans we like to think ourselves above the other creature of the planet , but at our core we are still animals. Whilst we tend not to hibernate, during winter months it is harder to be active and if it is cold outside then being active seems less appealing. It takes longer to warm up and exercises seem not to gain the full benefit as if it was a pleasant sunny day. By adapting your training to the seasons you will find you are much more productive. In India Wrestling Dangals and weightlifting competitions take place in the summer and autumn months, training decreases significantly during winter and in some cases stops altogether and slowly picks up during the spring as the weather improves.

WRESTLERS MEAL TIMES

The next factor to consider is the time of day. The wrestlers tend to eat very light in the morning, have a more substantial meal in the middle of the day and a similar meal again in the evening after training. As they train very early, they would have to rise exceptionally early to prepare and consume a large meal. By eating light they do not stress their digestive system overly much prior to training. After training is finished they will eat a recovery meal such as Badam or some fruits with milk. If they choose to have a meal at noon it will be mostly of solid foods, chipati, dal and vegetables.

The meals are timed around the wrestlers training. Prior to training they will have a light meal or a chana and raisin drink left to soak from the night before. Juices are consumed to help cool off during training. Sometimes small sweets are eaten during training to give an energy boost.

After training is completed milk or Badam may be taken and later a more solid meal. The liquid nutrition is easier to absorb after the stress of training. After the body has calmed then a solid meal is eaten. This process is repeated in the evening. The evening main meal may also be much more substantial to help facilitate repair of the bodies tissues.

FOODS OF THE WRESTLER FRUIT:

Fruits are highly beneficial to the human organism providing vitamins, minerals, fibre, antioxidants and water. They also contain phytochemicals, which can only be properly obtained through fruit and vegetables and have been shown to help protect humans from disease. Wrestlers make great use of fruits and will eat them raw, dried or blended into a vegetarian power shake . Mango, oranges,

bananas, apples, figs, currants, lemons and coconuts are staunch favourites. Many are turned into juices with orange juice being the most common. The water from a young coconut is seen as exceptionally refreshing.

VEGETABLES:

Whilst not considered as glamorous as other aspects of the wrestlers diet, vegetables are a staple that varies seasonally. When walking through the market stalls you can see the changes month in, month out as different plants come in and out of season. Vegetables contain antioxidants, fibre and micronutrients essential to optimal physical functioning. Vegetables also contain phytochemicals as well as alkalise the blood. Proteins and grains tend to load the blood with acid so eating vegetables is a great way of balancing this. Too much acid means a decrease in bone strength and muscle. Broccoli, cauliflower, spinach, green beans, and squashes are regular components of Indian cuisine. On this note most are cooked to a soft consistency as this is believed to be best for assimilation in the stomach.

STARCHY CARBOHYDRATES:

Rice, barley, wheat and millet are common grains used in Indian dishes. Wheat and millet are turned into flour to make breads whilst rice and barley are normally cooked and served as a side dish. Potatoes are a regular feature in many dishes. All are dense in carbohydrates though tend to lack the vitamins and minerals found in fruit and vegetables. Starchy carbohydrates provide fuel for the muscles in the form of glycogen. Many wrestlers enjoy chipati breads with ghi spread upon them. This is considered the food you should eat if you wish to gain strength and size.

BEANS/LEGUMES:

Legumes and beans form another component in the wrestlers diet. Many commented upon the benefits of dal a kind of cooked lentil soup. Chana is a vital part of the wrestlers diet. It looks much like a chickpea and is noted for its bodybuilding capability. If a wrestler cannot afford almonds they turn to chana. It is cheap, plentiful and nutritious. These foods are high in fibre and protein with some carbohydrates. They are excellent for balancing out meals as a side dish or if combined with a whole grain make up a nutritious complete protein and fuel source.

DAIRY:

Dairy has a special place in Indian society. The cow is considered a sacred

animal that provides life. Milk is a common art of the Indian diet and a large part of the wrestlers Khurak. Milk provides vitamins minerals, calcium, protein carbohydrates and fats. It is considered to be the best of foods and is used to make ghi. It helps to cool the body and is considered a very Sattva food. Many people in the west suffer from lactose intolerance so chugging down litres of milk may not be the best course of action to take(unless you like frequent trips to the bathroom). If you consume milk see how it affects you and then decide if it benefits you. Eggs are also eaten though many consider them Tamas. Eggs are known for their protein and muscle building ability and with the advent of western body building, tend to be eaten more and more. Eggs are a great food source containing protein and fats which helps to pack on the size.

HERBS/SPICES:

Indian food is known for it's wide ranging use of spices and herbs. Many have far ranging benefits to health which are too numerous to list here. Suffice to say they are important in the diet. The wrestlers tend not to use many spices believing that it will increase anxiety in the body. Spices they do enjoy are ginger and cinnamon. Salt is considered the worst of all foods and is avoided. It stimulates the body too much.

NUTS AND SEEDS:

Nuts and seeds are frequently eaten, especially almonds. Almonds are considered a source of *Dam Kasi*, or stamina and are a vital component of the wrestlers diet. They provide good energy without being heavy on the stomach. Their shape is similar to that of the male testicle and so they are considered a great source for producing semen in the body and thus power. Nuts and seeds tend to be high in folate, fibre, magnesium, copper, potassium and vitamin E. They are also high in fat which means they provide a lot of calories which the wrestler needs in his gruelling training.

MEAT:

Meat is not strictly forbidden in the Hindu religion. Many still partake of it including wrestlers. However many tend to minimise it's consumption especially in the summer. Meat is considered a Rajas food in that it creates much heat in the body. White meats are favoured over red and the eating of cows is considered taboo. Meat has B vitamins, iron and a high protein content.

SUMMARY ON THE WRESTLERS DIET

Again to reiterate. this simplified version of the science intended to give insight

o the whys and wherefores of the the wrestlers thinking behind diet and the effect it has on the physical mental and spiritual body. If this topic interests you I highly recommend immersing yourself in the subject matter through other books or a teacher versed in Ayurveda. One point I will make is that although it is a recorded science, much like modern science there are conflicting views and opinions. What one person considers Tamas another may consider Rajas. This is where the wonderful concept of critical thinking comes into play. Observe for yourself to see what applies, use the tools given to you to make your own path and find your own way as I believe this is truly the best way to learn and retain information.

The several Pahlavan and wrestlers I talked too had several things in common. Many ate light before training, especially in the morning, normally taking only a drink from soaked chana and raisins. They would then chew the actual solids after having consumed the drink and performing ablutions. Several would take a container with milk and drink this after training. At the more established Akhara there would be a preparation of ground almonds, milk and ghi called Badam taken after training alongside the morning meal. During training many would eat sweets used as offerings to Hanuman upon entering the Akhara. These were shared amongst all attending and was used as an energy boost. This reminds me of my time during the army when we would go “tabbing” essentially long distance speed marching with weapon and equipment. These would generally be gruelling for a paratrooper and in training we were always made to carry two chocolate bars (mars bars) in the top of our bergens (packs). Any one who has eaten one knows there is little in the way of quality calories but it was enforced strongly. Refusal to consume one or lack of was met with swift and generally not nice punishment. The idea was to quickly re-fuel your body with glucose as at the end of a tab, in wartime, you would be expected to fight immediately. Our training was so intense we would sometimes consume two at a time! The wrestlers train for many hours a day so having a hit of sugar now and again keeps them able to.

This brings me to another point. Many of the older wrestlers tend to adopt a fat looking body type. This is not considered unattractive but of use in wrestling and for strength. I think of it as somewhat akin to Sumo wrestlers but on a much smaller scale. The increase in size helps to dominate in the wrestling competitions or Dangals. Also whereas in the west many force feed themselves to get strong, the Pahlavan and wrestlers eat in accordance to their strength. In other words they eat large amounts because their strong is equivalent to the food

they eat.

Tests I have read on the wrestlers eating massive amounts of food were hard to prove correct. Many I met seemed to eat rather conservatively. Champions always consumed a hefty amount but nothing to put to shame the average all you can eat buffet go-er you will meet in the west.

During training those trained by a guru may be told when they are allowed to drink. This varies from Akhara to Akhara.

After training, milk is consumed, sometimes mixed with sugar or the milk, ghi almond concoction described above. Other drinks can come in the form of fresh coconut juice, well known for its energising benefits and electrolytes in the west. Another drink is a concoction made of vegetables, and fruit. It has an orange juice base and contains, beets, amla(Indian gooseberry) mint leaves and ginger. This last drink in particular is considered highly beneficial and restorative.

After a period of rest a main meal is then prepared and can consist of anything available in the wrestlers household or Akhara at the time. Common foods are dal, rice and chipati smeared with dal and this will constitute the basis of the meal. Eggs are sometimes consumed, many modern thinking wrestlers will eat these having read muscle mags from the west. Meat is eaten dependant upon the individuals caste, for example the warlike Rajputs will consume meat and many other castes can. This can be determined by the time of year or a certain circumstance but in general many are vegetarian. Dairy such as milk is highly valued and paneer, a soft cheese, is also consumed.

Vegetables available at the time of year are also eaten as well as plentiful fruits. Green, leafy vegetables and bananas are firm favourites as are oranges. Then the normal workday commences, during which food may be consumed either as a snack in the form of milk and fruit or as another meal at midday similar to the first. If training commences in the evening then juices and water may be drunk and prasad consumed during. The evening meal will be similar to the first, with variances in the main dish such as chana masala instead of dal and roti instead of chipati.

Plenty of liquids are consumed to flush out the body

This works well for the Wrestlers in India and is based upon historic, cultural scientific reasoning. However I doubt you are a Wrestler in India so therefore this diet may not be appropriate for you. Apply critical thinking. If you are on a

diet regime that works well for you then by all means continue. You can add many recommendations for your diet mentioned here. If however you exercise infrequently or not at all or tend to gain body fat rapidly I would not recommend this diet. Many of the youngsters in the Akhara are small in frame and thus a high calorie diet used by the wrestlers is optimal for them.

THE IMPORTANCE OF MILK, GHI AND ALMONDS:

Without a doubt the foods considered most important to the wrestlers are milk, ghi and almonds. These are considered the most Sattva of foods. They are also the best for developing strength in the body and for building a strong physique. These three foods have been the corner stone of the wrestling diet for centuries.

There are stories of great wrestlers eating huge amounts of milk, ghi and almonds to get big and powerful. However they used to perform long days of highly strenuous activity. In many cases it became their job. Food was consumed more in relation to ones strength and size than to gain strength and size. Building up ones strength alongside ones diet was considered more or less the same thing. In the West people like to force feed themselves, the opposite idea espoused in the Kushti Wrestlers lifestyle.

Milk can be drunk by itself, ghi may be used in cooking with other foods such as chipati or dal and almonds are sometimes eaten in small quantities raw. However the most famous, as well as believed to be the most beneficial way of taking these three foods is by mixing them into a special drink called *Badam*.

BADAM:

Badam is talked of highly by the wrestlers. It is a very Sattva food and is recognised to be a main contributor to the wrestlers size and strength. It is basically an ancient form of protein shake and weight gainer. It is prepared by grinding almonds into a paste using a mortar and pestle, mixing milk in during the process. Once it has been a thick paste it is combined with more milk. Ghi in liquid form is then added. Spices or sugar may be added. Each batch of Badam is made fresh for immediate consumption. The Quantities of ingredients can vary greatly. If one wishes to gain more weight then the ingredients are increased in direct proportion.

As well as Badam, another drink that can be consumed is called the Lassi.

LASSI:

In India the Lassi is a type of milkshake. It can be bought at “Lassi houses” Indeed it almost seems like India's equivalent of a coffee shop. Traditionally it is a blend of yoghurt, water and spices. Fruit, particularly mango, can be added as well as other ingredients. It can come in a sweet or salty style so can be either sweet or savoury. It is popular with indigenous peoples and tourists alike. It is another example of a cooling Sattvic drink and is often used to aid any stomach complaints(which if you go to India you will most certainly suffer at some point!). The drink is a good way of getting liquid nutrition into the body and is not as extreme as Badam calorie wise. On the festival of Holi, you can purchase Bhang Lassi. Bhang is a form of liquid cannabis and has the same effect as if ingesting the prepared plant. It is legal and can be bought from most vendors. Wrestlers tend to frown on its use though, believing that intoxication will weaken one physically and mentally. Others believe it helps to give them increased ability or “Hanuman Power”(Incidentally not the reason why I named the book!). This varies again from person to person and Akhara to Akhara though the majority believe it to be a negative thing.

MY EATING HABITS (SUCH AS THEY ARE)

I have found that consuming liquid nutrition by day and having a larger whole food meal in the evening has worked well for me. This again is a personal preference. I feel slow and sluggish after consuming mostly solid food as this takes more energy for the body to break down and digest. I tend to be in a hurry a lot as well so it is nothing to throw some ingredients in a blender and make a power smoothie or similar. I will use a lot of leafy greens such as spinach or kale, beetroot, low glycemic fruits such as frozen berries or mango (fresh if can get them!). If I can get these in raw I will as I feel this gives a great amount of nutrients and energy. Ingesting raw plants and fruits just feels better, almost as if you are absorbing their living energies. I also add a scoop or two of a good protein powder. This is an alternative to milk used by the wrestlers as I find it does not sit well with me. This sometimes comes from dairy sources or is vegetable based, normally a mix of hemp and pea protein. I will also add in some fats normally in the form of coconut oil. I have used ghi and it works but prefer coconut myself. Sometimes I will add in a spoon of flax or linseed. I grind up almonds in a food processor and add a 25 gram scoops worth to the mixture. Add in some water blend up and you are hot to trot. I sometimes add more or less of the ingredients dependant if I am looking to gain or lose weight. For example right now I am trying to lose some weight so I discount the almonds for a week or two. It is also good to cycle through what you add to the mixture so you get in different nutrients. Generally I have an A or a B shake with a mostly

you get in different nutrients. Generally I have an A or B shake with a mostly different make up. My favourite shake has no dairy so uses the pea/hemp protein combo and coconut oil. I believe that restricting dairy helps in reducing inflammation. On that note I do not cut dairy nor meat out of my diet entirely.

This I find to be a great alternative to the Ghi, milk and almond concoction consumed by the wrestlers (Badam)

The ingredients in the Power Shake are nearly all Sattvic in nature. They are light and easily digestible and help to foster a calm attitude. This falls in line with the tenets of the wrestlers diet and disposition.

Generally this is a high fat moderate to high fat and lower carb meal.

Protein:

Protein Powder either plant based. I use a mix of Hemp and Pea proteins as this creates a nice complete protein and isn't too disgusting tasting.

I also use a mixed dairy protein consisting of milk protein, whey protein and egg protein.

Quantity: 1-2 scoops of protein powder.

Fat:

Coconut oil or Ghi.

Coconut oil is a good fuel for the body due to the concentrations of Medium Chain

Triglyceride's it contains.

Ghi is a good alternative and is rich in vitamin A and K. Both are high in saturated fats which are essential for optimal testosterone function. This is particularly important for vegetarians due to the fact they have a lower saturated fat intake.

Quantity: 1-3 teaspoons of oil.

Carbohydrates:

In the form of low glycemic fruits such as mixed berries (blueberries, raspberries, strawberries, black berries, blackcurrants, redcurrants, cherries etc.), mango,

pomegranates. All of these are low glycemic but add nutrients and vitamins needed to the body. They are high in vitamin C so can be acidic to the body, this is balanced out by the acid neutralising effects of spinach and kale. I also add in a small beetroot. This is great for lowering blood pressure and promoting blood

a small beetroot. This is great for lowering blood pressure and promoting blood flow to the brain.

Quantity: 1-2 handfuls of frozen fruit. 1 small peeled beetroot.

Seeds and Nuts:

Linseed, Chia seed, flaxseed. These all contain omega-3 fatty acids which are helpful for heart health. They also boost metabolism, decrease disease and can lower inflammation.

Almonds contain calcium, magnesium and phosphorus as well as monounsaturated fats which are again good for a healthy heart.

Quantity: 1-3 dessert spoons of seeds, 1-2 25g scoop of ground almonds.

Leafy greens: Spinach and Kale.

Spinach can help neutralise acid in the body. It also contains fibre for digestion and folate to help reduce the risk of heart disease, cancer and age related memory loss.

Kale is rich in vitamins A,C,K and B6. It also contains folate as well as manganese necessary for metabolism and acts as an antioxidant.

Quantity: 1-2 handfuls!

Spices:

Cinnamon which helps with insulin sensitivity, helps fight bacterial and fungal infection and lowers blood sugar levels.

Nutmeg can boost dopamine, aid in restful sleep and is good for detoxifying the body.

Ginger is a fantastic spice (actually a root) great for boosting the immune system, is a digestive aid and has anti-inflammatory properties. I use all 3, usually in a dried form for ease of use. Combined they are fantastic for fighting off colds and the like which is useful for the soggy cold lair I call home!

Quantity: 1 half teaspoon of each.

TO CARB OR NOT TO CARB??

There is much debate on whether to have high carbohydrates or low carbohydrates as your fuel source. By this I mean that one or the other will take precedence, but not to the exclusion of the other.

I like to think the body operates primarily on either a fat fuel or carbohydrate

fuel. However it does not mean I do not eat both fats and carbohydrates in same meal but tend to limit the one I eat less off. And even to that end I do not think too much about it.

Whether I choose fats or carbohydrates as my main fuel source depends on numerous factors such as goals, time of year and weather.

For example having just come out of the other side of winter my nutrition consisted of a lot of carbohydrates, mostly in the form of porridge in the morning with some fruit and ground flaxseed made with goats milk. I would also make use of my slow cooker and make stews with potatoes, parsnips, carrots, herbs like mint and dill as well as meat. These meals were substantial, seasonal in the ingredients and warming. Heavy foods that fill you up and sustain you are the name of the game when it is cold. I don't know about you but trying to eat a salad in the winter just does not work!

Conversely I tend to switch to a higher fat diet in the summer or in hot climates. Whilst I was living in the Philippines I remember trying to eat porridge in the evening. I was literally a puddle of sweat spooning down this steaming bowl of food that just would not cool down. Switching to foods like mango and coconut with coconut oils and beans mixed with nuts seemed to work very well. As it was so hot and I was constantly out in the sun working, having a solid heavy meal seemed like the last thing I would want. I elected to have liquid nutrition in the form of power shakes.

The shakes would be made up of coconut oil, fruits, some ground almonds protein powder and occasionally some coconut water from the nearby coconut trees. They were quick to get down and refreshing.

By having liquid nutrition with interchangeable ingredients it helps to keep things simple during a busy lifestyle. It can be hard to down some frozen fruit in winter but I always make sure to follow up with a nice cup of ginger lemon tea to further aid digestion as well as stay warm. In summer this is less of an issue and is quite refreshing!

The same equivalent can be made with bananas and oatmeal as a substitute for the fats, nuts and seeds. About 1-2 protein scoops of oatmeal and 1-2 bananas should do the trick. You can add in one spoon of seeds but try to limit the fats in this shake. This is what I would eat first in a pinch during the winter.

Eating a meal 1 to 1 and a half hours before training seems optimal. It allows you to digest your food sufficiently whilst not making you overly hungry. Reino

~~you to digest your food sufficiently whilst not leaving you overly hungry. Being~~
too full or too hungry can take away from your performance. Sometimes you have no choice in the matter and must tough it out but if you have the capability to choose, find a time that feels comfortable for you. You may feel great eating 30 minutes before you train or 3 hours after experiment and see what is best for you.

Post workout I usually have 1-2 scoops of protein powder, a quickly digested form such as whey is best, with a teaspoon of greens powder plus either a teaspoon of honey or a couple of squares of dark chocolate.

The protein is facilitate muscle repair. The honey is used to shuttle the amino acids into the muscles quickly. Dark chocolate has a high antioxidant effect on the body and is useful as an alternative to carbohydrate fuel if you are looking to lean out. The greens powder I use as a nutritional insurance. It is packed with antioxidants, vitamins and has an Ph balancing effect on the body, ideal for after the stress of exercise. I also wait a while after training to consume this, though that is not a golden rule. I at least have a shower before consuming a post workout meal. As my training tends to wind down, taking around 10-15 minutes and includes a meditation at the end of that I find I can be really hungry at this point. The idea of this small meal is to get the nutrients where they need to go with out unduly stressing the digestive system. Immediately after training the blood is still pumping around the body and it takes some time for it to return to a relativity normal level.

Many consider having some kind of recovery meal to be a necessity if you wish to gain strength muscle and lose fat. However many people take this too far,to the extent that there are business that thrive upon the idea. Expensive powders and pills have been designed to cater to this market. Some of these are good. Many are less so. You can opt for the expensive option or use a simpler more home made version it's up to you. I would however make use of a recovery meal of some kind.

The benefit of a recovery meal are:

Prevention of muscle breakdown to improve recovery after exercise. Increase the ability to gain muscle through activating the chemicals required for

anabolic growth within the body (growth hormone, testosterone etc.)

Strengthening of the immune system.

Increased utilisation of stored fats leading to fat loss.

Blunt the effect of cortisol.

RECOVERY MEAL

Protein: 20-40 grams of fast acting protein powder such as whey/ EITHER

Carbohydrates: High glycemic Carbohydrates. 1 teaspoon of honey or similar(agave syrup).

OR

Fats:Dark chocolate 1-2 squares.

Greens powder 1-2 teaspoons

I then wait about an 30 minutes to an hour before having something more substantial, possibly another power shake but with the carbohydrate option of porridge oats and bandanna. I like to eat my carbohydrates after I have trained as feel this is when they are best utilised for refuelling the body.

Whereas I will have used quicker, high glycemic carbohydrates for my recovery meal after training, the later meal will be mostly composed of lower glycemic starchy carbohydrate. Common items would be:

Porridge oats.

Rice.

Potatoes

Whole wheat pastas and breads.

I usually find I am hungry, but not overly so an hour after my first recovery meal. The higher carb power shake I have an hour later serves as a good nutrient dense meal to higher carb power shake I have an hour later serves as a good nutrient dense meal to 3 hours after the Power Shake

NOTE. I like to train in the afternoon and finish around 4pm. This being the case the timing of my meals would look like this:

08:00 Higher fat powershake

12:00 Higher fat powershake

13:30 train

15:30 finish training

16:00 recovery meal

16:30 Higher carb powershake

19:00 Evening meal

EVENING MEAL

In the evening I like to relax and unwind. I especially enjoy the end of the day as this is when I prepare and cook my main meal. This will be a mostly solid meal and will defiantly be considered hearty! This is something I have used on and off for a long time and it works well for me. Staying lighter during the day helps with my focus, concentration and drive. Eating larger meals during the day weighs me down and makes me feels sluggish. There is science to back the idea. Our autonomic nervous system (ANS) regulates your bodies bio chemical functions, splitting into two parts, one for the day and one for the night. During the day you sympathetic nervous system (SNS) keeps your body and mind in an awake mode. It encourages energy expenditure and fatigue resistance keeping you alert and active. At night the parasympathetic nervous system (PSNS) comes into play putting the body into a relaxed restful state. It uses the bodies resources for digestion rather than action. The day is for being out and about the night for rejuvenation and recovery.

If you eat too large a meal during the day it may activate you PSNS, making you feel like you need to rest or even sleep. If you have ever had a celebration with lots of food and overindulged, you generally wouldn't want to start jumping around. You want to slump down in a nice chair and take a snooze.

Going back to how you train throughout the year you will note that you feel more energised in Spring and Summer than in Autumn and Winter. This is known as the circadian rhythm. This governs our sleeping patterns and the operation of our nervous system. By being in synch and in touch with our bodies, by listening to what they tell us, we can harmonise our daily life and well being. If you fight your own bodies instincts by forcing it beyond its natural ebbs and flows you set your self up for possible long term issues. People are less in touch with nature and them selves. We are organisms evolved to behave in a specific way. I was watching my girlfriends mothers lizard in his glass environment. Bruce (the lizard) would always be active during the daylight hours and when his heat lamp was on. He would hunt for prey and move around. At night he shut down, it was time for rest. Now whilst Bruce is a reptile and we are not, we have evolved from the same matter and trod the evolutionary path to get to where we are now. The basic make up of our nervous systems have deep core similarities. Having evolved from microorganisms, to multi-celled creatures,jelly fish,lizards, mice,monkeys and early humans. Each built upon the first so as we evolved our nervous systems evolved. And while we consider ourselves superior to all that cam before us we still hold those basic traits in our

make up. Only through surviving hardships has the human race achieved the state it is today. Unlike the previous list of animals we can exert free will but in doing so have lost touch with our basic survival instincts. By being in tune to our living organism we can assist it in ensuring we have a healthy strong body for life.

Originally we were a hunter gatherer species so the assumption being we would operate during the daylight hours and then assemble as a community to share out what we found to eat in a safe held location. This not only solved the issue of satisfying hunger but also the need for social interaction and a bonding of community. This can be seen in family get together or dinner parties where all participate in good food and pleasant company in a safe environment. Humans require a connection with others to achieve a sense of happiness and well-being. The safe, comfortable environment with others around to protect us also helps to diminish any stress with regards to being attacked. This would allow the biological organism to repair, refuel and reorganise for the following days activities.

Night time was for rest and then we would repeat. In the modern age we are still predominately dwellers of the day. You come back home from work in the evening and generally don't feel like as active. In that regard we haven't changed that much.

So now with that information I like to eat my main meal in the evening. It will be mostly a cooked meal though I may have a small salad on the side. If eaten prior to the main meal it will help to promote the digestive acids in the stomach. The main cooked meal can be pretty much any kind of dish you can imagine. The only caveat I add is that there is one predominant fuel source, either carbohydrate or fat. This means that there will be a much higher proportion of one than the other in the evening meal.

The body can operate best when utilising one fuel type over another. It is simply a case of being easier on the digestive system. Whilst you won't be able to eliminate one fuel or the other completely(nor should you) ensure to focus on one over the other. If you eat a good amount of both for example a jar of peanut butter and a bowl of rice, you will stress your digestion, absorption will be slower which can lead to an increase in body fat.

Other than this one rule I keep it simple. Eat good quality whole food as natural as you can get it and enjoy!

In keeping with the Ayurvedic and Wrestling ideal, I prefer to either make the meal myself or have it prepared by a relative or loved one. I feel that preparing your own food adds much too it be it psychologically or psychically. This is something you have created for yourself and I always appreciate it that much more than going out and ordering from a restaurant no matter how good the food is.

I also make use of a great many herbs and spices in my cooking. Many come from India and are used in traditional dishes. They not only taste delicious but add many nutritional benefits as well.

Some of the herbs and spices I use are:

Turmeric-Blocks oestrogen dominance, enhances insulin sensitivity. Coriander-Lowers cholesterol levels, reduces blood pressure, aids digestion. Cumin-Aids digestion, removes toxins from the body, boosts immune system. Fenugreek-Anti-oxidant/anti inflammatory, lowers blood sugar levels. Cinnamon-helps with insulin sensitivity, fights infection and lowers blood sugar

levels.

Ginger-Aids digestion, mildly thermogenic, boosts immune system. Nutmeg-Increases dopamine level,promotes restful sleep and detoxifies. Parsley-Heals nervous system and strengthens bones.

Basil-Anti-bacterial properties and good for heart health.

Mint-Aids digestion, eases nausea and headache.

Paprika-Anti ageing benefits and packed with vitamins and minerals. Black Pepper-Improves digestion and promotes intestinal health.

The list of benefits and ingredients is to name but a few. Almost all above have been linked with a reduced risk of cancer. Adding spices and herbs to your meals is an easy and relatively cheap way to boost your health. So do yourself a favour and invest in that spice rack you always knew you wanted!

In my own cooking I tend to add anywhere from a quarter to a whole teaspoon of several spices in my food. I love the different combinations of flavours you can use to make the same dishes taste different.

I tend not to eat much meat and try to minimise dairy. However I do not completely eliminate either. Rather I reduce or increase the quantity dependent on my training intensity, the season and how I feel. In winter I tend to consume more meat. In the Ayurvedic paradigm it is considered a Rajas or hot food, just

what is required in the cold parts of the years. During this period I may eat meat several times a week, the same goes for dairy. When the climate heats up I will drop eating meat to once a week. Dairy will be consumed several times in the week and many of my main meals will be plant based consisting of beans, legumes, potatoes and grains. This is not set in stone but is a general outline of my own eating habits.

There are many meals I enjoy. Anyone who knows me can tell you I can put food way with the best of them! There are few foods I won't eat or at least try once. I provide a list of certain meals I like to eat, some healthy, some less so.

RECIPIES

MORNING CHANA(SERVES 1):

- 1 small handful of chana.
- 1 table spoon of currants or raisins. 1 cup of water.

Put the chana and currants/raisins together in with the water and store over night. In the morning immediately upon rising, drink the water but leave the chana mixture. Perform your daily ritual/ablutions and consume the chana mixture afterwards before training.

BADAM(SERVES 1):

- 25grams of ground almonds.
- 500ml milk(cows milk, full fat).
- 1 tablespoon heated ghi.

This is the wrestlers drink. Mix together in a sauce pan and serve warm or cool. The quantities may be increased to double for that of almonds and ghi.
Extra ingredients that may be added include:

- Black pepper.
- Sugar.
- Dried nuts and grains, ground down and mixed in.

PRASAD:

Mix equal amounts of ghi, gur (hard molasses and besan (chickpea flour).

Cook in a pan with a little hot ghi until crispy and golden. This sweet snack is sold at Gurudwaras and presented at the Hanuman Shrine in the Akhara as an offering.

Soru or Sweet Syrups are presented at the Transumani Shrine in the Akkadia as an offering. During training it may be consumed for an energy boost.

SWEET LASSI(SERVES 1):

Half cup of plain yoghurt. 1 and a half cups of water.

2 teaspoons raw honey or tubinado sugar. Quarter teaspoon of cardamom.

Mix all ingredients in a blender until smooth. Consume chilled. For extra flavour you may add half a cup of berries or fruit. Mango goes very well with this.

SALTY LASSI(SERVES 1):

Half cup of plain yoghurt. 1 and a half cups of water. Half a teaspoon of cumin seeds. Quarter a teaspoon of salt. 3 to 4 leaves of fresh mint.

Mix in a blender until smooth and consume chilled. This Lassi is particularly good for aiding in digestion.

POWER SMOOTHIE(SERVES 1):

500ml water.

2 scoops of protein powder. Choose from whey, egg, milk, brown rice or hemp

proteins.

1 tablespoon of flaxseed, hemp seed, chia seed or linseed.

1 table spoon of virgin coconut oil.

1 handful of kale or spinach.

1 sliced beetroot.

1 handful of frozen fruit(berries or mango).

Quarter teaspoon each of cinnamon, ginger, and nutmeg.

Seeds from 1 cardamom pod.

Mix in a blender until smooth. You may need more water with this one! This is the kind of shake I consume during the day, especially in warmer climates.

CHANA MASALA (SERVES 2):

1 cup of Chana soaked over night. 1tbsp of vegetable oil.

1 Tsp of cumin seeds.

1 onion chopped.

25 grams of chopped ginger. 1 Tbsp of chopped coriander. 2-4 green chillies finely chopped. 1Tsp Tumeric.

400g of tinned tomatoes, mashed. 1 Tbsp of lemon juice.

1 Tsp of Garam Masala powder. Put the chana in a pan and add 500ml of water. Bring to boil and simmer for 10 minutes. Keep the water.

Heat oil in a pan over a medium heat and add cumin seeds until they start to brown. Blend or mash together the ginger, coriander and chillies into a paste. Add this to the pan and cook for a couple of minutes, then add in turmeric and garam masala.

Stir in the tomatoes and chana along with the water. Bring to the simmer then turn down to a low heat to cook for 20 minutes.

KHICHADI(SERVES 1):

Quarter cup of basmati rice.

Half cup of mung beans.

Two and a half cups of water.

1 tablespoon of ghi.

Half a teaspoon each of ground fenugreek, turmeric and cumin. 1 tablespoon of raw seeds(sesame, sunflower or pumpkin).

1 tablespoon of raw nuts(cashews, almonds or walnuts).

1 cup of vegetables, finely chopped (cauliflower, broccoli, green beans, cabbage,

kale, spinach and green peas). Can be a combination of any.

Teaspoon of shredded ginger.

Pinch of salt.

Rinse the rice and beans with water. In a pot combine water, beans, ginger and rice and bring to the boil. Reduce the heat and keep at a low heat for around 20 minutes. Add the ghi, ground spices and salt and stir well. Add in the vegetables, seeds and nuts, cook for a further 5 minutes then serve.

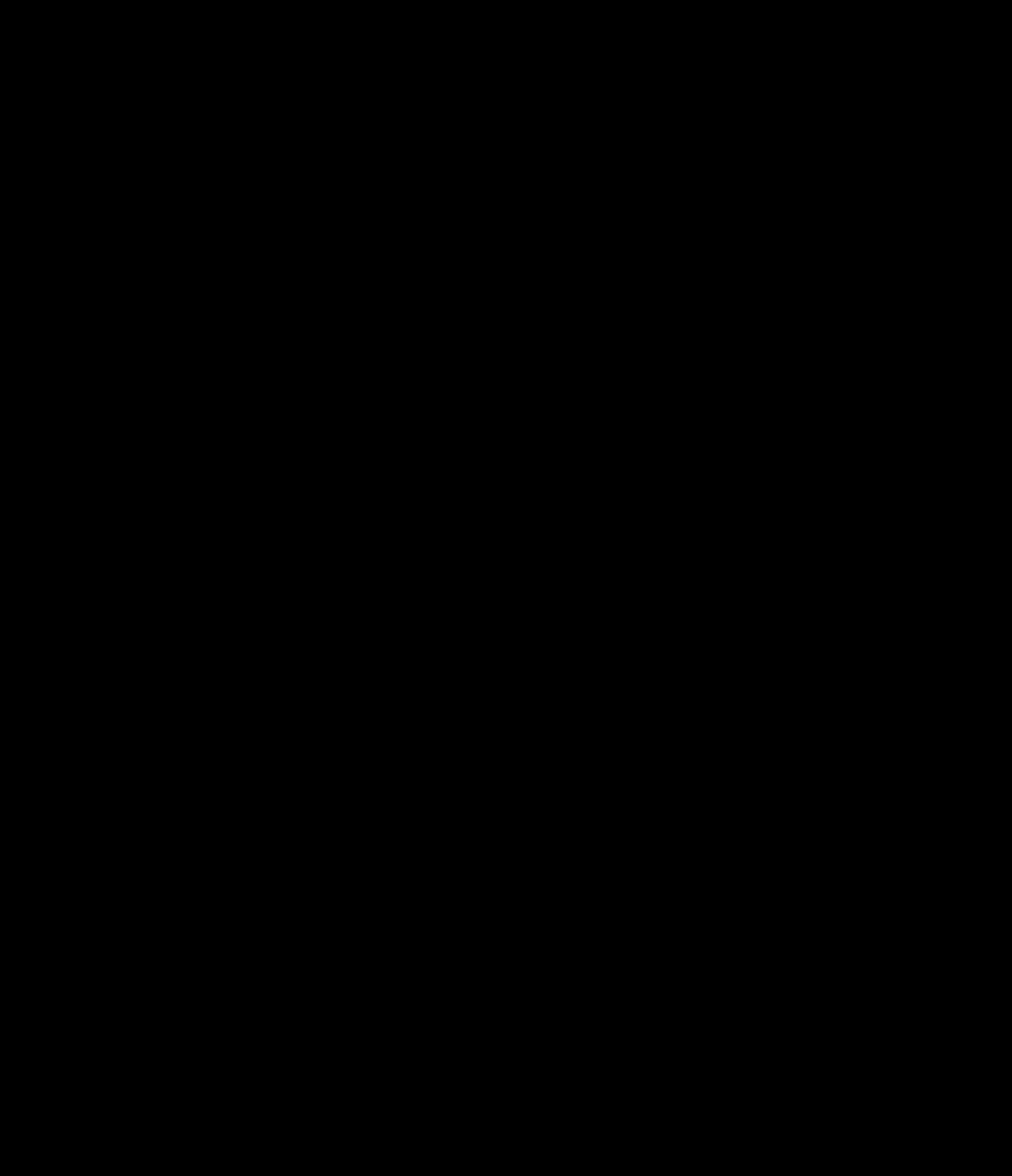
Khichadi is a very basic food which is easily digested. It is normally the first solid food an infant is put onto in India. It is very Sattvic in nature. I first had it when I fell ill with the “Dehli belly” and it helped to keep my strength up during this time. I now enjoy it back home as I find it really is easy on the digestive processes.



Pahlavan Luchman stands with the tools of his trade.

APPENDIX

EQUIPMENT



SELECTION OF EQUIPMENT

Trainers now have great choices when it comes to selecting equipment, especially in regards to the Gada. Many companies now produce a mace you can purchase and use straight out of the box. This is how I began my journey. Back then there was less information and knowledge and with personal experience and

having swung everything from high production steel maces, traditional stone Gada from the Akhara in India and concrete posts fixed into the ground. Ultimately it's not the equipment but the movement that gives the benefit. What you train with will have a lot to do with your finances and ingenuity.

STEEL/MANUFACTURED MACES

This is where most people will have initial contact with Mace training. They are rugged and will last a lifetime. If you have interest in training with a mace and you have money to spend then this is definitely a good place to start. I think of the steel maces as "training wheels" until you advance to the bamboo and stone maces. Starting with one of the manufactured versions will allow you to train with a piece of equipment not likely to disintegrate during training. Whilst you are learning the techniques the last thing you need is an unstable piece of equipment giving you more to concentrate on than just your form. Learning with the mace is a steep learning curve and using a properly constructed mace can help you gain your confidence, skill and get in quality training. There are also many different types of mace out there, from hollow, to solid to spin lock style where you can add weight plates. This offers a huge variety that can be used to augment your own training collection. However many are expensive for what they are and aren't particularly cost effective. For example as of this writing a steel mace weighing 10kg can come in as much as £100. For the same cost I could make 5 high quality bamboo and concrete maces. Many of these maces have a hollow head so you can increase the weight with shot, sand or water. This is all well and good once you have experience with the mace or wish to work up to it. For average person a solid construction will suit them better. One final point of note I will make is that many Manufactured maces tend to have an overly long handle. Many trainees thus use their maces by holding right at the bottom of the handle which lead to less than optimal technique and to my mind creates a large sweeping arc which relies more on balance than rhythm and power. This can be remedied by choking up on the handle. Handles also have a lot more weight in them than in bamboo counterparts. This may seem a small part but consider that the 10kg mace has 5 kg of weight in the end and 5kg of weight in the handle, even if it is hollow. Compare this to a bamboo handle weighing less than half a kilo. More weight in the head of the mace means more benefits if you are looking for serious results in your training. More weight in the handle effectively cheats the movement and creates a different technique. Those who transition to bamboo always note how difficult it is compared to the steel mace whereas the reverse is true for those use a bamboo and stone Gada.

Solid steel mace:

Pros

Solid construction means will last a lifetime. Great for beginning trainees learning technique. Can be used straight out of the box.

Cons

Cost may outweigh practicality.

More weight in the handle means less actual training effect. Long handles lead to many trainees adopting terrible form in the beginning.

Hollow steel mace:

Pros

Allows changes in weight meaning one piece of equipment can do the job of many. Creates more challenge than the solid steel mace.

All of the pros of the solid steel mace.

Cons

Can cost even more than a solid steel mace.

The unstable training effect is more of a trick than an effective strength training modality.

The unstable training effect can be potentially dangerous especially if new to mace training.

The unstable training effect may lead to gradual degradation of the tissues due to

trying to essentially absorb shock twice(twice the wear and tear).

Changing weights can be time consuming during training sessions and/or messy. All of the cons of the solid steel mace.

Plate loaded mace:

Pros

If you have some weight plates then you can have a more cost effective mace.
Easy to change weights quickly
Solid construction that lasts a lifetime.

Cons

Can still be relatively expensive.

Even when securely tightened there is always a chance weights may come off. Handles tend to be solid to support the weight meaning a lot of weight will be in the

handle.

Traditional stone/ cement bamboo Gada:

The equipment used in the Indian Akhara dating back at least 1000 years. This is a case if it ain't broke don't fix it. Whilst metal maces are used in India these are definitely the exception to the rule and on my travels I have only come across 2. Constructed from stone or cement with a bamboo handle they are a totally different animal to the steel maces. As the handles are made of bamboo the weight is all concentrated in the head .This mean when swinging the Gada you must be more powerful in your execution of the movement. Whereas the steel maces tend to carry themselves around, the stone Gada demands you be in control. Stone, cement and bamboo are cheap and easy to source out so for the cost of a manufacture mace you can make several traditional Gada.

The disadvantage of this is the time and effort put in sourcing materials and constructing the equipment yourself. I don not see this as much of a disadvantage. If you don't have time or inclination to make your own equipment then that is a sign of laziness and you will not progress well with this training. Training Gada takes a lot of time, more time than the average attention span of the modern day trainee. In a place where people expect instant results, constructing your own Gada should be considered part of the process. Like Luke Skywalker after he lost his first lightsabre he constructed his own instead of going to Lightsabres 'r' us. The sense of achievement when you create a good Gada is fantastic. You actually learn something and create something from your mind. That said a LOT can go wrong if your construction is not solid. A Gada head flying off is a sure recipe to break something be it your self, others or your environment. Injury leading to loss of training time is not what we are looking for. If you rush the process like anything in life, you will come a cropper. By being patient and dedicated in your actions you will reap the benefits. If you rush you set yourself up for failure. Sometimes you will have failed construction projects and in the beginning that can cost you time and money. That couple with the increased difficulty in mastery using the Gada should be relegated to only the most serious trainees.

Traditional Gada:

Pros

Can be cheap to make

Can create the Gada YOU want. Superior training effect

Cons

Can be dangerous if not constricted correctly. Can take time to create a good end result.

Making your own Gada can be as easy or difficult as you want it to be.

Essentially the more time and effort you spend getting the correct materials and on the creation process, the better the end result will be. You can find numerous videos online as to how to make your own. The simplest method requires a strong bamboo pole that goes to the middle of your chest area, some nails, ready mix cement and a container. Initially a protein tub is a great place to start. After a couple of goes you may feel more ambitious and begin to build higher quality Gada.

The actual creation process consists of hammering nails into the bamboo, ensuring it does not split. 3 is about right, you can do more or less. They will be 1 inch apart from each other at one end of your bamboo pole on all sides giving the impression of some kind of beating tool. Next either put cement into your protein pot and add water or pre make it and then pour it in. Either way works, just ensure that the water goes all the way through the mix so there are no dry clumps. Fill up the pot as much as you need, generally all the way to the top.

Now place the bamboo in, nails first into the pot. Gently tap it down to the very bottom and twist it a couple of times. Line up the bamboo so it is perfectly straight. You may have to tape the area that is the top of the lid or the lean the pole against something so that it does not fall whilst the cement dries. Leave the Gada to do its thing and when it is fully dried, try it out!



Other training implements

There are other training items you can use that can give you a similar training effect to maces. You may have some of these already. In no particular order these can include:

- Indian clubs

- Steel clubs

- Sledgehammers

- Bulgarian bags

All of these can be used in a similar manner to get a similar effect to Jori and mace training. In many respects they can be better in that if you have some already you can test out the movements without investing time and money. Sledgehammers tend to be the best fit for mace swinging though the shape of the head can sometimes be an issue clipping you in the back.

JORI

Getting hold of Jori will be the most difficult task of all with regards to completing your Indian physical culture collection. I am fortunate to have been able to buy a set of 3 based on the nail Jori design from a professional wood turner with experience in making wooden clubs. Unfortunately he now does not make any and finding a wood turner who will make Jori sized implements is extremely difficult, mainly because the use of a special industrial sized lathe is required. Smaller clubs are easier to manufacture, hence their relative ease to

find and purchase. If you can find a person willing to create the Jori be prepared to pay a hefty price, the wood and time spent making them is not cheap. Only serious enthusiasts will or indeed should consider buying Jori.

The number one alternative to Jori is to buy a pair of larger Meels. Meels are the Persian equivalent of Jori. They come in pairs and are swung in a similar fashion to the nail Jori in that they do not touch the body. As such the maximum weight of them is not so much of an issue. Their tear-drop shape is very distinctive and feels particularly ergonomic. These are much easier to locate though can still be pricey. For a long time I preferred the Iranian Meels due to their versatility so they are definitely an acceptable substitution for Jori. Another alternative is to use 2 Gada of about the same weight. This works much like performing the 1 arm Gada swing, just alternating sides and as such replicates Jori swinging very closely. This can be the cheapest method if you make your own Gada. Whilst it is very similar to Jori swinging it is not exactly the same in feel but more or less the same in benefit. I also believe if you become proficient at swinging the Gada at once you will be a much better Jori swinger! When you select the handles ensure they are not too thick otherwise you may have trouble holding them. Ensure the handle is not too long as if it is you will hit yourself in the face with any length left past the hand, or too short so you have essentially dumpy Meels. A pair of sledgehammers could also be used in this manner.

Smaller clubs can also be used in both wooden and metal format. There are some very large British style Indian clubs that can be a substitute for Jori but personally if you went down this route you would be better off purchasing Meels especially as wooden clubs can cost a fair bit.

Metal clubs are good because they are heavy, but bad in that they tend to be too dense and so lack the length required. Again they can be thought of like eels as their length means they should not come into contact with the body.

If you want to and have the time patience and are a bit of a sadist then you can make your own Jori using traffic cones, steel poles and cement. This is what you may have to do. If you choose this path choose the longest traffic cones you can find. Ensure that the pole goes through the entire length of the traffic cone and leave 4-5 inches poking out of the top as a handle.



Concrete Gada and traffic cone Jori. Made in Afghanistan with “scavenged”

materials, so what's your excuse?

SUMTOLA

The Sumtola can be easily constructed if you have some tools and a log just under a metre in length.

Mark where you want the handles to be in pencil. Ensure the handles will be 1 to 1 and a half inches in diameter and that there is a gap of at least 1 inch through which to pass the fingers. Drill along the lines you have drawn. Ensure the drill holes are right next to each other. Continue this process along the pencil lines. You will next have to remove this piece from the log. You may need a wedge of some kind to get in to the gap made by the drill and prise it out. Be careful that you do not snap the crosspiece that will make the handle. You should perform this 4 times in total, twice per side of the handle. What you will be left with is the log with four wedges taken out of it. Where the gap of the handle will be should still be solid. Next pick the width of the hand grip you wish to use, mark it off and drill beneath this line all the way through to the other side. Do this along the sides of the log connecting to this piece. Once drilled remove it as above. Now you should have a rough handle. Repeat on the opposite side. Once done, shape the handles by cutting, chiselling and sanding.

Once you have the finished product, paint it up and off you go!



Home made Sumtola.
NAL AND GAR NAL

There are many ways to make a Nal or Gar Nal, you are only limited by your imagination! To make a Nal you will need to get hold of 2 cylinder shapes made of metal or hard plastic, one that fits within the other and a piece of metal pole to work as a handle. The smaller cylinder should be a maximum size of 6 inches diameter. The second cylinder must be a minimum of 8 inches and as big as 20. Cut holes the size of the length of pole in the side of the smaller cylinder where the handle will slot in. Cut the length of pole so it can be placed through the hole in the smaller cylinder but also fit within the outer cylinder. Position the small cylinder so it is inside the larger one and in the centre. Next you will need material which you can cut to shape of the outside cylinder. Next once this is done, tape it down securely to the top of the cylinder. This will make the bottom of your mould. It has to be taped so it does not fall off if it becomes wet.

Next turn it upside down . In the gap between the big and small cylinder, start to pour in pre made cement up to the lip of the cylinder. The centre should be

cement free leaving the handle exposed. Leave the cement to dry. Once dry, remove the cylinders and test out your new Nal!

The Gar Nal is made in the same way, just without the need of a handle. Make sure that your head is the same diameter or larger than the inner cylinder! Also it may be an idea to sand down the inside cylinder once it has dried otherwise it may cut and dig into the neck.

Another way to make a Gar Nal so it is more ergonomic for the neck is to buy a kids rubber ring. Ensure it will pass over your head and is not too large.. Cut a hole in it and fill it with cement. You may find it useful to dig a trough in the ground to place the ring so it keeps the majority of its shape whilst it sets.. once dry, cut off or peel the outer rubber and voilà! One brand new Gar Nal!

If you want to buy a version of the Nal then I recommend the Centre of Mass Dumbbell made by Sorinex. They begin at 20lbs and go up to 70lbs which is a good beginner weight for the Nal serpentine press. They can also be used in pairs for the dumbbell exercises listed in the exercises section of this book. I am not paid to endorse or received anything from Sorinex but have bought and used their equipment before and can only judge off the quality of what I have. Which is great in quality! If you are states side, definitely consider picking 1 or 2 up.



So this is the end of the book, I really hope it has been of use to you! If you have taken anything you didn't know or wish to apply then I have achieved my goal.

I welcome any comments, questions or criticism in the hopes that I can learn lessons to take away for my next venture.

The exercises in this book are fantastic if applied in the right manner. Start slow and explore all the movements to find which best suits you and your goals. As you do so you will find yourself thinking beyond just training the body but also the mind and spirit as well. If all you want is bulging biceps I am sure you will be well accommodated. However if you wish to explore your own inner universe then this is a great place to start. In the Ayurvedic paradigm, the body mind and soul are a unified whole, not separate qualities. What affects the body equally affects the spirit or mind and the reverse is true. Part of what makes these exercises so enduring is this point.

Exercise for many is a near quasi religious experience, a time to forget the worries of day to day life and to feel great about oneself. To empty the mind and focus on one goal. The Kushti wrestlers realised that this was not just a recreation but a lifestyle. Dedicating themselves to Hanuman, their Guru, comrades and their training went beyond themselves to make them much more than what they were.

Exercise is the foundation for personal development. When you are physically fit and feel good you can apply yourself to your daily life with more energy and zest. Building a solid foundation will help carry you through your life. As the wrestlers would often say to me “health is wealth”, now is the time to start cultivating your own, for no one else will do it for you. Take charge of your health and your happiness and steer your own course.

Find your own way.

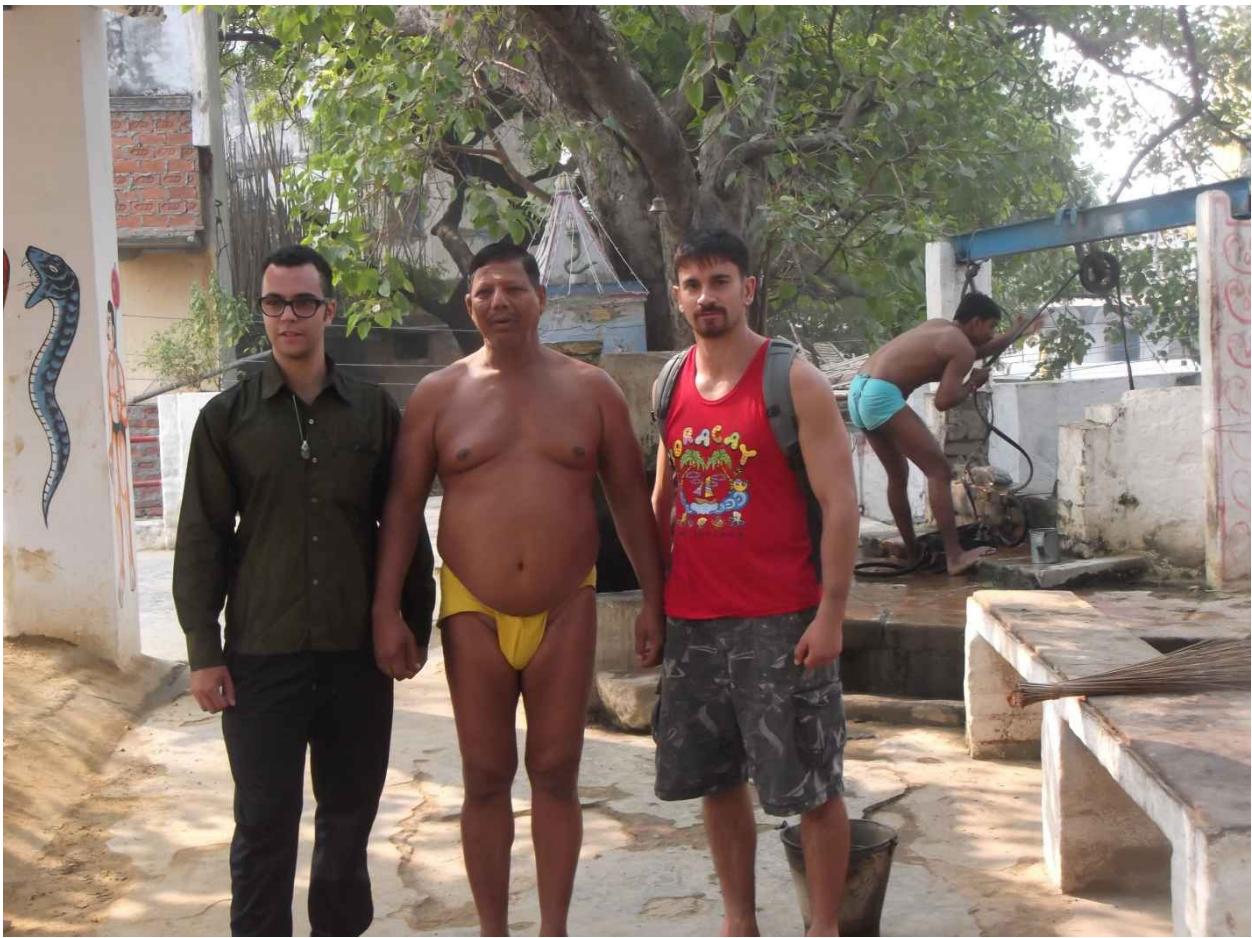
May the Power be with you! Marcus

















Lord Hanuman

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GLOSSARY

- AGNI: Fire. Also denotes the God of fire.
- AKHARA: Wrestling Gymnasium
- ASANA: Yoga Posture
- AYURVEDA: Science of Vedic medicine.
- BADAM: The wrestlers drink made of almonds, ghi and milk.
- BETHAK: Hindu squat.
- BHAKTI: Devotion.
- BHANG: Hashish.
- BRAMACHARYA: First stage of the Hindu life cycle. Celibacy.
- BRAMACHARI: A practitioner of celibacy.
- CHANA: Chickpeas.
- CHI: Or Qi. Chinese concept of energy.
- DAL: Cooked lentils.
- DAM KASI: Stamina.
- DAND: Hindu push up.
- DANGAL: Wrestling competition.
- DOSHA: 3 energies within the body representing different physical and mental characteristics.
- GADA: Mace used for warfare and training.
- GAMA: India's most famous wrestler.
- GAR NAL: Neck weight.

GHI: Clarified butter.

GUNA: Attribute.

GURU: Teacher.

HANUMAN: Monkey faced god of strength and devotion.

HATH: Count of a swing of left and right equalling 1 repetition.

JANGHIA: Shorts used fr training.

JOR: Wrestling performed for skill training.

JORI: Pair of wooden clubs used for training.

KAPHA: One of the 3 doshas representing strength and slowness. Overweight.

KARMA: Fate.

KAUPINAM: Wrestlers g-string.

KHURAK: Diet.

KUMBHAK: Breath control technique.

KUNDALINI: Energy in the body laying dormant until awakened.

KUSHTI: Indian wrestling style.

LANGOT: Wrestlers G-string.

LASSI: Milkshake made of yoghurt, milk and sugar.

LINGAM: Phallic Shiva Lingam.

LINGASANA: Genital weight lifting hot yoga.

LUNGI: Skirt like clothing worn during lifting of weights.

MALLAYUDDHA: Ancient form of Hindu unarmed combat.

MANTRA: Sacred slogan.

NAL: Stone hand weight.

NIM: Margosa tree.

OJAS: Vitality or virility.

PAHLAVAN: Wrestler or Strongman.

PHARSA: Heavy spade used for digging the pit.

PITTA: One of the 3 doshas representing passion and expressionism.

PRANA: Vital energy/breath.

PRANAYAMA: Breath control techniques.

PRASAD: Sweets often used as a offering.

RAJA: King.

RAJAS: One of the 3 Doshas representing activity and heat.

SADHU: A renunciant living outside of society.

SATTVA: One of the Gunas representing cooling and calm.

SHAKTI: Divine energy.

SHIRSASANA: Head stand.

SURYA NAMASKARA: Sun salutation.

SWASTHA: Established in oneself.



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TAMAS: One of the 3 Gunas related to lethargy and darkness
TAMAS: One of the 3 Gunas representing darkness and lethargy.

TAPAS: Austerity.

VATA: One of the 3 Doshas representing quickness and nervousness.

VAYU: Wind.

VIBHUTI: Power/ashes.

VYAYAM: Exercise.

YONI: Vagina.

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NOTES