

CasePerformance

January Newsletter

Part I



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Here is the news that we'll cover in Part I of this month's newsletter....

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Hello,

I hope that the month of January has treated everyone well and that you find yourself a step or two closer towards achieving one of your short/long term goals. Things are active here for the CasePerformance team members.

Our [strength](#), [running](#) and [nutrition](#) consultations are going well. If you're interested in finding out about our group discounts please send us an [email](#).

I. A Look at This Month's Newsletter

The first month of 2014 is now in the books. Hopefully that doesn't *also* mean that your New Year resolutions fizzled out two weeks ago like most ... Actually I know that isn't the case as those in those in the CP Community rise *FAR* above the "typical" member of society (insert imaginary Lion's roar right now)!!!

The 2014 newsletter picks up where last year's left off – with a bang! We kick things off with our CP Community Member of the Month interview with a name that should be quite familiar to everyone who follows this newsletter, Alex Leaf, who shares with us his training background and the strategies he uses to keep his body running smoothly.

Following our interview, we get to our CP Community Member Discussion where Dino Tassigiannis discusses a very time appropriate topic in his piece, *Experiences of a Yo-Yo Dieter*. In it, Dino shares his experiences as a yo-yo dieter and how looking at others, rather than at yourself, can be the cause of many physique derailments.

Needless to say, I think you'll enjoy Part I of our newsletter!

Respectfully,

Sean Casey

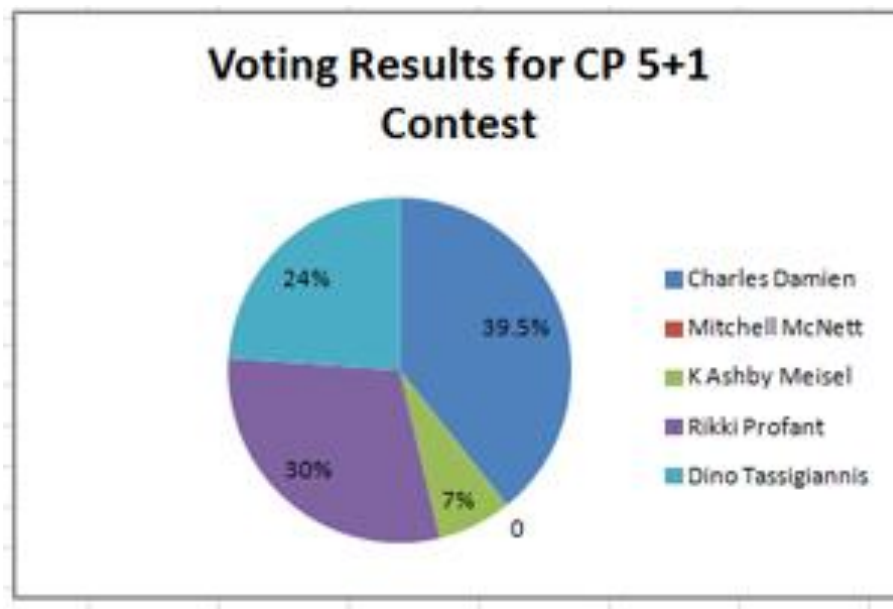
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II. CP Community Member Appreciation "Top 5+1" Winner – Charles Damien!

Thanks to everyone who participated in our sponsored [5+1 CP Appreciation Contest](#). The entries were fun to review as it gave me a better understanding as to what types and “why” certain articles were popular with community members. All finalists received the opportunity for nutrition consults with me. However, only one could win the \$50 Amazon gift card. As shown in the results below, with 39.5% of the vote, Charles Damien was the winner!



Charles Damien's Top 5+1 Entry

Top 5 Articles

1. [Interview with the Expert – Adel Moussa Part II](#)

Here is one of my Top 5 articles on CasePerformance. I love SuppVersity and CasePerformance, Adel and Sean do very good work. In this article, they talk about supplements for strength athletes.... ones that are overrated or needless, others overlooked (for example : baking soda, Adel loves it) and indispensable. A must read article for those looking to know the myths and the truths on this topic!

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2. [Don't Demonize but Analyze to Find the Perfect Diet for YOU!](#)

Another good article here. Sean focuses on popular diets, using the Paleo diet as an example. The main message here is that every person is different, so one's diet should be ADAPTED to him/her. Eat healthy foods, and try what's work best for you!

3. [Research 101](#)

This article is very interesting as it gives you the basics of research. Excellent for beginners who have difficulties understanding/interpreting scientific studies/research. It describes the different types of studies you can encounter – epidemiology vs experimental. Plus it talks about other criteria (Validity : extrinsic vs intrinsic, sample size...).

4. [Pubmed For Dummies](#)

Here is another must read. Since I'm French, I had difficulties (and I still have...) in using PubMed. This article really helped me in using Pubmed for research purposes. A step-by-step guide for dummies like me, may be useful for you too!

5. [Top 5+1 CP Community Member Appreciation Contest](#)

Although it's not a *real* article, I chose this one and would like to thank Sean for his work and here for this contest with a very nice gift for the winner. Good luck to everyone, may the best win (of course it's me ;-)

Plus 1 Newsletter

[2013 March Newsletter Part I](#)

This is my favorite newsletter; I particularly enjoyed Alex Leaf's article *Is sitting killing you?* which emphasizes the importance, the NECESSITY of staying active for health. MOVEMENT IS LIFE!!

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III. Community Member of the Month...



This month's CP Community Member of the Month is Alex Leaf who comes to us from Bellevue, Washington, USA. As alluded to in our intro, Alex's has contributed multiple [articles](#) to our newsletter during the past year. Thus it's only fitting that we kick 2014 off by tipping the CP hat to our most prolific newsletter writer of 2013! Without further delay, let's get straight to it....

First off, I want to thank you for taking the time out of your training, work and social commitment schedule to join us today. We are honored with your presence.

The honor is mine Sean, thank you.

Tell us a little about your background... How did you get involved with exercise, nutrition and the lifestyle you live today?

Actually, my interest in exercise physiology and nutrition is fairly recent. Growing up I had more energy than I (or my parents) could handle, and my dad had me join my city's wrestling team in elementary school. I really enjoyed getting to go head-on with others in a match that tested every aspect of physical and mental toughness, and I stuck with wrestling through my school system up until college.

Despite this part of my life, time not spent training was focused on sitting in front of the TV playing Xbox and eating Chinese orange chicken rice bowls. I never really got fat or had any health issues despite my junk food diet because of wrestling, however as I grew older and started to appreciate sex appeal more, I became increasingly dissatisfied with my body image.

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It was around my junior year in high school that I started lifting weights in the off-season and shifting my interest from videogames to fitness. I definitely got in better shape, but my diet was still crap. When I graduated from high school and started at Washington State University, my interest in nutrition picked up. No longer living at home, I had control over what I was buying and eating, and I decided to make a change. Of course this all stemmed from my discovery of Mark's Daily Apple and the paleo/primal diet. Thus, I started out a dogmatic follower of this new trend and these beliefs only became reinforced as my body responded favorably to the diet changes. I realize now that it was not the primal diet, but simply cutting out the excessive grains and junk food that did the magic.

During that first year, I also joined WSU's Student Wellbeing Advisory Council, where I worked with faculty and other students to oversee the health and wellness initiative across campus and promote responsibility, healthy living, and interdependence. I'm proud to say that I was on the board throughout my entire undergraduate career at WSU and after I received my BA in Accounting I was offered a position to stay on the Wellbeing Council as a special alumni seat. I didn't start looking into the nutrition research until fall of 2012 after discovering SuppVersity and talking with Adel. From that point forward I slowly fell out of the Primal ways and looked at nutrition with a more skeptical and educated mind.

Today my time is spent being an ACE Certified Personal Trainer and passionate researcher of anything that interests me. I plan to attend Bastyr University this fall to pursue a master in nutrition and become a registered dietician.

When first starting off, what were the biggest mistakes you found yourself making? In other words, what would you advise people NOT to do when first starting a training program?

With regard to training, my biggest mistake was ignorance, and in reality this is the biggest mistake of most people I see in the gym today, despite “years” of weight-lifting experience. I would see articles on T-Nation or Men's Fitness and try their workout routines or suggestions, or keep jumping from program to program. Now I fully admit that every type of training has its place, but for most people (myself included), these programs are too voluminous or not relevant to the goals of the person. Even people who have 2-3 years of proper weight-lifting experience probably don't need to blast each muscle from every possible angle for an excessive amount of sets once per week. Sure many pro-athletes have these crazy programs that clearly work, but I guarantee that when they were first starting out, their training looked nothing like it does now.

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Are there any particular short and/or long term goals that your training is currently directed at?

Currently, my training is directed at increasing strength while maintaining my current weight. I spent six months after graduating May of last year “bulking” and went from 150 to 170 pounds. After that, I spent my winter shedding some of the added body-fat, and am now looking to maintain my current weight of 160 lbs while improving muscle balance and strength. My routine is very Ian King inspired and I’m currently working through a control phase. It currently involves increasing strength at various joint angles that normally wouldn’t be targeted in standard dynamic lifts. I’m accomplishing this via static holds at various sticking points in some main lifts, as well as eccentrically emphasized auxiliary movements. I will be starting up with more dynamic focused work in the coming weeks however.

I love exercise and being active in general, so I suppose a long-term goal for me would be to continue making my health and fitness a priority, especially when I start up my master’s program since it will be very time-intensive. I also enjoy trying various types of training to see how my body responds, so another goal would be to continue to experiment with different training philosophies to broaden my perspective and experience in the fitness field.

What does your typical training week look like?

I prefer to only train 4-5 times per week no matter what my goals are. I make a commitment to be active in my free time, but dedicated gym time is usually around an hour per session. As I mentioned earlier, many people just do way too much. I feel that an hour of lifting is the maximum that is really needed to get the most from a workout, and 4-5 weekly workouts should be plenty depending on goals. I prefer to train fasted in the mornings, and use my nights and weekends to relax. I also feel that by training in the mornings, I start fresh and don’t have to worry about a long day making my workout suffer.

Now, do you partake in any non-nutritive means to assist the recovery process?

Of course! I usually do Hatha yoga 3-5 times per week, which I feel really helps me center and relax. It has also been amazing for my flexibility, balance coordination, and breath control. Honestly, I would recommend that everyone partake in yoga, not as a replacement to a dedicated resistance training program, but definitely as a recovery adjunct. In addition, I start every morning on my non-training days going for a long-walk

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or if the weather is bad, cycling on my ergometer while watching Netflix. Neither of these is strenuous, and mainly functions to get some blood-flowing and assist in the recovery process. Finally, I am very active through the day. I use a standing workstation, walk or ride my bicycle for transport (when feasible), and do random bodyweight exercises throughout the day. Again, none of these impacts my training and I never try to tire myself out. It is just a way to burn some excess energy and help some blood flow to the muscles. If you are interested in the science of recovery, you may find my article on [Active vs. Passive Recovery](#) insightful, and if you want a more down-to-Earth read, I wrote about the [importance of recovery](#) here at CP last October.

If you had to pick a single lift that would be your "favorite" for pure enjoyment purposes, (not to be confused with what you think is "best" lift for performance), what lift would it be?

My favorite exercise is probably the standing barbell military press. Having to press the weight above head really hammers the entire upper-body and core musculature, and I get such a sense of accomplishment when I perform it. It is definitely a staple lift that I try to work into any program for myself, and I always find I look forward to the days in which I get to do that exercise.

A topic I always get questions about is nutrition and supplements. Have you found any particular nutrition strategies to be particularly effective for you?

Eating is always good, and I love food. I have found that sticking to a whole-foods based diet makes a world of difference. My pre-workout is coffee; my post-workout is potatoes, bananas, and whey protein. I only eat three times daily; post-workout, lunch, and dinner, and they are always large and satisfying meals. I don't mix fats and carbs, and I focus my carbohydrate intake around my training in the morning, and at night on recovery days. I have found these things to work really well with me. I also get a minimum 12-hour fast between my dinner and post-workout meal the next day.

The above is my staple nutrition strategies, but modifications depending on the current training routine and goals are always a possibility. For instance, if I decide to diet I may expand my fast to 16-hours and only eat twice so that my meals are still large and satisfying despite a reduced overall food intake. I definitely never snack though.

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Likewise any supplements that you particularly like?

My strawberry flavored whey protein is lovely. Other than that, I take about 1g of EPA/DHA, some garlic, creatine, and melatonin daily. The first two are more for a safety buffer and I can't say I have noticed anything from them since my diet is pretty good. The melatonin makes a world of difference in the sleep though, and the creatine makes a noticeable impact on lifting performance as well.

It's well known that you're a fan of research (Editor's Note – I refer to Alex's writings both [here](#) and at [SuppVersity](#)). Are there any recent studies or research topics that you find yourself particularly digging at now that you can share some brief insight on?

Sure. In keeping with the spirit of training, I recently came across an extremely insightful meta-analysis that found that when training at 65-90% 1RM, 30-60 repetitions per muscle group per session yielded the greatest hypertrophic response. Amusingly, this matches up quite well with many of the popular hypertrophy programs out there such as the classic 3x10 or Bill Starr's 5x5. The review also found that training each muscle group twice weekly was ideal. I have used this in programming, aiming for 60-120 repetitions per week for each muscle group and found it to be highly effective. It's a fascinating read, and anyone can access it [here](#).

Wernbom, M, J Augustsson, and R Thomeé. "The influence of frequency, intensity, volume and mode of strength training on whole muscle cross-sectional area in humans." *Sports Medicine* 37, no. 3 (2007): 225-264.

Any other final thoughts/advice you're willing to share with us at CasePerformance?

Train hard, eat hard, and recover hard. Never overlook the smallest things, as they may make the biggest difference. N=1, all that good stuff. Thanks again for the interview Sean, don't stop being awesome. Oh, and a special thank you to Charles Damien for liking my article on death by sitting!

Great advice there! Once again I want to thank you for joining us here today. Keep up the great work!

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IV. Community Member Performance Discussion

This month’s community member discussion comes to us from Dino Tassigiannis who comes to us from Liverpool, England. Dino’s name may sound familiar to some of you as he was previously the [CP Community Member of the Month](#) back in January 2013. Before reading his contribution to this month’s newsletter, I **strongly encourage** you to read his [interview](#) as it provides a backdrop to much of what Dino discusses in his piece, *Experiences of a Yo-Yo Dieter*, a very appropriate topic for this time of the year as everyone is working towards their fitness New Year resolutions. Thus, without further ado, I share with you...

Experiences of a Yo-Yo Dieter

By: Dino Tassigiannis



Do you find yourself on the umpteenth yo-yo diet protocol? Image Source.¹

Hello, my name is Dino and I am a yo-yo dieter.

When I was first asked if I wanted to write this month’s CP community discussion article, my mind started racing, trying to get to the finish line of the perfect idea. However, in striving towards this ideal, I kept tripping over my legs and falling over. After all, trying to keep up with the standard already set is no easy task. So, I thought “*why not just share*

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my experiences?” After all, there are not many people after there that have survived death twice, have a broken back and an artificial hip all before the age of 30. That would be my uniqueness. I can only be as good as I can be, not others.

I guess that’s where the fault of yo-yo dieting starts, trying to keep up with others. I work in the supplement industry and in this field, you come across many individuals who seemingly lack self-doubt and constantly beam with confidence. Now, that is not a bad thing. In fact it is something I aspire to be like. Yet, for me, trying to live up to this standard is quite difficult when comparing myself side by side with these individuals. Every so often, after sticking to my diet and training hard to climb my personal mountain [to reach my goal], I make the mistake of looking down and fear strikes me.

This fear is basically self-doubt. Why aren’t I losing as much weight as him? Why aren’t I gaining strength as fast as him? Then I start disliking myself for questioning my ability and end up in a rut. That is when I break the dietary plan. It’s analogous to when you’re driving along, hit some ice and begin to skid. Rather than turn into the skid, correcting your course, you turn away from it and spin out of control. In other words, even though we know what to do, we still mess up because of doubt.

I have only recently come to this conclusion about myself. I became self-aware of what I was doing. I wouldn’t see it that way for many years. Instead I’d say “*Ah it’s my cheat day.*” Then I’d have difficulty going back on the diet the next day so it would turn into “*Ah it’s the weekend, no one starts diets until Monday.*” Excuse after excuse and for what? Wanting to order a take-away because I was too lazy to cook something nice?

Yes, it is laziness. Ordering food is not a convenience. How is it convenient to order something, and then have to wait 60 minutes for it to be delivered? In that time I could grill some chicken, boil some vegetables or rice and eat it. There is no excuse anymore to not eat healthy.

For those that say it costs more to eat healthy, I’m sure you have ordered a pizza in the past for £12 and that is if it’s a local. If you order from a big chain, you’re looking at £20 odd. For that price, I can buy 2.5kg of chicken that is steam cooked. That lasts me around a week and all it needs is defrosting. Rice and pasta? You can buy a week’s worth for £2. Vegetables would cost next to nothing if you buy from local farmer markets. Thus, this excuse of “too expensive” is also false.

Now the motivation to stick to the diet, in case getting the body you always wanted isn’t motivation enough, is simply to maximize the experience of life. I can walk (yes I can feel your sarcastic praise, but keep in mind I was once in a wheelchair) but I know if I don’t lose weight, walking will become extremely hard as I age. With a daughter on the way, I don’t want to imagine myself teaching her to ride a bike while I’m sitting in a wheelchair holding it. I want to be the best dad I can be.

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This realization was what originally drove me to lose a lot of weight back when my son was 1 year old. It occurred one day when I had him on my knee and I was taking him to see his nan in my electric wheelchair. We passed a couple on the way and the man shouted across that I must be the best uncle in the world. Uncle? What was it about me that made him not think I was the child's son? Thought's started racing in my head. Was it the wheelchair, giving off the appearance that I couldn't be a father? That simple remark drilled my determination so deep that it was the last time I actually used my electric wheelchair so such a distance.

I knew losing weight would get me out of them four wheels, so I trained, ate right and reached my first goal. Somewhere since then though, I lost control and put a lot of weight back on. Writing this is my way of coming to terms with myself; Putting faith back into my ability and realising what I do, is my fault and only my fault.

You cannot blame corporations of fast food chains for being overweight. They don't make you choose the food, you do. You cannot blame magazines for self-doubt on your image, you buy them thus fund their writing enhanced pictures which in turn makes them think it's what you want to read and see. You cannot blame your genetics or circumstances when there are people out there in wheelchairs winning bodybuilding shows, Olympic gold medals and surviving life with less ability than you. You need to wake up. I need to wake up. Only by waking up will we realise our dreams and reach them.

Reference

1. Metallyoyos. This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 3.0 License. It was accessed on January 25, 2014 from: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Metallyoyos.jpg>

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IV. Meets/Events

I have been notified of a couple upcoming events that those in the CP community may enjoy participating in...

Strength Sport Events

2013/2014 USSF Nationals & 2014 Kansas State Powerlifting and Weightlifting Championship

What: On the 26th and 27th of April the USSF will hold the 2013/2014 USSF Nationals, and 2014 Kansas State Powerlifting and Weightlifting Championship. It will be run according to the rules of the USSF that can be seen on the home page, with both men's and women's classes being invited.

Where: Crossfit Olathe; Olathe, Kansas, USA

When: April 26-27, 2014

Prize money: Dependent on the number of lifters if we have the full 60 there will be \$600 to give away. For nationals the Goal is 1000 for each man and woman. Dependent on how many show up

For more information [CLICK HERE](#)

2014 USSF Nebraska State Powerlifting Championship

What: A one day powerlifting event.

Where: Omaha, Nebraska, USA

When: June 7th, 2014

Prize money: A cash prize will be given out dependent upon number of participants

For more information [CLICK HERE](#)

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2nd Annual Strength Guild Games

What: The basic premise of the games is very simple. It will be a two day team competition, 5 events per day chosen randomly each year by rolling dice. The events are compiled from all of the pure strength sports (Powerlifting, Weight lifting, Highland games, strongman and track and field short events). The events will be contested under the rules of the existing sports. The team with the most points at the end of the competition wins!

Where: Topeka, Kansas, USA

When: Oct 4-5th, 2014

Prize money: A cash prize as well as other prizes will be given out

For more information [CLICK HERE](#)

Endurance Sport Events

There has been no specific event that has been brought to my attention. However, for a general listing of running events going on in your area, [CLICK HERE!](#)

*** Please know that CasePerformance does **NOT** receive any financial or other incentives if you choose to participate in any of the above events.

That wraps up Part I of this CasePerformance newsletter. Hope you enjoyed it. Stay tuned for Part II of the Newsletter where we share news of note at the CasePerformance Website before touching on the CP Performance Discussion, *PED Testing 101: Testosterone, Epitestosterone & The Relationship Between Them*.

Until then... Train smart, train hard and leave the excuses to someone else!

Respectfully,

[The CasePerformance Team](#)