

## Hybrid Crossfit Strength/Metcon Program aka Gant Grimes Hybrid Program

---

### INTRODUCTION

Several months ago, I had some conversations with Garrett Smith and a few others regarding the potential benefits of increased strength and gymnastics programming and shorter metcons sessions. I embarked on a 12 week project where I was going to do a mixture of gymnastics, Olympic lifting and slow lifting with limited metabolic conditioning. All metcons were to be kept under 10 minutes and most of them had a strength-bias. We suspected that 1) strength is the most important aspect of metcon and 2) excessive metcon is unnecessary and possibly counterproductive.

I unofficially ended the project last week with PRs in the CFT and Deadlift. Over a 10.5 week training period (45 training sessions to be precise), I hit 21 PRs in strength, metcon, and mixed workouts. Several of those broke long-standing PRs. A couple of them broke PRs set during this project.

I am making no conclusions beyond what worked for me and what worked for me was a blend of strength, power and gymnastics training with short, intense and usually heavy metcons. I didn't have to put up with sore joints like I did doing pure strength work and I didn't have to deal with a fried CNS like I did doing pure Crossfit. It's a nice blend that kept me interested and focused every training session. I also recovered well (Saturday was an optional training day; I often skipped it, giving me a 4 day training week). Incidentally, I dropped body fat and increased my LBM over the last several months.

## THE HYBRID PROGRAM

- These programs will increase static strength, explosive strength and limit strength. This increase in strength will lead to substantial improvements in metabolic conditioning.
- Metcons should be short and intense. Keep it under 10 minutes (and usually under 5). Keep it heavy and keep it functional. Select workouts that require very little rest. **Scale reps, rounds, or time before scaling weight!** (This might be the most important bit you'll read on this). This is the key to the neuroendocrine response we're looking for. Find heavy metcons here.
- Use KB's, tires, farming implements, stones, boat chains and sledgehammers liberally. Row and Sprint often (Tabatas, 100s, 200s, 400s). Full body exercises (cleans, thrusters, swings) are great. Use couplets and triplets. **NO chipper workouts.**
- The exercise order and selection promotes increases in strength and, if you eat for it, lean mass. Everything you do on this program packs a substantial neuroendocrine wallop. Pick your metcon exercises accordingly. You should be shaving twice a day on this program.
- Eat more protein. If you're Zoning, increase protein intake by 2 - 4 blocks and fat by 8 - 16 blocks. Do not increase your carbs (I have accounted for them in the fat increase).
- Go heavy, go hard, or don't go at all. The volume is low enough and the metcons are short enough that your CNS should be stable throughout the program. If you need a day off, take it. Don't tear your body down while it's trying to build itself up.

- Don't over think it.
- Sleep like a fifth-year senior.
- Eat like the locusts of a Biblical plague.
- Eat lots of red meat. It's just better. Consuming large quantities of blood-soaked animal tissue puts you in a better frame of mind to train like this. If you eat eggs, eat whole eggs.

## **VARIATIONS**

- There are three programs.
- The 3/1 Program. I designed one for people who like the 3/1 CF schedule. Personally, I think 6 workouts in 8 days a bit much. But you wanted it, so here it is.
- The Novice Strength-Biased Program. This is a 3/1/2/1 schedule. I got used to training like this doing the PMenu WOD, and I like it. It's also an intermediate programming scheme discussed in Practical Programming. I wrote this program because I train with a guy who doesn't need to do as much OLY lifting as I do. The power versions of the OLY lifts are done. There is also an extra day of push presses or rack jerks. If you train on Saturday, just do a regular WOD (this can be a little longer). If you train with weights, keep it light and drill some OLY lifts.
- The Intermediate/Advanced Strength-Biased Program. This is my personal program. Saturday is optional. This is where I drill OLY by doing assistance exercises (snatch balance, tall cleans, etc) and get on the rings. Or I get in the canoe, go mountain biking, or play a little judo. Saturday is not a hard training day for me. So yeah, I pretty much train 4 out of 7 days.

- For awhile, I was using a 5-day Practical Programming template for a beginning intermediate (H,M,H,off,H,L,off). Of course, you don't really program the OLY lifts that way, so there was a hodge podge of stuff in my log. The template I put out is also a little different from what I actually did. I'm trying to accommodate the advanced-novice to advanced-intermediate. Everybody can tailor the template to their own needs.

## **CONCERNS**

- Do other stuff. It's summer time. Walk, swim, play softball, ride a bike, whatever. Don't pass a bar, set of rings, or rock ledge without pulling yourself up on it.
- Substitute if you feel the need. I refuse to miss Murph or Filthy Fifty. If a favorite WOD comes up, do it.
- The exercise order optimizes the ability to work circa max in each exercise. If you don't understand why, don't change it.
- The exercise selection is based on the neuroendocrine response and systemic adaptations associated with each.
- Deadlift every week. They're good for your soul. Cool down with reverse hyper 2 - 4 times a week. They're good for your Deadlifts and thus good for your soul. Your back will thank you.
- 5 minutes a week of KB long-cycle clean & jerks has profound effects.
- Read Christopher Sommer's article on front lever progressions (also has planche progressions).

- Read up on the Bulgarian method.
- Squat low for training. If you're a guy, try to tea-bag the platform. You'll be amazed how much you'll be able to lift in a CFT when you only squat to regulation depth.
- The abbreviations are days of the week and weight, so M=Monday, T=Tuesday, etc. And it goes Heavy, Moderate, Light. Heavy is near maximal weight. Moderate is about 80 - 85% of max for several sets across; it's good for volume. Light is for drilling only on OLY lifts.

## **SETS AND REPS**

- Welcome back to linear progression! We're going to get stronger every week. Linear strength progression works a little differently in a program with gymnastics and metcon, so pay attention to what's happening. I have borrowed heavily from Rippetoe, Everett and Louie Simmons in designing this.
- OLY lifts should be 5-8 sets (or more) of singles or doubles. Look to Coach Burgener or the PMenu for additional programming ideas. You have to be careful with your loads and volume on this stuff. It can sneak up on you.
- The slow lifts should start with 3 x 5 (including dips and pull-ups). Drop to 3 x 3 after 6 weeks or whenever the volume becomes too much. You may also want to mix in some 5 x 3, 5 x 2 or 7 x 1. It's your program! Eventually you'll almost exclusively be doing either 1) med volume/high intensity or 2) low volume/stupid intensity!
- Only do one work set on the Deadlift if you're working with max numbers.

- Mix sets across with progressive loading. You can do 3 x 3 across one week and 5 x 3 progressive (working up to a 3RM) the next. Do progressive loading at least once every third workout for each respective lift.
- Work in some ME/DE days as necessary. We're all about speed and power. I mix in plenty of box squatting so I can squat frequently. It helps your Deadlift too. Reverse Hypers help everything.
- Westside box squats. Using about 50 - 60% of your 1RM squat down to a box, pause and explode up. Westside recommends sets of 2 as the bar will slow down with reps beyond this.
- Deadlift every week (it's worth repeating). If it tears you up like it does me, mix in some rack pulls and halting Deadlifts. I love 3 x 6 snatch grip Deadlifts off a 4" box.
- Substitute OLY lifts as needed. Play with the full and hang positions to optimize results. If you're on the advanced program, do the full version at least once a week.
- I'd squat 3 times per week, doing back squats twice per week and maybe OHS and front squats on a third (or fourth) day.
- For warm-ups, "Rings x 2" means 2 sets of that progression. I do however many reps I feel like doing. And that's not very many. Within the warm-ups I do less than 50 pull-ups, pushups, and squats per week (and zero sit-ups).
- The order of exercises is vital. You want speed, technique and accuracy. You also want full use of your hips:

**Warm-up >>> Gymnastics/Progressions >>> Oly Lifts/DE >>> Slow lifts/ME >>> Short strength based metcon (<10 min) >>> Posterior-Chain Movement**

In rare cases, I'll do metcon first. For instance, if Fran comes up, I'll do that first before doing ME front squats. It just works for me.

## **BOTTOM LINE**

- Go fast, go heavy and go hard. If you're doing sets across, increase it every time. Don't reset if you fail at 5, just drop to 3. If you're doing CF ME work (5 triples, 7 singles), go for a PR every time. Metcons are short, heavy, and functional. Don't rest.

(H) - Heavy

(M) - Medium

(L) - Light

(Opt) - Optional

HS- Hand Stand

FL - Front Lever

HPC - Hang Power Clean

PP - Push Press

PC - Power Clean

P-Sn - Power Snatch

BS - Back Squat

360 - Full spin on the rings

GHR - Glute-Ham Raise

Burg on OLY days - Burgener Warm-up

## **PROGRAM EXAMPLES:**

### **Monday** - Handstand Work

Clean and Jerk 5 x 2 or 7 x 1

Squat 3 x 5

Deadlift or Romanian Deadlifts 1 x 5 or 1 x 12

Reverse Hypers or Glute Ham Raises

Chins

Overhead Sit-ups

### **Tuesday** - Front Lever

Power Snatch 5 x 2 or 7 x 1

Bench 3 x 5

Moderate Metcon 3-5 mins

### **Wednesday** - Rest

### **Thursday** - L-sits

Press 3 x 5

Power Snatch or Power clean

Front Squats 3 x 3

Heavy Metcon 5-10 mins

### **Friday** - Off

### **Saturday** - 20 min workout

KB work - long cycle Clean and Jerk for 4-6 mins

Light to Moderate Metcon 7-20 mins

### **Sunday** - Off

**Monday** - Handstand Training

DB Clean and Jerk

Back Squat

WOD

**Tuesday** - OHS

Bench Press

WOD

Core

**Wednesday** - Handstand Training

Front Squat

Incline DB Press

Deadlift

Weighted Pulls

**Thursday** - Off

**Friday** - DB Snatch

Back Squat

Standing Press or Weighted Dips

WOD

Core

**Saturday** - Muscle-Up Training

Intervals (maybe)

**Sunday** - Off

**Monday** - Handstand Practice

Clean and Jerk 5 x 3

Back Squat 3 x 5

WOD

**Tuesday** - Front Lever Practice

Power Clean 5 x 3

Bench Press 3 x 5

WOD

**Wednesday** - Handstand Practice

Clean and Jerk 5 x 3

Front Squat 3 x 5

Deadlift 1 x 5

Weighted Pull-ups 3 x 5

**Thursday** - Off

**Friday** - Front Lever Practice

Dumbbell Snatch 5 x 3 (Left and Right Arm)

Back Squat 3 x 5

Press 3 x 5

WOD

**Saturday** - WOD (Will Include Deadlifts in this Metcon)

Weighted Pull-ups 3 x 5

**Sunday** - Off

**Monday** - Front Lever

Power Snatch 5 x 2 or 7 x 1

Bench 3 x 5

Moderate Metcon 3-5 mins

**Tuesday** - Handstand Work

Clean and Jerk 5 x 2 or 7 x 1

Squat 3 x 5

Deadlift or Romanian Deadlifts 1 x 5 or 1 x 12

Reverse Hypers or Glute Ham Raises

Chins

Overhead Sit-ups

**Wednesday** – Active Recovery

**Thursday** - Active Recovery

**Friday** - L-sits

Press 3 x 5

Power Snatch or Power clean

Front Squats 3 x 3

Heavy Metcon 5-10 mins

**Saturday** - 20 min workout

KB work - long cycle Clean and Jerk for 4-6 mins

Light to Moderate Metcon 7-20 mins

3/1 strength program			
1	handstand practice	front squats	WOD
2	front lever practice	push press/rack jerks	WOD weighted ring
3	PC	DL	dips
4	off		
5	handstand practice	OHS	WOD
6	front lever practice	press	WOD
7	P-snatch	BS	weighted pullups
8	off		

novice strength-biased program					
M (H)	HS	HPC	BS	WOD	
T (M)	FL	PP/rack jerks	OHS	WOD	
W (H)	HS	PC	FS	DL	weighted pullups
R	off				
F (H)	FL	P-Sn	Press	BS	WOD
Sa	WOD				
(L)(opt)	WOD				
Su	off				

intermediate/advanced strength-biased program					
M (H)	HS	CJ	BS	WOD	
T (H)	FL	SN	OHS	WOD	
W (H)	HS	CJ	FS	DL	weighted pullups
R	off				
F (H)	FL	SN	P	BS	WOD
Sa (L)(opt)	whatever				
Su	off				

<p><i>intermediate/advanced prog warmup</i></p> <p><i>rings series x2</i></p> <p>1. 360</p> <p>2. L-pullups</p> <p>3. K2E</p> <p><i>*back roll to support*</i></p> <p>4. dips</p> <p>5. pushups</p> <p>---</p> <p>6. back ext + GHR</p> <p>7. OHS</p> <p><i>(optional: Burg on OLY days)</i></p>	<p><i>Cooldown</i></p> <p>1. reverse hypers</p> <p>2. windmills</p>
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------

## **NOTES:**

### **Question**

*That's sets X reps right?*

*So when do we see a WOD by you?*

*Also, are the orders of the exercises set in stone?*

*Probably not. I see its Oly before strength, which makes sense for technique.*

### **Answer**

Yes, sets x reps.

I'm doing something for somebody that might be filmed (I sound like Alston with his secret training). Other than that I doubt I'll ever make it to video.

The order of exercises is vital. You want speed, technique, and accuracy. You also want full use of your hips.

Explosive lifts >>> slow lifts >>> metcon

In rare cases, I'll do metcon first. For instance, if Fran comes up, I'll do that first before doing ME front squats. It just works for me.

I prefer to have gymnastics movements at the beginning, but I have forgotten them too many times (and done them at the end) to suggest it's mandatory.

**Question**

*When you go medium intensity, do you up the volume?*

*And, did you feel that the front lever progressions, squats, etc. provided enough abdominal training?*

*I saw that you included one day of L-sits and some KB windmills.*

**Answer**

Not really, but you could. The intensity schedule is based on Rip's Practical Programming. I go heavy when possible.

Every exercise in the program requires and builds an iron trunk. I don't do anything extra other than the occasional overhead KB sit-ups or GHDs in my Metcons.

**Question**

*Do you mean squat low butt-wise with a high-bar position or squat with a low-bar position?*

*From what I've seen in your journal you walked into this program after:*

- 1) Obtaining a great strength base*
- 2) Obtained a solid conditioning and lactic-threshold base via CF, in which you lost strength*
- 3) Played around and arrived to where you're at now.*

*Correct?*

*So my question is; can you obtain that solid conditioning and lactic-threshold level that you already obtained via CF and held onto through this program?*

*You're conditioning and WOD times have gone up so I assume it's safe to say yes but again you had a base. What about the lower/unconditioned?*

## **Answer**

Whatever blows your hair back. Rip and Greg each wrote a treatise on this in the last month. Pick the one that suits your needs. Please note that the ease of tea-bagging is directly proportional to bar position.

1. I'd say a good strength base.
2. Yes.
3. Pretty much.

Time will tell. The early returns indicate that yes, shorter, less frequent Metcons, combined with and complementary to a program of gym/OLY/power can give you (me, at least) a nice conditioning/lactic-threshold.

In six months, we'll have a better idea of how much metcon is enough.

## **Question**

*That pretty sums up my experience after following (attempting to follow) that protocol for the past year and a half.*

*It led to many plateaus, a stagnant CF Total, and few PRs. not to mention recovery issues and little or no motivation to exert myself in sport (jiu-jitsu). It was pretty hard physically and (honestly) emotionally.*

*This is what I like about your thoughts Mr. Grimes and ESPECIALLY the recent ME Blackbox article in Performance Menu Issue 41 - June 2008.*

*Your postings and Coach Rutherford's work have helped to move me towards a more balanced training approach (IMO) and ultimately a more balanced lifestyle.*

## **Answer**

Thanks, David. There are many teachers here and much to be thankful for. I have borrowed heavily from several people in designing this. Building on SS and CF, Coach Rut's original MEBB article is what first set me down this path, followed by the CA WOD. And it's nice to have Rip around to bounce ideas off of (he's been very supportive of this and not surprised by the results).

The final push was reading the goals of the people on the PM forums. When I started reading MOD's and Dr. G's stuff, I realized that personal happiness was as much (for me, more) a part of personal fitness than beating other people, lifting more weight, and smashing old PRs. Once I focused on the former, I accomplished the latter.

Be happy.

I've been trying to simplify these ideas/concepts in my head for the easiest understanding for myself (and especially if I'm going to explain it to others).

Basically, it is coming down to using the various exercise tools in their best applications.

**For building plain lower body and posterior chain strength, there's low rep slow lifts.**

**For taking that strength and turning it into power there's the Olympic Lifts done in their favored low rep ranges.**

**For upper body strength, Gymnastics training done in low rep ranges.**

**For improving work capacity and general ability to tolerate training discomfort, there is Kettlebell training done in the GS style.**

**If one wants to do Strongman stuff, do it using the proven training regimens.**

For metcon, Tabatas of various calisthenics, chosen based on one's strength level and goals/weaknesses. Also, "bike, run, swim, row, hard and fast" (and SHORT). If Tabatas and High Intensity Interval Training have been proven to work well for both aerobic and anaerobic purposes while not draining the trainee, why can't they be made the lion's share of metcon training? I can't see why not.

Long Slow Duration training, IMO, sucks in general / entails excessive mechanical wear / is not healthy due to increased oxidation & inhalation of pollution / is boring. I do not see it adding much to health nor the fitness I'm interested in. IMO dump it unless it is a part of your sport. I am of the mind that many recent CF WODs are absolutely getting into LSD territory once they are lasting over 30 minutes. Chippers and heroes brutalize the adrenals.

Right tool for the right job, I say. Mixing and matching creates its own kind of fitness, absolutely (the question is, where do diminishing returns begin from mixing too much?). It also creates its own problems and injuries due to trying to use a tool for the wrong job. It would seem that combining modalities while utilizing them in their proper/intended way, such as in hybrid programming, is resulting indirectly in improved work capacity when tested together a la CF metcon WODs.

I guess the big question is whether or not metcon work capacity is something that should be trained, or merely tested occasionally to gauge progress. I'm leaning toward the latter.

## **Question**

*Now how do you go about picking what exercises you will do for the short Metcons?*

*Do you worry about overtraining?*

*For example after some near max Deadlifting or squatting my legs are pretty dead. Would it be overkill to include lower body work in my Metcons?*

## **Answer**

I usually pick them to compliment my lifting. Use full-body, multi-joint exercises as the foundation of your metcon, thrusters, cleans, KBs. These have an inherent metcon effect because of the nature of the exercise. Top them off with another movement or two, decide how long you need to do it (time, reps, rounds, weight), and get after it.

I keep everything I do in a log. Check it out. I usually comment on whether a metcon was good or bad. You should keep similar records.

I don't believe in the concept of overtraining. Recovery IS a part of training. If you're not recovering adequately, you are failing in your training program.

I am also aware of how my body is feeling. I get physically fatigued 3-6 times a year and I have to break for several days. This is usually enough to keep me from getting CNS fatigue. Between a sometimes sporadic travel schedule and the fact that I usually just train 4 days a week, I'm usually good.

The question I think you want me to answer is whether or not this training program will drive you into the ground. No, it won't. If you train 3/1/2/1, you'll only be doing 3-4 short Metcons per week. That's doable. But you HAVE to eat and you HAVE to rest (I don't do this part, but I'm pretty sure you need to).

Almost every metcon I do involves legs. I box squat most of the time, and I Deadlift before a rest day (it's a non-metcon day). Plan accordingly.

### **Question**

*Just realized I left out Deadlifts. How on earth could I forget them?? I know Rip advocates only doing 1 work set/week if you're using max weights for the DL.*

*Perhaps I'll insert DL's on their own day - maybe Tuesday? Monday is a tough workout, but I'm trying to figure where to place them without impeding my max PR efforts on Friday.*

### **Answer**

I wrote a long post earlier and lost it. I screw it up with the moderating buttons sometimes.

I basically do all those lifts every week. Gymnastics --> OLY --> strength. Three days with metcon, and one long day of pure lifting.

Weekly Deadlifts (or DL assistance) is necessary. C&J is a great warm-up for DL.

Don't worry about %ages, bodyweight metcon one day, strength the next. Just work the program, and your body will tell you where to go. Try to pick metcon that complements your strength program. If it's heavy but still fast you're good to go.

## SUMMARY

My goals (judo) are obviously different than the guys on bb.com. However, they might be happy to know that in 3.5 months of a "heavy hybrid" program and dedicated eating; I added 20 pounds of mass (to 204) and increased my 3 lifts (squat 403, standing press 200, Deadlift 485). I took my normal diet, added 60 pounds of protein/day (which took me to about 1.1 - 1.2 g/lb/BW). (I'm normally insulin sensitive, so adding back in grains and eating ice cream before bed had a significant effect on my mass gain.)

I would also add that I did gymnastics movements first because I viewed them as a skill I wanted to improve. If you just want them for static strength, you should follow the traditional training hierarchy and put them last. I did a lot of static strength work, so gymnastics first never bothered me. However, I wouldn't recommend that a newbie tax his trunk with planches and front levers before doing heavy squats and deads.

If you can't hold a handstand for a minute, then its skill work and can be done first. You need to get stronger and better at the movement. Still, excessively long HS holds could compromise some overhead movements in your workout. I put it last now. Now handstand practice, walking on hands, etc. is skill work.

One additional correction: I overemphasized front squats and OHS in the original program. I'd rather squat twice a week and alternate power and full versions of the OLY lifts. If you want extra OHS/FS work, put them in a metcon. I have updated the program [to reflect this] and will release a 2-3 part article in the PMenu.

If I was just starting out and was serious about getting big and strong, I would do SS + GOMAD until I couldn't do it anymore and then switch to a heavy hybrid. Olympic movements are better for developing the upper back and pulling power

in general--even for an aspiring bodybuilder. In my opinion, [The Hybrid Program] is a Starting Strength graduate program and it is designed to give you more explosive power and conditioning than the templates in Practical Programming.