



PC Conditioning

Personal Training for all Levels

Newsletter

October 2009

" We cannot become what we need to be by remaining what we are."
- Max DePree

Dear readers-

Thanks for checking out the October edition of my newsletter. This is the time of the year when cooler temperatures arrive, but many of us still take the time to enjoy outdoor exercise. One form of outdoor exercise that I wish more would consider implementing is cycling. It's a GREAT way to save on gas, environmentally friendly, and simply fun to do. My niece (pictured to the right) would concur.



Before I conclude this month's intro, I just wanted to post a few "Healthy Halloween" tips. Enjoy and I will see you next month:

<http://parenting.ivillage.com/gs/gscelebrations/0,,bwg,00.html>

<http://urbanext.illinois.edu/foodforthought/0110.html>

<http://vegetarian.about.com/od/vegetarianfamilies/qt/halloweenhelp.htm>

To your health,

-PC

Featured Interview

As I continue to say all the time, we're a product of our mentors. Regardless of what your career entails, you are here because of the path that was previously laid for you. One person who has helped me in my career is the highlight of my October, 2009 newsletter. I'm pleased to introduce you to Boston University's Assistant Coach of Strength & Conditioning, Darcy Gould. Darcy is responsible for the training programs for various teams at Boston University, including men's and women's crew, field hockey, and women's ice hockey. I had the privilege of working under Darcy in the spring of 2007 when I interned at Boston University. She remains, to this day, one of my mentors I know I can always go to with questions/concerns regarding strength and conditioning. A friendly demeanor and hands-on approach to her work are what I admire most about her. Regardless of how her day is going, she always greets her athletes, co-workers, and peers- and even her favorite former interns like me- with her bright smile. Darcy recently spent some time to chat with me and share some information with my newsletter readers.



PC: Thanks for taking some time out of your busy schedule to introduce yourself to my readers, Coach. I know you have a very busy schedule, so I greatly appreciate your time. Let's start off by having you discuss where you grew up.

DG: I was born in Sacramento, California and raised in a suburb just outside of Sacramento called Citrus Heights.

PC: Where did you go after high school?

DG: I received my BS in Kinesiology/Exercise Physiology from San Francisco State University. I attended California State University, Sacramento for my MS in Kinesiology/Sports Performance with an emphasis in Strength and Conditioning.

PC: What sports did you play growing up?

DG: I took tennis lessons in my younger years, but when I turned 6 and was big enough to play team sports, I fell in love with soccer, softball, volleyball, and basketball. In college I chose to focus on basketball. At Sac State, there was an Olympic Lifting Club Team that we had to be involved with somehow as a part of the program. I chose to compete and Qualified for Nationals. When I got to Boston, I qualified in the Lowell Marathon to run the Boston marathon. I guess you can say I've been all over the spectrum. I still feel like I am growing up so you never know what I might try next.



PC: What were your favorite classes in college?

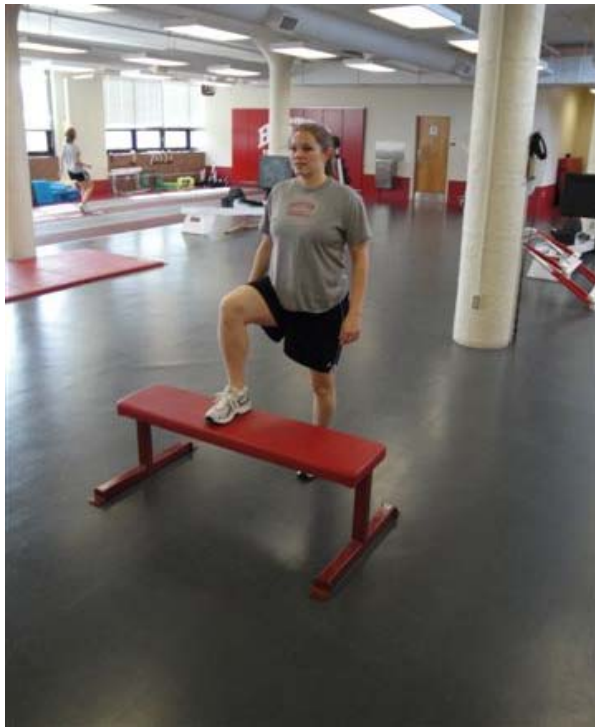
GH: Exercise Physiology Labs, Nutrition, and Sports Psychology. In grad school I was able to spend 4-6 hours a day training athletes using programs that I wrote. My 2nd year I was given the head coach title that put me in charge of training 11 teams with the help of other GAs and interns. It was as hands on as you could get.

PC: When did you know you wanted to be involved in strength & conditioning?

DG: I had a mentor in the football coach at Del Campo High School. I never played football, but Coach Kenyon had a strength and conditioning class that athletes took. My basketball coach and parents thought it would be a better use of time than regular PE. They were right. Coach K could see that I loved what we were doing and that I was hungry for more than just training. I wanted to know the why, what, when, and where of it all. When I got into college I continued to train, but kept getting nagging injuries. I wanted to know how to help other people avoid these and other injuries while still getting them stronger, faster, and better conditioned. Coach K encouraged me to get into the field and taught me programming and technical coaching skills that I still use today.

PC: What are some of your day-to-day roles at BU? What teams do you train?

DG: I currently work with the Women's Field Hockey, Women's Ice Hockey, and Men's and Women's Crew Teams. I am responsible for writing and implementing programs to keep the athletes healthy and productive. Depending on the sport and time of year the goals of these programs are to enhance mobility, stability, flexibility, agility, speed, power, strength and conditioning. This process involves constant contact with coaches, athletic trainers and of course, the athletes themselves.



PC: Who are some of your mentors, both past and present?

DG: I already spoke of Coach Kenyon. Starting the mentoring process just a few years before I met Coach K were my parents. My Mom and Dad are both athletes and are also big sports fans in general. I was blessed with parents with a vast knowledge of sports as well as motivation so they were able to coach quite a few of my teams growing up. They are where I get my work ethic. No matter the result of a situation or game it was always important to give your all, regret nothing, and have a good attitude doing it. My Mom would sit in the stands at basketball games and keep track of hustle point stats. These were things that the score book might not reveal, but she

thought were important like taking a charge or diving for a ball. I depended on these stats when things just didn't seem to go right. It gave me a sense of control in a sense that you can be consistent with one thing...your effort level. You can't control the other team, the refs, often times the way the ball bounces, but you can control your own effort level. There are a lot of other people that have helped me to get where I am, but Coach Kenyon and my parents had the biggest and earliest effect on my life.

PC: As a woman, how do you feel being involved in a field dominated by males?

DG: To be honest I don't really think anything of it. I got over that really quickly working with my first team in Grad school. I had my 1st real session that I wrote and was totally responsible for with a Division I Baseball team at 5:30am. I knew that if they saw me as flustered or nervous I'd lose them. There are no second chances in a situation like this. I stood on a platform and taught them how to Olympic Lift with PVC pipes filled with sand and told them they would not be allowed to move up to a bar until their technique was approved by me. When I reflected back on that morning I realized that it had nothing to do with me being male or female. It had to do with my ability to teach and coach them to gain an advantage over the competition. Their goals are the same no matter what my gender, mood, or situation is.

PC: How have you been treated as a woman in this field?

DG: So far I do not feel that I have had any benefits or limitations in comparison to anyone else in the field. From my parents to Coach Kenyon to my current Head Strength Coach, Glenn Harris, I have been very lucky to be pushed and encouraged by all of them. The story is a bit different with male athletes. I have gotten quite a few different responses both positive and negative. I know that 99% of the boys that I coach have never had a female coach and it makes them uncomfortable. These boys might end up with a female boss someday so I hope I can give them a positive experience of dealing with a woman in a position of authority. Of course they have had female teachers and professors, but it's a bit different when their attendance and effort level might directly effect their position or time competing with the team. In cases that I have had a male athlete show me disrespect, I have been able to deal with it myself. I do not like having to rely on the sport coach to step in to deal with it. It's almost like the "wait until your father comes home," situation. If I can't deal with a situation like this why do I deserve that respect? If it does come to that, I have had some very professional male sport coaches that support me and would step in at any time to demand the respect I deserve. Luckily I have never had to take advantage of that.

PC: What do you like the most about being a strength & conditioning coach?

DG: I love seeing the look of an athlete's face when their hard work has paid off. This can come during a weight room test or a game. My favorite action is when one of my athletes "weight rooms" another athlete in a game. That means that my athlete might be at rest or receiving the ball or puck and the other team sneaks up to either steal it or knock her over. The "weight room" happens when the opposing athlete runs into my girl and bounces off of her like they ran into a brick wall and my athlete continues on with whatever she was doing. I also love it when a coach notices that their athletes are outlasting, outrunning, or outmuscling their opponents. It is never a bad thing when the people you are trying to support notice that you have made a difference or have somehow made their job a bit easier.



PC: What do you like least about being a Strength & Conditioning Coach?

DG: There are two things

1. I do not like dealing with missed team sessions. Unfortunately this was not something they taught me to deal with in grad school. There will always be someone that can't make it due to class or some other issue. Obviously getting their education is a priority so I have no problem adjusting for that. It's the athletes that try to get out of a session because they didn't get a paper done or have a test that they want to study more for. I use this situation to teach the athlete to manage time more efficiently.
2. I do not enjoy dealing with injured athletes. That statement sounds extremely unsympathetic, but it is exactly the opposite. I can't stand the look on an injured athletes face while the rest of the team continues to train normally. It melts my heart because, having been an athlete, I know exactly how they feel. I hated missing any time away from my team and training. I feel like I can't do enough to get an athlete back fast enough, which unfortunately most of the time they just need rest. I spend more time counseling them about how time is the only thing they can count on to heal their body rather than training. I also feel that I am always reminding the rest of the team to be sure to make them a part of everything they do. You are told your entire life as an athlete that you are an integral part of the team and then when you can't compete, everything and everyone still keeps going on without you. Its almost like you expect the competitive world to stop and when it doesn't, it hurts. I wish I could have some magic potion to get them back to working as hard as they would like to, but just like weight loss, there is no quick fix.

PC: Outside of BU, what are some of your favorite hobbies/activities?

DG: My husband and I are expecting our 1st child in January so that has definitely taken over. Right now everything is about preparing, decorating, and planning. I used to bead jewelry and bake, but we also have been in our 1st house for a little over a year. Yard work and other home maintenance have taken over. Now that I have a yard I enjoy keeping it up. My parents both have green thumbs so I am trying to follow in their footsteps. They landscaped the yard I grew up in and have helped me with mine so I feel I am on the right track. They made yard work a family fun time that always ended with a dive in the pool so I see it as an enjoyable thing. I hope to get my daughter into it as well.

PC: Congratulations of the upcoming birth of your first child! As you know, I continue to work with prenatal clients, but can you share with my readers some of the general exercise guidelines you've incorporated to your training regimen?

DG: Thank you PC! My Dr. knew about my passion for training and the intensity of my profession and let me fire questions at him. I mentioned that I enjoy running of all types from longer runs to interval sprints on a field. He said it was all fine until I felt a specific type of cramp in my lower abdomen. The big change in training is that I would have to stop and walk when I felt that instead of pushing myself through it. As I get bigger I have had to really lower my distance and intensity due to the discomfort in my hips throughout the rest of the day. The more my placenta grows the slower I have to run. My runs have turned into jog/walks. I do intervals but at a much lower intensity. I will slowly have to progress to walking, stationary biking, and elliptical training. I

have a general idea of what I'd like to do each day, but similar to when the baby is born, sometimes the plan must be changed. I can't guarantee that I will always feel terrific and when I have an uncomfortable day I still train, but at a lower intensity. Sometimes I just don't feel like doing anything so I take that day off and add another day somewhere else. I am always sure to get at least one day off during the week and if I take two, it will not be the end of the world.

Regarding weight training, my Dr. said no really heavy lifting like what I did for Olympic lifting because of the blood pressure spike when my breath is held. I am still weight training 4 days a week and doing the same exercises that I have always done. I am sure to breathe through every rep and I am not getting into a heavy strength phase. I have added more exercises that incorporate breathing, hip stability, and muscle activation. I want my body to still be able to balance and activate the muscles I need to stay healthy for after I give birth and want to start moving again.

PC: I have friends who have recently given birth and occasionally seek me out for exercise advice. What plans do you have, exercise-wise, after you deliver?

DG: Because of my history of overtraining I have been lectured by everyone around me to be sure that I allow my body to recover. From what I hear about how busy new moms are I really don't think I'll have a problem with that. I know I will be lacking in the sleep department so that is probably going to be 1st priority on the list. I hope to train up to delivery, if possible, so this rest will be needed. I am planning on rest so that I don't feel guilty when I take it. I am also someone that isn't a fan of sitting still so when I have to get out of the house walking will be my 1st mode of exercise. I am planning on becoming active again when I feel my body is ready. If I had to estimate an actual time period I'd guess 2-3 weeks after delivery.

I will train exactly how I'd recommend to an athlete to come back after an injury. I actually had to rehabilitate myself after knee surgery and ran both marathons so I am confident in my ability to fully return. I will start with the same breathing, stability, and activation exercises that I finished with. When it comes to cardiovascular work I will walk, bike, and elliptical first. As I am able to begin to move a bit quicker I will jog and walk in intervals until I feel that I can run and sprint comfortably. This could take a few months or a year. Since this is my first time recovering from having a baby I don't want to pretend that I have an exact plan.

PC: With respect to the field of strength & conditioning, what advice would you give to a young woman aspiring to enter this field?

DG: It's the same that you'd give any woman entering any field. Work hard to educate yourself so that you have the confidence to talk and walk the game. It's also about the little things. Writing programs and coaching are obviously pieces of the puzzle to success, but you have to include communicating with other support staff and coaches and the athletes themselves. We are ultimately support staff and often have to adjust our program according to what just happened at practice or in a game. Patience and flexibility are key elements in every strength coach's program. You never know who is going to walk in the door.

Always have the athletes' best interest at heart even if it is not what they want to hear. I often feel like I am their on-campus parent, but I do not want to baby them. I make a lot of decisions

as if I were the parent at home and heard what the strength coach did with my child. Would I approve of what I am hearing?



PC: What has been some of the best advice you've been given over the years that continues to stick with you?

DG: Lack of planning on my part does not constitute an emergency on someone else's part. This is a lifelong lesson that sticks with me and that I hope athletes learn by the time they leave. Be responsible for yourself and you often make other people's jobs easier. People including employers notice these things and want to keep people like this around.

It is not anyone else's fault I am having a bad day. Just because I am in a bad mood or didn't get enough sleep does not mean everyone else around me should suffer.

If this is the worst thing that you have to deal with in life, you are pretty lucky. So many athletes get lost in their own little world and forget how lucky they are to have the experiences they are having. This has helped me through quite a few bad days. It might feel like my little situation is world ending, but it's a much bigger world than I can ever imagine, with much bigger problems than mine.

PC: What are some of the principle guidelines you preach to your athletes?

DG: They are the same things that my parents taught me growing up. Work hard consistently. Control what you can control in your own attitude and your own effort level. Unfortunately I don't get to be around them as much as an actual sports coach, but I do what I can. I give credit for hustle points just like my mom. No I don't sit with a pad and pen, but I like to let them know I notice effort, even if the result isn't ideal. I watched an athlete dive to get the ball into the goal.

She barely missed, but she deserves some kind of positive feedback for making that painful effort while everyone else stood and watched.

PC: Do you keep in touch with your athletes after they graduate?

DG: I actually just joined Facebook for just that reason. I meet so many special people here and often am not ready to be done with them after 4 years. It gives me a chance to keep up with them without having to email or call all of them individually.

PC: I often like to wrap up many interviews I conduct with some quick one-word answer type of stuff. Just respond with what first pops into your head.

PC: What one adjective best describes you?

DG: Disciplined

PC: Who are your heroes?

DG: My parents

PC: What/who do you love?

DG: My family, especially my husband and growing baby.

PC: What's your favorite exercise?

DG: Sprinting.

PC: Least favorite exercise?

DG: Stationary bike.

PC: Lucky number(s)?

DG: 12 (It was my sports number. It started w/ soccer and stuck from age 6 to college basketball)

PC: Favorite TV show?

DG: That's a tough one! I'd probably say Hell's Kitchen, Entourage, Lost, and various sporting events.

PC: Where do you see yourself in 5 years?

DG: Happy Coach and Mom.

PC: And 10 years from now?

DG: Head Strength & Conditioning Coach.

PC: One last question, Darcy. If your athletes are reading this, what about Coach Gould (principles/ideologies) should they walk from this interview with?

DG: If you put forth a solid, consistent effort and display a good attitude you will be confident with the results. If you have something left to give you didn't do the best you could have. Learn and give more effort next time. Make your own luck and have no regrets.

PC: Thank you so much Darcy! I really appreciate your time and continue to appreciate your support in the gym.

DG: Thanks PC!

Exercise Tip of the Month

"Lat Stretch"

While chin-ups and pull-ups are two great back exercises when it comes to "vertical pulling," some people do experience post-workout muscle soreness/tightness in these areas. Deadlifts also induce lat soreness in some exercise enthusiasts. To combat/minimize this tightness, I often have clients engage in a static stretch for their lats during a workout. We'll sometimes pair two exercises and follow it with a static lat stretch. It'd look something like this:

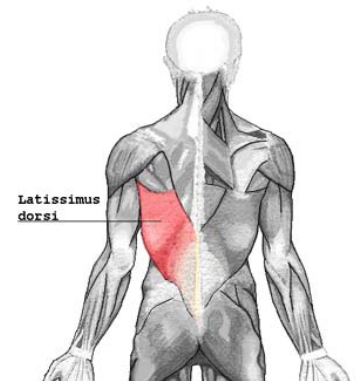
Chin-ups

pair w/

Split Squats

Lat Stretch x 10 sec ea

If you experience tightness in the lats (the area on either side of your torso that begins right around the armpit area and extends down to the side of your waist), consider this stretch. It really helps loosen up the affected area.



Nutritional Tip of the Month

"Four Stars for Fish"

I know a few of my clients want to slap me sometimes because I am always pushing them to eat more fish, or at least make it more of a regular part of their diet. I'll often advocate fish because many people report they don't feel overly full after having it out at a restaurant, for example. We all know that uncomfortable feeling when we don't listen to our bodies and end up eating too much.



Fish is healthy for our heart and our brain. It was proven recently that fish rivals the effects of anti-depressants (<http://www.jonnybowden.com/2009/08/fish-oil-rivals-antidepressants-in.html>). Aim for a diet filled with plenty of fish and exercise. We know exercise releases natural endorphins that make us feel good mentally. Pair that with the positive psychological effects of fish and you're good to go—both happy and healthy!

Here are a few types of fish high on Omega 3's:

- Salmon
- Trout
- Herring
- Striped Bass

Here are a few high in mercury to limit/avoid:

- King Mackerel
- Shark
- Swordfish

Blog

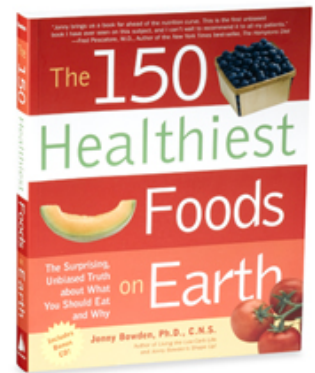
My blog continues to be the part of my web site and newsletter I get the most feedback on. Make sure to go back and check out past entries to get caught up. The direct link for my updated blog is found here: <http://pcconditioning.blogspot.com>.

Product Recommendation of the Month

Jonny Bowden, Ph.D., M.A., C.N., C.N.S. is a nationally known expert on weight loss and nutrition. According to Amazon.com, "...from almonds to yucca, readers will find out what nutrients each of the 150 featured foods contains, what form contains the most nutrients, if it's been recommended to combat any diseases, where to find it, how to prepare it, and how much to eat - plus wonderful recipes using these sometimes obscure foods! Indexes by nutrient, by disease, and by food make finding what you need a snap, and the at-a-glance format makes the information as easy to digest as the foods themselves."

To check out this book, simply click the following link:

<http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1592332285?ie=UTF8&tag=pccon-20&linkCode=xm2&camp=1789&creativeASIN=1592332285>



Web links / Recommended Reading

Please click the following links to check out the interesting articles I've come across these last few weeks and let me know what you think:

<http://www.jonnybowden.com/2009/08/fish-oil-rivals-antidepressants-in.html>
"Fish Oil Rivals Anti-Depressants in Clinical Trial" - Nutritionist Johnny Bowden presents some fantastic news.

http://www.tmuscle.com/free_online_article/sex_news_sports_funny_grok/what_your_doc_doesn_t_know_about_weightlifting
"What Your Doc Doesn't Know About Weightlifting" - Possibly the most interesting article I've read all month.

http://www.boston.com/news/health/articles/2009/09/14/exercise_can_extend_survival_even_in_oldest_old/ "Exercise Can Extend Even the Oldest Old" - Nice piece from the Boston Globe.

Q&A

Topic: "Web Site Changes"

Q: Paul, are you going to be modifying anything to your **PC Conditioning** web site in the future?

A: Yes, I am. I am going to be adding a section where I will highlight random people over time and broadcast their progress. I've had specific clients over the years who have excelled, and I feel it's time to let others know. I've learned through exercise and various sports that hard work is contagious and I think this new section of my site will inspire my readers- and hopefully many others. The tentative section will be called "Shining Stars." I will, as always, ensure client confidentiality by using first names only.

If you've got a question, feel free to email me at the following: paulconnolly123@gmail.com. Who knows- you may see your question published in a future newsletter!

Paul Connolly, President and Founder of PC Conditioning, is a National Strength and Conditioning Association Certified Personal Trainer (NSCA-CPT) based in Watertown, MA



About the Author

Certified through the National Strength and Conditioning Association as a personal trainer (NSCA-CPT), Paul possesses a degree in Exercise Science from UMASS-Boston where he graduated Magna Cum Laude. Holding a background in anatomy & physiology, human performance, and nutrition, he has been involved in the fitness industry since 2003 and has contributed to local and national media publications as a featured health and wellness columnist. The founder of suburban Boston-based personal training consulting service PC Conditioning (<http://www.pconditioning.com>), Paul is an advocate of strength training for all ages and enjoys working with fitness enthusiasts of all levels. His diverse clientele includes high school and collegiate athletes, stay-at-home Moms, corporate 9-5ers, brides-to-be, and seniors. Paul's passion for fitness has led him to engage his clients in all major components of fitness including cardiovascular conditioning, nutrition, strength training, and flexibility. Adult AED and CPR-certified, Paul is available by appointment only.

He can be reached via e-mail at paulconnolly123@gmail.com.

"Understanding the fundamental concepts of exercise and optimizing daily function are key concepts in the training programs I outline for my clients. Injury prevention, improving self-confidence, and heightening one's knowledge of physical fitness through consistent hard work and dedication are all integral components of the approach I take with my clients. I see many people making similar mistakes in their conditioning programs and I make it a point to correct these areas. I demand 100% effort from my clients and make it a point to consistently educate them about the necessary lifestyle modifications required to achieve their respective goals."

Important Disclaimer: The information contained within this document is not intended or implied to be a substitute for professional medical advice and is not intended for medical diagnosis or treatment. The intention of this article is for the sole purpose of disseminating fitness information. We recommend that you always request the advice of your physician or other qualified health care provider before starting any new fitness program or with any questions you may have regarding your health or any medical condition.