

Guide to the Warrior Athlete

by Rob Ord



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By Robert Ord

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The Warrior Athlete – *def.* a serious athlete who trains with the determination and focus of a warrior; a person constantly engaged in the struggle to achieve greatness both in athletics and in life.

– *Rob Ord,*
founder – www.brassringfitness.com

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Introduction to the Warrior Athlete

There are many physical fitness training programs available these days. Some are good. Most are not. Most programs address the body and neglect the mind. Many programs even go so far as to minimize the effort you must make to create the body you desire. This is a mistake.

Brass Ring Training integrates mind and body into a totally unique training philosophy.

The philosophy of the
Warrior Athlete.

"Good is the enemy
of great."

~ Jim Collins

Is this the program for you?

Yes. This program is designed for you if you:

- Are looking to get more out of a workout than just improved looks.
- Appreciate the feeling of accomplishment after a hard workout.
- Want more than just an average life.

The foundation of this program is based on the philosophy of the brass ring, on striving to achieve greater than "good". "Good is the enemy of great." ~ Jim Collins

At Brass Ring Fitness, we strive for greatness. Greatness of body.
Greatness of mind.

We have created a program which combines the focus, courage, and drive of the Warrior with the strength, discipline, and stamina of the Athlete. When you approach your fitness program with the mindset of the Warrior Athlete, nothing can stand in your way.

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In the end, it is
the enemy you
ignore which
becomes your
undoing.

~Rob Ord

The Warrior Athlete Defined

Living by a Code

It is more common than not to find individuals who judge others by their actions and themselves by their intentions. This runs completely counter to the Warrior Athlete's mindset, which is anything but common. The Warrior Athlete abides by a simple code:

Discipline • Strength • Courage

You need no special talents to follow this code. You only need the honest desire necessary to stay on the path.

Discipline

Discipline is living your ideals when no one is watching.

Discipline is the tool used by the warrior to hone and sharpen the mind and body for when it will be tested in the chaos of battle, where mistakes lead to death. Disciplined practice in peacetime develops an uncompromising determination that can withstand the force of the first blow in combat, and then return fire.

The athlete employs discipline in their training to hone body and mind for the challenges of sport and competition. It is through consistency in practice that the athlete is able to improve performance in competition.

Combined, the Warrior Athlete achieves self-mastery through a disciplined focus on the following aspects:

Mind – a practice of “present thinking” and actions that foster learning and growth. There is truth in the saying “we are what we think”. Conscious and disciplined monitoring and correction of the constant chatter in the mind leads to intentional actions. Intentional actions promote advancements in life; while unconscious actions based on scattered thought often result in setbacks.

Body – a strategic training regimen focused on mastery of physical skills. This is a training plan that starts with an objective and then works backwards. For the athlete, the regimen will focus on

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developing the attributes today which will result in successfully reaching the objective tomorrow.

Soul – meditation, prayer, time spent in nature, or whatever connects you to the Source. Man differs from animals in the belief of a connection to something beyond the physical. Developing a disciplined practice of following your beliefs leads to a greater understanding of self-purpose and direction.

Strength

The Warrior Athlete's development of strength requires strict adherence to a disciplined pursuit of technical precision in training both the body **and** the mind. Without mental discipline, a physically strong athlete is merely an admirable shadow of her true potential.

Accuracy with
intensity over
expedience without
precision.

Strength starts by aligning thoughts with objectives.

"Sew a thought and you reap an action. Sew an action and you reap a habit. Sew a habit and you reap a character. Sew a character and you reap a destiny". ~ Charles Reade

Strong character, then, is not something we are born with. It is built through the consistent and conscious effort to pursue excellence. For the Warrior Athlete, one demonstration of strength is the application of *accuracy with intensity over expedience without precision*. As the sign that hung in Albert Einstein's office at Princeton read:

"Not everything that counts can be counted, and not everything that can be counted counts."

The strength cultivated by conscious discipline goes far beyond fitness. The true result is a superior strength of character, the kind of character that the great warriors are known for. As you focus your disciplined actions toward a specific objective, you will cultivate an inner strength which far exceeds the might of muscle alone.

Courage

Just as discipline leads to strength, strength leads to courage. Courage is the willingness to leave what is comfortable and safe in order to achieve something greater. It is what allows you, as a Warrior Athlete, to charge forward in your pursuit of your Brass Ring, without regrets and

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without looking back. Dwelling on the past or fantasizing about the future is easy and comfortable. Courage is necessary to develop the kind of focus required to live and act in the present moment.

Most people settle for average, and are satisfied with accomplishing far less than they are capable. They choose comfort, familiarity, and safety over the uncertainty, thrill, and potential "danger" of the unknown. They choose to live in fear. The Warrior Athlete chooses to face and conquer that fear.

"Courage is not the absence of fear, but the mastery of it." ~Mark Twain

Discipline, Strength, and Courage complete the Code of the Warrior Athlete. Each element must be present in order to effect positive and lasting change. Discipline without strength, or strength without courage is of little value.

However, the Code in itself is incomplete. All of the discipline, strength, and courage in the world cannot create an effective individual if that individual acts without a clear purpose, an overriding goal. The final element involved in the creation the Warrior Athlete is the clearly thought out and consciously chosen Brass Ring.

What is a Brass Ring?

Your Brass Ring is your ultimate goal. What is it that you think about when you first wake up? What desires fill your thoughts as you drift off to sleep? What is the goal that drives your daydreams? This is your Brass Ring. This is your goal of goals.

Your Brass Ring could be to cultivate a body which someday, when you are pushing 80, can still chase great-grandchildren around the lawn. Or your brass ring could be to compete and be

victorious at an Olympic level or with an elite military unit. It could be anything, but it is your **reason**. It is the reason you train every day. It is the reason you face your fears, face your pain, face your uncertainty, and it is the reason you push through it.

"Courage is not the
absence of fear, but the
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~Mark Twain

"Sew a thought
and you reap
an action. Sew
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a character and
you reap a
destiny"

~Charles Reade



What is your Brass Ring?

Grab Your Brass Ring

Grabbing your Brass Ring is not an easy affair. If it were easy, it would be merely another goal. Your Brass Ring is something that is worth fighting for, sacrificing for. As a Warrior Athlete, you are up to the challenge.

Requirements for achieving your Brass Ring:

1. You must be willing to dedicate your full focus, body and mind to the achievement of the goal. This may require some sacrifices including; changing the way you spend your time, changing who you associate with, evaluating and reprioritizing your life, etc.
2. You must be willing to take a risk and venture past your comfort zone, into areas where you are vulnerable. "If you do what you've always done, you'll get what you've always gotten." ~Anthony Robbins.
3. Finally, you must actively live the Code of the Warrior Athlete. Disciplined practices that are in line with your Brass Ring lead to the strength and courage needed to weather obstacles, frustrations, and even setbacks.

Self-Mastery

The Code of the Warrior Athlete - discipline, strength, and courage - is the process by which the Brass Ring is attained. It is a moment by moment pursuit to bring thoughts and actions into line with a goal.

What is Natural?

Like all animals, man is, by nature, a creature of comfort. If left to follow his impulses only, he would act solely on momentary desires. "I'm hungry – I eat. I'm tired – I sleep. It's too hard – I quit. It's too long – I stop. I take the road most traveled because it is easy."

Hunters understand this behavior. When a bow hunter sets up a blind, he first looks for indications that the target animal is in the area; footprints, droppings, or nesting signs often suffice. Then he will look for access routes to food, water, or other desirable features in the area. Finally, he will set up the blind in the best position. The most important element that he will look for is the easiest path for the animal to take to get what it wants. Often an animal will take a wide, well worn path versus a rough, concealed path for the simple fact that it is the easiest route to get what it is after.

The nature of man is not that different from animals. This can be easily observed in the way many people eat. Nearly everyone has at least a rudimentary concept of what is healthy to eat and what is not. They consciously know that it is better to make healthy food choices instead of unhealthy choices. Yet the natural impulse is to eat what **satisfies** most in the moment.

Fast food companies capitalize on this understanding by not just offering an easy solution to hunger, but by subtly appealing to the "I want" impulse by adding sugar and other pleasurable chemicals. I once bought a yogurt from a fast food restaurant and was astonished to learn that it contained so much sugar, far more than any yogurt from the store. I then looked at the milk, and again found that a considerable amount of sugar had been added. The combination of instant gratification and the pleasurable sugar appeals very strongly to the impulsive nature of man.

This appeal is unconscious and natural. This appeal is very dangerous.

"If you do what
you've always
done, you'll get
what you've
always gotten."

~Anthony Robbins.



Impulse vs. Conscious Choice

Self mastery, on the other hand, is a denial of momentary impulses and desires in favor of a strong commitment to live a life of greatness – a life in pursuit of the Brass Ring. It starts with a conscious decision, a firm pledge to actively pursue something bigger than one's self. To achieve this, you must take action and develop desired habits. For a person whose Brass Ring is to be an elite athlete, many of the actions required will be different from another person whose Brass Ring is to be a professional musician. In either case, though, achieving one's brass ring is not something that 'just happens'. Rather, it is the result of conscious and consistent decisions to fully live a life of purpose.

Maintaining Focus

Think of the directory at the shopping mall. You see the diagram of each of the floors and all of the shops, including the one that has the new running shoes you have decided to buy. First, you find the "You Are Here" X. Next you'll find the store that sells your running shoes. You'll trace the path from where you are to the shop, and off you go. On your way you'll see lots of interesting advertisements for all manner of things, trying to connect with your impulse center. Each step you take that is in line with the path that you traced on the map is a step closer to your goal. Any deviation from that path, to look at the flashy, sparkly, distraction is a step farther away.

In your pursuit of your Brass Ring, steps are actions that move you toward your goal. Anything that disrupts your momentum is a distraction. Discipline is required to stay on the path. It is easy to make a commitment to follow a plan of actions that will result in achievement. It is another thing to actually follow that plan. Discipline is the first attribute the Warrior Athlete must develop to achieve self-mastery.

Strength is the result of consistent application of disciplined effort in an area. What is at first difficult in training, say deadlifting 135lbs, over time and with consistent practice becomes easy. In fact, with disciplined practice, a maximum lift of 135lbs becomes 155lbs, then 185lbs, then 225lbs. This is not only true of physical strength, but of strength of character as well.

At first, you may struggle to stay on your path in the mall, enamored with the sparkle and flash of distractions. However, after your practice in discipline grows stronger, your focus and drive lead you directly to your intended destination with little trouble or effort. Your focus and determination have grown stronger. What used to seem so difficult is now second-nature.

Self-mastery is
successfully
deadlifting
225lbs after
disciplined
training and
conscious
decision-
making.

Courage is strength in action, as in the display of loyalty, devotion, and honor. Courage is leaving the warmth and comfort of the nest to venture out in pursuit of greatness.

There are three main levels where courage is required to attain self-mastery. Imagine a staircase. Mastery must be achieved on each "step" before it is possible to attempt the next.

The first level is **Self** – You must focus on leaving comfortable habits based on impulse in order to master your own body and mind.

The Second level is **Support** – Next, you reach out to others that rely on you. Put others before yourself by providing a good example, guidance, and love.

And the third level is **Service** – In this level, you endeavor to provide something of use to all mankind.

Foolishness

It is important to note that foolishness sometimes masquerades as courage. Stepping out into the unknown for no purpose other than to attract attention is foolish. Taking on more than you are able to bear in order to please others is foolish. Foolish actions can initially be mistaken for courage, but are easily detected if they are not supported by the elements of the Warrior Athlete code.

Foolishness is trying to deadlift 225lbs to impress someone and pulling every muscle in your back.

Self-mastery is successfully deadlifting 225lbs after disciplined training and conscious decision-making.

Self-mastery is the state of being where life is lived courageously on the foundation of ever increasing inner strength, which is the result of conscious attention to specific practices or disciplines.



Brass Ring Training

The Conventional Model

When the "health & fitness" industry is (rapidly) expanding at the same rate as the national waistline, something is very wrong. The conventional methods for developing healthy, high performance bodies and minds - used in schools, infomercials, health clubs, and even the military - are simply ineffective.

Conventional exercise "wisdom" relies heavily on isolation training and machines using high tech pulleys, handles, padded seats, cushions, and wires. These machines are often more impressive than the man that uses them.

The unfortunate truth is that the vast majority of people have no idea of how to achieve real fitness. The sadder truth is that most people are not even looking for it; they are looking for a quick fix to their health problems. This has led to an influx of bogus claims for lazy people. The flooding of the market has made it difficult to discern real value from wasted space.

It is time to for change.

Unconventional Methods – Uncommon Results

"Insanity: doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results." ~Albert Einstein

Changing the conventional system requires an unconventional approach.

Think like a warrior; train like an athlete.

CrossFit, Inc. has pioneered a fitness revolution on a global scale. CrossFit founder, Greg Glassman, introduced the simple guiding principle of "constantly varied functional movement at high intensity." Adherence to this philosophy has earned CrossFit the loyalty of millions across the globe. Unconventional athletes are experiencing the excellent results which prove this remarkable model.

Brass Ring Fitness utilizes this bold and effective method because it yields exceptional results by using simple movements, performed primarily at high intensity. The "high tech" component of training is switched from the machine (equipment) to the Machine (human body).

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Creativity and ingenuity in the application of functional movement with low tech equipment give way to incredible results which can be demonstrated not only in the mirror, but in their true value – the ability to use your body as it was designed to be used.

Athletic Training

The common belief today is that by vigorously moving the body around, breathing hard, and sweating, you can somehow become more athletic. This is not the case. Commonly, the main objective for someone to “exercise” is to look and feel better. This is a start; however, it does nothing to address the needs of the athlete. “Exercises” alone are not what make someone athletic.

The athlete uses whatever will best prepare them for competition. Competition can be against another or against yourself, against the clock or against your nemesis.

The athlete can use a barbell, a dumbbell, a swimming pool, a track, a mountain, or a multitude of other tools. The athlete can also use movement as a tool, such as a squat, a push up, or a pull up. The tools of the athletic trade, combined with an effective strategy for nutrition, hydration, and recovery, are what comprise “Athletic Training”.

Tools of the Athlete:

Barbell
Dumbbell
Kettlebell
Pull Up Bar
Picnic Table
Mountain
Pool
Track
Squat
Push Up
Pull Up

Skill Training – This is activity specific. This form of training develops specific motor function for a particular activity or sport, including agility, coordination, balance, and accuracy. Example: shooting hundreds of free throws will improve your basketball game.

Strength and Conditioning – This is the foundation of the athlete’s abilities. It includes things like strength, stamina, power, speed, endurance and flexibility. Skills learned and developed in this group will benefit any sport. Example: box jumps can increase your vertical jump reach (volleyball, basketball, track sports), speed up your response time (running, swimming, racquetball), or strengthen your glutes for stability (rock climbing). Brass Ring Fitness focuses on this type of athletic training.

"Insanity: doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results."

~Albert Einstein



Stimulus and Response

Most people view their training as occurring only within the confines of a gym. This is a mistake. All elements of your life should be viewed as integral to your training. Workouts are certainly a large part of your athletic focus; however, you should also view your nutrition, stress levels, career workload, planned rest periods, sleep, and mental focus as integral aspects of your training.

Stimulus and response are how the body and mind adapt to the world. Change can only occur as a result of this mechanism. **Stimulus** is the external force (or action in the external world) that the body then internally **responds** to.

Stimulus: Lift a heavy weight

Response: Develop stronger muscles

Stimulus: Wake up every morning at 5am for meditation or prayer.

Response: Develop discipline that affects your state of mind throughout the day.

Stimulus: Adopt a healthy diet.

Response: Have the energy and mental alertness to tackle your workouts *and* the big presentation at work.

Literally, *everything* you do should be considered stimulus.

Desired Response

Once you have begun to view all actions and forces in your life as stimulus, it will become apparent that you can, within reason, invite the correct stimulus to elicit the desired response. First, determine your desired end goal and then choose the best method to achieve it.

For example, you would not pick a road on a map and drive without any regard as to your destination. Rather, you would determine the location you wish to visit, and then determine the best route on a map.

Similarly, in order to elicit the desired response, you will need to incorporate the correct stimulus into your training/life. See specific examples in the list on the next page.

"Not everything
that counts can
be counted,
and not
everything that
can be counted
counts."

~Albert Einstein

<u>Response</u>	<u>Stimulus</u>
Strength	Resistance Training
Stamina	Repetition
Power	Explosive Movement
Speed	Rapid Repetition
Endurance	Distance
Flexibility	Range of Motion

Controlling the stimulus to elicit the greatest response is the main objective for athletic improvement. As a Warrior Athlete, you should consciously control stimulus to the best of your ability by:

Use of an effective workout schedule.


Eating for optimal recovery (recommended eating plans are The Zone, the Paleolithic Diet, or any other diets high enough in protein to build muscle and high enough in fat to supply your body with plenty of fuel).

Hydrating frequently and copiously.

Sleeping a minimum of 6 hours per night.

Cultivating discipline, this leads to strength and courage.

In cases where there is a forced stimulus, you should integrate the stimulus into your training. For example, an unexpected layover could be viewed as a mental flexibility challenge.



Focused Training – Brass Ring Cycle

Brass Ring Training focuses on strength and conditioning, the foundational aspect of all athletic training. When you develop a strong base in strength and conditioning, and combine that with the focused mind of the warrior, you will be miles ahead of others in your particular sport or area of interest.

The Brass Ring Cycle uses a training philosophy similar to those employed by elite athletic teams and military special operations units. The cycle focuses training in a small area for a certain length of time to train your body with the greatest precision and progress possible.

For example, the Brass Ring Long Cycle begins with a three month focus on Strength and Stamina (S&S). For three months, the focus of most workouts will be on developing these particular skills to reinforce your athletic foundation. This first phase is followed by three months focusing on Power and Speed (P&S), followed by three months of Extreme Training (XT).

A short cycle follows the long cycle, offering three tightly focused single month phases. One month of S&S, one month of P&S, one month of XT. This completes the entire year of training. You will not believe the progress you can make in a year!

Breakdown:

Strength and Stamina makes up the foundation of athletic ability. Strength is the muscle's ability to apply force. This is achieved through training with resistance (bodyweight, dumbbells, barbells, kettlebells, etc). Stamina is the muscle's ability to effectively process and store energy. This is achieved through repetition.

In both areas, the proper stimulus is employed in various forms, by using the five major functional movements – lift / squat / push / press / pull. Get to know these as you will be practicing them consistently. Also included in most of the workouts will be interval running, rowing, and/or swimming with, (a) moderate intensity, medium-distance, or (b) high intensity, short-distance.

Power and Speed are important components which are required if you are to develop a strong, athletic foundation. Power is explosive movement, defined by $P = (F \times D) \div T$.

$$\text{Power} = \text{Force} \times \text{Distance} \div \text{Time}.$$

Force = weight. Distance = range of motion. Time = how long it takes

Power is achieved through single (or low rep) efforts requiring the predominant use of explosive fast twitch muscle. In order to increase the power output of a single exercise, you can increase the weight, increase the range of motion, or decrease the time. For example, a tuck jump will require much more power than a 95lb weighted squat. The squat will require moving a portion of your bodyweight plus 95lb only approximately 12"- 24". However, a tuck jump will require moving your entire body in a shorter time and over a greater distance.

Speed is rapid repetition. It is achieved through high-intensity interval training.

Stimulus for developing Power and Speed will include the five major functional movements, as well as Olympic Lifts (with barbell, kettlebell, and dumbbell), and plyometrics. Also included will be short-duration and medium-duration, high-intensity interval running, rowing, and/or swimming.

Extreme Training represents the athlete's "season", or the special operator's "deployment". Extreme Training is where the efficacy of an athlete's preparation is tested.

XT combines all of the above training elements in a challenging phase that tests both the athlete and the warrior in you. Incorporating difficult workouts, pushing your body to its limits and demanding great mental focus, you will develop a greater sense of confidence by dismantling perceived self-limitations. In short, you will be stronger, faster, and tougher than you ever dreamed possible. You will push yourself to your perceived limits, to find that those limits no longer bind you.

Understanding Scaling - The Frozen Pond

There is a saying, "Too much 'can do' can do you in." Going too far or lifting too much can sometimes seem like a good idea at the time. However, when you spend the next week on the couch with a back spasm or hobble around with a messed up knee, you realize that you're missing important training days. The small advantage you would have achieved by adding the extra weight pales in comparison to what you could have

Success is the
sum of small
things done day
in and day out.

~Robert Collier



accomplished if you were able to continue training injury-free. Consider the following analogy to help you determine how to progress as a Warrior Athlete and stay free of injury.

Imagine a pond as winter sets in and the temperature begins to drop below freezing. First the edges freeze with a thin layer of translucent ice. As winter sets in deeper, the ice thickens at the edge and moves inward to the center of the pond. Slowly the pond freezes over, thicker on the outside than it is in the middle. At some point the whole surface of the pond will be thick enough to walk on, to skate on, or even to drive a truck on.

Testing the integrity of the ice is not something one should jump into – literally. Even though the ice is no longer translucent, it may not be thick enough to hold the weight of an adult. Small, careful steps are taken. Attention should be paid to sounds. A crack or groan signals danger – step back. Falling through the ice is not likely to happen without lasting consequences, whether that is a frightful cold, frostbite, or death.

The elements of the Warrior and the elements of the Athlete are developed through an uncompromising determination to master body and mind.

Training should be approached like a frozen pond. The ice represents our physical capabilities. For most of us, the edges are thick enough to hold our body weight. This is where easier workouts are, which can be considered safe. We can venture into these workouts without fear of injury.

As we move in closer to the center, where the more difficult workouts are, we start to enter new territory where we may not have a good handle on what is too much, too heavy, too complex, or too fast. We inch forward slowly and patiently, stepping back when we feel that shift or hear that quiet groan, and work on technique and form. Then carefully, after some time has passed, we can test the ice again. Slowly, progress will be made.

If we are patient and determined, we can go to places in our fitness we never believed possible. If we are impatient though, we may have to sit on the side of the pond as we recover and the ice freezes over again, losing much of the gains we made.

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Victory is
reserved for
those willing to
pay its price.

~Sun Tzu

Let's look at some examples.

3 Rounds of:

5 pull ups
10 push ups
15 sit ups
20 squats

5 Rounds of:

10 muscle ups
10 deadlift (225lbs)
10 Handstand push ups

The first set of exercises would, for many, be at or near the edge of the pond where the ice is thick. This might be considered a "safe" workout.

However, the second set of exercises might be in the exact center of the pond. The second set has the potential to be on the thin ice (or bare water) if an individual has not been adequately trained in the exercises, or has never performed a deadlift above 135lbs.

How Can You Tell When the Ice is too Thin?

During the workout, you can often tell when your body is reaching its current limit. You might feel a twinge in a muscle, or suddenly, you just won't want to finish a set of squats. You might just become very aware of a specific muscle. When this happens, step back. You are on thin ice.

After your workout, you can also tell if you've gone too far. Your recovery time should not be more than 48 hours. If you are still so sore that you have trouble getting off the couch three or four days later, back off. You are training too hard and if you continue like this, the ice is going to crack underneath you.

The bottom line is that it's important to know where you stand.

Sometimes you will find yourself on thin ice. When you do, be prepared to take a step back. Listen for the sounds of cracking ice. Lower your reps. Try a lighter weight. Take it slower. Pay attention. Your body will tell you what you need to know.



Conclusion

Developing the Warrior Athlete in You

The elements of the Warrior and the elements of the Athlete are developed through an uncompromising determination to master body and mind. Together they represent the first and most important asset anyone could earn. More important than money or status symbols, they embody the true riches. Wealth without health (of body and mind) is of little value.

The Warrior Athlete is forged in the fire of intense unconventional workouts, hardened by a disciplined approach to live by a code, and sharpened by an unyielding pursuit of self-mastery.

Are YOU ready?

Watch for our next installment in the ebook series on developing the Warrior Athlete.

To learn more about the Warrior Athlete, or to get started on your own training plan, visit www.BrassRingFitness.com.

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