

An Introduction to Strongman Training – 3 Part Video Series

written by Mike Roberto | July 16, 2013

Big Tex Gym in Austin, TX recently hosted an introductory *strongman training seminar* by Texas Strongman Nick Klugiewicz.

In this seminar, Nick covers the following events:

- Continental Clean
- Log Press
- Thomas Inch Dumbbell Press
- Farmer's Walk

...as well as an equipment Q&A at the end and a brief introduction in the beginning.

Throughout the seminar, Nick adds general tips, anecdotes, and training advice. We couldn't have asked for a better presenter.

The section is broken down into three videos:

Video 1: Continental Clean and Log Press

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In Nick's intro, I love how he breaks down bodybuilding vs. powerlifting vs. strongman. It basically goes like this:

- **Bodybuilding** is *subjective* and has weight classes
- **Powerlifting** is *objective*, but there are also weight classes.
This means that **pound for pound strength matters in powerlifting**
- But in **Strongman**, there aren't so many weight classes, and pound-for-pound strength is less significant. You basically have a heavyweight and a lightweight.
It's often broken down at the ~230lb weight limit. Over is heavyweight, under is lightweight.

Sometimes there's an under-175lb class. *Sometimes*, there's a 200lb division. But many times, you'll just see heavyweight and lightweight and that's it.

So if a 298lb guy lifts one rep more than a 235lb guy, guess who wins: the

298lb guy.

There's also often a teen division and a master's division for the younger and older competitors. Don't take this as gospel though – look at your upcoming competition and see what they have.

The Continental Clean

This exercise is normally done using a thicker bar than what's shown in the video. It is not so easy to simply clean and press it – the thick bar at heavy weights makes that next to impossible.

So in order to do it, you need a supinated grip (as you would with a deadlift). Once you bring it high up to your rib cage area, you need to maintain balance and then flip your underhand to an overhand grip. Then press.

The biggest challenge is keeping your balance while doing the flip.

Experiment with hand grip on light weight – as with any exercise – too wide or too narrow will cause big problems.

You can balance it off of your stomach, and sometimes even use your belt to help out – but check with your competition rules to make sure you're not illegally using equipment.

The Log Press

The biggest problem here is when users *curl* the log. It needs to be close to your body, so you can pop your hips and “roll” it up. Then you press right up underneath it.

“Head Through the Hole”

This is a phrase strongmen use when pressing. When lifting things overhead with both hands, your head should be *between* the “hole” made by your arms. Nick explains this 11:10 in.

At the end of the video, we catch a good side angle of this as well.

Video 2: Thomas Inch Dumbbell

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This behemoth of a dumbbell has an incredibly thick grip, and is meant to be lifted to your shoulders with two hands, and then pressed with one arm overhead.

Your strength begins from your feet, and having a stable base. It's important to

start over the dumbbell, so that you can pick it straight up to your shoulder, saving energy.

Once it's on your shoulder, on the press portion of things, you can only use one arm. So make sure you keep that other hand off!

Once again, head through the hole.

Getting Ready for Thomas

This is not the kind of exercise you can just go and do. You need to build up to this through a variety of other big lifts and using smaller dumbbells. Start with generalized training before doing the specific training.

The Thomas shown in the video can be loaded with extra 25lb plates.

Video 3: Farmer's Walk

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There are different types of competitions for the Farmer's Walk. You may need to carry the load for a certain amount of time, or at a certain speed.

The Pick



The trick is to begin with staggered feet, so that you are moving right at your first step right after the "pick". You don't lift and *then* move. You lift *and* move, if that makes sense.

When carrying it, do *not* use your biceps – keep it close to the body using your shoulders (nearly like a shrug) and keeping your arms straight. Otherwise you can hurt your biceps tendon.

The Turn

The turn is a huge challenge because physics is against you. As you're turning, the heavy weights will want to keep going in the direction you just had them pointing at – but you're trying to make them turn. It's a nasty game of momentum that you must correct for.

Too little correction, and you'll have too wide of a turn, which is too slow. If your correction is too tight, the weights will overcompensate and you'll end up zig-zagging or the weights will not stay straight.

It takes much experience and training to do it as effectively as Nick does. Watch him go full-speed at 9:55 in the video.

About Nick Klugiewicz

Nick is an NAS Texas Strongman, and is a Cellucor athlete. You can see Nick's Page on Facebook.

Filmed at the Big Tex Gym in Austin, TX

Want to try some of this gear out? Come on down to the Big Tex Gym in North Austin, and Steve Smith (the owner) will get you going! This is the *only* hardcore gym in North Austin!