

Essential Components of a Good Strength Program

An Interview with Jim Smith of The Diesel Crew

AJ: Hi everyone. This is AJ Roberts of www.HardcoreStrengthCoach.com. I'm going to do a live webinar here with Jim Smith of the [Diesel Crew](http://www.DieselCrew.com). Jim just released a brand-new program called "Accelerated Muscular Development."

Before we get into the questions, Jim, why don't you go ahead and let everyone know who you are for those who may be listening but haven't heard of you before.

Jim: Sure. Like AJ said, my name is Jim Smith. I'm a strength coach and I've been training athletes since 2001 – athletes and lifters – but primarily all the programming that I've done up until maybe two or three years ago was primarily for athletes, so I've been programming more mainstream in the last two or three years as I started writing for *Men's Fitness* and also I became a member of Elite Fitness to [inaudible 0:01:00.6] what they did.

My programming up until that point was a lot of power lifting, Strongman training, and kettlebells as well. I've been moving more toward a lot of body weight training and a lot more fulfilling-type programming for general lifters because that's kind of what they're looking for.

I've been training myself for upwards of almost twenty years and, like I said, if you haven't been to www.DieselCrew.com, that's where we kind of got our start before 2001, and that was before I became certified through the National Strength and Conditioning Association (NSCA). So that's a quick background of how I got started.

AJ: Great. For those that don't know, I've been friends with Jim for a long time and he always blows me away with his knowledge. He's one of those trainers that not only is in the gym, training hard, and getting results; he's also studying and continues to be learning. We always run into each other at different seminars we go to. So to

anyone who's listening, you may not be so familiar with Jim or myself. Basically, we care a lot about getting good results out there.

And that kind of leads into our question, Jim. What is Accelerated Muscular Development?

Jim: Well, besides being a long set of words strung together that a lot of people can't spell correctly – I think I should have put a little bit more time into the title, but what I was trying to do was put a description out there that kind of tells exactly what the program is.

It's a system that I developed that my main goal was to say, "Hey. I don't want to spend all day in the gym. If I'm a lifter, I want to go in there and I want to build muscle. I want to get stronger. I don't want to spend hours and hours in the gym, which is typically what everyone is doing. I want something that's high impact: I get in, I get out, three times a week, and that was sort of the underlying principle when I started looking at developing the system.

In the program, I do provide sixteen weeks' worth of workouts. And everyone has asked me about that. And that's sort of what all muscle-building products or programs typically give you. It's like, "Here's twelve weeks. Go do these twelve weeks. Good luck."

But what happens when that twelve weeks is over? Where do you go? You don't really have the knowledge or you being informed to know where to go after that.

So, like AJ said, we're always trying to go to seminars and learn the latest techniques and we always try to build upon our knowledge, because as a strength coach or a personal trainer, I want to be able to give these lifters the best information out there. And that's my goal. I want to change lives basically.

And I have to continue to better myself and that's what I did with this program . It gives you the knowledge that I've learned and lays a foundation so that you

understand, “Well, here’s a workout. But what are the important components of the workout?” It’s not just the exercise that you do. I don’t just go in and do a bench press and then do some tricep stuff, you know. There are so many more components to a good strength program than just the primary exercises.

And that’s typically what you get when you buy them off **[inaudible 0:04:45.9]**. You get the workout and that’s it. So I want to not only teach everyone who buys the system why and how muscle is built, but I want to teach them and give them the knowledge – so that moving forward after that twelve weeks of workout, or that sixteen weeks of workout – they can create their own program and they can make informed decisions dependent upon their own individual needs.

Now, just an example. Let’s say – and everyone can probably relate to this – but you walk in and it’s bench day, it’s upper body day, whatever. You lay down on the bench. You throw a plate on and start lifting the weight. You feel kind of creaky. You feel kind of weak. You don’t really start hitting your groove until that second or third set. That’s when you start feeling, “Man, my shoulders are starting to warm up. My chest is warmed up. I can really get some good drive on the bench.

Well, there’s a reason for that. There’s a warm-up and a progression to what happens during a good workout. You don’t just come walking in off the street and start banging out reps on the bench. If there’s a specific methodology that you can use to not only warm up for the workout but get the maximum benefit of the workout because by the time you hit the bench press, you should have a good sweat going. You should be activated. You should have hit your soft tissue stuff. Everything’s ready to go so when you lay down on the bench you can get the greatest bench workout that you can because like I said, we’re not going to spend a lot of time in the gym. I want to hit it and get out.

In the workout in the package for the program, I provide an upper body workout and a lower body workout where you can actually follow along while I do a workout and I think the longest ones took 35-40 minutes, and that was only because I was working out with a partner. The workouts typically take right around 30 minutes, and that’s start to finish.

So that was my main intent, to provide the knowledge for anyone to write their own program. I don't want them to just rely on stuff they get out of a magazine or stuff they read in a forum and things like that, so that's what AMD is and kind of why I wanted to provide it.

AJ: I know a lot of people listening might be thinking... you said the workouts take 30 minutes a week, right?

Jim: Well, in...

AJ: A lot of people, especially with body-building, we get into these long workouts and things like that. How are these workouts different than say, what you would see in a popular magazine that's out there?

Jim: Well, like I said, with popular magazines, what they're going to do is say "Well, four sets of twelve of everything," and they're going to start right into the bench press. If someone is coming in from sitting at the computer all day or they're working outside or sitting on the couch playing Xbox, you know, you can't just walk in and start hitting four sets of twelve of everything.

The reason AMD is different is it gives you – the way I laid out the system was it gives you modules or components so you walk in and you do your soft tissue work. Then you go in and you work on your mobility, start opening up those joints, and right before the workout, you start exciting the muscles, okay. You start activating the muscles. You start warming up. And it could be more of a general warm-up. It could be a specific warm-up, and that's before you even touch your primary exercises.

So once you hit the stride and hit your primary exercise, then you get into the supplemental work set and you end with... If there's anything you need to rehab or there's anything that you need to work on individually, you can do that. You can do some stretching.

But you know, it's not just the workout. It's step-by-step, from the time you walk in the gym to the time you leave.

AJ: Well, that's really cool. I know you've been working on AMD for a long time. One of your purposes for making it was to make it different and I think with each of those components, to me it really stands out. It's not one of these eBooks you get that has maybe 20 pages of theory and then the rest is just pictures and exercise descriptions.

You've gone into so much detail and there's videos, is that correct? For them to watch the workouts you've done. You've set up a YouTube channel for people who purchase that have like... You show them the exercises correctly as well. And that is just going above and beyond anything I've seen out there.

That's one of the reason I got you on the call to try to talk about the program, and hopefully those listening in can get an idea from the conversation here on how to build their programs, too, and what they should be adding in.

Well, Jim, what are some of the big differences from the other eBooks I've read. I mentioned a few, but I know there's a bunch.

Jim: I haven't really seen many of the programs out there. Some of the ones I've seen, like I said, are just repeating what you said, you know, maybe 20 pages of theory and then they get into the workout.

The main AMD manual is right around 200 pages, but the system itself has three manuals. The three manuals are... Well, the way I lay out the system is it's color-coded. Because what I wanted to do was have you hit the ground running. I wanted everything as simple as possible.

Now, the components that I was talking about when you walk into the gym, things that we want to do in a specific sequence are: first, we want to work on our soft tissue. If we work on our soft tissue we're going to have better movement. We're going to have better sensibility. We're going to have better traction – that means to make us stronger.

AJ: So you go over the different soft tissue work. I'm assuming foam rolls?

Jim: Yeah. Everything.

So the first manual in the AMD system is what I called "Accelerated Corrective Strategy," and it has three strategies in it. It has the foam roller stuff which is just soft tissue work. Then it has your mobility stuff. "Hey, I want to start opening and doing stuff. I want to start moving better. I've been sitting at the computer for years." Or "I just feel terrible. I feel so stiff. I've got to open up," and then it has activation.

So we have soft tissue, mobility, and activation. Those three things are the lead-in to your workout. Now that's the yellow manual. – ACS is the yellow – so we start our workout with the yellow.

Then we move into the main AMD manual. Now, in the main AMD manual, the next step in the AMD system is we want to warm up. That warm-up, like I said, could be a general warm-up. It could be a specific warm-up. Let's say I'm doing a bench press. The specific warm-up for bench press could be light works at the bench press or some dumbbell work, or it could even be activating or warming up our supportive structures, like our lat's and our shoulders and different things like that. So we could have a general warm-up or a more specific warm-up.

Then in the AMD system – and that's the blue (so we go yellow and then we go blue) – in the blue, we go: Our warm-up, and then we do our primary exercises, and these are the compounds, multi-joint exercises that we're going to. Multi-joint basically means, "Hey, I'm working lots of muscle groups."

That's our biggest impact. That's how we're going to build muscle because you'll work in exercises, and remember what I said, we want the highest impact in the shortest amount of time. We're not going to get a high impact in doing tricep kickbacks but we will get a high impact from doing closed grip bench press. So we're picking the right exercises to do for a primary workout to get the biggest impact.

Then we move into our supplemental work which is either working that primary muscle group or we're working muscle groups that support that primary – if our main muscle is our chest, we're going to work on our triceps and our back, and different things like that.

Now we've done two of the three main manuals to the AMD system. We've done the yellow, which is the Accelerated Corrective Strategies. We've done the blue, which is the Accelerated Muscular Development, which is our warm-up and our primary exercise and supplemental exercise.

Now we go into our core, and that's the Red – Combat Core. Now, Combat Core has been out on the market for a few years and it's been peer-reviewed. I've had some of the biggest strength coaches and fitness professionals look that over and they bought it. The feedback has been huge.

What I did to that was, I even went further and added more exercises in the Combat Core because what I wanted to do was break it up into three sections, as I said. Well, here's our basic core training exercises. Here's our intermediate and here's our elite. So as you get stronger, you can progress from beginner to elite in those core training exercises. Now, that's our core work.

So now we've introduced and warmed up and activated and soft tissue. We've done our core stuff. Now, at the end of the workout, we go right back to Accelerated Corrective Strategies because we want to use those same exercises that we used to warm-up, we want to use them for rehab, anything. If we have a shoulder issue or a knee issue or something that's not working, we want to use those things. We want to finish our workout before we leave and spend some extra attention to getting everything balanced out.

So that's an overview, and I basically gave away everything for free, but I'm just telling you the structure is proven. It's scientific. If you read any of Eric Cressey's stuff, Mike Robertson, those guys are amazing. And Mike Robertson, by the way, actually edited the manual and he loved it as well.

Those things, those activities, are essential before you even hit the ground running with your primaries and such. And nobody does it. So what I wanted to do was to make it as easy as possible. You come in, and in this section of the workout, the first thing you do is this. The second thing you do is this. The third thing you do is this. Then you do your workout and then you end with this. It's to the point and straightforward. It's very basic and very simple to follow.

AJ: You sent me it awhile back and I've gone through it. For me and my training goals, being a power lifter – and a lot of what I do is different – but as far as the warm-up and soft tissue work and all of that, that's stuff I started implementing a long time ago and this, the way you've laid it out is... You know, I wish I had something like that two years ago when I was trying to figure out which exercises I need to do and which I can skip, because a lot of times when you get a product, they just put a hundred exercises in there and tell you to pick four and then rotate after so many things. So I really love it the way it's laid out. It's like, do this, this, this and this.

And even being advanced, I can see the huge benefits for it. You were talking about the proven system and actually, you had a few people doing this program before you launched it. You had that high school wrestler you were telling me about. I think his name was Mike. Why don't we go over what you did with Mike and how he transformed, how his body transformed, how his athletic abilities transformed. What were some of the differences, because he was an athlete before. He looked like he worked out and then after working with you for only a real short amount of time, it was amazing the difference, you know?

Jim: Well, obviously with any younger athlete, you know right away that their nutrition is bad, okay? They don't get any time to eat. They might eat breakfast and then they don't eat again till lunch and then they either have...

And when I got ahold of Mike, it was right before wrestling season, so I knew that he'd be doing wrestling right after school. So the first thing I told him to do is, "Man, you've got to start planning the night before to get some nutrition as a teen."

I'm not so great with the nutrition piece. I know some of the key pieces and what we

need to do nutrition. So what I did for AMD was I brought in John Alvino. He's a men's fitness expert as well, but he's on the nutrition side. So I had him lay out exactly what to do to figure out what your core needs are within AMD. And then what I said was, "Listen. Hey, they figure out their caloric needs. I need you to make me some muscle-building meal plans." So we did that as well.

So what I did was, if I'm not an expert at something, I go seek out who an expert is in the subject that I need, so I had him build that into the AMD system because I wanted to make sure it was on-point, you know. I don't want to go in there with something sub-par and me try to struggle through it. He's the guy that does nutritional programming every day for clients. So that's the piece that I had him come in for.

I had him consult with Mike as well, but Mike needed to eat more. He wasn't eating enough. So we had to plan the night before. That's the key. Let's say you have a busy job, you're always on the run and stuff. The only way for you to be successful is: one, to be consistent and two, just pre-plan. You've got to plan the night before. You have to lay everything out, maybe cook everything on one day, but if you're consistent, you're going to see huge gains.

So we cleaned up Mike's meals and we made sure that he was filling in the gaps between breakfast and lunch, maybe right around 10:00 a.m. and then between lunch and his wrestling workout. Then after he got home, he tended to eat his butt off. For one, he was weak. I mean, he looked all ripped up initially when I got him, but one, he was weak; and two, his posture was terrible, especially for a wrestler's sake. They typically have a kyphotic posture, you know a plump, shorter posture, because of all the anterior work they do. They're always pushing and pulling in front, but they never do any upper back work so their posture is horrible.

What I did was, I brought him in – like I said – always starting the workout with our soft tissue work, activation stuff, okay? So he had bad shoulders. He had bad posture. We started activating his upper back. He started doing pull-aparts, pushups plus, all kinds of programs – everything that's in the Activation section of Accelerated Corrective Strategies.

AJ: Jim, just a quick question. Is there any way you can turn your microphone up? A couple of the listeners say you're a little bit quiet.

Jim: Okay, is that better? It must be. It was kind of slipping. I'm sorry about that.

AJ: Yeah, that sounds a little louder.

Jim: So what we did was we just started to work on his upper back and that was the activation so, like I said, it's an individual thing. Take a look in the mirror. What's slumping forward? What's tight? What's restricted? Those are the things you want to work on in that activation section and also really focus your soft tissue work on the things that are really restricted and tight, and our activation stuff is going to work on things that are inhibited.

So, just as an example, I always talk about sitting on your butt all day. Well, it means your glutes are inhibited because they're shut down. If your glutes are shut down, your hamstrings have to do all the work and then you get hamstring pulls and different things like that. You have anterior pelvic tilt, different things like that. So we want to make sure we're activating our glutes, okay? So that's something that right off the bat, is a key.

If I sit on the couch all day, I'm going to activate my glutes. That goes in the activation section. So it's an individual thing, but I'm telling you why you need to do it and you can make the decision for yourself. Like I said, though, I do provide a sixteen-week workout that gets you started. I provide you with videos that show you me actually walking through the workout.

But getting back to Mike, he just followed the program. We brought him in. We worked on the compound movements, all the things to get him stronger and, like I said, he looked ripped up. Posture was bad and also he had no pressing power. He had no strength, and he had to work on building the foundation – lots of body weight stuff and progressing him to lifting weights because he had never really lifted any appreciable amount of weight.

And as a side note, too, when lifting with compound movements, you have to understand that your core has to be braced and that's something that I also talk about in Combat Core when we're doing the core training exercises – how to brace your core, because a lot of people are still under the misconception that you suck your abs in when you're doing any type of loaded exercise like squats or dead lifts or whatever, but AJ, you know, as an elite power lifter – AJ's an elite power lifter – what would happen if you had a thousand pounds on your back and you're pulling your abs in?

AJ: *[Laughs]* I'd be sitting on the ground.

Jim: Right. You'd be smashed on the ground. So I'll give you a little hint. In Combat Core, what I do is I do a simple drill, especially with people who have never understood how to brace their abs. I take an elastic band. Some of you have jump stretch bands so you can actually use exercise tubing but you tie it around your waist. Now let's say we were using it for dead lifts. You tie the band around your waist and you push your abs out until the band becomes tight. Now anytime throughout the movement if the band drops or becomes loose, you know that you're not bracing your abs outwards. So that's a little tip you can do, or a little drill, to start grooving in a pattern of bracing under tension.

Now, why is that important? If I brace my abs out, my lower lumbar becomes very secure, becomes very tight, because there's lateral hoop tendons on the rectus abdominis that wrap around and attach on the lower lumbar. So everything is working together as one kinetic chain and bracing your abs out is very key to stabilizing your lower back and to lift any kind of weight and to be safe, you know, injury-free.

So we worked on Mike's upper back. We worked on his nutrition. We worked on his bracing because, obviously, I want the highest impact so I had him squatting. I had him doing bench press. I had him doing dead lifts – all those compound types of exercises. And like I said, he didn't have a lot of time. When I got him he was heading into the season so one, he was training every night, and he usually had a match on Saturdays, so we had to have the highest impact in the shortest amount of

time and we had maybe one to two workouts a week.

Now after the season we started working out three times a week just like the AMD system is – and no more, because I wanted to make sure that... Well, one of the key pieces of any muscle-building program is not only the progressive overload, not only the nutrition – those two things we talked about – but it's the recovery. So we had to make sure that, because the lifting was so stressful, because lifting with compound movement is very stressful, we wanted to make sure we have full recovery, and that's why I laid out the AMD system so that it's only three days a week.

I know you're working every day, right? You don't have eight hours sleep. No one does. I have kids so I know that. I never get eight hours sleep and I know I work every day so for me to get full recovery, I have to make sure that I'm not in the gym every day. And I don't want to be in the gym every day. Maybe when I was younger, I was in there maybe four or five times a week, but as I got older, my time became very limited. I have kids, I work every day. So I want to make sure that I'm getting full recovery between my workouts because when I do work out, I want to be able to hit it with the greatest intensity I can because I know that I'm only in there 30 minutes and I don't have to hold anything, or hold anything in the tank.

If I go into a workout and I'm like, "Man. I've got to be in here an hour and a half, two hours to do 20 sets of arms," or whatever, you're not going to give 100% when you first start. But if you know you have 30 minutes in the gym, I'm going to do step one, step two, it's all laid out for you, and you know exactly what to do. You can go in there and kill it for half an hour and get out. That's basically what we did with Mike.

AJ: Yeah, you know, he gained sixteen pounds in sixteen weeks just looking at him change. What you said and what's important is that he worked out before, and a lot of people you've worked with have worked out before. It's not that they lack effort. It's not that they can't put in the hours. It's just that they don't have a system to follow. They're missing key components. And they might in the gym for an hour or two hours, but they're not doing the things they need and it's a lot of time to be wasting. And this is just a straight-up "Here's what you do. Here's how you get it

done. Here are your results.” You know?

And so if anyone out there is looking for a program that’s just basically, “Boom! Here’s everything you could possibly need,” and say, if you’re listening in and you’re like, “Well, I don’t just want to gain muscle,” You’ve got a fat loss manual you’ve thrown in there. And you have a stretch one. It’s a lot more than just muscle mass, right?

Jim: Yeah. It’s huge. Like I said, I’ve been writing this thing for over a year and the stuff I put in there has been gathered over many years. I knew that when I put this out, if it was only a muscle-building program, then I would have people saying, “Well, you know, I’m really out of shape.” There are two sides of the scale, right? There’s a smaller guy who wants to gain mass, but there are other guys that want to lose fat and gain mass.

So what I did was, before I released this, I thought about those two things and I wanted to make sure that the fat loss component was in there, so I created a fourth manual as a supplement to the AMD system. It’s Accelerated Fat Loss Strategies. And what that is, is it gives you five different options to do to accelerate your fat loss. These are high-impact accelerated workouts that say, “Well, here’s my main muscle-building workout. I want to do my fat loss workout right after that.”

I presented it to Mike Robertson, and the way I had it laid out was, I had it initially as “Here’s your three AMD workouts. In between, you can put in some fat loss workouts.” And he said, “Man, that’s so much volume and these fat loss strategies are so short, why don’t we put them after the main workout, because otherwise you’ll be working out five days a week which is totally against what the whole system is comprised of.” And I said, “Oh, okay. Let me make these Fat Loss Strategies high-impact, they can be done right after your main workout and get them out.

The cool thing about it, depending on the intensity of your Fat Loss Strategy, it jacks your metabolism up. Alwyn Cosgrove has pulled up scientific studies all about this and I actually put those in the Fat Loss Manual. But it jacks your metabolism up to 38 hours after the main workout. If you see a lot of guys do their muscle-building

workout and then they go and they walk on the treadmill. That steady, say, cardio might burn a few calories while you're actually doing it. If I'm on the treadmill ten minutes, I'm burning calories for ten minutes. But it doesn't do anything for your metabolism after the workout.

Now if you go in there and do intervals where you do a high intensity sprint on the treadmill followed by a jog, and then repeat it for a certain length of time, that's going to jack your metabolism, like I said, up to 38 hours after the workout. You're still burning calories when you're off the treadmill and you're out of the gym. So the Fat Loss Manual is definitely something that I wanted to make sure I included in the package because I knew that there are a lot of guys out there that aren't the small guy. They're the bigger guy and they want to lose weight while they're starting to build a strength and muscle foundation.

AJ: For sure. And then you also included a Strength Manual, too, for people to transition into once they've done the sixteen weeks. Is that right?

Jim: What was that now?

AJ: You've got the Strength Manual in there as well.

Jim: Oh, yes. Well, what I did was, I have twelve weeks of workouts and then four more weeks of strength and power. I said, "Well, okay. We laid the foundation these first twelve weeks. Now I want to start building some power with the workout." So I picked it up and worked on more explosive movements on those last four weeks. Is that what you're talking about?

AJ: Yeah. You basically transition. Teaching people you're going to build the muscle then get it strong, build the muscle then get it strong, which is something in our workouts we do a lot. We do a lot of, contrary to what people think of power lifters, we do a lot of body-building. And the system you laid out is you're going to be big and you're going to be strong and you're going to be tough, you know? You can have everything. It's kind of the ultimate system so to speak. You haven't really left any stone unturned. You've got the mass-building meal plans, a bunch of bonuses that

come with it. I mean, it's really loaded up. I know you have two secret bonuses as well that they get access to once they log in. It's great. Like I said, you've been a friend a long time and if it was crap, I'd tell you straight up. *[Laughs.]*

It's more like we just have a... I mean we're friends and that kind of thing, so... I'm just blown away by it and I think Alwyn Cosgrove said when your "Core Combat" system came along awhile back, he said it's one of those manuals that comes along and blows everything else out of the water, that sets a standard to a new height, and I feel that this does that again. And this take the muscle-building to a new height, and other people are going to have to step up to the game because it truly is something that isn't out there. And the great thing is if people have purchased other programs, this is only going take what they have and go a few steps further for them as well. So it's not just a beginning program. It's for everyone.

Jim: Right, exactly. And just as a side note, I really respect Cosgrove and everything and he's a mentor of mine – and you as well. Every time I come to see you I learn something, so just the feedback from people I respect means the world to me. So I appreciate it and, like I said, I always try to over-deliver and I've never put anything out there that's junk.

As you stated, the cool thing is if you have other programs or anything that you're working on, you can take the AMD system and say, "Hey. Well, here's the main program that I got but I know now that I've got to start doing workouts with these three components and I've got to end with this." So you can plug the AMD system into anything you're doing and just understand now that these are the essential components of a strength program and if they're not in there, I know now where they go and I know what to put in there. So you can use this system with any other program that you're currently on. So that's a good point and I'd never thought about that.

AJ: You can take what you have and build around it. You can use the different sections in different places depending on what you're doing and what your goal is. It's really more than just one thing. In essence, it's three sections that are really something like ten manuals in total because you added the different things in each one. It's just loaded. It would take people a week just to read through everything they get. I mean, they can get started right away but with all the bonuses and everything like

that, it's going to take a long time to get through.

Jim: What I did do – and I knew that it might seem overwhelming even though it's a very simple and basic system – so there are two things I did. One, I color-coded everything and I said, “Hey, here's the model. Everything is color-coded. Each manual is color-coded and you can see how it fits directly into the model. But also what I did was I created a Quick Reference Guide that says, okay, well, before I read anything, let me read this and let me go through it and I put in... The thing is huge. For each manual, there are tons of exercises, and I have the exercise index in the Quick Reference Guide for each manual.

What I wanted to do with that, when you print it out, you'll have it in your three-ring binder and it will be all right there and then you can just take – here's the exercise I'm going to take out of here and put them in here, and you're ready to go. So the Quick Reference Guide sort of allows you to hit the ground running and tells you what essential things, what pages you should read right away so that you could start tomorrow if you wanted to, just implementing it.

AJ: Good. Let's get into some of the questions. There are a couple that have come through here. If anyone is listening and has questions, type them in and if they're appropriate, we'll do our best to answer them.

We've talked a little bit about this when we spoke about the program before it was released, but Ed is asking basically, he is training for his Royal Bench Press competition and he's been using the Westside system and our system. How could he take your program, what would you recommend to him, to incorporate, basically, into his bench press competition training cycle?

Jim: Ed, thanks for the question, buddy, I really appreciate it. The first thing I'd tell Ed to do is go out on the Accelerated Muscular Development site and at the bottom, there's a free articles link. And what I did was, I just want to overload you with all these free resources just so you can really feel comfortable with the information. If you'd like the articles, that's great. You don't have to buy the system. They're all there for you. I want you to use them as your reference and just learn. I'm here to teach you.

Ed, go out there under the free articles and there's a "How to Bench Press" article. When you go in there, it lists all the key points to setting up on the bench and different things like that, and I provide you with a ten-minute video, a YouTube video, where you can watch and show how to set up on the bench, the leg drive, how to row the weight down to your chest. A lot of people think that you have to relax and let the weight drop. No, stay real tight and row the way down. There are different key points like that. Go out and watch that video and read that article and it will take you, like I said, ten minutes for the video and maybe two minutes to read the article.

The second thing I'd say is that I think AMD is perfect for you because what you can do is continue doing your Westside protocol, your heavy/light, heavy/light, heavy/fast, heavy/fast. I don't know if you're doing repetitives after or dynamic on your second day, but continue doing your Westside, but this is going to give you what to do before you even hit the rack. Remember what I said, it tells you, as soon as you walk in off the street, it's just soft tissue, mobilize, and activate, then get into your bench.

And I tell you what. There's going to be huge dividends paid for your tricep strength, your lockout power, if you start opening up that upper back. AMD would fit right into that, for not only rehab and keeping everything balanced in your shoulders and your back and your chest, but also warming up before you even hit the rack, so if you go to your competition, you're going to have your bands there. You can hit your pull-apart. You can do your pushup plus. You can have your foam rollers, start doing your soft tissue, and then you start your warm-up and you're ready to go, brotha!

AJ: We talked a little bit earlier about that. I agree. The stuff that you have, especially before and after, it just blends well. Like I said, I've been doing the warm-ups, the mobility, the activation work for awhile now and this is the simplest, easiest thing I've seen that really is aimed at getting stronger, getting bigger. The other ones try to hit every market there is: stay-at-home people who don't work, who don't get off the couch; people who work out all the time, and you have to try to figure out what to do and this is just boom, to the point.

Jim: Right.

AJ: I think Ed, like Smitty said, that article – you did a video with it – it’s awesome. Go check it out. If you want to get to the AMD site, there’s a link right there at the bottom of the page here. Scroll to the bottom to the Articles. Anyone who’s interested in AMD can do the same thing, just lick the link and just read everything so you really get to understand what the whole program is and what it involves.

The next question here. Is this program only for men? Or can women use it too? And that was from Serena. Smitty, what’s your answer?

Jim: *[Laughs]* Well, the way I marketed it was for men, but without a doubt women can use it. There are tons of women bodybuilders out there, strength, athletes, for sport or power lifting or Olympic weight-lifting. It’s for anyone. The way I wrote it obviously was for men, but like I said, what I did was provide the basics for any good strength program so it doesn’t matter if you’re male or female. You should be hitting these steps: Step 1, Step 2, Step 3, workout, and then move into the core stuff and rehab. It’s the basics to any good program, so yes, without a doubt it could be for men and women.

AJ: It looks pretty hardcore, but like you said, in terms of the basics, it has everything, and certainly we’ve talked a lot over the years about should men and women train differently. They don’t in my gym. I know they don’t in your gym, so I just thought that was a great question.

Let me look at the next question here. Bill was asking about tennis elbow. He has an injury and hasn’t been able to do any upper body workouts. He’s wondering what are some ideas about working around that or solving the problem and how can AMD help that?

Jim: I definitely would say not work around it in the sense that we ignore it and try to do exercise that feels okay to us. I’m more of an aggressive rehab guy. I don’t like to let things sit because if they sit they become immobile, so if we threw your arm in a sling and just had you do certain things that felt okay – it’s not going to get better – I

would say a lot of the things that I've done for elbow rehab have worked awesome. The first thing I get anybody to do is just start working their upper back with soft tissue, so foam rolling the crap out of your upper back because that stuff becomes distended, like I said, a kyphotic posture. I said that before. It just basically means everything is slumped forward and that's just from large rep, or high-volume short repetition movement. So if I'm always moving the mouse out here, working the Xbox controller, that's high repetition – over and over and over with a short range of motion. That's going to weaken our upper back and distend our shoulders forward. So we want to work on the soft tissue of our upper back. That's the first thing. We always do that.

The second thing is, you can grab a lacrosse ball or tennis ball and start doing some trigger point stuff up and down your arm onto your bicep, your radialis, your forearm, your biceps, your triceps – just start pinpointing certain points and just rolling it with the tennis ball. So that's another technique for soft tissue but more direct because the implement you're using is small and you can get more direct application.

The next thing I do for tennis elbow is I start doing rotations. Supination is where your palm is up and pronation is where your hand is down and the way you can remember that is, if you have your hand up with your palm up, it looks like you're carrying a soup bowl. You can remember that: 'soup-in-ate' and pronation is like where you pour it out, you pour the bowl out. So supination and pronation back and forth with a sledgehammer. The reason that works is because it puts torque on the elbow and what you do is you keep your hand close to the weighted head of the sledgehammer and you go back and forth, i.e. do high volume repetitions with that.

As you get stronger, you move your hand further and further down away from the weight so you have more torque. There's a longer moment arm for the leverage, keep back and forth, back and forth. And the way I like to do it is I keep my arm at a 90° angle and if I'm in a seated position, I have it just resting on my quad – I have it resting on my leg and I go back and forth, back and forth. If you don't have a sledgehammer and you're at the gym, I'd recommend using a **cage pin**, just grabbing a **cage pin** and doing it. Same thing: supination, pronation. High volume.

And if you can, the last thing I'd recommend for tennis elbow – well, I could go on all day, but I'll say two more things actually.

Contrast bath: get a five-gallon bucket. Fill one with really hot water and one with ice water and just dunk your arm in there and just do extensors. Open your hand up, open your fingers up under the water while your elbow is submerged and move it back and forth in the hot water and cold water. Just go back and forth and work on extension.

You can also take that water out and put rice in a bucket and do rice digs and rice extensors. That's basically, you put a 20-pound bag of rice in a five-gallon bucket and you plunge your hand in and just extend your fingers out, plunge your hand in and extend your fingers out. Just working that extensor work because, like I said, a lot of people develop symptomatic tendonitis or tendonosis in their elbows just because their musculature is not balanced. They do a lot of grip work, but they never do extensor work. And extensor work is very key and vital to creating a balance in your overall musculature because when there's an imbalance, that's when you start having issues. So those are things I'd recommend for tennis elbow.

AJ: That's great. Injuries suck and you've done a lot of videos before on injury and I've had a couple of people who have contacted me on the Q&A and I just send them straight to the video.

Jim: We talked about My YouTube channel. If you go to www.YouTube.com/smittydiesel, you'll find a sledgehammer rotation video out there and I have all my athletes do that if they have any type of elbow issue. And a lot of people get elbow issues too – and AJ can attest to this – from doing squats. They just have immobility in their shoulders and they have a lot of compression and stuff on their elbows when they unrack a squat weight, especially when you start getting heavier, and you can develop some issues there, too. So you want to definitely work on your soft tissue and work on some rotations and some contrast baths.

AJ: You've taught us all a lot of great stuff today that you can use back and forth. I know it's Memorial Day and it's pretty nice up here, and nice there. I'm sure the listeners listening are wanting to get out and enjoy the rest of their day, so I'm going to bring it to an end here.

You've given away a bunch of information. Whether people pick up the program or not, I think they will get a lot out of this. So again, if people want to look at the program, you can click the link on the page there. There will be a replay of this and I'll post it on my lead account on Twitter, Facebook, if you guys follow me. I'll send it over to Smitty, and post it on the blog, too.

So, Smitty, I guess I'll see you in a couple of days in New Jersey, buddy.

Jim: Yes, sir. And I just want to say thank you to everyone: one, to AJ for putting this on and two, to everyone else, man. I really appreciate it. It's Memorial Day. You came here and listened to me and man, that makes me feel really good and I'm very, very humbled, so I appreciate it.

And if you don't pick up AMD, please go to the site anyway through the link on the page and there are hundreds of free articles I put on there just for you guys and anybody who wants to come to the site. Just go out there and also go to the YouTube page. It's all free. It's all for you guys.

AJ: Alright. Thanks everyone. Like Smitty said, we really do appreciate everyone taking time out to listen to us today. I'll put the replay up ASAP and we'll talk to everyone again real soon here. So, over and out.

Jim: Thanks.