



PRESENTS

THE CONSUMMATE ATHLETE TRAINING SERIES

SLED TRAINING FOR
ATHLETES



By: Matt Wichlinski
TSSAthletics.com

INTRODUCTION

Thank you for checking out the Introduction to Sled Training (ST) for Athletes. This introduction will not be a comprehensive guide, but a quick overview of some of the things that are possible with ST. Now listen up... No one is responsible or liable for your actions but you. If you choose to follow someone else's advice or use their ideas in some way in your life, and it does not work for you, or you get hurt in the process, it is no one's problem but your own. You have the choice to do or not do. With that being said, I give you my word that I would never say or ask you to do anything that might be harmful. If I think there may be an issue to watch out for, I will try to announce it. There is no substitute for good old fashioned common sense. There are some aspects of ST that will be easy, while some things will be hard. Not every exercise is suitable for everyone, especially not right away. Make a personal evaluation of your current ability and situation (injuries, strength level, training experience) and use this information to grow yourself, not destroy yourself. There are four basic areas that I want to address with ST.

- ◇ Mobility
- ◇ Stability
- ◇ Strength
- ◇ Conditioning



Kee in mind that ST is not yoga class and we are not trying to touch our toes behind our ears, we will leave that to our girlfriends. We want to work out some of the kinks from our hard and intense training prior to ST and better prepare ourselves for our next intense training session. The freedom of motion that ST offers is ideal for symmetry and

athletic balance. I believe that ST is one of the overall best ways to condition your body physically, rehab, prehab and recover between intense training sessions. ST in itself can be very intense, depending on how you use it, but one of my favorite ways to use ST is for the recovery aspect. Using ST for recovery is no secret, guys like Louie Simmons and his followers have been doing it a long time, and they are some strong dudes with lots of aches and pains that come with the territory of training hard and heavy. Incorporating ST in to their training has helped them get back to their heavier training more frequently, and it can help you do what you like doing more frequently too.

ST is very versatile and can be done anywhere you can find a road without too much traffic, a field or beach depending on the kind of sled you have. A sled costs very little money to make, a little more to buy, or can be free if you are creative and have a few items that fit the bill. There is little to no excuse for anyone to not be able to perform this type of training, as the equipment investment is minimal and the training time and environment is endless. With plenty of time and space to do your training, you will be able to learn and experiment with



Bent Over Dynamic Front Pull



dozens of new exercises that can be performed to enhance your mobility, speed up your recovery, and improve general physical preparedness (GPP). One of the issues with a lot of the current fitness systems these days is the desire to go very hard and intense. This is not a problem with someone who has adequate strength, mobile and stable joints and a balanced development. The problem arises when athletes undergo very intense training when they are weak and unstable which



very often results in injury from fatigue, poor posture and improper technique. To combat this issue, ST offers myriad exercises that create substantial mobility and stability throughout the body which can make an athlete eventually perform more explosive movements, with higher intensity and increased volume with a lower risk of injury all while having much more fun doing it, due to better motor control and performance. Increased performance is always more fun. In addition to the increased mobility and stability you will gain from regular and proper ST, there is a huge potential for strength gain, particularly if you are a novice trainee.

There are different kinds of strength we will focus on as well. Basic strength is the foundation for all other athletic training.

Increased strength while at least maintaining other aspects of your ability, such as flexibility, will almost always mean increased athleticism. Static strength is a major consideration and something that I feel a lot of athletes are missing today. It may seem a little boring at times because of what seems a lack of activity (simply holding a strong position for a period of time), but static strength is a wild beast that can make or break many situations for some athletes like wrestlers and grapplers, especially. The mental aspect of static strength training is unparalleled in my opinion. If you're not sure what I am talking about, just picture a gymnast holding



a six second maltese cross on the rings... Pretty grueling to say the least. Notice the position of the athletes in the two photos on the rings and the sled drag.

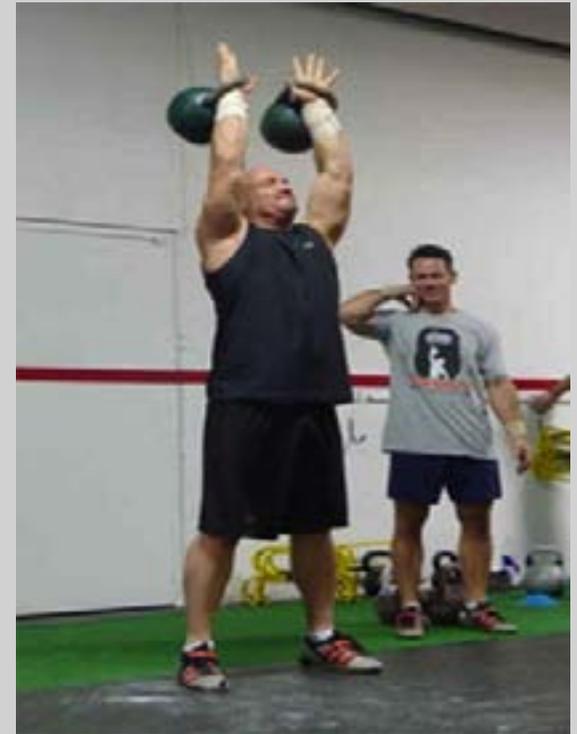
Most of us don't have the ability to hold such a high level static strength position on the rings, nor do we even have an idea where to start training for something like that. But with ST, we can very quickly and easily start with something on a much lower scale that suits our current abilities and build ourselves up accordingly.

In addition to the several static strength positions we will use with ST, we have many different dynamic strength exercises including pushing, pulling, squatting, hinging, carrying and twisting variations to accompany them. Those six things cover the basics of human movement, and we can perform them ballistically to build speed and power, or we can perform them with a slow controlled tempo to develop strength endurance and hypertrophy. All of which are necessary for the well balanced athlete.

It is no secret that we want to train and exercise by doing the things we enjoy doing. I have a personal affinity for gymnastic training, but do not always have the ability to get on the rings in a gymnasium over a well cushioned and protective flooring system, as I am positive most of you do not have that type of access either. Nor do I have the ability to perform many of the more skillful movements that a top level gymnast could. But that does not mean I am limited to push ups and pull ups all the time. With ST I have plenty of variety, innovation and progression on my side. That isn't to say that you don't have the same options with basic gymnastic training, ST is just a different option.

My goal of presenting this ST manual is to show how you can use a simple sled to enhance athleticism and feel much better by improving flexibility, joint mobility, and performance with various forms of strength from basic strength, static strength, and dynamic strength, as well as energy system training. As you can see, ST is an ideal companion to kettlebell lifting, bodyweight training, and weight training in general because of the ability to move your body and the sled any way you choose.

Taking a quick look at the next three photos, you can see that performing an overhead walk with the sled, and walking forward, backward and even sideways can strengthen and stabilize your shoulder girdle and core, much like kettlebell and bodyweight training, because ST enables the athlete to move in virtually any and all planes of motion. The days of only performing sled sprints



forward and backward as hard as possible, with the occasional lateral walk are over. While they are great exercises, and they should not be lost, you are about to learn a ton of new exercises to enhance your athleticism and general health and well being far beyond your current state, without the need for any fancy equipment or much time or money at all. Not only will your legs get a blast of a workout, but you will get tons of new movements for upper body as well, which is not the norm with the way I see most ST being performed today. I like to see my athletes perform a wide variety of movements, for full balanced development.

Not only my fitness clients, but for my specialized athletes as well. I want to see balanced development from top to bottom, right to left and front to back. Without that balance, you are begging for an injury and will get derailed from training and playing time. Take a baseball pitcher for example. He is always throwing hard with the same arm, in the same repetitive motion (forward



overhead throw) and regularly fatigues his shoulder in that motion. How often does he reverse the motion and pull his arm back? Not nearly as often. How about the other arm? It does not get the same throwing action. The problem is when he trains to throw harder and faster and mimics his throwing motion or works the muscles usually involved with his pitching and creates an even bigger imbalance instead of training the antagonist muscles which aren't being used as much as the muscles on the other side of the body. This imbalanced development poses a real problem to the health and performance of the athlete. ST is not the only option to battle these issues,

but it is a good one that anyone can use. ST is a great option to fix the ailments that specificity can bring to the intermediate and advanced athlete, as well as enhance GPP for the athlete as well.

While some of the exercises will closely resemble a specific movement pattern in a sport, it is not my intention to get an athlete to perform only that movement to enhance a particular skill, or use ST for skill specific training at all. The whole point of ST is to enhance your GPP and use it in as many different ways as possible to enhance your athleticism. Take the “Slapshot” for instance. Many hockey players will love this one for obvious reasons, so they will go out and start training that movement over and over again, in hopes of improving their skill specific drills and rotational power for hockey. This isn’t necessarily a bad thing unless the athlete performs the exercise in the same direction that he always performs the skill in practice and in games. So, if the athlete is a right handed and always takes his powerful slapshots in the same direction, ST allows him to train the muscles in the opposite direction and maintain or create balance in the core muscles without messing with his specific sporting technique. Since the athlete trains his drills so much in practice, I



recommend he get 2-3 times the volume of ST in the opposite direction to create more balance and help keep him healthy. This holds true with most throwing and rotational based sports

like baseball, tennis and golf. It is easy to see how regular practice with specific drills can create imbalances in the athlete, and ST can help fix those imbalances and improve performance and health in general. I know what you're thinking, "Let's get on with all the exercises!" The Complete Sled Training Manual for Athletes showcases dozens of exercises like the overhead walk, the slapshot, the Maltese walk, the Victorian walk, the waiter walk, The Hollow-Arch Tempo walk, as well as many more and explains the when, why, what, how to and who for all the variations and you'll be able to immediately incorporate these drills into your current training program to improve your ability and the performance of your athletes right away.

Thanks for checking out this intro to ST! There are dozens more variations coming your way in the complete ST manual for Athletes. Please keep an eye out and it will be available soon. Let me know if you have any questions or how this could benefit you by contacting me on [Facebook](#) or email at Matt@TSSAthletics.com.



WHERE TO START

It has been said that physical strength is the most important thing in life. I find it hard to argue that point, as I think that if you are stronger, most things are easier. The undeniable fact is, general strength is the foundation for all other fitness and athletic training. While there are many ways to get stronger, this manual is primarily focused on how ST can make us stronger, fitter and healthier. First, we need to know how to make or acquire a sled to use in our training. This is much simpler than many want to make it out to be. Don't make it difficult, just get started and you can change and fix things as you go.

I prefer a homemade wooden sled because it is cheap, easy to make with no specialty tools like welders, and slides well with little noise on pavement. You can go out right now to any hardware store like Home Depot or Lowes and have a sled ready to go today if you want. You could also make one with an old tire, and it is durable and works great for some exercises, but works terribly for others because the rubber tire sticks to the ground and doesn't slide very well. That is good for someone who wants a tough workout with sprints, but terrible for someone who is training something like shoulder stability. Finally, you can choose to buy one from a fitness company, and while they are great options, you'll just have to spend a little more money and wait a few days for delivery. All options will provide the same results, though. I do not know which sled on the market is the best option, nor do I care, because I am not making any money or benefitting in any way which sled you buy. The choice is totally up to you. I choose to make some of my equipment myself because I take pride in training with tools that I built myself. I'm not saying building your own barbell for olympic lifting is good

idea, but a training sled that you drag down the street doesn't need to be perfect.

Maybe one day soon I will sell sleds on my site for those who want to support The Strength Shop. For those that just want to train hard, go out now and make one if you don't already have one or two laying around. A quick google search can provide several options for other companies that sell them. Click the pics or links below for choices of companies to buy from, or use as ideas to make your own sled. Either way, get started

Making/Getting a Sled

The most simple version of a sled is a drag sled that can be made of a single slab of wood, an eye screw drilled in to one or both sides of the sled to attach a rope or strap to pull it, and a pipe of some sort to add any desired weight you like. The strap to pull the thing around might be the most expensive part of the whole deal.

Rogue S-25 - \$95 + Shipping



ELITE FTS DRAGGING SLED - \$108 + \$45 SHIPPING



HOMEMADE DRAGGING SLED - @ \$30



DIY sled made from a block of wood. You could use a few 4x4's and create the same type of thing. An eye screw and a carabiner in the front to attach handles (I use tow straps), and a 1 1/2" pipe and flange on top to stack weight. I use a 12" long pipe on top. I put an eye screw on the back as well for additional exercises and more variety. We will get into those specifics later. The wood is usually free or very cheap. [A new tow strap is \\$20 from Home Depot. A pipe and flange and a few strong screws will be a few more dollars. Worth every penny.](#)



You could stack kettlebells, sandbags, or anything else that fits on your sled, depending on how you designed it.

A great alternative to a drag sled is a push sled, also commonly known as a prowler. In many instances, depending on the exercise and the goal, it is a far superior option. Many companies make and sell their own versions of the prowler due to the increased popularity and effectiveness of this monster of a training tool. While it is not as compact, handy and portable as some other pieces of equipment, it is as effective as it gets when considering general conditioning for an athlete. Typically, you can buy one from a fitness company for between about \$200-\$369, plus shipping, which will be about \$100. I made my own very crude version that I lovingly call the Dragon Wagon, or the Dwagon. I like this name, because after you push the hell out of it, you will feel clumsy and partially retarded, then you start talking about the “Dwagon” and you sound retarded, and then people start to get it. Say it out loud a few times, “I wuv my dwagon!” Anyway... It cost me less than \$100 to make and an afternoon of fiddling around with some tools over a few beers. I thought about putting a wheel on the front and detachable handles on the back to use as a strong man wheel barrow, or a rickshaw, or even use for massive deadlifts like strongmen contests use for car lifts, but I didn’t get there yet. Maybe I’ll design it

and market that shit so I can retire. And the best part is, It'll only cost you a few pay checks! A picture of what I am talking about is below labeled sled barrow.



ELITE FTS
PROWLER
\$369 + \$99
SHIPPING



BEAST SLED
\$249 + \$100
SHIPPING

SLED BARROW - \$399 + SHIPPING



I think this is a pretty nifty option for general fitness, but not sure how durable it is. I really like the versatility of having a push, a pull and a carry apparatus, however, it's fairly expensive.



I am not saying this sled is ideal, but regardless of how crude it is, it will get the job done. There are literally hundreds of pics and designs found around the web. Pick something that works for you, your budget, and your situation and get started now. If you want to buy one, buy it, if you are going to make one, consider if you will be transporting it in a car, etc, and make sure it fits. If it becomes a pain in the ass to use, you won't use it, so set yourself up for success.





Now this sled design warrants a little more discussion, so I will outline below exactly how I made my Dwagon. Again, I am not saying this is exactly how you should make yours, but it should give you an idea based on your situation and your needs. Be as specific to your personal needs as necessary. Here are a few links to other ideas for making your own sled.

- <http://www.ironmagazineforums.com/open-chat/103438-building-homemade-prowler-sled.html>
- <http://www.wannabebig.com/forums/showthread.php?153247-Homemade-Prowler>
- <http://forum.bodybuilding.com/showthread.php?t=124825211&page=1>

How to make a Homemade Push Sled aka Prowler

As stated earlier there are many varieties of sleds to choose from. My intention here is to show how I made my personal homemade Prowler (aka - Dwagon, the draggin wagon, yes I'll be painting a fire breathing dragon on the side of it). A brief search of the web can show you many different variations of homemade sleds, or where to buy one from a respectable company like www.elitefts.com, but this is how I made mine. Use the idea if you want, but I would expect you to make any necessary adjustments and use common sense to make yours better, or more suitable to your individual needs. Be sure to watch the video as well.





One of the major concerns I took in to consideration was the fact that I needed to transport the Dwagon in my very small hatchback automobile. So I needed to get it in and out fairly easily with scratching my car or breaking my back. Lets just say I was not very successful at either of those goals, but I tried. I chose the bucket design because I wanted to safely load the Dwagon with a variety of tools, like plates, sandbags, kettlebells, ropes, sledgehammers, bodies or anything else you could essentially haul in a wheelbarrow, not just weight plates or a kettlebell awkwardly hanging off of it.

Necessary Supplies

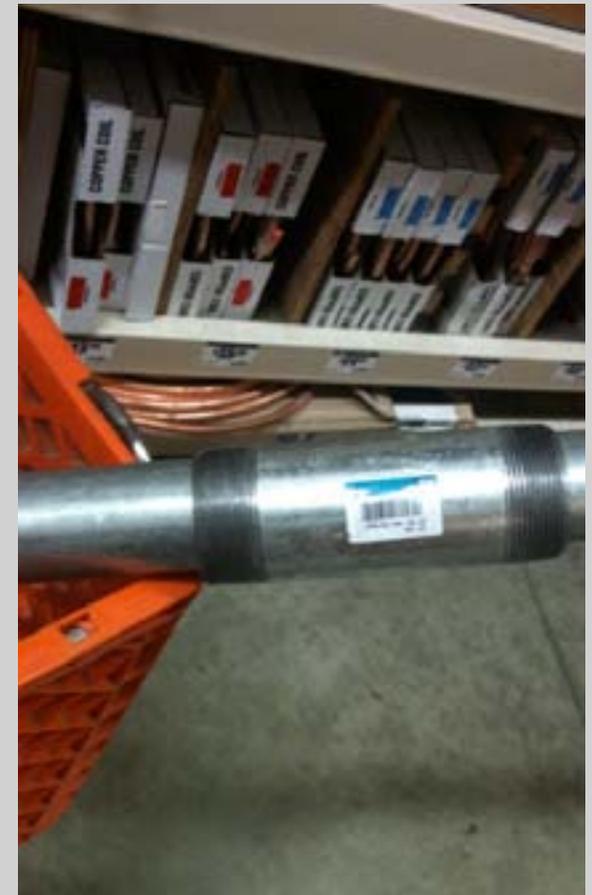
- ◇ Wood
- ◇ Pipes
- ◇ Screw
- ◇ Nuts and Bolts
- ◇ Nipples



First I got a 1.12 inch x 10 foot long galvanized pipe from Home Depot that cost \$36.75



I cut 30" off each end to have uprights at 2 1/2 feet with threading on one end of each upright. That left me with 60" king pipe that I use for fat bar training. Ale clean and press, anyone, Any-one?



You will need 2 or 4 two inch nipples x 6 inches long to support the uprights. Read the rest to see if you four nipples or are satisfied with two, as two nipples are sufficient for most for most men. They will cost a few doallars a piece. As you can see in the above pic, the 1 1/2" piple slides into the 2" nipple very nicely.

