

Lawrence: So welcome back everyone to the HIT Business Membership live Q and A. Today's guest is Mike Petrella. This is obviously the October 2019 Q and A. Mike is the owner and head trainer at STG Strength and Power. STG is regarded by many as the finest and best equipped gyms in the world. Michael is MedX/HIT certified, Master HIT certified, certified as a youth fitness instructor, winner of the prestigious Most Innovative Training Program with the World Head of Family Sokeship Council, and coach to 61 AWPC, WPC, IPA, RPS, 100% Raw Powerlifting Records. Those acronyms mean very little to me but probably more to you guys.

Lawrence: Michael is also the host of Rogers TV In The Gym, completing six episodes in season one and 10 episodes for season two and has opened and expanded through five facilities over the past 13 years. I think, Mike, you've also got another In The Gym series being filmed at the moment, is that correct?

Mike: We finished filming of season three in August and it is now airing in Ontario, Canada right now. Thursdays at 8:30's when the new episodes air, and then once the final one has aired, I'll get digital copies and I'll put up on YouTube for everyone to see.

Lawrence: Oh wow, that's amazing, congratulations. What channel is that on where you are?

Mike: Around here, we have a very big cable company, it's called Rogers Cable. They own a bunch of the major sports teams and they supply internet and cable TV for a good part of our country. So they essentially do the show, they're the producers of the show and I just make the content for it, but after it's aired for them originally, they have original broadcast rights, I

have it. So after the fact, it becomes my intellectual property and then I can repurpose it.

Lawrence: Great, awesome. I'm sure that's a very valuable contribution to the strength training community going on the content I've seen you do for this show in the past. So that's the introduction, and for everyone on the call, if you have a question, all you need to do is raise a hand via the control panel, I will unmute you and you can ask any question you like of Mike. Obviously, Mike's got a lot of experience in personal training, in running a high intensity training business, and has just a ton of knowledge on anything related to exercise machines.

Lawrence: This will be recorded, so if you would rather something you said wasn't available for people to listen to after the fact, then I wouldn't say it, so just bear that in mind, but this is a private community of your colleagues. This is around 80 people in high intensity training, trainers and business owners, and so it is a very private community that we have here. Let's see, we've got Craig who's got a question. Hey Craig, I'm just going to unmute you, just bear with me a moment. Hey Craig, you there?

Craig: Yeah, can you hear me, Lawrence?

Lawrence: I can hear you.

Craig: Oh, fantastic.

Lawrence: The floor's yours.

Craig: Cheers. Hey Mike, how are you?

Lawrence: [inaudible 00:03:34] Hello? Michael?

Mike: Craig, my brother, how are you doing?

Craig: Good Mike, good. Listen, I got a quick question. I figured this might help a few people. So really quick. So I just picked up a Nautilus Gen II abdominal machine and I mean, if we look around, we can find a lot of this stuff relatively inexpensive, but a lot of it hasn't been maintained over the years. Considering the collection that you've got, I was wondering if maybe you could get some suggestions for people in terms of things like replacing the chain bearings and whatnot, and what would be the most, as a general, I guess, generally speaking, what would be the most effective way to fix these on our own, and if there's specific places that outsource and where we can get equipped, like, pieces for these pieces of equipment.

Mike: Yep. First thing that I like to do with [inaudible 00:04:31] machine is... I'm getting a bunch of feedback there, can you hear me just fine, Lawrence?

Lawrence: Yeah, I can. I'm just going to mute Craig while you answer the question. One sec. Go on.

Mike: Okay, great. That seems to be good, I hope he can still hear me.

Lawrence: Yeah, he can.

Mike: On the old machines, the biggest problem with the friction was instead of using bearings, they used bronze bushings. I've actually used a couple of old Nautilus machines that have been so well maintained and so little used that 40 plus years later, those bushings actually do their jobs. They're self-lubricating, and a brand new machine, as hard as it would be to come by, they function quite well, but over time, those bushings, they

get pretty gummed up. Grease and dirt gets into them, and trying to re-find those bushings would probably be problematic, and they're definitely not better than the bearings.

Mike: What someone can do is they can pop the bushings out. If you've got a press, that's the best way to do it, but you can do it with a hammer and a punch as long as you're careful. If you take the bushings to any sort of bearing shop, and in my area, they're every 15 minutes down the road, there's a bearing shop, they're not that specialty, you can get someone to measure everything up and they will give you the equivalent bearing size to put back in. Again, I would suggest you use a press to do it, but in a pinch, you can do it with a rubber mallet. Once you put it back together with those bearings, it is a night and day difference. It takes so much of the friction out.

Mike: Then the other thing I've seen some people do is they'll take off the chains and they'll convert it over to a Kevlar belt. Now, this is a little bit more challenging because you have to get new pulleys, because obviously a hard metal chain won't go onto a plastic pulley very well. But I've found that on the ones that I've tried that the Kevlar belt and the plastic pulley, it makes it, it takes away the sound. The chains obviously have a sound to them, but I don't find it does much for the friction.

Mike: I actually talked to an engineer in my area who does a lot of engineering for Harley Davidson, and he said to me that the idea of going to a Kevlar belt and a plastic pulley as a means of reducing friction over a chain and sprocket is not accurate. He said that it will never, ever work. So I keep mine with chains, but switching over from bushings to bearings and just going to any sort of bearing shop, that seems to work very, very well.

Lawrence: Great answer Mike. And Craig, if you've got a follow up question on that, just raise your hand and I'll unmute you again, but obviously if we get the feedback again, we'll just mute you whilst Mike answers. Tim, I know you've just arrived, welcome to the Q and A. If you've got any questions for Mike, just raise your hand via the control panel and I will unmute you and usual be able to ask Mike anything. In case you missed the intro, Mike is just a real expert when it comes to anything related to growing your high intensity training business, personal training as it relates to helping people with all sorts of goals and challenges, and then also anything in relation to machines. And I'm sure he knows a lot of other things too but those are the main things that come to mind. So Craig, I'm just going to unmute you, just bear with me a moment. Hey Craig. It just takes a moment.

Craig: There we go, can you hear me?

Lawrence: Yeah, hiya.

Craig: Okay, perfect. So just a follow up with the chain comment, Michael, would be basically replacing the chain then, I could do that at a motorcycle shop as an example, right? They should have the size I need to do it and whatnot? Without changing cams and everything else?

Mike: Yes. A motorcycle shop will have it. I actually use a tractor supply store in my area. Most of the Nautilus machines use a standard 40 roller chain. Some of them use a double 40 roller, and then they had a couple of real heavy duty units that were up a size from that but they're few and far between.

Mike: There is different qualities of chains. You pay a little bit more for a good American-made chain. I do find they do last a little bit longer, they do seem to fit a little bit better. Stuff that's coming out of China, it does work and it's certainly better than the old chain that's been on there for 40 plus years. The only thing that is challenging is just getting the chain off, counting the exact number of links that you need, and then cutting it to that same size. You get pretty good after a couple of machines though.

Craig: Okay, and then just to remove the chain if you're doing it on your own, you just use, I'm trying to remember the name of the tool when I used to work in a bike shop. It was like a chain puller almost where you just pop out the little... Would that suffice or do you actually have to cut it physically?

Mike: To take it off of the machine, they just use a master link system, and just with the flat screwdriver you can pretty much pop both of those chains off, but then to get the next chain to be the right amount of length, yeah, like you said, a chain splitter, a chain puller, and you just make it to length and then you just reattach the same master link.

Craig: Okay, perfect, that's great. Thanks man.

Mike: No problem at all, have a great one, Craig.

Craig: Yeah, you too Mike.

Lawrence: Okay. So Craig, let me know if you've got any more questions and yourself, Tim. So a question from me on behalf of someone who couldn't attend, Mike. This is completely unrelated to machines but I'm sure you've got a view on this. Their question is related to breathing. They report that a client has an inability to breathe adequately at the end of a set. I think

many of us can relate to that. He says it's a major factor limiting the progress for many of his trainees. How do you coach your clients to breathe effectively during high intensity exercise? Do you have any tips or tricks?

Mike: Could he elaborate a little bit more on what he's currently teaching? For instance, I know some of the super slow guys, they use almost a hyperventilating breathing, and I don't teach that but I know a lot of people in this community, that's kind of the background they're coming from, so if you can give me just a quick idea of what he's doing, I can tell you how I would go from there.

Lawrence: He's not on the call, this is a question I took from him earlier today, but knowing Jack, I know he was very much inspired and influenced by Body by Science, and so he probably knows about the forced hyperventilation technique, so that's maybe what he's trying to teach clients and perhaps they're struggling to do that effectively. Assume that that's where he's probably coming from. So sorry Jack if I've got that wrong, but I assume that's probably where he's coming from.

Mike: Okay. That's fine. I'm fine with the way they teach things from an absolute safety perspective. I do find that as people get stronger, I don't want them to create a gigantic hold of the breath, a gigantic Valsalva maneuver, I'm not a fan of that. But like most things, I feel that there's a middle ground that's going to work well for most people. I certainly again don't want them taking a big gulp of air and holding their breath for multiple seconds.

Mike: But I find that when people are trying to make strength progress, one of the biggest issues I come across is them able to keep their body, when I

say tense, not to the point where they're locking up like they have rigor mortis, but they try to loosen off too many muscles, they can't hold their absolutely in the proper position, they can't hold their rib cage up, and it's loosening off, so their primary muscles that they're trying to target just don't seem to be able to contract the way I want them to. Just kind of instruct them to breathe fluidly and just breathe the way they want to as opposed to saying, "Okay, well, you're not doing absolutely perfect hyperventilating cadence for your breathing, so we're not going to progress further."

Mike: Outside of the early stages, I let people determine their breathing maybe a little bit more than some of the people in our community do. I don't believe it's anywhere near dangerous levels and I've never had anybody pass out or anybody ever have breathing issues. But without seeing the person and how they do it, they might want to loosen up just a little bit on it. Not to the point where they're sacrificing safety, but unless you're dealing with an absolute beginner who's never done any sort of weight training, I'm not quite as strict as some of the other trainers out there.

Lawrence: Awesome. Would you use any particular cues when you're instructing clients, Mike, or when your other trainers there are instructing clients, will you use any particular cues or words to help a client breathe how you would like them to breathe more effectively?

Mike: I don't know if I have anything that I use all the time. A lot of time, it's specific to the person that I'm training. You'd be surprised how much just saying breathe, and you know, giving them the, hey, you know, you're trying to hold your breath and just letting them know because sometimes, they get very focused on the intensity. There is a couple of exercises that

a lot of the people in our community use where I do get a little bit more into the breathing and more of that hyperventilating style breathing, something like a torso rotation, because the same muscles that are moving your abdomen while you're breathing in and out are the ones that are under tension, so a lot of times when I get people on an exercise like that, I will get deeper into the instructing of the breathing, which some people in this community do for every single exercise.

Mike: But just saying breathe freely, make sure that oxygen's coming in, just saying the word breathe to them, it just kind of triggers something in their brain and gets them going. Then near the last few repetitions when the intensity is really, really high, I find that I'll say something two or three times in a row. The first time, it doesn't quite register, so you know, you might have to breathe, breathe, breathe, and it takes a few times for it to get into them just because they're very focused on the intensity.

Lawrence: That's awesome, thanks Mike. All right, so Tim, I'm just going to unmute you. Bear with me a moment. Hey, what's up Tim?

Tim: Hey there. Quick question. We just, at the risk of humble bragging, we just received our new MedX gear and I'm looking for any tips on what we should or should not be doing from a maintenance point of view, and a schedule on that regard based upon your experience.

Mike: Okay. Great question. The nice thing about the MedX machines are they're very, very low maintenance, especially if you're running a private gym and people aren't just jumping on the machines non-stop every day. The only major contact points on a lot of these MedX machines are the actual bushings that sit in the towers that the stack rods go into. If the

machine is brand new, you're probably not going to have to touch them for many, many years. I have seen, though, on several of them, that these bushings, they've dried out over years. They're not as lubricated as they once were. They're self-lubricating bushings.

Mike: If you just pop them out and put in a new bushing, a lot of times it will make sure that those stack rods are dead straight, and it takes a lot of the friction out of the machines whenever I'm playing with a MedX machine that has started to get a little bit ore friction than I think it should. As for the belts, they're overkill. I think I've only ever changed one ever, so just keep an eye on it. If a belt gets frayed from some sort of contact point, you'll want to change that, but I think I've only ever had to change one.

Mike: The biggest issue I think most people had on some of the grips, the rubber grips seemed to come off a little bit, especially on the pull down. They tend to slide off. You'll have to kind of just wedge them back on, which is kind of a pain in the butt, but it's not really a maintenance issue, but making sure that stack rod has got the proper clearances, making sure that the bushings are clean. The one thing I will say is don't put any sort of lubricant on any of those rods. It will just get into the plates, they'll tend to stick. I've had to take entire weight stacks apart and clean them out. But for the most part, they're almost maintenance-free. If anything comes up, it'll come up in a hurry. You'll feel something sticking, and a lot of the times, it's pretty obvious what it is.

Mike: The only thing that I've come across that's a little tricky on a MedX machine, if someone has moved one improperly, like, you can move the weight stacks intact with a proper gully. If you move it beyond a certain angle, it will throw the alignment off and you'll see the weight stack is

either touching the inside of the tower or except the rod will be a little bit out of alignment, and you can even just grab a rubber mallet and you just got to look at it, see where it's rubbing, and you just give the weight stacks a bit of a good hit on different sides, and just making sure that it's not touching the tower. But outside of that, they're relatively maintenance-free.

Tim: Awesome, thank you so much.

Mike: No prob, have a great day Tim.

Lawrence: Great question, Tim, and congratulations on your new MedX, that's awesome. Okay, so Richard, welcome to the call. So we've got Mike Petrella on who is an expert in all things personal training, running a HIT business, and exercise machines among other things. Feel free to ask any questions. I know you've got a new Hammer Iso Row on the way, so if you've got any questions about that, Mike is probably your man.

Lawrence: Mike, I've got a question for you, again, somebody who couldn't attend. They said, they ask do you have any insight into why some trainees quote unquote "feel their back" during the chest press exercise? He says I have a few who don't appear to be visibly arched, launch or crane their back in any way, yet it tightens up to the point of discomfort. Have you encountered that, and how do you troubleshoot it?

Mike: I have some clients who it doesn't really seem what muscle they're working, you know, they actually have to ask you, you know, what muscle am I working, and for me, it's kind of a crazy question because how do you not know what muscle you're working? They might not know the name of it, so I definitely have come across things like this.

Mike: What I would suggest, again, without seeing the person's mechanics, in take a bench press for example, or any sort of chest press, the lats are one of the main stabilizer muscles for it, so for someone to feel it in their upper back is not terribly uncommon. From a powerlifting standpoint, you're actually looking to tense the lats, and I believe the secondary function of the chest is scapula retraction. I might have that wrong. I want to say that Arthur was talking about that, it's one of the reasons why he made his machine on a decline.

Mike: A lot of times, I find that if someone's feeling it in the wrong place, it is a postural issue. Sorry, did you say to me that they aren't arching their back when they're doing a chest press? They're keeping it flat?

Lawrence: Correct.

Mike: So when I teach most chest pressing, obviously from a powerlifting standpoint, you're looking to exaggerate the arch, but I am not relaxing the lower back in most of these people. I am getting them to expand their rib cage and pull their shoulders back. I find that they get more activation in the chest and you can use larger resistances in a safe manner. I don't let them relax those upper back muscles. So even though this is going to sound counterintuitive, as opposed to them saying well, I feel it in my back and not my chest, I would almost be getting them to contract the lats harder and set up everything and see if that doesn't give them a better base.

Mike: Years ago on the bench press, I was taught you can't blast the cannon from a canoe, and essentially that just means you have to have that stable base to activate the chest muscles to their fullest potential. If for some

reason, that wasn't enough, that didn't work, then I'm always a big fan of doing the pre-exhaust and doing some sort of isolation for the chest first. Hopefully they can feel it a little bit better, a little bit easier that way, and then going into the press from there. So those would be my two suggestions.

Lawrence: So like a chest fly pre-exhaust, something like that?

Mike: Yes, some sort of dumbbells machine, cable crossover, any sort of flying motion should work.

Lawrence: That's awesome. And that's a great metaphor you used as well, appreciate that. So question from Richard. Richard is on the line but he's typing questions. Maybe he's got a poor audio set up or what have you. So he's either buying or he's either just bought or already acquired a Hammer Strength Iso Row. You have one of those, don't you? I assume.

Mike: I have the High Row. Hammer made four or five different Row variations. I'm pretty familiar with all of them though.

Lawrence: Okay, I thought you might be. So he's actually really open about this. It's more of an open question. He's interested to learn about what you might recommend in terms of how to use the different handles, the choices available, your personal favorites when training clients on that particular piece, and how the muscles are emphasized differently with the various grips in your opinion.

Mike: I'd have to know if he's using the Low Row or the Mid Row. When you say Hammer Strength Row, again, there's a couple of different variations. For instance, the one I have, it only has one grip. The [inaudible 00:23:41] Row

only had one grip. The Low Row, the original version, only had one grip, and then they eventually made one that had multiple grips. So if he can let me know which one he has.

Lawrence: I think it's a Low Row, but Richard, you might just want to clarify that in the comments, but I think it's a Low Row, so do you want to just answer it from that perspective and Richard might correct me.

Mike: Okay. Well, assuming that he's using the machine I think that I think he is, which is you load the plates down low, they're only about a foot off the ground, and the movement arm is underneath you as opposed to up top, that's what I'm assuming he's working with.

Lawrence: No, let me, I'm just going to bring it up because it's not, it's slightly different to that, so just give me a moment. I'm just going to bring it up. I'm pretty sure the weight's overhead.

Mike: Okay.

Lawrence: Yeah, so Hammer Strength Plate-Loaded Low Row. So the plates are overhead.

Mike: Okay, all right. [crosstalk 00:24:41].

Lawrence: Or above the head anyway.

Mike: I'm fairly sure I know which one he's using then. The one thing that was kind of crappy about Hammer Strength is they only really gave you one main way of holding onto it, unlike a company like Pendulum. Their row was called the Three-Way Row because it has three different handles.

[Mike Petrella Q&A - October 2019](#)

Lawrence: One thing, I'm just going to unmute Richard because he can then clarify just in case, just to make sure we've got exactly the right machine.

Mike: Sure.

Lawrence: Yeah, so Richard should be on the line in a moment.

Richard: All right, there it is.

Lawrence: Hey.

Richard: Can you hear me?

Lawrence: Loud and clear.

Mike: How are you doing, Richard?

Richard: All right, how are you, Mike?

Mike: I'm doing well. How's business up your way?

Richard: We're doing our darnedest. We're getting a couple of new clients this week again. So no, the one that is you're sitting, ut got a chest pad, and the plates are near the floor, and you're pulling horizontally towards yourself, and there's a way to do it so you can have an overhand grip or an underhand grip, or even somewhere in between. There's three different grips. If you want, I can text you a quick thing of the picture and if we're not sure, you can, if you have time, check it out.

Mike: I understand which one you're talking about. That's what I thought when I was just talking here with Lawrence. Most people on that particular machine, I use the neutral grip or the grip that's basically almost perpendicular with the ground. I think the Hammer's got a slight angle to

it, just because I find it's easiest on the wrist and it seems to track well on their elbows, so that's where I generally start people and a lot of the sets are done that way.

Mike: I find that the widest version of the grip is probably the one that I use the least. With a more advanced person who's gotten used to a lot of the movements in my gym, and you know, they're just looking for a little bit of variation, maybe to keep it even mentally fresh as opposed to me thinking I'm going to put a tremendous amount more muscle on their upper back by making the change, I go to the wide one the least.

Mike: I had the strength coach from Western come up and do a TV show with us and he's big on doing, like, you go from the weakest position to the strongest position so generally the weakest will be some sort of overhand wide grip, and then it gets stronger as you go more narrow and more neutral or more supination. A lot of times, you can kind of stick with the same weight. So say you can use 100 pounds on the wide overhand grip, but maybe the person can use 130 or 140 on the strongest grip. If you just keep that 100 pounds and work your way from fatigue on the weakest grip, by the time you get to the strongest, that's where you're going to be doing your repetitions. I find that to be a particularly effective method. But when I'm just starting people out, generally that middle, neutral grip seems to be the go to.

Richard: Okay. Thanks very much. I guess just a quick follow up was a comment. You remember I think you saw the machine, I brought it by your place when I picked it up, the other Hammer Iso-Lateral Front Pulldown. Do you remember that, which one I'm referring to?

Mike: Yes, it's the same one that- [crosstalk 00:28:13].

Richard: The one you told me [crosstalk 00:28:15] [inaudible 00:28:17]. When I work that one really hard, I find the next day, I'm surprised to find that my pecs have been really stimulated by that, which is good, but I'm just not seeing how the pecs get involved. I definitely feel like the pecs are worked with that one. It's almost reminding me I guess a bit like a pull-down, and I'm thinking it's a good overall upper body exercise, does that make sense to you?

Mike: Well, if you were to look at say a Nautilus Pullover, so obviously the arc is exaggerated a little bit more than a pulldown, the upper chest has to work to a decent degree for that, and if I'm not mistaken, on the arc on your Hammer Pulldown, it's not obviously the same as a pullover but it's got a bit of an arc to it because it's a leverage machine that has a bit of a swing. I haven't spent enough time on it to I guess corroborate your story, but I don't see there being any issue. A lot of these muscles do have to work synergistically.

Mike: There's very few motions where I'm looking to absolutely isolate a muscle. So if I'm doing a pulldown with good form and I happen to get a little bit of chest tightness, I'm not too concerned about that.

Richard: Okay.

Lawrence: Awesome.

Richard: Thank you very much, Mike.

Mike: Have a great one, Richard.

Lawrence: Richard, I know you've got a, I know you had a, just so you know, Richard, you should be able to, on the control panel, if you've got another question, you can just hit raise a hand, which should be a little button on the control pad, and I can unmute you. Now, you had a bunch of comments, a bunch of questions, now do you want to ask any more of those now because the floor is yours at the moment if you've got anything else you want to ask.

Richard: I'm just looking at my own comments here. I guess a question that came to mind is the idea of bracing. You know, as people get strong and they start to use heavier and heavier weights, people refer to a bad habit if you will where you start to brace and you start to bring in uninvolved or unintended muscles, and you talked about, you know, isolating. I guess my general question is is bracing always a bad thing? I think sometimes you're getting an overall stimulus, indirect effect if you will, I think going back and forth where maybe I use a lighter weight from time to time so that I really sort of focus on being super strict, but every now and then, going heavy, even if there is some bracing, it seems to me that they're within reason, that there could be some benefit to that from an overall stimulus.

Mike: Of course. I would look at it this way, Richard. Say you had a bell curve that in the middle was at the highest point and then it falls off at the beginning and the end. I would say that someone on the one side who's trying to keep all their other non-primary muscles, like say you're doing a standing bicep curl and you're trying just to flex the arm but you're not keeping the abs strong, you're not keeping the quads tight. You're going

to use a very, very small amount of resistance on the biceps, and I don't feel that's ideal for muscular hypertrophy.

Mike: Then at the far end of that bell curve, you'd be looking at someone who's finding ways to hold their breath for five, 10 seconds, and they're trying to flex every other muscle but the biceps and they're trying to leverage the resistance up and they're probably not receiving optimal stimulation at all. I feel that there's probably a sweet spot in between.

Mike: If you were to think of doing squats or deadlifts for repetitions, which I consider to be very, very result-producing, the idea of not having a certain amount of rigidity and intensesness to a lot of the other musculatures, it's going to result in an injury. You're not going to be able to keep that proper straight spine. You are more than likely going to cause some sort of lower back injury.

Mike: So I find that a lot of people that are trying to get away from all tenseness are using such little resistance that their body's not really going to respond, and there's the other side of things that they think that if you tense up, you're somehow taking all the work away from the musculature. I'm sure there is certainly a place in training world where you can go too far with it, but I find that getting people up to the resistance where I think they should be heading for optimal stimulation is, yeah, there is a bit of tenseness that has to come there.

Mike: It's your abdominal pressure that you have to build up to use the proper resistances, and I know there's going to be certain people in our crowds on the powerlifting side that they lift maximum resistance and you do want to stay, they call it functionally tight. There's going to be other people in

our world that are probably more on the super slow end of things and they want to stay away from that at all costs. I really do feel there's a sweet spot in between the two.

Richard: Okay, thank you Mike.

Mike: No problem Richard, have a great day.

Richard: Yep.

Lawrence: Good stuff. Good questions, Richard. Just another reminder for everyone that's just joined. If you have a question for Mike, please raise a hand. Mike is an expert on all things personal training, high intensity training business, and exercise machines, so feel free to raise a hand if you have a question. Mike, I have some news and a question related to that. So [Sean 00:34:02] and I, did you get a chance to meet Sean, my friend who came to the conference earlier this year? The Irish chap.

Mike: I believe so.

Lawrence: Good, okay. So we're actually, we decided we're going to open a facility and we're pushing forward with that at the moment. We're looking at probably January as our open month. We're actually in the process of getting some MedX from Craig. He'll be giggling to himself, and he's actually in the process of just helping us with the shipping on that as well. So it's all very exciting, it's a big five MedX set up.

Mike: Good.

Lawrence: We've got a bit space. The space we're going to get is around 1700 square feet.

Mike: That's awesome.

Lawrence: Which is quite big for a big five. I'm just curious, from your perspective, as someone who's tried lots of different machines, we're going to be probably targeting the busy professional in the beginning, and sort of trying to mold the service as much as possible round there. What would you be looking to acquire in terms of the sixth, seventh, or maybe eighth piece to complement that big five do you think?

Mike: Okay. So the first thing I'll say is whenever possible, always buy top quality equipment, and MedX obviously fits that bill. Back to one of your other, I believe it was Tim asking about maintenance there, the better the quality of the stuff, the less maintenance problems you're going to have. If you have the MedX big five, that's going to cover a lot of your bases, especially I assume you're doing a Body by Science type workout.

Mike: If you were to look at Blair Wilson's original set up, he had the big five plus the MedX Core Low Back. I think that would be a nice piece to add to that. Just gives you something a little bit different than what you can get with the big five, and it's still MedX, still high quality stuff. I think I've talked on another podcast with you that some of the spinal rehabilitation stuff, the low back and the neck, is probably driven more business to me than anything else, so Core Low Back would be up there.

Mike: Some sort of four-way neck. Almost anyone who consults with me about setting up a gym, I always tell them about training the neck and it being very, very, very important in terms of the physical results you get from [inaudible 00:36:26] but also distinguishing yourself from some of your

other competition in terms of the open market. So that'd be my first two big pieces to add to it.

Mike: Then from there, we do a lot of cable work at our gym. A lot of times, you can get these on the used market, they're all over the place. Getting some sort of functional trainer or something that has a high low pulley or something that allows you to do pull downs and rows from the cables. I still think these are tremendously important exercises. They're just basic exercises but they still work very well. We've talked, again, about how I actually prefer cable work for most tricep work and it's not terribly expensive.

Mike: You can get a lot out of a power rack and a barbell in place, and again, it's still, I think, important in a gym set up. We don't use it a lot with a lot of our clients though, because I just don't need to use a barbell because we have better tools, but especially, you know, you get a younger client in and they say hey, I want to learn how to squat, and if you don't have a squat rack, they're going to walk somewhere else. I don't do a ton with the powerlifting anymore but we still have powerlifters in the gym and I still think being proficient with the barbell is very important for some people, not for everybody.

Mike: So you know, basic cable set up, basic rack with a barbell, some plates, and then for the dumbbells, we used to have a set of dumbbells from five pounds to I think about 125, and it was nice and they were good dumbbells but they took up a ton of space. In 2012, we switched over to the power blocks which you probably would have seen them at any of Luke's gyms. That's what he runs in his places too, and you can get a good set up that gets five pounds to 90 pounds, and they take up about

two square feet. You know, you make them to an adjustable bench, and it gives you a lot of different options.

Mike: You know, say you want to do a pre-exhaust where you get them to do a dumbbell fly, and you can put the bench right beside the chest press. At 1700 square feet, you have a lot of extra space, and you can get them to do a dumbbell fly right into a MedX chest press, which is still a very effective way of training. So that would be my first few. A neck machine, low back machine, probably both the MedX or on the neck machine, the Pendulum is very good if you can get one out your way. Then some cables and a rack.

Mike: The other thing that I look for from time to time when people are just getting started, the old Nautilus and the old Hammer Strength. You can buy them used relatively inexpensive. They don't normally need a whole lot of maintenance or repairs to get them back to 100%. The old Nautilus were great. They were fantastic almost across the board. Some of the Hammer Strength I like, some of it I don't. You can ask people's opinions in your own community that you've built, they'll give you an honest opinion. I mean, I've seen very good Hammer Strength machines go for a couple of hundred bucks all the time. You don't necessarily have to have something rare or something highly sought after to have a very effective machine in your gym.

Mike: The pull down that Richard was talking about, it's the same pull down that Dorian Yates used in his Blood and Guts videos. It's a great pull down, and you could buy them, at least around here, almost any day of the week for 500 bucks and it would get a ton of use on the floor, it's got a great feel to it, it's got a great grip to it. The strength curve is excellent, and

again, you're not putting out a ton of capital up front to have a very usable, very serviceable piece on your floor.

Lawrence: That's awesome, thanks Mike, really appreciate it. So I'm just going to unmute Cass. Just bear with me, Cass, one sec. Hi Cass, how you doing? Just takes a while to connect there.

Mike: No prob.

Lawrence: Hey Cass, can you hear us? Or hear me? Okay, I can't hear you at the moment. You may just want to just check your audio set up or just type the question in and I can read that, but yeah, I'll move over to Richard and I'll come back to you, okay? Okay. All right. Just bear with me a sec. Hey Richard.

Richard: How are you? [crosstalk 00:41:03].

Lawrence: Very good, same as when you last asked.

Richard: What's that?

Lawrence: I say I'm the same as when you were last talking to us, which was about 10 minutes ago.

Richard: Great. So two questions. I'm in Brantford this weekend, Mike. Do you have anything that you're looking to get rid of for a good price?

Mike: Like, equipment that I'm selling?

Richard: Yeah.

Mike: I don't think I got anything for sale right now. I'll take a peek. When we went to the new place, I think I got almost everything on the floor. I don't

think I got too much in the shipping returns right now, but I'll go take a look for you.

Richard: Okay. I just thought I'd see as I'm in the neighborhood. The second question is I have a Hammer Strength leg extension but I do not have any kind of leg curl.

Mike: Okay.

Richard: I used to think, and often you think the big five, there's a leg press, does it all, but you know, of course I have the Glutiator which is kind of a leg movement, and a little back. But I'm thinking the leg press certainly is going to hit a lot of things, but I've got the leg extension. Do you think having a leg extension without a leg curl could eventually be problematic, either for myself or my clients, in that I'm not working the antagonistic muscles directly?

Mike: I'll answer that a couple of different ways. The first is, you know, you got to see Dr. McGuff at the rec there last year. Me, you and Lawrence were all fortunate enough to attend, and he talked about wishing that he hadn't said the big five because people got too entrenched into that idea. So taking the average person, and especially going from nothing, which is in most cases what people have been doing, and getting them to work at big five is going to cover a lot of bases and it's certainly going to be a boom for their overall health and wellness, but I would consider that to be the beginning stages for most people.

Mike: Once you move beyond that, I do feel that some of these isolation motions become more needed, and even a lot of lower back injuries that I've seen, it's my belief that they have started with problems with the

hamstrings. When I started building my first gym back in '06, one of the first things that I sourced out was a hamstring machine. I think it would absolutely be good for you and your clients to have one. The old Nautilus one is actually fantastic. You can buy them relatively cheap. The best one that I'm aware of on the market right now is the lay down Pendulum version because of its strength curve and its adjustability. It's just very, very smooth and it's got a very small footprint.

Mike: I like the lay down version a little bit better than the seated version for most people. For some reason the seated version seems to bother some people's knees. I don't know exactly why that is, but I have noticed that in the past. But having something on the floor to counteract the leg extension, I'm a big fan of, so if you can find something in your area at a good price, I think it's a very good pick up for your gym.

Mike: You mentioned the Glutiator there, I will say this to you too Lawrence. I don't know if you're going to find a used one out in Ireland there where you're setting up, but if you've got it in your budget, talking to you know [inaudible 00:44:39], you've had him on your show.

Lawrence: Yeah, yeah.

Mike: That is the one machine where I bring people in and I sit them on the machine and I get them to use it as a selling point, because they have never felt their glutes work quite like that. The male population, they love it because a lot of them are playing some sort of athletic sport, whether it's in an actual competitive league or just some sort of, in Canada, we call it a men's league, like, just something you do when you're past the point of doing competition league. They know about wanting to get the glutes

stronger and then at least as far as 2019 goes, women training the glutes is still very much in vogue. Right after neck training, I find that the Glutiator is the next thing I use to distinguish myself different, even though we have 100 pieces of equipment in the gym.

Lawrence: Awesome. All right.

Mike: I've tried to answer both of your questions a little bit.

Richard: Yep. Thanks again, Mike.

Mike: Have a great one, Richard.

Richard: I just missed a leg curl. The guy just sold it and he only wanted like 400 bucks for it which is no wonder why it went so fast.

Mike: Yeah, that's a great price for any piece of commercial exercise equipment.

Lawrence: All right Richard, so I'm just going to mute you one sec whilst I unmute Cass, just bear with me. Okay. So Cass, you should be able to hear me now. Hello?

Cass: Hello, can you guys hear me now?

Lawrence: Loud and clear.

Cass: Hey Lawrence, what's up? And also, you know, Mike.

Mike: Hello.

Cass: Oh boy. I'm pretty much had a few questions, experience to Mike since you have experience in powerlifting. I actually wanted to ask about using specifically HIT, can HIT training specifically be adapted for it, and I

actually started considering maybe I might at least try out one powerlifting competition, just because apparently somebody said that they noticed that I was really, really strong compared to my size. I mean, I usually range around 135, 140 ish. I fluctuate at times. Apparently, being able to even deadlift over like 300, I think it was 325 pounds is kind of an achievement so I'm just like, hmm, maybe I should.

Mike: How tall are you?

Cass: I think 5'4", 5'5".

Mike: Yeah, yeah, so 5'4", 5'5", you're fluctuating around that weight, you'd probably want to get to the 132 class, and you're basically doing a double body weight. That's going to be pretty competitive at most meets.

Cass: Oh, okay. So at that point, I probably have a chance to even think about competing, because I really thought, I don't know, maybe, but you know, I don't know what standards, what's considered strong though.

Mike: I mean, you're going to be able to find someone on Instagram who's unbelievably strong and put up a number that seems insurmountable, but I can tell you that if you were to walk into most gyms, around 130 pounds and you pull 300 off the ground, you're going to turn quite a bit of heads with that. That is pretty strong. I think that competing is a good idea. I have not had one of my clients compete in body building since 2009, and the reason being is to win a show, you have to be in very bad health. You look fantastic, you look completely shredded, but you have to sacrifice your health, whereas in the powerlifting, to have your best state, you have to be very healthy. You have to be very strong, you have to be at your physical best.

Mike: So we've had dozens and dozens of powerlifters compete at the gym because we promote strength and health and wellness as one of our primary goals. So powerlifting is just a natural variation that you're just getting strong with three barbell lifts as opposed to maybe some of the machines that some of my other clients may use, so I'm a big fan of that, and I think you'll learn a lot about how your body reacts to exercise by going through that particular process, so I'm a fan of the going through a competition.

Mike: As for adapting the training to HIT, we did use a routine for my competitive guys that was certainly a lot less volume than the majority of the other training protocols, especially the typical Russian protocol of squatting every day or most days.

Cass: Oh hell no.

Mike: The main American protocol being out of Westside. They're a little bit lower than the Russians but still a higher volume routine than most have. What we did was our accessory work was very much in the HIT mold where we were doing normally only one set, doing it very, very hard, doing it to failure or you know, when we had a team, we had a lot of forced rest just because we had these spotters and the training partners to do it. But we had to spend a little bit more time and a little bit more volume on the actual lifts themselves, the squat, the bench and the deadlift, because if you were to tell me that you wanted to be a football soccer player, you'd have to spend a certain amount of time with the actual skills, which is dribbling, dribbling the ball. Is that the right term when using your feet, Lawrence? I'm not even sure.

Lawrence: Correct.

Mike: Yeah, so you have to spend a little bit of time on that because it's the skill for the sport, but in this case, the skill of the sport and the stimulus that's causing the overload is the same thing. So we were doing a little bit more volume on say like a bench press. We might not do just one set, we might do a heavy set, we might do a lighter set, we might even bring someone in on a different day and get them to do what we would call 50% sets where we would use 50% of not their one rep max but 50% of their 10 rep max. So you know, relatively light weight, and we'd get them to do maybe three or four sets of triples just to get that groove dialed in, just to get that form dialed in. We weren't looking to stimulate anything, we weren't looking for it to be a heavy, hard workout, but we did find I think most powerlifting coaches will attest to this, that there has to be a little bit more time practicing the actual sport itself, which is the actual lifting of the barbell.

Mike: I don't have this 100%, but that Andy Bolton who was the first man to lift 1000 pounds, only deadlifted heavy once a month. Now, I don't know if that's 100% accurate, I was told that, but I was also under the impression that he might have only deadlifted heavy once a month working at that kind of resistance, but he was deadlifting, you know, several times a week. You know, 500 pounds might be nothing, it might be everything to somebody else, but he was practicing a lot. So finding that nice balance between practicing the sport and then also having those heavy workouts where you're trying to build and kind of managing the two we found was the sweet spot for us.

Cass: That actually makes sense, because it kind of reminds me of what Charlie Francis wrote when he was pretty much writing his sprinting programs for

Ben Johnson and elite Olympic sprinters. It really does sound like if I do want to compete even in powerlifting, I would have to actually figure out probably just see if there's anybody local here who's actually done a meet and check up the volume, frequency and intensity. Just being able to practice the skill of the barbell, that was one thing that I particularly thought about. Hearing from somebody who actually's done it and also competed, it kind of like made me think that hmm, what this, for example, how much time did you actually have to invest into your training within a week or so if you were on the competition side?

Mike: Okay. If I were to look at my average client, we do half an hour sessions in our gym, I'd say they train twice a week so they have an hour invested into their workout. I would say that my typical powerlifter was probably spending two, two and a half hours weekly. Some of them might get up to three, but that didn't have much to do with them doing that much more work. It was also a bit of a social thing. They all got along quite well, and it was a bit of a group dynamic as well.

Mike: But yeah, a lot of that just had to do with we did three training sessions a week as opposed to one or two. That's because we had a day dedicated to the deadlift, a day dedicated to the squat, and a day dedicated to deadlift, squat and bench, the three lifts. The way I even broke down the accessory work because there was carry over between the squat and deadlift, was squat was basically leg day, and deadlift was upper body pull day, and obviously I know there's a lot of legs involved in the deadlift, but all the accessory work was for the upper back mostly.

Mike: Then as the guys got even stronger, we found that they could only deadlift one week and squat the next week, but they would still do lighter reps. So

say they deadlifted heavy on week one and they squatted heavy on week two, they were still squatting and deadlifting every single week, but they weren't pushing it hard, because we found that once people got really strong, to keep progressing in squatting, the lower back became the limiting factor in how well we could recover. Even though I'm a big fan of the medical low back for building up lower back strength, there's certain rehabilitation issues, we actually had to pull off of it because it created so much fatigue that we were having a hard time progressing. But these are guys in the four, five, six hundred range that are drug-free, so you're really pushing physiology at that point too.

Cass: Okay. So just one last question about that. What I'm getting at is that you have those three distinct type of days dedicated towards actually I guess it seems like putting the skill work and putting in the actual time for it, and the biggest thing for me is like, I'm probably not going to be that great at the bench just because for some reason, my lower body has always been a lot more stronger than my upper body, and I'm not sure about the women's bench, being able to actually even compete on that, because it's weird. I'm capable of squatting and deadlifting quite a bit, a lot, but when it comes to my upper body, I'm just kind of like, it's a weird dichotomy because I would think that there was some sort of pressure even in my chest press, or even push ups, it's not that great.

Mike: I'd have to see your leverages to comment further on that. It's not a completely uncommon thing that you're saying. I've seen plenty of it. A lot of times it comes down to just how you're built. But with that being said, if you're deadlifting north of three, and say you're able to squat around two, even 100 pound bench press in competitive form is probably going to

hold up quite well. So it's not like I see a whole lot of adult women who are doing a 200 squat, doing a deadlift, and they can bench 200, that would be exceptionally rare, so generally that number is quite a bit less, so I wouldn't beat yourself too much on that one.

Cass: Yeah, because that was the biggest thing that I was really concerned about, because the idea that I can probably bench over 200 or something, I'm just thinking, no, I don't think that's probably... I mean, the idea that I probably would have to have a spotter or something because if something that heavy falls on me, I'm crushed.

Mike: Yep.

Lawrence: Awesome, thank you Cass. These are awesome questions around powerlifting, something different. Mike, we've come to the end of the hour. I just want to say thank you so much for your time, really, really appreciate it. You're just excellent at this kind of thing and so articulate and helpful. What's the best way for people to find out or for the members to find out more about you and your business?

Mike: The website is [STGStrengthandPower.com](http://STGStrengthandPower.com). I'm on Facebook, you can get me through STG Strength and Power or just Michael Petrella. I mean, generally the people that are in our community, they all have mutual friends who will probably look up my name and say that we already have 40 or 50 mutual friends and that tends to work best. I just want to add one thing to Cassandra's last question for you there Lawrence.

Mike: I have the feeling at one of our earlier podcasts, I got into the powerlifting routing a little bit more and I don't know if it was on your members' only one or if it was on the open one, but i want to say that on one of them, we

talked a little bit more in depth, so if she wanted to listen to that, I think I got into the program a little bit more, and if for some reason I'm wrong and we didn't, we can always, we can do something in the future, like on HIT and powerlifting.

Lawrence: I'm very impressed by your memory. It was in the first podcast we did, which was probably like two years ago or a year and a half ago or something like that. So yeah, I will link to that, Cass, for you, because it will go into this specific training in a lot more depth. Or you can just search Mike's name in the blog and probably find that, but I will link it anyway in the show notes for this. But no, good point Mike, appreciate that. Also, just for everyone listening, this will obviously be recorded and transcribed for future reference so if you want to listen back or read back, then you can and I will definitely be doing that because there's lots of stuff I want to review that was said in this one.

Lawrence: Just a little teaser for November, our November Q and A will feature Craig Hubert who was actually on the call for this one. Craig is an expert in high intensity training. Obviously he runs a high intensity training business as well. He's been featured on a public podcast talking about how to start a business from scratch in terms of being a mobile HIT trainer or training out of big box gyms. So again, I think I like this format where I keep the topics open. We haven't focused on one specific thing. We'll probably do the same thing with Craig, but I'll confirm that closer to the time. I just want to say thanks to everyone joining this Q and A, and thank you so much to you, Mike, for doing it. This has been really great.

Mike: Any time, Lawrence, thanks for having me on.

Lawrence: All right, goodbye everyone, take care.