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Community Member of the Month...



This month's CasePerformance Community member of the month is Sarah Stevens who hails from Topeka, Kansas, USA. I was fortunate to get to know Sarah through my involvement with the [Strength Guild](#) which she co-owns along with her husband & CasePerformance contributor [Phil Stevens](#). (I should note, in an earlier 2011 newsletter, we highlighted this [article](#) which discussed their work at the Strength Guild & has their contact info for anyone interested). Without further adieu, let's start picking Sarah's mind....

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First, tell us a little about your background... How did you get involved with resistance training and/or exercise in general? Did you participate in any sports while growing up?

I was never athletic as a child. I was your typical punk kid. As a young adult I was overweight and very unhappy with myself. So, I knew I needed a lifestyle change.

I started as a personal trainer and aerobics instructor in your typical 24 hr gym; needing something for myself I started running. I fell madly in love with it and set my eyes on a 100 miler. With one failed attempt, I came back and completed one in 32 hrs the following year. I also dabbled in BJJ (Brazilian Jiu Jitsu), competed once and realized I was WEAK. I turned my eyes to CrossFit and did that for a few years, always striving for bigger numbers. I met my husband and we sat down and discussed a reasonable strength program and here I am...stronger!

When first starting off, what were the biggest mistakes you found yourself making? In other words, what would you advice people NOT to do when first starting a training program?

I've made many mistakes. Here is my 2 cents...

- 1) Ladies, GET OFF THE SCALE! Don't be afraid to eat.
- 2) Pick a goal, and GET IT. Follow a program out, don't add to it. FOLLOW IT and FINISH IT!

Speaking in terms of generalities, what does your typical training week look like?

I usually train 3-4 times a week. It works well me and I'm able to recover better. Less is more for me right now.

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Are there any particular short or long terms goals that you're currently working towards with respect to your training?

I just hit my latest short term goal which was a 315 lb (142 kg) squat. I now own it. Now, it is a double BW squat... 330 lbs (150 kg)... Here I come!!!

Long term is just to be a capable woman and a good role model for my daughters.

One of the biggest fears that I hear from women when I discuss resistance training is the fear of losing their femininity. As a female, did you ever have this concern when first starting to resistance train? If so, what have you found/experienced since becoming more involved with resistance training and powerlifting?

I don't think I ever focused on the bulk but rather strength. I wanted to be stronger and was and am willing to accept my body as a strong woman; just as I was ok with having the body of a distance runner. Your body fits your sport. I really do like the way I fill out my jeans, though. I'm proud of what I created and am definitely more confident as a strong chick. I know whatever goals I have, I can and WILL achieve them.

Switching gears here, a topic I always get questions about is nutrition and supplements. What are your thoughts on these topics? Any particular nutrition and/or supplement strategies that guide your decisions in these areas?

I'm all for eating real food and keeping it as simple as possible. I take my fish oil, creatine, and my ZMA which really helps me sleep at nights. My daddy always told me, keep it simple stupid.

Diet after diet frustrates me. I'm happier and more balanced if nothing is forbidden. I make better choices that way.

(Editor's Note – I really would like to emphasize Sarah's note of *"I'm happier and more balanced if nothing is forbidden."* For those of you have worked with me, you will note that this is very similar to the answer I often give when asked, "What is the best diet?" ... Of which I simply respond by saying – *"The one that you can and will follow long term"*,

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of which includes the golden rule that Sarah points out –**Nothing HAS to be forbidden!**)

Any other thoughts/advice you're willing to share with us at CasePerformance?

Train hard, eat good/real food, set goals, and keep it fun. (-;

I realize that thoroughly answering these questions takes a lot of time and effort on your part. There are a lot of solid insights and lessons that one can take away from your thoughts. Thus, on behalf of our readers, I want to once again thank you for taking time out of your busy day to join us. Keep up the great work!

