

CHAIN RUNNING AND CRAWLING by John Brookfield

In this article I would like to expose you to a couple of methods in my Chain Reaction Program you may not be aware of. These methods will greatly increase your strength, power generation, work capacity levels and your mental fortitude. These methods are also based on simple natural movements that you are probably already using in your training or even everyday life. When simple natural movements are used it becomes very easy to make great gains as long as you understand the proper progressions. Over the years I have worked very hard finding ways to take these simple natural everyday movements and create progressions that are easy to understand plus will greatly increase your results. When you use natural movement and apply these progressions you are guaranteed to get the best results possible simply because you are using movement patterns used regularly instead of trying to gain strength and results from unnatural movements which is often done unknowingly. These methods I will show you will produce the greatest functional usable strength imaginable.

In fact I am getting ready for a world record truck pulling event in October where I will be pulling a semi-truck weighing over forty thousand pounds the distance of one full mile using only my physical strength and mental fortitude. These methods are actually what I personally use to train myself with to prepare for this event. I have honestly found these methods and drills have produced the best results ever for me personally. They develop every possible asset you need when it comes to producing great transferable results that are also safe in application. The reason these methods are very safe is once again they are based on simple natural movements the way the body was designed to move instead of trying to make it move in a manner it was not designed to move. Let's take a look at these methods.

CHAIN RUNNING

My system of running with chains can be implemented in a wide variety of ways but let's look at a simple drill that most of you are already doing and if not can easily be implemented into your own workouts as well as your clients, athletes or teams workouts. For this chain running drill I suggest using a 35 foot 1/2 diameter chain which will come out to about ninety five pounds in weight. You will also need a harness or a waist belt to attach the chain onto. This chain running drill can be done on any type of grassy field, concrete or asphalt surface or indoor or outdoor turf. You would generally not want to run the chains on a wooden surface or an actual track.

We will use the standard 40 yard dash in this example. However, you can pick any distance you would like. The 40 yard dash is widely used for training purposes plus if you are limited to running space this distance can be very user friendly. Once you have the 40 yards marked off simply stand at one end and attach your chain to your harness or waist belt with only one end of the chain attached so that the chain is lengthwise and will stretch out the complete 35 foot length of chain. To start the drill I suggest having your chain somewhat piled up and not stretched out to start. Now with the proper set up start running down the field to the end of the 40 yard strip. As you take off you are running with only your regular body weight. As you begin to accelerate you will start to pick up the drag of the chain and once you are about twelve yards out you will have the drag of the entire ninety five pound chain stretched out lengthwise thirty five feet behind you. Once at the end of your 40 yard strip simply stop and without hesitation turn back around running to the other end back towards your starting position. You will notice as you turn around and take back off the chain is stretched out in front of you and now as you start running with just your body weight the chain once again will start to drag behind you little by little until you have the entire ninety five pound drag at twelve yards out again.

Continue running back and forth back and forth for the 40 yards as the chain continues to grab you as you accelerate. You will quickly notice you have a bit of recovery time each time as you get to the end of the 40 yard distance and every time you take off again the chain starts to increase its drag until you have the ninety five pound drag at twelve yards out. Do as many times down and back as possible without stopping or walking. Try to relax the best you can and control your breathing as you continue to drag the chain over and over down the 40 yard distance. Each time you get to the end be sure to not stop to take a break but simply turn around and take off again. This little break and lull in the action as you stop to turn around is your break. This drill as you push to sustain will develop tremendous work capacity levels. Don't be overly concerned with the speed of your 40 yard runs, simply strive to keep running even if your pace seems slow. If you feel like you have to stop try to simply walk down the 40 yards a time or two and once you recover attempt to run again covering the 40 yards again.

A simple example workout to increase your work capacity over time is to let's say start off with running the chain down and back five times which is of course ten 40 yard runs. If you can do this running without stopping simply increase your amount of times down and back to ten or more 40 yard runs down and back with ten times down and back being twenty 40 yard runs. Continue doing this little by little as you greatly enhance your work capacity and your ability to sustain and resist fatigue. As you increase your amount of times down and back also try to increase your speed and ability to drag the chain with more power down and back. This chain running drill will truly push your limits as you endure and sustain but it will

also give you results like never before. These results will transfer into anything because these gains you are making are coming from a simple natural functional movement which you are designed to do.

To give you something to shoot for try to work up to fifty runs down and back covering the 40 yard stretch which add up to one hundred 40 yard runs. Strive to do this without any walking but constantly running even if it is not quick. Another great drill to try if you are a strong runner is to hook together two 35-foot, 1/2 diameter chains and attach them to your harness or waist belt. Like before start with these two chains basically in a pile behind you. Mark off 100 yards this time and then take off in a hard run with the chains attached. As you start you are using only your body weight to run but little by little as you accelerate the chains increase the amount of drag and once you are about 24 yards out you have the entire seventy feet of chain behind you for a whopping two hundred pound drag. Of course at this point you still have about seventy six yards to go dragging the two hundred pounds of drag from the outstretched chains. Push to make it to the end and once there you can try to run back to the starting point, stop to rest or simply start to walk back to the starting point. If you are unable to turn around and run I would suggest doing the walk even if it's extremely slow. Remember as you turn around and walk back the chains are outstretched in front of you which means you are only walking with your own weight and as you start moving forward the chains increase their drag until you are about 24 yards out and you have two hundred pounds of drag behind you again. You will find that even walking with the two hundred pounds of dragging chains behind you is quite a workout and will develop great endurance and power generation. Once you walk to the starting point try to run back again with the chains repeating the sequence again.

SHACKLE CRAWLING

Shackle crawling is a method I developed awhile back and is a huge part of my training now. Shackle crawling is based on natural movement and may be the greatest overall strength developer there is. This strength development will transfer into anything because again it is based on natural movement the way the body is supposed to move instead of trying to develop strength with exercises that are not based on natural movements. The Shackle crawling is also completely safe due to the natural movement patterns. To implement the training I use wrist and ankle straps on my wrists and ankles. From here I put two of the 35 foot 1/2 diameter chains on the ground in a U- shape pattern with the ends of the chains facing forward so that I can hook the ends of the chains to my wrist and ankle straps. Once I attach the ends of the chains to my straps I start to crawl forward in a spider man type crawl using a cross crawling pattern. As I move my hands and feet forward I am also dragging the chains with me creating a constant and great resistance to my entire body. Every region of my body is working as I move forward dragging the chains. With the two chains I have about two hundred pounds of drag behind me. If you only have one chain I suggest hooking the chain to your wrists instead of your ankles, however either way will really work you and produce great results. Your core will fire in a way you have probably never felt before due to this progression added to a simple natural movement pattern. Strive to keep moving and cover a good amount of distance without stopping or quitting. If you feel you can't move forward anymore try to simply stall out and hold up your body weight for a moment and once you recover a bit start to crawl forward again. The combination of holding up your body weight while adding this unique progression will really work muscles you did not know you had but in return produce phenomenal results.

In closing, I highly suggest you implementing these chain running and crawling drills into your training. After using these drills for awhile I have honestly found they are far greater for developing strength, power generation and work capacity than anything else I have ever tried. By using these methods and adding some Battling Ropes velocity drills along with some unique agility drills I feel I have covered all the bases in my strength and conditioning program and prepared me for my upcoming world record truck pulling event.. These methods are full body natural movements that will transfer into your sport, battlefield and everyday life.