

# "Forty Two"

In a favorite book of Jo's (my wife), they build a colossal computer to calculate the answer to "life, the universe and everything". After millions of years they gather and ask this ill-conceived appliance what its answer finally is. It says in response, "forty two". The gathered crowd becomes irate and rightfully so given the investment in this machine. However, realizing there is something more at work they ask "Forty two"? The machine answers with what really may be the answer to "life, the universe and everything", which is "learn to ask better questions".

I've been asking *this* question for perhaps twenty years now. "What are a set of 'root' lifts"? What small set of lifts can I do well at that will put me within proximity of doing well with most others? This is my shot at the question, and though I'm sure exceptions and holes in my set can be found, I think this is a pretty good setup generally for people who are into the "Ye olde tyme all-around strong thang".

**2 Arm Clean and Jerk**-All about just getting lots of weight overhead.

**Bridge Press**-Like a bench press, except on the floor and arched up. Generally more weight can be handled in this than a bench press. Lots of muscle groups involved and helps create a strong back arch also.

**Barrel/Sandbag Shoulder**-Hug the barrel or bag with one arm, and have the other holding underneath. Then lift it up till it rests on your shoulder. Again, lots of muscle groups involved. You can also use a plateloading bolt for this.

**1 arm Snatch**-Snap a dumbbell or barbell from floor to overhead in one quick motion. The first basic assymetrical overhead lift.

**Rack Pwr Squat**-A Powerlifting style squat with the bar low on the traps but started from the bottom, from rack pins or stands of some sort. More like a "back lift" than a regular squat and harder.

**1 Arm Clean and Side Press**-Clean a barbell or dumbbell up to your shoulder without the help of the other hand, then bending opposite the db or bb, press yourself away from it until your arm is straight, then drop under the implement and stand up holding it overhead. The other basic assymetrical overhead lift. If you can do this and the snatch well, nothing else is too far out of reach.

I just wrote outlines of the lifts since most people reading this article know how to do them already. Chinups and such are not included since "Ye olde tyme strongmen" were mostly about getting stuff off the floor.

You will notice that there are six lifts, which suggests a pretty effective arrangement in the order written; *Work on one lift a day and take a rest on sunday*. Work by working up to a max, by doing as many reps as you can up to perhaps twenty, do lots of sets short of failing, or do as many sets and reps as you can in twenty minutes. When you stop progressing by one rep scheme, switch to another. This is a long term commitment, don't sweat a bad workout or two, just keep walking in the same direction.

This isn't the answer to "life, the universe and everything" but being strong at this set of lifts does put you in range of being strong at most else.

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