



Q1

Tell us a little about yourself. What is your background? Education? Where you grew up?
What sports you participated in?

Born in the roughest nation in Western Europe - Scotland. I grew up in the arsehole of the country - Livingston. In those days we had no money so we spent most of our time outside playing football (REAL football - the kind you play with your feet). But I was a huge comic book fan and through my reading I began to be fascinated with the martial arts. So I enrolled in ITF Taekwon-do at the age of 11. Now the TKD I learned was a REAL fighting system - none of the shite "tag - you're it" that's getting passed off these days.

I was lucky enough to be trained by one of the greatest natural coaches I have ever come across: Derek Campbell - who is the Louis Simmons or Charles Francis of his field. He changed my life. At one point during my lessons, my Dad was made unemployed (the economy in Scotland under Margaret Thatcher - Prime Minister at the time was horrendous. So we could no longer afford lessons. I had to quit.

Instead Derek taught me for free. An amazing human being - the kind of coach that totally changes a kid's life. He seriously needs to write a book on the Art of Coaching fighters.

I received my first degree black belt at age 15 and began competing at the national level. After winning a few fights, and losing a few, I realized that the people I beat or didn't beat knew the same stuff as I did. This fascinated me. How could one man beat another man who had the exact same knowledge about fighting? Strategy plays a part, but that's part of what you should already know.

It kind of hit me that the only thing separating the winner from the loser was how they applied the

techniques: how fast they moved, how hard they hit, how long they could go for. When technical skill was identical between two competitors, the strongest and fastest athlete would win almost 100% of the time. Soon I was devouring every sports science book I could get my hands on and ended up in college studying training.

Q2

Did you always want to work in the industry?

No - It was just the next logical move. I had tons of requests from people who wanted me to help them - so that's what I did in the beginning. I should state though that if professional ITF style Taekwon-do, had existed or K1 was around then - I'd have become a professional fighter.

Q3

Why are you unique?

Hmmm. Maybe because I don't prescribe to a system of training per se - I use what works regardless of if it's popular or not. And I REALLY don't care what my peers think of me. The only opinion that matters to me is the opinion of my customers. And I'm driven solely to get results with the people who hire me. I train people for real - I don't just write articles. Sadly, that might be the thing that makes me the most unique.

Q4

I just got done reading the *Professional Fitness Coach Program Design Manual* and let me tell you - it is AWESOME! Thank you for putting out such a great resource for any coach or athlete who are serious about making their program structured and balanced! Tell me, why do you think coaches have a hard time pulling it all together?

I think coaches are trying to hard to adhere to their own system. Just like the martial arts world has evolved from separate systems to MMA, we need to evolve to mixed training methods. I am not a one-set-to-failure guy by any means, but I can tell you I've learned a lot from the High Intensity guys. I've learned from the Westside boys, the Swiss Ball guys, the endurance guys, the Olympic lifting guys, and the functional guys. Maybe that's why I'm unique too! I've a writer for EliteFTS, for t-nation, in Mens Health, appeared for the NSCA and appear on the Functional Training tour with Perform Better. Who else is "recognized" by all the different groups -- I think my open-mindedness to training puts me in that unique spot.

I just look for solutions in training that can improve my results. I don't care where those solutions come from, only that they work,

Q5

I am sure it is hard for you to go to seminars and see programs that aren't up to par - how do you handle that situation? Sit back? Interrupt? Or offer advice afterwards?

I've never gotten dumber from attending any seminars. Even the worst events I've been to I've picked up something that I can use. And if I learn anything, in my opinion, then I'm worth more as a coach.

As far as offering advice? Only when asked. I'll help anyone, but I don't debate or offer my advice unsolicited.

Q6

What types of things can happen to an athlete if their strength program is not balanced?
Injury? Performance Issues?

A chain is only as strong as its weakest link right? So if you can bench press 400lbs but only row 100lbs you have a shoulder girdle that will buckle in sport at a load of over 100lbs. In other words your strength is useless because you haven't developed it into a linked system.

It's the same with the other qualities. Show me a kickboxer who can't kick above his knee but can squat 600 and I'll show you a loser. You need to balance joint actions and sports training qualities.

Q7

Are "functional training" and "core" used too loosely?

Smitty, they are completely bastardized terms that have become known as swiss ball training really. Functional Training is really just any training method that improves a real world quality. Is the leg extension machine functional? No - but what if you were a professional seated ass kicker? Then it WOULD be functional right?

I get a lot fo guys saying "you shouldn't use unstable surfaces in training because that doesn't exist in sport". Well what about water polp, wakeboarding, jetskiing, mountain biking and motocross? These ARE sports where effectively, the body stays still and the ground moves underneath the athlete.

I define "core" as anything that isn't the arms and legs. Again it has come to mean abdominal training which is a huge misgiving.

A great CORE exercise is an overhead squat holding a keg, or a single kettle bell in one hand - that's got nothing to do with sit-ups and everything to do with real core training.

Q8

What was the worst injury that you were able to overcome for one of your athletes? Can you give us a quick layout of the plan of attack you used to build them back up?

I worked with Damon Huffman (motocross) who broke his femur in a race and needed to have steel rods put into it. Huffy was one of my more challenging athletes in general - he would race Saturday and/or Sunday, fly back on Monday, train with me Tues, Wed and Thu and fly out for the next event on Thurs night or Friday morning. That's the REALITY of training a pro athlete.

Q9

Where was your biggest failure as a coach? What did you learn from that experience?

I worked for a guy in 96 and was supervising the training of a couple of Olympic fencing hopefuls. I followed his program to the letter but there were too many gaps in it. Those kids didn't make the team that year. I blame myself for not stepping in and changing some of the program earlier. It was just naivety on my part I suppose. If you see something that you think is wrong - ask. You're either right or wrong, but you'll either fix the problem or learn something. Staying quiet is idiotic.

Q10

What was your biggest success? What did you learn from that experience?

I learn just as much from my failures as I do from my successes. But I guess beating cancer taught me that anything was possible. I also worked with a kid last year whose brother had been killed in Iraq. She trained her ass off, gained a ton of muscle and now hold the record for kills in Division I Volleyball at Idaho. Haley Larson - an amazing athlete - watch for her name.

Q11

You've dealt with some serious obstacles in your personal life? How did that make you a better coach? Better person?

Cancer changes everything. I had cancer, beat cancer and it returned and I relapsed. I'm writing this from a hospital bed in UCLA after just having undergone a stem cell transplant to beat this disease once and for all.

Unfortunately it took being faced with a killer disease in order to really appreciate life and all it's gifts. Try having a conversation with your wife about what she should do after you die - that's not easy.

Quick Exercise Grid

What are your top 3 exercises (means) to provide the following adaptations:

Power - DB Jump Shrug, Olympic lift variations, explosive power

Agility - Running drills - the ability to decelerate a lunge pattern effectively in all three planes

Strength - Heavy loading through the posterior chain and shoulder girdle: squats, deads, dips, chins, rows etc

Speed - Same as the power exercises, but I'd definitely add the deadlift as a starting strength exercise.

Q12

Some of your products are geared toward high level conditioning for athletes, but more recently with your latest manual, *Afterburn*, you have addressed how to trim down all demographics of the population. Can you briefly discuss the concepts you outline in *Afterburn* and how it can help tackle the obesity problem the US we are currently facing?

My mum died of a heart attack related to obesity when I was in college. She was following a fat loss program that I learned from professors.

She followed a low fat, low calorie diet. She gained fat. At the time I was national champion and had 5 national champions as clients.

But my own knowledge failed my Mother. This pissed me off.

So I devoted my life to figuring out why fat loss programs have failed - I became obsessed with it. And I figured out better methods.

I think I'm the one of the best in the World at it right now.

The key mistake we've made and continue to make is using steady state aerobic exercise and caloric deprivation as the cornerstone of our fat loss programming. Its ass backward and just doesn't pan out in reality. You can quote research all you want at me, but I see 200 + clients 2-3 times a week in our facility and have done for the past 6 years. I've got more data on training than any fucking research article you want to show me.



Quick Word Association

(Give me the first thoughts that come to mind, when I say.....)

Berardi: G-Flux. Probably his biggest contribution to date.

Kettlebells: A tool. Has been overemphasized and will likely be underemphasized shortly. But still an extremely useful tool.

Conan the Barbarian: The comics were better.

Odd Objects: Real World Strength

Chek: Misunderstood. Smarter than you can imagine.

Meniscus Rehab: Needs to be hamstring based and thought of in three dimensions.

World Cup: The biggest sporting event EVER. Except when Scotland don't qualify L

Tate: Perhaps the smartest man I have ever met. Proud to call him a friend.

UFC vs. PrideFC: A mismatch in marketing one way and in fighting ability the other.

FLEX magazine: The comics were better.



Q13

How do you like working with your wife at your training facility - Results Fitness Training?
What do you do when there is a conflict?

My wife is my best friend and most ardent supporter. You just need to have clear delineated roles that separate business and personal life. In the gym most of the operations is run by Rachel and my staff. I am only the training department.

And it's fair to say - that Rachel is clearly one of the best female trainers in the country - it's definitely an advantage having her on our team.

Q14

What was the latest manual or book you've read related to the industry?

The [MMA manual](#) you sent me. Which is excellent by the way.

Q15

What was the latest manual or book you've read NOT related to the industry?

Atlas - From the Streets to the Ring (biography). *The Power of Intention* - Wayne Dyer.

Q16

What was the latest DVD you've watched related to the industry?

Zach Even Esh's Kettlebells for MMA fighters.

Q17

What would you be doing if you weren't a strength coach?

Probably teaching fighting somewhere. Ideally lying on a beach just being rich though!

Q18

Over the last several years, it seems that the industry has seen a progression from machines => band training => stability training => strongman training => odd object training. Along the way, the core components have been retained and the bullshit has been left behind. Has everyone switched over to the integration of many different training modalities into their programs? Is this even needed?

I don't think even 10% have fully integrated everything. There are still gaps in their methodology. Just train your athletes to exploit the gaps in other coaches programs when you go head to head.

Q19

Tate talks about when as he read books, manuals and transcripts over the years, he would take notes and compile summaries of these texts. What is your best technique for recollection? Cue cards, summary sheet, reread the book?

I actually have a photographic memory. I can speed read and my recall ability is very high. So I really don't do any formal note taking when reading books. Nothing wrong with re-reading books though,

Q20

Finish this statement, "If I could go back 5 years, I would do the following 5 things (that I just recently accomplished) immediately - and not wait!

I would have started doing semi-private training earlier and eliminated one-on-one training. I would have sought out Ryan Lee to help with my online business. I would not have associated with certain "gurus".

But honestly - I have no regrets. I'm not sure I'd change much.

Q21

What 5 sites do you go to everyday?

Some business sites, some blogs. Nothing in the industry really. The elitefts Q&A and my own email are the only definite spots.

Q22

What 's coming up for AlwynCosgrove.com? What are you promoting right now? Any products on the immediate horizon?

The next product will be a collection of interviews I did with various strength coaches. Then I'll get started on Volume II of that.

After that - launched in October: I will be releasing *Afterburn II* and the "*Realities of Fat Loss Training*" which will cover my theories on fat loss and will be aimed more at personal trainers and coaches.

Other than that - I'll be speaking at the Ryan Lee Bootcamp in September, and am currently negotiating a book deal.

Alwyn Cosgrove

www.AlwynCosgrove.com