

# the **CrossFit** JOURNAL ARTICLES

## The Odd Lifts

Greg Glassman

There are movements that will never make it to your local gym and they include some of the best exercises ever known. There is a collection of them known as “the odd lifts.” It would be foolish to ignore these lifts. It would be even more foolish to approach them with other than extreme caution.

There are competitions with the odd lifts and they have an association - the United States All-Round Weightlifting Association (USAWA) The USAWA's [web site](#) covers the rules of the competitions and lifts.

We review the odd lifts with a mix of humor and awe. The humor is a juvenile humor because it finds its roots in the discomfort and injury of others – like kids’ cartoons. Imagine the damage you could do with the Roman chair bench press alone. Or, how about the two-man clean and jerk?

The awe comes in recognition of the tremendous difficulty and discomfort many of these lifts engender at even moderate loads.

If you try these lifts, start light, real light.

Some of these lifts place enormous demands on

stabilizing muscle; others are very functional. Some are as demanding of cardiorespiratory function as running, while others train for teamwork or coordination.

**Here is a list of some of our favorites:**

**The Inman Mile:** Traverse 1 mile with 150 percent of your body weight on your shoulders. Gait optional! Refreshments allowed!! Not only is this a perfectly functional movement but an exciting component to overall fitness.



**Roman Chair Extensions:** Weighted hip extensions with weight in crook of elbows. Not necessarily functional but an education in hip extension and extensors!



**Roman Chair Bench Press:** This is a bench press from the face-up, parallel to the floor, extended position on a Roman Chair. The bench press is just a distraction to keep your mind off of your gut.

**Allen Lift:** A sit-up from the ground with arms locked overhead holding weight. If the bar moves inside a straight line from hip to shoulders or arms bend, the lift is disqualified. This has to be the all-time mother of hip

of 3

## The Odd Lifts (continued...)

flexor exercises.

**Abdominal Raise:** A sit-up with a barbell held behind the neck. Done on the ground or on a Roman Chair. Why don't we see more weighted sit-ups? Give this a try.

**Two Person Cheat Curl:** Very cool curl!

**Two Person Clean and Jerk:** This is a great source of amusement (try a tall guy and a short one, or one strong and one weak) but may develop teamwork.

**Two Person Snatch:** Same as above.

**Steinborn Lift:** From a loaded bar on the ground the lifter stands the bar on end, takes a "position against the bar" (squatting?) and lets the bar fall to one shoulder

and pivot to the other from which position the athlete squats on command.

Actually, very functional. You wouldn't have to hang out at a construction site too long before you'd see this done.

**Zercher Lift:** Deadlift to knees, rest barbell on knees, and then bring barbell to crook of elbows and finish deadlift.

**Middle Fingers Clean and Press:** You guessed it, clean and press with two middle fingers only. This one is great for you grip junkies.

**Zeigler Clean:** This is a clean while balancing a plate on your head. Lift is complete only if plate doesn't fall.



## The Odd Lifts (continued...)

**Judd Clean and Jerk:** One-legged clean and jerk.

**Two-Person, Two-Hand Team Press:** This one will get you a free year at 24-Hour Nautilus; just try it.

**Repetition Snatches with Body Weight:**

This exercise and the Repetition Clean and Jerk with Bodyweight have reasonable claim to be the best overall conditioning drill ever.

**Repetition Cleans with Bodyweight:** Yeah! The greatest single weightlifting movement turned into a cardiorespiratory nightmare for those strong enough.

**Repetition Clean and Jerk with Body Weight:** Same as above.

**Repetition Jerk with Bodyweight:** Outstanding exercise.

**One-Hand Snatch:** One-handed versions of big weight movements are very demanding of the transverse axis and consequently strengthen the trunk. There's also a neurological benefit to the greater control demands of one-handed movements.

**One-Hand Clean and Jerk:** Same as One-Hand Snatch.

**Continental Clean:** This is an anything-goes-except-standing-the-bar-on-end clean. The bar can touch the body anywhere the lifter chooses! You can even put knee or butt to the ground.

This may be a good way to teach the efficiency of the normal clean. Ouch!

**Wrestler's Bridge, Pullover, and Press:** From Wrestler's Bridge, pull a barbell overhead to chest and then do presses to lockout. No points other than head and feet may touch ground during lift. (A two-inch pad for the head is OK!)

This takes a classic exercise, the Wrestler's Bridge, and adds weight. Beautiful!



*The Zercher Lift*



Greg Glassman is the Founder of CrossFit, Inc. and Crossfit Santa Cruz and is the publisher of the CrossFit Journal. He is a former competitive gymnast and has been a fitness trainer and conditioning coach since the early 1980s.