



Z-Health Newsletter - February 2008

Your monthly insight to Life in Motion

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Calendar of Events

Our current schedule is below. Check our [website](#) for updates.

Conferences & Workshops

- Santa Clara, CA: Apr 23-27 - Body, Mind, Spirit Conference

R-Phase (Level 1)

- Durham, NC: Feb 1-3 & Apr 11-13
- Chicago, IL: Feb 8-10 & Apr 4-6
- San Diego, CA: Feb 18-23
- Denver, CO: Feb 29-Mar 2 & Apr 18-20
- Minneapolis, MN: Mar 28-30 & May 30-Jun 1
- Edinburgh, Scotland: Sept 1-6

I-Phase (Level 2)

- San Diego, CA: Jun 5-8
- Durham, NC: Jun 12-15

S-Phase (Level 3)

- Phoenix, AZ: Mar 6-9

Ask Dr. Cobb

If you have a question you'd like Dr. Cobb to answer in a future column, send it to askdr Cobb@zhealth.net.

Q: *Your January newsletter was very eye-opening, but how does survival cause me to use bad form? You would think that the body would lift ergonomically because injury is bad for survival. Thanks, Jeff*

A: You are right in that injury is bad for survival, but if you look at the reflexive makeup of the human nervous system, there are no "lift heavier", "run faster", or "jump higher" reflexes -- neurologically, we are ONLY hard-wired to identify and respond to threat. And these threat reflexes are incredibly fast, incredibly specific, and cause us to withdraw from things that are potentially dangerous or painful. In the case of heavy lifting, all the body knows is that this is something really heavy and if your body isn't ready for it, it will be perceived as a threat. And, since one of the hallmark "survival" activities of the body is flexion, or trying to get "small", your form will go.

Even with good form, your survival mechanism will also keep your muscles from lifting their maximum. The easiest way to explain the impact of the nervous system on performance is to use the example of a car. As you drive, you've got two "locomotor" options -- the accelerator and the brake. To drive safely, you have to have both. Unfortunately, if you try to drive with both pedals pressed to the floor you're not going to get very far AND you're going to tear up your car in the process.

This is a perfect example of what happens in the body. Your nervous system acts both as the accelerator and the brake on your performance. If you're in the middle of a workout and your nervous system believes that you are getting close to tearing a muscle or a joint, it will shut you down and you'll have to abandon the lift.

Here's the really interesting part, however. If you have "low-grade" problems in your body, particularly in your joints, your nervous system goes into every exercise with the "brake threshold" set way lower than it needs to be. In other words, your lifting potential is pre-set at a lower limit than necessary because your nervous system is trying to protect you from injury.

So, one of the major tasks for any athlete is learning how to ensure that these reflexes inhibit their movement as little as possible when they are not necessary. Foundationally, if we can decrease the amplitude of inappropriate reflexes in the body, an athlete will perform at a much higher level.

20% off R-Phase: More of a Good Thing

Our end-of-year sale was a tremendous success, and we know a good thing when we see it!

So, until the **end of February** you can get 20% off the R-Phase manual and DVD -- and we will even throw in **FREE SHIPPING**. You will **pay just \$68** (plus applicable tax). That is a **savings of \$17 off our list price of \$85!**

Two easy ways to order:

1. Use [this link](#), or order online at zhealth.net and enter promo code R20FEB08 at checkout.
2. Call **888.394.4198** to order. Be sure to mention promo code R20FEB08 to guarantee your 20% off.

Designed to be an **encyclopedic** introduction to Z-Health, the R-Phase DVD/Manual package is **VITAL** for everyone wanting to build a better body! In fact, it's so complete we use this **exact info** to prepare our professional trainers for certification.

R-Phase is designed to do 3 things:

1. Teach you how to **rehabilitate** your own pain and injuries,
2. Help you restore **normal range of motion** to every area of your body – especially every joint, and
3. Teach you the **SPECIFIC** methods you must know to re-educate your nervous system - the control system for your health, athleticism and movement.

What you will get:

1. Z-Health® R-Phase Training Manual, filled with over 250 photographs, an extensive introduction, eight week training schedule, resource guide and references.
2. 2 DVD set:
 - Volume 1 is a 35 minute guided practice session that will mobilize and energize every area of your body and introduce you to the COMPLETE R-Phase training series – the foundations of Z-Health!
 - Volume 2 is the indispensable companion to the guided practice session that offers in-depth instruction on how to build the R-Phase exercises into your body with laser-like precision!

Be sure to order by Friday, February 29th, to take advantage of this pricing! Call 888.394.4198 and mention promo code R20FEB08 or [click here](#) to order.

Z-Health Evolution: Interview with Mike T. Nelson

We interviewed Mike T. Nelson, MS, CSCS. Mike is a PhD student in Kinesiology, RKC, and Z-Health Level 1, 2, & 4 certified trainer, who shared with us how he found Z-Health, as well as his personal evolution.

Mike, what brought you to Z-Health?

I was in Charles Staley's coaching group, and some of the lifters were saying that they felt better and were breaking PRs (personal records) after doing Z-Health, so I got the R-Phase DVD. I started waving my limbs around to it like a bird having an epileptic seizure, and began feeling better and movement was easier. I now know that the "bird approach" probably wasn't best –and that precision is key. But, as Dr. Cobb says, even Z done badly is better than not doing it at all.

Clearly you have advanced from there, so what were your next steps?

In June 2006 Brad Nelson (no relation) arranged for Dr. Cobb to come to town for some private sessions. I remember Dr. Cobb doing a muscle test on my left hamstring, and it was horribly weak. He had me do some elbow circles, and I thought he was out of his mind. I could not believe I was paying big money for this -- he knew I had a hamstring issue. When he retested my hamstring, it tested strong and I had no cramping. I was astounded.

I ended up paying on the spot for R-Phase training that fall. To be honest, I had no idea what I had signed up for, but thought if I could learn HALF of what I had observed by the end of certification, I would be thrilled.

That sounds like quite an experience. How did R-Phase go?

At the time I went to Arizona for the first weekend of R-Phase, I was physically a mess. Training was taking its toll on me; after doing heavy deadlifts it was almost impossible to wash my face in the sink the next morning since I could not bend at the waist without lots of pain. On bad days, my WARM-UPS ALONE were taking me close to an hour – and that was just to get to the point where I could actually start my "work out". By the time I went back to Arizona for the R-Phase second weekend, I was doing the drills with more precision, and the results were much, much better. While I had left the first weekend feeling great, by the time I got back to Arizona again I was pretty messed up. I remember asking Dr. Cobb at dinner one night, "if you were me and you know what you know, what would you do?" His response was basically to walk off the plank, give it a shot 100%, and see what happens. I realized that I was on a short path to driving myself into the ground, so what did I have to lose?

And what DID you do? Did you actually start over?

I emailed Brad Nelson, who was already R-Phase certified, and asked for his help on relearning all my exercise technique. Basically, I was not using the correct technique and adding WAY too much tension to compensate. Most of my lifts were "technically" correct, but there was a better and more efficient way. So I started doing deadlifts with the bar only, and then with only 135 lbs, for several weeks. That was a huge blow to the ego, but I stayed the course. I felt great, and my lower back was also feeling pretty good now. There was more work to do, but progress is always good!

In March, I opted to do the Tactical Strength Challenge and ended up pulling 365 lbs, even though my heaviest deadlift during training was only 225 lbs. It's amazing what happens when your body is more efficient! I woke up the next day and felt tired, but my movement was not in the hopper and soreness was very minimal. Washing my face in the sink was easy and pain-free! Life was great.

That is really impressive that you were willing to just start over like that. Can you give me just a bit of a sneak peek into the I-Phase (Level 2) and T-Phase (Level 4) Certifications?

I-Phase is where you integrate movement and work with the visual and vestibular (inner ear balance) systems. It was incredible--visual and vestibular input can have profound effects on movement. Everything was starting to make sense. Z-Health was not just mobility drills, it was a system for ALL movement, based upon how the body takes in information – proprioceptive (joint info), visual (eye movements), and vestibular (inner ear input). Brad Nelson summed it up well when he said, "R-Phase is a great tool; I-Phase is the whole tool SHED".

T-Phase work involves lots of hands-on work from soft tissue to lymph to cranial work. Since much more learning takes place when you do something under your own active control, we also learned how to do ACTIVE work to follow up on all the hands-on passive work. I also realized that Z-Health is not just a system -- it is a complete way of dealing with movement on virtually any issue. Just like R-Phase, everything is tested, so you know if you made good changes or not. That is when I fully began to understand how to look at movement and potential solutions just at a glance.

Thank you so much for your time. We look forward to catching up with you again after S-Phase!

You can learn more about Mike at www.miketnelson.blogspot.com or www.miketnelson.com.

<http://www.zhealth.net>

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