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WHAT'S YOUR WORKOUT?

Chef Gives and Gets a Helping Hand With Weights

By JEN MURPHY

Most people go to the gym to help themselves, but Michael Leviton likes his workouts to help others.

Mr. Leviton is the 48-year-old chef-owner of Lumière in Newton, Mass., and Area Four in Somerville and Cambridge, Mass. He does strength training once a week at InnerCity Weightlifting, a Boston non-profit that tries to reduce youth violence by getting young people into the gym. Mr. Leviton trains with Joe Sierra, a 25-year-old who is one of 19 personal trainers and one of 134 people enrolled in the program.

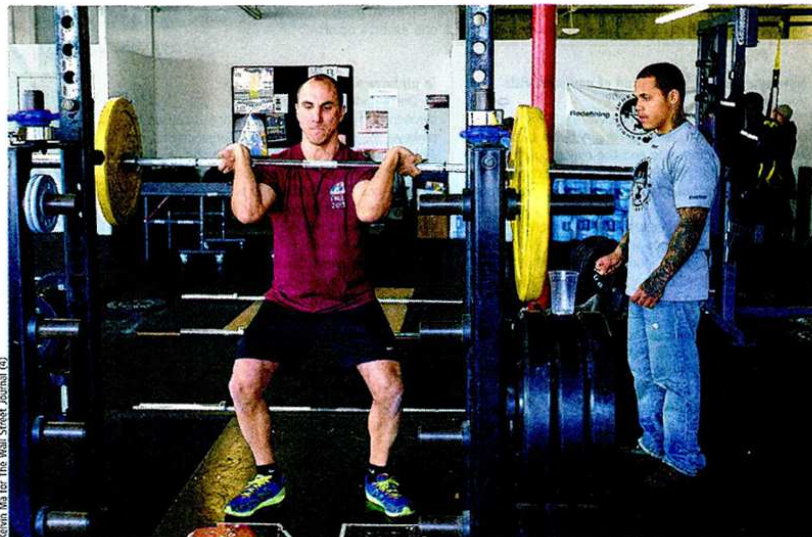
"It feels like a real community there," Mr. Leviton says. "There is so much more value to this program than just learning to toss weights around."

Jon Feinman founded InnerCity Weightlifting in 2009 to give Boston's youth an alternative to gangs. The program, in the city's Dorchester neighborhood, offers participants job opportunities and will pay for them to get certified as personal trainers. It then pairs them with paying gym clients like Mr. Leviton.

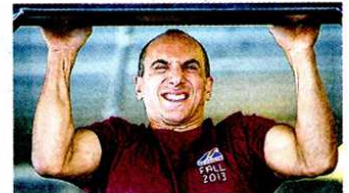
"The idea was to provide a place youth could feel safe and feel accepted by people who would normally judge and stereotype them," says Mr. Feinman, a former competitive weightlifter.

Mr. Leviton played soccer at Wesleyan University in Middletown, Conn., and continues to play on the New England Over-the-Hill men's soccer league. His wife heard Mr. Feinman speak at a forum in 2012 and decided to check out the program. She also works out at InnerCity Weightlifting.

Mr. Leviton's workouts incorporate Olympic weightlifting, a style of



Kevin Ma for The Wall Street Journal (6)



At InnerCity Weightlifting in Boston, Michael Leviton, left, does a clean and jerk as his trainer, Joe Sierra, looks on. Above, doing a pull-up. Below, with his wife, Karyn Cohen, who trains at the gym, and daughter, Isadora.



strength training where participants lift a barbell in a swift and powerful controlled motion. His sessions are geared toward keeping him fast and strong on the soccer field during the 10-week spring and fall seasons. "I can run, but it's nice to feel like I'm getting stronger," he says.

The Workout

Every Saturday at 9 a.m., Mr. Leviton trains with Mr. Sierra at InnerCity Weightlifting for an hour. They warm up using a foam roller. They move onto leg work, performing super sets, two different exercises back-to-back with little to no rest between.

Next are Olympic weightlifting exercises, such as the snatch and the clean and jerk. "Mastering these is all about learning the form and proper technique," Mr. Leviton says.

From there, they do super sets that work the back, shoulders and chest using various equipment such as kettle bells. They end with exercises to get the heart rate up such as burpees.

Mr. Leviton also works out one or two days a week at Cambridge Athletic Club and rides the stationary bike, lift weights and stretch. One or two nights a week, if he can get his 11- and 4-year-old children to bed, he

exercises in his basement where he has weights and a spin bike. Once or twice a week, he runs for 30 minutes on the track or football field of M.I.T., near one of his restaurants, or along the Charles River.

The Diet

Mr. Leviton usually eats breakfast on the run, either a fruit smoothie or whole wheat toast with almond butter and jelly. "I'm tasting everything when I'm cooking on the line so I pass up lunch or dinner a few times a week," he says.

Some days lunch or early dinner is a staff meal, which the kitchen team

prepares. He tries to dine at home with his family one night a week and often has Thai or Chinese food. "I need to get a different palate of flavors" than those at his restaurants, which feature comfort food and bistrot cooking.

Other times he and his wife cook roast chicken and vegetables or he brings home pizza and salad from Area Four. His splurge is sushi. "If my wife and I can grab a date night, we go for sushi and a big bottle of sake," he says.

The Gear & Cost

The suggested contribution at InnerCity Weightlifting is \$20 a workout, which goes to the trainer. His membership at Cambridge Athletic Club is \$50 a month. Soccer-league dues are \$100 a season. He recently switched to minimal running sneakers, rotating between a few older models of New Balance Minimus sneakers. "I never loved to run but since I've been wearing minimalist sneakers it's less tedious and painful."

The Playlist

When he runs, he often listens to a "Fresh Air" podcast from NPR. He'll watch an action movie or Boston sports while on his spin bike. "I can't watch a game sitting still," he says.

Lifting Techniques: An Olympic Event That's Even Harder Than It Looks

In Olympic weightlifting events, an athlete attempts to lift the heaviest weighted barbell within a specified weight class. The two lifts are called a snatch and the clean and jerk, which work nearly the entire body, says Jeff Potteiger, a fellow of the American College of Sports Medicine and a professor in the Department of Movement Science at Grand Valley State University in Grand Rapids, Mich.

The upside, Dr. Potteiger says, is that "you are building strength and explosive

power," which is why you see "sprinters, soccer players and football players integrating this into their routines." The downside, he says, is that Olympic weightlifting is very technical. "It takes some people years to master the techniques," he says.

To perform the snatch, he says. "The lifter first goes into a full squat position as the bar is raised above the head." Then he uses his "leg muscles to drive upward into a standing position."

The clean and jerk is a two-part move-

ment, says Dr. Potteiger. "The barbell is lifted off the ground to rest across the chest" while the lifter is in a squat, he says. Then he "pushes his arms and the barbell up overhead as they stand."

Dr. Potteiger says he wouldn't suggest people new to weightlifting attempt Olympic-style lifts. "You need to have a base level of fitness," he says, and even then, he suggests a certified strength-and-conditioning coach or trainer to teach you the moves.

—Jen Murphy



The objective of Olympic weightlifting: Lift a barbell above your head.