

Introduction Trial to The Hard Way Project

Every month participants receive a .pdf that starts with an introduction that includes: the monthly theme, learning objectives, reference material, and a ‘Checking In w/ the Left Hand’ integration cue. The month is then composed of:

x2 workouts focused on supporting learning objectives. Each with a discussion to set the learning ‘intent’ and a ‘capture’ to help create the awareness space to support the process and its reflection.

x1 Hard Way Challenge that looks to extend the activity domain and invite nuanced extractions not otherwise able to be arrived at themes during shorter (“I can see the finish line”) type workouts.

x1 Awareness / Habit Activity which finds a monthly mindset theme to increase awareness around in our daily routines and lives. These themes have subtle ways of manifesting into our physical activities just as our physical habits surrounding workouts reinforce and replicate into our daily routines.

We also host a monthly video call to discuss the previous month’s project, look into the current month, and also open up a forum to discuss anything going on in life that is related to the project. It is a community. These calls are recorded and archived for individuals wanting to review or if they’ve missed a meeting.

This trial month samples from the first 3 months of our subscription to present a representation of a variety of different learning activities/ intents, themes, and material. In the standard subscription, each month’s material will be mutually supportive throughout that month’s project.

Workout A – June; Max Effort Mindset. Learning Objective categories: ‘one more’ and ‘good enough isn’t’.

Workout B – April; Self Awareness of Effort. Learning Objective categories: ‘relative intensity’, ‘RPE scale’.

Hard Way Challenge – May; Patterns & Routines. Learning Objective categories: ‘threshold training’, ‘RIR’.

Awareness/ Habit Activity – April; Self Awareness of Effort. Learning Objective categories: ‘relative intensity’, ‘RPE scale’.

Modified Scale	Ordinal Scale ¹	Percent Effort	Perceived Work Load	Talk Test
	6	20%	Very, very light	At Rest
	7	30%		Gentle walking or “strolling”
	8	40%	Very light	
1	9	50%		Fairly light
2	10	55%		
3	11	60%	Moderately hard	Brisk walking, able to carry on a conversation
	12	65%		
4	13	70%	Hard	Very brisk walking, must take a breath between 4-5 words
	14	75%		
5	15	80%	Very hard	Unable to talk and keep pace
6	16	85%		
7	17	90%	Very, very hard	
8	18	95%		
9	19	100%	Exhaustion	
10	20			

“Checking In w/ the Left Hand” Integration

The ‘Checking in w/ the Left Hand’ is a framework that utilizes each finger of the left hand to represent a reframing or mindset technique that can be leveraged to optimize performance, persevere against challenge, or to guide individuals forward towards success.

It is introduced in full during the in-person Diesel Day 1 event through Crooked Butterfly Ranch Ltd. During ‘The Hard Way Project’ small callouts help with continued integration & development of the framework for participants of Diesel Days.

This framework is built upon “lessons from the battlefield & ballfield, made relevant for the boardroom & breakfast table.”



Workout A

(estimated time to perform 30-45 minutes)

Equipment

- Set of Dumbbells
- 400m to Run
- Do NOT time this workout

Set Up

- A. Grab a pair of dumbbells and get outside
- B. Recommended: Men 35-55# / Women 25-40#

Execution

x100 [Dumbbell Thrusters](#) - every time you break a set, run 400m AND add 10 reps to your finish point.

1. General Warm Up: 3 rounds - 2 min jog, x3 pull ups, x5 push-ups, x7 air squats.
2. Specific Warm Up: Practice a few sets of 3-5 thrusters at increasing weights up to workout load.
3. After your last set of thrusters, maintain your bearing and run hard the last 400m.

Capture

- A. Total number of reps and runs you complete.
- B. Any patterns you fell into for thrusters.
- C. Did you pace your run or push your run.
- D. Most importantly, what were the thoughts & decisions associated with B & C? (if any).
- E. What did your breaks look like when you came back to the DBs after a run and when you probably put your hands on your knees.

Intent

This is very simple creative programming to encourage max effort (no Reps in Reserve) for each set. It couples an active recovery period (the run) to flush the lactic acid ([Chris Hinshaw calls this an "Acid Flush"](#)) out of the legs and move blood back into the shoulders.

Discussion

This isn't a timed workout. It might go on indefinitely if you pick the wrong set of dumbbells! Select a load that feels like 25 reps for a first set is doable but challenging. No substitutions in the middle of the workout. You will be more disappointed in yourself if you choose too light.

If you think the squat portion of the thruster will be the limiting factor, set up a box or chair to squat to - just reinforce driving through the heels as you rock out of the seated position. Maintain proper neutral spine.

We will cap this workout at 180 reps. If you get capped, we need to have a discussion about your weight selection and what else is going on for you.

There is a target number of reps and rounds that makes this workout ideal. If I share those numbers, what will happen is your subconscious (maybe conscious for some) will start to influence your performance, for better or worse.

Do not get paralyzed by trying to decide what set of dumbbells is right for you. It's probably the ones that are heavier between the two sets you are back & forth about.



Workout B

(estimated time to perform 75 minutes)

Equipment

- 3 sets of dumbbells - x1 light, x1 medium, x1 fairly heavy (recommendations below)
- Means of counting reps per pair of dumbbells (recommendations below)
- Timer

Set Up

- Find enough space to perform [Man Makers](#) with all three sets of dumbbells in front of you.
- Position a timer out of sight. Do not wear a watch.

Execution

60 minute AMRAP of [Man Makers](#) (full range of motion squat depth required)

1. General Warm Up: as required.
2. Specific Warm Up: perform a few reps at each loading focused on familiarization of movement pattern & technique in the video hyperlink
3. 60 minutes of [Man Makers](#) with a goal of repping as much total weight as possible.
4. Do not reference the timer at all throughout the workout.

Capture

- Note feelings and other signals you were using to assess rates of exertion.
- Note thoughts and internal dialogue that was occurring during each set where you made a decision to pause, rest, or change dumbbells. What was driving you to achieve and what was tugging at you to yield.
- Record patterns of rep schemes you deliberately or unintentionally found yourself falling into. What were the decisions or feelings that set these patterns.
- Record reps & total weight moved per dumbbell pair and calculate total weight moved overall. A pair of 50# dumbbells for 10 reps would be:
 $[50\# \times 2] \times 10 \text{ reps} = 1000\#$
- Identify/Relate different [Borg Scale RPE](#) (Ordinal Scale) during different periods during the workout.

Intent

Optimize performance by challenging yourself to move higher & lower on the [Borg Scale RPE](#) (Ordinal Scale) as a strategy vs finding a convenient 'cruising' pace. This is CrossFit's [Threshold Training](#) concept.

Recommendations on dumbbell loading:

- Don't get overwhelmed in this process by trying to be exact.
- Start by selecting the medium pair of dumbbells. Find a weight that can be performed for an unbroken set between 12-15 reps when fresh. Identify what part of the movement pattern has the greatest amount of fatigue or stress, i.e. the renegade row, clean, full front squat, or thruster. Probably around the 40# for average fitness/conditioned males.
- Next, select the light weight that supports the greatest fatigued movement for 8-10 reps of the aforementioned and when 10 unbroken steady reps at medium weight is too much. Probably around 25# for average fitness/conditioned males.
- Finally, grab a weight that is a 3-5 rep load when just short of fresh (5-10 min mark). Probably around 55# for average fitness/conditioned males.

Recommendations on rep counting:

- Poker chips in front of each pair of dumbbells to count single reps w/ blacks representing sets of 10, 20 or 25 for each.
- Notepad & pen scribing tick marks for each load.
- Do not pick something that tempts you to stray from your working area or orients you towards the timer or distraction.



Hard Way Challenge

(estimated time to perform 60 – 90 minutes)

Equipment

- Echo Bike, Assault Bike or C2 Bike Erg
- A [shorty band](#)

Set Up

- A. Position your equipment in a happy place.
- B. Put the [shorty band](#) around your legs just **above** your knees. I typically use the red band. If I don't have a shorty band I will double/triple loop or tie a knot in a monster band to get the right fit and resistance.

Execution

Ride your bike for 2 hours, max distance.

1. It is very important to have the band above the knees.
2. Pick an appropriate elastic band that requires you to **actively drive your thighs outward**, ([Abduction](#)) keeping your knees flexing and extending as a hinge joint without introducing valgus or varus producing forces/ angles about the knee joint.
[Catalyst University](#)
[ACL Strong](#)
3. Set the seat height & horizontal position properly.
[Trek Bikes \(Height\)](#)
[Road Cycling Academy \(Horizontal, Technical\)](#)
[Echo Bike, example](#) (Note: in this video the demo is sitting too high)

Capture

1. Recruitment awareness of ALL the muscles.
2. When things got challenging, where did your mind go and what were your actions to seek comfort.
3. Did you stay intentional with effort. Reference speed, cadence, rpm, or wattage as time went on and continue yourself to hold a standard of challenge. Optimize effort during short intervals and by setting targets over repeated periods of time and/ or distance.
4. Record all the data your specific monitor allows you to record.

Intent

Optimize performance by challenging yourself to move higher & lower on the [Borg Scale RPE](#) (Ordinal Scale) as a strategy vs finding a convenient 'cruising' pace. This is CrossFit's [Threshold Training](#) concept (reinforcing last month).

Challenge yourself not to fall into a mediocre pace of 55 rpm or 10 kph or some random wattage. Test out an effort for a specific interval (time, distance, calories...), make that interval not convenient to a simple cute number like 5.0km or 3min or 50cals, then at the end of the interval assess how the effort is serving you. Can you push harder for another different interval? Should you ease back for another different interval.

Remember, the goal is MAX distance. No matter what. You will not achieve this number by a long shot if you try to pace or worry about minutes 90-120 when you still have yet to optimize minutes 8-15 or 23-27...



Awareness / Habit Development Challenge

We want to identify thought habits that lead to diminished performance.

Every time you catch yourself thinking “I don’t feel like it” or “Not right now, I’ll do it later” or something to that effect it needs to ‘ring a bell’.

What were you ‘feeling’ when this popped into your head? Inconvenience, lethargy, indifference, triviality, annoyance...? These are the slippery thoughts your Mind is sharing with you that were influenced by the Mind’s Mind.

For you to even have the thought originate to require a deflection of an action, your mind must have first recognized the value of taking the action. Then it for some reason fought something to change its value assessment for the action in order to placate mediocrity.

Sometimes it is deliberate and comes from a rational or calculated place, but then you should be able to capture what the calculation for not taking action was based on. Was the calculation based on a rationalization (a disguise for bullshit) or something legitimate.

Example: I’m walking around my home and see some leftover grease or stickiness on the counter. My mind instantly determines that it is not proper and I should clean it up. But then there is almost immediate hesitation and the next thought is to do something different. To ignore it, or that it isn’t important, or my wife will clean it up, or I will do it later, etc. Sometimes a thought will appear “I don’t feel like it right now” or “Ugh, what a hassle.” There are infinite possibilities and they will continue to get more attractive as the Mind’s Mind grows and wisens to stay in charge just as you develop in being able to defeat it and be in charge.

If it’s easy to fail at the simplest and most trivial opportunities, it should also be the easiest to succeed. The inverse holds equally to experiment for the hardest of opportunities.

Every time you have one of these rationalizations ‘ring a bell’ and count it as a rep.

The first step towards habit tuning is awareness. The next step is discerning validity. Then the next step is rewarding (with positive or negative reinforcement) behavior.

Throughout the month count your reps and also count your wins. Attempt to identify patterns of scenarios, thoughts, and moods of your reps.

The ultimate goal is to evaporate all your reps to where you never have a chance (need) to earn a win. Without having a need to win (or opportunity to fail) is incredibly more advanced than accumulating wins.

Do x5 pushups at the end of the month for every rep you ‘rang the bell’. No discounts for winning. Winning is prize enough.

