

John C.

SUCCESS STORY!

Customer

John C., a 90-year-old WW2 vet.

Challenge

John realized he wasn't exerting himself enough to fight off age-related weakness and creeping negativity.

Greysteel Solution

Barbell training twice a week.

The program includes box squats, deadlifts, incline bench press, barbell curls and high-intensity interval training on the bicycle.



John learning to deadlift.



John's shirt says it all.

LIVING LIFE TO THE MAX:

90-year-old takes up barbell training and discovers it's never too late to progress instead of regress

In his 87th year, WW2 vet, John C., decided it was time to prepare for old age. He's from Nebraska and even with an adventurous life—marriage, 6 kids, foster children, basic training, multiple careers and a master's degree—his normal mid-western upbringing meant he was practical, despite artistic leanings.

It was two years after John's wife Mary passed away, that he moved from his home in Oregon to Michigan to be near his daughters, Suzanne and Becky. Plan A was living with Suzanne and her husband but John gave it some more thought and knew it wasn't the right solution. The right solution was an independent living community, 20 minutes down the road from Suzanne.

In John's mind, the problem with old age is wrong thinking. But John's a reader who exposes his mind to new ideas and started reading Deepak Chopra in his 80s. "Part of what he talks about," John says, "is lack of purpose as people age, the need to go in different directions and people should be doing more to exert and sustain themselves. I got the idea that people could do things to fight off mental and physical weakness."

John knew falls are a real problem for elders and the idea of living better by doing appropriate physical exercise immediately made sense to him. He got an iPhone, did a lot of research and learned about strength training. But there were no weights at his place and he asked one of the staff, Cassie, if there was something they could do to bring strength training into his independent living community.

Dinner with local doctor gives John the iron bug

Cassie brought Dr. Jonathon Sullivan—a.k.a. Sully—an emergency physician, former marine and barbell coach in Farmington for a tour of the retirement community and dinner with John. The idea was for Sully to put in a proposal for a strength training program at the community, which he later did. Before Sully left that night, he told John, "I can get you under the bar." Those words started John's career as a masters athlete at 89-years-old.

"I decided I couldn't wait for something to come to my residence because it's a significant change in thinking," John says of his decision to start barbell training at Sully's gym, Greysteel Strength and Conditioning.

To get started, John went through Sully's standard interview and assessment and did his first deadlift of 25 pounds before the session was over. John has a couple of mobility issues and his barbell program is modified because of them. But he does the work—box squats, incline bench press, deadlifts, barbell curls, conditioning—just like any other masters athlete at Sully's gym, Mondays and Fridays, rain or shine.

John's in good health, always takes the stairs and you won't hear him talking about his problems. Even so, after six months of barbell training, he's got fewer of them.

Stronger, firmer and feeling good

He feels good mentally and physically. John's belly has 'firmed up quite a bit' and he feels stronger because he *is* stronger; in six months, he turned that 25-pound deadlift into a 130-pound deadlift.

"The program is fulfilling what I was hoping would happen," John says. "I'm developing muscle mass, reducing the deleterious effects of aging and progressing instead of regressing."

John's barbell training is part of his strategy for 'holding off the grim reaper for as long as possible' but feeling good about himself is the greatest benefit he's noticed so far.

*"A lot of negativity creeps in as you age.
People think you can't do things...but you can."*

-John

And that's not just talk. Besides barbell training, John participates in a reading program that brings seniors and inner-city kids together and he's got his Spanish book club which helps him practice the language he learned in his seventies.

Being alive to the max

In a time where most people take better care of their automobiles than themselves, John's thinking is different. His philosophy is doing life to the max and his advice to others? "Keep pushing the envelope. Do what you can and do *beyond* what you can."

John is a true believer in the benefits of barbell training and calls himself a 'one-person info centre'. He puts the info out there—John has fun and he likes talking to people—but doesn't proselytize because he believes people can make up their own minds.

In the meantime, John will be at Greysteel, Mondays and Fridays, training for his next goal of deadlifting 200 pounds.

**John's personal records are as of March 2017. He will keep breaking them.
UPDATE: In the fall of 2018, John deadlifted 225 pounds, smashing the record he was going for previously.*

John C.

Results

Increased muscle mass.

John is now firmer around the mid-section.

The biggest benefit of training for John is feeling good about himself and reducing the deleterious effects of aging.

Increased strength: at the beginning of training, John lifted 25-pounds off the ground. Six months later, he can lift 130 pounds off the ground.



John started with a strap-assisted back squat and then progressed to below-parallel box-squats.



The marine and the WW2 vet.



810-201-4857

greysteel.fitness@gmail.com

www.greysteel.org