

simply the **BEST**

THE GOOD NEIGHBOR

'How does anyone else get anything done with this guy in the gym?' This is my thought process as I watch Nick finish — not start — his quad workout with a plate-laden rep-fest on the leg press. For one thing, it's impossible not to stop what you're doing and watch this man-machine hybrid ease his way through a set of 15 with 1,600-plus pounds on the sled. But also, a weight load like that requires 36 big wheels, so how could anyone else get

anything done when all the 45-pound plates are being used?

Still, this is the only part of Nick's strength week that even remotely resembles the routine of most lifters. Here, he goes through a meat-and-potatoes assortment of lifts for legs and low back — Zercher squats, rack pulls, back extensions, leg presses and calf raises — only he does them with otherworldly poundage. On the Zercher squat, arguably the most uncomfortable exercise known to man, he tops out at 585. For reps.

"The main thing is that you can't get stronger if you get hurt," he says. "So you push as hard as you can. Push to the brink but don't go past it. Better to be safe than dead. I push my body to places that I don't think are right, but I'll know when I'm pushing too hard. I train by feel and I'll know when it's enough. If it

ain't there, I'll just stop and go home. Better to take a day's rest and come back the next day than to knock yourself out for weeks or even more."

Seeing what this kind of training has done for his build, it's easy to see why so many people have tried to convince him to cross over into bodybuilding. Even now, with nary a competition in sight, he's hovering around 10% bodyfat, looking leaner than most IFBB pros do in their offseasons. And he can boast that kind of look while heaving around hundreds of pounds more weight in the gym than his bodybuilding counterparts.

"They've tried to talk me into it," Nick says of doing a bodybuilding competition. "But I don't have the joint structure to bodybuild and be successful at it. Not to mention I can't stand dieting."

