



D W I G H T P H I L L I P S Leap of Faith

Dwight Phillips overcame major obstacles, including gravity, to become the best long jumper in the world




Arizona. Charles said that Phillips had poor upper-body strength and was relatively weak in the hamstrings and vastus medialis (a quadriceps muscle that crosses the knee). Poliquin also said Phillips needed to work on his upper-body strength and his eccentric (lowering, or braking) strength. In addition to prescribing personalized weight training programs, Poliquin worked on Phillips' diet. He put him on a Paleo (i.e., 'cave-man') diet, four days on and one day off, and used 'extensive food supplements and IV nutrition to compensate for years of poor diet.'

Phillips worked hard on his weaknesses, and he eventually made some impressive lifts in the weight-room. Weighing only 176 pounds, Phillips has power snatched 264 pounds and front squatted, all the way down, 350 pounds. As for his initial upper-body weakness, Phillips did so well on Poliquin's strength program that he could bench press 280 pounds for four reps and perform two wide-grip pull-ups with 85 pounds tied to his waist.

At the 2004 Olympic trials on July 12, Phillips easily won with 27' 2", passing on his last three attempts. He also competed in the 100 meters, hoping to earn a spot on a relay team, but got only as far as the semifinals. With the relay out of the picture, it was time to focus on the long jump. And focus he

did: Just three weeks before the Olympics, Phillips competed in Linz, Austria, and made a personal best of 28' 2 3/4. He would be the man to beat in Athens.

In Athens, Phillips got off to a great start by making 28' 2 1/4 on his first jump, despite only using half the board at takeoff. He didn't increase his distance in his remaining jumps, but the first mark was enough to secure him the gold ahead of America's John Moffitt, who made a personal best of 27' 9 1/2 on his fifth jump. The bronze medal went to Juan Lino Martinez of Spain with a best of 27' 3 3/4. The 2000 Olympic champion Pedroso finished 7th with 27'. Said Phillips after the competition, 'I'm full of joy. It was an amazing night.' And with characteristic focus, he remembered to add that he would be continuing to work on breaking Powell's world record.

As for how he would like people to consider him, Phillips says, 'I would like to be known as a patriotic guy. A guy that was raised well by my mom and dad, a guy who's always smiling, and a guy who's always going to give his all, in everything he does, not only in track and field but in every part of my life.' Spoken like a true champion—make that *Olympic* champion! 



TOSHIFUMI KITAMURA/AFP/Getty Images

After winning his Olympic gold medal, Phillips said, "I would like to be known as a patriotic guy. A guy that was raised well by my mom and dad, a guy who's always smiling, and a guy who's always going to give his all...."

When a 14-year-old boy from Tucker, Georgia, was struck by a motorcycle 12 years ago while playing street football, doctors were not optimistic about his recovery. Both legs were broken below the knees, and the right leg was injured so badly that the question was not whether the boy would be able to play sports again, but whether he would be able to walk at all.

The doctors placed his legs in casts for four months, starting him on a rehabilitation program that would last two years, and then it was up to the boy's family to wait with faith that their son would regain full use of his legs. The young man's name is Dwight Phillips, the same Dwight Phillips who won the Olympic gold medal in the long jump in Athens.

About his accident, Phillips said that it taught him not to take anything for granted and how to fight through adversity. That attitude enabled him to make the track and basketball teams at Tucker High School. When he was a senior he high jumped 6' 10"; triple jumped 50' 10" and long jumped 23 feet. Phillips went on to attend the University of Kentucky for two years before transferring to Arizona State. At that time Phillips considered himself a sprinter and eventually made personal bests of 10.16 in the 100

meters and 20.68 in the 200 meters. However, Arizona State track coach Greg Kraft convinced Phillips to focus on the long jump, as he believed the talented young man would do better in that event. In just his second college meet Phillips jumped over 25 feet, and soon he had visions of winning the gold medal and breaking the world record held by Mike Powell at 29' 4 1/2".

At the 2000 Olympic trials Phillips finished second, then went on to jump 26' 5 1/2" to place eighth, the highest of any American. Ivan Pedroso of Cuba won the gold with a best of 28' 3/4". Phillips says he "competed on emotion" and needed to focus on improving his technique.

In February of 2004, Phillips started working with strength coach Charles Poliquin, whose gym was near Phillips' current residence in Tempe,

Strength & Mass Manager 2004											
Dwight Phillips		2004/6/1		Workout ID: 8369		Workout SEQ: 2 of 3					
Specific Preparation		1		Legs		2004					
		s1	s2	s3	s4	s5	s6	s7	s8	s9	s10
A. Power Cleans From Above Knee Cap											
3227L Make sure shoulders are ahead of bar in start.											
Weight:	200.0	222.2	233.3	211.1	238.4	243.4					
Reps:	6.0	3.0	2.0	5.0	3.0	2.0					
		Average		Total							
		Weight: 219.5		Sets: 6.0		MC_1		4-6		....4 120 4/0/X/O	
		Reps: 3.3		Weight: 4390.7		MC_2		4-6		....4 120 4/0/X/O	
				Reps: 20.0		MC_3		4-6		....4 120 4/0/X/O	
B. Telemark Inertia Quarter Squat											
3244L Go to ankle flexibility											
Weight:	135.3	165.6	185.8	206.0	226.2						
Reps:	6.0	4.0	6.0	6.0	6.0						
		Average		Total							
		Weight: 185.1		Sets: 5.0		MC_1		4-6		....4 120 4/0/X/O	
		Reps: 6.6		Weight: 5182.2		MC_2		4-6		....4 120 4/0/X/O	
				Reps: 28.0		MC_3		4-6		....4 120 4/0/X/O	
C1 1 1/4 front Squats											
3264L quarter rep in bottom position.											
Weight:	165.6	175.7	185.8	185.8							
Reps:	6.0	5.0	5.0	4.0							
		Average		Total							
		Weight: 177.2		Sets: 4.0		MC_1		4-6		....4 120 4/0/X/O	
		Reps: 5.0		Weight: 3544.3		MC_2		4-6		....4 120 4/0/X/O	
				Reps: 20.0		MC_3		4-6		....4 120 4/0/X/O	
C2 Atlantis Kneeling Leg Curls Neutral											
3065L Foot is pointing away and neutral											
Weight:	80.8	85.9	90.9								
Reps:	6.0	6.0	6.0								
		Average		Total							
		Weight: 85.9		Sets: 3.0		MC_1		4-6		....4 120 4/0/X/O	
		Reps: 6.0		Weight: 1545.6		MC_2		4-6		....4 120 4/0/X/O	
				Reps: 18.0		MC_3		4-6		....4 120 4/0/X/O	

An example of one of Dwight Phillips' sophisticated weight training workouts, written for him by Charles Poliquin during Phillips' final preparations for the Olympics.