



Episode 54 Transcript

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Meg Squats Steps Up to the Platform

Nick Collias: Hey there. Welcome to *The Bodybuilding.com Podcast*. I'm Nick Collias, the host up in here, and today, I wanted to share a conversation with you that I recently had with Meg Gallagher, aka Meg Squats. Now, she's been a guest [on the podcast before](#). She's also a competitive powerlifter, and the 2018 Bodybuilding.com [Women's Spokesmodel winner](#). And when I spoke with her, Meg was also just a couple of weeks out from competing at the USAPL Raw Nationals Powerlifting Competition. This is a huge competition with well over 1,000 competitors, and Meg has been a fixture there for the last few years, while she's been building her brand, and building her prominence on places like [YouTube](#), [Instagram](#), and just in the general culture of strength.

For instance, we do have a great 8-week program with her on Bodybuilding.com All Access called "[Uplifted: Build Muscle and Strength with Meg Squats](#)." You should really check it out. I talked with Meg about her prep for this competition, how she's blended bodybuilding and powerlifting in her training in recent years, and how freaky it can kind of be to feel good during an important physical prep, which is kind of where she's at right now. There's also all kinds of good advice and tips in here for powerlifters and women who are following Uplifted, but also for just anyone trying to make the most of their bodies, get as strong as possible, and keep it going for years at a time. If you know Meg, you know she's always frank, and always fun to listen to, so enjoy.

Meg Squats: Did you already squat?

Nick: I did. I got my squats out of the way, and now I'm ready to talk to Meg Squats.

Meg Squats: Good for you. Good. I wouldn't have it any other way.

Nick: Well, they, they were, they were easy enough. I'm not sure they were, they were really hard enough for what you would want, but I don't know. I've just always been curious about those old-school breathing squats programs. Have you ever looked at those?

Meg Squats: Yeah. What, what week are you on?

Nick: Oh, this is day one, so it was just, you know, one set of, one set of 30 with, um, 95 pounds. It's really nothing special, but it's just such an interesting thing, because you, you know, the set took like two and a half minutes to do.

Meg Squats: Yes.

Nick: Like you just, you do a rep...

Meg Squats: One set of 30, that's rough.

Nick: ...then you breathe. It's, it's fun. It's fun. Thinking of... As I was about 23 reps into 30, it got me thinking that I should ask you what's the, what's the most grueling set, or workout, of squats that you can recall doing, off the top of your head, when you're like, "Oh, my God, when is this fuckin' thing gonna end?"

Meg Squats: Hmm. I think 10s are probably the worst. 10s and 12s. I don't go much higher than that, though. I won't lie to you. Uh, um... But I would say of all of the, you know, various intensities, and like set numbers that you could do, that is probably the worst.

Nick: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Meg Squats: Anything from 8 to 12 is pretty bad. That's where most of my sets are, though, until I'm prepping. So, until I'm like 12 weeks out, I'm usually in that rep range, unless I'm trying to push for a certain PR, or something.

Nick: Sure.

Meg Squats: But training right now is so nice, Because I'm so close to the meet that I never see a set of eight, or above. You know, I'm really focused in on the high intensities, and the lower rep ranges, so it's like...

Nick: Right.

Meg Squats: ...right where I want to be.

Nick: No, no, it seems like you have, yeah, you have a lot of purpose right now. I was watching one of your videos the other day. Uh, it was really, uh, I thought it was really interesting, because it reminded me of this... There's this strength coach I like named [Dan John](#), who likes to talk about park bench and bus bench workouts, and the park bench is basically like you're sitting there, you're punching the clock. You're doing stuff, but you're not really, you're not on the clock, really.

Meg Squats: Yeah.

Nick: And then, there are the bus bench workouts, where you have a timeframe, a goal. You follow the program. God dammit, nothing's getting in the way. I think in your video, you called it going "ham sandwich." You, you're at right in the middle of that right now, right?

Meg Squats: Yup. Yup. Exactly.

Nick: So, but, remind us, remind our listeners what exactly you're building up to, and what your history with this event is like.

Meg Squats: Yeah, so I'm getting ready for [USAPL Raw Nationals](#). Um, so this is my fourth time doing this meet. It's my favorite, because everyone is there, so I get to see all of my friends, and I get to lift. Luckily, I lift on Thursdays, so I can kind of hang out with everyone for the rest of the weekend.

Nick: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Meg Squats: Yeah. It's the biggest meet of the year. I think last year, there were 1600 lifters.

Nick: Oh, my.

Meg Squats: I think this year, so it's a little bit yeah, it's a little bit smaller this year, because the qualifying totals have gone up a bit. Um, but yeah, it's my favorite meet, and that's why I've been kind of doing it so consistently.

Nick: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Meg Squats: It's great, just Because you get to see everyone, um, that's in part of the Raw powerlifting world. Um, at least the USAPL side.

Nick: Is this what your year sort of hinges around?

Meg Squats: Yeah, definitely. Um, the past two years, this has been the only meet that I've done, and you know, I kind of just take like a full year off, not that I would suggest that other lifters do that, but since, maybe my life is a little crazy, where I have the opportunity to travel a bit more, um, or at least that's what I've been doing, I like to take some time off and, you know, I'm still training.

Nick: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Meg Squats: But it's not really powerlifting-focused training. If I'm traveling, I'm always on the go. Um, so it's nice to kind of give myself a full year to take a little bit of a break, and um you know just get motivated again, like, halfway through the year and know that now, it's time to focus.

Nick: Sure.

Meg Squats: And I just kind of do whatever I want in-between there. Um, so yeah, it's a big meet for me. Um, it's like the one thing that I do in the year that, you know, I'm really focused on. I'm always focused on getting stronger, but I guess this specific date is the opportunity that I get to actually express the strength that I've built over a full year. Um, so yeah. It's kind of nice to do it on like a

bigger stage, and you know, it's the frequency of competition that doesn't drive me crazy and keeps me coming back every year.

Nick: Sure.

Meg Squats: So, it's really just work, what works, uh, for what I'm doing.

Nick: Yeah. No. I think that's an interesting point that you mentioned in, in, in your video, that you're, you're going ham sandwich, and people think, might think like, "Oh yeah, that, that has to be stressful." But you almost sound like you're relieved to have that sense of purpose. Like, "All right, yeah, this is, it's all been great, and now, I'm saying no to stuff. I'm living this boring lifestyle, and I'm kind, it kind of feels great to do that for a little while."

Meg Squats: Yeah. It definitely does, because I know that it's not what my, you know, life is going to look like forever, and I know that, you know, me buckling down is kind of this relaxing thing where, you know, I kind of just made a choice, and I just have to follow, like, what that choice tells me to do, and how I can, like, honor the choice that I made to compete. Um, it's kind of easy to say no to things when you're focused.

Nick: Right.

Meg Squats: Um, and you know, I don't really have that focus other times of the year, because I am sort of like trying to get a lot of work done, and trying to create the things that I create to have a job, you know? I'm kind of running all over the place, you know, making videos with other people, and collaborating on different projects, and it's really nice, and it's fun. But it's been kind of cool to say no to things, just to say, or maybe it's not saying a complete no, but it's like just hold on. Hold that thought, and I'll be back after October 12th, and then, we could do it.

Nick: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Meg Squats: So, you know, it's a nice space to be in, because I do get to be a little bit bored. Uh, but I think I'm okay with that boredom. Uh, at least in my social life, and other, otherwise. Um, because I know that it's not going to be like that forever.

Nick: Sure.

Meg Squats: Um, I sort of have a little break from that, too.

Nick: And some people can never really quite get that feeling, though. They can't, they can't be okay with the idea of saying no to things, and sort of trusting that it will all, it will all be there when you're done, um, have you struggled with that with this competition, or with other competitions in the past? Or, did you, have you always kind of been able to turn it on, turn it off, when you needed to?

Meg Squats: Hmm. I think in the past. Right now, I'm in a place where I'm a little more secure. Um, which I'm really fortunate to have that. Like, I feel pretty secure in my career, and secure that, um, like if Meg Squats doesn't show up at every single event, she's not just going to disappear off the face of the Earth.

Nick: Right.

Meg Squats: Because that pressure is there to sort of always be moving, and always be working on something, and always be you know, just say yes to everything. In the past, I've been scared that if I, you know, if I don't take advantage of all these opportunities that I'm getting, it's going to be over, and I think now, I've reframed it to know that, you know, my, the past five years of work that I've put in is not just going to disappear from under me if I take a few months of, of solitude. Um, so that's something that I had to work for. Um, because it, it that, that's, like, fear was a real thing, in the past. I feel like now, I've sort of made a name for myself. Um, not that I'm going to you know, forget about everything for an entire year.

Nick: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Meg Squats: But it's okay to stay in one place for me, at this moment in time. And I'm starting to just get better at strategizing my year, and figuring out like when I can travel more, and when I can, you know, make things work. But, um, it is, it has been, uh, to get back to your original question, it is a scary thing, um, but I think now, you know, I've been scared of it for many years, and I've, you know, kind of always given in to my career. And since I'm only competing once a year, it's kind of, I feel like I owe it to myself to figure out if, you know, will I do much better, um, this year if I, you know, choose a more relaxed lifestyle?

Nick: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Meg Squats: And focus, spend more energy focused in, uh, and, and make more sacrifices to worry about the meet, um, you know? To be honest with you though, if I show up to the meet, and I, you know, don't feel like... if the results aren't worth it, that's definitely something that I'll consider, because I don't have to, you know, stop traveling to compete. Like, you can still do that. Maybe you won't feel as great, um, and right now, I've been noticing, like, I just recover much faster.

I feel, overall, more at peace, and rested. Um, probably because I've been sleeping a lot more than usual. Um, but I definitely feel much better. But if it doesn't show through on the platform, or if I notice that like maybe those sacrifices weren't worth the extra, I don't know, five kilos that I got, then I'll definitely reconsider it for future competitions.

Nick: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Meg Squats: Because I don't know if it will be worth it. I'm kind of figuring that out. Um, so yeah, I guess, we'll see.

Nick: No, I think that's an interesting way to put it. Because, yeah, we're not talking about just, hey, a day where you're going to go test your PR, and if it's great, it's great, if it's not, it's not. We're talking about a competition, and it's a competition that you have a history with. So, you have a history of, you know, this is what I did. Am I getting stronger? Am I staying the same? Am I getting weaker?

Meg Squats: Right.

Nick: Um, so, I don't know.

Meg Squats: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Nick: How important is, yeah, that number on the stage to, to you, or on the platform to you? Is it something you feel like you can just put in, into context, and take it for what it is? Or, four years, five years into this program, does it mean more now that you have all this experience behind you?

Meg Squats: Hmm. I think it's definitely, uh, it's more important to me, but my approach is more relaxed, if that makes sense. Um, I think I was, uh, you know, as you show up to the same meet every year. You just kind of know what to expect, and you are more comfortable with the choices that you make leading up to it, and because you know what choices are the right ones to make, leading up to it. So I think the competition overall is more competitive, as opposed to the first time that I competed in it. Uh, the... like, powerlifting over the past four years has just really exploded, and um, I'm proud of that, and that's exactly what I wanted to happen. So it's great, but the, uh, for the athlete in me, it's made it so that it's really hard for me to break into like the top 10.

Um, and that's what I hope to do with this competition. Um, that's been a big goal of mine. I've been like for the past three years, I've just been falling, um, short of that top 10. Or, maybe, the past two years. The first year, I think I finished ninth place, at this national level competition, and you know, I'd always thought, "Okay, maybe I can like keep breaking through, uh, and make my way up to the top five, maybe." But now, um, you know, that was my goal maybe three years ago. And now, it's just so competitive that I think last year, I finished 14th or 13th, something like that.

And now, it's like, "Okay, I'm spending all this time. I hope that I am strong enough to get back in the top 10. That would be great." Um, I'd be really, really proud of that. So, um, you know, I hope that I can get back into the top 10, and I've been taking things more seriously because the competition is so stiff, and getting even more competitive. Um, so yeah. I think, uh, I think, the, hmm, I, I'm more serious about it, uh, because I know what the right things are to do.

Nick: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Meg Squats: And I know how to be more serious about it. I think beginner lifters, they feel like they're very committed, and passionate, and I think maybe that passion is there, but they don't have the strategy to really execute, um, like how they, they wish they could. And sometimes, like, being passionate isn't enough to really perform well. You have to have the experience, and you have to have the, you know, all the things that lead up to making a really boring press. Um, it's not as sexy as it seems, you know? It is really boring, and it is really strategic, so yeah, I'd say I'm more serious, but that seriousness doesn't, you know, it's kind of relaxed.

Nick: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Meg Squats: Like, it's not really this intense, I'm not like this intense person who's so obsessed with the sport. I mean, I am, but it's a very, it's a very relaxed, uh, intensity, I guess.

Nick: I like that. Yeah, and you had, you had a great line in one of your videos recently, where you said, "I've never felt so good in a prep."

I was wondering, does feeling good freak you out at all? Like, you know "This should feel worse. My body should hate this"?

Meg Squats: Um, you know I've been uh, there have been a lot of other lifters who, I don't know if

they're responding to me, um, and saying how good I feel, they have been kind of talking about fatigue more in maybe reassuring their lifters how they should feel. Um... I wonder like, you know, I don't know how many other lifters that are able to have the privilege to relax. Like, uh, I'm able to step back a little bit from work because I'm lucky enough to now have a team that helps me out more than they did in years prior. Um, so I'm able to not stress myself out with work as much, I may say no to travel. Most people don't have that privilege. Most people like, if their boss says "Hey, you got to go travel for like, two weeks before the meet," you kind of just have to do it.

So, I think my perspective on fatigue is like, I'm definitely one of the lucky ones and part of me is like "Ha ha!" But you don't know what it's like to completely close all the other doors and focus and like, lock yourself in a room, um, at least I'm assuming that. Most people don't know what that's like.

Nick: Sure.

Meg Squats: So, I'm really lucky this year that I'm able to do that. Um, it does freak me out a little bit. Yeah, I'd be lying if I said "Oh, shoot! How could I... Should I have been pushing it harder?" But, honestly, I probably wouldn't keep powerlifting if I always felt the way I felt in other meets. You know?

Nick: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Meg Squats: I think that would intimidate me more and the stress of physically feeling bad would be something that would not have me feeling in a good mental space or in a good physical space either. So, yeah, I guess it's like, a little bit, I'm in unknown territory because I've never felt as good as I do feel leading up to this meet. Um, but, I'd be, I think I'd be foolish to think that were a bad thing.

Nick: Mm-hmm, okay, yeah, I think that's a good explanation. And especially when you're talking about powerlifting as a sport exploding and just, you know, more women lifting heavier. There's a certain kind of fatigue that does come with lifting heavy for the first time for an extended period of time that maybe people aren't prepared for, you know? Uh... somebody who's, you know, in the middle of your program that's just, kind of, you know, struggling along, maybe a little bit... I don't know how, how do you recommend they deal with fatigue or know that maybe "Yeah, I am pushing it a little too hard. This is real fatigue, it's not just me kind of being tired?"

Meg Squats: Yeah, I think some of the biggest things to remember are to follow the program that is written out for you. Uh, people start getting strong and they get so excited and then they want to keep pushing that strength, um, forgetting that there's a program written so you can follow it. You know, then I think that induces fatigue earlier than what it's supposed to sometimes. So, it's really just follow the plan. And also, if you're starting to notice that the plan set for you is too much and you can't recover, first, try to eat more or sleep more. And then if that doesn't work, then instead of, you know, introducing all these crazy recovery methods or doing anything too expensive, like getting massages or going out of your way to do anything, then drop the volume a little bit, and then, you know, see how your body responds to that drop in volume. Um, if you're not recovering then, you know, check on the volume, check on your sleep and check on your nutrition. Most of the time, people don't have sleep or nutrition in check and those are the easiest things to, like, try and adjust.

Nick: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Meg Squats: I mean, not that it's too easy but, you know, um, it's easier than, like, going to get

cryotherapy or something like that, so...

Nick: Cheaper, anyway.

Meg Squats: Check those things... Yeah, right. Definitely cheaper. Um, so check those things and then, you know, there's no shame in lowering some of your volume. I usually suggest people to take out some of your bro stuff first. So, start from the bottom of your, like, start with the least specific movements that you have and take some of those out and then, you know, then go up to your main movements. So, yeah, I think those... Uh, so like follow the plan, check in on your sleep, nutrition, and if those things aren't in check, then maybe think about dropping some of your volume in whatever way that you can do to where you are still performing the specific movements that you need to, um. And so try to follow the program.

Nick: It's interesting hearing you talk about sleep. I remember I talked to [Mark Twight](#) once which is this guy who is a trainer in Salt Lake City, who, you know... He'd train the guys in "300" and then did these really incredible transformations with these different movie stars and I asked him, like "What kind of the secret is?" And he says, "The secret is, these guys, I make these guys sleep 10 hours a night. If you want to work with me that's one of the... that's one of the mandatory things is you have to sleep 10 hours a night. No less than that." And he said "Once you do that, once you sleep more than you think you need to sleep, all things are possible. It's amazing what your body can put up with."

Uh, I was wondering, how you, uh, you said that you've been sleeping more during this prep. How have you been able to crack that nut?

Meg Squats: I've let myself sleep in now, which is something that I never did, because I've been, you know, just convincing myself that my email inbox is not the most important thing in my life right now.

Um, you know, sometimes I'll just be organizing my email inbox and I'm like "I'm not doing any work, I'm just organizing the email inbox. It's so stupid." So, I think I used to let things like that stress me out and it would kind of keep me up at night if that wasn't completely clear, which is a mindless task. So, I've been definitely trying to manage my stress when it comes to work and that has helped me sleep a lot more. Um, and sort of letting go of the mindless work that you do every day.

Nick: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Meg Squats: Let go of that and focus on the big projects. Um, and so I've been able to manage my time in that way to make more time for sleep.

And now I'm trying to adjust my sleep schedule, so that it's sleeping in less and going to bed early because I compete or, at least, I weigh in at 7 am. So, I, you know, I usually, I wake up around like 7:00 or 8:00 um, but I'm trying to adjust my schedule so that I'm used to waking up at 6:00 a.m., and going to bed a little earlier so that in two weeks when I'm ready to compete, me getting up at 6:00 a.m. is not a big deal at all. So, yeah, it's been about managing work and stress and...

You know, that's another thing where I'm just trying to be as productive as I can throughout the day. Um, saying no to social engagements is nice because whatever sleep I lose or whatever work time I lose for sleep just gets done because I'm not really doing that much else otherwise. So, yeah. That's

another one of those things where it's like I pray to God that my life isn't like that forever and I'm glad that it won't be.

Meg Squats: But those have been my strategies so far.

Nick: Okay and one other thing that's different this time around is you're now Bodybuilding.com's spokesmodel, as well. Uh, I was wondering if that means that there's been more bodybuilding stuff and bro stuff in your training building up to this or not? Because I saw one uh, old Instagram post of yours where you were like "Okay, I'm 10 weeks out, time to stop training like a bodybuilder and start training like a powerlifter again." Do you feel like that's a bigger part of what you do now?

Meg Squats: Yes. Um, so yeah. Right around that time, like 10 weeks out, is when I start dropping the things that aren't as specific to [powerlifting](#). So, I still have some bro stuff. I like to call it bro stuff or bodybuilding stuff, but it's very, very minimal. Right now, it's the most minimal it will ever be and, yeah, it's really just, right now I program in movements that make me feel good in the gym so if I have, you know, the desire to do bicep curls, which is definitely sometimes there, I will do them. But it is very squat, bench, and deadlift heavy, there's not much more in between. Yeah. It's definitely a powerlifter's program right now.

Nick: Okay.

Meg Squats: There's no bro stuff.

Nick: But do you feel like that bro stuff, I don't know, is more important to you in the foundation part of this? You know, it's three, six months out than it used to be?

Meg Squats: Oh, yeah. I mean, that's always been, um... For me, I've always been interested and I know that I'm going to get stronger by improving or increasing the amount of muscle mass that I have and increasing the amount of lean tissue that I have and there's no denying that bodybuilders know how to make that happen. So I think I do pull a lot of workouts and inspiration from bodybuilders who have kind of proven that to me. I think a lot of powerlifters do that, they're always looking to other athletes outside of the world of powerlifting and other people who've just been lifting longer than us to figure out what's going to be best to increase that amount of lean tissue.

Nick: And that's one thing I like about your Uplifted program, is that it treats those as kind of one and the same project. As opposed to, I know some people when they think- when they think "Alright, it's time to get strong" they only think, like "I only want to do strength stuff. I don't want to be doing bodybuilding stuff. Like, it's two completely different styles of training". Um, they definitely seem like they tie in together in your approach.

Meg Squats: Oh, yeah, for sure. I mean, I think if you wanted to be a good powerlifter, increasing that amount of muscle mass is where you want to be and then, you know, on top of that, it's just practicing the main powerlifts and getting a lot of volume of those lifts in the program. So that's why Uplifted is such a great option, because it combines both of those worlds to make it so that someone is in the habit of training hard and doing a lot of movements that are not only isolating the muscle groups that you... And muscles you need to get stronger but also practicing the squat, practicing the bench...

...and practicing the deadlift and variations that support them so that you're really building a bigger

powerlifting total, also a healthy and well-rounded physique to like, support that strength with huge muscles is always the plan.

Nick: Sure, and I to talk about treating it like practice. I watched your deadlift practice prep PR recently. I wanted to talk to you about those heavy singles because one thing that I really admire about you is the patience that you have with those reps. I mean, seriously, that's the slowest rep I've ever actually seen somebody pull off with maybe the exception, you know there's some of those [Richard Hawthorne](#) reps. Of course, every powerlifter wants to be compared to Richard Hawthorne because he pulls like 5 times his body weight.

Meg Squats: Yeah, right?

Nick: But like, he just goes up so slowly and then he starts nodding his head once it goes past his knees and you're like "Okay, here we go. Somehow he's going to get that fucking thing up."

How do you know when something's going to go at this point? Because it seems like you're willing to work through anything to get that thing up.

Meg Squats: Yeah, I mean, I usually joke and tell people like, "Just close your eyes and count to 10 and then it'll eventually leave the floor." Um, but that really is it. I mean, I've been pulling with that like pace or timing for a long time, so I'm used to being just patient off the floor. I think when people see it, they're really impressed but that is just like, what my deadlift looks like.

It just takes time because I'm not only pulling something very heavy, I know in my head that it's like "Okay, stay disciplined with this because the more disciplined you are off the floor, the more consistent you'll be with the pull and then you'll be in the right position to make the rest of the pull easier." Um, because the second you let your body get out of position, and the second you're like "Whatever! I'm just going to rip it off," that's when the pull becomes even harder, not only through the initial start but also through the rest of the rep. So, I am focused at staying as disciplined as I possibly can, so that the lift continues, so that I'm able to get it.

So, yeah. I mean, I joke about closing your eyes and counting to 10, but that really is it, just stay with the rep and know that if it's on the bar, you're going to pull it. Anytime I'm handling a lifter, I always remind them like, "Okay, whatever that weight is, we chose to put it on that bar for a reason. So, you better pull it off the ground."

You know? Like "That wasn't an arbitrary call, that's a call because you know that you are that strong. So, don't stop pulling if it feels heavy. Like, it's heavy because it is."

Nick: Right.

Meg Squats: "So, but just know that you're stronger than what it is heavy and you can lift that." So, yeah, it's just about confidence and knowing that in training I never want to have to like, retake that rep again, I just want it to be over.

Nick: Right.

Meg Squats: So, it's like "I've already invested one second, at least, into pulling this, I might as well just finish it." You know?

Nick: Sure, no. I think that's interesting. I think of the reps that I've given up on and I feel like when I go up to it, grab the bar and if it doesn't move right away, there's some part of me that's like "Ah, it's just not in the cards." And I've been a spectator at a few powerlifting meets where I see somebody doing the exact same thing. It's like, they step up, they have a very clear expectation about "This is going to feel this way." And if it doesn't match up with those expectations then they're just like, "Well! Guess I'll just not do this one." But...

Meg Squats: Yeah.

Nick: You have a sense of purpose there like, "No, it's going. It's there for a reason."

Meg Squats: Yeah, totally, I think that's key to like, you know, talking yourself up and like making yourself like feel confident, when you step up to the bar.

Nick: So, one other thing I wanted to ask you about, since you're four or five rounds into this, is how much more knowledgeable you are now about things like nutrition, supplementation, now than when you've first got into really serious national level powerlifting, I was wondering if you could go back in time and give yourself sort of the one sentence or two sentence cliff notes, uh ... What, what, what would you, what would you say?

Meg Squats: Hmm, I'm trying to think of what I ... I know probably my first meet, I probably ate something stupid, like the day I competed. Probably just ate like, donuts or something.

Nick: Right.

Meg Squats: So, I think meet day nutrition is important, you should probably just keep it at consistent as like what you've been normally eating. That is key. Um, I think other than that, it's just kind of to keep things as consistent throughout your entire prep as possible, too. I think at that time, when I was first getting started, I didn't have much consistency over my diet at all, maybe?

Nick: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Meg Squats: When I was first getting into like counting macros and I think that's how I dieted down my first meet, um, my first national meet. But yeah, I would say just keep things normal and not crazy on the first, whenever you're competing. I think I've seen other meets where people just bring all this ... They you know cut weight or something and they finally make into weight and they feel like, "Oh, I can just eat whatever I want." Um, but that's not gonna be too great for your digestive system while you're on the platform. You don't want that to get in the way of you lifting heavy.

So that would be my biggest thing, is keep things normal and any supplements that you usually take, take them. Um, if you take pre-workout, which I usually do, then bring it to the meet and yeah, try not to go crazy with it but try to keep things as normally ... as normal as possible in regard to supplementation and nutrition.

Nick: Sure, yeah and you hear all kinds of stories about what people do backstage at powerlifting meets and how they get it wrong, how they self-sabotage. And one of those is definitely somebody who they don't eat enough but they take a bunch of supplements ... Maybe, you know, it's the same supplements they usually take or maybe it's more and they're just really not prepared for it. Do you

feel like you've really kind of figured out how to, how to pace out supplements as you've gotten deeper into that world and how to prepare yourself for meet day? I know some people, you know, they'll slowly introduce [caffeine](#) before a meet or something like that. Just to really make sure it's, it's part of the periodization almost.

Meg Squats: Yep. Yeah I think before like my first year, I didn't really take much pre-workout or any kind of like pre-lift supplementation. Maybe just a coffee but there was never timed appropriately, it was never like really planned. And now I am more inclined on heavy sessions or like, if I'm going for a PR, I'll be more inclined to take a pre-workout supplement because I know that it's just gonna give me... There's something to say about feeling good when you're lifting and like feeling energized and even though I don't think that stimulation is really going to mean an extra five kilos for me on the platform, it's just a matter of me feeling good and awake and energized. That is something that, you know, I think supplementation can play a role in. You know, I'm in a good mood, I have a little bit extra caffeine. Um, I wouldn't suggest someone taking like two or three scoops...

Nick: Right.

Meg Squats: Because a powerlifting meet is a long day and you, you don't wanna peak and then you know crash at the end. But I would, you know I think having a pre-workout supplement is key to like training.

Nick: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Meg Squats: And especially if you're training a heavy deadlift, where you have to wait like five seconds before it leaves the ground, um... So you know those are things that definitely... It's not like a magic pill or magic solution, but definitely something that can help.

Nick: Mm-hmm, I like the way you put that. It's about feeling good. I think feeling good is underappreciated. That's sort of a theme of this discussion I think so far.

Meg Squats: Oh, yeah.

Nick: Now, I wanted to save room for this in here as well. You mentioned in your, it was either your butt video or your boobs video recently, I don't remember which one it was... that you're also in... You're into the new Bodybuilding.com Signature protein bar and I've been sampling these as well. And I had to ask, does that mean that the Rice Krispy treat is no longer part of your training day?

Meg Squats: Oh, man. You can't make me choose.

Nick: I mean you can do both. They're both delicious.

Meg Squats: They are... Um, no they're, I can't believe how good they are. I don't think, so actually I've been kinda hot in my gym right now Because I've been training in my garage. So, I've been drinking more... I've been doing more of, like, drinking my carbs. So, I'll have a Gatorade just so that I'm staying a little extra hydrated, getting my carbs at the same time. So, I'll still have my... I'll still have both the Krispies and the bars. But I like to have the bars as just a snack throughout the day, in case I like don't want to cook or don't want to, you know, I need something quick. So I probably won't use the bars as like an intra-workout.

Although they would kind of fulfill all the... Check off all the boxes for an intra-workout supplement, but since it's getting hot, I'd rather just drink something. Um, so yeah. I like to have it for like a breakfast snack.

Nick: Okay.

Meg Squats: And I'm doing my protein in throughout the day...

And like you know my nutrition plan does have me spacing out my protein in like even... It's distributed evenly throughout the day so having that snack that's like 20 grams of carbs, 20 grams of protein even and like... You know, it's just kind of straightforward, is a straightforward small meal for me.

Nick: That's good, it's like just a little situational solution. Yeah.

Meg Squats: Yes, yes exactly.

Nick: And, I understand what you're saying as well when it's during training that Rice Krispy treat or Gatorade can make more sense because it's very simple you know exactly what you're taking it for and what you're getting in there. I mean there's nothing simpler than a Rice Krispy treat, it's just sugar and rice basically right?

Meg Squats: Yep, yep. Exactly.

Nick: Now I wanted to check in with you about Uplifted as well. "Uplifted, Build Muscle and Strength with Meg Squats"—this program you did with us and Bodybuilding.com All Access and I wanted to ask you what you've been hearing from people who tried it and how that program or training like that factored into, you know, your buildup over the last year for this sort of event?

Meg Squats: Yeah, so, Uplifted is what I ran in my off-season, kind of as I transitioned from you know, I took some time off after my last meet and then I was, you know, just doing some bro stuff and like having fun in the gym to getting back on a consistent-focused program. I ran Uplifted and so that experience, that time I took away from powerlifting and just getting back into things was, you know, spent doing a lot of bodybuilding stuff while still getting back into the [squat](#), bench and [deadlift](#).

That program was what I credit some of the muscle gain that I made in the off-season and that I ran that as my off-season program and you know slowly adapted to getting into a powerlifting program after that. I think I ran like 16 weeks of Uplifted?

Nick: Wow.

Meg Squats: I think in the second half of the eight weeks, we made some minor adjustments. But yeah, that was the program I ran in my off-season and you know, you know I adjusted it to make it accessible for anyone but I think overall, it's a program that can be run by someone like me who's getting ready for her, you know ... I think this is my sixth powerlifting meet. Sixth or seventh powerlifting meet after four years of powerlifting at a national level. And then some of the [transformations](#) that I've been reading online are from beginner lifters, general lifters or off-season powerlifters. So it's been really exciting to see how many different people can run a program

that is, it's not rocket science.

Nick: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Meg Squats: But it is something that can work for a lot of different people. So it's been exciting to like know and be confident in my own progress but also to see other people who run it. I've seen like in-depth reviews of the program on like Reddit so that's been really cool to see how someone's body fat percentage has changed, to see how you know how much stronger they've gotten, and you know people ask me all the time, "Oh, what do I do next?" And I'm like, "Uh, if it works, then you should just run it again."

Nick: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Meg Squats: "There's no shame in that." Um and that's exactly what I did for my long off-season, so it's really been cool and I love getting feedback from people and I love seeing when people are like on their first day or like first week of Uplifted. I'm just like really excited for them.

Nick: Yeah. I like that you offer the possibility of running something twice in a row, too. I think a lot of people just think, "Okay I did it, I'm done." But it's, it's totally an underappreciated tactic to say, "Alright, I'm gonna go back and I'm actually gonna be so much better and confident the next time because I know what I'm doing." That first two weeks, you're just finding your feet generally in any program.

Meg Squats: Yep and now that you're, you know, your numbers have changed, and you're stronger after the first eight weeks, it is a different program because one, you're better, two, the weights are gonna be heavier because we calculate them off of percentages and RPE so you're gonna be more in tune with what your rate of perceived exertion is and you'll just know how to run it even more efficiently.

And there's a lot of movements in that program, too. So I don't think there's any fear of boredom in it at all because if anything, it's even better for you to get more in the habit of squatting, benching and deadlifting cause you're just gonna be better with more practice.

Nick: Sure. So now, remind me of the date of the meet you're... How many days out?

Meg Squats: Um, the meet is October 12th and I'm two weeks out. I'm a little under two weeks out.

Nick: Okay.

Meg Squats: So maybe... one week and five days?

Nick: Okay.

Meg Squats: Four days. Wow.

Nick: So, it's possible that when this conversation gets published, you'll have already competed. I'll see if I can get it out sooner but if, if it does get out sooner, how can we... How can we watch you in the meet? Is there a way we can stream it?

Meg Squats: That's a good question. Usually Bodybuilding.com streams it, but...

Nick: Let, let's just say we are then. I'm sure we are. I'll make it happen.

Meg Squats: So... Yeah, okay cool. Last minute...

Meg Squats: So, yeah, the meet will be streamed. You can probably find it on USAPL, [USA Powerlifting's Instagram](#), which is @USAPowerlifting. And they'll link it so that you can watch the streaming. I recommend if anyone's watching to check out the schedule and check out the prime-time sessions but I will be competing on Friday morning, October 12th... In the morning of October 12th, so... I'm a 63-kilo powerlifter so I'll be in the 63-kilo session so... Yeah, check it out and look for me and comment "Go Meg!" on the [livestream](#).

Nick: Yeah. And we'll certainly be watching here. Best of luck, thanks for talking to us, Meg.

Meg Squats: Thank you so much! Yeah, I appreciate the call and interview and now I'm even more excited to train.

Nick: Excellent. I would just consider bumping it from 10 to 30 today if you're gonna do a hard set of 10. 30 is really underrated, that's where, that's where the magic happens.

Meg Squats: Oh, God, okay... Maybe I'll try it. Maybe I'll try it... And so I just turned 30 and a lot of the people will do on their birthday, they'll do like a... their body weight for how many squats...

Nick: Oh, jeez.

Meg Squats: They'll squat their body weight for however many years old they are and I mean my birthday, I was like in the middle... You know I was like four weeks out so I was like, "No, there's no way I'm doing that! No way!"

Nick: I don't want to be responsible for a horrific gym accident here. But...

Meg Squats: Maybe I'll try it with fake weights.

Nick: You know the old breathing squat programs, they would have you use your 10 to 12-rep max for 20 reps with the idea being that you have to stop and pause and do one, stop and pause and... So yeah, that's the idea, is that you just stretch it out, stretch it out.

And this particular program that I'm following, it builds up to a set of... Like a rest-pause set of 50 with 185 that's in six weeks from now and I'm just like dreading that. I get, I can't even wrap my brain around that like, like what is that experience like? Is it gonna take me like 10 minutes to do that? So...

Meg Squats: Oh, gosh.

Nick: That's where it's headed so I think 30 with your, with your body weight as strong as you are, is definitely, definitely feasible. Could be kinda fun.

Meg Squats: Alright, well if I do it, I'll put it on [Instagram](#), that's for sure!

Nick: Excellent, blow out some candles at the end of it. Or throw up on the cake or something.

Meg Squats: Yeah!

Nick Collias: Alright, well hopefully we'll talk to you again soon!

Meg Squats: Okay, thank you so much.



MEG SQUATS STEPS UP TO THE PLATFORM

On the eve of her biggest comp of the year, the YouTube star and devotee of the heavy lifting life talks with us about prep, protein bars, and how good it feels to buckle down and say no to distraction.