



Episode 69 Transcript

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Logan Aldridge: The Fittest One-Armed Man on Earth

Nick Collias: I said, "Welcome to *The Bodybuilding.com Podcast*." It's our fourth one we're recording today, all right. So, if it looks like we're wearing the same clothes all the time in these podcasts, it's because we are.

Heather Eastman: We are.

Nick: If you're tired at looking at my hat, then just listen on [SoundCloud](#) instead, I'm sorry.

Heather: I'm tired of looking at your hat.

Logan Aldridge: It's a cool hat.

Nick: Thank you very much. Hey, anyway, where were we? I'm Nick Collias. I'm the host of this here podcast, along with Heather Eastman over here. Our guest over there is a new Bodybuilding.com team athlete, Logan Aldridge.

Fans of the show may remember that we had [KC Mitchell](#), "that one-leg monster," on last year. This is "that one-*arm* monster" over there.

Logan Aldridge: Nice.

Nick: You know KC?

Logan Aldridge: Good ol' KC. Yeah, yeah.

Nick: He's a pretty intense dude. We had a great conversation with him, yeah.

Logan Aldridge: Yes, he is. I can't compete with that here.

Nick: But not about him, but you. Let's talk about you.

Hey, Logan is an accomplished [CrossFit](#) athlete who recently took second at [Wodapalooza](#), among men's adaptive athletes, right?

Logan Aldridge: That's right, yes sir.

Nick: Also, obviously seen you in spartan races, seemingly doing whatever the hell you want to do.

Logan Aldridge: Just go for it, you know?

Nick: Anyway, Logan, my man, welcome to the podcast.

Logan Aldridge: Thank you so much. An honor to be here.

Nick: Also, recently engaged.

Logan Aldridge: Recently engaged. Yeah.

Heather: Oh, yeah. Congratulations.

Nick: Congratulations on that.

Logan Aldridge: Thank you so much.

Nick: Now, as I've been researching you for this podcast, I found myself entering this totally fascinating world of adaptive CrossFit. You know, you think about adaptive athletes, with commercials as your guide, you think about the bionic leg for the runner and things like that.

But, in CrossFit, it's a whole different culture of problem solving, just bootstrapping solutions. People are constantly cracking movements, it's such a fascinating thing to watch. So, I want to ask you about that.

Logan Aldridge: Yeah.

Nick: But, before we do, I feel like we need to start with your story.

Logan Aldridge: Yes, please.

Nick: So, tell us a little bit about who you were athletically before you lost your arm at age 13?

Logan Aldridge: That's right.

Nick: And who you were after that.

Logan Aldridge: Absolutely. Great place to start. So, first and foremost, from Raleigh, North Carolina, born and raised there. Family's all from there, as well, so I'm very much a local in that area. Growing up, I was very much an outdoors kid, all the time. I could not sit still, you couldn't get me to finish eating the food on my plate, because I wanted to just go back outside. Played all the sports, you know, did all ... have one older brother who kind of guided me along the way of what sports were cool, and, you know, just kind of following in his footsteps at a young age. Then, you know, having some tough skin from his inevitable bullying and all that.

So, I fell in love with extreme sports at a young age. I loved skateboarding, wakeboarding, surfing, snowboarding-

Nick: Gettin' air.

Logan Aldridge: Frankly. Yeah, anything on a board that was, yeah, extreme, where you could get air and do tricks, things of that nature, I was fascinated by it. Not to say that I wasn't by a traditional sport, and I mean, football, soccer, baseball, basketball, played all of those, as well. My parents, at a very young age, put me in gymnastics, which I still accredit the most important thing you could do for a kid, for all-around just physical ability, gymnastics.

Nick: We've heard that from a bunch of different people.

Heather: Learning how the body works.

Logan Aldridge: It's incredible. It's incredible, still to this day.

Nick: [Andy Speer](#), who's a great strength coach in New York City, he was on the podcast a long time ago, and he was like, "Everything I have I owe to gymnastics," basically, you know?

Logan Aldridge: Yes. I would attest to that, as well. So, anyways, I loved wakeboarding. We bought a lake house near ... in between North Carolina and Virginia, it's called Lake Gaston. I was so excited that my parents wanted to kind of enable me to pursue wakeboarding in the way I wanted to do. So, like compete, you know, trying to make it into the circuit, trying to become a professional wakeboarder. You know, young kid, you have these aspirations to be in the NFL or to be ... whatever the case may be. Well, wakeboarding was mine.

I really was pretty good for a young, you know, 11, 12-year-old kid, and fearless. If you said, "Hey, go out there, hit that wake as hard as you can, close your eyes, try to do a flip." I would do it. I would be like, "All right, that sounds awesome."

Nick: No stranger to following falling, then?

Logan Aldridge: No, no, no. You smack your head, you see some stars, you get water in the eyelids, but it didn't deter me, I still loved it. So, I was really ... I was all-in on it, and treated it as such. It was training, it was like we're going out there to ride to get better at the sport.

So, at the age of 13, we were just wakeboarding with my training partner, if you will, also just really close, good friend of ours who lives a few docks down from me at the lake. We just finished up him riding, so we dropped him off at his dock. If you're familiar with a wakeboard boat, you know how they have a tower on top of the boat? That's where the rope connects to, so that when you're jumping it helps pull you up a little bit into the air.

Nick: Okay.

Logan Aldridge: So, the rope's connected to the tower, and the other thing about wakeboard ropes is they're very skinny, and no elasticity, you want it to act like a cable in order to just be really tight when you're cutting into the wake. So, I began to kind of do my job after we dropped him off, which is tidy up the boat. Well, we just needed to just putt along, if you will, you know, just the boat just in gear like five docks down, maybe 150 yards away or so.

So, I'm just putting away some life jackets and I go to pull in the rope, like I always do, and when you pull in the rope, I was using that technique that you do, like over the thumb, under the elbow, like you would do-

Nick: Sure, like an extension cord, right. Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Logan Aldridge: Exactly, exactly. Trying to make things neat. So, I had a couple loops like that, and I noticed, I looked back at the back platform and noticed that the rope was kind of just loosely underneath the back platform of the boat. Now with wakeboard boats, the prop isn't right there, the prop's actually almost up underneath the middle of the boat. The back platform is where there's this thing called a wedge that drops down, help the wake get bigger, and this pad where you can put your board on, and all that stuff.

So, I thought it might be caught somewhere around that. It happens sometimes, you know, being a bit, you know, careless wakeboarding. So, I quickly ... and I had the couple loops, and I said, "Ugh, dad, rope's underneath the boat." So, he saw, "Oh, shucks," and he went to turn off the propeller ... turn off the motor. As soon as he went to turn it off, that rope I guess was close enough, and caught the propeller, spinning as fast as it was. Which, mind you, we're just in gear, we weren't cruising, we weren't going 20 miles an hour, just in gear.

But it was enough force, and it caught it soon enough before, you know, winding down, that it coiled around the prop. When it did, you know, the only thing between that rope coiling around the propeller and the attachment to the tower was my arm with those two loops. So, that pressure, that amount of pull, caused it to slip ... that rope slip off my thumb, and chinch down around my arm above the elbow, if you will, almost like an extreme tourniquet that happened, right above the elbow.

Now, 13 years old, that happens, feel a little bit of a jerk, I'm still standing on the back of the boat, like, "What? What in the world just..." I mean, I remember looking up at the rope, I'm like, "Rope's there," and looking at it, my arm's like this, and it looks ... literally, it was the wildest thing. It looks like it's going inside of the inside of my bicep, and then just coming out the other side. You couldn't even see the lacerations from where it had just cinched and tourniqueted.

Nick: So quickly.

Logan Aldridge: So, it cut through all the flesh and the muscles down to the bone. So, it was basically coiled around my humerus, my left humerus of my arm right there. You know, I'm just wide-eyed in shock, I didn't even feel it, but something just happened.

So, my mom's on the boat, couple family friends, and my dad. My mom says to my dad, his name's Wesley, "Wesley, his arm." So, he steps over and immediately grabs that rope and starts to uncoil it. Now this rope, just to keep in mind, it was coated with plastic. It was literally like a cable almost, and I think that's why it acted that way, more so than maybe just a really tight squeeze, it just cut right through.

He began to untangle it from my arm, and when he did that, I knew we were in for a serious, traumatic event had just happened. Because this was a 21-foot white boat, and when he did that, the boat became red. It wasn't like, "Oh, there's a wound here," it was like ... without getting too, you

know, graphic, I mean, it just ... it was insane how much blood just exploded out of that laceration.

I guess, you know, in hindsight looking back, it's because that artery right there, coming straight out of your heart and your left arm, that had been severed. So, massive blood loss immediately. So, my dad ripped off his shirt, wrapped it around, pulled it tight, you know? Had the tourniquet immediately. Had he not, yeah, I wouldn't be here right now, for sure. I would have bled out in two to five minutes.

So, he did that, and now just a bit of chaos is ensuing, you know? We're yelling up to my friend who's walking up his walkway to his house, yelling, you know, "Call 911." I'm still wide-eyed, like, "What? What just ..."

Nick: Right.

Logan Aldridge: "We're just going to have dinner now, we just finished wakeboarding. We're just going to have dinner. This isn't actually happening. This isn't actually happening." That's what I was thinking in my head. We finally get over to our dock, and we dock the boat, and my dad picks me up out of it. I remember thinking like, "Just take me up to the house, show me my bed, I'll see myself sleeping, and I'll just wake up. Then we can all just have dinner, or whatever, go wakeboarding."

Nick: Pretend this never happened.

Logan Aldridge: Yeah, right? And that's when the reality set in for me. He carried me up there, he did just that, and showed me the room, and I was like, "Damn, all right, this is happening." At that moment, I started to think, I was like, "All right ..." I started to recognize the reality of the situation and the potential outcome.

Now, to kind of set the scene for you, you're probably imagining, in an instance like this, you would, "Oh, my God, I can't believe that happened. Get in the car, drive to the hospital as fast as you can." We did not do that, and that was really because of my desire. Obviously, you know, you look back, and you say, "You should've done that." But, I wanted to wait. I wanted to sit and wait for an ambulance or whoever, 911, to show up. So, we did. We sat and waited, and it took quite a long time.

This is the middle of the summer, in the middle of nowhere, in Lake Gaston, North Carolina, Virginia border, and the local hospital was volunteer crew for the weekend. So, they show up, and I hop in with my mom, and we go to that local hospital. On our way, I remember, for the first time, you know, really processing like, "Oh, my gosh, I could ... this is pretty serious, and I could lose my arm."

Because while we waited, my arm was resting in my lap, and I kept saying like, "Get that thing off my lap." They're like, "That's your arm." I couldn't feel it, couldn't feel anything at all.

The pivotal moment, for me, and my attitude, and perception of this whole experience, was in that ambulance, when I started to ponder what the outcome may be, that I might-

Nick: You were pretty sure you were going to live at that point, right?

Logan Aldridge: Yeah, yeah. Yeah, I was very confident I was going to live at that moment. Not sure my mother was, because at that moment is when I asked her, I said, "Well, mom, what if I lose my arm?" She just looked at me without, you know, skipping a beat or thinking twice, said, "Logan, it's just an arm." Those words, they give me goosebumps when I tell this story still-

Nick: Still.

Logan Aldridge: Because such a simple statement, but frankly, so profound in its impact to me and my perception of this event in my life. Okay, it's just an arm. I mean, which is very blunt but very true. You got two of them, okay. If you lose one, you still have another one. At least it's not your life, at least it's ... it could always be worse, right? You know, and the list goes on, fill in the blank. At least it's not whatever it is.

So, that moment made me immediately realize that whatever happens, it's okay, it's going to be okay. Now, the catch to that was I was left-handed, so it was potentially going to be losing my dominant arm, which, yeah, is a big pain, and, you know, might have its own obstacles and hurdles to overcome. But whatever, that's fine.

So, long story short, we get to the hospital, they can't do anything, they say, "You need trauma ... level one trauma unit to do this." They call UNC, they send a helicopter out, put me back in the ambulance, send me out to this field. This was like some shit out of a movie. They bring me out to this field, I'm in this stretcher, you see this badass helicopter come, "Vvvvmm," land, and I'm like, "Is that for me?" Yeah.

Nick: What's that helicopter doing here?

Logan Aldridge: Yeah. I'm like, "Sick." So, they put me in the helicopter, and we jet over to UNC Children's Hospital, which took no time, 30 minutes or something. Parents are hauling ass in the car trying to get there to, you know, catch up. We get there, you know, all the doctors all around you, ripping off clothes, "What happened? Blah, blah, blah."

They try to save my arm, I spent a few weeks in the hospital, because it wasn't just like, "All right, we're going to cut it off." It was trying to save it. Took an artery out of my leg, put it in there.

Nick: Really?

Logan Aldridge: Yeah, and they got blood flow. But the ... they got blood flow, and the arm just swelled up, looked like I was allergic to bees and been stung or something.

Nick: Did you regain feeling in it ever really?

Logan Aldridge: No feeling, no nerve. They wanted to start with the blood flow, and then they wanted to see if the muscles would start to, you know, accept the blood and pump it back up the arm, back into my body. What they quickly realized was we'd missed that window. That window for, you know, those muscles without circulation is about six to seven, six to eight hours, and I think we were right on the tail end of that. So, we missed that window when we went into the surgery, and it was all said and done.

So, a few days later they realized it's not ... the muscles are not coming back. So, the reality is we're going to have to amputate your left arm. That was the moment where, you know, it all became very real for all of us as a family. We were holding onto hope a lot before that, and then it was just like, "All right, this is it, this is the way it's going to be." So, we decided to amputate.

After that, the response from my community, and I say community, like friends, family, friends of friends, friends of friends that I didn't really know, but I've heard their name once, coming to the hospital. That stuff was really important, *really important*, I believe, in my recovery, because it was just ... I was full of love. There were so many people around me telling me things were going to be okay.

But a big fear of mine was that all these people were going to see me and perceive me as this handicapped, slightly disabled, impaired individual.

Nick: Right, like your story was over, to a certain degree. Yeah.

Logan Aldridge: Right. You know, so, "Oh, so much for that go-getter extreme sport kid, Logan. Dang, he lost his dominant arm now, and what ..." I mean, I was really good at lacrosse and loved lacrosse. Played that sport the most, in terms of a team sport.

Nick: Jesus Christ, you played everything.

Logan Aldridge: I played them all, man. Played them all. But that was definitely my niche, in terms of a team sport, I was going to play for the school and all that stuff. That was the first thing I said when they told me we're going to amputate, that when they brought me out of surgery, just enough to come to, and they said, "Logan, we're sorry ..." The whole family's standing around, "Sorry, we're going to amputate your arm." First thing I said was, "How am I going to play lacrosse?" That was the first thing that I thought.

I didn't ... obviously didn't know the answer, but the mindset I had leaving the hospital was, not that I need to prove people wrong, but that I need to show, most importantly myself, but also a great by-product all these others, my friends, family, and the community I live in, that I'm the same kid I was before, I'm going to have the same aspirations, and attempt to do the same things I did before. I'll figure it out along the way, what I can and can't do.

But I will not accept an expectation that, because I have one arm now, I cannot do these things. I won't. I just won't accept it. I have to experience, and I'm okay with failure, but I'll have to learn that on my own. Because a prime example of that, that I like to tell, was the doctors telling me that writing was always ... it was going to be very difficult to learn to write. They didn't even say it that politely, they were like, "You're not going to be able to write with your right hand."

Nick: Right.

Logan Aldridge: I'm just, you know, maybe it's being the younger brother, and having the old ... but like, "Okay, well, now I'm *definitely* going to write with my right hand."

Nick: You know what I'm going to write? Kiss my ass.

Heather: I'll write circles around you.

Nick: Exactly.

Heather: Doctors are not known for their subtlety.

Logan Aldridge: Right? I think it was the best thing they could have said to me, because while I was in there, I started writing the A, B, C's, it looked like chicken scratch, and I could barely figure out how to hold the pen. But, yeah, I write fine now with my right hand, better than I did with my left.

So, I say that to say that was my first experience with an expectation, all right. They put it on me, and said, "This is what the expectation, externally on you, how you will be as a one-armed person in this world." I refused, I said, "No, no, no. I don't have to be like anybody else has been before, and if I am going to be anything like them, I'll have to figure that out myself."

So, get out of the hospital, and I had to try, had to go back and try to play lacrosse. I had to try to wakeboard again.

Nick: It's amazing. You got serious about wakeboarding-

Logan Aldridge: Yeah, man. *After* losing my arm-

Nick: After... in wakeboarding.

Logan Aldridge: After is when the real ... you know, the motivation to do well, or to try to do well in the sport came about. Yeah, it turned into a really cool piece in [Wakeboarding Magazine](#), where they said in the magazine, Logan's going to compete at this competition, that I didn't even know about. So, I was like, "Oh, now I got to go. I got to go compete at this competition."

Nick: They're fortune tellers, obviously.

Logan Aldridge: So, I went and did really well there. It's called ... it was called the Extremity Games. It was wakeboarding for adaptive individuals. I was the youngest amongst a bunch of older guys who are much more experienced than I, but I did well. I landed a set of tricks and a run that would've been like the holy grail of ... the perfect score for me, and I pulled it off there. It was a really, really, cool full circle feeling of, "Wow."

I landed more tricks one-armed, than I ever had been able to with two. With flips and stuff, as you could imagine, all that sort of stuff.

Nick: Wow. Was there a steep learning curve on that? I just imagine like you're ... I mean, everything that I see you do, I look at it, I'm like, "The grip strength this guy must have on this, it's unreal."

Logan Aldridge: That's what I accredit it to.

Nick: Yeah. Okay, so you already had that grip strength building.

Logan Aldridge: I think, yeah, just from the wakeboarding background. But then, you know, riding with one arm, you know, the sessions were very different. You know, I went from being able to ride for 35 minutes, 40 minutes, an hour, to 15 minutes, max, and then I can't even grab a water bottle, my hand's so dead.

So, yeah, it was a lot of 15 minutes on, an hour off, 15 minutes in the water, an hour off, 15 minutes ... but it was the world I lived in, it's what I was surrounded by. We still went to the lake every weekend. My close friend lived five docks down was like a brother to me in that whole process, and we rode all the time. That's just what it was. I started driving the boat more, and started to get back into lacrosse too, like ...

Spent summer focusing on hand-eye coordination, and I did that by playing ping pong for seven hours a day with my friend, no joke. We had no life, we just played ping pong. But, it was ... I didn't realize it at the time, I thought we were just having fun, they're like, "That was really important to develop the hand-eye coordination," and everything I was trying to then apply in other aspects.

So, yeah, I kind of got the motor skills back, picked up a lacrosse stick, started working on it. You know, I'm 14 years old, and, you know, I'm not by no means big-boned or thick or anything, so I was

a twig then. So, it was all weak, I was just weak, you know? I had to develop strength.

So, I became obsessed with developing strength in this arm, whether it was sitting there squeezing one of those little spring-loaded, hand grip things, or those little, those little, the Chinese balls that you wiggle around in your hand. That, for dexterity purposes. Or taking a deck of cards and sorting through a deck of cards, and flipping out all the hearts. This was weird stuff, that was almost like physical therapy, but I just did it. I was like, "I should do this stuff, because it's weird and hard, and it makes me feel uncomfortable, and I think it's helping in some way."

Nick: Right, I mean, it just makes that thing into a magic wand-

Logan Aldridge: Yes, that's what I said. And that just carried through my mentality of high school and into college. I was like, "All right, if I'm going to have one arm, this one arm is going to be the most jacked one arm anyone has ever seen-"

Nick: Don't you dare mess with that arm.

Logan Aldridge: Yes, it's going to be the size of two legs, this one arm. That didn't happen. I don't eat enough to make that happen. But that was the mentality. And that was, it was never to show people how capable I am. It was for myself. It was to be the same kid that I was before. It was to be involved and be perceived by my peers just as you would perceive any other high school student.

Now I say that, and then I also say, on the other hand, I had a very unique high school experience because of that. The school I went to is incredible. Small, private school in Raleigh, North Carolina, Ravenscroft. So accommodating. I mean I went there 1st through 12th grade, and it was my family. Still is.

They were so accommodating and supportive of me, but I remember going into 8th grade in the first day of school, getting up in front of the class and just saying, "Hey guys, I look different, as you can tell. Lost my arm this summer. Let me tell you how it happened."

And I told them how it happened. To me that was ... it was what I was supposed to do on the first day of school. But to the student body, my peers, and to the teachers, they thought, "Wow. This kid didn't think twice to just get up and own it. Just, so this is what happened. I'm still who I was. If you want to know more, if you want to see it, if you want to touch it, come over and see me. Come talk to me. All is good. I love curiosity. I encourage it."

So that moment, kind of, I think, struck a chord with my mom in realizing that I was really comfortable talking about it, which I think is a parent's biggest fear when something like that happens to a child. How they're going to-

Nick: You'd be haunted.

Logan Aldridge: Yes, how they're going to perceive it. "Oh, I'm a freak, I'm different. I don't know."

And that wasn't my situation at all. So, I think my mother really saw that, and was like, "Well, you know what? Let's propel this thing into something really great for him if he wants to."

By that being public speaking. So, at 14, she at the time was extremely successful in the mortgage industry, working for Wells Fargo, and their big annual conference was coming up. So, I got to go to be a guest speaker there.

Nick: At 14!

Logan Aldridge: At 14. I don't know what my mom was thinking. I don't know what she was ... I was not, like, well-spoken or anything. I was a 14-year-old kid-

Nick: That's what I'm saying ... It's a pretty small community of 14-year-olds that are going to be speaking to the bankers.

Logan Aldridge: Yes, man. I don't know what she ... We didn't have anything ironed out. It wasn't this motivational, inspiring talk. It was just like, "Tell your story, Logan. Tell your story."

You know, it had been about a year after, a little over a year after. A lot had happened in that year. A lot of road ... like benchmarks, a lot of really cool momentum, successes for me, psychologically. And I told my story. And I told about those successes along the path.

Then I tried to apply that template to any other person's life, whether, whatever challenge that might have been for them; a divorce, loss of a loved one, relocating across the country, the mortgage industry suffering. This was before the mortgage industry did suffer. So, I had some freaking, I had some insight.

Nick: Yes, fortune teller.

Logan Aldridge: So, and the audience, they, I thought I just was a kid up there talking, and that it was like charity on their part. But they were, they said, "You're a great speaker. We thought you had been doing this for years."

So, I quickly realized I was comfortable speaking. I enjoyed the stage presence. I enjoyed talking to people, and more importantly, I just enjoyed sharing my story and trying to relate it to other people's challenges, struggles in life, and how they can apply this mindset, if you will, this template, and achieve or overcome.

And that just snowballed in a really cool, but organic and manageable way. That [speaking engagement](#) led to another, led to another, led to me forming my brand as Beyond Expectations, abbreviated as BE, and what that meant for me. And the non-profit I started, [The Logan Aldridge Foundation](#), that raised money to give back to children's hospitals, because I accredit so much of my experience to that one I had in that hospital, and how it wasn't white walls and white-jacket doctors.

It was colorful, butterflies ... kind of why I have a butterfly tattoo on me now. And just personality. The doctors cared. They cried when they told my parents that they're going to have to amputate my arm. They felt like family. That was a very unique experience, I believe, in a hospital setting. There was this gaming center we could walk down the hall to while I was in ICU, and hang out with all of the visitors. It was just really powerful stuff.

So, I wanted to give back to that, and started my foundation that helped UNC Children's Hospital, along with other children's hospitals in the southeast, implement cool ways to keep kids feeling like kids. Whether that was partnering with Nintendo Wii to put Wiis, mobile Wii stations, so that kids in the hospital bed could still play and feel active. That was really important stuff that I did then.

And then my mom and I co-authored a book when I was 15, and that book was a self-help book, once again, just kind of telling my story and giving you some action items along the way to discover what challenges you might be facing and ways to overcome them. And then, frankly, I was about to graduate high school, all this was going really well, I'm speaking a ton, traveling all over the country

on these speaking tours, if you will. It was encouraged to continue the speaking thing, do that as a career.

And I did not want to miss out on the experiences of college. Not only for the academia and education, I wanted to learn more about how to be an entrepreneur, a better marketer, a better business person, but I wanted the social experience, too. Like, man, I said when I lost my arm I wanted to just be like I was before, and now these incredible opportunities have come before me, and I love it, and it's amazing, but I'm not going to miss out on the opportunity to be a student, just be a kid, go to university.

Nick: In order to just keep talking about the arm. Keep talking about ... You are missing something at some point, absolutely.

Logan Aldridge: Right, exactly.

So, it was such a cool way to turn such a tragedy into such a success, but also, I just wanted to be normal, and so went off to college. Went off to college as just a kid going to college, no baggage, no nothing. So frankly, put a lot of that on pause. Just put it on pause for four years. And went to school and had a phenomenal experience. And that's when I graduated and discovered my passion for fitness and working out with friends all along that way, and-

Nick: What did you study?

Logan Aldridge: So, I studied Supply Chain Management, Entrepreneurship, and Marketing. It was kind of like an all-business, admin-related, but a double major with a Marketing Supply Chain. And then I had the opportunity to have an independent study with Additive Manufacturing. I became, my senior year of college, and I'm not a nerd, I'm not geeky about anything, but I became obsessed with 3D printing, and additive manufacturing, and its relevancy to supply chain management. And how efficient it was, and all this sort of stuff.

And then I started to turn the wheels from my experience with orthotic and prosthetic companies, and my own prosthetics that I had made for me that I didn't use. I had them made, wore them a couple times, and they sat in the corner, collected dust. So, I started to really become interested in how can we take this technology and apply it to that industry. And now, it's quite common now to find it in there, but at the time it wasn't.

So, I continued to learn a lot about that. I graduated and got a ... I was very fortunate to get a great job offer back in Raleigh, at a big IT, enterprise IT company, called Red Hat. I worked there for a little over a year. Great company culture, incredible. But wanted to pursue my passion, do something that really struck home for me, and that at first was this 3D printing opportunity in O and P. In orthotics and prosthetics.

So, I got the chance to do that for a local orthotic and prosthetic company, and implement the technology, and do it well. That was amazing, and it worked out really well. What I discovered in that moment is what led me to ultimately being here today, is that I was a bit jaded in how I thought people became amputees. I thought it was a lot of traumatic accidents. People like me, young kids, people ... and then they lose the limb. But unfortunately, more often than not, it's due to kind of medical complications such as diabetes and what that leads to, and the chronic illness that it leads to with a leg amputee, and then the likelihood of the next leg getting amputated with five years.

And the patients that we saw, just generally coming in, just had very poor qualities of life. And I tried to look at it from a macro perspective. I'm in here micro, trying to help make these devices fit better, function better, be more cost effective, and that's great. But how do I instill and help assist bigger

change on a more global scale here? Because we're missing something ... this isn't the way these people should have to live.

Nick: Right. It's limiting how they can benefit from the other technology, too.

Logan Aldridge: Of course. Quality of life. So, I said, "You know what? It's the fitness. It's the health and wellness and fitness that people aren't getting."

Not people, but like the impaired community. The people with suffering from a disability, or a chronic illness, or disease, or ... That doesn't mean that that aspect of life has to get turned off, and that's when I stepped into a CrossFit gym, and I drank the sugar-free CrossFit Kool-Aid, because you know, we're a lot about being healthy.

Nick: Sure, sure.

Logan Aldridge: Frankly, just became obsessed with it. Became obsessed with the methodology and the whole approach to functional fitness, and saw the benefits in myself. Started to train in that way, and see opportunities where I was challenged every day, and I had to be creative and come up with something to do or implement to create the same stimulus as prescribed in the workout, if you will. And that's when the real light bulb moment went off for me in my journey. And I said, "This is my opportunity to be an advocate, a thought leader, an ambassador, a pioneer for adaptive training."

Adaptive CrossFit, as you mentioned in the beginning of this podcast, but it's training. It's adaptive training. CrossFit's just a great platform we've been in. That was when I just said, "How can I spread this message? How can I grow this first locally in my community," but then, thank goodness for platforms like Instagram, and all the social media platforms that exist. Post about it, all day long. Just like a typical CrossFitter, you post about all your workouts.

But this was a different message, and it started to work. We started to get other, I started to discover local amputees in my own backyard, who would then, we would invite in to the gym, and they would train. And now I have two members who have been members ever since I started, and they came in shortly after. One's a congenital amputee, older lady, Christy, and then the other's a young girl named Kippy who ... her injury was kind of a botched rotator cuff surgery. It turned into arm paralysis, but long story short, the community was right there in the backyard.

And now the trickle effect it's had internationally, and then coupled with CrossFit creating its own seminar, Adaptive Training, where we're teaching these individuals how to, coaches and gym owners, how to welcome a wheelchair athlete. How to welcome someone missing a leg above their knee, into a class, a group training environment, and they feel comfortable and well taken care of in a safe environment.

Nick: What do you think it is about CrossFit that this seems to have really flourished so much there? Because yes, there are adaptive powerlifters, strongmen, bodybuilders, wheelchair bodybuilding's an event at the Arnold, right?

Logan Aldridge: Absolutely.

Nick: But, when I started looking, it's like, there's something unique about how it's expressing itself in CrossFit, for just looking for really unique solutions, and doing whatever's necessary to make something accessible to somebody.

Logan Aldridge: Oh, that's a great question, and you know, I ... you hear this all the time, so it almost gives it less value to say it, but the word that I believe makes it so impactful in there is "community." And to expand upon that is like, the camaraderie of that environment. The principle of suffering together makes us all better, and when it's a group workout, I don't care if it's your first day and you're 200 pounds overweight, or if you're the fittest person according to, you know, CrossFit World, the former CrossFit games winner, I don't care. If those two people are next to each other, if they do a workout together, it hurts both of them just as equally. It's painful. It hurts. You're pushing through. You're breathing hard. You're trying as hard as you can to finish.

And then the camaraderie aspect of when it's all said and done, the person who is trying to finish, who's coming in last, is getting support of the entire group. They get the most praise for sticking with it, not giving up, and following it through until the end. We all hit a wall in a workout where we stop and say, "I don't know if I can keep doing ... I don't know if I can do another rep. I don't know if I can do another burpee. I don't know if I can go on that next 400-meter run."

But then we do. And when we do, we come back, and we're like, "I didn't die. Wow. I'm a lot more capable than I thought I was 10 minutes ago, five seconds ago." And that-

Nick: Day in and day out.

Logan Aldridge: Golly, man, did that not resonate with the message I'd been sharing for a decade on a public speaking platform. Not only did it resonate with all that, but then I said, "Wow, if this is the experience everybody's having; able body, any body, it doesn't matter, what kind of experience could you have if you created standards and acceptable ways to modify movement for somebody with a permanent physical impairment?"

You know, there's always scaling. You can always scale workouts for somebody if they're very overweight, haven't done this in a long time, just are new to athletics, or unathletic. That's fine. That's a totally welcomed and acceptable.

But the bigger question was, how do we modify? How do we adapt movement to achieve the same stimulus, the same prescription as a CrossFit workout of the day, the WOD, is written? How do we achieve that? And that's where my mind started to geek out on having fun with innovating equipment, and creating gadgets and straps, and different rep protocol, and different multipliers of the weights, and modifications of the weights to mimic that. And that's, and here we are, five years later.

Nick: There's some really interesting stuff that I see you come up with, too.

Heather: Incredible.

Nick: It seems like every movement is kind of a puzzle to be cracked in its own special way. Like you're doing walking handstands using a plyo box. I saw guys using split ropes in wheelchairs, those weighted split ropes. You've got the mono rope. It all looks uniquely challenging. It all looks like it still just taxes the shit out of your grip.

Heather: My favorite was that article about a Spartan Race that you did, and you know, they've got, I don't know what it's called, but it's where you've got the rings and you have to monkey bar your way across it.

Logan Aldridge: Those darn rings.

Heather: And I love that your foundation is called Beyond Expectations, because I'm sitting there and I'm like, "Okay, man, I don't want to admit this, but I don't know how he's going to do this."

I'm trying to imagine in my head how you could kip your way, and then it shows the progression, and I encourage anyone who's listening to this or watching this, to go and look at some of those articles. It shows how you figured it out, and you're just like, yeah, yeah. That's, you know, it's a lot harder the way you have to do it, but you do it.

Logan Aldridge: That's right. That's right, and it was, that was just "try." That was purely a moment of, "All right, Logan, try it."

I hadn't done that before. I don't train obstacle course racing in my free time. I just, I love Spartan Races, and I go do them when I can.

Nick: Communal suffering.

Logan Aldridge: Yes, right, exactly. Misery loves company. And that was one of the last obstacles, and I was like, "Man, I have got, if I can just get this little chicken wing held in that little ring, maybe I can get to that next one."

And then that little swing happened, and it got to the next, and I was like, "Oh my, I'm three rings in now. I've got to just keep ..."

And yes, I was surprised myself. I didn't think that that was very possible for me, and got a lot farther. So now my goal is to definitely complete that obstacle, because I didn't. I didn't make it to the end. I had to drop and go do the freaking 30 burpees that you had to do when you can't do it. But that's my goal in the Spartan Race world, is to complete that freaking obstacle. I was so close.

Nick: In the CrossFit world, what kind of, what continues to allude you, or what have you yet to crack yet?

Logan Aldridge: Great question. The handstand stuff. You know, the real, the true handstand walking. Any version of a muscle-up, right. I, especially ring muscle-ups, that's just something I just can't do. I can physically do a bar muscle-up, but I have a philosophy on understanding the difference between "now I'm just a circus show," and "I'm doing fitness to enhance my functionality and quality of life."

To do one-armed bar muscle-ups, I think is profound, it's cool, it's badass, but I believe it has tremendous diminishing returns. I believe there's a lot more potential and opportunity for injury, severe injury. You know, like, this is the only shoulder I got. It's the only arm I have left. So, I'm cautious of that. And I see that perception a lot from the outside world looking at the way adaptive athletes train, especially those pursuing it as, very competitively and to be elite in the sense of traditional elite athletes of their sport. How it can be like, "Man, you're already missing an arm. What are you trying to put 220 pounds over your head for? What if you blow that shoulder out?"

You know, all these things, and I get it. But I'm not a complete idiot. I do have an understanding, and I have, I've never had an injury. I've been very aware of that, and I'm very diligent about prehabbing, you know, taking care of this stuff, so that that's prevented. Not to say, you know, you never know, anything could happen. It's not like I'm guaranteed safe. Anything could happen. You're right. But that's a risk I'm willing to take, and I don't think it's so risky that it's likely to happen, I just think it's something that any professional athlete, any athlete, you know-

Nick: Sure.

Logan Aldridge: There's always risk involved, right?

Nick: Well, you seem like you have the right mindset, though, that displaying strength versus building strength, right?

Heather: Right.

Logan Aldridge: Right, right.

Nick: You see people in every gym, every day of the week who are displaying strength ...

Logan Aldridge: That's a great way of putting it.

Nick: ... and they act like they're training strength, but, really, you're just doing something.

Heather: You're showing off.

Nick: I mean, even if you're just showing off for yourself. It doesn't necessarily have to be like, "Oh, I'm doing it for somebody else." But you're like, "How strong am I? How strong am I today? How strong am I today?" As opposed to actually building strength.

Logan Aldridge: Right, right.

Heather: Well, that's what I was curious as I was watching some of the [videos](#), is, you know, you're doing an overhead movement, and I'm like, gosh, that's applying different forces on your spine, and, you know, you'd almost have to have a protocol for how to train the other side of that that people don't get to see. You know, you're putting a cool video up, so then there's got to be work on the back end that we're not aware of.

Logan Aldridge: You know, and you bring up a great point, and it's an objective of mine to do a better job of sharing the stuff that goes on behind the Instagram scenes, if you will, because that's something we reiterate constantly in the seminars that we teach, the adaptive training seminars. The accessory work, the other stuff, like you see on the Instagram, all the cool stuff. And every now and then I'll try to promote some of the accessory stuff I do, but, yeah, that's critical. That's critical. Any opportunity to train symmetry, to work on your weakness, whether you're able body and your weakness is gymnastics in the world of CrossFit, you know... And there's weightlifting, gymnastics, and the conditioning monostructural stuff. If your weakness is in gymnastics, yeah, you got to work on that stuff. After workouts. Outside of doing workouts.

Same with adaptive athletes. You got to work on accessory stuff. I need to work on building strength in my left side. You know, my spine, I was very concerned about that when I first got into CrossFit, like the deviation of my spine. The scoliosis, if you will. And there's only so much that you can do about that. Like the day I lost my arm... Bodies are incredibly complex and incredibly intelligent, and my body adapted. When I lost my arm it said, "All right, you just lost a lot of weight over here, how do we compensate for the lack of weight?" And so, there was a natural torso shift where that arm tries to become a little bit more centered in the body for use. That's inevitable. Now, to try to correct that or prevent it is almost silly, because that's your body trying to be efficient. It's trying to help you. So, to correct it completely would then actually put pressure in places that you wouldn't want it, and would be more likely to be prone to slipping a disc or something like that.

So instead, I'm at a deviation, or my spine is what it is, and I've built a lot of strength around that. There's a lot of stability around my core and around how my body is now. I feel great. I don't have any back problems. I mean, everything seems fine, and I think I'm just more aware and accepting that I'm not supposed to look like everybody else. I'm not supposed to have a perfectly straight body.

Heather: You mention when you were 14 years old, standing up in front of a class and inviting curiosity. As an adult and in your dealings with other adults, is that curiosity still there? Do you still invite that? Are adults more hesitant?

Logan Aldridge: Great question. Yeah, it's definitely still there. And yeah, I welcome it completely. We're just sharing my story on this podcast. I still love to do that. You know? Gosh, it's been how many years? 13 years? 14 years? Yeah. I encourage the curiosity because I know I put myself in the other shoes. Like when I meet someone in a wheelchair, or when I was a kid and I would meet an amputee, I would ask, "Where's your arm? What happened to you?" And I get that all the time. All the time. In the gas station, anywhere.

Nick: My son would ask you if he was here right now.

Logan Aldridge: Yeah. I get kids looking up my sleeve, and they pull my sleeve open, and they look at it. And I'm like, "Oh yeah? You want to see something wild? This thing's still got a bicep. Look at the sucker on there." And they're like, "Oh, my gosh!" and it freaks them out sometimes. I have fun with it. You know? I tell kids that, "Where'd your arm go?" I'm like, "You know what? I was your age, and I stopped eating my vegetables, and look at what happened." Yeah, right? And they're like, "Oh, let's go get some broccoli."

Nick: That's great.

Logan Aldridge: It's hilarious.

Nick: Now, one thing that I love that you do is one-arm barbell lifts. So, it would be very easy for you to say, "All right, you know what? It's nothing but dumbbells and kettlebells." But I love one-arm barbell lifts, and they were things that used to be competed back in the old days, right? Like in the 1904 Olympics, they had the one-arm barbell lift, however you get it over your head, as an actual Olympic event.

Logan Aldridge: Exactly. That's so true. I forget about that.

Nick: Yeah. Yeah, no. It was one-arm dumbbell, one-arm barbell.

Heather: The strongmen with the singlet and the mustache.

Logan Aldridge: Yep. Exactly.

Nick: But I was wondering, yeah, the one-arm snatch, one-arm clean and jerk, one-arm deadlift, they were competed events. They're still competed in weird places.

Logan Aldridge: Yeah, yeah.

Nick: But I was wondering what the learning curve was like for that, and where you found guidance for those?

Logan Aldridge: I really... The learning curve, I picked it up and just did it, frankly. I wish I had a better story about that, but the truth is, I just didn't know. I didn't know how it was supposed to be done, or how to do it, but I just thought I would figure it out along the way. And like I said in the beginning, I would determine if this was a good, smart thing to do, or if I just shouldn't do barbell stuff. And, fortunately... You know, at a young age, being involved in all these different sports and going to different sport performance camps in the summers, I've been exposed to Olympic weightlifting before my accident, which is crazy. That means I was younger than 13, which I can't remember exactly where, but I know I was.

Nick: You knew what it was at least.

Logan Aldridge: I knew points of performance on a clean. And I've never... I don't know. I can't even really put a reason behind why I knew that, but I remember with two arms having done those movements before. Obviously, it was probably an empty barbell or something, but you know, with football summer camps, strength and conditioning coaches I had gone to before with my older brother, just kind of being thrown into the mix. So, I understood the importance of the movement, and how the movement was supposed to function. To me, it wasn't that different by just taking an arm away. It was just, all right, grab it in the middle now. Hold it in the middle. But I didn't touch a barbell until I had built up what I deemed tremendous stability with a kettlebell and a dumbbell with this arm on all planes, like strength and stability and push-ups, the ability to do a push-up.

All that stuff was really important. And then a massive focus on core strength for me, because I knew I got to protect the spine, and a lot of this is going to be unilateral all the time. And so, got to protect the spine. And once that happened, the barbell stuff just kind of clicked, because I took the right progressions. I didn't come into it, I was new to it, and, "All right, I want to do some barbell shoulder presses and overhead squats." I mean, I still suck at overhead squats. I'm working on that. But-

Nick: Everybody sucks at that.

Heather: Yeah ...

Logan Aldridge: Yeah. So, it just kind of happened. And then the traditional progression of strength and comfort, and a progression of technique as it would be for anybody new to the barbell began to happen for me with one arm.

Nick: Hm. Now, you set a couple of records as well, right? I don't know what they are.

Logan Aldridge: Yeah. Some Guinness World Records.

Heather: Let's see. World record, most one-arm, one-leg push-ups in one minute.

Logan Aldridge: Yeah.

Heather: Are you still the record holder?

Logan Aldridge: I am. Yeah.

Heather: Very nice.

Logan Aldridge: Yeah. That was a really cool, really cool experience to do that and most weight... This one's just so weird, how specific it is. Most weight cleaned with one arm on a barbell in one minute.

Heather: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Logan Aldridge: So, I got like 2000-something pounds. I don't even remember.

Nick: Huh.

Heather: And a 455-pound deadlift.

Logan Aldridge: Yep. Yeah, yeah.

Nick: So, that one-arm, one-leg deadlift, or push-up, is an interesting one to me, because I'm a fan of the one-arm push-up. I think it's totally under-utilized.

Logan Aldridge: You're right.

Nick: And it's a great goal. I mean, talk about a movement that just... It trains everything from head to toe. You got to use your toenails in a movement like that.

Logan Aldridge: Yes. Right. Right.

Nick: Where did that fit in the progression?

Logan Aldridge: Oh, my gosh. You're going to think this... Once again, this is not a very good story.

Nick: "I was born doing it."

Logan Aldridge: I was training CrossFit, training CrossFit. I was working very closely with Reebok at the time, and Reebok calls me up Monday and says, "Hey, we're getting together." And the Nano 7 was coming out, their new shoe at that time. They said, "We're putting together three different groups of our CrossFit athletes. One group out in California, one group in New York, and one group out in Australia. And we've invited Guinness World Record to come out to all these places, and we're going to try to break... We're going to set a record for the most records broken in a day, in 24 hours." And they're like, "Do you think you could break some one-arm records?" I'm like, "I don't know. What are they? What are they?"

They're like, "How about most one-arm, one-leg push-ups in a minute?" And I was like... I literally read the email, pushed out my chair, got down, got in the push-up position, picked the leg up, and did like 10. And I got back up, and I was like, "Yes, I can do that. I can try that."

Nick: What was the record?

Logan Aldridge: I think it was 12 or 16 or something.

Nick: Oh, really? Oh, okay.

Logan Aldridge: Yeah.

Nick: And you could do 10 without ever having done one before?

Logan Aldridge: Yeah, I just did 10. I just got down and just did 10.

Heather: I can do that.

Logan Aldridge: You know, I like a challenge. I wasn't arrogant and like, "Yeah, I'm going to crush that," but I was like, "That would be cool. That would be cool. Yeah, I'd love to."

Nick: Give it a shot, sure.

Logan Aldridge: And then the other one, I don't even know how that one came about. I think I didn't even know about that one until the day of.

Nick: These were all on the same day.

Logan Aldridge: Yeah, yeah. The same day. I mean-

Nick: Now there's a WOD, man.

Logan Aldridge: I show up. I get flown out to New York. I stay in a hotel. They treat ... It was an incredible experience. They had some media people from like Men's Health and other avenues, and the CrossFit athletes that I revere, like [Dan Bailey](#) and [Annie Thorisdottir](#), and all these athletes are in... I come down the next morning. I got in late. Come down the next morning... We're going to meet in the lobby to go, and they're all sitting there in the lobby. I'm like, "What?" And they're like, "Yeah, you're here with us. We're going to go break some records." I was like, "This is surreal." And that was it.

It was literally a Wednesday. Flew up on a Tuesday night, did that Wednesday, flew back Wednesday evening, and I was back home. I was like, "I just broke two Guinness World Records. That was pretty cool." And then it was over, and it was back to just normal life.

Logan Aldridge: It was a cool experience. Very cool experience.

Nick: Yeah, sure. I want to ask you what strength accomplishments you're most proud of, but it seems like you moved so quickly between things that there maybe isn't an answer there. But is there really something that stands out, where it's like, "You know, this was really special to me?"

Logan Aldridge: In like a lift itself, or in a movement, I really... There are. Yeah. There's a goal I had for a long time, was to squat clean 250 pounds, and I did that. And I weigh 160 pounds, so that was important. And to deadlift 500 pounds. And I've done that, while maintaining like a five-and-a-half-minute mile. So, being conditioned and exhibiting strength. Those were really cool things. Now, that's great, and yeah, I guess those would be the ones I'm most proud of, but it doesn't feel that way. Like, I didn't do them to be able to say that I can do them. Like, I didn't want to do it to be able to then say that that's what I can do. It was just... Like you were saying, it wasn't me displaying strength to do that. It was just a progression of my strength that that came about.

Nick: Right. Feels better that way, even if it's not like you break down on the floor like, "Thank you! Thank you!"

Logan Aldridge: Right, right.

Nick: But yeah, it's like you earn them.

Heather: Check that box.

Logan Aldridge: Yeah, yeah. And that's just the continued journey in that way. It's not like I can hang my hat up when I hit these things. It's just like, "Wow. If you're capable of that, then what else can you do?"

Nick: Sure. Sure. Well, what else can you do? I mean, what do you want to keep doing? You know, this is where you've come in, what, 13, 14 years?

Logan Aldridge: Yeah, yeah.

Nick: What do you want to do with the next decade, aside from just get stronger?

Logan Aldridge: Yeah. I do. I want to get stronger. I'm 28 years old. I will always try to pursue my maximum physical potential, and right now, I feel really good. I feel extremely healthy. So, I think that's very much performance-based right now. I think my aerobic capacity can be better, so I'm focusing a lot on that. Like running, being able to run faster and longer, and it's sustainable, and recover better. Just be a better CrossFitter, frankly.

But my real vision and hope and dream for my future is to be on the forefront, or be a part of, the growth and inclusion and empowerment of adaptive training, and what that can mean for people that are not adaptive. What that can mean for the person who has really struggled psychologically to walk into a gym, because they just feel like they don't belong. And forget even that scenario, a gym, but just to get up and start walking.

I truly believe... I hope this doesn't come across as arrogant or anything, but that I was put on this earth to do that. To try to empower people to realize their potential, their capability. To defy the odds. And if there's any way I can do that, I believe it's through education. I hope, I aspire for it to be through my actions, and the opportunities I can help create through development, whether it be equipment, or event inclusion, or legitimate professional platform, such as that of CrossFit, right? And that's my first journey.

Nick: Or Bodybuilding.com.

Logan Aldridge: Yeah. And now look where we are. And that's been my first experience for five years was... And it's been phenomenal. It's not over. It's just getting started in the CrossFit world. It's just getting started.

But to have the course available, and to be on that staff, and to be spreading the education, and then showing the inclusion in events like Wodapalooza are massive steps in the right direction.

And this right here, right now, this week out here at Bodybuilding.com headquarters, officially onboarded as an athlete with you all is one more confirmation that it's happening. But secondly, my mission is to bridge that gap, to take adaptive training into every form of fitness discipline and lifestyle and demographic around the world. So, I think that's what I was put on this earth to do, and I hope that I can do that justice by the end of my life and watch it evolve.

Nick: Well, we're thrilled to be part of it as well, man. Thank you so much for coming and talking with us, Logan.

Logan Aldridge: Thank you. Sorry I'm a talker, man. I just talked the whole time.

Nick: We wanted you to talk. It's better than the alternative.

Logan Aldridge: I warned him. I warned him. I said, "You're going to have to shut me up."

Nick: So, where do people find you if they want to follow your journey?

Logan Aldridge: [Instagram](#), frankly, is my most accessible platform. I treat that very intimately and interact with everyone on there, so if you send me a message, I will respond to you, and I will share with you information or whatever interest you have. And that's just my last name, first name. So, Aldridge Logan.

I do have a website, [LoganAldridge.com](#). You can always go there. But through the Instagram, you can email me through there, and we can talk, or reach out through the direct messages. And I'm on [Facebook](#) and that stuff, too, but those are the best ways.

Nick: Great.

Heather: You definitely want to follow him. It's remarkable.

Nick: There's just some pretty cool shit happening on your Instagram.

Heather: Yeah. Very, very cool stuff.

Logan Aldridge: Oh, absolutely. Thanks.

Nick Collias: All right. Thank you so much.

Heather Eastman: Yes. Thank you.

Logan Aldridge: Thank you all. Appreciate it.



[KRYSTAL CANTU: ONE ARM, NO EXCUSES](#)

CrossFit athlete Krystal Cantu may have one arm, but it doesn't stop her from lifting heavy and breaking PRs. This is her inspiring story!