



Episode 57 Transcript

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Fergus Crawley on Squatting 132 pounds, 7,600 times, in 24 Hours

Nick Collias: Hey, everyone. Nick Collias here. We've got a really interesting episode of *The Bodybuilding.com Podcast* today. You may know that it's not only November, or whatever month it is when you're listening to this, it's also Movember.

Movember is a month when men tend to grow their mustaches out to bring awareness to men's health issues. Things like prostate cancer, testicular cancer, and suicide. Let's talk about that last one in particular. Three quarters of suicides happen to men. It's the 10th leading cause of death of men in the U.S., and it's only going up, unfortunately. In the U.K., where Fergus Crawley lives, it's the single biggest killer of men under the age of 45. Fergus is a powerlifter. He's competed at a pretty high level around the world, and he knows the struggle with depression and suicidal thoughts very well, but he also knows the incredible power that physical training and weights can give to a life that doesn't have direction. To help bring more attention to men's mental health and suicide prevention, he's actually undertaking a really fascinating challenge. He's going to attempt on December 12th to set the Guinness World Record for the most weights squatted in 24 hours. I was fortunate enough to chat with Fergus recently about his story, his attempt, and his training. It's a really in-depth, pretty fascinating conversation. So, let's listen in. I really appreciate you talking with us on short notice. I'm sure-

Fergus Crawley: Nah, no worries at all. Thanks for reaching out.

Nick: ... Yeah, yeah. Absolutely. It's not something we do for everybody. We don't always try to talk to everyone trying to set a Guinness World Record. But, I really appreciated what I saw of your backstory and also this particular challenge is just a fascinating challenge on so many levels. I

thought there has to be a good story there.

Fergus Crawley: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Nick: First, tell us-

Fergus Crawley: It is.

Nick: ... how do you feel right now, and did you already train today?

Fergus Crawley: No. I'm actually in the middle of a deload week at the moment. It was scheduled for Monday of next week, but it was brought forward based off the fact that my Friday and Saturday session last week was the first real point where I felt like my joints were fighting back a little bit, should we say. Which is good, because I've lasted 14 weeks of proper documented intense prep and this is the first week where I've woken up and felt like my hips aren't quite what they should be doing and my knees aren't quite feeling the way they should. My deload week I'll still probably shift 75,000 kilos and move about 75 kilometers, but it's a much lighter week than the ones I've been having. I'm feeling a bit physically beaten up, but already feeling a bit better this week in terms of just recovering. Two deloads is part of the process so far and I've honestly never actually been able to feel the recovery day by day ticking away, and it's the first time I've not hated deloading, where I go in the gym and I'm like, "Oh, I wish I could be lifting heavier, I wish I could push myself a bit harder." This time, I'm like, "Oh, thank God." I can leave the gym not feeling like I've been hit by a bus and sleep a bit more comfortable tonight. But, I'm feeling in a good place overall.

Nick: Good. I have a ton of questions for you, but before we dig into the details, I wanted to make clear that this isn't just something you're doing for "fun"—fun being in quotes—it's the culmination of a very serious journey for you. I wanted you to tell us about your path to get to this point in your life and how you became involved with the idea of Movember and men's issues like this.

Fergus Crawley: I think the best place to start is to understand the sort of sporting background that I came from. I grew up in Scotland, and from the age of about 10, I played rugby, which is a less stop-start version of American football. As I'm sure you all know, I think [sevens](#) is up-and-coming in the States.

Nick: Oh, definitely. Our [last podcast guest](#) is both a bodybuilder and a rugby player.

Fergus Crawley: Oh, brilliant. Brilliant. There you go, case in point. I had three concussions in four weeks when I was 17, so that put me out of any rugby playing ability for, I was told five years. But, I saw a lot in the rugby community and the structure and focus it gave you, because we trained as a team, we functioned as a team, we socialized as a team and the drive and determination underpinned my life. So, I carried on training as if I was gonna go back to rugby at some point, but knowing that I wouldn't. I then met one of my good friends, called Andy Smith, who's actually competing in the Pro Raw Powerlifting competition in March in Australia, and he got me into strength-specific sports. Since then, I've competed all over the world in powerlifting competitions. My best I think is 667.5, in kilos that is. So, squatted 260 kilos, benched 160 kilos, and deadlifted 272.

Nick: Those aren't slouch numbers, those are pretty serious numbers. In pounds, that's over 570 pounds in the squat and deadlift.

Fergus Crawley: Yeah, they've steadily increased, but my squat's always been my strongest. The one that I've enjoyed the most, as well. The physical side of things, how I got here was the friend that got me into strength sports is opening a gym in Edinburgh called Lift, which I thought I'm not living in Edinburgh, in Scotland, anymore. What can I do to help him out? I thought, I'll think of a PR stunt, and then came across the world record and thought I'll do it that way. But, the reason I thought I could build something along that was basically, I finished school and went to university, basically full of life, full of energy, quite mature for my age, with a very optimistic view on life. Very driven, very focused. It was almost weird, in my year at school, if you weren't hard-working and you weren't really driven. Kind of inverse of what you expect. We could be left to our own devices and trusted to take ourselves seriously and really focus on our goals. I went to university expecting to be able to continue that journey, continue developing myself and continue learning at the rate at which I wanted to.

But, I found quite quickly the stimulus wasn't there and the only real outlet I had in terms of fulfillment was through the powerlifting, so the gym quickly became the focus of my day as I realized within a couple of weeks at university that the people I was around and my accommodation and my cause, they were perfectly pleasant people, but they weren't gonna be friends for life. Which sounds a bit judgey, but you kind of just know after a little while, don't you? Just personality traits and with the first impressions you get from them. You know whether you're gonna be able to get on with them for a long time or not.

Nick: Right, and some people have that same feeling, but it takes them years in college to realize okay, the momentum has stopped.

Fergus Crawley: Exactly, yeah. But, I was acutely aware that this isn't what I was expecting. Basically, that continued for a long time. I tried to do a few things, but sort of just resided in the hand I'd been given and kept training. Again, powerlifting is an individual sport. There wasn't a powerlifting team at my university, and the university was very good at sports. So, if you weren't in a team sport, that did put you at a bit of a disadvantage socially, in the sense that if you were a sport-driven person you spent a lot of time with them. But, my sport was individual, so what I was doing was spending a lot of time with myself. Fast forward a year and a half. It had been like this for about a year and a half. I've been retrospectively diagnosed as depressed, but in that entire year and a half I have not voiced any serious concerns to friends or family and all I've said was I wasn't enjoying things, it wasn't what I was expecting, et cetera, et cetera. A bit of complaining, but by no means "I need help."

Along the way, I was taking other people's problems on as I went. I was trying to help other people out as much as I could whilst at the same time knowing deep down that I wasn't in the best place I could be. As a very sociable person, it got to the stage where I think five days passed where I didn't say a word to anyone, other than to a coffee shop checkout employee or to someone at the local supermarket or something like that. I just sat back and thought "this just isn't me." This isn't the person I am. I'm sociable, I'm outgoing. I couldn't understand why I was in the position I was in, but it came down to the fact that I'm a man. You don't talk about these things. I thought it would undermine people's expectations of me and also undermine my expectations of myself. I felt by asking for help I'd failed and people would see me that way.

The irony is I was training for strength but ultimately feeling like self-help was a complete weakness. Basically, the culmination of all these things and the fact that I let it go on for so long meant that in May 2016, I actually attempted to take my own life, which, as you'll be pleased to hear, and can

probably figure out for yourselves, I failed to do so. But, the worst thing is I didn't wake up and come around from my attempt feeling like I'd turned a corner and that was a realization. My first thought was you failed again. You've let yourself get to this stage and you can't even do this.

That was quite harrowing for me at the time because I felt even more lost than I did beforehand. About five or six hours passed where I just sat there, just contemplating things. I did eventually come to the conclusion that something needed to change, but I had to take matters into my own hands because no one had been able to help me so far. Again, that's an irrational thing to say because I haven't sought out any help. My solution actually came in the form of a five-and-a-half kilo 14-week-old French bulldog.

I got myself a dog, and on walks we, well I say "we," I spoke about what was going on, as he can't speak back obviously. On our longer walks, I basically just started saying things out loud to him that I never thought I'd say out loud. After a while, saying them out loud enough times made me comfortable with the reality of the situation. When I got to that stage, and the fact that he'd given me a sense of purpose again in the sense that I'd lost all value in my own life, but as soon as I had him to look after, his life was entirely valuable. His life had the intrinsic value, which gave me intrinsic value because he was completely dependent upon me. The dependency he had on me was what got me out of the situation I was in, by giving me a sense of responsibility. The challenge as well, because bringing up a puppy is no easy task, especially on your own. That got me to a stage where I could be happy again, in the sense that at the end of that university year I just allowed myself to be happy. I'd spent the summer working in a bar, I was training with friends.

I was back home in Edinburgh in Scotland, so I was training with friends, working in a bar, and I could just be happy. That went on for about a year and a half. Now, what I've realized recently is that was me recovering from the trauma, which isn't a bad thing because I was allowing myself to be happy. Which, for a long time I hadn't been able to do. I was acutely aware of the fact that I felt like I had lost a part of myself, that real drive, that real focus that I had. Only recently have I felt like I've fully turned the corner in the sense that I'm back to being me, because I've been happy for long enough and I've had enough time to reflect on what's happened and where I'm going that I can really sit back and think you can be yourself again and you can really give everything you have to whatever you're focused on.

Nick: I imagine you've also been able to see, it sounds like, in this time that this is far from a solitary experience that you had.

Fergus Crawley: Correct, correct. The interesting thing is, and this is a complete byproduct of the actual attempt itself, the planning, that is. I thought I was comfortable with the situation in the sense that it's been what? It's been over two years since the attempt itself. But, since starting this and since talking to people and going on the campaign and talking about these issues, I've been able to look back and look forward and look at myself in my present situation. I was so aware of what might not have been. So, all the happiness I've experienced, all the happiness my friends and my family have experienced since then have been moments where I've been so much more aware of the fact that that was almost not the case. And I'm so grateful for the fact that I've been given a second chance.

The cause just means so much to me now in the sense that I wouldn't wish the feeling or the suffering or the mental isolation that I went through on my worst enemy. And, I know that there's thousands upon thousands of men around the world in similar situations that feel like they can't talk about it. That is the crux of the issue. It was for me.

But, I know in a lot of circles the issue is the stigma of hardness, that men need to be the pinnacle of toughness, of bravery. But, for me, bravery is having the courage to talk. People can view it as a weakness, asking for help, but I know for a fact how much you need to summon in yourself to really be able to open up about it and build up that courage to actually say the right thing to get yourself out of the hole you're in. That bravery and that responsibility is what makes "a real man."

It's a contentious term, a real man, but I think in modern terms being a man just means being responsible for yourself and being responsible for those around you. It's as simple as that. So, the mission statement of my whole campaign, along with Movember, is be a man of more words because talking saves lives. That was the strap line from the mental health awareness month in September, and I've just managed to implement that into my personality and into my mission, because I think that that is the first step, not to recovery, but the first step to succeeding in bringing yourself back around because at the very least you're no longer alone. If you're keeping everything to yourself, it's gonna stay there and it's just gonna bubble up. I can speak firsthand. I know what it feels like. It's horrible.

The turmoil you go through, the tossing and turning, the "how do I get myself out of this," the simple solution, the simple first step is bring someone else on board to help you figure it out, because you're not gonna be able to do it yourself. I know for a fact.

Let's say that my suicide attempt was stage 10 and my joining of the university was stage one. I think I probably could've got to about stage three or four, where I knew I wasn't happy, and if I'd spoken to someone openly about it then, that would've been it. Stage six or seven, this is all hypothetical of course, where I knew I was in a bad place and I knew it was starting to have an effect on my life, if I'd got to then, I still think I could've come back, just by talking about it. Then, it got to the stage where my depression actually started to affect me physically in I couldn't sleep, my routine was all over the place, and when I did eventually sleep, I could sleep for like 20 hours and sleep through 15 alarms and wake up still feeling exhausted. That was the first time that I really felt like I was completely lost and I couldn't be helped.

I had so much time before that where I could've just been a man of more words and helped myself, but this stigma and this shame that I put on myself for thinking that I couldn't ask for help was what stopped me from doing it.

All I'm trying to encourage with this and the message and the reasoning behind it is just that men should be able to talk, universally, in all cultures, in all echelons of society. There's no reason that we can't talk. I believe that the courage to be able to talk openly is a mark of bravery and a mark of strength rather than what in days gone by we have considered a mark of weakness.

Nick: I think that's a really important message, and I think people think about, when they think about talking through problems, they think it has to be this grandiose structured conversation, where you come to the answer right away. But, what I hear you saying is it doesn't matter as much what you're saying or who you're talking to, it's just the act of talking and getting-

Fergus Crawley: Correct.

Nick: ... that ball rolling. I mean, you were talking to a dog and it took-

Fergus Crawley: Yeah, exactly.

Nick: ... months of talking to a dog.

Fergus Crawley: Yeah, yeah. Almost a year before I opened up to my family about what happened. And only recently have I opened up to my friends. Because I thought because I felt okay, there was no need to burden them with the reality of what happened. At the same time, what I've realized recently is I also was doing a very good job of ignoring the reality, because I've only really been able to confront the trauma by talking about it recently.

So, what I've set out to make catharsis for other men has actually been the therapy that I've needed for the past two years. Which is fantastic, because I feel in the best place I have done since I basically stuck the stages before I became depressed, which is brilliant.

But, the best thing about it is that in me doing that, along the way I've managed to help some men take the first steps that they need to get themselves out of the situation they are in or helped make some men more available to be talked to by those that are struggling, because that's something else that I'm really pushing as well, is that as well as being a man of more words, if you are struggling, we should all endeavor to make ourselves someone that can be talked to. Because I know I could probably count on one hand my friends that I would be truly comfortable in just phoning them up and saying, "Look, this is what's going on. Please help me." So, I think we should all, as friends, as sons, as fathers, as brothers, whatever it may be, just make a bit more of a conscious effort to be emotionally available if someone ever needs us to be, because that's part of the challenge as well, is the listening. The talking is important, but having someone on the end that can listen can make it a lot easier for the person that's suffering if you can do a good job of it.

Nick: I think this is great. I think it's great for people to hear. I'm curious how it led to this idea of attempting a feat of strength, though. And, of all things, how you landed on this, in particular, because this is a challenge that's been done before by somebody in a different way. How did you land on this idea and think all right, this is what I need to do?

Fergus Crawley: I thought one, play to my strengths, which is squatting. Two, I just love training. I'd been falling out of love with training for a little. I haven't competed in a powerlift since over a year ago now. What's the date today? A year and two days ago was my last competition. I've just been training for training sake for a while, so I thought you need something to make you love training again. What are you good at? You're good at squats. Okay, let's see what we can do here.

How can you make that a bit more of a statement than just doing something silly, squats-related. And then, I thought of the fact that the stigma in society is that mental health is a weakness. How do I counteract that notion of weakness by doing something that denotes strength and endurance that I have, because it's a very long time, but I just wanted to balance almost the irony of the strength that will be needed to do this against some people's understanding of mental health as a weakness. I thought that by doing something this extreme and telling my story along the way, it could hopefully signal to men that no matter what you're willing to achieve, able to achieve, or capable of achieving, you're still able to suffer.

In the sense that kids will look at athletes, kids will look at their idols and they'll think they've lived these lives, that they're so amazing at what they do. And then, they see it from the outside looking in and they'll probably think why can't I be like that? How can I be that successful? But, behind the

scenes you don't know what's going on. I think it comes down to how the mighty fall argument, in that it can happen to absolutely anyone. The stronger you are, the more committed you are, the more driven you are, the more ambitious you are, I'd argue you almost have a bit further to fall. I think the main thing is I wanna my attempt to be a symbol of strength, in and of itself, but I also want the process and the story behind it to become a symbol of strength, as well, rather than people seeing the mental health as a weakness. It's kind of just a twisted balancing of strength and weakness that I thought would be a good way of doing it.

Nick: I've seen you put it in another interesting way. You said you were taking yourself into hell to inspire other men to get out. I think that's a great perspective to have, and I hear what you're saying about people who are successful. I've talked to a lot of people who said that after the most successful moment of their life, they won a bodybuilding show or they had a book come out or something, that was the most deep depression of their life almost, successful people, because they got up to the top of the mountain and looked around and said, well, this didn't save me. I thought this was gonna be the thing that saved me from myself.

Fergus Crawley: Yeah, yeah. Exactly, exactly. But I think, to take it down a step as well, people have challenges, people have goals in their everyday lives, and sometimes all it takes is one knock too many. So, I think if we do help people to understand how to manage it and understand that they're not alone and that they can talk about it, then as a society we'll be more of a community and just have a bit more of a productive attitude to things. Because if we start viewing it as something that can be managed rather than ostracized, then we can move forward.

An analogy that someone used with me was if you picture every human being as a raft at sea, everyone in the world will have some form of baggage that they carry with them. All it takes is one bag too many and your raft will start sinking. But, in the same vein, all you need to do is get rid of that one bag and share it with someone else's raft and you can stay afloat. It's not about being baggage-free, it's about staying afloat. We've all got challenges in our lives. We've all got things we need to deal with. But, by sharing those challenges and by working together, and actually by acknowledging that the baggage needs to be removed or dealt with, I think we can move forwards in a much more productive way in society as a whole.

Nick: I agree with that. What do you know about the existing record, and what was your research like when you started to look into that?

Fergus Crawley: I thought I'll look on the Guinness website. I hadn't had any experience with them before, so I thought I'd just look online. See what it was contained. Came across it. Saw the number and thought "Oh, that's not awful." And then, I actually did the math and kinda figured out where it was at. Sadly, however, the evidence I've seen and been told about, it doesn't look as if it was done to the same guidelines that I've been given.

Nick: Right. I noticed that as well. I saw a video, and it appears that Shaun Jones, who was in the UK in 2010 or so, maybe 2013, he did this on a Smith machine with a box, right?

Fergus Crawley: Yeah.

Nick: That's not what your plan is?

Fergus Crawley: No, that's not the plan. That's not what my guidelines are, either. I did actually

message Guinness, saying and providing the evidence, but all I got in return was that he will have had the same guidelines as you, Fergus. I've not been talking about it too openly because they are different. Well, if he was given the same guidelines as me, then they weren't adhered to and it was patched anyway, which is a bit frustrating. We saw this and thought, after I failed to get it overturned, I thought, "You know what? I'm just gonna do it anyway and try to prove a point," which is just a bit of stubbornness in me, but at the same time, I think it deserves to be done properly. But, yeah. I don't want to say too much, just in case there is evidence that I've missed.

Nick: Sure.

Fergus Crawley: But from the evidence that's available, it does look like the guidelines haven't been strictly adhered to at all.

Nick: Well, I mean, that's the powerlifter in you, too, though.

Fergus Crawley: Yeah, yeah. Powerlifters are stubborn, there's no doubt about that.

Nick: I mean, and it's-

Fergus Crawley: You got-

Nick: It would be a really different challenge to do it in a Smith machine. I think like, yeah. I imagine you could basically fall asleep and still be squatting in a Smith machine. That's not an option that you have.

Fergus Crawley: No, no. Well, I don't think so. If I fall asleep with a bar on my back I might be in a trouble, I think. We'll see what happens. But I'm confident physically, I'll say that, I'm not afraid to say that.

I'm concerned about the psychological element where I stop believing that I'm confident physically. Because at the end of the day, if I'm starting at 8:00 PM, so, 8:00 PM through to 8:00 PM, so 12th of December I'm starting at 8:00 PM, going through to the 13th at 8:00. So, that night shift is going to be quite challenging, I think.

Nick: Right. Give us a little bit of information about how you reversed-engineered exactly what you're going to have to lift overall, how you are going to parse that out, how you selected your weight.

Fergus Crawley: Yeah. Basically, sat down with my coach, Johnathan Pain, who works with Complete Human Performance.

Nick: Right, which is great programming.

Fergus Crawley: Yeah. Yeah. Alex Viada's company. Basically, sat down with him, got his take on it. We knew how to strength base, but my endurance base hasn't been trained particularly high over the past few years, I think it's fair to say. And one of the first things he said to me that made me sort of go, "Huh," was, "Let's treat this like an ultra-marathon." And I thought, right what does he mean by that?

So, the weight, we chose 60 kilos, because 60 kilos is enough to screw me into the floor so that there's actually enough gravity to sort of keep me in position and go through a squat consistently. If I've only got four kilos in my back, it's very easy to sway and twist and kind of get all over the place, but 60 is enough to pin me down.

Nick: For American listeners, that's about 132 pounds. So pretty close to a plate on each side. It's light, but it's not an insignificant amount of weight. It is a weight.

Fergus Crawley: Yeah. And then we also just thought anything much heavier than that would just be too taxing on my nervous system. So, this is an endurance event, not a strength event, in reality, in the sense that it requires a high-strength base, yes, but the challenge is gonna be the endurance, the actual cardiovascular system. So, my training has involved horrifying amounts of cardio that I kind of didn't see coming, to be honest. But here we are.

So, the way we break it down as well is, it's 460,000 kilos divided by 7,666. So, 7666 reps of 132 pounds, which is in that short time frame sounds okay, but then according to Google it's 15 humpback whales. When you think about it that way, it's a bit scarier.

But the way I'm planning to do it is, I've got a trial run on the 23rd of November. So 10:00 PM to 4:00 AM, I'm doing a trial run. But we think the best way for me to do it at the moment is to do 25-minute EMOM, doing a set of 10 every minute on the minute with 60. Then take five minutes rest. Do that for as many times until I need a much longer rest.

The other thing we're toying with is doing a set of 10, a set of 10 with 60 for an hour period, taking 60 seconds after each set. But it just depends on what's more efficient, so we'll play around with that and see what happens. But I'm thinking that I'll be on good enough condition for the EMOM to be the best one, because I did that before we even started my training. Well, not my training... Sort of my proper categorized block training. And I could do that for 45 minutes straight. I was pretty cooked at the end of it, but I didn't feel like it was impossible.

Nick: The informal math that I did comes out to, basically if you did five every minute for 24 hours, you'd be there. So, if you're doing ten every minute, you can get ahead a little bit.

Fergus Crawley: Yeah, that's the plan.

Nick: The difference between five reps a minute and 10 reps a minute is pretty significant though in terms of that ex... that puts you, what maybe over 10, 15 seconds, which means you're starting to build up a little lactic acid and things like that.

Fergus Crawley: Yup. Yup.

Nick: So, there's a real challenge in there. It makes me think that you probably have become quite familiar with lactate in your training in recent weeks.

Fergus Crawley: Oh, you are spot on. Spot on. And so, my third, I think it was my second week training... I had a couple... I had a week's testing, and then I had sort of a week that was just a bit of an interesting training week for me. I had some... Monday and Tuesday were weights. Wednesday was threshold run, so I did a mile at six out of 10, a mile at seven out of 10, a mile at eight out of 10, 800 meters at nine out of 10, and 400 meters flat out running.

Nick: That's a burner.

Fergus Crawley: For me, with someone with very little aerobic experience since I was 18, that was a baptism by fire. Then the following week on a Saturday, I see a two-hour low-intensity run. I'm like, bloody hell. I've never run for more than 40 minutes in my entire life other than in a rugby pitch. But you're doing another thing, so it's not the same.

But it was heart rate monitored. So, coming from a... my interpretation of cardio has always been, it's only valid, it's only useful if you're pushing yourself, and you feel like you're sort of gassed at the end of it. But this first two-hour run I actually really enjoyed. And I had to keep my heart rate around the 140 mark, which I was very rigid in doing. It was my first run, so I thought I'd be very by the book. I looked at the clock. I was looking at the... I got about 12 and a half miles in and I thought, huh. Half marathon is 13.1 miles. I wonder what time you're at? And I was like, right. You're what, at 1:36 or something. So, I did my first long run, I did a half marathon in one hour and forty-one minutes.

Nick: Which is respectable.

Fergus Crawley: Yeah, yeah. So, for someone that's never run more than 12K in my life, I was very happy with that, and thought okay, this is promising. Little did I know, week by week this would go up and up. So, the point... Highlights of my cardio have been one Saturday I had a three-hour low-intensity run, stopping every 15 minutes to do 50 continuous body weight squats, and then straight back into running. So absolutely no rest. Three hours, 22 miles, 600 body weight squats. That was a bad one. And had four hours on the walk bike on Saturday just gone.

Then I had on Friday, it's interesting being a sort of CV/weight mix. So, did a lot of lunging and push-pressing, which then culminated into a mile of lunges with 30 kilos on an athletic track, which is quite dull. I was out of range for my Bluetooth headphones, as well, because I didn't have any pockets. That made it a very lonely afternoon.

Then the past three weeks, I've done a pyramid. So, I've done 10 squats, 10 lunges, 10 behind-the-neck presses. This is with 30 kilos for two weeks, so 10, 10, 10, 20, 20, 10, 30, 30, 10, 40, 40, 10, all the way up to a hundred and then all the way back down. That was at 30 kilos. And then at that, week one, I did that 2:54. The following week I did it 2:26, which is really good. But interestingly, that wasn't challenging. It was just boring. So, obviously, when I told my coach that, the response was okay, next week do it with 40 kilos. And that took me three hours and five minutes, and that was when I woke up my joints were thinking, you know what you've pushed us a bit far today.

Nick: But you weren't bored.

Fergus Crawley: I was bored. Don't get me wrong, I was bored. But it was visibly more challenging. People were... people that saw me doing it the week before said, "You looked like you were just going through the motions." But this week, I was... I had to fight a bit more. That was good though, but again, at no point, did I think, I can't do this. It was 88,000 kilos shifted in 3 hours and 5 minutes across squats, lunges, and behind-the-neck press.

What I've learned interestingly is the cardio's taught me almost bit of the Zen mentality. So, I kind of know when it's good to switch off and when it's good to fight, because coming from powerlifting, it's all over in... you crush in nine lifts. You probably don't spend more than 20, 25 seconds under

tension. And there's a few grinders in there if you're getting 25 seconds, I think. So, you're used to this, all this pent-up energy, this burst, this absolute fight mentality just thrown at you.

But with a long cardio you can't do that, otherwise you burn out. You need to know what's coming, you need to breathe, you need to get on with it, and you need to be able to put yourself into the bigger picture and get it done. So, what I've learned with the running is, when I come across a hill or something, or when I know I'm going up a hill and I've got 50 body weight squats to do at the top, full of lactic acid, which is happened a fair few times actually and wasn't very nice.

And I know that the fight is temporary. No one feeling lasts forever. We all know that in every aspect of life, but I've become so much better at understanding what that means for my body. So, I know what my heart rate will do, I know what my rest periods will do, I know how the lactic will work alongside what I'm doing. Just how to manage that internally.

So, I'm hoping that the psychological element to it will be much better managed, because I've learned to switch between Zen and fight and sort of everything in between. That's what I mean by when I said I was just bored and going through the motions was, that was when I just Zenned out and got on with it, treating it as if it was a cardiovascular exercise where you just, it's one foot after the next. It's one squat after the next. That's the way to look at it, and that's the mentality I'm gonna need to adopt to the challenge itself.

Nick: Well, yeah. And your body is also learning to use that lactate as fuel along the way.

Fergus Crawley: Exactly, yeah.

Nick: And that's kind of the cruel irony. You have to teach it to do that, and there's only one way to do that.

Fergus Crawley: Yeah, yeah.

Nick: It's just to take a bath.

Fergus Crawley: Yeah, yeah. That is the sad reality.

Nick: Really high-rep walking lunges and things like that, they are things that bodybuilders, powerlifters have done for a long time, and sort of sworn by as a secret ingredient for leg development and for cardiovascular development. Do you feel like that was a big help for you, that assistance move?

Fergus Crawley: The lunge was sort of critical the whole way through, really. It's been a big emphasis from my coach. I think in terms of stability, imbalance, positioning, and sort of knowing where I'm best fit bio-mechanically, it's been enormously helpful. The work capacity I've built up in my legs through the lunges... if you compare me now to then, in terms of what I can push out through my legs, the lunges... it's amazing how much I've adapted to just getting through them.

So, when I used to do them... so when I've done bodybuilding training, when I've done powerlifting stuff and had lunges involved, it's always been toward the end of a session, and they've not really been prioritized. They've sort of been quote/unquote "a burnout" or something like that. But as a leg movement for overall strength, stability, and positioning, they've just done wonders for me and my

lower back and upper back and shoulders, especially.

Keeping the bar in place for that long has been challenging. So, they're not underutilized because they underpinned a lot of programmings for bodybuilding and powerlifters, but I think the high-rep... the real challenge of it is exciting. And I think there's a lot that can potentially be gained from people missing that sort of thing in their training, from just putting a barbell on the back and just seeing how far they can go or seeing how much they can develop over time. Because if you compare a video of me from the start to now, you can see where I've strengthened up and you can see the benefits. It's amazing. Just uprightness, positioning, the way my foot strikes the floor, the way that I stand up, and the way I finish at the end. Worlds apart.

Nick: I think one reason why people shy away from them is because there's nothing quite like them for the soreness that they can impart.

Fergus Crawley: Yeah.

Nick: But they also just, they show you where you're weak, especially when you're holding a weight you have to stay upright, as you mentioned. You learn really quickly where you're weak. How is that discovery process been for you, not only discovering where all the body parts are, learning by pain, but also learning where you're weak?

Fergus Crawley: My lower back has always been an issue with my training. We've never quite cracked it. With coaches I've worked with, I've never really understood my lower back. There was a stage where I was doing sort of conjugate training, so had a max-effort, lower-body day. And I pulled... what was it, just basically 490 pounds I think it would've been, off a two-inch deficit. Pulled it for single. It was hard, but it wasn't... I did it belt-less, as well, that was the key thing, and it was hard. Put it down. Did my working sets and thought... My backup sets eight and seven, and thought, "Oh, my God. They were hard work."

And then I could not pull over, what would it be, over 400 pounds for three weeks. My lower back has never recovered. So, the lunges, after the first couple of weeks, it just highlighted so clearly to my coach, who I've only been working with in this period, may I add. It just highlighted to him how much work my lower back needed. But the key thing is just the lunge volume and staying upright and all the squat volume I've been doing.

Rowing, as well, has been a huge thing just to build up that work capacity and lactic acid in my lower back. The comparison from waking up in the mornings, the pain in my lower back to then and now is huge.

Something else is my glutes. My glutes I thought have always been strong because of the way that I've been able to squat, and they've always felt strong. But the lunges have highlighted that actually they're one of the weakest links. So, there's been more specific work done there. But again, the work has been quite specific to the weaknesses we highlighted from the initial week of testing, which highlighted those things. But in terms of me feeling where I was weak, I was so much more aware of where I was weak with the training going on, because it was targeted and so voluminous. There was no hiding, really.

Nick: So, what is the macro view of your training? I think you mentioned that you've been doing this for 14 weeks. What was the big picture in how you were peaking toward this event?

Fergus Crawley: The plan has always been to build up my, basically maintain my strength base as much as possible through having a work... But the training has... it's followed a period of microcycles, whereby I start my most intense sessions at the start of the week and then they slowly go down in intensity but build up in volume. It's just the standard sort of curve graph and model.

But the bigger picture for it is we're just wanting to build up my aerobic capacity as much as we can and work on my weaknesses as much as we can until about six weeks out. So as of two weeks ago, my squat specificity has got much, much higher. My Tuesday sessions have gone from being lower body with a squat focus to being just squats with a more targeted volume focus.

It's a bit disheartening leaving the sessions having done... some of them have been over a thousand squats, and feeling like my squat's the weakest link. But that is just because of the fatigue that's built up. So now, the fatigue is hiding the fitness and the work capacity. But as we start to taper off, I will start to feel a bit superhuman, I'd imagine, just because the fatigue is slowly leaving my body.

So, after this deload, I think it's... Well, I've got my trial run on Friday, a week tomorrow. So, I've got trial run 10:00 PM 'til 4:00 AM as I said a week tomorrow, and the week leading up to that is, I'm not too sure how it's gonna go. But I can tell you my deload session on Saturday this week is 80 kilos, which is about 190, 175 pounds, 180 pounds I think, for 50 sets of 10 with 60 seconds rest. That's the deload session.

Nick: Wow.

Fergus Crawley: So, I can only imagine what the next three weeks are gonna hold. But I think, then, it's just a pretty deliberate taper leading into it, so obviously the squat specificity will be very high, the volume will start to drop, and I think I'll just start to feel really good just as the volume drops off. Because it's just my joints... the thing is though, as well, is I know so much more when I'm feeling bad and why I'm feeling bad, whereas before, you know, you can have some bad sessions, like think sometimes you're not as strong as you are. Sometimes you can't shift the forty on the dumbbells as well as you could on the day, the week before. But sometimes that just comes down to sleep.

I can now look at the bigger picture of my training and think, right, okay. This feeling is accumulative effect. Or this is a one-off. This is you struggling because of this factor. So, my bigger picture mentality now with training as a whole is so much more from a backseat perspective rather than a front-seat perspective. So, I've learned so much about my body along the way, that I feel like I'm in a really good position to continue doing this sort of thing in the future to the point where I could, I know how to manage myself physically as well as emotionally.

Because the psychological effect of this training has been huge. Some of those runs in the pouring rain ... I mean the UK doesn't have the climate that parts of America does, sadly. So, there have been some sessions I've done where I've left the house in sideways rain for three-hour runs and got back shivering. I'm asthmatic as well so that doesn't help. But then, it's just psychologically I can almost laugh. I can almost take a bit of a sadistic view now and know that I'll come out the other side stronger, rather than sigh and convince yourself, this isn't worth it, the pain's not worth it, etc.

It's been a long journey, and the bigger picture Johnny hasn't told me specifically what his plan has been, because I've just wanted to take it week by week, so I don't get spooked almost. Because if he said to me come... So, we started training ... I think we're in week 13 now. Let me just check what

my... I think my total volume is just shy of a million kilos training. Yeah, total volume is about 750,000 kilos and total distance is about 950 kilometers.

So, if he'd have said to me come the end of November you'll have moved this much, and you'll have lifted this much, I would have thought, "Oh my God. How am I gonna do that?" But taking it week by week, and having my bigger picture as the attempt and the cause has just helped me really focus on each individual session, which I think has made it psychologically much easier to deal with.

Nick: You sound like an ultra-runner. When you talk like this, just talking about all of the volume that you've had to go through. And it also makes me think about ultra-runners and that they can always do more. It's just figuring out what they can recover from. And I was wondering, recovery-wise, what's your approach been and have been any game changers that you haven't really anticipated. Like are you doing body work, are you into meditation, are you gonna sit in the sauna. What do you do to figure out how to recover from this?

Fergus Crawley: Interestingly, I had to learn that, because the first 10 weeks of my training and four weeks leading up to starting, I was actually dieting. So, basically, trying to lean down so I have as much usable muscle as possible when the time comes. So, I was... the last two weeks, I was on 1900 calories and then obviously eating back the cardio. On my big Saturdays, let's say I'd burn just over 2000 calories on my massive Saturday runs. Come the end of the day, I'd only be eating just shy of 4000 calories, having run for 20 plus miles, which is really hard to take in.

So, the recovery for me... sleep has been absolutely essential. I've gotten into as rigid a routine as I can. I've been getting up at the same time every day. Been trying to go to bed at the same time every day as much as I can. I've been trying to eat the same thing in the morning. Just stay much more conscious approach to hydration as well as implementing some yoga.

Meditation, I'm not gonna lie, I haven't been able to get a grasp with. It's something I want to get better at, but I haven't been able to sit down and crack it yet, which is a bit frustrating. But that's almost why I stopped trying to crack it, because it's starting to frustrate me. I've been reading before bed so that I've got less blue light coming in and I'm just a bit more calm before bed. I feel like my sleep quality has been the best it has been in years. And I think that probably comes down to the CV work.

The food I've just been taking a mix of nutritional and psychological approach to it. So, I'm been trying to eat as many of my carbs around my big sessions as possible, but I've also been making sure that I'm really looking forward to the meal. So, I've been cooking more and the cooking has really helped to wind down. And then the psychological elements to the food has been huge for me. So, I can look forward and use that as something, which is going to be critical in the attempt itself. If it's a slice of pizza that gets me through the next 45 minutes, then it's a slice of pizza that gets me through the next 45 minutes.

And that's something that we've actually been trying to figure out. What do you crave when you're in desperation mode. I actually had a ham and pineapple pizza the other week, which I've never had in my life. But I got home and I thought, you know what? I want pineapple on my pizza, which is blasphemy, but here we are. Here we are.

But physical recovery-wise, the main thing's been sleep, and focusing on trying to get better quality sleep. So, no caffeine, I've been having less caffeine. Reading before bed rather than sitting on my

phone. I've tried yoga, I've been doing three to four times a week and just a bit more general mobility work and things just to kind of calm myself down. But meditation is something that I want to work on. I feel like it could be beneficial to work on as I see the benefits, and I know a lot of people that really reap the rewards from it.

Nick: One thing that I think it could potentially offer you is, it's all about breath control, right, and learning to use your breath to calm your body down. I imagine there are going to be certain points in your 24-hour journey when getting your heart rate down, getting your body to calm down is going to be the only challenge. But at the same time, your training is so important. I don't want to make you feel bad for not meditating. It sounds like you've got the fundamentals. If you're sleeping well, eating well, doing yoga three times a week, that's a great start man. That's more than most people are doing.

Fergus Crawley: Yeah, it's as much as I can hope for I think. I do honestly wanna crack the meditation, though. It's something I think I just need to commit. I think I need a bit more empirical evidence from people. I need to understand how people have helped get into a good rhythm with it. Because it's just something I don't feel has click with me yet. But it's definitely something that I want to get better at. So, I'll keep you posted. I'll let you know how I get on.

Nick: Okay, I think it's interesting that you were dieting before this. Was that part of the plan? Because I see pictures of you on Instagram now, and you definitely look leaner than you were when you were competing in powerlifting, I saw a picture of you well over 200 pounds, and-

Fergus Crawley: Yeah, yeah, yeah. I'm still just over 200 pounds, I think. I'm about 90, 90 and a half kilos, 91 kilos, which I think is just over 200. But I peaked at about 100 kilos. That's about 220. So, a year ago I was 220 pounds. For the past year, I've been about 210. And now I'm sitting around the 200 mark.

But the dieting was, basically the logic was we want all the body weight you have, we want it to be usable, which I completely understand. I empathize with. However, being the one who actually have to do the dieting alongside the training, it was quite hard to see eye to eye sometimes. But it was always part of the plan, and I knew it was the case. But I think what it has done as well is really toughen me up psychologically for what's coming.

Because we'll all have dieted at some point in our lives, and we know how grim it can get and how bleak it can be at 6:00 with you know you're having very little left to eat for the day, and how am I gonna get through this? I'll have a Diet Coke or something like that. It's just bleak. The conversations you start to have with yourself in your head are hard work. Not hard work, and the prioritization of my food and how best I could split up my calories throughout the day so it would make me as happy as possible and I'd function as well as possible.

It's taught me a lot in terms of the mentality I'm gonna need. My logic is if I can get through six weeks at 2,000 calories or below a well as get through this training, then it's gonna be a lot easier to get myself out of any psychological holes I get into in the 24-hour period, because dieting is not easy, is it? We all know, but I'm glad to be eating more again, put it that way.

But the problem is, I mean, one of the reasons I got into lifting in the first place was because my 22 years on this earth, I've always been hungry. I've never been full. It's a curse, but I know a lot of people wish that was the case with them. Yeah, dieting when you never get full is even harder than

dieting when you do get full.

Nick: Right, sure. I'm curious. Have you follow Ross Edgely and his journey around Great Britain in the open water at all?

Fergus Crawley: Yes, absolutely.

Nick: There's a certain resonance that I'm feeling here. We had him on the podcast about six months ago. Right before, it was maybe five, seven days before he left.

Fergus Crawley: Just beforehand? Oh, brilliant, yeah.

Nick: Yeah.

Fergus Crawley: Yeah. I've read his book.

Nick: It was such a fascinating discussion. Yeah, he's a great guy, though, and there's some challenges that he went through over the last five months, because he just finished swimming around Great Britain recently. It's a little similar to some of what it sounds like you're going to have to do in terms of just figuring out how to fuel yourself through something that's kind of unimaginable to the modern body. He ate thousands of bananas. He was swimming six hours twice a day.

Fergus Crawley: Yeah, thousands of them. Every day, I did enjoy seeing people launch bananas off the boat to him every day, actually. It always brought a smile to my face. No, I have an enormous amount of respect for Ross. What he's done is incredible, but I'm not gonna pretend like what I'm doing is comparable, because his is a quest rather than a challenge and hats off to him for doing it with the smile on his face that he has done, as well. There aren't many people on the planet that could take such an optimistic attitude on something so, so horrifyingly challenging.

But what I've taken most from him is when he talks about, again, he comes to that Zen mentality. It's knowing, "If I swim hard for three hours, I can eat this. I can get out of the water. Don't do this. Or if I swim hard for three hours, the current's gonna take me this much further." It's putting things into a bigger framework so that you can break it down and understand what the work you're doing equals for the bigger picture.

You can't think, "I'm in a world of pain right now. I want this to stop." Because if you think that, you're missing the bigger picture. You need to look at it from every angle, and I think his attitude to things is so positive. He's just so invested in what he's doing. That's how I've started to feel and how I know I need to approach this. I mean, what he's done is incredible, swimming for 12 hours a day. Sometimes, he had a jellyfish stuck to his face for six hours, I mean, just utter, utter madness, isn't it? But I've learnt a lot from his book. I've learnt a lot from seeing his journey. Yeah, the upmost respect to him, and I think the mentality he has is something that I can definitely tap into for... I've tapped into already for my training, but the challenge itself, it's gonna have to be a, "Look at the big picture, take a step back, and just get on with it."

Nick: I also thought of him because he had some interesting thought that he... aside from being a feat swimming across Great Britain, it was also kind of an experiment that he was doing to see if muscle really could be the ultimate engine for endurance, because he was saying that he found that when he was on doing these epic swims, swimming between Caribbean islands, that he had more

left in the tank than, sometimes, elite swimmers did, because he was so much larger and more muscular, and he felt like that gave him extra glycogen storage potential that somebody else who's a lot thinner, because we think of endurance athletes being a smaller, thinner athlete, something that they just don't have. And that meant that listening to you talk about doing this for 24 hours, you're going beyond all energy systems, right? You can talk about, "Okay, this is a phosphate system. This is a glycolytic system. Okay, now we're doing aerobic things."

But when you're doing this for 24 hours straight, all of that becomes completely academic, and it's just about whatever fuel you can hold onto at a certain level.

Fergus Crawley: Yep. That's part of the fun, isn't it? It's, "What can my body achieve? What can I endure?" I think often the phrase "endurance athlete" is a bit too narrow-minded. If you look at the Barkley Marathons, for example, they aren't just endurance runs. They are endurance of the mind. It's basically ultra-orienteeing. Do you know what I'm talking about when I say the Barkley Marathons?

Nick: Sure.

Fergus Crawley: Yeah. They're twisted. What you have to approach mentally and physically to get through it is just incredible, and I think that's what it comes down to, is that is endurance, the notion that endurance is how much can you take and what can your body achieve, as you say, beyond energy systems. I'm not gonna lie. In a sadistic sort of way, I'm excited to see what happens. We're obviously gonna manage it as closely as we can and with as much emphasis on just the principles that we academically know, but there's gonna be unpredictability, isn't there? Because I've not done this before. I've not. The longest I've trained for, the Watt bike the other day, four hours, was probably the longest, and then the three hour and five minute lunge, squat, and push-press section was the longest I've lifted weights for in any given period, and that was pretty constant. Yeah, it was constant in terms of my rest was no longer than 60 seconds, really.

If someone looked at me and thought I was like I was glazing over, and I felt a bit delirious after about two and a half hours, and I just started eating... ate some Jaffa Cakes and just immediately felt like I'd come back around and had a second wind. So, I have started to have some early signs of some energy systems letting me down a little bit, which is something that, prior to training for this, I'd never understood and experienced personally. So, it's been interesting to feel the academics, really understand how it had been affecting my body, and I think the closer we get to the challenge, the more of an understanding I'll have. I'm never gonna have a full understanding of it until I've done it, but it'll be a journey. It'll be a journey.

Nick: For the squat nerds out there, the powerlifters out there who might be angry at us for skipping the details, I wanted to ask you: You're doing high bar or low bar?

Fergus Crawley: Both. Annoyingly, I squat low bar in flats, so my strongest stance is flats and probably just outside shoulder width, about 30 degrees on my feet. My ankles don't change enormously. I'm not so far off the ground with my upper body as some low bar squatters are, just due to my femur length, but the plan is to work my grip width and stance width out and in just so I can give bits of rest to different parts of me. Interestingly, my session on Tuesdays for the past three weeks has been, I've had a heavy triple then two unwraps at 80% of that triple. Those were all low bar, and then I've had 10 sets of 10 at 220 pounds with 60 seconds rest alternating, so I've gone low bar, high bar, low bar, high bar for the 10 sets. So, having to change shoes in between sets is a bit

of a pain, but-

Nick: Okay, so you will squat high bar in squat shoes and low bar in flats on the day of, as well. Wow.

Fergus Crawley: On the day of, yeah. I'm not sure how I'm going to actually split them up, whether it's going to be the 25 minutes in high bar, 25 minutes in low bar, or whether it was gonna be five sets low bar, five sets high bar. We're not sure yet. That's something that we're figuring out, but you're very right to ask the question, because it was one of my first thoughts, actually. I was thinking, "How on earth am I gonna actually manipulate my biomechanics to be as efficient as I can with my energy?" Because I can already feel, even doing the 40 kilo squats as part of the big pyramid, I could feel where I was breaking down, and then I could slightly change my body angle and my positioning, and suddenly the squat felt a lot stronger. Again, it's just learning to know my own body and just knowing when is best to utilize the changes. Instantly, as well, something we've been discussing is basically keeping all my tricks up my sleeve until I need them, so I think I'll probably start without sleeves for as long as I can.

I won't use a belt until I absolutely need it. I won't use casting until I absolutely need it. I won't use stimulants until I absolutely need them. I'll save the really psychologically rewarding foods until I absolutely need them, et cetera. I'll only sleep if I absolutely need to. The music will be calm. I'll probably listen to podcasts and classical music to start with, and then it might end up getting to Slayer/Rammstein, who knows? Who knows how far I'll need to go.

Nick: How far into the depths you'll go.

Fergus Crawley: Yeah, exactly.

Nick: Well, speaking of depth, how deep were you planning on squatting, as well?

Fergus Crawley: The guidelines are hip crease in line with the knee, as you've seen from the evidence available to us online, that wasn't the case in the previous one, but I'll be squatting to parallel depth, because that's what I'm used to, so it will be consistently hip crease below the knee. Yeah, with 60 kilos, I don't think I've ever *not*squatted to below parallel. If I do, then I hope somebody shouts at me for doing so.

Nick: Are there any supplements that have helped you along the way? It's easy to say something like, "Oh, yeah, take creatine. Take beta-alanine because it can help you with the lactate." But at the same time, when we're talking about this volume, you're beyond anything that has ever been tested in the lab.

Fergus Crawley: Yeah. I've used a bit of beta-alanine for my harder endurance sessions, but honestly, I've never really used many supplements. I've always used whey protein as an available protein source. I've used creatine in the past with bodybuilding stuff, but electrolytes and carb powders, and I've used energy gels with caffeine in them for my longer runs, so they've got 25 milligrams of caffeine in a 150-calorie carb gel, so I've used that on my longer sessions. Beyond that, it's just been electrolytes and carb powders, really.

Nick: Yeah, one of my coworkers was asking me if you were using gels and are planning to use gels. I thought that that works for some people in an endurance event when there's a bathroom on

the site of the trail, but it made us wonder: Have you considered the possibility that you'd shit your pants during all of this? Is that a concern?

Fergus Crawley: These are the questions we must ask, aren't they? Yes. No, I have. One of my friends was actually joking, saying I should just wear a nappy and just not go to the bathroom, because it's gonna get to that stage, but I have pondered that idea, you're right. It's keeping me up at night, but I think I'm gonna try and stick to what I know as much as I can. This is me, this isn't from my coach—my plan is to just keep my nutrition as basic as possible for the next four weeks, but baseline carbs, just your standard... your classic bro foods, really, just white rice, easily digestible carbs, oats, fruit, et cetera, so I'm used to digesting them but also know that they're easy to get through, and they have an easily-accessible carb source, because I do want to avoid gels at all costs for the reason that you've mentioned. Although I'll be close to a toilet, the last thing I want to do is to... yes, as you've said, lose control in front of a crowd.

Nick: Lose time.

Fergus Crawley: Yeah, you lose time. We'll go with that. That sounds a lot better than what you said. Yeah, no, it is a concern, but we've already tactically thought about where I can position myself so I'm close to the toilet, even at one point considered getting a port-a-loo brought into the gym, but sadly, I don't think health and safety allows that.

Nick: Wow. I find myself wondering what's going to go on in your body during this. Obviously, it's going to be real mental challenge, but just on a physiological level, I wonder: What happens in a body when you do this? What are you hoping to learn from your sort of mock game day that you have coming up?

Fergus Crawley: I think the main thing to determine is exactly how I'm going to attack it, so how we're divvying up the reps. We'll obviously play around with the things that I mentioned before and then determine which feels best, which looks best, whether I'm breaking down or anything. Beyond that, basically, how I digest foods, how my hydration holds up, because in my session, I'll admit I've probably got hydration a bit wrong. I've waited a bit too long. I've not been sipping enough, or my sips have been too small, and I've started to feel really, really dehydrated. Before I know it, I'm having a big sip of water, and I'm like, "Wow, that's refreshing." And if you get into that stage, you're already too far gone. I'm gonna have to fit a lot into a small period of time, but it's trying to understand my body physically and the way that I've learned to understand it emotionally. I'm gonna need to know when is the time to fight and when the time is to Zen out.

So, when can I just go through the motions and have some food here or there, have a small carb source here, drink my water? And when am I gonna need a meal, when I'm gonna need to sit down, when I'm gonna need to go to the bathroom? How long is it gonna take me to get up from going to the bathroom? Things like this. Where do I cramp first? How do I manage cramps most effectively for me? If I need massages, will I be able to recover from them quickly enough? Will they actually do anything for me? This sort of thing, we're basically going in blind and just having the resources there to play with in the time that we've got to just see how much we could learn, but it's six hours. At the end of the day, six hours is a quarter of the time that I'm gonna be doing, and a quarter of the time, if you put that into a marathon framework, a quarter of an ultra-marathon...

Sorry, if you times a marathon by four, you've got something that you wouldn't really predict if you've just done a marathon, would you? You wouldn't be able to use the protocols you've used for 26.2

miles in 100-miler. So, it's a bit of a balancing act, but I'm sure we'll be able to take something away from the trial run about my body, but I think my write-up post-10th will be interesting on how I felt and what happened. I'm really curious to see how long I sleep for afterwards, as well. That's something I'm really excited to find out, just how much am I gonna need. But we'll see.

Nick: What do your family and friends think of all this?

Fergus Crawley: Annoyingly, actually, not many of my friends have any faith in me. I'm kinda having to convince them. My friends that have lifted with me or have competed or anything, they do, but it's when you break it down to just the average person that doesn't train, and you just do the maths. They're thinking, "No way. I've never done a squat with 60 kilos in my life, and you're gonna do it that many times, in theory." But my mom doesn't like the fact that it's gonna take such a toll on me. I think she's just uncomfortable with the fact that it's such a challenge. My dad's background, he was actually a professional cricketer. Cricket, for years, was a very, very dark sport for suicide. It was the worst sport in the world for suicide ratings at one point, around the time when he left, so he knows too many people that he's played cricket with or played cricket against that have taken their lives.

So, the cause for him is quite topical. He's never had any mental challenges himself, but it's been huge for the cricketing world. It's much improved, may I add. There's boys out there that have done really well, but it's still an issue, because it's a sport where you can just put in the hours, and you don't need to stop. You can always keep going, so when you move out of it, you lose basically all your time, and you need to fill that void somehow. It was harder back then than it is now. I think he just believes in me physically, because he knows I can push myself, and he knows things are hard, but he just believes in my investment in the cause. My brother's actually a cricketer, as well, semi-professional, and he's stupidly strong. He deadlifted 450 pounds when he was 16, so there's something in the family, I think. But he can push himself really hard, as well, because he was actually quite fat when he was younger, so he worked really hard to lose all the weight, and along the way, just got himself a really, really, really good knack.

So, he believed in me, but then my friends kind of get it, but they're not sure how it's gonna go, but they're all really behind the cause and really, really behind why I'm doing it, which is really important to me and really helping me get through it. The physical side of it, I think it's kind of unpredictable, really. I'm not gonna have a go at my friends for not having faith in me because to be honest, if someone came to me and said, "I'm gonna cycle 500 miles tomorrow," I would say, actually, "No way. You're not gonna do that." It's just the shock, isn't it? It's not thinking about the things that have gone into it. Because when I put it to 12 weeks ago, 13 weeks ago, saying, "I'm doing this." I hadn't gone through the training. They haven't seen what I've been giving up. They haven't seen the silly sessions I've got on Saturdays and things.

So, faith is building, but my friends and family have been very supportive and very active in terms of pushing the cause and really getting into the right channels, because that's something I'm very keen to do. I really do wanna spread the roots as deep as they can go with my message, because I think it could resonate with a lot of people, especially in the bodybuilding and powerlifting and CrossFit world, because we know a lot of people use lifting as a coping mechanism. That's brilliant, but it should go slightly beyond the coping mechanism. There should be a solution, as well. The mechanism shouldn't just stop coping. You shouldn't get through life feeling like you're just coping. You should thrive, and I think the foundations that lifting and training and the lifestyle build, that it all gives you such fantastic foundation for the rest of your life.

If we can all harness that coping mechanism to something a bit bigger than that and actually provide a solution from it, then we're moving in the right direction.

Nick: I completely agree. And yet, when I think of you on that day, whether you succeed or whether you fail, then this is done, right?

Fergus Crawley: Exactly.

Nick: What comes after this?

Fergus Crawley: I'm so glad you said that.

Nick: Whether you succeed or whether you fail, what comes next, and how do you keep from feeling that space too much?

Fergus Crawley: I've actually got my next world record waiting approval, interestingly. But next year, I am just hoping to keep building on the foundations that I've built with this campaign. Hoping to take a bit more of a business perspective to it, so I'm hoping to work a bit more closely with specific people to really build something, because this is basically... all my social media's been completely new. All my affiliations, all the stuff I've done has been completely off my own back, one man band from the middle of August until now, so where I've got to in the time, I'm really happy with, but I'm thinking if I can take a year to really build something and actually just get some faith behind it as almost a movement, so I'm trying to be as interactive with schools, as interactive with companies as I can be just to spread the word.

I think once I've got success or failure, once I've got this under my belt, and I know what my physical tasks for next year are gonna be, I'm hoping I can really push the cause and really just use myself as an example of how everything I've discussed can be manifested into day-to-day life. Yeah, that's the plan as it is, but we'll see what happens.

Nick: Sure, so you don't feel like all of that hinges on you breaking the record, necessarily?

Fergus Crawley: No, not at all. Not at all. I'm very glad you put it like that, actually, because I'm very keen that people don't lose sight of the fact that this is about the bigger picture, and the attempt is the focal point for the cause. It's a means to an end, not an end, in itself.

The end is a reduction in the amount of suicides in men around the world, and the cause is just one way of highlighting those statistics and hopefully getting some men to engage with each other more. I've not lost sight of that at all, which I'm very happy with myself for not doing, because I think it would be easy to get swallowed up in it, but there's a few people I need to remind that the attempt isn't it. That's not it. It's the focal point. It's the foundation of which to work off, and hopefully by doing something extreme, ... I'm saying I can take myself into hell so that I can inspire some men to get themselves out.

Nick: That's great. You have a page where people can donate as well, right?

Fergus Crawley: Yes, I do. The best way to do it, if you just search [Movember](#) and [Fergus Crawley](#), F-E-R-G-U-S C-R-A-W-L-E-Y, that's the best way to do it. Then, [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) are both @24hours_of_power, and there's links all over the place, but a lot of write-ups and things, as well, so

I've got... done full write-ups on my story, my experience, the role that my dog played in everything, a bit more detailed than I gave today, and then just bits and bobs here.

I'm hoping as well that when I'm livestreaming the event, in the gaps where I'm not squatting, I'm gonna have some stories from other people, anonymous or named. I'm hoping to just fill in the gaps when I'm not squatting with just stories from others just to share people's experiences and just put things into perspective, really, because the key message I've been having fed back is not feeling like you're alone in a world where we're all striving to be successful and need to be successful and everything is becoming a little bit harder day by day.

Jobs are a bit harder to get. Rent is a little bit higher. Everybody's starting to be successful. Everybody's ambitious, but the more ambition and the more strive there is, the further we have to fall, so I think it's just great for people to know that that's society, that's not them. They may suffer more than others do, but there'll be people suffering with you. And by opening up, you are taking the first necessary steps to helping yourself out of that struggle and that suffering. By opening up, you might be helping someone else out along the way as well, which is great.

Nick: Sure. If somebody wants to watch the livestream, because I'm definitely going to check in on this and see where you're at various hours along the way, where is that going to be?

Fergus Crawley: That'll be on the Facebook, which is Fergus Crawley - GWR Attempt, and it'll be on the website, which is www.24hoursofpower.co.uk, and then the gym itself will be streaming it, which is [Lift Gyms UK](#) on Facebook. There'll be plenty of places to access it. I don't have the details of the live stream finalized yet, but that will be where it's available, and I'll make sure I make it available to you guys.

Nick: Wonderful. I appreciate it. Thank you for giving us so much time. It's been a really fascinating conversation. It sounds like it's been a fascinating journey for you, as well.

Fergus Crawley: It has been, and I'm hoping it'll be just as fascinating in the weeks to come, as well.

Nick: All right. Well, thank you very much.

Fergus Crawley: Thank you. Thanks for having me.



[PODCAST EPISODE 47: TALKING 1,000-REP WORKOUTS WITH TYLER HOLT](#)

Trainer and Bodybuilding.com Spokesmodel Search finalist Tyler Holt comes by to talk about 1,000-rep workouts, as well as the joys and challenges of "living the dream" of gym ownership in his mid-twenties.