

The things we do today, make us who we become tomorrow...



Learn & Always stick to the basics of Stonelifting, then through training you will find what adaption's to add to training & lifting technique that will help you use your body to the best of its lifting abilities.

Stonelifting is a Functional movement for day to day life & can be undertaken by anyone...

Author Martin Jancsics a.k.a. The StoneMan

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PDF/Document made available from March 2025

Statement

First and foremost I would like to thank you for reading this document, I hope you have as much fun reading through the pages as I did writing them & that you find the information useful.

The information along with the methods of both lifting & training within this document are only the words of the author & although he has extensive experience in Stonelifting, training people technically to fully use their abilities & is a qualified Gym Instructor & Personal Trainer, he would ask everyone wishing to participate in fitness or undertake Stonelifting, especially as a training method, if in any doubt on health conditions consult a doctor or medical expert before starting.

Lifting stones or using the training methods & techniques mentioned within this document are performed at the lifters own risk.

Please everyone; be careful when you train and never lift any weight that your body and muscles have not yet worked up to lifting through previous progressive training as this can cause an injury, first & foremost – **always be safe.**

Enjoy your Strength & Fitness Journey.

‘A Strong Body Leads to a Strong Mind & a Strong Mind can Achieve Anything’.

Stonelifting

As Stonelifting has given me so much over the years I have created this Free Document to share with everyone as a way of giving something back to this great strength culture.

Over the years I have trained & took part in various different strength sports, lifting my first set of weight when I was about 10 years old, but it wasn't until October 2011 when I was 32 years old that I first became involved in Historic Stonelifting. The first Historic Stone I lifted was the Inver Stone, this can be seen in the photo below left showing my very first lift of the Inver Stone from 2011. The photo below right shows my Inver Stone tattoo. I got this as Stonelifting has been a major part of my life, giving me more than I could have ever hoped for. This strength culture has allowed me to train hundreds of people in the technical aspects of Stonelifting, travel to America from Scotland a number of times since 2017 to teach & share the history behind the stones while teaching the technique & lifting methods. It has given me drive & focus in my life to better deal with everyday problems. Stonelifting is one of the most functional activities for movement you can take part.



Historic Stones – Where did this name come from?

For hundreds of years lifting stones have been known & described with different names, including Clach Neart (Scottish Gaelic, roughly translated as Stones of Strength), Manhood Stones & simply Lifting Stones. In modern times they are more known as Historic Stones. This name came about when I was creating a Facebook page in memory of Peter Martin 6th to remember him & helping his Stonelifting research reach a wider range of people from around the world. When I was trying to come up with a name for the site I wanted to involve the words stone & history, so called the page Historic Stonelifting, hence the name 'Historic Stones', which came from the Facebook page title. So whenever someone mentions the name Historic Stones they are paying homage to Peter Martin 6th & his father Peter Martin 5th.

Stonelifting Technique

Before we start remember one thing – Stonelifting is an individual’s strength journey, never judge your accomplishments or goals on the success of others, simply aim to achieve the goals you set out for yourself & to be better tomorrow than you are today, it doesn’t matter what anyone else can do, simply concentrate on yourself, you will learn & develop as a person over the months & years you progress in training. This is what Stonelifting is all about, personal growth, strengthening the body & mind together.

“If you want to lift stones then you have to train with stones, this is because unlike lifting a barbell, a stone is a much more awkward implement to lift, they are unbalanced & misshapen with the full weight being condensed into a smaller object. All this changes body position a little & the way your body mechanics will work very slightly, but enough to make a stone lift far more different to a barbell lift. The stone lift will place stress on muscles a little different, while placing more stress on smaller muscles that would not be under as much stress while lifting a barbell”.

Now let’s get into the lift itself,

We will begin with something I call, **The Basic 10 ‘5 & 5’**.

The first Five describe the characteristics that make each stone unique & different from all the rest, making each one an individual & separate challenge from all others.

- The Stone’s Size
- The Stone’s Shape
- The Stone’s Texture
- The Stone’s Weight
- The Stone’s Balance (an uneven weight distribution throughout the stone).

The second set of Five are the lifts that can be completed with a stone with each one being a successful lift & a step forward to the next lift.

- Breaking the stone away from the ground a few inches (Wind Beneath the Stone).
- Lifting the stone over the knees & securely sitting it on the lap in a squatting position.
- Standing in an upright position with the stone held high on the chest.
- Standing in an upright position with the stone held securely on the shoulder, held in place with only one arm while the other arm is held away from the stone.
- Standing in an upright position while pressing the stone overhead with arms extended.

The five lifts can be seen below.



Lifting the Stone

The first thing you should think about before lifting any stone is something I like to call 'Ground Location'. This is simply moving a stone to an area that has flat ground (only if the stone isn't sitting on flat ground already), or as flat as you can find, but not too far away from where the stone is meant to sit, then you should return the stone when finished lifting it. This is important because if you lift the stone on an uneven surface, you risk a greater chance of injury happening from placing too much force on one side of the body when lifting, plus you will be off balance & could fall or stumble to one side. The photo to the right shows the Testing Stone of the Fianna in a good place to lift.



Something to always remember is that Tacky must NEVER be used when lifting Historic Stones, with this in mind it's a good idea not to use tacky in training either when lifting natural stones.

Chalk is ok to use when lifting Historic Stones, especially when the stones are wet from bad weather.



The Lift:



Start by standing over the stone with your feet about an inch or two away from the stone at both sides. To position the feet properly, imagine there is a line running over the middle of the stone from one side to the other, a centre line (shown in the photo to the left in black). Place the toes of the feet in front of this line, this brings the centre of the stone in line with the centre line of the body allowing us to utilise the strength in the muscles more efficiently & mechanically (transferring

energy & strength through the muscles in the body's own pre-determined functional order while we lift to maximise our abilities the best we can). If the stone is too far in front of the body when you lift it, you can place too much stress on the lower back & cause an injury. This is why we use the centre line & place the toes in front of the line.



The picture to the left shows the same stance but from a side on view for more clarity.



After this use the same centre line to help place the hands in the correct position, this can be seen in the two photos to the left.

Place the hands underneath the stone enough so the fingers are under it with the palms pushing against the side of the stone. The stone will rest on the fingers & the palms will push against it for pressure. The rounder the stone the further underneath the stone the hands can be placed & the forearms can be used to apply squeezing pressure along with the palms of the hands.



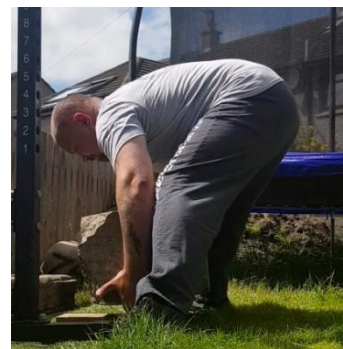
When the stone is flat on the underside you will just need to place your fingers under it in order to lift it away from the ground, this can be seen in the photos below. The photo to the far left shows the stone being tilted forward to help place the hands under the stone & on the centre line. The photo in the middle shows the stone ready to lift. The photo to the far right shows the stone being lifted with the weight of the stone balanced on the hands as they were positioned using the centre line.



Once the feet & hands are in place & you are ready to lift, you now need to move the body into the correct position by keeping the back as straight as you can & bending at the knees. The three photos below show how I position my body to lift a stone.

First I have my feet & hands in place, then I straighten my legs & take a deep breath, I then bend at the knees until they touch the back of my arms (the triceps) which creates a good angle in my legs allowing me to utilise the big muscles of the legs & back together to lift the stone. Taller people may have to move the knees further & past the triceps muscle & closer to the biceps muscle at the front of the arm, if doing this then the knees must be to the outside of the arms & never to the inside of the arms.

As I start to lift my legs begin to straighten, but not fully, this is a natural movement from using the back & leg muscles together.



Lift the stone over the knees & onto the lap, squat down to parallel or as close to this as you can go. The closer to parallel you can squat with the stone on the lap, the more secure it will be, the higher up you squat the more the stone will try to fall off of your lap & back to the ground. It is also good practice to sit in this position with your back as straight as it can be (like sitting on a chair), this will allow you to pull the stone (in the photos I am lifting a concrete block) tight into the stomach & chest. From here take a deep breath in of air to tighten the muscles & squat upwards until you are standing upright with the stone held high on the chest.

This can be seen in the two photos below.



When the stone is on the lap, before you stand up with it be sure to press your chest down against it and not to simply pull the stone in against the stomach. This will allow you to lift the stone higher up the body. This can be seen in the four photos below.



To the Shoulder – Advanced movement # 1:

When lifting the stone onto the shoulder you want it to first be sitting as high up on the chest as possible before beginning to transfer it onto the shoulder. The rounder the stone is the easier it will move up to the shoulder as it can roll & be pushed up there. The more awkward shaped the stone is the more difficult it will be to put onto the shoulder as it may not roll up there & will have to be bounced off the chest while simultaneously moving towards the shoulder.

When the stone is on the lap & you are holding it tight in against the body, if it has a smooth texture or misshapen you may find it difficult to hold, if this is the case simply manoeuvre the hands until you can hold the stone tight & securely.

Once the stone is at chest height & you are moving it up to the shoulder, if you are moving it to the left shoulder then keep the left arm in contact with it at all times or if lifting onto the right shoulder keep the right arm in contact with the stone at all times, this keeps constant pressure against the stone & keeps it held against the body. The opposite arm & hand will move to the underside of the stone to push it upward towards the shoulder. To finish off the movement, hold the stone securely on the shoulder with one arm while the other arm is held away from the stone.

This can all be seen in the photos below.

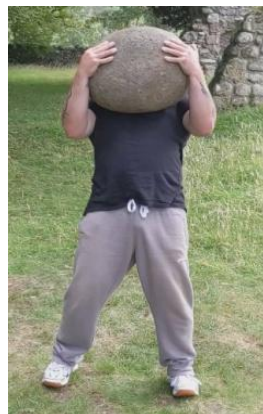


Pressing the Stone – Advanced movement # 2:

When pressing a stone, just like when lifting a stone to the shoulder it should be sitting very high up on the chest but also very close to the underside of the chin. Once the stone is in this position, to then bring the hands underneath the stone ready to begin the press, simultaneously ‘bend at the knees, push the hips forward & lean backwards’, but only enough to bring the hands under the stone – **Do Not Lean Back To Far**. We perform these three movements together to keep the stone in the body’s centre of gravity line while keeping the body’s balance, I call this the **Pressing Line**. You only need to bring the hands underneath the stone enough so that the stone is resting fully on the palms of the hands, with the fingers used to keep the stone in place. As you begin to press the stone the body can begin to straighten up, until the stone is fully pressed overhead & the body is standing up straight.

Something to remember, only press a stone overhead if it is dry, if there is a wet surface from the rain then the stone could slip out of the hands which is very dangerous – Be Safe.

This can be seen in the photos below.







The two photos on the left show the 'Pressing Line', this shows the stone in line with the body's Centre of Gravity, keeping the stone & the body in line together & balanced. This allows you to utilise your strength & lifting technique better while minimizing any chance of injury.

Bend at the knees, push the hips forward & lean backwards, but only as much as needed.

An important Tip for the stone press:

When you are positioning & setting up the stone before lifting, make sure the flattest part of the stone is facing the sky, when you are in position ready to begin the lift you should be looking directly at the flattest part of the stone (marked in a Red circle in the three photos below). When you lift the stone & are standing up with it, the flat side of it should be against the chest, this then allows you to position the hands on the flattest face of the stone ready to press, making the press over head a little safer.

“Always lift the stone so that the flattest face of it is against the chest for pressing”.



An important Rule for Stonelifting:

After you have picked a stone up & completed your desired lift, aim to use the Negative / Eccentric / Lowering part of the lift & put the stone back onto the ground under control as best you can, don't just let it drop.

This can be seen in the photos below.



Phases of a Stone Lift:

When lifting a stone there are five different lifts that can be achieved, but there are also the four different Phases to consider, which are all different parts of the lift. This is something I came up with back in 2016 to help me train each different part of the lift individually, allowing me to perform specific movements in training or during a lift in order to mechanically function at the best of my ability.

- Phase One – Lifting the stone away from the ground & onto the lap in a squatting position.
- Phase Two – Lifting the stone away from the lap & standing up with it held at chest height.
- Phase Three – While in a standing position move the stone away from the chest & onto the shoulder, then holding it there securely with one arm only.
- Phase Four – Pressing the stone away from the chest & overhead with arms extended.

Phase One:

While training for Phase One you can perform what I call ‘Stone Rows’.



The main function for this exercise is to help you lift a stone you have been struggling to lift over the knees & onto the lap. For example, if you are wanting to lift a stone that weighs 100kg onto the lap, but you can't yet lift it over knee height, you can add a 5kg or 10kg weightlifting plate to the top of the stone by simply placing it on top & performing a rowing motion with the stone, lifting it as high up towards the chest as you can during each repetition, then lowering the stone back onto the ground to

begin the next repetition. During this exercise or afterwards you may feel a little sore in the Hamstrings & Glute muscles. This is because of the position your body is in; this is called a ‘Hip Hinge’. The Hamstrings & Glute muscles are both stretched & isometrically contract to help stabilise the hips in this position. It's a good idea to warm these muscles up with Dynamic Stretches before commencing the exercise & always begin with light weight & work up to the main working weight you want to lift in the training session. Stretching the muscles with Active Stretches afterwards, holding a stretch between 20 & 30 seconds is good. This can help relieve the onset of Delayed Onset Muscle Soreness (DOMS). This is when muscles get sore a day or two after a workout due to the muscle fibres breaking down & repairing themselves.



The photo to the left shows a 5kg weightlifting plate resting on top of a stone ready for the Stone Row exercise. The plate can also be secured to the stone by tying it on with a ratchet strap.

The below photo to the left shows a piece of wood 2" x 4" x 12" long sitting next to a stone. The photo to the right shows the stone sitting on top of the piece of wood creating space between the ground & the stone. This allows you to lift & row the stone for repetitions without getting your fingers jammed & hurt underneath the stone.



When getting ready to lift through Phase One, you can apply the following thought process:

- Feet
- Hands
- Legs
- Lift

This is simply a set of instructions to help set yourself up for the initial lift. Get the feet in place at either side of the stone with the toes over the centre line, place your hands in position ready to lift using the same centre line, bend the knees to bring the upper body downwards towards the stone & finishing with the back as close to parallel to the ground as it can comfortably be, then take in a deep breath of air to help tighten the muscles in the stomach & round the lower back & lift.

Phase Two:

While training for Phase Two you can perform what I call 'Stone Squats'.



Once the stone is resting on the lap & pulled tight into the stomach & chest, take a deep breath in of air to tighten the muscles of the mid section & round the lower back, then straight after this begin to Squat upwards till you are standing fully upright with the stone held high up on the chest to finish of the repetition, hold this for a second before Squatting back down to the starting position with the stone sitting on the lap again, repeat this movement for a series of sets on repetitions.

This exercise can be performed with a moderate to heavy weight to help build tremendous strength throughout the entire body, especially the legs & back muscles, or it can be performed with a moderate weight (a weight that feels between light & heavy for you to lift) to help build up muscle endurance for a Stonelifting tour where multiple lifts of different Historic Stones would be performed throughout a day or weekend, or to help build strength endurance for physically demanding sports.

Phase Three:

While training for Phase Three you can perform repetitions to the shoulder with a moderate weight stone. This will help you perfect the movement to a standard that allows you to lift while minimising any chance of injury & gradually building strength in the muscles required to lift heavier stones, this must be a gradual process. If you try to lift a heavy stone to the shoulder without building up strength first, this could lead to an injury in the lower or upper back due to the strain on the muscles that are not ready for the stress placed on them.

Phase Four:

While training for Phase Four you should again perform repetitions with a light to moderate weight of stone in order to build the strength in the body required to press heavier stones. This is the most dangerous of all the lifts & requires a lot of force to balance the stone while pressing it upwards. The stone press is not like the Barbell Press or Log Press, as the weight in the stone is condensed into a small & unbalanced object the muscles are forced to work a little differently. The basic press is the same but in the stone press there will be greater force placed on the muscles of the upper body than in a traditional barbell or log press due to the energy & exertion of the muscles not being distributed evenly throughout the press.

Strong Hamstrings & Glute muscles will help with the stone press in the initial set up, which is when you pick up the stone away from the ground and stand with it at chest height ready to press. The hamstrings & glutes must be strong because once the stone is at chest height, to bring it higher up the chest & closer to the bodies centre line & too then manoeuvre your hands under the stone you will have to bend at the knees & move the hips, this places stress on the hamstrings & glute muscles.

Health Benefits:

Stonelifting is a great strength based exercise but for true fitness and health benefits to your life you must also take care of your cardiovascular system by performing exercisers that raise the heart rate in a different way. Strength exercises will raise the heart rate rapidly which can cause high blood pressure, cardio exercises will raise the heart rate gradually in a healthier way for longer sustainable results for a healthier life. Over time Cardio exercises will increase heart health which will in turn provide an increase of oxygenated blood into the working muscles of the body. The harder you train the more blood & oxygen your muscles require too keep them working at peak performance or anywhere close to it, oxygen also helps us create energy in something called Aerobic Respiration where Glucose is broken down in the presence of Oxygen to create energy in the muscle cells in the form of ATP (Adenosine Triphosphate). Cardio training will also increase lung health & capacity. The healthier the lungs are the more oxygen they can inhale from the air. The body requires oxygen in the muscles to help create energy when working hard, oxygen also replaces carbon dioxide in the body which is a waste by-product created by the body from the breakdown of carbohydrates. Too much carbon dioxide can make us feel unwell, so the healthier we are the stronger our lungs will be, they can then take in a greater amount of oxygen from the atmosphere to replace carbon dioxide in a process called Gaseous Exchange, you will then breath the carbon dioxide out into the air.

You don't need to run for miles every day to achieve cardiovascular health, but completing a cardio exercise before a workout for 5 to 10 minutes will help raise the body temperature & heart rate gradually, getting the body ready for a tough workout to begin a training session & doing the same to finish a workout to help cool the body temperature down & regulate your breathing & heart rate.

Cardio Exercises like using a Treadmill, Exercise Bike, Rowing Machine, performing a high number of reps or an exercise using a light resistance or a type of circuit training exercise. We choose the exercises that we enjoy doing.

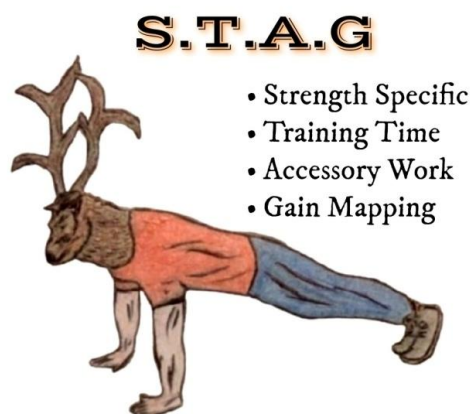
As part of a warm-up after cardio, performing a few 'Dynamic Stretches' (arm swings or leg raises for example) is beneficial. This is where you rotate a limb round a joint separating bones & allowing movement. Exercises can be found on Google for this. These stretches / rotations help

loosen up the joints for better movement during the main part & intense portion of the workout. Dynamic Stretches also help lubricate the joints in the body for better movement by releasing Synovial Fluid from the cartilage, The cartilage is a soft tissue & act like a sponge so when movement takes place it releases the fluid for better & more fluent movement during exercise. Dynamic Stretches can be done in sets of 8 to 10 swings per set, completing 2/3 sets of each exercise.

The cool down after a workout will consist of the cardio portion along with 'Static Stretches'. Exercises can be found on Google for this. These are exercises that relax the muscles after the workout to loosen up the body so you can walk about & move easier, they will also help with the effects of muscle soreness, after an intense workout muscle soreness will still be part of the after effects but to a lesser extent after stretching. Static Stretches also help mobility for everyday activities. These stretches can be held for 20 to 30 seconds for good results before moving onto the next stretch.

Information to help Programme Design:

Below is something I came up with a few years ago, S.T.A.G. These are principles that will help with programme design. The logo is a Scottish Stag doing Push-Ups as the Push-Up is one of the greatest exercise we can perform for strength & cardio & one I perform on a daily bases.



Training Principles		
	Principles	Meaning
1	Goals / Targets	Determine what your goals are & what you want to achieve, the motivation.
2	S.T.A.G	<p>S – (Strength Specific) Choosing the correct type of strength training & exercises to suit the goals.</p> <p>T – (Training Time) How much time can be put into training on a weekly basis & into each training session.</p> <p>A – (Accessory Work) Additional exercises to help improve strength & muscle performance. Working both the main primary muscles & secondary muscles.</p> <p>G – (Gain Mapping) Session plan information, creating a training programme to include, Sets, Reps, Weight Percentages, Rest Time & give direction to exercise training order,</p>
3	Records / Notes	Keep records of training sessions to show progression over time.

Intensity				
	Sets	Reps	Rest	%
Strength	3/5	1/5	2/5 minutes	85 / 100%
Hypertrophy / Building Muscle	3/5	6/12	60 / 90 seconds	65 / 85%
Endurance	2/3	15 >	30 / 60 seconds	< 65%

- Large Muscle Groups can be trained using 10/20 Sets per week.
- Smaller Muscle Groups can be trained using 20/30 sets per week with more Reps per set as smaller muscle groups use less weight to train since they are not as strong.

Muscle Group Order:

- Compound Exercises first in a workout as these are bigger muscle groups & require more energy to fatigue, by training compound exercises after Isolation Exercises the body may not have enough energy left to sufficiently train the bigger muscle groups, especially with 'Free Weight Exercises' as these use the Stabilizer muscles to a greater degree to help balance the weight.
- Save Abdominal & Lower Back work till the end of a workout (Abs last) at these muscle groups are used as Stabilizer / Fixator Muscles during most exercises.
- Leg exercises before Back exercises as the Legs are a bigger muscle group & require more energy to fatigue.
- Deltoids before Arm exercises as the Deltoids are a bigger muscle group.
- Triceps before Biceps in a workout as the Triceps are a bigger muscle group.

Terminology Muscles	
Agonist / Prime Mover	Concentric Contraction, a muscle that moves a bone round a joint to lift a weight – Muscle Shortens.
Antagonist	Eccentric Contraction, a muscle that pulls the bone in the reverse direction round a joint to lower a weight back to the starting position – Muscle Lengthens.
Synergist	A muscle that assists the Prime Mover during contraction.
Stabilizer / Fixator	A muscle group that supports a joint at the Origin point of the Prime Mover so this joint doesn't move.
Muscle Origin	The attachment point of a muscle that runs over a joint where the joint doesn't move.
Muscle Insertion	The attachment point of the muscle which runs over a joint that rotates when the muscle contracts.

I hope you enjoy reading through this document & that you find it helpful.