Intro: Vegan vs Meat Strength Challenge

Today I'm with the strongest vegans I know who built insane strength only eating plants. And these are athletes who eat a lot of meat. And they'll be competing in strength challenges to find out who is stronger. Starting with the deadlift. We have arm [music] wrestling, the calisthenics challenge, higher wrestling. >> Let's go. We pull up.

Let's go. [screaming] >> I told you I was here for the entertainment. >> [laughter] >> So, we all know the misconception in society that you need meat for protein.

We also know that that is kind of >> total BS. >> But we came across these clips featured on Brandon Williams' YouTube channel. Now, Brandon is a popular YouTube content creator and fitness influencer known for his body transformations, calisthenics challenges, and lifestyle experiments. He has over 2.5 million YouTube subscribers. And in the clips we're going to watch, vegans and meat eaters battle it out over a series of different weightlifting challenges. Who do you think is going to win?

>> Well, knowing what I know about plant-based strength, I'm going to say the vegans, but I really hope I'm not wrong. But Shamnam, our former figure competitor, what's your take? >> Here's my take. I'm not sure if this video is going to tell us everything about diet, but I will tell you this. I'm here for the entertainment and I want to make sure our audience knows that this isn't a randomized controlled study, but [snorts] let's see what the talent has. And I'm of course going for the vegans. >> You guys excited having you? Let's do it.

>> How you feeling right now? >> Uh, I'm feeling 30% confident. >> You know, if you ate some meat, you'd be maybe 60% confident.

Deadlift and First Reactions

>> All right, you got this. >> Okay. No, I don't. All right. Okay. I [laughter] take it back. >> I'll take the 70% he doesn't have. >> Okay, >> I'll run with that.

>> Oh my god. >> Okay, Austin, it's all you. If you lift this, we win this event. >> This is easy. >> Got it. >> Let's go, Austin. >> Come on. >> Get it, Austin. Come on.

>> Okay, so for the deadlift, uh, team meet actually won. Um, and I believe they picked up a whpping 675, which is fairly impressive. So, fair play. Credit where it's due. Okay, so I'm going to bring in the first comment that I noticed, which was actually in the first challenge, the meat eater was wearing straps and the vegan actually didn't wear straps. So maybe we could sort of notice that.

Maybe that's why they won. Not saying it is, but it could be. And another person said, "Much respect for the vegan on deads. Use no straps, lighter body weight, and was still pulling up crazy numbers. What a beast." >> We have arm wrestling. It's going to be Michael. Oh, shirt's coming off. Versus Rick. You want like steak or a sausage or something? I would definitely like some meat.

>> Here we go. Let's grip up >> in three, two, one, go. Let's go. >> Come on. Keep going. >> Hey, but here's the thing that I just thought of. Don't you think it's pretty remarkable that the vegans are actually competing? I mean, if you think about it, vegans make up what, one or two, maybe 3% of the population. So, it's a much smaller pool of people to recruit from, and they're still competing.

>> So true. >> Next, we have [music] tire wrestling. To win, you have to either rip the tire from your opponent's hands or drag them across your red line. Three people from each team will compete, and best two out of three wins.

That's one for team meat. >> NO. >> LET'S GO.

Arm Wrestling and Tire Wrestling

>> It all comes down to this round right here. We've got Jordan versus Rick. Gentlemen, want some veggies? >> You see this? >> Yeah. >> That's you right there.

>> YEAH. Come on. >> Yeah, >> I'm getting pumped up watching it. >> I told you I was here for the entertainment. [laughter] >> Love it. >> The calisthenics challenge. The first person to complete 10 muscle-ups, 10 dips, 10 pull-ups, and then 50 push-ups, all in that order, wins. It's going to be me versus Romulus.

Got to fuel up really quick. Got some beef jerkys. >> I got a banana. >> What the >> What kind of vegan are you? >> In three, two, one. >> Let's go. Let's go.

>> There you go. >> N Come on, go 1 2 3 4 5 10 5 Keep going. What are you doing?

Calisthenics Challenge

>> Five more. >> Come on. COME ON. 6 49. >> I'm going let it drag out. [screaming] >> COME ON, BOYS. >> YEAH, those carrots don't feel muscle, buddy. >> I know this isn't a randomized control trial, but I still think this is actually useful for people to watch and it kind of bridges the gap between both communities. There's not this divide. People having fun, having a laugh together, and I think it's just hilarious to watch.

>> Yeah. What I did think was quite easy or interesting though was that the meateers were way more interested in insulting the vegans. I thought like they were the ones that wanted to do all the like, yeah, I'm so much stronger than you.

Whereas the vegans kind of just like used their strength to prove the point. So, I kind of like that. >> I like the camaraderie. I agree. I think it's so nice to just like see competition but actually see people really enjoy themselves. I don't know. Like I said, I'm here for the entertainment. >> It all comes down to this. The Hercules holds Brady and Michael competing in this event. The shirt's already coming off. Look at that. Whoever can hold on the longest will win this event. But there's a twist. The team that is going second will be blindfolded, so they will not know what time the first team got. And in order to decide who's going first, we're going to flip a coin. Heads or tails? [music] >> Heads. >> The eagle is heads and the flag is tails. >> Tails. All right, we got the vegans all blindfolded. You guys ready?

Okay, they're probably ready. In 3 2 1 go. Here we go. Michael, we have 150 lbs on each end. So, he's [music] holding 300 lb right now. 15 seconds in. He's got a little hook grip, too. All right, 30 seconds.

>> Come on. You're doing good. >> Come on, boy. >> All right, this is the time we got. All right, guys. You're good. You're good. You're good, guys. >> Only 10 seconds, bro. >> Yeah, only 10 seconds. That's crazy. All right, Brady. You feeling ready?

>> Yes, sir. >> You don't know what time to get right now. We're going to start in 3 2 1 go. >> Let's go, buddy. That's ready. Okay, go. >> This is it. This is all right here. >> You can let go. [music] It's okay.

>> All right. >> You just sink down into that and you just hold it. Okay. >> Just let go already.

Hercules Hold Showdown

>> No. No. Don't Don't listen to me here. >> All right. You got 17 seconds. All day. All day. All day. All day. >> 30 seconds. >> Represent that beacon strength, brother. >> 35 seconds.

He passed it. >> Too late. It's too easy. >> You passed it. You can let go. Let go now. >> Yeah, you won. >> Let's go. >> So good. >> I mean, there is evidence that showcases that vegans do have greater muscular endurance and cardiovascular endurance due to the foods that they eat. So, I'm excited that we may even be talking about a

little bit more of that science and why we're seeing some of this stuff down the line. But, um, 150 lbs on each side. Could you imagine holding that?

>> No. >> In a fully extended arm position. It's like a I think my arms would just snap off like twigs. >> Same. To be honest, Claus, you down for that? >> I'd love to see that.

>> Oh, wow. I agree. I agree. What I'm thinking is if I was like a 14year-old boy, I would be entranced. This would be like the greatest ever YouTube. If I was like one of those fitness 14y olds, maybe my parents brought me up vegan or they maybe brought me up in the carnivore diet or something. I'd be like so engaged with this >> inspirational. Like I'm not even into bodybuilding or anything like that. And I find it so inspiring. I'm just like, how is that even possible? We know some of our greatest vegans like Patrick Babumian, one of the greatest world strong men in the space and he's fully plant-based. So, you know.

>> Yes. And speaking of Patrick Babumian, somebody left a comment that I thought was similar to something that he said, which was like, "Of course vegans will win this round. Elephants, rhinos, hippos, horses, buffaloos, gorillas are the strongest. How much longer do we need to prove that vegans are stronger?" I mean, it sounds like one of those ones where as a vegan, I've heard that argument so many times, but it's true. It's literally true, right? And sometimes, Shapnam, I don't know what you think about this because you're kind of, you've come from the academic world. Sometimes I feel like plantbased proponents lean too heavily perhaps into you know randomized control trials and big data and actually human intuition and common sense and first principles thinking is actually sometimes more effective than delving into academic studies. >> Maybe more effective at times and this is where we talk about why the storytelling is so important, right? but it may not be as evidence-based. And the evidence is what really guides our decisions here. And I think that that's a really important aspect to be making is science is here to support those ethical considerations that we're also making in our daily decisions. And I think it's important to note here that what we're showing here is the entertainment and it's it's not showing proof that vegans are secretly stronger, right?

It's also not showing proof that meateers are secretly stronger. Neither is true. Six different people came to work out and collegiately compete on one afternoon. And what we saw here was that they both can produce great outcomes.

Debating the Results and Vegan Strength

But I think it's the evidence that shows that what we saw this year, there was a state-of-the-art review that plant-based eating is not inferior to omnivore diets to increase strength and hypertrophy. And I think that's a really important aspect that evidence brings to the table. Right? What we're showing is that if you're eating enough protein, enough calories, eating plant-based is not technically inferior, right? What we're showing is that it could be a really efficient way of meeting those performance outcomes while still holding true to your ethical ground. And I think that's where it's really important to have the evidence. >> Yeah. And we are going to get to that study that you spoke about as well. We've got a little clip of that coming up. But Claus, do you want to actually reveal what the results of the whole competition were? >> Oh yeah. Let's go through it. That's the objective. Deadlift. Team meat won. Credit where works due. Arm wrestling, as we saw, Team Vegan won that. Calisthenics, at that point, Team Meat were leading 2-1. Thai wrestling though was where team vegan brought it back to two all. And then dumbbell press, Hercules hold, team vegan won, and kind of took it away. So, it's 42. Four to team vegan, two to meat eating. So, what does this tell us, Shabnam? not a randomized control trial, but I think it's a little bit compelling. >> As someone who's used to complete and someone who really depends on evidence, again, this is just really entertainment. What really wins a deadlift is things like limb length, tendon insertion points. We're talking about uh training capacity, uh training age, um nutrient timing. It's a multitude of variables and factors. And so I think as a scientist I can't really come to a conclusive factor of saying like yes >> but but the evidence shows that if you are on a vegan diet and are still meeting the caloric isocaloric needs protein requirements and you're training adequately you can beat a meat eater. [laughter] There you go folks. You do it right. >> You can do what you want. I mean, I can't say you could beat a meat eater because who knows who you're going to compete against. So, again, >> again, you know, >> oh, the layer. >> Also, what I want to say is the meateers were going into it acting like they were just going to clean up. That's the thing I think that is the most fun part about it is they clearly thought they were going to win and they were all giving it the big one, slagging all the vegans off as if they were weak and

the vegans weren't weak. So, that's the part I like about it. I'm like, at least the vegans stood their ground and they did technically win. Whether it's a scientific, you know, study or not, they still won. >> They they took this one.

>> Yeah, >> they definitely took this one. I'll give you that. >> To add into the point that I was saying about how the meat eaters seem to be the ones that were trying to insult the vegans. Someone else highlighted it and they said, "I mean, the vegan men didn't even utter a word to discourage the opponent. They did what they did. Vegan men are real men. It's kind of it reminds me of that Gandandy line um that you should judge a nation by how it treats it most vulnerable, right? If men are treating the planet's most vulnerable, which animals are with more care, then that's more integrous in my opinion.

>> I mean, just like a really nice comment to add in is we do not need to hurt animals to become strong. And that's another good point, isn't it? Because the meat eatating side obviously all are fine with eating animals and vegans are saying we can do the same stuff as you. Whether or not they're better is kind of irrelevant. It's like we can do the same as you but we don't have to hurt animals to do it. So that's kind of a nice thing. I think >> I think we've got Matthew Nagra. Sarah you um found a clip from Matthew Nagra and then Alan Aragan on the Andrew Huberman show. So let's go to those clips because they uh kind of corroborate what you're saying. Shadnam.

If it is the case that animal protein and plant protein result in the same muscle and strength gains, provided you're consuming the same amount, then who cares about all that other stuff. But if we were to go straight to those randomized control trials to start here, we have two clinical trials that we have. So, one of them was a Brazilian study done by Hamilton Rochelle and Heavy Lraine and colleagues. And in this study, they had 19 vegans and 19 meat eataters. They had them up their protein to 1.6 g per kilogram of body weight, either exclusively from plants or mostly from animals. And they had them resistance training twice a week for 12 weeks. And then they measured the changes in strength and muscle gains from the beginning to the end and there were no significant differences between groups. And so that suggests that both can support similar performance or or similar improvements.

Research Clips on Plant-Based Muscle Gains

Now following that there was another study out of the UK by Montaigne and colleagues where they actually did randomize most people. They had them up their protein now aiming for 2 g per kilogram. They also had both groups consume creatine because that can also further bolster gains. And they had them training a lot more this time five times a week for 10 weeks. And once again, no differences in muscle or strength gains. And so those two trials show that actually there are no clear significant differences in muscle and strength gains as long as you're consuming the same amount of protein. And that's ultimately what matters. And we can get into the nitty-gritty of again those other details I mentioned, but that's the end result. Finally have studies where we're looking at completely vegan regimen, a group who's totally vegan, no no animal products at all in in the diet versus an omnivore group and uh put them on a resistance training regimen 12 weeks. This was uh done by Lraine and colleagues. This was a few years back. And so they optimized protein or at least made it at the bottom of optimal at 1.6 g per kilogram of body weight per day in both groups.

Okay. And so but the unique thing about this study, it was the first time ever we're compare comparing vegans with omnivores. So there were no significant differences between groups in muscle size and strength gains by the end of 12 weeks where they put on a progressive resistance training program.

>> It was isocaloric. So >> isocaloric meaning uh for those that don't know what that means is total number of calories ingested per day. Same in the vegan versus omnivore group. >> Yes, that's right. Isocaloric is macronutritional, you know, isoproaic. Everything everything is equated between the groups macronutrition wise. no significant differences in the size and strength gains. And um they're suspecting Oh, and by the way, the vegan group, their protein intake was boosted up to 1.6 g per kilo or.7 gram per pound, it was boosted up by uh soy protein supplementation.

So apparently, I mean, we're beginning to see that at a dose a total daily protein at 1.6 six gram per kilogram of body weight. The totally vegan group was able to hang in there against the omnivore group.

>> The aragon clip here is really useful because what I'm seeing here is the nuance isn't can plants build muscle.

It's actually leucine threshold. You need to hit a certain leucine threshold per meal to maximize what we call muscle protein synthesis, right? And plant sources like soy and pea can absolutely get you there. You just may sometimes need a slightly bigger portion or you may need to combine different sources throughout the day. But the end of the day, you can still get what you need isocalorically, protein wise, macronutrient density wise by eating plants. And so the scientists, the meateers are seeing it, and I don't think they really like it. Huberman, though he's a brilliant scientist, he also has his biases, right? and he's a huge advocate for eating meat. I think he also is sponsored by a meat company.

I think we've discussed this before >> or like some sort of natural jerky company. So, we have to also consider those aspects in the arguments that we hear from certain individuals, right? >> I love hearing that though because I'm like, you know, I want to lift. I want to become strong. Like, I don't want to be a weak person. So hearing that I can just continue being a soy girl is awesome. [music]