



## Rewards outweigh risks for powerlifters in Northwest Arkansas

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For some students, going to the gym is more than a pastime: it's a lifestyle.

Freshman Ali Hamza is a regular at Ozark Iron Gym, a powerlifting hub in Northwest Arkansas. Hamza said he goes to Ozark almost daily, and he has been powerlifting for a couple years.

Powerlifting consists of three exercises: squat, bench press and deadlift. It is a strength sport that has been officially recognized since 1971 with the inception of the International Powerlifting Federation (IPF). The IPF governs competitive powerlifting and holds its own annual world championships.

Hamza, from Bryant, Arkansas, praised the environment at Ozark Iron. He said he loves the energy and the passion that its members bring.

Ozark Iron Gym aims to blend "old school lifting fundamentals with new training ideas" and to have an environment where "lifting knowledge and experience" are the goals.

Ozark Iron employee Jacob Kelly said that while people come in from all over NWA, plenty of UA students, like Hamza, come in regularly to powerlift as well.

"Every day at five they're in here," Kelly said. "It's a whole group and they all show up together," Kelly said.

While powerlifting is a gateway to muscular supremacy, it is also an easy



Ali Hamza, a freshman, powerlifts at Ozark Iron Gym after class Nov. 15.

Haydon King Staff Photographer

way to sustain injury. In a study of 104 Swedish sub-elite powerlifters conducted by four doctors at Umeå University in Sweden, 70% of participants reported being injured in one way or another at the time of the survey. An additional 17% said that they had been injured at some point in the last year.

"Personally, my knees grind just from doing heavy squats and deadlifts," Hamza said, corroborating that conclusion.

Hamza said over-lifting can cause long term damage to joints and cartilage.

Ben Gianacakos, 35, said that he has been powerlifting for 20 years, and it has taken a significant toll on him.

"My elbows hurt all day, feet hurt all day, knees hurt all day, hips hurt often, and shoulders hurt pretty regularly as well," Gianacakos said.

The study conducted at Umeå cited "dietary issues" as

a potential cause of some of these injuries— something that Hamza feels very strongly about. He sees lifting as an integral part of the bodybuilding process, but emphasized the importance of nutrition.

"If you don't eat right, you're not going to get anywhere," Hamza said. "The first year I worked out, I paid no attention to food so my body stayed the same."

Hamza said that making a routine to go the gym helps him, and other people he works out with, stay in shape and achieve better results.

"The key (to fitness in general) is consistency. I've been doing it for a couple years now," Hamza said. "You see people go to the gym, just doing light weights, they're not really tired, they're not sweating, they think 'oh, I'm here, I'm working out.'"

Although injuries sustained through powerlifting can cause setbacks in training, the study concluded that such injuries often do not keep powerlifters from their passion.

"Once you do it for long enough, it becomes a lifestyle, it becomes a habit, so once you're used to something you just keep on doing it," Hamza said.

## Recruits bring a new level of potential to Arkansas basketball

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on the ESPN top 100.

"I want to be more diverse than what other big men are," Williams said. "I know I'm good down low, so I try to work on my outside shot to expand the floor, or being able to grab the rebound and take it full court to make an open decision for my teammates."

Robinson, from Bryant, Arkansas, shot up in recruiting rankings over the summer just like Williams. He is currently enrolled at Oak Hill Academy in Virginia.

He is rated as 90th on the ESPN top 100 and the 20th best point guard in the country, though 247sports has him rated as 73rd overall and the 14th best point guard.

Robinson's commitment propelled the Hogs from the No. 8 recruiting class in the nation to No. 5.

In his last season at Nevada, Musselman's five starters were all graduate transfers, and he had 10 total transfer players on the roster. He only had three players recruited out of high school on his roster.

Immediately after being hired, Musselman attracted four transfers to Fayetteville, giving the Hogs some new blood for a team that went 18-16 last season.

Jimmy Whitt Jr., a former Hog, left SMU to return to Fayetteville. Jeantal Cylla transferred in from UNC Wilmington to play forward for the Razorbacks.

Two transfer players are ineligible to play this season but will provide depth next



Head coach Eric Musselman coaches Nov. 16 during the Razorbacks' game against Montana. The Hogs have remained undefeated so far this season with a 7-0 record.

Haydon King Staff Photographer

season. Connor Vanover left California to come home to Arkansas and JD Notae transferred in from Jacksonville University.

Though Musselman is

known for having success with transfers, it is the "Fantastic Four" that is causing Razorback basketball fans to look to the future.

The Razorbacks are off to

a 7-0 start this season, and aside from the transfers Musselman brought in, the team is made of Anderson's players. It is clear that with his NBA background and his

grassroots in basketball that Musselman can coach, but he is showing he can recruit too.

Hog fans have seen minor success in recent history

with a few small NCAA tournament runs, but Eric Musselman might be the key to taking Arkansas back to the top of the college basketball world.

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