

# THE STRONGMAN'S HEART

## How strongman training affects your heart—positively and negatively

Any athlete of any sport that requires a physical demand knows how the heart can get pumping. You also understand that your sport's demand on the heart causes it to adapt, to increase its capabilities so that you can perform your sport better. And it is fairly obvious that the demand on the heart when you do a max attempt squat is very different from when you run a marathon. In general, the heart's adaptations to a sport's demand are viewed as positive. But this is not necessarily so, at least regarding cardiovascular risk. Put another way, your heart might adapt positively to your sport's demands, but that adaptation could have a negative impact on cardiovascular health. To what extent this might be the case in strongman competitors, marathon runners, and sedentary controls was investigated by a group of six researchers. Do not skip this research review if the health of your heart is important to you.



**The strongman's heart adapts to the demands of the sport. But not all of these adaptations are good.**

### Original Research

Venckunas, T., et al. Strongmen sport is associated with larger absolute heart size and impaired cardiac relaxation. *Journal of Strength and Conditioning Research* 25(10):2919-2925, 2011.

**Power Key:** strongman, athlete's heart, heart function