

NFL Workout: Strapped In

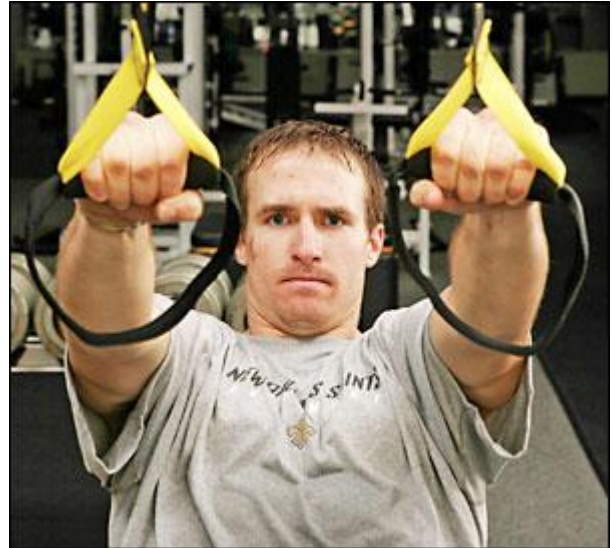
A system designed by a Navy SEAL got the Saints' Drew Brees in shape to succeed

Posted: Tuesday January 9, 2007 12:42PM; Updated: Tuesday January 9, 2007 2:11PM

By Lisa Altobelli

To help him recover from surgery to repair a torn labrum and a partially torn rotator cuff in his right shoulder -- and to prepare for an All-Pro season this fall -- Saints QB Drew Brees turned to an unusual workout regimen. "When they told me it was invented by a Navy SEAL, I knew it would be cool," says Brees of the nylon TRX suspension-strap system devised by SEAL Randy Hetrick for training in small spaces such as in ships and submarines. "It's just your body weight working against gravity, so you won't get injured. Now my wife [Brittany] uses one at home, and I'm addicted."

Brees began using the system (sold to the public at fitnessanywhere.com) last April under his trainer of three years, Todd Durkin. "I like that Todd was a quarterback [at William and Mary]," says Brees. "He trains me in a way that's position-specific." Durkin says he wants his athletes "to be strong feet to fingertips. In Drew's case, I knew we could do that safely using TRX." Safely and effectively: Brees, who plays the Eagles on Saturday, led the NFL with 4,418 passing yards.



Saint's QB Drew Brees.

Greg Nelson/SI

ATOMIC PUSH-UPS

With feet in straps eight inches off the ground, assume the push-up position. Do a standard push-up. Then, at a controlled, even speed, raise tailbone as high as possible, keeping legs straight and pulling the body into a pike position. Return to the push-up position. Two sets of 15. **Benefits:** Core strength as well as shoulder stability. "This is an advanced move," says Durkin. "We needed to get his shoulders as strong as possible, and the core generates the majority of his throwing power."

HIP ROTATION WITH SCORPION KICK

With left foot in strap eight inches off the ground and straps anchored overhead, assume the push-up position. Pull right knee tight to chest. Rotate hips to left and bring right knee towards left elbow. Rotate hips to the right and bring bent right knee out over the top of the body. Do a set of 10, then switch legs. Two sets per side. **Benefits:** Core and rotational strength, shoulder stability, flexibility. "Awesome for a QB," says Durkin. "It helps disassociate his shoulders from his hips to improve his throwing torque."

PENDULUM SWING WITH KNEE TUCKS

With feet in straps eight inches off the ground, assume the push-up position. Swing both legs to the right and bend knees toward the right elbow. Then let gravity pull legs back through the center before swinging to the left and bending both knees toward the left elbow. Do 20-30 reps or for 30 seconds. **Benefits:** "This really targets the obliques and the lower abs," says Durkin. "It develops the midsection while at the same time focusing on rotational strength."

CARD TOSS

(For this, Brees goes strapless.) Standing in a wrestler's stance, left arm behind back, face a partner a few yards

away. The partner tosses up a playing card and asks a question about anything -- music, pop culture, even football. ("What play do you call when you see a Cover 2?") Catch card with right hand while answering. Do 10 cards with one hand, then switch. **Benefits:** Hand-eye coordination, reaction time and mental toughness, which, says Durkin, "teaches an athlete to push through to the final second."

SUSPENDED CRUNCH

With feet in straps eight inches off the ground and the straps attached to an overhead bar, assume the push-up position. Lift hips and pull knees toward chest. Extend legs back to starting position. Two sets of 15. **Benefits:** The most basic of the exercises in Brees's routine, this strengthens the core and develops shoulder stability, keys to passing effectively. "We needed to get his shoulders as strong as possible," says Durkin, "and the core generates the majority of his throwing power."

BREES'S DIET: DOs-'N'-DON'Ts

Brees's long list of food allergies includes dairy, wheat, gluten, eggs and nuts. "If I stayed away from everything I'm allergic to, I'd lose 20 pounds," says the 6-foot 209-pounder. "Some are minor allergies, some major. I listen to my body and do the best I can." Here's Brees's diet regimen on a non-game day. He drinks water throughout the day and at meals.

7:30 a.m. Two wheat- and gluten-free waffles or pancakes. Four strips bacon or two links sausage. Side of corn grits or potato hash browns. A peach, pear or four slices of cantaloupe or honeydew.

Mid-morning (postworkout) AdvoCare recovery shake. About 10 ounces and 230 calories, it's vitamin-packed and high in soy protein. He drinks a second shake in the afternoon after the Saints practice.

2 p.m. Grilled chicken breast or grilled redfish fillet with a side of rice or green beans. Or shrimp and sausage gumbo.

7 p.m. "I love the New Orleans flavor," says Brees. "We go out a lot." A typical restaurant order: turtle soup, shrimp rémoulade and fried green tomatoes, green beans, spinach or broccoli. At home Brittany often makes wheat- and gluten-free pasta with marinara sauce, with a soyburger chopped in it. "She's big on soy products," says Brees. "I'll have soy milk, soy yogurt, soybeans."

9 p.m. XanGo mangosteen fruit-based juice. "I just take it out of the fridge and chugalug three ounces. It's supposed to have a lot of antioxidants."