
Vasper Report

3 Months of Training with Peter Wasowski and staff

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1) *The immediate injury.*

2) *1 week post surgeries*

3) *1.5 months post injury.*

As a professional track and field athlete, I have to be in prime, elite shape at all times. On a daily basis, I have to be mindful of the activities I do with my body and what I put into my body. During times of injury, these daily routines become even more critical. On March 7, 2011, I suffered a traumatic injury to my right ankle during a training session. I compete in the triple jump. On March 7th I was having my best training session in a while until I actually jumped too far. On a practice jump, my second phase came down on the edge of the runway and my foot literally flipped upside down. The arch of my foot was folded up toward my shin bone and the heads of the tibia and fibula were protruding from the skin. Medically speaking, I had an full, open dislocation. The miracle was not having any fractures. After 5 days in the Stanford Hospital and 2 surgeries, primarily to power-wash the sand and debris from my muscle tissues, it was time for my road to recovery to begin. I was a member of the 2008 Olympic team, #1 in the US and #12 in the World, and my 2011 track season was over before it even had a chance to begin. Nevertheless, I needed a way to train, against all odds, for the 2012 Olympic Games in London. That's when I learned about Vasper and gained hope of a full recovery.

As I understand the system, Vasper is a unique training regime that is comprised of liquid compression and liquid cooling. The combination is meant keep the body's core temperature down while forcing the body to produce excess lactic acid in order to trigger the release of additional growth hormone (HGH). This sounded exactly like what I needed to kick start my recovery. I began my training at Vasper on May 12. Up to this date, I had been on complete bed rest for one month and had begun walking in regular shoes only 3 weeks prior to beginning at Vasper. The only training I was allowed to do was stationary biking and abs. My right leg was atrophying and visibly smaller than my left leg.

During my first week at Vasper, I trained 5 days straight. Peter monitored the temperature of my foot as a way to assess the rate of metabolic activities and made note of the swelling around my ankle both before and after sessions. When I began my trainings, I had almost no range of motion in my foot; it was even hard to walk properly. Because I was supposed to avoid excessive weight on my foot, my beginning sessions were limited to the "sit-down" bike. The angle at which my foot rested on the cooling plates was perfect for working the scar tissue across the top of my foot that was inhabiting the dorsiflexion of my right ankle. The movement on the bike was fluid and did not cause any pain. In only 5 short days, I was beginning to feel my strength returning. It was refreshing to have the ability to do high-caliber training, in terms of the lactic acid produced, without putting stress on my ankle. In fact, in only 5 days, I began to see healing effects from my Vasper training.

In terms of the healing component, I have been recovering at a rate that is baffling my doctor, coach, and physical therapist. The surgeon who saw me in the hospital the morning after my first surgery told me that with my injury "it would be hard for even a 'couch potato' to return to their normal life style." With me being a professional athlete, he was basically telling me that he thought I would never compete again. I set out to prove him wrong. I began working with a new doctor immediately. On July 7th, exactly 4 months from the initial date of injury, my doctor cleared me for ALL activity. He did not want to do it because he did not understand how I could possibly be ready for things like running and jumping given the nature of my injury, but after putting me through a series of tests, all he could do was shake his head in disbelief. He was very impressed at my recovery. He knew a little about Vasper and encouraged me to keep up the good work. The next day, I came to share the good news with Peter and he said I could finally graduate to the standing, elliptical machine.

Sitting vs. Standing

The sitting and standing machines create two different types of workout experiences. After training on both machines, it is hard to quantify where I receive the best workout. I definitely feel like the standing machine is much more challenging and I get fatigued more quickly. However, what I felt seemed a little counter-intuitive to my initial impression of the type of workout Vasper provided. The standing machine left me feeling more exhausted, whereas, a hard workout on the sit-down machine made me feel energized. I also felt that the sit-down machine enable me to target specific

muscle groups if I need to, where as, the standing machine provided more of an “overall” conditioning.

Cooling

The cooling aspect of the Vapser system is one of my favorite parts. I especially love the feet cooling because I feel like that part does the best job of cooling my overall body temperature. I also noticed a big difference in the swelling of my ankle when using foot cooling versus not using it; the swelling always went down after training with the foot cooling. As for the rest for of the areas, the liquid compression of the arms and the legs only had a moderate cooling effect. I felt the least amount of cooling from the hats and helmet. I never felt a significant amount of cooling from my head, but I guess if the head were made too cold, people might get headaches. During one session, someone threw out the idea of cooling this neck. I think that would be a wonderful idea and make a huge impact on the rest of the body.

Compression

I found the idea of training with compression to be very enticing. It seems to force my muscles to work harder. My legs were able to handle a good deal of compression, but my arms were affected much more easily. I usually asked for the compression to be as strong as I could take it on my legs. Doing so gave me a much stronger “burn” in the muscle bellies of my hamstrings and quadriceps. The only times I every had a problem with the compression was on the standing elliptical when something on the edges of the leg cuffs would rub my skin too hard and rub the skin off. It only happened twice. Overall, the compression greatly enhanced my training efforts.

The Cool Down

Although I do not understand the whole theory behind the cool down bed with the Telsa generator, I did find it relaxing. After getting off the bed, my body temperature always felt back to normal. I was generally relaxed and ready to take on the next tasks of my day. I have been wondering if this “cool down system” could work after any workout. Would this be a helpful recovery tool for athletes after tough training sessions?

Final Notes

After having completed about 20 sessions at Vasper, I am just about ready to resume my regular training on land. Without doing any strength training in the weight room, both of my leg are of equal size and I have regained most of the strength I lost in my right leg. I feel confident that I never would have recovered this quickly had it not been for Vasper. My injury was the type that had, thus far, been medically undocumented. I am working against all odds. My time at Vasper has renewed my hope of competing at the 2012 Olympic Games. Thank you for believing in my dreams!