

Jedd Johnson

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Intro

You've heard the saying a million times, and no matter how often you hear it, it's still true.

"You're only as strong as your weakest link."

Like a chain, whichever individual link is the weakest, that one is going to be the one that fails first under load in most cases.

Your body is essentially a chain, too - a kinetic chain, and whatever link in your kinetic chain is weakest will be the one to fail when you're trying to make a lift.

For many people, that weak link is the grip. They can break a great deal of weight off the ground in the deadlift, but they're unable to complete the lift, because the bar breaks their grip before lockout.

There's nothing worse than having everything set up perfectly with your technique, and having logged all the hours in preparation for a big pull or a meet, only to have your grip sabotage your lift, and hear the bar crashing to the ground.

The objective of this ebook, is to correct all that.

Soon, you'll understand exactly what it is you need to do in order to finally fix your weakest link, and pull bigger numbers in the deadlift than ever before.

Thank you for picking up this product, and I can't wait to hear about how it helps you in your training. Be sure to let me know.

All the best in your training,

Jedd

Important Terminology

Grip strength training, just like anything else, involves some terminology. In this section, we'll cover that quickly in order to clear up any confusion.

There's generally two types of hand positions: Open Hand and Closed Hand:

Open Hand

A grip position where the fingers and thumb are separated enough that they can't overlap at all. These positions usually require the whole hand to work harder, and as a result, weights lifted are usually lighter due to mechanical disadvantage. Most thick bar training tools put the hands into an Open position.

Closed Hand

Any grip position where the thumb is able to cross over and touch the fingers to reinforce the grip. With this overlap, generally a Closed Hand Grip is stronger and allows for better endurance and more repetitions. The full grip on a Deadlift is one example of a Closed Hand Grip.

Aside from the specific relationship and positioning of the thumbs and fingers, there are also terms depending on whether the fingers or the thumb are most emphasized, as well as whether the grip is primarily static (little to no movement) or dynamic (movement, either concentric, eccentric, or both).

Support / Supporting

This is the type of grip used in the Deadlift, Pull-ups, Rows, etc. The fingers are the primary force producers, aided somewhat by the thumb. The grip is mainly static, meaning there's little to no movement taking place as far as opening or closing the fingers. With a full wrap, where the thumb overlaps the fingers, it's referred to as Closed Hand.

Crush / Crushing

This type of grip strength is used when closing hand grippers, squeezing tennis balls, and doing sand digs. The fingers are the primary force producers, and the positioning is very dynamic in nature, since the fingers must move the handle of the gripper through the opening and closing phases. Can be Open Hand or Closed Hand, depending on what stage of the movement.

Pinch / Pinching

This type of grip strength emphasizes thumb strength. Generally, the fingers and thumb rest on opposite sides of what is being lifted. Pinching can be static, such as when pinching plates, or dynamic, such as when squeezing a clamp or other lever device.

At this time, let's establish the terminology that will be used in Death Grip for the different ways to grip the bar when performing the Deadlift.

Alternated Grip

The grip commonly used where one hand is overhand (pronated) and the other hand is underhand (supinated). Also referred to as Switch Grip or Reverse Grip.

Double Overhand

With Double Overhand, both hands are pronated, in an overhand grip. Several variations of DO are used: Hook Grip, Full DO, Thumbless, Monkey Grip

Hook Grip: This grip is often used when the lifter has experienced a biceps tear or is afraid of developing one. The thumb is wrapped around the bar and then the fingers are "hooked" over the thumb. This hooking action can make for a much more secure grip, and allow the lifter to pull more weight, although the pressure on the thumb is usually very painful for the lifter.

Full DO: Both hands are pronated, and the thumbs lock over top or near the fingers. "Full" signifies that the thumb is indeed wrapped over and used to their full capacity.

Thumbless: In order to make the fingers work harder, the thumbs are kept out of the equation, not touching the bar or the fingers. If your fingers come in contact with the bar or the rest of your hand, this is NOT thumbless grip, it's monkey grip.

Monkey Grip: The thumbs aren't wrapped onto the bar like normal. Instead, they're placed on the same side as the fingers. This thumb positioning makes the fingers have to work harder than normal, although the thumbs are still involved to a small degree.

In addition to making the hands work harder (especially the fingers), all of the Double Overhand styles provide the benefit of less pressure on the biceps of the supinated arm. This is good to know if you have torn a biceps in the past, or if you fear that you are at risk of experiencing a biceps tear.

The hook grip has the distinction of being a grip that can be just as strong, if not stronger than, the alternated grip, once you are used to the pain of the pressure on the thumb. This is good, IF you can get through the pain, but it doesn't do much to actually improve your grip strength, like Double Overhand positioning does.

If your objective is to truly get stronger (build a better grip), and not just modify your technique (hook grip), then full DO, Thumbless, and Monkey Grip should be incorporated. The DO variations can be used on Deadlifts during lighter work, such as your warm-up pulls, or when doing higher rep ranges, in order to make the fingers work harder. The idea is that with stronger fingers, you'll have an overall stronger Deadlift grip.

However, just using a DO grip method on a few sets doesn't add up to a great deal of work or stimulation for your grip, so results will most likely be limited and will take time to develop. With that in mind, if your grip is a problem, it's best to regularly include drills in your training that will build your grip strength, beyond just gripping with a DO style on your lighter sets.

Later on, you'll be introduced to the best drills for developing your supporting grip strength.

Thoughts on "Specificity"

Hand Positioning, Joint Angles, Magic Hold Time

After specializing in Grip training for 12 full years, one thing that has become completely clear to me is that your grip improves specifically in the ways you train it. This includes joint angles (i.e. orientation of the individual finger joints), hand positioning (where the hands are at in comparison to the rest of the body, the tools being used (barbell, grippers, thick bars), the movement of the hand & fingers (static/dynamic), hold times, and other factors.

The reason I bring this up has to do with the fact that there seems to be confusion out there about how to build grip strength, when your hands are failing you on the Deadlift.

Many times, I've heard of lifters who realized their grip strength was holding them back on their deadlift, so they went and grabbed some thick bar training tools and started using them in their training, only to find out that their grip on the barbell didn't improve that much with the regular barbell.

Just like any other sports preparation and strength training endeavors, specificity in training is of the utmost importance in order to maximize results.

While thick bar training is an excellent form of grip work to increase general hand, finger, thumb and wrist strength, carryover from thick bars back to regular sized bars often yields limited results because even though you're using the same exact muscles, bones, and joints to do the work, the grip develops VERY specifically to the way the hands are trained.

Immediate Changes You Should Make Right Now

Ditch straps on rowing movements

In talking with many lifters over the years, it seems that there is a lot of emphasis being put on lifting big weights during pulling movements like Rows and Pull-downs. This is not a bad thing, but what I've also noticed is that lifters have a tendency to use straps during these movements, in order to squeeze out as many reps as possible with the biggest weights possible.

To me, this is a problem, because it's a huge loss of opportunity to strengthen the hands in a way that will help the deadlift grip. Exercises like Dumbbell Rows, Seated Rows, Pull-downs and variations of these types of movements, in my opinion, should be performed without straps, any chance you get.

I stopped using straps on these movements when I started doing Strongman competitions back in 2003. For the first few weeks, the weights I was able to use, and the reps I was able to do, went down. But my hands adjusted, and soon I was right back where I had been, when I was using straps all the time. So, I encourage you to leave the straps off for the majority of your sets to start challenging your hands more. I think you'll see that you won't lose much in the way of development of the back, shoulders and arms at all, and it will probably be zero. Plus, you'll probably start seeing some improved development in the forearms due to this simple change.

Your hands might be a bit more tired once implementing this change, and the first couple deadlift sessions might be a bit tougher. Your hands will respond and get stronger

quickly though, and once that compensation effect fully takes hold, your weights, reps and holding power will begin to increase steadily. You'll also begin to see that your grip strength bounces back more quickly from harder hand-intensive sessions.

Train Double Overhand

One of the reasons that the alternated grip is used when Deadlifting is to reduce rotation of the bar throughout the pull. Because the hands are turned in opposite directions, the bar is cradled and the hands keep the bar from rolling, enhancing your grip all the way to the top.

Unfortunately, this doesn't do much to stimulate the hands, especially at lighter loads. You can start out your Deadlift work with Double Overhand warm-up pulls in order to get a little bit more grip work in, and now those lighter sets become not only a way to get the full body firing and primed for heavier work, but also a way to make the hands stronger. Just this one change, done over time, will bring up your hand strength, regardless of what other drills you add to your program to train the grip specifically.

This change will also have the added benefit of reducing the risk of biceps tears, and absolute nightmare for the serious deadlifter. For many lifters, the supinated hand in the alternated grip is a ticking time bomb, and it's just a matter until that bicep rips off. The Double Overhand grip, however, reduced the chance of that happening greatly. This is why so many lifters are using the Hook Grip these days, either because they've already had a biceps tear take place, or want to avoid one like the plague.

This is obviously a change that will most likely result in a dramatic reduction in the amount of weight you can Deadlift. But that's ok. I'm not suggesting only ever doing the Double Overhand deadlift, but rather, I want you to use those intermediate sets, between you warm-ups and final work sets, to challenge your hands to hold on with all their might.

In fact, I'd suggest testing how much you can Deadlift with the Double Overhand grip, and tracking how much you can pull with it as you move forward in your training in the coming months, and I'm sure you'll see your personal record (PR) in that lift climb up steadily.

Train Thumbless Grip

Another huge opportunity to strengthen the fingers is to work in plenty of Thumbless Grip lifts, either Monkey Grip, where the thumbs move to the same side as the fingers, or to really make the fingers work overtime, leave the thumbs off completely.

One way to do this is to work with a thumbless grip variation on all your warm-up lifts. This will wake the fingers up in a different way from what you're used to, and will force you to contract the flexors more intensely. This kind of activation can lead to a better lock on the bar, when you go back to a full grip, also.

It's also not a bad idea to establish a PR for Monkey Grip Deadlifts and completely Thumbless Grip deadlifts, especially at the beginning, after making this change. That way, you'll know what your current strength level is, and as you continue to train your grip hard, your thumbless deadlift variations will become new ways for you to benchmark how you're progressing, instead of just your max effort single in the deadlift.

Get away from using the calluses

Instantly Improve Your Grip

Believe it or not there are some technical adjustments you can make when you apply your grip to the barbell and when you pull it off the ground, that will give a better mechanical advantage when lifting, and help you control the barbell better and give yourself a longer lasting Grip when you near your top pulls. Some of these you may already be doing. If so, awesome. But if not, be sure to give them a try the next time you need to pull big.

Hook Your Thumb Over The Back of Your Finger

You can solidify your grip just by making sure your thumb overlaps at least one finger on your Deadlift grip. This could end up being the index finger, middle finger, or both, depending on how exactly your hand is shaped and how long your fingers are. Regardless of how it shapes up, lock the thumb over your fingers each and every time you pull.

If you get in the habit of placing your thumb this way, if your grip does begin to slip at some point, you can squeeze a bit harder with your thumb to keep your fingers in place.

If your pinky or ring finger lose their bite on the bar, it's nothing to worry about - your pull can live without them involved. But if you lose your grip with your index or middle fingers, you could really be in trouble, so make sure your thumb is where it needs to be.

This can be done when using the Alternated Grip, or if you're going Full DO in training. Activate the thumb as much as possible by intensely squeezing it onto the back of the finger it strikes.

Always Chalk the Backs of Your Fingers

Since you're going to make sure your thumbs strike the backs of your fingers, it's important to ensure that you chalk that area as well. If your fingers get sweaty, it can be hard for the thumb to offer much assistance, because it'll be slipping off. But if you can keep your fingers chalked and dry, it'll result in another 5lbs or so of gripping power, and that can make the difference between a full pull or a dropped bar.

In addition to the back of the fingers, make sure all other key areas of the hands and fingers are properly dried and chalked prior to pulling. Any spot on the hand that might touch the bar should be properly prepped.

Wrist Cock

In any lift, you're only as strong as your weakest link. You've heard this a million times by now. For most lifters, when performing a deadlift, your fingers and thumbs are the weakest links. So anything you can do to take emphasis away from them during the lift should help you maintain your grip a bit more, is going to be an asset for you.

Having the wrists cocked, or slightly flexed, is something that can give you a nice little bump in your grip, and it's something you might not be doing right now. Once you start doing it, you might be pleasantly surprised.

All you need to do is when setting up, activate the wrists slightly into flexion, before pulling. You won't need to get a gigantic angle in your wrist - you are not going for a full goose neck. You're just flexing the wrist slightly so that two things happen.

First off, the bar position will change ever so slightly, so that it rests closer to your palm, and off your fingers.

Second, by getting your wrists involved in the lift, they share some of the load, and the fingers don't get stressed right from the start of the pull.

When lifting with the wrists cocked, at first, you might be able to pull the bar a few inches before your wrists give way and the stress goes back to the fingers. As your wrists

strengthen, that distance you're able to pull with the wrists carrying more of the responsibility will increase, and the time where your fingers take the brunt of the load back decreases.

Eventually, if you focus on wrist engagement, you may even be able to pull with the wrists cocked all the way to lockout, which can mean big increases in deadlift numbers.

Bar Close to the Body

The closer the bar is to the body, the better. A close bar path keeps the movement as efficient as possible, and reduces the chance that you'll lose your grip and drop the bar.

If you film your deadlift from the side with your camera, watch how the bar tracks. For many people, the bar has a tendency to swing out, away from the body. This is NOT GOOD if grip strength is a liability for you, because the further the bar moves away, the more pressure it puts on the fingers to hold the bar steady.

If the bar is travelling in a curved line away from the hips, it could be due to a couple of causes. First, you might have your weight distributed too much on the front of your foot. When this happens, the bar as well as the whole body has a tendency to drift forward throughout the course of the lift. Make sure your bodyweight is going through the back of your feet. This dramatically reduces the risk of the bar moving forward on you, especially when nearing the knees during the pull.

Next, the bar may be moving forward because your hips are rising too soon. When the hips rise too soon, it often causes the torso and shoulder to move slightly forward, which can cause the bar and hands to go that way as well, resulting in more pressure on the hands to complete the pull.

Third, if you don't have your lats engaged prior to initiating the pull, the bar will tend to sway forward. Make sure your lats are under appreciable tension before pulling, so the bar stays close to your body, for an efficient Deadlift.

To keep the Deadlift as mechanically efficient as possible, think about pulling the deadlift from ground to lockout in as straight of a line as possible. It may be impossible to pull it in a perfectly straight line, but the straighter the better.

One thing you can do to help yourself pull the bar in a straighter line, over a shorter path, is to approach the Deadlift as less of a pulling exercise and more of a pushing exercise. Think of pushing the floor away from the bar, rather than pulling the bar away from the floor.

It's also been described as performing the Deadlift like a Leg Press. When you lift on the Leg Press, your back angle is pretty much set and consistent, the only thing moving is your legs, at your knee and hips. Think of doing the Deadlift like this as well, keeping your weight distributed on your heels, driving through your heels, into the floor, and keeping the hips down as long as you can.

Pull Faster

The faster you get the bar to lockout, the better chance you'll have at holding on. Of course, if you're grinding the moment the bar breaks the floor until you lock out your hips, there's a better chance your hands will give out on you. So, being able to pull fast is an asset to you when your grip is in question.

So, how do you get faster in the deadlift? There are a few ways.

First off, you can make sure that as soon as possible, you engage your glutes, to finish the lockout off with your hips. Often, lifters try to lock the Deadlift out with the lower back, but it is much stronger and more efficient to engage the hips in order to lock the Deadlift out. This puts a snap in the Deadlift, and cuts the pull time down by a fraction of a second. This might seem trivial, but if your grip feels like it might be slipping, any reduction in time under tension is a good thing.

Next, you can develop a faster pull by training for speed in the Deadlift. This is usually done through specific speed-development drills. For instance, speed Deadlifts can be done with roughly 70% of your 1 rep max (RM), and the objective is to pull them to lockout as quickly as possible, in a sense dominating the weight to lockout, instead of just grinding out reps with lighter weight in a grease-the-groove type of way.

Another way to train the Deadlift for speed is by adding band resistance and pulling against it as quickly as possible. When doing this, the resistance is lightest at the floor and increases the further you pull, which means your body (hips especially) will need to maximize the force produced to not only lock the bar out but to do it as quickly as possible. Bar weight should be kept in the neighborhood of ___ % of your 1RM, and the bar should always be moving fast. If it begins to slow down, resistance should be dropped, because the key here is bar speed!

Bar Close

Common Questions Answered

Should I use a thick bar if I'm having trouble with my Deadlift Grip?

Many times, when lifters find they have a problem holding onto their Deadlifts, they automatically think they need to start doing a bunch of thick bar training.

You can't really blame someone for thinking this, especially given all of the information/propaganda that's out there about thick bar training.

Fat Gripz handles are advertised EVERYWHERE these days. Brooks Kubik talked about thick bar training all through his book, Dinosaur Training, one of the most popular strength books that are out there. And grip enthusiasts spend a great deal of time training thick bar, in the form of thick bar dumbbells, axle lifting, and a multitude of other open-hand training tools.

Let me say this right away, thick bar training is a great way to train for general hand strength increases. If you train thick bar hard, your hands WILL get stronger.

Unfortunately, many lifters who jump into thick bar training after struggling to pull their PR Deadlift to lockout over and over are pretty frustrated after several weeks of going all fat grip in their training, when they return back to that same weight and find that they're either still struggling with that same weight, or possibly even have slid BACKWARDS in their strength.

So, why is this the case?

It all goes back to the rule of Specificity.

Your fingers build high amounts of strength for the position in which they are trained, but the carryover to other finger positions begins to drop off very quickly outside of that specific position.

In other words, if your grip is failing with 405lbs on the deadlift on a normal size 1" to 1.25" bar, you need to do train your grip with drills on that size of handle. If you go too far away from 1" to 1.25", let's say in the neighborhood of 2" to 2.5", the results you see when you go back to pulling on 1" to 1.25" might improve a bit, but they won't improve that much.

The same can be said for the other way around. Working on the smaller bar will do next to nothing to improve your thick bar either.

To illustrate this relationship, I'll point to my experience with Double Overhand Deadlifting on a regular bar and Double Overhand Axle Deadlifting. In 2010, I lifted

510lbs in the Double Overhand Deadlift on a regular bar (no hook grip). That was just in a random training session. It's not contested in Grip Sport though, so I didn't work on it to speak of for about 5 years.

I worked my ass off throughout 2013 and 2014 to increase my Double Overhand Axle Deadlift, and I finally lifted 400+lbs in competition for the first time in early 2015.

In a random workout shortly after that, I was able to DO Deadlift 510lbs on a regular bar. No more, no less.

So, a solid 2 years of training a ton of thick bar disciplines for Grip Sport and my regular bar DO Deadlift grip saw no improvement.

The size difference between the "handles" I was using was just too great for significant carryover.

However, during the Spring and Summer of 2015, I wanted to improve my Deadlift, and I began following the Coan Phillipi Deadlift Program. During this period, I didn't do any Axle Deadlift to speak of. My concentration was on deadlifting with a powerlifting style bar.

Due to all the work I was doing with the regular barbell, I was eventually able to perform a Double Overhand Deadlift of 525lbs, a lifetime PR for the DO DL.

When I tested my Axle Deadlift a week or so later, I was unable to pull 400lbs Double Overhand.

I'm not the only one who's seen this either. I've lost count of the number of people who wrote me through my site or YouTube, angry, because they put all this work in on Fat Gripz, and they still can pull their Deadlifts to lockout.

Again, thick bar will make your hands stronger in a general sense. You'll be able to pull more weight and get more reps on Fat Gripz lifts, other thick bar lifts, and you'll see better endurance in sports like mixed martial arts, but when it comes to being able to get a Death Grip on the barbell for Deadlifts, you need to do the great majority of your work on the normal sized barbell.

Should I do Bodyweight Hangs if I'm having trouble with my Deadlift Grip?

I've had people write me and ask me if they should do bodyweight hangs for time, such as gripping onto a Chin-up or Pull-up bar and then hang there for as long as they can.

At first glance, this might make sense for some, since the size of a Pull-up Bar is pretty close in size to a Deadlift bar.

However, hanging still falls short for several reasons: hand/arm position, weight being lifted, speed, and the execution time. Let's look at each one a bit closer.

Hand/Arm Position: With Deadlifting, the arms are along your sides/ribs, and with hanging, your arms are up over your head. This automatically limits the carryover. Enough said.

Weight Being Lifted: With Deadlifts, you're often lifting well over your bodyweight. With hangs, your holding your bodyweight. The load is just not heavy enough for it to be an accurate form of training. Even if you wear a weight vest, throw chains around your neck, or put on a Dip Belt with a bunch of weight added, Hangs are just not the answer.

Speed: The speed of a Deadlift varies by each lifter, but each lifter is trying to pull the lift to lockout, hold it there to show control, and then return it to the floor, and get all of this over with as quickly as they possibly can. No one is trying to pull a big Deadlift and take their time about it. With Hanging, there is not speed, so again there's very little relationship between the two tests of strength.

Execution Time: If you watch top-end Deadlifts, most of the time the concentric phase (pulling from the floor to lockout) is completed within 3 seconds. Then you have to pause to show control, and then return it under the proper control for the given federation. That's a total of about 6 seconds in most cases, depending on whether the lifter takes the time to shout at every spectator in the crowd before setting it back down. Your training should reflect this as well. Most lifters who are serious Deadlifters are going to be able to hold onto a bar and hang for 30+ seconds, so again, it's just a waste of time to build your deadlift grip training around hangs.

Should I do training with Ropes if I'm having trouble with my Deadlift Grip?

The answer's no, for many of the same reasons that Hangs and Fat Gripz don't work for building your deadlifting grip strength. Battling Ropes, picking them up and whipping them around repeatedly. Nothing like Deadlifting. Even climbing a rope or performing Arm-Over-Arm Sled Pulls won't build the specific grip strength you need for pulling bigger deadlifts to lockout, holding them there and then returning them to the ground.

Should I do Krok Rows if I'm having trouble with my Deadlift Grip?

The Krok Row Workout involves working up to very heavy Dumbbell Rows done for lots of repetitions, and with some of the heaviest weights, lifting straps are used.

This has actually led some people to believe that by performing their Dumbbell Rows with straps on, their grip strength will increase.

My experience with these is limited, in fact, I've never done the Krok Row workout. Nevertheless, I think there's much more to this than just throwing straps on for your rows and your hands will get stronger.

There's a very popular video on [bodybuilding.com](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YJGeMkQWCsk) where Matt Krok talks about the Krok Rows workout (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YJGeMkQWCsk>). In the video, Krok says:

"Basically, I'd always had pretty decent grip strength, and I'd always done Dumbbell Rows in my program, but there was period of a time when I graduated from college where I changed gyms, and they didn't have that big of dumbbells so I had stopped doing them.

And then I was getting ready for Nationals that year, and all of a sudden I started dropping deadlifts. I went back, analyzed my training, and realized that I hadn't been doing the Dumbbell Rows, and so I immediately included them back into my program, and at that point I realized what a significant roll they played. So at that point, the biggest dumbbells I had access to were 155's, so I couldn't add anymore weight, so I just started doing more and more reps...

...I think now my rep PR's like 185 for 40 reps without straps. What I realized was the more reps I did, and the more weight I could use, not only did it help my grip strength, it also really helped my deadlift. I had been having some issues with locking out my deadlifts, and all of a sudden all those issues went away and my deadlift was jumping up."

Look, Krok is obviously a freaking beast. Doing 185 for 40 reps with no straps is just insane.

But, if you look at what he said, you'll notice he always had a good grip on him, and never had trouble lockout out his deads until he cut the Dumbbell Rows out of his training. Before that they were a staple.

I think putting the Dumbbell Rows back in started stimulating his hands more again, like he was used to and it built his grip back up to where it needed to be. It sounds like this happened over a pretty short time period, so he probably didn't lose that much top-end grip strength, and then once he added his heavy rows back in, BOOM, his top-end grip came back.

I think the strapped rows that he does have just about nothing to do with his current grip strength levels. I'd say he probably enjoys doing the rows, and enjoys throwing weight around, so he got his Krok dumbbells made and is still making short work of beastly weight.

Again, I'm taking nothing away from this dude. He's seen a ton of injuries and battled back from all of them, and even kicked testicular cancer's ass along the way as well. But, I think he's also the kind of genetic wonder whose hands respond well to this specific type of training, and his Krok Rows are perfect for him.

I just wouldn't feel comfortable prescribing Krok Rows to someone who's been having trouble locking out Deadlifts, when I think there are better options available. I especially wouldn't suggest perform strapped rows. I think Krok is using the straps for just insanely heavy lifts that he needs because of his back, arm and shoulder development levels. The kind of weight he can row, 310lbs, in the video I watched, is just out of this world. I'd need straps to row that much weight too. I wish Krok the absolute best in his training and life for that matter.

Should I do Farmers Walks and Holds if I'm having trouble with my Deadlift Grip?

I'm often asked about Farmer's Walks and Holds. These are actually a form of training I would suggest, because the finger positioning, joint angles, arm angles - all of these factors are very similar to the actual Deadlift.

However, not everyone has Farmer Handles, so they won't be able to try them. For that reason, I didn't include them in the Death Grip Program.

If you have them and want to try them, I say go for it. Just make sure that you are working heavy and keeping your hold times fairly close to that magic period of 6 to 10 seconds. If you can hold something longer than 10 seconds, don't be afraid to bump up the weight.

Some have asked about using Dumbbells for Farmer's Holds. You'll still be getting a very similar grip position with Dumbbell Farmer's Holds, so that factor is covered. However, lots of gyms only have dumbbells that go up to about 100lbs, and I think most people who deadlift seriously are going to grow beyond that kind of weight pretty quickly.

Plus, I know when I hold dumbbells at my sides, one or both the heads contact my legs, and that actually deloads the dumbbell somewhat, which means I'm not holding all the weight in my hands. Some of it is at rest on my thighs.

If you do decide to use Farmer's Holds in your training to improve your Deadlift Grip Strength, going for maximized weight lifted and/or carried, versus extended endurance.

I'd rather see someone constantly adding a couple pounds to their farmers and holding them around a 10-count, than staying at lower weights and holding or carrying for upwards of 20 or 30 seconds. The Deadlift pull just doesn't take that long, so there's no sense in holding for that long.

Should I train with Grippers if I'm having trouble with my Deadlift Grip?

Grippers will help you build strong hands if you use them, but most of the exercises you do with grippers, especially the act of just closing and opening grippers, will do very little for developing the kind of hand strength that will give you a better deadlift.

Really, the only form of gripper training that I would recommend for lifters who need to improve their supporting grip strength for deadlifts are timed holds in the closed position.

It may seem counterintuitive, but I also suggest setting the gripper (pre-positioning the gripper using the off-hand). In fact, I'd encourage you to use your off hand to get it down near closed as deep as possible with the off-hand, and then mash it shut with the closing hand, and then hold it there.

A fun variation of this is to place a penny or other small coin between the handles and try to hold it there for as long as possible. This is called a penny hold.

The reason for the deep set and holding the gripper closed for time is because the closed position mimics the grip you have on the barbell the most, when using a gripper. The hand is almost entirely closed and there is little opening of the fingers, so it looks similar to the grip used during deadlifts.

Gripper holds are a great way to finish off your hands and leave them really smoked at the end of your workout.

Chelsea

I think this set of drills is what you want to focus on. I put in a description, work load, and frequency here. It's hard to add this stuff into an existing plan, but I'm going to try to do so, in the word document. Question: How important are RDL's to your program?

Wondering if it might be a good idea to remove RDLs and just do the drills I'm suggesting? If you think you can pull out RDL's, you might just be able to insert my drills there. But I think the holds are best done on actual deadlift days you already had planned. What do you think about that?

We may need to schedule a follow-up call...

Rack Pull Holds - 5 sets of 1 hold - 2x/week

Goal is 6 to 10 second hold. If you get in the 8-10 sec range, add weight on next set.

If you miss the 6-sec mark, drop weight.

Heavily Banded Deadlifts - 3 sets of 2 reps - 1x - every other week

Apply heavy band tension that ramps up around top-of-knee. Hold 2nd rep of each set for a 3 to 5 second-count at the top. This will put you in the 6 second range for the entire pull.

Double Overhand Thumbless Speed Deadlifts - 3 to 5 sets of 2 - 1x/week

Pull bar to lockout as quickly as possible, safely, focusing on above-knee speed. On 2nd rep, hold for 6-count. Focus on squeezing with fingers hard and really activating lats.

Band-Away Deadlifts - 5 sets of 2 1x/week

Perform good, solid, hard reps and hold 2nd rep at the top for 6 to 10 seconds. Band is attached to bar and anchors in front of you. Object is to clench hard and keep lats activated.

Perform all dumbbell and barbell row without straps.

Band Platform

Measurements
Supplies needed

Exercise Index

Gripper Penny Holds

Hold Against Bands

Bar Holds

Rack Pulls

Heavy Pull Down

Heavy Rows

Heavy Shrugs

Program

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Thanks,

Jedd Johnson

Jedd.diesel@gmail.com

Other Products from Jedd Johnson

Art of Scrolling Steel (Jedd Johnson and Bud Jeffries) - Oldtime Strongmen, such as the Mighty Atom and Slim "The HammerMan" Farman, have always been known for the sculptures they produced out of steel bars. Two modern-day strongman performers with a love steel bending, Bud Jeffries and Jedd Johnson, team up to bring you the world's foremost resource on scrolling steel. Bud and Jedd show you how to make things such as steel paperweights, steel house plants, Christian fish, and many other classic strongman scrolls.

<http://thegripauthority.com/scrolling-dvd.htm>

August of Arms (Jedd Johnson) - Are you ready to build a set a of powerful guns? Would you like to add an inch or more to your arms in just a month's time? Then get ready for the most intense month of arm-specialization training you've ever

experienced. August of Arm includes: 31 full arm workouts, 69 different exercises, Daily Stretching Batteries for maximized growth and recovery, Video demonstrations for every single exercise. If you're ready to blow up those biceps and transform your triceps, get this program today! <http://dieselcrew.com/august-of-arms.htm>

Basics of Grip Training and Strongmanism (Jedd Johnson) - Get FASTER RESULTS in your Grip Training. Learn how to do Feats of Strength QUICKER with Fewer Injuries. Learn the fundamentals of Grip Training and Feats of Strength with this 2-DVD Set totaling nearly 4 hours, with all of the footage from the small-group seminar I held in March, 2016. Topics covered: Grippers, Plate Pinching, Euro Pinch, Block Weights, Thick Bar, Support Grip, Feats of Strength, Card Tearing, Steel Bending, Injury Prevention, Recovery, Programming and MORE!
<http://thegripauthority.com/Basics.htm>

Block Weight Training (Jedd Johnson) - The first in the High Impact Grip Training Series, this DVD is the go-to resource for Block Weight Training. Showing you training methods and techniques for all forms of Open Hand Training, such as the Blob, Hex Blocks, Plate Pinches and Odd Objects, you will learn the absolute best ways to train for serious hand strength. <http://www.thegripauthority.com/block-weight-training.htm>

Braced Bending (Jedd Johnson & Mike Rinderle) - This DVD will show you how to destroy EVERYTHING in your path. From frying pans, to steel bars, to horseshoes, and wrenches, Jedd and Mike team up once again to bring you everything you need to know on how to do odd object bending like a champion. It's fun to destroy things around the house - start today. <http://www.thegripauthority.com/braced-bending-dvd.htm>

Cadence Based Gripper Training (Jedd Johnson) - This is an 8-week Gripper Training Program designed around purposeful training and bringing up weakness in all the segments of the gripper closing technique. Includes a full program for both beginners

and advanced gripper training, a log sheet, and more. <http://thegripauthority.com/gripper-training-program.htm>

Call to Arms (Jedd Johnson & Joe Meglio) - Want to add size to your arms? Don't even try to tell me you don't. Just because you do strength training doesn't mean it's a sin to train the arms once in a while. In fact, it's better if you do because it will keep you safe and healthy. After all, what strength sport athletes have some of the biggest, strongest arms? Strongman Competitors. Ever see how many of them tear their biceps? Lots of pulling but no curling equals risk for tears. Don't let it happen. Get Call to Arms today. <http://megliofitness.com/call-to-arms/>

Card Tearing eBook (Jedd Johnson) – The Card Tearing eBook is loaded with techniques you can use to build the hand strength to start doing serious damage to a deck of cards. With the extensive exercise index, designed to build strength in all the components needed for card tearing (strong wrists, fingers and thumbs), in no time flat you'll be ripping stuff up! <http://www.cardtearing.com>

CRUSH: Total Gripper Domination (Jedd Johnson) - This product explores every aspect of Gripper Training you need to know in order to improve your crushing grip strength and even certify in the major gripper certifications. Be amongst the best in the world once you watch this awesome video. Normally an on-line DVD, but you can also upgrade to the hard copy as well. <http://www.thegripauthority.com/gripper-dvd/crush-dvd2.htm>

Deceleration Training to Prevent ACL Tears (Jedd Johnson & Jerry Shreck) - One of the most common season-shortening and career-ending injuries in the morning is preventable - the ACL Tear. In this DVD, you will learn the time-tested protocol Jerry Shreck conducts with his athletes at Bucknell University that has helped drive his ACL

injuries down and keep them down for over 8 years. <http://dieselcrew.com/ACL/deceleration-training.htm>

Fierce Forearms (Jedd Johnson) - A man can't walk around with forearms that look like pipe cleaners - it's time to build monster forearms that would make Popeye jealous, and this Workout of the Month from TheGripAuthority.com can help you get there. Order now and start attacking your forearms from all angles if you want well-rounded forearm mass: bigger, thicker forearm flexors, a giant set of brachialis, stronger wrists that don't give way under stress. <http://thegripauthority.com/fierce-forearms.htm>

Fixing Elbow Pain (Jedd Johnson & Rick Kaselj) - For people who train hard in the gym like us, one of the most common injuries that sets back out training is elbow pain: tendonitis, tennis elbow, golfer's elbow, epicondylitis - call it what you will. But one thing is for certain, once you get it, it can be tough to get rid of it. With this product you will learn how to rehab your elbow pain to get back to pushing the big numbers in the gym, and you'll learn how to keep it from coming back. <http://www.fixingelbowpain.com>

Fix My Wrist Pain (Jedd Johnson & Rick Kaselj) - For people who train hard in the gym and have found themselves with nagging wrist pain. This ebook includes a full rehabilitative section by Rick Kaselj, as well as a section on Wrist Pain Work-Arounds and other preventive and pre-hab information by me. <http://www.fixmywristpain.net>

Grip Training for MMA Athletes (Jedd Johnson) - The grip is extremely important for Mixed Martial Arts. It can mean the difference between victory and defeat. It can allow you to get in your opponent's head from the instant you get your hands on him. And it can allow you to apply vicious holds that will have them fearing you before you're even face-to-face. This ebook shows you how to make your hands lethal weapons for MMA competition. <http://www.dieselcrew.com/MMA-Grip-Training.htm>

Grip Training for Track and Field Throwers (Jedd Johnson and Matt Ellis) - Your hands are the last thing that touches the shot, javelin, discus and hammer when you throw them and any pain, weakness, or injury in your hands will little-by-little undermine all the work you put into your throws. It doesn't matter how much you've worked on technique, how strong your legs are, how fast you can move, if your hands are weak or beat up, they'll shoot a hole into everything else that's going on. Doing the right grip-strengthening work will MAXIMIZE your throwing power. Focusing on proper injury-prevention methods will keep you going strong the whole season long. That means more PR's and top finishes this year. ALL OF THIS is why you need to get your hands on this video... <http://www.griptrainingforthrowers.com/>

Hammering Horseshoes (Jedd Johnson & Mike Rinderle) - Learn how to perform the feat of strength that has stood the test of time, Horseshoe Bending, from the Leaders in Grip Strength Feat Instruction, Napalm Jedd Johnson and The Beast in the East, Mike Rinderle. Discover horseshoe progressions, how to wrap shoes for protection and how to kink, sweep and crush them into heart shapes. Why would anyone NOT want to bend horseshoes? <http://www.thegripauthority.com/horseshoe-bending-dvd.htm>

Home Made Strength DVD (Jedd Johnson & Joe Hashey) – Download the online DVD and immediately learn how to construct 8 bad-ass pieces of equipment that cost a fraction of the price and will last you for years. Build strength without breaking the bank. <http://www.homemadestrength.com>

Home Made Strength II: Grip Strength Edition (Jedd Johnson) - It's time to build up your grip strength so you can start benefiting from having a set of strong hands, wrists and forearms. All you need to do is add some equipment to your arsenal, and I will show you how to do it on the cheap. Get ready to develop a world class grip strength and build fun and rewarding grip tools that will last you for years. <http://www.homemadestrength.com/homemadegrip.htm>

How to Lift the Inch (Jedd Johnson) - Thomas Inch was a traveling, performing Strongman from England in the late 1800's. One of his signature feats of strength was the "Unliftable" Inch Dumbbell, a mighty hunk of cast iron weighing 172lbs with a handle as thick as a soda can. To this day, lifting the Inch Dumbbell remains one of the biggest goals on grip strength enthusiasts' bucket lists. This full-length video shows you proper Inch Dumbbell lifting technique, a host of high-impact thick bar training drills, as well as an introduction to some of the most widely used grip training implements for developing the strength to pick up this mighty dumbbell.

<http://thegripauthority.com/how-to-lift-the-inch-dumbbell.htm>

How to Make Atlas Stones with Slater Stone Molds (Jedd Johnson & Steve Slater) -

Let Steve Slater, the man who has made more atlas stones than anyone else walking the Earth, show you exactly how the process is done. He will show you live all the ingredients you need for stone making, plus give you all of the hints and tips he has developed all of the years for making top quality atlas stones that you can be proud of in your training.

<http://dieselcrew.com/how-to-make-atlas-stones.htm>

Introduction to Strongman Training (Jedd Johnson & Steve Slater) - Learn the basic techniques of some of the most common and beneficial events in the sport of strongman. With this DVD, you can be confident you are being taught proper form and mechanics by two great strongman teachers, Jedd Johnson and Steve Slater, two men with over 20 years of Strongman Experience between them. <http://www.dieselcrew.com/strongman-training.html>

King Kong of Grip Workout (Jedd Johnson) - This Workout of the Month from TheGripAuthority.com, is actually 4 Workouts in 1 Product. You'll get a complete

workout for each of the following events/implements: (1) 1 Hand Pinch on the Adjustable Pinch Device (2) FBBC 2.5" Crusher (3) IronMind Little Big Horn and (4) Grip Topz Hub <http://www.thegripauthority.com/KK/king-kong-of-grip-program.htm>

Lever Bigger Hammers (Jedd Johnson) - This was the workout of the month for June, 2013 and it is based around sledge hammer levering, specifically Vertical Levering, where the hammer is taken from the vertical position, to the nose, and back up. This workout and these techniques helped me finally lever a 16-lb hammer and it can help you get there to. <http://dieselcrew.com/lever-bigger-hammers.htm>

Lift the Blob (Jedd Johnson) - One of the most famous Grip Challenge items, the term, "Blob," was coined by Richard Sorin, when he set out to lift his half 100-lb original-style York dumbbell head in a Pinch Grip. The first one to do so, he was the first to discover the highly beneficial training method of Block Weight Training. This ebook shows you how you can train to Lift the Blob, too, even if you have small hands, and even if you don't own an actual half-100lb Blob. <http://www.thegripauthority.com/lift-the-blob.htm>

Nail Bending eBook (Jedd Johnson) – This is the most complete reference on nail, bolt, and steel bending that exists. All of the major techniques are explained, including Double Overhand, Double Underhand and Reverse, as well as other lesser known techniques. This eBook is over 180 pages of instruction, including a 60+ page exercise index that will turn your hands, wrists and lower arms into steel bending weapons. <http://www.TheGripAuthority.com/bending.htm>

Nail Bending: How to Melt Steel with Your Bare Hands (Jedd Johnson) – Picks up right where the Bending eBook left off. Complete technical demonstration of the three

major Bending Techniques as well as information on strength building, injury prevention, and MORE. <http://www.thegripauthority.com/nail-bending-dvd.htm>

Napalm Pinch: How to Dominate the Two Hands Pinch (Jedd Johnson) - This DVD shows you everything you need to know to take your Two Hands Pinch training to the next level. With information on Technique, Hand and Device Prep, Drills, and Contest Programming, you'll learn the ins and outs of Two Hands Pinch training from the man who held the World Record in the lift for close to 5 years.

<http://www.thegripauthority.com/NapalmPinch/two-hands-pinch-dvd.htm>

November to Remember (Jedd Johnson) - The holiday season is notorious for making you put on weight, due to all the parties, all the shopping, all the fast food, and other liberties. This year, you change that, with November to Remember, by adding strategic cardio sessions to your days in order to amp up your metabolism. This year, you don't put on weight during the holidays - you take it off - make it a November to Remember.

<http://www.dieselcrew.com/NTR/november-to-remember.htm>

Operation: Gripper Certification (Jedd Johnson & Paul Knight) - Just like the Deadlift, Clean & Jerk, or any strength lift, technique is EXTREMELY important in order to be successful with Gripper training. These days, more than ever, strength enthusiasts want to become certified Captains of Crush, but the technique of gripper training continues to hold them back. Featuring Paul Knight, one of the best gripper guys in the USA, this DVD explores IronMind COC-specific training, to help you become the next Captain of Crush. <http://www.thegripauthority.com/OGC/gripper-certification.htm>

Phone Book Mass Destruction (Jedd Johnson) - You've seen the performing strongman doing the classic feat of strength of phone book tearing. To do this feat legitimately, it requires a keen balance between strength and technique. Unfortunately, most of the big time performers do not want to share their secrets for either of these facets, but with

Phone Book Mass Destruction, I will show you multiple techniques for tearing phone books, plus how to train the hands, wrist and forearms in order to not only wreak havoc on phone books, but also to bring up your lifts in the gym. <http://www.thegripauthority.com/phone-book-tearing.htm>

PUSH and CRUSH (Jedd Johnson) - The May 2013 Workout of the Month shows you how to combine Upper Body Push Training with Gripper Training in order to take your gripper performance to new heights. This method was shown to me by Paul Knight, one of the best Gripper Closers in the United States: <http://thegripauthority.com/push-and-crush.htm>

Road to the Record DVD (Jedd Johnson) – This Documentary shows you the exact Pinch Training I did from October to December of 2009 when I broke the record in the Two Hands Pinch. http://www.dieselcrew.com/road_to_the_record

Silver Bullet: How to Develop Monstrous Crushing Strength and Endurance (Jedd Johnson) - As if it isn't hard enough just to close big grippers. IronMind had to go and make it even more challenging with the Silver Bullet Hold. With the Silver Bullet Hold, you close down a gripper onto the Bullet, with 2.5 kilograms hanging from it and hold it for time. Demanding both gripper strength and holding endurance, the Silver Bullet Hold is the perfect desert for your Gripper Training workout. This DVD will show you everything you need to know to maximize your performance on this heart-pounded, hand-exploding event. <http://thegripauthority.com/SilverBullet/SilverBullet.htm>

Stone Lifting Fundamentals DVD (Jedd Johnson) – This DVD covers everything you need to know to safely add stone lifting to your training repertoire. Designed to benefit strongman competitors, strength coaches, and strength enthusiasts, we cover the basics of stone lifting as well as advanced stone training techniques. <http://www.dieselcrew.com/stone-training/>

The Grip Authority Instructional Site (Jedd Johnson) – Be a part of a community with monthly video lessons and workout plans for performing feats of strength and developing strong hands for all sorts of athletic endeavors. <http://www.thegripauthority.com>

Training with Napalm's Nightmare (Jedd Johnson) - The Napalm's Nightmare is the perfect blend of thick bar grip training, with full body dynamic power. The Napalm's Nightmare consists of two rolling handles, each nearly 2.5" in diameter. It connects to a loading pin, which allows you to go as heavy or light as you want or need to. And when you hook up onto the Napalm's Nightmare, it becomes the hardest kettlebell swing you ever did, and the nastiest two-handed deadlift you ever tried. Get Your Copy of this Full Length DVD, and find out what else you can do with the Napalm's Nightmare to take your strength levels to new heights!

<http://dieselcrew.com/store/product/napalms-nightmare-revolving-handle/>

Two Hands Pinch Workshop (Jedd Johnson) - Do you feel like your progress on the Two Hands Pinch has come to a screeching halt? You'd be surprised how big of an effect small modifications to your technique can have on your Two Hands Pinch abilities. In February 2014, I held the first ever Two Hands Pinch Workshop. Over the course of the day, John Manna was able to add nearly 30 lbs to his 2HP, by implementing these small changes you're about to find out. Would YOU like to add 30lbs to your 2HP? It's possible with this DVD.

<http://www.dieselcrew.com/learn-two-hands-pinch-grip-sport-training>

Ultimate Forearm Training for Baseball (Jedd Johnson) – The complete resource for forearm and grip training for baseball. Hit more home runs, hit for a better average, add velocity to your fastball, and increase your injury resistance by training the lower arms the RIGHT WAY! <http://www.advancedbaseballtraining.com/forearmtrainingforbaseball>

Ultimate Sled Dragging Manual (Jedd Johnson) – Sled dragging is a very beneficial type of training for athletes because of its potential to develop strength, power, speed, and to support restoration. Within this manual, we define dozens of sled dragging exercises which will bring a variety to your sled dragging that you never thought was possible.

<http://www.dieselcrew.com/dieselsled.htm>

The Wrist Developer (Jedd Johnson) - The Wrist Developer, made by David Horne's World of Grip, is a great tool used to train for wrist strength for reverse nail bending, and it is used in Grip Contests as well. This DVD shows you how to get the most out of the device, both for developing wrist strength for reverse bending and for finishing as high as possible in contests. <http://thegripauthority.com/wd/wrist-developer.htm>

Yoketober (Jedd Johnson) - Do you want to build bigger traps? Get a thicker upper back? Rounder shoulders, meatier triceps and just plain cast a bigger, wider shoulder? Then you need to do some specialized YOKE TRAINING. The Yoke is the back of the upper torso: the traps, the upper back, the posterior delts and the triceps, and in this program, you'll attack every part of the Yoke every single day of the month, the whole time tracking your goals and seeing how big of a monster you become by the end of the month. <http://dieselcrew.com/yoketober.htm>

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