Hand Gripper Training Manual

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Heavy Grips Certified:
Gripper King and Grip Monster*

*Lee Hayward has officially closed the HG300 and HG400 Heavy Grips Hand Grippers under authentic conditions of the Heavy Sports Inc. certification Program.

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I have been getting lots of e-mails lately asking me about gripper training. This stuff is really catching on, and so it should be! The grip is one of the most neglected aspects of strength training. Proper training with heavy hand grippers is one of the best and fastest ways to improve grip strength.

Gripper training will help increase the size of your forearms. Since I started training with heavy hand grippers I have gained over an inch in forearm size. A strong grip will also assist in developing the entire body from being able to better hold onto barbells, dumbbells, etc. This is especially true with pulling exercises such as dead lifts, barbell rows, and chin ups where very often you will lose your grip before your back muscles are fully fatigued. A strong grip is also important for many sports such as: martial arts, wrestling, rock climbing, gymnastics, tennis, baseball, golf, etc.

There are many reasons why you would want to have a strong grip. You can have a big bench press, or lean six pack abs. But if you got the grip of a teenage girl you can’t hide it, and sooner or later you’re going to get out done by somebody’s brother, somebody’s cousin, or somebody’s pop - it could be rather embarrassing.

This is exactly what happened to me a couple years ago. Let me tell you it was a major kick in the ass to get working on my grip strength. Here is how the story goes... we were out visiting family during Christmas holidays. They live in a small community so of course there is no gym of any kind and no one there works out at all.

Granny had invited us all over for dinner. And we were all sitting around chatting while we waited for dinner to be cooked. Now you have to realize that I am "the bodybuilder" of the bunch, the guy who "lifts da weights". So they all assumed that was a real strong young feller.
At this time I was getting ready for a powerlifting bench press meet and was regularly benching over 400 lbs. in training. I’m not saying that this is a world record lift by any stretch of the imagination. But a 400+ lb. bench press is respectable and I was feeling good about myself for having worked up to that level.

Anyway, after dinner everyone was taking about how full and fat they were feeling. You know what it is like at Christmas, after eating a big meal. Well to make the best of it, pop leaves the table and comes back with the bathroom scale and jumps on it to see how much weight he has gained. Just having fun and carrying on we all jumped on to see how heavy we were, etc.

Then my brother in law picks up the bathroom scale and with his hands and effortlessly he pinch grips the scale and it shot all the way up to over 250 lbs. Of course, since I’m "the bodybuilder" he hands the scale to me and says "how much can you do?". Well, I couldn’t turn down the challenge. So I got up and squeezed that scale and it only went up to around 170 lbs. Feeling a bit embarrassed and turning a little red in the face, I said "ah, I must not of held it in the right spot" so I tried again this time squeezing for all I was worth and I managed to get the scale up to 190 lbs. Then my brother in law looks over at me with a big grin on his face, knowing dam well he just whooped my ass in hand strength. It certainly knocked my ego down several notches in a hurry.

My brother in law has never even been inside a gym, let alone workout. He works as a boat builder so he is doing heavy labour and carpentry work all day long. He also heats his house with a wood stove so he is regularly out cutting wood, etc. Over the years he has built himself a strong powerful grip through good old fashion hard work.

In my case my job consists of sitting behind a desk and tapping on a keyboard. Not exactly the best way to build a mean set of mitts. And for some reason typing 40 words per minute is not seen as a very prestigious feat of grip strength by most people. In fact if I didn’t workout I would be a very lazy SOB.
Anyway, the reason that I told this story is to point out that just doing regular weight training workouts will NOT develop a really powerful grip. Yes, you will develop some grip strength just from holding onto the weights, etc. but this alone will never maximize your grip strength potential. You need to actually focus on grip training in order to build a powerful crushing grip.

Most people are first introduced to hand grippers via some cheap plastic handle sporting goods store gripper. Because these grippers very easy to close (approx. 30-50 lbs. of pressure) everyone got used to the idea of mindlessly pumping out easy reps, often with a T.V. remote in one hand and a gripper in the other.

Low resistance high rep gripper training is totally useless. If you want to develop a strong powerful grip, you need to approach it with the same attitude and mindset that you would for a maximum effort squat workout. Heavy hand grippers go up to over 300 lbs. of tension. And with some serious grip training, a lot of guys can work up to closing a 300 lb. hand gripper in less then a year.

Below I have outlined a good basic hand gripper training program. If you follow this gripper routine for the next 3-4 months you will dramatically increase your grip strength.
Note: in some of the pictures below you will see my "training partner" Sasha. She is a 1 ½ year old Black Lab mix. Her mother was a pure Black Lab, and her father is unknown, but he must have been a very smart dog because he got though the fence took care of business and left without getting caught.

Here is an overview of what you will need to properly train your grip.

- various strength hand grippers
- 5 lb. protein container ¾ filled with sand
- flat handle spring clamp
- chalk
- note book
- dog (optional)
Here is a close up shot of the hand grippers. You’ll notice that on some of the gripper handles I have black electrical tape wrapped around the bottom of the handles. This is to make it easier for the fingers to slide across the handle when closing the gripper. This will also help prevent scraping the skin off your fingers because the knurling on some grippers can be pretty sharp.

You can order Heavy Hand Grippers online at: www.LeeHayward.com/heavygrips.htm
Here is a close up shot of flat handle spring clamp. I am using a clamp from a barbell weight set. But any type of flat handle clamp will do, just check around at your local hardware store.

Here is a close up shot of the 5 lb. protein container ¾ filled with sand.

I’ll explain what all this stuff is used for later.
The gripper routine that I’m going to outline requires you to train your grip 3 times per week, preferably after a weight training workout. I usually train hand grippers when I get home from the gym. Your grip strength will be much greater when your body is warmed up and the blood is pumping.

If this is not possible then you should do some moderate physical activity before training your grip. Just don’t jump into your gripper training cold. Like any serious workout, you need to warm up first. You should also do a couple closes with an easy gripper to get the kinks and cracks out of your hands before doing any heavy grip work.

**Choosing Which Grippers To Start With**

Heavy Grips handgrippers are made in 50 lb. increments from 100 lbs. to 300lbs. so that you can train your grip similar to training any other bodypart - by increasing resistance.
If you have never used a heavy hand gripper before then it can be a bit tricky to know what grippers to start with. My advice is to just go and buy all 5 grippers. They are less then $20 bucks per gripper so it is not going to break your bank account. This is exactly what I did when I started serious grip training and I’m glad that I did. But if money is bit tight and you don’t want to spend that much cash at first you can start off with just 2 hand grippers.

For women and beginners I suggest that you start out using the HG100 and HG200.

If you have average grip strength then you start with the HG150 and the HG250.

If you have decent grip strength now you should start with the HG200 and HG300.

*There is a special package deal where you can save some cash by buying 2 or more grippers at a time at:*  
Hand Grippers 101.

Before we get in to the actual routine. There is some basic gripper stuff that you need to know. Every hand gripper has what is called a "dogleg".

Look at your gripper closely and you'll notice that the ends of the spring that attach into the handles, one side is slightly curved and one side is a bit straighter. *(You may have to look real close because sometimes it is not easy to tell).*

In this pic the right hand side is the "dogleg", notice that the end of the spring where it goes into the gripper handle is straight.
In this pic I have turned the gripper around and you’ll notice that the right hand side of the spring where it goes into the gripper handle is slightly curved. It may take you a minute to notice, so go back and size up the 2 pics closely.

The "dogleg" side (i.e. the straight side) is the one that you want to hold in the palm of your hand when closing a gripper. It will be slightly easier to close a gripper this way.
How To Properly Close A Hand Gripper.

Chalk the palm of your hand. But make sure to not get any chalk on your fingers. They need to remain smooth in order to better slide across the gripper handle when squeezing it shut. Hold the hand gripper with the dogleg handle high in the palm of your hand up near the base of your fingers. Push your thumb forwards to help prevent the gripper from sliding to the bottom of your hand.

My "training partner" Sasha, is watching closely to ensure that I have the right starting position.
Because of the high placement of the hand gripper you will need to use your other hand to help squeeze the gripper so you can wrap your fingers around the handle. This is called "setting" the gripper.

Once you have your fingers wrapped around the gripper handle you can squeeze the gripper shut. Make sure to keep your thumb pushed forwards to help prevent the gripper from sliding to the bottom of your hand.
You’ll also notice in the pic above that the pinky finger is not fully on the bottom of the gripper handle. You want to set the gripper so your hands are as far down the handle as possible for maximum leverage. If you were gripping closer to the spring it would make the gripper much more difficult. So setting the gripper with your pinky finger only half way on the gripper handle is the most advantageous position for maximum gripper leverage.

Before you actually get into any serious grip training you should practice this set up and proper gripper technique with a gripper that you can easily close. Do this over and over again until you have it down pat.

To see all these steps in action check out this video clip of me closing the Limited Edition Heavy Grips 400 Hand Gripper at: www.ironworkout.com/400grip.rm
The Actual Gripper Routine.

This routine is based around "heavy negatives" and "over crushes".

To do a **heavy negative** you take a hard gripper that is too difficult for you to close. Follow the set up tips that are outlined above for getting the gripper set into proper position. Then use your free hand to help "cheat" the gripper shut, or at least close the gripper as far as you can.

Once you get the gripper closed as much as possible with two hands. Remove your assisting hand and try to keep the gripper shut with your gripping hand for about 5-10 seconds or until the gripper peals your fingers open. Eventually, you’ll work up to being able to fully close the gripper with one hand. When this happens it is time to move up to a harder gripper for heavy negatives.
To do an **over crush** take a gripper that you can easily close with either your left or right hand. Follow the set up tips that are outlined above for getting the gripper set into proper position. Then mash that sucker for all your worth and keep squeezing it as hard as you can for 5-10 seconds.

Each workout alternate doing a set of heavy negatives and a set of over crushes. Aim to do between 3 and 5 sets of each. Rest a couple minutes in between each set. This will allow you to exert maximum effort into your grip training. Take your time and don’t try and rush things. Like I said before, if you want to develop a strong powerful grip, you need to approach it with the same attitude and mindset that you would for a maximum effort squat workout.

Write down and keep track of your workouts in a note book. This will be good for monitoring your progress as you go. Work both hands equally. If you’re like most people you’ll have one hand stronger then the other. But keep working both sides equally and you will improve the strength in your weaker hand.
Gripper Assistance Work.

This is where the protein tub ¾ filled with sand comes into play. You need to work the agonist and antagonist muscle groups. Just like you would with your regular gym workouts. You would never just train your chest but neglect your back (well some people do, but that’s another story).

The protein tub is used to work the extensors, the small muscles that open up the hand. Now these muscles are not very strong so you can’t really train them very heavy. But a great way that I have found to work them is by placing your hand inside a protein container, forcing your fingers open, and then lifting the container up by pushing your fingers open and holding it for time.
Start off by putting a little sand in the container at first until you get used to it. Then gradually add more and more sand to the container.

It is a good idea to hold the container over a chair or low to the ground. This way when your grip starts to fail you can quickly put the container down. Otherwise you’ll be left with a big mess. I did this before and spilled a full container of sand all over the floor.

Use a watch to time your holds, each workout try to hold for longer then you did for the last workout. Do 2 holds for each hand for maximum time. If there is a big difference between your left and right hands you can do an extra set of holds for your weaker hand to help it catch up with your stronger side.
Thumb Work.

This is where we will use the flat handle spring clamp. Hold the handles between your thumb and forefinger and squeeze the clamp shut. Hold it for as long as you can, until the spring forces your thumb and finger apart.

Again use a watch to time your holds, each workout try to hold for longer then you did for the last workout. Do 2 holds for each hand for maximum time. If there is a big difference between your left and right hands you can do an extra set of holds for your weaker hand to help it catch up with your stronger side.

That’s it, the entire basic hand gripper training routine. Follow this routine 3 times per week and you will see some big time improvements in your gripping strength within the next few months.
The **Heavy Grips** hand gripper series was developed for athletes who want to take the training of their grip strength to the next level.

These high-quality aluminum-handled handgrippers are made in 50lb increments from 100lbs to 300lbs so that you can train your grip similar to training any other bodypart-- by increasing resistance.

If you want to develop serious hand strength for a sport, or just want to impress your friends, than the **Heavy Grips** hand grippers is the only choice for you!

**These are the perfect hand grippers for Arm Wrestlers, Powerlifters, Strongmen, Bodybuilders, Rock Climbers, Gymnasts and anyone else who wants to develop a strong crushing grip and massive wrists and forearms.**

Get your very own set of Heavy Hand Grippers at: