

Armrestling

Pulling Big II

JIM SMITH, CSCS, CFT, USAW

www.DIESELCREW.com



...Pictures from Ukraine, John Brzenk vs. Tara Ivakin ...
www.PULLINGJOHN.com

After the overwhelming responses we had from the original article, [Armrestling – Pulling Big I](#), I knew I had to step it up on this next installment. Armrestling is a very demanding sport and if you think that the power is only generated in your arms then you are going to be in for a huge surprise. To generate power for Armrestling requires a systematic, dedicated approach to create an environment that addresses each athlete's specific needs. As we discussed in [Armrestling – Pulling Big I](#) a **Needs Analysis** is required when designing a strength regimen. A Needs Analysis for Armrestling tells us that development of the hand, triceps, biceps, elbow complex, shoulders, upper back, core and lower back - is essential for "pulling big." For basic definitions, please reference the first article in this series.

We will now look beyond isolation exercises to exercises that target prime movers and incorporate a more multi-joint approach. This will be discussed in length in the next 2 articles of this Armrestling series. Some isolation exercises are needed to bring up weaknesses and to provide rehab/prehab – but we know that closed chain exercises that incorporate prime movers, synergists and stabilizer complexes are more functional for this ballistic sport. Below you will find exercises that are non-conventional, but highly adaptable and modifiable for all the different types of pullers.

Top-Rolling a Gorilla:

Not only building tendon / ligament density and muscular endurance, these exercises require adjustments of the stresses while moving through varying movement patterns. Utilizing block weights, sandbags and sledgehammers will allow you to step up confidently against that guy who has gigantic hands and mitts like a gorilla. Developing the grip component is essential if you plan to slam a top-roll on your opponent. Dumbbells are a great tool, but we want to look at the "extension of the exercise" and see what other tools we can use. This first exercise is utilizing a **sandbag**. To be able to control this sandbag you must crush the bag as hard as you can and then make "adjustments" throughout the movement to control it. Hit this for reps and you will have an iron grip and you will start to develop the much needed side pressure for top-rolling.



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This next movement utilizes a **blockweight**. This is a broken end of a hex dumbbell and is utilized in the grip community to isolate pinch strength in the whole hand, individual fingers and teaches the athlete how to “flex their palm”. Developing grip strength in this open hand position will increase your overall hand strength and it will have carryover to over aspects of grip including crush, support and levering. Start the pull and then wrist curl the blockweight to finish the movement. If you can learn to “flex” your upper back (the sensation will be to squeeze your armpit), you will begin to see how to tie-in your core and ultimately your entire body while performing these exercises.



The last movement in the gorilla series is utilizing a **sledgehammer**. You can adjust the sledge pattern to incorporate all postural movements of the wrist – ulnar/radial deviation, wrist flexion /extension. Being able to over-power your opponents’ wrists will allow you to hook your way to victory. The sledgehammer movement will take you to the next level and really define your weaknesses as you will fatigue very quickly trying to stabilize your wrist. Another unique way to utilize the sledge is to fix your arm at a 90 degree angle and just perform radial and ulnar deviations in this position.



Going Around the World:

Each of the images below are videos. Please double-click on each image to start the video. These 2 exercises are part of the “Around the World” series I have been working on for increasing your tendon and ligament strength. Repetition is the key and functional strength is the result. These movements will also allow you to recover quicker after sustaining a sport related injury.



Block Rotations



Block Drops

Blockweight Reverse/Hammer Curls:

Proactive development of the brachioradialis is fundamental for the elbow joint to remain healthy. If a muscle crosses a joint it will affect that joint. You can see from the image below, the insertion and origin are on opposite sides of the elbow – therefore it affects the elbow. This means we want to pay special attention to developing the brachioradialis. And, once again, the blockweight will emphasize crushing pressure in the open hand position. The blockweight can be grasped by the top for hammer curls or by the face for reverse curls.

ORIGIN

Upper two thirds of lateral supracondylar ridge of humerus and lateral intermuscular septum

INSERTION

Base of styloid process of radius

ACTION

Flexes arm at elbow and brings forearm into midprone position; flexes the elbow, assists in pronation & supination

NERVE

Radial nerve (C5, 6)

NOTES

although brachioradialis is innervated by the nerve for extensors (radial), its primary action is elbow flexion; the neutral position of this muscle is half way between supination and pronation (elbow flexed, thumb up)





Axle Bicep Curls:

And finally in this installment, we want to finish up with some Axle Bicep Curls. Utilizing a 2" Axle is one way to take curls to a new level and make sure your getting the most benefit from your training. When performing this killer exercise, you must isometrically squeeze your traps, rhomboids, lats, posterior delts and core to stabilize the load.



Hope this helps – and look for my last installment in our Armwrestling series: Armwrestling – Pulling Big III. We will be discussing how to tie in more complex movements and we'll touch on some prehab/rehab protocols that will ensure total hand health and longevity in the sport.

Jim Smith, CSCS, CFT, USAW

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“Achieving Beyond Potential”

SPECIAL THANKS:

IronMind (www.IronMind.com)
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REFERENCES:

WEBSITES:

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