

Smitty,

*Hey buddy, I was hoping to get your opinion on the plate wrist curls. It's obviously a good all around movement as it involves the wrist, fingers, thumb, ect... But, do you think it is the best movement for wrist flexion strength? I need to increase my strength in this area and I'm debating between regular wrist curls and the plate wrist curl. I love both lifts but would like to hear your thoughts on this issue. Thanks in advance and God Bless you and the family bro.*

Austin

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Preface: Austin is a friend of mine, who has just started competing in the sport of Armwrestling.

Austin,

I have given a lot of thought to your question, and although plate wrist curls are an awesome exercise, I think there are better ways for you to develop the wrist (and total body strength) you need for Armwrestling.

When looking to develop a hand strength regimen to address weaknesses for any sport – you must first do your Needs Analysis. A Needs Analysis would address; Weaknesses, Previous/Current Injuries, Movement Patterns and Reverse Movement Patterns, Time Under Tension (TUT), Stability considerations and finally Physiological considerations. I will just address Austin's weakness request for his wrist but I will not neglect the tie in for total body involvement while pulling.

Here are a few Diesel exercises that I developed to take Austin's pulling to the next level.

### **IronMind Rolling Thunder Wrist Curls:**

Instead of doing plate wrist curls – I would do wrist curls with the IronMind's Rolling Thunder. I like to do these standing because of; the instability component, the bi-lateral core involvement component and the bicep static contraction component. If you perform wrist curls seated – you are eliminating valuable Time Under Tension for the specific supporting musculature that you need for this sport. With the IM Rolling Thunder (tied to a weight or tied to a dumbbell with a rope or chain) do your wrist curls. These will allow you to do wrist curls in an open hand position with your thumb opposing your fingers – simulating grasping your opponents hand while pulling - and the IM Rolling Thunder will rotate as you move through the full range of motion – the carryover will be incredible.



### **Behind the Back Wrist Curls:**

This should be done with either a thick bar, axle or IM Rolling Thunder. This is one of the tips the Diesel Crew suggests in their program designed to lift the Thomas Inch replica dumbbell. Unbelievable carry over to wrist strength. Hit this one for reps or load a heavy weight on and hit a static, flexed hold for time. Don't cry to me when you can't hold your toothbrush later.



### **IronMind Rolling Thunder Curls:**

A typical exercise for Armwrestlers is performing concentration curls, on a bench, for partials or full range movements. What I suggest is to still do curls, but do them with a IM Rolling Thunder (tied to a weight or tied to a dumbbell with a rope or chain) while standing. There reason for this of course is the thick, open hand position of the IM Rolling Thunder, but also, while standing you will be able to incorporate (activate) your lattisimus dorsi, posterior delt, tricep and core component that is essential for pulling. You can hit these for partial movements, or through the full range of motion.



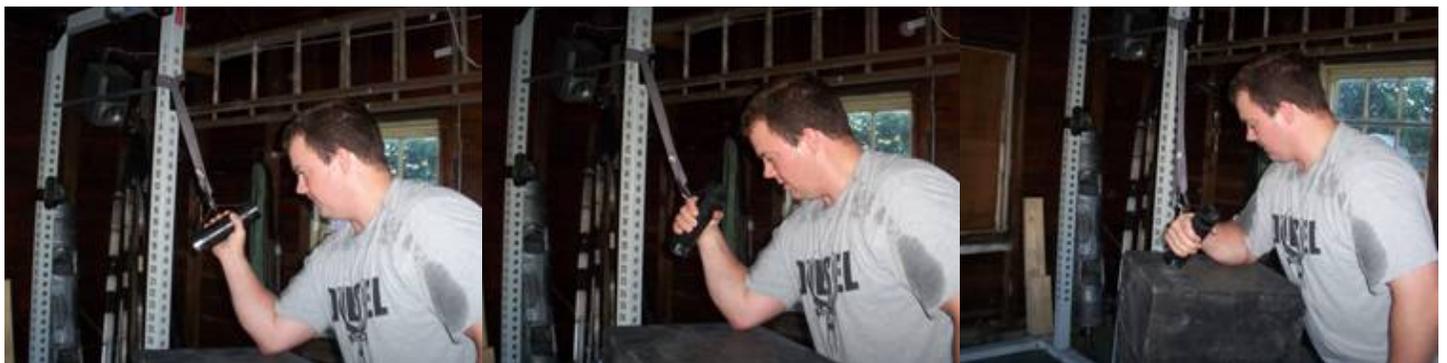
## IronMind Rolling Thunder Hooking and Pressing:

Now for the good stuff - setting up a hooking and/or pressing station. First, two quick definitions:

The press is one of the purest power moves in arm wrestling. Having a bulky upper body certainly helps with this one. If you are confident that you have superior upper body power (especially chest and triceps) to your opponent and are at least equal in bicep and forearm strength, this is a good move to perform. If, however, your opponent is much stronger than you are in the chest and triceps, using the press might be a bad idea. This move can be beaten by a quick toproll, as it is vulnerable to strong, quick backpressure. This is because your arm must be close to your body to perform this move, so if your opponent can pull your arm across the table you will not be able to win with a press. - <http://www.eiyc.com/press.htm>

The hook is the most common move in arm wrestling. You are probably familiar with the hook, because it is the move that is used when arm wrestling is portrayed in bars and elsewhere on TV. It is considered an "inside" move, meaning you are trying to beat your opponent's arm instead of his hand (as you do in a toproll). To be successful in a hook, you should be stronger than or at least equal to the strength level of your opponent. You need not have as good a bench press or squat as your opponent, because this strength counts very little in arm wrestling. Instead, try to gauge your forearm and bicep strength against that of your opponent. If you believe that you are not as strong as him or her, try toprolling instead. If, on the other hand, you compare favorably to your opponent, you can really blast him in an impressive manner with the hook. - <http://www.eiyc.com/hook.htm>

Tie a Jump Stretch band to an eye hook or solid object that is a little higher than your shoulder. Snap a carabiner on the band and then attach an IM Rolling Thunder. Now, setup your Armwrestling table or flat platform close and go to work. You can do hooking or pressing with this setup and increase the band tension as you get stronger. Now you have an Armwrestling setup with Accommodating Resistance!



## IronMind Gripper Top Roll:

Are you ready for a top secret exercise? First, a quick definition:

The toproll is a great move to beat your less experienced friends with. If you win with a toproll, you are winning with leverage instead of brute strength. This is because the toproll is what is referred to as an "outside" move. You are trying to put tremendous pressure on your opponent's fingers, causing his hand to open up and allowing you to gain leverage. When the opponent's hand opens up, it allows you to get further out on his hand (toward his finger tips) and makes it very difficult for him to "outmuscle" you until he regains his hand position. You, of course, should fight to maintain and improve your hand position, thereby taking his (possibly) more powerful arm out of the match! If you do it quick enough, he will have no idea what happened! - <http://www.eiyc.com/toproll.htm>

If you can control your opponents hand you can control the match. If you can apply the side pressure to your opponents hand quickly, you can control the match. So let's develop explosive crushing strength as we work through the entire movement pattern of a match. Create the Jump Stretch band setup as described in the previous example. Everything is the same, except instead of snapping an IM Rolling Thunder on the carabiner, snap onto the looped spring of an IronMind Captain's of Crush gripper. Crush the gripper closed (no set) and hit the pull against the band tension.....nice! Now, you will be working your crush and building the tendon, ligament strength through the functional movement pattern for Armwrestling. Note: It is best to start out with keeping your thumb pointed straight up and facing the Jump Stretch band as you perform the exercise. This one's a keeper!



## Thick Rope Pull-ups:

And finally – for this installment – thick rope pull-ups. Looping a thick rope up high on your pull-up apparatus and doing pull-ups with it - is unbeatable for creating dominating crushing hand strength and tendon and ligament strength in the hand and wrist. At the same time you will be developing the upper back stability needed to pull big.



Hope this helps – and look for my next article – that explores more insane exercises to help Armwrestlers get to the next level.

Jim Smith, CSCS, CFT, USAW

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