

GRIP NATION

Jim “Smitty” Smith
The Diesel Crew

When I go into a commercial gym, I usually laugh to myself when I see the **uniform**. We all know what the **uniform** is...the guy with the pressed tank top, matching shorts, gel'd hair, wears his belt the whole time he's in the gym and makes cell phone calls periodically in between sets on the smith machine. I prefer to watch the guy that is by himself, torn shirt, working hard and concentrating on the task at hand. I then realize hey – this guy is the janitor.... Seriously though, the person who is more worried about better his performance and less about his image – is the athlete who will win.



Neil Posillico

The athletes who win understand one thing – “completing the chain.” And if they don't understand it, then they need a strength coach to empower them with this knowledge. Full power cannot be achieved if there is a weakness in the chain - the chain being the athlete's body. We also must realize what power is when considering performance of the athlete. Power is achieved from the ground up, from the core out, and from the hands in. Only when these aspects have been addressed can $F=ma$ happen optimally. Comprehensive strength programs should include aspects of Powerlifting, Strongman training, Olympic weight lifting and the transitional breakdowns,

nutritional strategies, cardiovascular training and flexibility considerations. One key element that is most always missing from these protocols is the complete development of the athlete's **GRIP**.

Over the last 2 years, there has been an insurgence in the **GRIP** community. Even though GRIP legends like David Horne and Richard Sorin have understood the importance of the development of the hands for years, only recently has it become an acceptable essential element of strength training programs.

When developing an athlete's **GRIP**, all aspects must be considered. (See Table 1)

Table 1

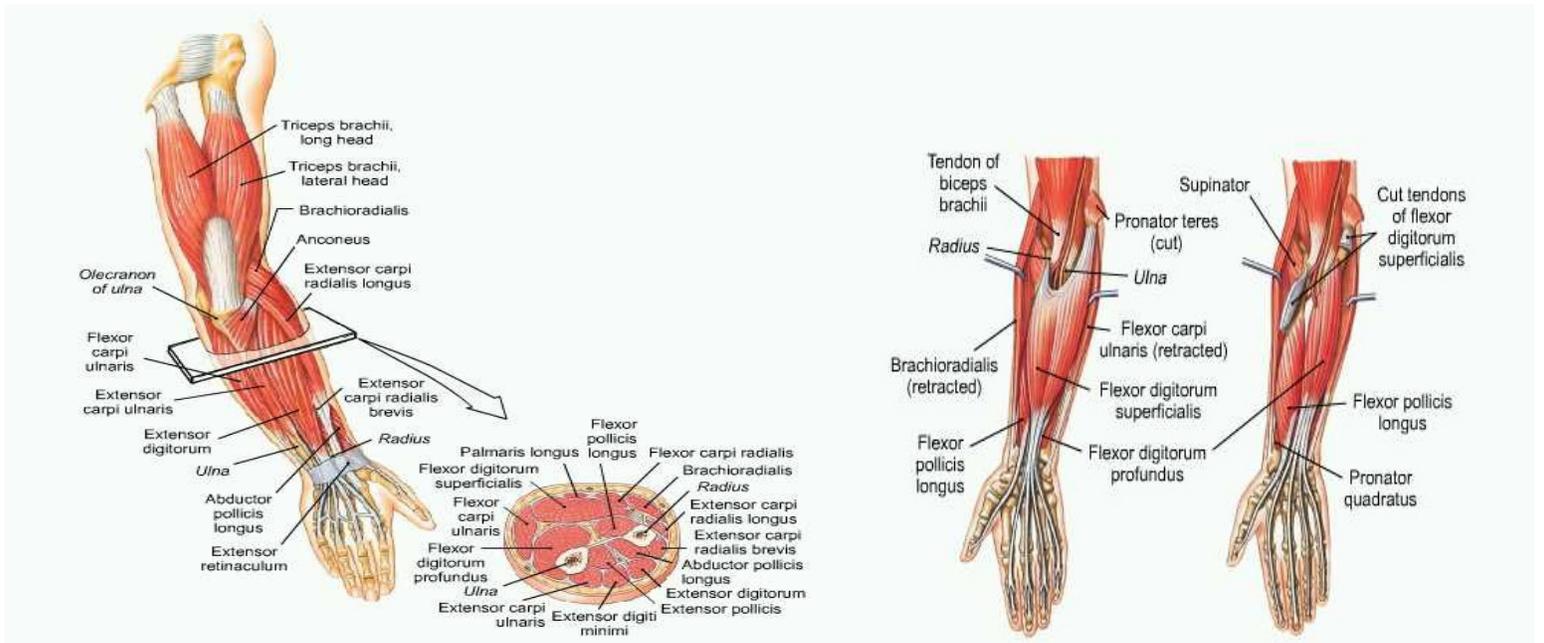
| | | |
|----------------|---|--|
| CRUSH | Creating hand strength through a distance quickly | Grippers, Sandbag, Coin bag, Plier lifting, Wire cutting, Towel Training, Eagle Claw Training |
| SUPPORT | Static hand strength, fat bar lifting - can be incorporated into every exercise; ie olympic lifts, deads, presses, rows, etc... | Fixed Thin/Thick Bar, Kettlebells , Clubbells, Rotating Thick bar, Rope Training, Double Overhand DL, Four Finger DL, 2 Finger Alternating DL, Farmer's Hold / Walk |
| PINCH | Static hand strength with open hand - generally the thumb is opposing | Wide / Narrow, Block Weight Training (Whole Hand, Finger Specific), Brick Lifting, Stone |

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|------------------------|--|---|
| | the fingers | Holds |
| LEVERING | Flexion, Extension, ulnar / radial deviation, rotation every angle | Sledge (all angles), 2 hand Sledge, Plate Wrist Curls, Kettlebell , Clubbell, Stone Padlocks |
| BENDING/TEARING | Combining all components of GRIP and transferring that strength through the body | Short Steel, Long Steel (scrolling)/phone book, cards |
| EXTENSOR WORK | Needed to maintain balance of hand strength and keep carpal bones aligned properly and ensuring proper spacing for carpal tunnel | Jar lifting, Rubberband, Sand/Rice bucket, Sledge – Finger Walking |

Pavel has known this all along. He has always stated the following example. Make a tight fist. You will see that not only does your hand tighten, your forearm tightens. If your forearm tightens, your bicep/tricep tightens. If your bicep/tricep tightens, your shoulders tighten. And so on across your shoulders and back – **“completing the chain.”** This has now become the basis for including **GRIP** into the power equation.

The complexities of the Arm from the elbow down, will illustrate Pavel’s enlightening statement. (See Image 1) You will see the muscles of the hand cross the wrist, and the muscles of the forearm cross the elbow. Now we all know, if a muscle crosses a joint it affects that joint. This fact is true for all instances.

Image 1



Now we can see, it doesn't matter if you are a Powerlifter holding the bar while benching or squatting, or a hockey player holding a stick or even a football player making a tackle or a catch – **GRIP** strength will make a huge difference in the outcome of each scenario. While benching you must squeeze the bar until you have "white knuckles" and pull the bar apart during the concentric phase of the lift. If you squeeze the bar, it will maintain the contraction of your upper back and shoulders providing a stable base to perform the lift. If you are a hockey player, you must not only maintain a strong **GRIP** on the hockey stick, but you must also have strength in all postural movements of the wrist. Finally, if you can just barely grab a football jersey by your finger tips trying to make a tackle, you better have a strong crush grip or you'll be sucking turf.



Jim Wendler
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Please look for future articles on how to develop each aspect of grip, how to incorporate grip into your program (developing a needs analysis, frequency) and prehab/rehab considerations.

Bio:

If you are part of the Grip community you probably have already heard of the Diesel Crew. The Diesel Crew was founded by Jim Smith and Jedd Johnson and their motto is "***Achieving Beyond Potential.***" Their athletes are subjected to many different conventional and non-conventional training methodologies, including (but not limited to); Powerlifting, Strongman training, old Strongman training, Dinosaur training, Olympic weight lifting and **GRIP** strength. These two have been very busy this year.

The Crew has been traveling to Powerlifting seminars, traveling to the Night of Strength II (Roger LaPointe - Atomic Athletic) at the 2004 Arnold Classic, presenting at the 2004 NSCA Pennsylvania State Clinic, competing in the 2004 Massachusetts State Strongman Championship and now putting on the largest Grip strength/hand strength contest this year. The Diesel Crew presents... "***Global Grip Challenge 2004.***"

Saturday, September 18th in Wysox, Pennsylvania. The contest will feature the "Best of the Best" including today's top Grip Strength athletes, along with Grip's rising stars. All facets of Grip will be tested in this grueling 1 day event. Contest events will be; Grippers, Rolling Thunder, Vertical Bar, 2 Hand Plate Pinch and Short Bending. Prizes and trophies will be given out to the top 6 place finishers with cash prizes going to the winners of the Special Events after the contest. "You Want It...Come and Get It". Please see www.DieselCrew.com for details. Special thanks to all our sponsors: Dragondoor, Sorinex, IronMind Enterprises, Inc., Heavy Sports (Heavy Grips), David Horne, Atomic Athletic, Elite FTS, Total Performance Sports (TPS), Fat Bastard Barbell, Robert Baraban, North American Strongman Society (NASS).

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"Achieving Beyond Potential"