



Training with IronMind's Crushed to Dust™! Grip Tools

John Brookfield



Feel free to remove this booklet from your catalog and use it to help you train for maximum benefits with IronMind's Crushed to Dust™! grip products.

Introduction

Since 1990, we've been *the* hand strength specialists, recognized around the world as the leading supplier of grip tools. Our grip tools are designed to develop all essential components of grip strength: crushing, pinching, supporting, wrist-forearm, open hand and fingers, extensors, and active rest and rehabilitation. In addition, our grip products are made with a variety of athletic and functional applications in mind, and are used by everyone from strongmen, Olympic lifters, and golfers to law enforcement officers, musicians, martial artists, special forces . . . the list goes and on . . . archers and arm wrestlers, throwers and rowers, firemen and football players, rodeo riders and rock climbers . . . you get the idea . . . not to mention grip enthusiasts, those who want strong lower arms and hands for their own merit.

Our customers often ask us for recommendations on which products to use for their specific goals or passions, how to best train their lower arms, and more specifically, how to train using our grip tools in conjunction with one another. To that end, we have turned to the acknowledged expert in the field, grip master *extraordinaire* John Brookfield, for his advice on training with IronMind's Crushed to Dust™! grip tools. John has reviewed our products and created an excellent road map for choosing and using IronMind's panoply of grip devices. In addition, he has answered some frequently asked questions which alone may inspire you to try some new things and reach new levels of accomplishment.

Whether you're on your way to being certified for closing our No. 3 or No. 4 Captains of Crush gripper or are in pursuit of greater lower arm and hand strength for your specific sport or endeavor, we think you will find this advice perfect for your goals.

All the best with your training!

John Brookfield on IronMind's Crushed to Dust™! Grip Tools Their Functions and Key Users How to Train With Them Questions and Answers

As many of you know, IronMind Enterprises has a wide variety of tools to develop your lower arms. IronMind is also considered to be the authority on functional grip strength. I can honestly say, with all my years in the strongman field, that IronMind has earned this title. When it comes to lower-arm strength, they have developed a grip arsenal that is just about all you could possibly need for your chosen battlefield.

Often people have questions about **how or why they should use a particular product for their chosen sport** or activity and what types of athletes or trainees would most profit from using each particular product, so we will cover that first, on a product-by-product basis. Please note that I cannot cover all possible users and their specific applications, so try to find the category that best fits your needs; for example, if you're a firefighter, you might look at *wrestlers, law enforcement, military*; if you're a Highland Games athlete, you'll want to look at *throwers*. Also, just because you don't find your specific sport or endeavor on the list doesn't mean that the products or routines aren't for you—I have focused only on the key groups.

Next we'll talk about training, a topic that I am asked about frequently. People often want to know how to use a number of the grip products in concert with each other; specifically, they want routines, including sets, reps, frequency, and order of exercises. A handful of you know that I am not much at sticking to routines myself; however, I realize that they are vital to most people for getting started and for structuring their training. We will provide optimal routines for specific sports or applications using the IronMind grip tools, explaining why each routine will give you a huge advantage over the competition in record-breaking time.

Last, but not least, is a question and answer section. I have answered a number of questions that I have been asked over the years. You will probably want to look at this section closely; while some of the questions will be typical or elementary, others may show you something you never even thought of before and may be real eye-openers to the true grip masters out there. By and large, I believe the questions and answers will highly motivate you.

IronMind's Crushed to Dust™! Grip Tools: Their Functions and Key Users



1 Captains of Crush® Grippers

As many of you know already, the world-famous Captains of Crush Grippers

come in five strengths and are all highly durable and professionally made for consistency and long life. The approximate strengths of these grippers are as follows:

Trainer – 100 lb.
No. 1 – 140 lb.
No. 2 – 195 lb.
No. 3 – 280 lb.
No. 4 – 365 lb.

The rating listed for each gripper is the poundage required to completely close the gripper, or to touch the handles together. While the poundage listed can vary slightly, the Captains of Crush grippers are amazingly consistent, accurate, and durable. These grippers have become popular around the world with strength athletes of all kinds, not only as a way to train your grip to the utmost, but also to gauge or measure the strength of your grip. To anyone not familiar with the Captains of Crush grippers, the average gripper purchased at Wal-Mart or the local sporting goods store requires around thirty pounds of pressure to close the handles, which gives you some idea of the difference between them and the super heavy-duty and challenging Captains of Crush grippers. Remember, the easiest Captains of Crush gripper, the Trainer, requires about 100 pounds of pressure to close it, so it is around three times as difficult as the traditional gripper.

You may also be interested to know that a test done years ago showed that the average man was able to squeeze 112 pounds of pressure on a hand dynamometer (a special device used often by physical therapists and orthopedic physicians to measure hand strength). The test consisted of one thousand males squeezing the device with their dominant hand. I bring this

up to once again show you that the average man with the 112-pound squeeze would barely close the 100-pound Trainer and fall short on the 140-pound No. 1 gripper, which shows that the ratings of these grippers are well-devised and right on target. They are truly the world's best for building your crushing grip—and many types of athletes require a good crushing grip to enhance their performances.

With this in mind, let's look at a few groups that would profit from the grippers in particular; however, I would like to mention that these grippers are good for all strength athletes: they can be good by any athlete as a warm-up if nothing else.

Captains of Crush® Grippers: Target users

- *Baseball* – helps the hands to work in conjunction with the bat as one piece at the point of impact, resulting in more home-run power as well as bat control
- *Wrestlers, law enforcement, military* – strengthens grip for grappling, throwing, and holding an opponent; steadies hand for better weapon control
- *Karate, boxers* – helps in punching and striking power so the hand is harder and more stable during the strike
- *Strongman* – enhances ability in steel bending, weight carrying, lifting heavy objects, pulling heavy ropes, etc.
- *Olympic lifters and powerlifters* – increases ability to hold on to the bar in the clean and snatch, as well as for a heavy deadlift
- *Arm wrestlers* – improves ability to counter or dominate an opponent's hand techniques, as well as to equalize an opponent with a larger hand
- *Throwers* – helps to stabilize and strengthen the hand in the throwing motion
- *Tennis, golf* – strengthens and stabilizes the lower arm, wrist, and hand during the swing
- *Aspiring Captains of Crush* – this is the weapon of choice, so you have to be able to close it!

2 Go-Really Grip™ Machine



The Go-Really Grip™ Machine takes Olympic plates and has a smooth feel to the squeeze. I have a great appreciation for

this type of grip-training device because it was a plate-loading grip machine that got me interested in trying to develop the strongest grip in the world. I will say briefly that this grip machine develops a great crushing grip and that the same list of performers as for the Captains of Crush Grippers would greatly profit from this tool. Also, this machine will develop the hands in the same way as the grippers.

Two advantages the Go-Really Grip Machine has over the grippers is that, first, both hands can be worked together, which saves time and also has a tendency to develop both hands equally. Second, this grip machine can be used by someone working out very lightly who may find even the Trainer a little bit too heavy, or by someone training at the in-between spots, trying to move from one gripper to the next. The list of target crushing strength groups is the same as that for the Captains of Crush grippers; and as with the grippers, this machine is great for absolutely anyone interested in building stronger hands.

Go-Really Grip Machine: Target users

Same as for Captains of Crush® Grippers (see 1. above).

3 Little Big Horn



Designed to give you the same test of hand strength as that of lifting an anvil by the horn, a test that goes back to the blacksmith days, the Little Big Horn is a tapered piece of steel with one end larger than the other. Either end can be gripped with the hand around the horn, and either end can be attached to a loading pin with the desired weight you wish to hoist. The anvil lift develops your grasping strength, especially important for grappling situations, as well as bat or racquet sports.

Little Big Horn: Target users

- *Baseball* – simulates and develops the muscles used in swinging and controlling the bat
- *Wrestlers, law enforcement, military* – strengthens the grip for grabbing and controlling an opponent
- *Tennis, golf* – helps develop strength and control for swinging the racquet or club
- *Throwers* – reinforces the lower arm throughout the entire throwing motion
- *Strongman* – builds entire lower-arm strength and is also similar to many tests of strength the strongman must perform
- *Arm wrestling* – builds entire lower arm and simulates the size of opponent's hand
- *Rock climbers* – strengthens the entire hand for static holds
- *Olympic lifters and powerlifters* – stabilizes the hand/wrist for pulling off the ground

4 Bag of Nails™



The Bag of Nails originated from the classic feat of bending a 60-penny nail, but it provides an element of standardization and consistency you wouldn't ordinarily find. The kit includes pieces of round steel bar stock of different levels of bending difficulty,

with hand pads and instructions to help get you started down the bending road. Steel bending is fun, and it also develops a certain type of strength that absolutely nothing else can equal.

Bag of Nails: Target users

- *Baseball* – develops twisting and turning strength in the hands and wrists that controls the bat
- *Wrestlers, law enforcement, military* – develops hands and wrists for enforcing holds on opponents
- *Karate, boxers* – strengthens the tendons, ligaments, and joints where the hand and wrist come together, resulting in greater striking power.
- *Strongman* – helps with steel bending itself and builds strength for overall performance
- *Arm wrestling* – develops tremendous power in wrists that enhances all techniques
- *Tennis, golf* – improves hand and wrist tie-in for greater strength and control of racquet and club

5 Close the Gap Straps™



These straps are made to help you move from one level of Captains of Crush grippers to the next, which, of course, builds your crushing strength. They are based on the concept of “strap holds,” which I invented, so you know how much I think of them.

You attach the weight plate of your choice to the looped end of the strap and squeeze the gripper shut on the other end of the strap, lifting the weight off the floor. There are two thicknesses of straps to give you variety and help get you past your sticking points with the grippers. You can either lift the weight for time or see how much weight you can lift.

Close the Gap Straps: Target users

Same as for Captains of Crush® Grippers (see 1. above).

6 The Claw Curl™



The Claw Curl allows you to do curls with your fingers extended for a greater range of motion, giving you a workout that has a different feel from anything you have probably experienced before. It forces each finger to pull its own load, resulting in greater hand strength. The Claw Curl can also be used to gain size in the forearms if you use lighter weight and do high repetitions—it seems to give you a great pump. I also highly recommend this product for those trying to keep their hands healthy and to gain dexterity.

The Claw Curl: Target users

- *Karate, boxers* – strengthens individual fingers for increased striking and gouging capability
- *Rock climbers* – strengthens digits individually and simulates many hand-holds the climber encounters
- *Musicians* – builds finger strength and develops muscle control and dexterity in all digits
- *Arm wrestlers* – strengthens fingers and helps dexterity used in the top roll
- *Hand health* – keeps your hands and fingers in good general health as you work your fingers in a bigger range of motion
- *Aspiring Captains of Crush* – builds individual finger strength for a stronger squeeze

7 Eagle Loops™



Eagle Loops are similar to the Claw Curl except that they are generally used in a static hold with your hand somewhat open. They will develop great strength for rock climb-

ing and the clawing and jabbing techniques of the martial artist. Because of the open hand position, musicians playing the guitar or harp will benefit.

Eagle Loops: Target users

- *Karate, boxers* – clawing and jabbing techniques
- *Rock climbers* – perfect, actually simulates handholds
- *Musicians* – simulates open hand positions
- *Arm wrestlers* – simulates gripping opponent's hand
- *Aspiring Captains of Crush* – builds overall finger strength: each finger and thumb needs to be a strong individual, to work effectively together as a team

8 Blockbuster Pinch Grip Block™



The Blockbuster Pinch Grip Block gives you a great way to test and build your pinch-gripping ability. Pinch-gripping may be the best way to build true usable, functional hand strength because you are

using your entire hand, the thumb as well. The thumb is vital to your hand strength and health. With this block, you can lift with any combination of your fingers and thumb.

Blockbuster Pinch Grip Block: Target users

- *Wrestlers, law enforcement, military* – greatly enhances the grappler's ability to control and hold an opponent, especially due to greater thumb strength
- *Karate, boxers* – strengthens entire hand and wrist, resulting in greater striking power
- *Rock climbers* – strengthens digits and simulates many handholds on the rocks
- *Strongmen* – builds the hand in ways that will enhance many tasks that the strongman is called on to perform
- *Hand health* – pinch-gripping is recommended for general hand health, to develop and condition the thumb
- *Baseball* – strengthens the entire hand, with emphasis on the thumb to handle force when the ball hits the bat
- *Throwers* – improves overall hand strength and stability for the throwing technique
- *Arm wrestlers* – stabilizes wrist and hand throughout the pulling technique
- *Tennis, golf* – strengthens and stabilizes the lower arm, wrist, and hand during the swing
- *Aspiring Captains of Crush* – builds thumb and finger strength for a more powerful hand overall

9 The Stacker™



The Stacker is used to develop the wrists by placing your hand under the end of the Stacker and lifting it, and some added weight, off a table or bench. The leverage factor also makes this lift a great finger developer.

Training with the Stacker involves a static hold type of lift that is useful for arm wrestlers, and the stress placed on the wrist is effective for building a stronger swing in baseball or tennis.

The Stacker: Target users:

- *Baseball, tennis* – enhances wrists for batting and control of bat or racquet
- *Musicians* – simulates hand position of guitar and harp players
- *Throwers* – strengthens and reinforces wrists for longer throws
- *Arm wrestlers* – strengthens wrist for all techniques

10 Hub-style Pinch Gripper™



The Hub is a small round steel circle that simulates the hub of old York plates of long ago. Years ago a feat of strength consisted of

grasping the 45-pound plate by the hub with your finger tips and thumb and lifting the plate off the ground or a bench. This type of pinch-gripping is a little bit different from most but is very effective. Once again, it simulates a grip that a rock climber might encounter or a hand position a martial artist might use for striking or jabbing.

Hub-style Pinch Gripper: Target users

- *Karate, boxers* – enhances striking and gouging techniques
- *Rock climbing* – develops finger strength and simulates handholds on rocks
- *Musicians* – develops individual digit strength for playing instruments
- *Arm wrestlers* – builds individual digit strength for top rolling
- *Baseball* – strengthens the entire hand, with emphasis on the thumb to handle force when ball hits the bat
- *Throwers* – improves overall hand strength and stability for the throwing technique
- *Arm wrestlers* – stabilizes wrist and hand throughout the pulling technique
- *Tennis, golf* – strengthens and stabilizes the lower arm, wrist, and hand during the swing
- *Aspiring Captains of Crush* – builds thumb and finger strength for a more powerful hand overall

11 Outer Limits Loops™



The Outer Limits Loops are designed especially to train the extensors, or the muscles used to open your hand, by doing static holds. This is a movement seldom thought of even though your hand opens as often as it closes. By training these muscles and tendons, you not only avoid injuries, you will also gain strength. I

have already written a lot about how working the extensors helps overall hand strength so I will simply say this: the Outer Limits Loops are an excellent tool for training and developing the extensors, and the extensors should be worked by all. So, simply the list of target users is *everyone*.

Outer Limits Loops: Target users

Everyone, to build overall hand strength.

12 Titan's Telegraph Key™



This piece of equipment has long been a favorite of mine. It allows you to

work both hands at the same time, as well as individual fingers, and it also isolates your thumbs. In fact, the Telegraph Key is one of the best ways ever of developing your thumbs. Working on the leverage principle, it produces great results for hand health or any sport; portable, it is easy to use in the gym, the hotel room, or on your kitchen table. I give the Telegraph Key an A+ and recommend this product for everyone.

Titan's Telegraph Key: Target users

Everyone seeking any type of hand strength or health.

For *thumb* development in particular:

- *Wrestlers, law enforcement, military* – builds thumb strength to subdue opponent when grabbing arm, hand, ankle, etc.
- *Karate, boxers* – reinforces hand throughout striking, punching, gouging, and striking techniques
- *Arm wrestlers* – develops entire hand, including individual fingers, for more powerful grasp of opponent's hand
- *Hand health* – enhances circulation through entire hand: thumb and all digits
- *Aspiring Captains of Crush* – builds overall finger strength: each finger and thumb needs to be a strong individual, to work effectively together as a team

13 Apollon's Axle™



The Apollon's Axle is a specially made thick-grip barbell that holds Olympic plates (and just as you would expect from IronMind, the plate-loading ends are the official IWF diameter of 50 mm or 1.97"), and it's also the length of a regular Olympic lifting or powerlifting bar. The difference is that the bar is thick and this is what separates the men from the boys. The bar is perfect for all types of lifting, like cleans, rows, reverse curls, curls, deadlifts, and is a must for strongmen and any type of traditional lifters—it will test and build your grip whenever you use it. This bar has been used in some of the most prestigious professional strongmen contests in the world.

Apollon's Axle: Target users

- *Baseball* – greatly enhances wrist and hand strength for greater power and control of the bat
- *Wrestlers, law enforcement, military* – develops strength for holding, throwing, and grabbing opponents
- *Throwers* – develops strength in lower arms needed throughout the throw
- *Strongmen* – develops great lower arm strength and simulates many tasks of the strongman
- *Olympic lifters and powerlifters* – develops greater hand strength on the bar for all types of barbell lifting
- *Arm wrestlers* – develops entire lower arm

14 Dexterity Balls™



This product is close to my heart since I wrote the course that goes with the balls. These balls come in two different sizes. The course is designed to take the

balls from their basic use of massaging and lightly working your fingers to turning this ancient art into developing great hand strength and muscle control. How to do this is explained in the course, which shows you the exercise techniques with the balls and how you can continue to progress with the balls throughout your lifetime. You will be amazed at how diversified

these Dexterity Balls can be. I have actually gained total hand strength training with different balls, using no other hand strength training. Also, these balls are absolutely the best exercise product in the world for gaining dexterity and muscle control.

Dexterity Balls: Target users

- *Rock climbing* – helps build strength and control in each digit
- *Musicians* – develops strength, dexterity, and endurance of all digits
- *Arm wrestling* – develops strength and dexterity for the top roll
- *Hand health, rehab* – keeps hands in good general health and develops dexterity
- *Tennis, golf* – develops conditioning and muscle control needed in tennis and golf
- *Karate, boxers* – strengthens entire hand for striking, punching motions
- *Aspiring Captains of Crush* – builds overall hand strength and dexterity and improves circulation for recovery

15 Hardy Handshake™



Made to develop crushing strength and also to help you close

tougher grippers, the Hardy Handshake is a plate-loading device that works on the leverage principle, and was the original plate-loading grip machine designed to work like a Captains of Crush gripper. You can train light or heavy, and even do negatives. Portable, it can be used in the gym, in the office, or at home. I recommend it to anyone wanting to enhance his crushing strength, and especially to traditional lifters hanging onto heavy weights, such as when deadlifting or doing cleans or snatches.

Hardy Handshake: Target users

- *Baseball* – provides tighter grip on bat resulting in greater bat strength and control
- *Wrestling, law enforcement, military* – assists in grabbing, holding, and throwing opponents
- *Karate, boxers* – develops stability and strength of hand for greater striking ability
- *Strongmen* – enhances crushing strength needed for many strongman endeavors
- *Olympic lifters and powerlifters* – provides stronger hands for hanging onto heavier weights
- *Arm wrestlers* – builds strength for controlling opponent's hand

16 R-Ring™



This impressive ring is steel, 6" in diameter, and can be hooked to weights in a variety of ways. It, of course, simulates the handle on 56-pound or 28-pound

weights that are used in the Highland Games and thrown for distance and height. The R-Ring can be used to deadlift heavy weights as well. In fact, Steve Jeck has a couple of these rings attached to a short chain that is attached to some heavy stones that he uses for one-hand deadlifts and a heavy farmer's walk. Used in this way, these rings are a great hand strength developer as well as hand toughener. They are perfect for throwers and strongmen. The R-Ring™ can also be used as a test of strength for finger lifts, *a la* the old-time strongmen.

R-Ring: Target users

- *Karate, boxers* – strengthens and toughens hands for greater striking power
- *Throwers* – simulates grip used in many throwing events
- *Strongmen* – simulates grip used in many strongman events
- *Olympic lifters and powerlifters* – develops strength and hand toughness for hanging onto heavy weights

17 Wrist Reinforcer™



A popular and a versatile tool of the trade, the Wrist Reinforcer is designed to work your wrists and

forearms, with some emphasis on your hands. Using as little or as much weight as you want, you lever it up and down or even in circles and figure-eights, letting the weight at the other end provide the resistance. You can also use it for a club-type workout. The Wrist Reinforcer is a formula for success for baseball and tennis players, golfers, and arm wrestlers.

Wrist Reinforcer: Target users

- *Baseball* – develops tremendous strength in the wrists and forearms for batting
- *Throwers* – reinforces wrists and forearms for a great advantage

- *Arm wrestling* – builds dominant wrist strength, especially for applying back pressure.
- *Tennis, golf* – improves racket or club handling
- *Strongman* – develops strength in entire lower arm required for many strongman events, e.g., tire flips, Hercules Hold, car rolls

18 Heavy Hammer II Leverage Bar™



Similar to the Wrist Reinforcer and working on the same leverage-type principle, the Heavy Hammer II has a two-inch grip, which increases the grip component of the hand-wrist-forearm equation; think grip plus wrist. Lever the bar up and down, sideways, or behind, or in circles or figure-eights to strengthen your grip as you work your wrists and forearms. Like the Wrist Reinforcer, the Heavy Hammer II Leverage Bar is excellent for baseball and tennis players, golfers, and arm wrestlers.

Heavy Hammer II Leverage Bar: Target users
Same as for Wrist Reinforcer (see 17. above).

19 Snowball™ and Giant Snowball™



Very simply, the Snowball is perfect for anyone. It feels like a snowball when you squeeze it and it can be worked lightly or vigorously, anywhere you go. The Snowball is a must for hand health, providing a light active rest workout, and for anyone warming up on the golf course or the tennis court. The Snowball is also great for cooling down after a workout.

Snowball and Giant Snowball: Target users
Everyone, for active rest and cooling down.

20 One Wicked Wrist Roller™



Not a traditional wrist roller, the Wicked Wrist Roller has a 2-inch-diameter knurled steel handle with a 10-foot, climbing-grade

cord for maximum benefits. A versatile tool, the wrist roller allows you to pack tremendous muscular size onto your forearms and can help any athlete reap maximum benefits in his chosen field. It is also useful for keeping your hands healthy because you decide how much weight to use. Adding to its versatility, IronMind ingeniously designed the Wicked Wrist Roller so it can be used either free-style or threaded through a 1" or 1-1/16" bar on a power rack, for example.

One Wicked Wrist Roller: Target users
All athletes.

21 Rolling Thunder Revolving Deadlift Handle



The Rolling Thunder is a thick-handled, one-hand deadlift apparatus. A one-handed deadlift with a thick bar is hard enough, but this

deadlift handle revolves, making it very tough to hang on to. This product can be used to train your grip to the utmost, doing reps, holds for time, farmer's walks, etc., as well as to test yourself against others. The Rolling Thunder has become a world-famous test of grip strength that is frequently used at major strongman contests.

Rolling Thunder Deadlift Handle: Target Users

- *Baseball* – enhances grip strength for more batting power and control
- *Throwers* – builds strength in wrists and hands that stabilizes lower arms for longer throws
- *Strongmen* – develops strength in hands and actually simulates some events
- *Olympic lifters and powerlifters* – develops strength needed to hold onto heavier weights
- *Arm wrestlers* – helps develop strength to control an opponent's hand
- *Aspiring Captains of Crush* – provides the best of both worlds, building power in the fingers as well as overall hand strength

22 Twist Yo' Wrist™*



New for 2003, IronMind designed the Twist Yo' Wrist™ with the idea that it would extend the concept of its famous wrist roller to attack the forearms and fingers from a new angle, opening the door for gains in both muscular size and strength. Sure, a little

steady training on the Twist Yo' Wrist will make you look like King Kong in the kitchen, so you can impress your family ("Hey Mom, watch Dad open this peanut butter jar with just two fingers . . ."), but that's just the beginning.

Twist Yo' Wrist™: Target Users

- *Baseball* – increases ball control, strengthens and conditions the wrists
- *Wrestlers, law enforcement, military* – look at the name—need we say any more?
- *Strongman* – directly helps on such classic feats of strength as card tearing
- *Arm wrestlers* – control the hand and you'll control the arm, and that's because where the hand goes, the wrist—and then the arm—will follow
- *Rock climbers* – train for strength–endurance on a meaningful alternative to a standard wrist roller

23 Holle-It-Up™*



We have saved the best for last because this year we are proud to introduce a grip tool

with the finest pedigree imaginable: this little beast was invented by the Holle brothers who have allowed us to sell it. Sure, the most obvious application for this is as an Inch Elevator, as we put in our catalog, because it takes training for an attempt on Inch replica dumbbells to an entirely new level, but that's only the beginning of its value. When Nathan Holle, pointed to it and said, "That's all you need—that and your grippers, that covers everything,"

*Information on the Twist Yo' Wrist™ and Holle It Up™ was written by Randall J. Strossen, Ph.D.

we knew we had reason to take this very, very seriously. Latch on to it and see for yourself: the Holle-It-Up will prepare you to meet the Inch Challenge, but it will also boost your capability on thick-handled lifts in general, and target your pinch grip at the same time. Follow Nathan's advice: your whole arsenal of grip training tools should start with this and a Captains of Crush gripper—and it just might end there, too.

Holle-It-Up™: Target Users:

Everyone who wants stronger hands!

Routines

In this section we will look at training routines for each of the different strength categories on our list. Some of the athletes are similar; although each group has slightly different needs. The routines presented here, which include number of sets and reps, order of exercises, and how often to train, should be considered as a foundation—they are a place to start or a set of guidelines.

If you have read my books or my articles, you probably know that I often talk about learning your own body and your own needs, and how often and how hard to train for the best results for you as an individual. Each routine will show you the best way to obtain the results you desire, but once you get going on it, you will want to adjust it accordingly as you learn your own body's needs. Also, you will have to pick your own level of weight or resistance to start.

Aspiring Captains of Crush: 3 times per week

1. Warm-up – Go-Really or Hardy Handshake grip machine, medium weight, 6–8 reps
2. Rolling Thunder – 3 sets, medium weight, 5 deadlifts
3. Captains of Crush grippers – 3–4 heavy sets, 3–5 reps
4. Titan's Telegraph Key – *thumbs*, 3 sets, medium weight, 15–20 reps
5. Outer Limits Loops OR Eagle Loops or Claw Curl – 2 sets, light weight, 25–30 reps
6. Cool down with Dexterity Balls – 5 minutes per hand

Baseball Players: every other day

1. Crushing strength – Captains of Crush grippers or Go-Really or Hardy Handshake grip machine, 3 sets *moderately* heavy with 7–10 reps

2. Holle-It-Up, Little Big Horn, Blockbuster Pinch Grip Block – 2 sets of heavy lifts, 5 reps with each hand
3. Wrist Reinforcer or Heavy Hammer II Leverage Bar – 3 sets with each hand, medium weight until fatigued, about 15–20 reps
OR Twist Yo’ Wrist™ – 2 or more sets both directions, medium heavy
4. Stacker – 3 sets each hand, medium weight, 10 sec. holds
5. Cool-down – Dexterity Balls or Wicked Wrist Roller, cool down with balls for five minutes each hand. If you choose the wrist roller, do two *very light* sets to cool down without any real fatigue

Wrestlers, law enforcement, military:

3 times per week

1. Warm-up – Wicked Wrist Roller, 2 sets of average resistance with very light fatigue, if any
2. Pinching power – Holle-It-Up, Little Big Horn, or Blockbuster or Hub pinch gripper, 3 sets of heavy lifts, 5–6 reps with each hand
3. Thumb – isolate thumbs by doing Titan’s Telegraph Key, 3 sets *for thumbs*, 15–20 reps
4. Crushing power – Captains of Crush grippers, or Hardy Handshake or Go-Really grip machine, 4 sets of fairly heavy squeezes, 7–10 reps
5. Twist Yo’ Wrist – 2 or more sets both direction, medium heavy
6. Cool-down – light gripper or Snowball, one light set with light fatigue, if any

Karate, boxers, strikers: every other day

1. Warm-up – Captains of Crush grippers, or Go-Really or Hardy Handshake grip machine, 2 sets of light reps, about 15 reps
2. Thumb development – Titan’s Telegraph Key, Holle-It-Up, or Blockbuster or Hub pinch gripper, 3 sets of medium weight, 10 reps each hand
3. Crushing strength – back to Captains of Crush grippers, or Go-Really or Hardy Handshake grip machine, 3 heavy sets, 5–7 reps each hand
4. Outer Limits Loops – 2–3 sets each hand, light weight, 25–30 reps
5. Dexterity and muscle control – Dexterity Balls or Claw Curl, work until fatigued with balls, or 3 medium sets with Claw Curl, 15–20 reps

Rock climbers: 3 times per week

1. Warm-up – Claw Curl, 2 light sets, 15–20 reps
2. Holle-It-Up, Little Big Horn, or Blockbuster Pinch Grip Block – 3 sets each hand with medium weight, 20 sec. holds

3. Heavy work – Eagle Loops, 3 sets of chins to failure. If you can’t chin with them, do sets of heavy rows, 5–8 reps
4. Hub-style Pinch Gripper – 2 sets with each hand, medium weight, 10–12 reps
OR Twist Yo’ Wrist – 2 or more sets both directions, medium heavy
5. Cool down – Dexterity Balls, use them for a while and make them your friends

Musicians: every other day

1. Warm-up – Claw Curl or Wrist Roller, 2 sets of light weight until lightly fatigued
2. Titan’s Telegraph Key – 3 sets of medium weight, 15–20 reps
3. Dexterity Balls – work rotations in each hand for 10 minutes; as you improve, speed up rotations
4. Outer Limit Loops – 3 sets with light weight until fatigued, around 30–35 reps
5. Cool down – Snowball, Eagle Loops, or Claw Curl, one set until lightly fatigued

Throwers: 3 times per week

1. Crushing strength – Captains of Crush grippers, or Go-Really or Hardy Handshake grip machine, 4 sets somewhat heavy, 6–8 reps
2. Wrist Reinforcer or Heavy Hammer II Leverage Bar – 3 sets somewhat heavy, 6–8 reps
3. R-Ring, Apollon’s Axle, or Rolling Thunder – 3 sets of heavy deadlifts per hand, 6–8 reps
4. Holle-It-Up, Little Big Horn, Blockbuster Pinch Grip Block, or Wicked Wrist Roller – 2 somewhat heavy sets until fatigued
5. Stacker – 2–3 sets each hand, medium weight, 10 sec. holds
6. Cool-down – one light set on Captains of Crush grippers, or Go-Really or Hardy Handshake grip machine

Strongmen: 3 times per week

1. Crushing strength – 3 sets on Captains of Crush grippers, or Go-Really or Hardy Handshake grip machine, slightly heavy, 7–10 reps
2. Holle-It-Up or Little Big Horn – 2–3 sets per hand, heavy weight, 5–6 reps
3. Wrist Reinforcer or Heavy Hammer II Leverage Bar – 2 sets of heavy rotations or figure eights until fatigued
OR Twist Yo’ Wrist – 2 or more sets both directions, medium heavy
4. Crushing strength – back on grippers, one heavy set, 4–5 reps
5. Deadlifts on Apollon’s Axle, R-Ring, or Rolling Thunder, 3 sets heavy, 4–5 reps
6. Cool-down – Dexterity Balls or Wicked Wrist Roller, one set until lightly fatigued

Olympic lifters and powerlifters:

3 times per week

1. Warm-up – 2 light sets Captains of Crush grippers, or Go-Really or Hardy Handshake grip machine
2. Deadlifts – Holle-It-Up, Apollon's Axle, Rolling Thunder, R-Ring, or Little Big Horn, 3 fairly heavy sets, 5–7 reps
3. Wicked Wrist Roller – 2 hard sets until fatigued, medium weight
4. Back to deadlifts – Apollon's Axle, Rolling Thunder, R-Ring, or Little Big Horn, one heavy set, 5 reps
5. Cool-down – Dexterity Balls, light gripper, or Snowball

Arm wrestlers: 3 times per week

1. Warm-up – Claw Curl or Eagle Loops, 2 sets of light weight, 15–20 reps
2. Wrist Reinforcer or Heavy Hammer II Leverage Bar – 4 sets of heavy lifts each hand, 7–8 reps
OR Twist Yo' Wrist – 2 or more sets both directions, medium heavy
3. Stacker – 3 sets of heavy lifts off table, 7–8 reps
4. Crushing strength – Captains of Crush grippers, or Go-Really or Hardy Handshake grip machine, 3–4 sets of heavy squeezes, 5–7 reps
5. Thumb and pinching power – Titan's Telegraph Key, Holle-It-Up, Little Big Horn, or Blockbuster or Hub pinch gripper, 3 sets of heavy resistance
7. Cool-down – Dexterity Balls, become friends with them

Hand health: 3 times per week

1. Claw Curl – 3 light sets per hand, 20 reps
2. Thumbs – Titan's Telegraph Key for 3 sets of light resistance, 20 reps
3. Crushing strength – light grippers or Snowball, 2 sets of 20 reps
4. Dexterity Balls – become personal friends with them

Tennis and golf: 3 times per week

1. Crushing strength – Captains of Crush grippers, or Go-Really or Hardy Handshake grip machine, 3 sets of medium tension, 12–15 reps
2. Pinch grip – Holle-It-Up, Little Big Horn, or Blockbuster or Hub pinch gripper, 3 sets of medium tension, 10–12 lifts off ground with each hand
3. Wrist Reinforcer or Heavy Hammer II Leverage Bar – 3 sets until fatigued with medium tension, rotations or figure eights
4. Wicked Wrist Roller – 2 sets of medium tension until fatigued

5. Stacker (tennis) – 2 sets each hand, light weight, 15 sec. holds
6. Cool-down – Dexterity Balls, light gripper, or Snowball

Outer Limits Loops and Close the Gap Straps

I strongly suggest that all twelve athletes or professions listed do some work on extending the fingers as well. I didn't put that into each routine; however I suggest supplementing the Outer Limits Loops into every routine twice a week. The best time to do this is right before your cool-down exercise, doing 2 to 3 sets with light weight, using a good range of motion. Do around 25 reps or until you get a good burn or pump.

I also did not put the Close the Gap Straps into the routines. The straps should be used especially by the people who are gripper fans, trying to move up the ranks to close the next gripper but having difficulty. I suggest using these straps once a week during your routine after you are well-warmed up; try to lift as much weight off the ground as you can, using the gripper and the strap, instead of holding for time, as this method seems to produce better results. Try the heavy lifting 3 to 4 times with each hand for the best results.

Questions and Answers

In the questions and answers section, we will discuss a few basic questions that are frequently asked and also some that are unique and seldom asked; these more unusual questions may open your eyes to some interesting training concepts. Also, while many questions that I get pertain to the Captains of Crush grippers, I will touch on only a few of these, as many of these questions are answered elsewhere in the IronMind catalog and with the purchase of the product.

Q.1 How hard can the average man squeeze or how do I compare with the average man?

A. Earlier in the product section I mentioned that years ago, a test was conducted with adult males to test their grip strength, using a hand dynamometer, a special piece of equipment that tests your squeezing strength. The average squeeze, or maximum for crushing strength of the best hand, was 112 pounds of pressure. Now this might sound a little bit low, but remember, this is the average man, not the strength athlete. Also,

remember that the Trainer is about 100 pounds of pressure to close, and the No. 1 is 140 pounds to close, and most people I encounter usually can't close the No. 1 Captains of Crush Gripper.

Q.2 Is it possible to start training on a stronger Captains of Crush gripper that I can't close, like the No. 2 or No. 3, and eventually close this gripper without using the easier levels as stepping stones?

A. Of course you eventually can. I, myself, started with the No. 3 gripper, not even knowing or understanding about the different grippers. I simply kept trying to close it even though I wasn't even getting close. However, over a period of time I was able to close the No. 3, so you can see, it can be done. However, this method is the long way and the not-too-smart way to take the trip. It is much better to start low and work your way up through the ranks. The only time you might consider using the jump-ahead method on a heavy gripper is if you can almost close it the first time you try, but even then, you should use an easier gripper to train your hand properly and also to warm up.

Q.3 Have you ever seen someone close the No. 3 Captains of Crush gripper the first time he ever tried?

A. On one occasion I met a fellow at a program that I was doing who was not even familiar with the grippers. I happened to have the No. 3 in my bag, and for some reason, I pulled it out to show a few people. After several others tried without much luck, this guy squeezed it and completely shut it the first time. He handed it back and said, "That's quite a tough gripper you have there."

Q.4 Are the grippers going to help my hands stay healthy for the long haul, or will they cause arthritis and other hand problems?

A. First of all, I'm not a physician, but second of all, most physicians would not have a clue how to answer this question. I truly believe the answer is a simple one: anything that promotes circulation in the hands is good for longevity when the exercise is done on a consistent basis. The only drawback is when you overtrain and abuse your hands, straining them and not allowing the proper time to recover. To simplify this idea: train, don't strain.

Q.5 My two sons are 14- and 15-years-old and play football and baseball. They are pretty strong for their ages and can close the regular sporting goods grippers very easily.

Are they old enough to start with the Captains of Crush grippers?

A. The answer is a simple formula and is also similar to the last question. If these boys warm up with the regular sporting-goods gripper first, they can start trying the Trainer. If they can close the Trainer, or almost close it, they should be able to train on the Trainer. However, if they can't and they persist in trying, they could strain or injure their hands. If this seems to be happening, I would let them work with the sporting-goods grippers for a while and try the Trainer again in a few months.

Q.6 If someone can close the No. 2 Captains of Crush gripper, and I can't quite close the No. 2, does this mean that his hand is stronger than mine?

A. Not necessarily. You have to look at the big picture. In other words, you can probably find people who specialize in a certain feat, like the grippers, who don't have good overall hand strength. Many people who have great lower-arm strength may not be able to touch the handles of the No. 2 gripper. However, they may be stronger in many other tests of hand strength than the person closing the No. 2. This is why it is fun to train with the grippers; however, you must do a variety of lower-arm exercises to be truly strong functionally.

One last example, years ago Randall Strossen handed the No. 3 to Cleve Dean, the huge arm wrestling champ. Cleve got close but did not quite close the No. 3. The point here is that if someone thinks that just because he recently closed the No. 3 and got on the certified list his hand is stronger than Cleve Dean's, he's crazy.

Q.7 How easy is it to injure my thumb while pinch-gripping?

A. This is a good question. First of all, pinch-gripping is the way to train your thumbs and keep them from injury. However, as I mentioned in Mastery of Hand Strength, you can injure the thumb by hyper-extending it when you grasp something too wide in a pinch-grip position. Pinch-gripping too wide an object places great stress on the joint and hyper-extends it. Each person is a little different in this area and, of course, the person with the longer fingers and bigger hands can usually grip wider objects without injury. The good thing about knowing this potential danger is that you can pretty much tell just by grabbing an object if your thumb is at risk or not: if you feel stress on the joint, go to something narrower.

Q.8 Does the average man have large-enough hands to lift the Blob 50-pound York block weight in a one-handed pinch-grip?

A. Years ago when Richard Sorin introduced this weight to me, I wasn't sure if my hands were big enough to lift it, and I may even have leaned toward "no." However, as many of you know, I have been lifting it for years now with my small hands. So, the answer is "yes," although it may feel impossible when you grasp it because of the difficulty of the lift. I will say this, I do believe a small- to medium-handed man may be stretching it to be able to clean it to his shoulder and then ease it back to the ground.

Q.9 Doesn't regular weight training help my hand strength and why do I need to do specialized grip training?

A. Regular weight training or conditioning will help someone who has never done any exercise before. He will develop a slightly stronger grip. However, anyone who is serious about his sport or activity does some more specialized exercises to enhance his lower-arm strength, as well as to keep his hands healthy. I have countless older athletes tell me that they wish they had realized years ago the benefits of grip training and hand health, and had had access to IronMind's products.

Q.10 I have heard that the old-time lifters and strongmen had stronger hands than many of today's athletes. How can this be so?

A. This is a great question, especially if you think about all of the supplements on the market today being consumed by many athletes. One point I would like to make is that the supplements don't develop tendons and ligaments, which much of the lower arms consist of. The old-timers used to train their hands and wrists the way a person of today would train his pecs and biceps. They understood the importance of their hands. They also regularly used thick-handled barbells and dumbbells, the norm back then.

Q.11 How important is it to work the extensors, or the muscles that open your hand?

A. Working the extensors is very important for hand health and injury prevention. I started doing an exercise or two working the extensors for a few days a week a few years ago, and I can say without hesitation that my overall hand strength and endurance have increased because of it.

Q.12 Will bending steel help my wrist strength for other sports?

A. Absolutely. Steel bending, especially short steel bending, will develop tremendous functional wrist strength over a period of time, the type of wrist strength that can be used in any sport. I have always said that when my steel bending is strong, I'm strong.

Q.13 I can close the No. 2 Captains of Crush gripper five times. How much should I be able to pinch-grip?

A. There is no accurate answer to this question, which I'm asked all the time. People's pinch-grips seem to really vary, which is why you must train at pinch-style gripping as well as crushing strength. To have an overall great grip, you must train both, as well as your wrist strength.

Q.14 I've been trying to bend some nails now for a while with some success. The problem is that it really hurts the palms of my hands. What should I do?

A. This is kind of like a stone bruise that a runner might get on the bottom of his foot. One thing that might help is to use a little bit more padding, especially on the ends of the nail where it tends to dig into the hand. Also, nail bending does have a tendency to toughen the palms of the hands, which also can make the palms sensitive on the journey. My last point is a practical one, but not popular among the IronMind crowd: you simply might need to back off and rest them a bit.

Now it's time to have at it and make some great grip gains. Please contact us if you have any questions about this training information and our grip products at:

IronMind Enterprises, Inc.
P.O. Box 1228
Nevada City, CA 95959 USA

Tel: 530-265-6725
Fax: 530-265-4876

www.ironmind.com
e-mail: sales@ironmind.com



STRONGER MINDS,
STRONGER BODIES™

IronMind Enterprises, Inc.
P.O. Box 1228
Nevada City, California 95959
U.S.A.

530.265.6725
e-mail: sales@ronmind.com

www.ironmind.com

Copyright ©2003 IronMind Enterprises, Inc.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means without prior written permission except in the case of brief quotations embodied in articles and reviews.