

# Sandbag Training



Ever thought about training with them? No, well there is a whole new world out there for you; there are articles everywhere and even a web site dedicated to these versatile training tools, below is our guide to training tough.

Recently I dedicated a Strength and Conditioning workshop to sandbag training. The participants were, at first a little sceptical but after I demonstrated a few exercises they couldn't get enough, you name it they did it, snatches, jumping squats, Turkish-get-ups, double shoulder presses, farmers walks and my personal favourite balance board swings (nasty!). Sandbags are a great strength and conditioning tool, their unpredictable weight distribution makes your muscles and neuromuscular responses work overtime and as you can see, they can be applied to replicate any free weight exercise.

You will need a bit of space so your local gym is probably not the best idea, a local park or if you have enough room your garden is ideal, your neighbours will think you are insane but who cares right? If you are new to this way of training keep the weight low and start off with some basic movements, as your strength and co-ordination improves increase the weight by adding a couple of handfuls of sand. Have three to four bags of increasing weight and make sure you have two that are identical in weight for farmer's walks and other bi-lateral exercises.



The sandbags at the best of times are evil to get hold of and lets be honest if you train heavy then you are going to need excellent grip strength, any way you look at it sandbag training is going to challenge your grip potential and for an iron grip creator,

try out the farmers walk.

To begin you will need to have your own bodyweight distributed evenly into two sandbags (if you weigh 80 kg, each bag needs to be 40kg) dead lift the bags and hold them at your sides as a dead weight, all you need to do now is walk as far as you can until your grip gives out. Not only will this challenge your strength, it will fry your oxygen capacity and burn a ton of calories.

I have found that the best way to utilise sandbags is in circuit form. Choose five or six exercises that will utilise your upper and lower body, work between 6-10 reps (the top end if you are a new pupil) and work non-stop from one to the other, at the end rest for around 1 min, get yourself together and repeat between 4-5 times depending on your fitness level. For example:

- Depth squats
- Mean machines
- Squat and double shoulder press
- Jumping lunges
- Balance board swings
- Farmers walks

Whatever your training motives, sandbags can be added to spice up your rusty old workout. There is no denying that for a change of training scene and a multi-planar movement session sandbags fit the bill. Remember to keep it functional and please don't just stand there bicep curling, explore all possibilities and use your imagination that's what's its for!

Exercise with intelligence and stay safe.

By Dan Welch