

**The 101 Greatest
Exercises for Size
& Strength**

By Jason Ferruggia

Lower Body Exercises

Dead Lift- The dead lift is probably the single greatest exercise there is. Dead lifts work your traps, upper back, lats, lower back, biceps, forearms, glutes, hamstrings, and quads. If you could only choose one exercise, this would be the one to do.

A proper dead lift begins with the right bar placement and grip and stance width. Set the bar about an inch away from your shins, taking a shoulder width grip and a slightly narrower stance. With your head up and back arched, your body should be at approximately a 45 degree angle in the starting position. Start the lift by pulling up and back towards you, being sure to get a strong leg drive. Return to the starting position by sitting back and then lowering the bar, trying not to squat down until the bar clears your knees. Reset your position and repeat.



Trap Bar Dead Lift- This is performed like a standard dead lift except for the fact that your weight and center of gravity is distributed differently. This bar allows lifters who can not get into a proper dead lift position because of flexibility or other issues to dead lift with relative ease. It is easier to maintain an upright posture with the trap bar and thus it is less stressful to the lower back.



Rack Dead Lift- This is a standard dead lift performed off pins in a power rack. The pins can be set anywhere from an inch off the ground all the way up to upper thigh height. The higher you set the pins, the more weight you will be able to lift. These will do wonders for your upper, middle and lower back development and greatly aid in helping your full range dead lift. For those who crave incredible trap development, this is one of the greatest exercises you can do.



Snatch Grip Dead Lift- This is a dead lift performed with an extremely wide grip. Your index fingers should be in the outside rings when doing this exercise. This will increase the range of motion and add slabs of muscle to your hamstrings.



Dead Lift off mats, plates or boxes- Stand on a stack of rubber mats, forty five plates or a three to four inch box to perform this exercise. This will obviously increase the range of motion and put more stress on the lower back and hamstrings. Be sure to start light on this exercise and keep your back arched tightly.



Romanian Dead Lift- With an extremely tight arch in your lower back, begin by sticking your glutes straight back and out as far as you can. Be sure to keep your chest out and your shoulder blades squeezed together. Descend until your upper body is parallel with the floor and then return to the starting position by explosively pushing your hips forward and squeezing your glutes.



Dumbbell Dead Lift- This is done exactly like a standard dead lift except instead of holding a barbell you hold dumbbells in each hand. Begin the same way by standing up tall with your shoulder blades back and your chest out. Begin the descent by breaking at the hips and sitting back and down.

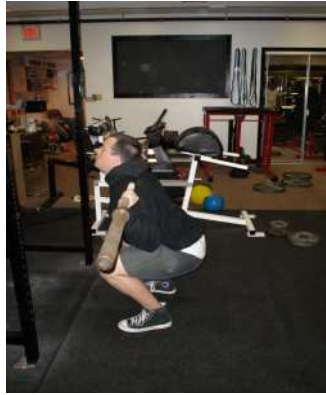


Dumbbell Romanian Dead Lift- This is executed in the exact manner of a barbell Romanian Dead Lift with the only difference being that you hold dumbbells at your side instead of holding a barbell in front of you.



Squat: The squat is known as “the king of all exercises,” for good reason. Aside from dead lifts, no other exercise will stimulate growth throughout your entire body like squats will. Squats will develop tree trunk legs and stimulate the release of testosterone while simultaneously jacking up your metabolism. In the early days of weight training, squats were one of the only exercises done on a regular basis. It is one of the most basic exercises you can do and one that we all perform nearly every day of our lives without even thinking about it.

Begin the exercise by getting into the proper setup. Before unracking the bar, make sure to take an even grip and squeeze your shoulder blades completely together. Try to take as close a grip as comfortably possible in order to create a bigger shelf to place the bar on. Rest the bar somewhat high on your traps and be sure to squeeze it as hard as you can. Take a slightly wider than shoulder width stance and point the toes out slightly. Keeping your chest held high and your head up inhale deeply and fill your abdomen with air. This is a key point and must be practiced. You do not want to breathe in through your chest and allow your shoulders to rise. Start the descent by breaking at the hips and sitting back and down. Go all the way down to below parallel, making sure to keep your back tightly arched and refrain from looking down. Once you have hit rock bottom, explode back to the top.



Cambered Bar Squat- This is performed exactly like a regular squat except with a different bar. This bar is great for those with shoulder problems who can not get into the proper squatting position with a regular bar. Since the weights are lower and will be in front of you in the bottom position, the cambered bar will work your lower back harder and is great for improving your straight bar squat.



Safety Bar Squat- This is also performed exactly like a regular squat and has the same benefits of the cambered squat bar including allowing those with shoulder problems to squat without pain. The safety bar will work your lower back harder than a standard back squat but and will also tax the upper back to a much greater extent than any other kind of squat. This is great for packing on mass in the upper back area.



Box Squat- This exercise is performed with a wider stance than most squats. You begin the ascent the same way except that you exaggerate sitting back even further than normal and try to keep your shins perpendicular to the floor without allowing your knees to travel forward at all. Sit down on the box and keep your entire body tight except for your hip flexors which should be relaxed briefly. After a slight pause, explode back up by driving your traps back into the bar and pushing out on the sides of your feet, while simultaneously driving your hips forward.



Barbell Lunge/ Split Squat - With a bar on your back, step forward until as far as comfortably possible and descend until your hamstring touches your calf. Pause for a second before pushing back to the start position. Be sure to keep your torso perfectly erect and get a good stretch in your hip flexor of your back leg.



Dumbbell Lunge/ Split Squat- This is performed exactly like the barbell lunge/ split squat except that you hold dumbbells at your sides.



Safety Bar Lunge/ Split Squat- This is also performed exactly like the standard barbell version with the exception being that you use the safety squat bar. This allows users with shoulder problems or range of motion limitations to do the exercise without pain.



Note: The difference between a lunge and a split squat is that in a lunge you step forward and backward, alternating legs that you step with on each rep. In a split squat you remain stationary throughout the movement and push yourself back up only until your forward leg straightens. After you reach lockout you immediately descend back into the bottom position with the same leg. Do all of the prescribed reps on one leg before starting the other leg.

Barbell Step Up- Stand in front of a 10-20 inch high box (depending on your strength, flexibility and height) with a barbell on your back and step up on to it. Step up on to the box with one leg and push down through the box. Be sure to only use the leg that is on the box to push with and keep your other leg locked.



Safety Squat Bar Step Up- This is exactly like the barbell step up except for the fact that you use the safety bar.



Dumbbell Step Up- Hold dumbbells in each hand and step up onto the box.



Glute Ham Raise: This is one of the greatest exercises for the posterior chain which is critically important for combat sports. To do a proper glute ham raise, you need a specially designed bench. The best one on the market can be purchased at EliteFTS.com. Begin with your knees locked and your body straight and parallel with the floor. Pull yourself up, using only the strength of your glutes and hamstrings with no extra momentum or cheating, to a position perpendicular with the floor.



Reverse Hyper: For this exercise you need a specially designed machine. The reverse hyper was designed by Louie Simmons of Westside Barbell and is one of the best exercises for preventing or rehabbing lower back injuries. This exercise decompresses the disks and works the entire posterior chain.



Pull Through- This is a great developer of the lower back, glutes and hamstrings. Start with your back to a cable machine. Hold a rope or cable attachment between your legs and take a few steps forward to lift the weight off the stack. Perform this exercise in almost the same fashion as a Romanian Dead Lift and as you descend, allow the cable to pull your arms through your legs for a full stretch before exploding back up.



Good Morning- Start with the bar on your back in the same position you would squat in. To initiate the movement you stick your glutes straight out to the rear and push them back as far as possible. With your chest out and back arched, lower yourself to 45 degrees or slightly lower.



Back Extension- This can be done on either a specialized back extension apparatus or on a glute ham raise bench. Keep your knees locked throughout the movement and start with the pad at your hips. Your upper body should be hanging over the pad and dangling straight down to the ground so that you are flexed exactly ninety degrees at the hip. Raise up until your body is straight and you are parallel with the ground. Pause at the top for a second before beginning the next rep. Hold weight across your chest or behind your head for added resistance. Bands can also be used to increase the difficulty of this movement.



45 Degree Back Extension- This is performed in the exact same manner as the regular back extension. The difference is that this exercise is done on a specifically designed forty five degree angled bench.



Abdominal Exercises

Plank: Get down in to a pushup position with your forearms resting on the floor. Tighten your entire body and pull your abdominals in and hold them for the prescribed amount of time. Be sure not to let your hips sag down or rise up, instead maintain perfect posture. This is a great exercise for increasing core stability and teaching the abs and lower back to function as a unit. You should be able to hold this position for three minutes before moving on to any other abdominal exercises.



Straight Leg Sit Up- Lay down on the ground with your legs completely straight and have a partner hold your ankles. Hold a weight on your chest for added resistance. When beginning the exercise be sure to push your legs down into the ground and keep your knees locked. By using your abs and your hip flexors, lift your upper body up to a position perpendicular with the floor.



Swiss Ball Crunch: Lie face up on a Swiss Ball and allow your abs to stretch fully and let your shoulders round down all the way over the ball. Perform a crunch by contracting your abs and shortening the distance of your sternum to your hips. Hold a weight either behind your head or on or directly above your chest.



Pull Down Abs- Stand with your back to a pull down machine and grab rope attachment behind your head. By contracting and pulling with your abs, lower yourself until your upper body is parallel with the floor. Pause for a second at the bottom and slowly lower yourself to the top. Pause again in the fully stretched position before beginning the next rep.



Decline Sit Up- Lay down on a decline bench and lock your feet down either with a pad or with a partner's assistance. Hold a weight on your chest and contract your abs to lift yourself up to the finish position. Descend under control and pause briefly in the fully stretched position before starting the next rep.



Hanging Leg Raise- Hang from a chin up bar with your body completely straight. Bend your legs ninety degrees and begin by flexing at the hip, while consciously contracting your abs, and bring your legs up as high as possible. Your knees should touch your upper chest and your hips should be rolled forward in the finish position. For an advanced version of this exercise, keep your legs completely straight. This exercise will hit the lower abs hard.



Dragonfly- Lay down on a standard flat bench with your body completely straight and grab a hold of the bench above your head. By using your abs, pull your body up completely straight until you reach a forty five degree angle with the ground. The easier version of this is to allow your hips to flex and use your legs to increase the momentum of the movement. This is an incredible exercise for the lower abdominals.



Dumbbell Side Bend- Strong obliques are one of the critical keys to a big squat and dead lift and are essential for optimal athletic performance. Stand up tall with your chest out and shoulders back. Hold a dumbbell in one hand and place the other hand on your hip. Bend down to one side and pull back with your obliques on the opposite side to complete the movement.



Rope Wood Chopper- Attach a rope to a pull down or cable crossover machine and grab the handles with your body angled sideways. With both arms straight, use your obliques to bring the rope across your body while twisting at the hips.



Band Wood Chopper: Take a Jump Stretch band and loop it over the top of a power rack. Split your legs with one forward and one backwards and grab the band with both hands and pull it over one shoulder. From there, perform a wood chopping motion and try to touch your opposite elbow to your front knee.



Side Raise on Glute Ham Bench- Start by lying down sideways on a glute ham bench with your legs straight and your arms behind your head. While being sure to stretch fully, commence the exercise by contracting your obliques and lifting your body up to a position slightly above parallel. Hold a dumbbell behind your head to increase the difficulty of this movement.



Side Raise on 45 Degree Back Extension- Position yourself sideways with your legs split and hold your hands behind your head. Descend into the fully stretched position and pause for a second before contracting your obliques and lifting yourself back to the top position. Hold a dumbbell behind your head or in the same hand as the side you are laying on to increase the difficulty of this exercise.



Russian Twist: Get in a sit up position with your feet hooked under a bench. Hold a weight at arms length in front of you and descend into the midrange position of a sit up. Rotate your body and bring the plate all the way to the ground on one side before returning to the middle for a brief pause and repeating to the other side. This exercise is great because it works the entire core in the same range of motion that you will typically use in combat when taking down an opponent.



Barbell Russian Twist- Place a towel in the corner of a room or power rack and place one end of a barbell against it. Grab hold of the opposite end of the bar with your arms out in front of you and take a shoulder width stance. Rotate to one side as you bring the bar down to your hip with your arms straight. To return to the start position, explosively pull from your obliques on the opposite side as you swing the bar back to the top. Pause for a second and proceed to lower the bar to the other side.





Upper Body Pulling Exercises (Lats, Upper Back & Traps)

Pull Up: This one of the best exercises to stimulate size and strength gains in the lats, upper back, biceps, brachialis, and forearms. One need look no further then the development of elite level male gymnasts to see what a steady diet of pull ups and chin ups can do for your physique.

Grab the bar with palms facing away from you and a shoulder width grip. Drop to a dead hang, with arms completely straight. Pull up until your chest hits the bar, while fully contracting your shoulder blades and squeezing your lats at the top.



Chin Up- This is basically a pull up with your palms facing you instead of away from you.



Parallel Chin Up- This is performed exactly the same way as a regular pull up or chin up. The only difference is that your palms are facing each other. These can be done on a specifically designed apparatus which has two parallel handles sticking out of the middle of a normal chin up bar, or by hanging a parallel grip pull down handle over a chin up bar. As with all forms of chin ups, be sure to extend your arms completely at the bottom and pull until your chest hits the bar with your shoulder blades full retracted at the top.



Towel Chin Up- Drape a towel over the chin up bar, grab one end in each hand and pull up, being sure to keep your back arched and squeeze your shoulder blades together at the top. Aside from hitting your entire back, towel chin ups will give your grip muscles an incredible workout and leave your forearms screaming for mercy.



Subscap Pull Up- This is an extremely advanced version of a pull up. Pull yourself up the bar and pause briefly at the top. Before ascending, push yourself away from the bar while trying to completely straighten your arms. You should be leaning backwards while you push yourself away.



Sternum Chin Up- Take an underhand/ supinated grip on a chin up bar and hang with your arms straight. As you begin to pull up, you want to lean back as far as you can and touch your sternum to the bar while your upper body is nearly parallel with the floor in the top position. Squeeze your shoulder blades together forcefully before lowering yourself.



Mixed Grip Chin Up- This is another great variation of the chin up which is performed with one hand facing you and the other hand facing away. Be sure to the direction of your hands each set.



Bent Over Barbell Row- Grab a barbell with an overhand grip and stand straight up. With your chest out and shoulder blades back, descend nearly into the bottom position of a Romanian dead lift. From this position, row the bar up to your midsection while contracting your shoulder blades together at the top. This is a great exercise for building thickness in the upper back.



Bent Over Reverse Grip Barbell Row- This is done exactly like the barbell row except that you grab the bar with your palms facing up.



Bent Over Dumbbell Row- This is also done like a barbell row but instead of holding a bar, you hold two dumbbells at your side. This version allows for a greater range of motion and more powerful contraction at the top.



One Arm Dumbbell Row- With a dumbbell in one hand, place your opposite hand on a bench or stationary object to support your bodyweight. Keep your back arched and stretch your lats fully in the start position. Initiate the movement by pulling with the lats and row the weight up until the dumbbell hits your lats.



Seated Cable Row- Sit down in front of cable stack and attach either a straight or parallel grip handle. Keep your chest up and row the weight into your abdomen while squeezing your shoulder blades together upon completion of the movement.



Semi Supinated Chest Supported Row- This is a great version of rows because it keeps stress off of your lower back. This allows lifters with back problems to safely perform rows and it also allows you to row even if your lower back may be sore from something else. There are special benches that have handles attached to do this exercise or you can just lay face down on an incline bench and row with dumbbells. In the semi supinated version of this movement your palms should be facing each other and your elbows should be tucked at your side. As always, be sure to squeeze your shoulder blades together at the top.



Pronated Chest Supported Row- This is exactly the same as the semi supinated version except that your palms should face behind you in this version. When doing the pronated chest supported row your elbows should be straight out to the side and perpendicular with your upper body.



Face Pull- This is an outstanding upper back exercise and is performed by attaching a two handle apparatus to the top of a pull down machine or cable crossover. While standing perfectly erect, grab the handles with your upper arms out in front of you and parallel with the floor. Row the weight toward your face and pull your elbows back as far as you can behind you. Be sure to fully contract your shoulder blades and pause briefly.



Hanging Row: This exercise goes by several different names and can be done in a variety of ways. Set a bar in a power rack about three feet off the ground. Hang from the bar and put your feet up on a bench. With your arms straight and back arched begin the movement by pulling your sternum to the bar. Fully retract your shoulder blades at the top before returning to the hang position. This exercise is harder than it looks and can really add some impressive size to your upper back and develop the pulling muscles that are so crucial in all sports.



Bent Over Lateral Raise- Start with a dumbbell in each hand and bend over into the same position you would perform a bent over barbell row from. With a slight bend in the elbows, initiate the movement by squeezing your shoulder blades together and raising your arms up until they are parallel with the floor.



Barbell Shrug- Grab a barbell with a shoulder width grip. Keep your head straight, chest up and shoulders pulled back. Shrug as high as you can, trying to touch your shoulders to your ears. Hold the contraction for a second at the top before lowering the weight.



Snatch Grip Shrug- This is performed exactly like the standard barbell shrug with the only difference being that you take an extremely wide grip on the bar. There is some evidence that has shown this wider grip to activate the traps to a greater degree than a standard grip.



Dumbbell Shrug- Hold dumbbells in each hand at your side and shrug.



Barbell High Pull- Take a shoulder width grip on a bar and bend over until the bar is just above your knees. While maintaining a strict arch in your lower back, explosively pop your hips forward and shrug hard. When the bar passes your abdomen, finish the movement by using your arms to keep pulling the bar up to your mid chest. Most of the work should be done by your traps and not your arms, however.



Snatch Grip High Pull- This is a high pull with an extremely wide grip. Be sure to initiate the movement with an explosive upward shrug.



Clean Pull- This movement is exactly like a high pull except that you use heavier weight and do not pull the weight as high. Clean pulls only have to come slightly above your belly button.

Snatch Grip Clean Pull- A clean pull with an extremely wide grip.



Upper Body Pushing Exercises (Chest, Shoulders & Triceps)

Bench Press- A great exercise for developing all of the upper body pushing muscles such as the front deltoids, triceps, and pectorals. Lie down on the bench with your back arched and shoulder blades fully retracted. Squeeze the bar and try to rip it apart. Unrack the bar, being sure to keep your shoulder blades tightly squeezed, and lower it to your sternum or lower pectoral area with your elbows tucked close to your side. Pause slightly, and explode back to the top by driving your feet into the ground and pushing the bar up and back slightly, allowing your elbows to flare out a bit as you lock out the weight.



Board Press: This is a bench press performed with 2x4's stacked on your chest. Hit the boards and immediately push the bar back up. This exercise will strengthen your triceps tremendously and can help improve any sticking point in the bench press.



Bench Press Lockouts in Power Rack- Set up a bench in a power rack and start with the bar resting on pins. The pins can be set anywhere from slightly off your chest to slightly below lockout. Push the bar up off the pins to lockout and then lower the bar back down under control. When you hit the pins let the bar come to a complete stop and pause briefly on the pins before initiating the next rep.



Incline Bench Press- Use an incline between thirty and forty five degrees, as any higher can lead to shoulder problems. Set up as you would for a flat bench press and lower the bar to your upper chest. Be sure to keep the elbows tucked in on the descent and push the bar straight up to complete the rep.



Barbell Floor Press- This is a great exercise to build up the muscles of the shoulders and triceps and increase overall pressing strength. Lower the bar until your triceps touch the ground lightly and pause for a second before exploding back to the starting position.



Dumbbell Floor Press- This is done exactly like the barbell floor press except with dumbbells in each hand.



Flat Dumbbell Press- Grab two dumbbells and lie down on a flat bench. Keep your shoulder blades back and your elbows tucked with your palms facing in. Press the weights up in a straight line and then lower under control.



Incline Dumbbell Press- This is the same as a flat dumbbell press except it is performed on an incline bench set between thirty and forty five degrees.



Pushup- This is probably the most basic of all exercises yet it remains one of the best. There is no one who hasn't done a pushup but there are tons of people who have never done a pushup properly. To do this, you must tuck your elbows into your side in exactly the same manner as you would bench press. With your body held perfectly straight (no A-frame and no sagging hips), lower yourself under control until your chest touches the floor. To increase the difficulty of this exercise try having a partner hold a weight on your back or wear a weighted vest.



Chain Suspended Pushup: Set a bar high in a power rack. Loop two same length chains around the bar and put a towel on the chains for hand padding. You can also purchase gymnastics rings for this exercise. From there put your feet up on a bench and proceed to do pushups as you normally would, being sure to keep your entire body tight throughout the exercise.



Chain Suspended Flye- Use the same set up as the chain suspended pushup and begin by slowly letting your arms drift out to the sides. Be sure to maintain a slight bend in your elbows during the entire duration of the set. Lower yourself until your arms are perpendicular with your body and pause briefly. To complete the movement, forcefully contract your pectoral muscles and pull your arms back to the starting position.



Semi Supinated Standing Dumbbell Press- Although I used to be a big fan of overhead pressing, I have realized over time that the dangers probably outweigh the benefits. Some people still love to overhead press no matter what the risk though, myself included. The thing about overhead pressing is that nothing packs meat on your shoulders quite like they do. For a safer version of an overhead press, start with your elbows tucked in front of you and your palms facing each other. This is very similar to the starting position of flat dumbbell press. Being sure to keep your arms in front of you, press the weight straight up to lockout.



Partial Range Parallel Bar Dip- Parallel bar dips have long been a favorite exercise of bodybuilders in search of huge triceps. They are also a staple in the training of gymnasts and anyone who has seen an Olympic gymnast knows that they usually have enormous triceps. The problem with the full range variation of this exercise is that it puts a tremendous amount of stress on the shoulders and can lead to injury. For that reason, it is recommended that you do not descend into the fully stretched position and instead stop about two thirds of the way down.



Note: Although the following exercises are neither pressing exercises nor typical "size and strength building exercises," they are of critical importance. These movements target and strengthen the rotator cuff muscles. Strengthening these muscles is a must if you are concerned about shoulder health. Also, training these muscles will allow you to press more weight and help to prevent any injuries that may occur from doing a lot of heavy pressing.

1 Arm External Rotation on Side- Lay down on your side with one hand supporting your head and the other at your side with your elbow fixed at your hip. Grab a light dumbbell with your knuckles pointing down and your forearm across your stomach. While maintaining a ninety degree bend in your arm, externally rotate and lift the weight up as high as possible.



1 Arm External Rotation on Knee- Sit on a flat bench with your chest up and one foot up on the bench. Place your elbow on your knee and bend your arm ninety degrees. With a light dumbbell, lower your arm until your knuckles are facing down and then return to the top position.



1 Arm External Rotation on bench with arm at ninety degrees-

Stand next to an incline bench set to the highest incline or sit at an angle on a preacher bench. With your arm bent ninety degrees and your elbow resting on the bench, lower the weight until your knuckles face the floor before returning to the start position.



1 Arm External Rotation on Side with Cable- Kneel in front of a low cable stack with one arm fixed at your side and holding the cable handle across your body in front of you.



L-Lateral Raise- Stand up straight and grab two dumbbells at your side. Bend your arms ninety degrees or until they form an L shape. Keeping your shoulder blades back and down, lower the weights up until your upper arms are parallel with the floor. Keeping the arms bent ninety degrees allows a much heavier weight to be used as it shortens the lever arm and increases the effectiveness of the exercise.



L-Lateral Raise W/ External Rotation- This is simply an L- Lateral Raise with an external rotation at the top of the movement.



Biceps Exercises

Barbell Curl- This has long been considered the premier bicep exercise. Grab a bar with an overhand, shoulder width grip. With your chest out and shoulders back, extend your arms fully. Curl the weight up until your forearms touch your biceps. Do not allow your elbows to drift forward and turn this into a front delt exercise. Instead, keep your elbows at your side throughout the movement.



Dumbbell Curl- This is performed in the exact same manner as the barbell curl and allows for greater supination and a more intense contraction at the top of the movement.



Hammer Curl- This is dumbbell curl with your palms facing in instead of up.



Incline Curl- Lie down on an incline bench with your arms hanging straight down and your palms up. Curl the dumbbells up until your forearms touch your biceps without allowing your elbows to drift forward. The incline position puts a greater stretch on the biceps.



Incline Hammer Curl- This a hammer curl performed on an incline bench.



Forearm/ Grip Exercises

Wrist Roller- This is an outstanding forearm exercise which can pack on tons of size. You can make a wrist roller yourself or buy a great one from Iron Mind online. The best way to do this exercise is to slip it over a pin in a power rack so that it does not turn into a shoulder exercise and you can concentrate on your forearms. Simply roll the bar towards you or away from you to lift the weight off the floor. When the weights reach the top, reverse the motion and lower them back down to the start position.



Pinch Gripper- Grip strength is critically important to nearly every lift and almost all sporting activities. The Iron Mind pinch gripper is a great way to work on your grip strength and can help improve a great deal of your lifts.



Fat Bar Hold- This is a very simple exercise which can improve your grip strength tremendously. Simply set a fat bar in a power rack and hold it in front of you for a specified time of fifteen to sixty seconds.



Plate Pinch Grip- Take a pair of plates and turn them face in, smooth side out. Pick them up and hold them for a specified amount of time.



Neck Exercises

Partner Assisted Neck Flexion- While lying face up on a standard bench, have a partner place a towel over your forehead and provide resistance as you raise your head up and down. A big, strong neck is a must for all athletes.



Partner Assisted Neck Extension- While lying face down on a standard bench, have a partner place a towel over the back of your head and provide resistance as you raise your head up and down.



Partner Resisted Lateral Neck Raise- Lie sideways on a bench with your head hanging off the end. Have a partner drape a towel over you head and provide resistance as you raise your neck up and down sideways.



Neck Bridges- These are usually performed improperly by most people. The correct way to do a bridge is not to rest on the top of your head. This compresses the spine and can be dangerous. When doing a neck bridge, you want to rest most of your weight on your forehead while trying to touch your nose to the floor. This stretches the spine and builds a powerful neck.



Neck Harness: There isn't much description necessary for this one. Simply put the neck harness over your head, sit down and raise your head up and down while keeping your back arched.



Strongman Exercises

Farmers Walk- These can be done holding dumbbells or any other heavy object. I recommend getting something similar to the farmers walk yokes seen in the world's strongest man competitions. There are many companies that make these objects so they shouldn't be too hard to find for a decent price. Performance of this exercise is very simple; grab the heaviest weight you can handle and power walk with it for a prescribed distance or amount of time. Be sure to maintain an upright posture with your chest out and shoulder blades back. This exercise is great for building an incredible grip along with a powerful set of traps. It also helps build great stability in the muscles and joints of the lower body.



Rope Pulling- For this you will need around fifty feet of heavy rope, at least two inches in diameter. Place the rope on the ground in front of you and attach one end to a weight if necessary. Get down into half squat position with your legs spread wide. Begin rowing the rope by pulling primarily with your lats and allowing your torso to twist naturally as you switch hands. Pull the rope between your legs and let it pile up there until you finish.



Tire Flip- This is one of the absolute greatest total body exercises you can do. Nearly every muscle in the entire body is used in unison during the performance of this movement. Before you can even attempt this exercise you need to find an appropriate sized tire. If you look hard enough you will easily be able to find one of these for free as most tire places will be more than happy to give away old ones. The appropriate weight of the tire will be approximately fifty pounds or so more than your best dead lift.

Begin by squatting down in front of the tire and grab the bottom of it. Explosively stand up and drive forward. When the tire reaches the upright position, you have to quickly switch the position of your hands and push it over to complete the flip.



Forward Sled Drag- Attach a weighted sled to a belt around your waist and simply drag it for a prescribed distance. You can either walk or sprint with the sled, depending on your goals. This exercise will blow up your legs and add pounds to your squat and dead lift.



Backward Sled Drag- Loop the strap through the sled attachment and hold one end in both hands while walking or running backwards with the sled.



Car Push- This exercise is unbelievable for packing on huge amounts of leg muscle and dramatically improving anaerobic endurance and work capacity. Line yourself up behind a compact car and place your hands on the bumper. Lean forward and into the car and keep your arms slightly bent while driving powerfully with your legs.



