

THE GRIP FACTOR

How thick bar training limits your strength



Original Research
Ratamess, N., et al.
Acute muscular strength assessment using free weight bars of different thickness. *Journal of Strength and Conditioning Research* 21(1): 240-244, 2007.

THICK BAR TRAINING HAS ITS BENEFITS, BUT ALSO HAS CERTAIN LIMITATIONS.

Using a thick bar is nothing new in weight training. In the 19th century, strongmen would demonstrate their hand and grip strength by lifting barbells, dumbbells, and axles with a large diameter. This practice went the route of the dinosaur but in the late 20th century experienced resurgence. The rationale for using thick bars with a diameter of two to three inches, compared to the standard diameter of about 1.4 inches is that, because it is more difficult to lift a barbell with a thicker grip, doing so will provide your grip with more stimulus to grow stronger. And the need for a strong grip is evident in many sports ranging from wrestling to strongman. Although there is a very strong common-sense aspect to thick bar training, athletes have been doing almost all exercises, from pulling to pressing movements, with thick barbells. To date, however, this training method has not been scrutinized via a scientific investigation. Researchers from the College of New Jersey set out to change that...

Power Key: thick bar training, grip strength