

# How to Train with your Heavy Grips™ Hand Grippers

## Heavy Grips™ Beginner Program



**By Clay Edgin—#1 Certified Gripper King and Grip Monster**

Congratulations on your purchase of Heavy Grips™ hand grippers. In this article I'm going to show you some tips, tricks, techniques, pictures, and videos to help you get the most out of your grippers and develop stronger hands, as well as give you a sample training program based off of my own program which I have been using with good results. Out of all my grip toys, I like my grippers the most because I can take them anywhere and I love to watch the expression on people's faces when they try them. These are not your ordinary grippers that you can squeeze all day!

### **Why Train With Grippers?**

If you're an athlete, you need strong hands. Nearly every sport in the world involves moving something with your hands or transferring your body's power through the hands. Developing stronger lower arms will help you in any athletic endeavor you aspire to do. Football, wrestling, baseball, weightlifting, martial arts, and yes, even golf all rely on a high degree of lower arm strength and working with grippers is a key element of that.

Let's get down to business.

## **The Set**

“Setting” the gripper basically means that you are using your other hand to help position the gripper in your hand. You are also closing the gripper far enough so that you can wrap your pinky around the handle and put it in a good position to close the gripper. It may take you a few days or a few weeks to completely grasp the “feel” of setting the gripper but once you do you will reap the benefits immediately. You will soon find a *'sweet spot'* in your palm for the handle to rest. That allows you to get the best possible leverage. When I set a gripper in my right hand, I use my left thumb to press one gripper handle firmly into my right palm, while at the same time using my left index finger to pull the other handle closer so my pinky can wrap around it better. Despite having 8” long hands, I have relatively short fingers and don't have an easy time closing grippers without a set. See Figures 1 and 2 below, and Figure 3 of the “set” gripper.



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3

Under no circumstances would you want to set the gripper any further than parallel, and in fact if you were interested in certifying on the HG400 or HG500, you would only be allowed to set the gripper enough to get your hand around it a little. That is, you don't want to use your other hand to help you squeeze it so far that the handles are nearly parallel with each other like in Figure 4. It makes the rest of 'the close' easier because you can get some added leverage. Why not do it then, if it's easier? Because it doesn't develop stronger hands, and didn't you buy the grippers to develop stronger hands in the first place?

If you want to develop truly strong hands, work on using a very shallow set and practicing 'no-set' closes. 'No-set' means you don't use the other hand to set the gripper at all and you squeeze the gripper completely closed using one hand only. These types of squeezes are much tougher and will make your hands strong. But if you don't have large hands, this can be difficult. Figure 5 is a video of a no-set close of the HG300. However, don't use hand size as an excuse for you not to use 'no-set' closes in your training. If you can no-set close the HG100, then you have the hand size to no-set close the HG150, 200, 250, and 300. All feats of grip strength rely on hand strength, not hand size. One of the unique things about Heavy Grips™ is that all the grippers have a standard handle spread of 2.5", allowing more people to be able to close the gripper with a shallow set or no set at all.



Figure 4

When I meet with someone new and interested in grip and they ask my advice on the grippers, 9 times out of 10 the first thing I suggest they correct is their pinky placement on the handle. As awkward as it sounds, having your pinky halfway off the bottom of the handle puts your hand in a better leverage position. You still want your pinky involved in *the crush* and not slipping off the handle though.

## The Squeeze

After the gripper is set, the other hand is taken away and you begin to crush the handles together. There isn't much explanation necessary for this part and the best advice I can give is squeeze hard! The closer the handles get to touching, the more your pinky and ring finger come into play.

Anyone familiar with the use of dynamic resistance in weight lifting, such as using large rubber bands or chains to add additional tension on a barbell, will recognize that gripper springs are also a form of dynamic resistance. The idea behind using bands and chains is that it teaches you to lift the weight explosively to blast through sticking points that you would normally encounter. As such, a gripper should be closed as fast as possible. If you don't explosively squeeze the handles together, you will not get nearly as close to closing them than if you had crushed them quickly and will find yourself at the same frustrating sticking point.

## Inverted Closes

Because squeezing the gripper in a standard position with the spring pointing up as shown above really works those last two fingers, if you want strong hands you should make it a point to include some '*inverted closes*' to focus on strengthening your index and middle fingers. **Inverted** just means that the spring is pointing towards the ground. Setting a gripper in the inverted position is a little more tricky than a standard position, but take your time with it. **No-set inverted gripper squeezes** are also great. Figures 6 and 7 show an inverted set and close.



Figure 6



Figure 7

## **Training**

As I mentioned in the card tearing article, the hands have a remarkable ability to recover quickly from the workout you give them. I would recommend working with grippers no more than 2-3 times a week if you are a beginner and then start to increase the frequency and volume of your workouts over the course of several weeks. Below is a sample training program for people who are trying to close the Heavy Grip 150, which we will call the **goal gripper**. You can adjust this program according to what your goal gripper is.

### **Warm-up:**

6-8 repetitions on a very easy gripper each hand. I do this just to get a little blood flowing to my hands. Those cheap store bought grippers work fine for this.

6-8 repetitions with a very easy gripper each hand, but this time do it inverted.

HG100 Closes – 3 each hand, and 3 attempts inverted

### **Workout:**

HG150 (goal gripper) Attempts – 5 each hand, and 5 inverted too

Negatives\* with HG200 – 3 negatives each hand, holding for 3-5 seconds each time

Braced or Choked Attempts\* on HG150 – 3-4 each hand depending on how tired your hands are

*\*Negatives and Braced/Choker Attempts are explained in the Intermediate/Advanced article*

### **Cool-down:**

Contrast baths – one bowl filled with hot water and another with cold water. Put your hands into one bowl, slowly stretching and flexing your fingers and then put them into the other bowl and do the same. Repeat several times.

### **Routine Notes and Progression**

If you are feeling “off” and not up to 100% strength, you can reduce the number of squeezes during the warm-up so the bulk of your energy and strength go into the goal gripper squeezes. I take no less than a minute in between gripper squeezes so my hands can recover a bit. Keep to this program 3 times a week for 3 weeks, then add in another workout so you are using the grippers 4 times a week. The next week, add in another day per week. From there, use your best judgment as to how often you should train. If you are an advanced grip enthusiast, you may choose to work your grip every day for a week and then take a week off. I’ve done this many times after slowly working back up in volume and it has helped a lot. As you increase the number of workouts you do per week, also increase the number (volume) of gripper squeezes.

Closing your goal gripper can be very rewarding and can take your hand strength to new levels. As you get more experienced, don’t be afraid to experiment with any ideas you have on training. And if you get stuck at that last 1/8” and aren’t making any noticeable progress, take a week off and then close that sucker!

Good luck and train hard!! If you're ready to take your gripper training to the next level and learn more about it, check out the Advanced instructions.

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