

- Special Report -

“Breaking Through Training Plateaus With Odd Object Lifting”

By Josh Henkin CSCS and Kyle Battis CSCS, NSCA-CPT





(Coach Josh Henkin's Home Gym)

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Good. Now with that out of the way let's get to the good stuff!

“Odd Object Lifting Has The Power To Help You Break Through Your Training Plateaus!”

Josh Henkin is Your Personal Strength Coach whose goal is to help you achieve your fitness goals!



Josh's Biography

Josh Henkin is a graduate of Arizona State University where he received his Bachelor of Science in Exercise Science/Physical Education and was a member of the Men's Basketball Team. Coach Henkin is the owner of Innovative Fitness Solutions, a premier strength and conditioning company in Scottsdale, Arizona. He is a prominent member of the fitness and sports performance arena.

Coach Henkin often makes guest appearances on television and radio programs where he presents cutting edge fitness concepts. In 2005 Coach Henkin released *Sandbag Fundamentals*. The book was a smash hit and created a high demand for additional products. Coach Henkin has answered the call with the creation of *The Ultimate Sandbag* and *High Octane Sandbag Training: the DVD*. In addition, Coach Henkin has teamed up with strength coach, Troy Anderson, to create *SMASH: Total Body Conditioning with Sledgehammers*, a unique DVD guaranteed to give you that extra edge you're looking for. To learn more about Coach Henkin's upcoming seminars and projects keep visiting sandbagexercises.com and ifsstrength.com.

Forward by Coach Kyle Battis

Let me introduce you to Coach Josh Henkin. Josh is going to go over breaking through training plateaus with odd object lifting in this e-book and this information will make you look at training in an all new way. You may not know what odd object lifting is but, after today, you are going to understand it a lot more effectively!

I have known Josh for a few years now. He is an absolutely amazing coach; he is very, very knowledgeable. I met Josh years ago at one of Coach Charles Staley's Bootcamps. I was very impressed with his knowledge and desire to help others.

Josh is one of the first people who introduced me to odd object lifting; more specifically sandbag training which we will definitely cover in this e-book. Since that introduction I have been using these tools in the training programs for myself and my athletes. While odd object lifting is not 'the answer' it is a valuable tool for your training toolbox and is a great way to help you break through training plateaus.

Josh is a strength conditioning coach in Phoenix, Arizona. He works with a wide array of people including those looking to improve their general health, post rehab, young athletes, and even professional athletes. He designs programs based upon people's needs, which sounds pretty common place, but he uses some relatively innovative methods to get people to their goals in a fast, safe manner. He has been able to come up with some creative systems through which to achieve that. One aspect of that system involves odd object lifting.

Without further adieu allow me to introduce you to Coach Josh Henkin and his powerful training information. I am certain that you will enjoy the information in this book



Kyle Battis

www.AskTheFitnessExpert.com

www.HomeGymSecrets.com

www.OddObjectLifting.com

“Breaking Through Training Plateaus With Odd Object Lifting”

By Coach Josh Henkin and Kyle Battis

So, let’s first talk about training plateaus. A lot of people (I run into these people all the time, especially in the local gym settings) have been training on machines been doing the same training program for long periods of time. Variety in training, even in training implements, is very important in order to avoid training plateaus and to continue the positive adaptations to training.

A big part of training is the nervous system. As you probably know that is a big reason for improved strength gains from training. Pavel Tsastuline talks about a concept called “Grease the Groove.” Basically that means: The more you do a particular movement...the more you to try to grease that specific movement...the better you will get at it and you will increase strength gains with enhanced nervous system activity.

However, I find that has a minor drawback which is that every exercise and every piece of equipment has a very specific groove, for example, barbells, dumbbells, and even kettlebells all have particular grooves. The more you train with that particular implement the more you get strong in that very specific groove.

If you were to take a different type of implement or object and try to replicate a similar movement, you might find that you are, actually, very weak, even though you are very good at, let’s say, dead lifting because you have done it many times.

But, if you are asked to dead lift a stone, a keg or a sandbag; you might find there are major holes in your strength levels. That may be a reason why you are not actually getting ahead in your dead lifting goals or overall strength gains.

The S.A.I.D. Principle in Action

You see, what I am talking about is the basic S.A.I.D. principle in action, which means **S**pecific **A**adaptations to **I**Imposed **D**Demands. Basically that means your body gets good at what you ask it to do.

THE SAID PRINCIPLE:

S = Specific
A = Adaptations To
I = Imposed
D = Demands

I believe we should try to stay with similar movement patterns most of the time; we are not getting away from basic movement such as pulling weight off the floor, pushing it overhead, power cleans, snatching, squatting or lunging but we may change the implement, where it is loaded, and so forth to enhance a new groove or new nervous system adaptation to, hopefully, "fill in the holes" of our strength grooves.

Important Takeaway Point from Kyle: The statement above by Coach Henkin is imperative to understand if you are interested in getting really strong and not getting injured so read it over again. If you focus on sticking with the basic movement patterns with most of your training and simply change how perform that basic pattern you will see great results. For example, you can perform a horizontal push a thousand different ways and with many different implements.

Here are some different examples of Horizontal pushing exercises:

- Regular Push-ups
- Wide grip Push-Ups
- Close grip Push-Ups
- Bench Press with Barbell
- Divebomber Push-Ups
- Med Ball Push-Ups
- Chest Press with Sandbag
- Board Press
- One arm-chest press with Dumbbell
- Push-up on Stability Ball
- Gymnastic Ring Push-Ups
- One-Arm Push-Ups
- Standing Cable Chest Press
- Chest Press with Dumbbells
- Chest Press with Kettlebell
- Power Rack Lockouts
- Towel Fly/Push-Ups

And so on and so on.... As you can see the possibilities are almost endless

My Definition of Odd Object Lifting

I have a relatively broad definition which is an odd object is anything that places the body or the object is somewhat unstable when lifting. An odd object can be stones, kegs, barrels, or sandbags. That can be one arm lifts or, more specifically, with barbells. It can be attaching bands and chains to bars and dumbbells, and so forth. It is something that places a bit of instability to the object. There is also what I call "non-confirming objects" which tend to be more like the sandbag.

In that category, an object changes shape constantly with every repetition and, really, does not allow getting into a specific groove. The cool thing about the sandbag example is that every repetition performed is almost totally different because the weight might be in a different spot or the weight distribution varies.

There are people currently using sandbags promoting sandbag training, and some of them, in my mind, are losing some of the benefits of that specific type of training. They are inherently, maybe, using a very stiff, hard object. People will try to prevent, for example, the leaking factor that is common in some homemade sandbags. To do that, they duct tape the weights inside so the weight does not move anymore. The result is a pretty solid object which takes away from some of the benefits of sandbag use.

A good sandbag should be relatively loose, so, when lifted, the weight can shift around. That is where most of the challenge is; not having a clean groove when lifting it requiring you to fight the weight. You are probably going to have to change your grip constantly, which is one of the primary benefits of using sandbags.

I tend to find the holes in people's strength and compensation patterns. I do not think it is inherently wrong to do that. Common sense leads us to avoid making a mess, so we do everything possible to do so! That is why I designed the new bags we are selling now; to eliminate that problem and get the benefit of having a nonconforming object which is a loose bag.



Head over to www.OddObjectLifting.com/ultimate right now, and you can check out Coach Josh Henkin's new sandbags and even more of his great products! He's got some great new sandbags that he has designed specifically to meet the demands of a sandbag that he is looking for.

Odd Object Implements and Training Methods

Let's go over some of the other examples of odd object lifting before we get to my favorite tool (sandbag training). I'll give you some examples of odd object training implements, and then I will try to touch on the benefits of each one a little bit.

Stone Lifting

A personal favorite of mine is stone lifting. Stones can be a river rock type which has ragged edges with non-smooth surfaces. Stone lifting is a very old-time form of training. Most people do basic lifting such as shouldering. This is familiar to people who have watched things like "World's Strongest Man" competitions on television where they use an Atlas stone which is a very spherical stone and is very smooth.

There are amazing benefits to this type of training. The obvious is gaining incredible grip strength. To grip the stone, you have to squeeze your hands with open palms on the stone and bring the weight up toward the body. The amount of upper back and arm strength involved in this type of training is incredible!



(Josh shouldering a stone)

I remember, not so long ago, I performed a really heavy lift with a stone and my upper back and traps were sore for about ten days! That was from one repetition! You build amazing trunk strength; both abdominal and lower back.

People talk about core strength all the time; this is a whole new level of it. People get exposed all the time that do not have a strong back or trunk. Not only are you lifting it to your lap or your body or your shoulder but, often, you are squatting

down with it too. You actually come up with that weight right in front of you; it could be in excess of 300 pounds. It is quite incredible!

I had a colleague ask me what type of transfer I may see to other forms of traditional barbell lifting, and I can tell you, just today, I easily hit in a max-effort dead lift with 15% more than I normally do, and I could have probably drawn another 15 or 20 pounds, and it felt like nothing!

It felt like a rock-hard grip; I could have toyed with the weight. There was a pretty amazing difference. I had not done that specific exercise for quite some time because I am training for a competition, and my training has been relatively specific. To see that type of transfer was really encouraging.

Transfer Ability

Let's talk about transfer ability and how odd object lifting might carry over to helping you perform better in daily life or in your sport if you are an athlete.

One easy example is that a lot of coaches want to integrate a form of lifting...Olympic weight lifting which involves clean snatches and jerks, and put that into a lot of athletes' programs. Even a lot of general population people see the benefit of being able to move quickly and athletically and use the whole body and integrate the body as one.

Unfortunately, in traditional barbells and in other forms of training, people just do not have the technique to do it properly and their equipment may be inappropriate to be doing that. I know that I have used many gym bars where I wrenched my wrists and elbows while trying to do some of those lifts because the quality of the bars are so low.

If you take an implement such as a sandbag and you learn how to shoulder it quickly (which is a pretty easy technical exercise) you are getting a lot of similar benefits. You are improving the power that drives the hips. You are improving trunk strength. You are improving hand strength. That is, I think, as much as most people could ask for. The fact that you can use a lot of great combinational exercises to train your whole body in one training session allows you to be very time efficient.



(Coach Zach Even-Esh of www.UnderGroundStrengthSecrets.com Shouldering a Sandbag)

A lot of the classic strength athletes probably had better physiques than most bodybuilders today do. These old-school strength athletes used a lot of the same type of whole body training using a variety of implements, including odd object lifting. They had a lot of functional strength that a lot of people desire, as well. So, if you want the type of strength that carries over to the real world then you should definitely be incorporating odd object lifting into your training program.

Is Odd Object Lifting For Me?

The isolation-style, body building culture, and training methods have really infiltrated the gym scene and the popular fitness magazines. That is how most people train, like bodybuilders. Some people who only know traditional bodybuilding training methods might look at odd object lifting and say, "That's not really something that's for me." But, if you are looking for real world, functional strength because you want to be able to bring in the groceries or shovel snow or pick up your kids, and not have a sore back the next day you will gain great transfer ability from this kind of odd object lifting, and you might not get that from body building training.

Fortunately, you get the conditioning component as well. One reason I became so emphatic about sandbags is because you have to fight them constantly; a great amount of work is expended during every movement. The amount of power used and expended during a sandbag workout is just amazing because you are integrating so many muscle groups at once. So, you do not have to worry about having an arm day or a back day and so forth. And, I can guarantee you that you will end up with better results in the long run!



(Odd Object Lifting Is Fun!)

Can I Really Get Better Results In Less Time With Odd Object Lifting?

Absolutely! If you are simply sticking with traditional-style training methods it's like the famous quote that states "The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting a different result."

Most people are stuck in the same boring old routine that they have always been following and they are not seeing the results they desire. To add a little variety to their boring routines and improve transfer ability they should consider adding in some odd object lifting.

It provides many benefits; probably one of the best benefits is that it is enjoyable and fun to do and offers a change of pace in people's workouts. I think a lot of people start, see gains, hit a plateau and drop off their training programs because it gets stagnant, boring, predictable; the fun factor leaves and that de-motivates a lot of people from progressing further.

I think a lot of people miss out. They follow an ideal training routine that they read about in a book or magazine. It may in fact be a good program and the individual may achieve great results initially, but they can only do that routine for so long before they get absolutely bored out of their mind with it! It stops becoming fun and it also becomes boring for your muscles too.

Also, if you always do the same thing over and over again, you are building overuse type injury symptoms because you never train in any different movement patterns or use muscle groups or in different way.

I remember one of the first places I read about sandbag training was in Brooks Kubic's *Dinosaur Training Book* which is a classic. Brooks talks about the stabilizers that are required in lifting a sandbag. If you have never done it before, you are going to find your stabilizers (which are small muscle groups that help support the joints) fatigued and sore. You are going to feel muscles you never felt before. You are combining the benefits of improved conditioning and improved strength. You are almost looking at a pre-hab type of training tool. You can see that it would be foolish not to include this in your current training program.

Keg Training

Lifting kegs is a classic form of odd object training. They are very inexpensive to get and, if you fill one with water, you will find the water moves drastically inside the keg, as you lift it. So, again, you are adjusting to using an object that feels as if it is moving; it is moving outside the classic groove of a barbell power clean or a barbell dead lift.

Bringing it to the shoulder or up overhead, you will find that new muscles are being incorporated; especially those of the trunk, shoulder girdle and hips which are really your strength senders. We are talking about becoming strong and powerful and muscular. So, with kegs, there are ways to lift similar to sandbag lifting, but they are different because they have a more fixed outside, but the inner pooling yields a rather unique feel.



(The Water Shifting Around In The Keg Challenges You In Many Ways!)

Sledgehammer Training

You also have sledgehammers which allow you to do a lot of rotational work of the trunk and, also, open up the shoulders and hips. The trunk shoulders and hips are common places that people develop overuse injuries or problematic areas of restricted mobility.



(Sledgehammer Training Is A Tremendous Tool!)

Tire Flipping

Also, there is classic tire flipping which people may have seen on television or read about in the newspapers. People look at tire flipping and they do not know what muscle is being used. They look at it and think that it's interesting but have no idea what that works! Until you do it, you really have no idea!

Here is a little story for you to illustrate my point. I had a training partner whose arms were sore for about seven days after the first time he did it. He concluded that doing maybe two sets of five tire flips was more than doing a whole hour of arm curls!

I talked with Dan John about this one time. He said. "The cool thing about hard work, Josh, is that you cannot do it for very long." If you are in the gym for two hours and you are able to continue to lift and lift and lift and perform thirteen different exercises for a single muscle group, chances are you are not working very hard or very efficiently.

So, speaking of tire flipping, how long can you perform tire flipping?

Oh! I'd say about fifteen minutes on a good day! Now that is hard work.



(Flipping A Large Tire Is A Full-Body Challenge)

Fifteen minutes at the most. And, that's all you are doing. You are going to be toasted for a while after something like that. I am looking at the benefits of what you are doing and really honing in on getting the most done in the least amount of time.

I think that people train for hours upon hours because they think that is what they need to do because that has been touted for so long. In actuality, when people were there strongest and most athletic (which was before the era of drug-filled body building) workouts were very abbreviated and intense. They focused on integrating everything as much as they could, all at once being athletic and teaching the body how to move as one. We have really gotten away from that because of the popularity of body building. The only way you are able to train for that many hours is in the drug world, which is hopefully not the way you go; rather this should be a healthy lifestyle choice you make.

Truck/Car Pushing

You can make use of your own vehicle such as car or truck you have available; hopefully the majority of people have them readily available! Do a simple drill such as pushing the car or the truck forward, backward, to the side. You can hook up a tow harness and pull the vehicle in different directions. I have a climbing rope to use for hand-over-hand pulls. Again, imagine working down the street with a nice SUV behind you! Talk about strength of the hips and legs and cardiovascular system.

If you asked me what your heart rate is during this type of activity I will smack you! If you do ask this question obviously you are not pulling anything but a Mazda Maida or something!

A Note From Kyle Battis: One of my college basketball players and I, this past summer, took my Jeep Wrangler into a large parking lot, and we took turns pushing it across the parking lot as fast as we could. Now, a jeep is probably not as heavy as some of the vehicles Josh Henkin and other strongmen are pushing but let me tell you it was one hell of a cardio session! We did, maybe, four or five reps across the parking lot. We switched off back and forth. The person not pushing was in the driver's seat working the brake pedal when needed and steering appropriately. It was a killer training session. We were sore for a couple of days after that. Definitely something you should try if you can!

With truck/car pushing, you can manipulate how you are pushing it. You can decide on a certain distance. You can do it for a certain length of time. You can do a relay like I mentioned above. You can, deliberately, find a slight incline, and you will find that to be a great deal different than something that is completely flat. Something very simple like that can become an incredible full-body conditioning workout. If you want to train for fat loss, I do not think an hour of spinning will have any comparison to the benefits you will get from truck/car pushing!

Truck/car pushing is a lot of more efficient, and it is done outside which is a nice change of pace!

Rope Climbing

I will be putting out a video on rope climbing pretty soon so keep your eyes peeled for that. I think that climbing ropes are an incredible tool! I do not know if they fit the classic mold of odd object lifting, but they used to be pretty standard in most gyms. Nowadays you cannot even find them even in schools anymore, because people are always worried about liability. But, they are thought of, classically, as one of the best forms of upper body training. I remember reading that many of the military schools used to use them as their standard of upper body strength testing; it was climbing rope. Because people have such poor hand strength nowadays and combine that with people working their front sides more than their back sides, climbing rope is a phenomenal drill for many people.

I combine ropes with cable systems so you can do different pulls. We have done it with sled pulling that allow for some unique variations and attaching them to carry bells and so forth and chains. We have some pretty darn cool drills that show you the versatility of a simple climbing rope.

I have even taken a couple of short pieces of rope or, even, towels and thrown them over a pull-up bar and perform chin-ups holding onto the rope or towel. It works your grip tremendously! A lot of people say, "Well...I don't need grip strength! I just work an office job!"

Unfortunately, I think that most people couldn't care less about grip strength. However, as you look at people's goals which are, let's say, to have better arms or to relieve carpal tunnel type syndrome, improving grip strength is a great way to combat and improve those aspects.

Simply grabbing the wrist with one hand and squeezing as hard as possible, you can feel the upper arm muscles being used. If you eliminate that by using straps and other apparatus, you can imagine how much less muscle you are using when you take away the advantage of your hands. Secondly, if you want to have a good overhead or bench press, a good row, a good chin, and a good dead lift, you must have good hand strength.

Special Un-Advertised Audio Training Bonus!

I want to make sure that I deliver lots of value to you in this report so I decided to include some special audio bonuses for you. To hear a special audio interview I did with Underground Strength Coach Zach Even-Esh visit this link: <http://www.OddObjectLifting.com/audio1>

In this audio interview you'll hear Coach Even-Esh share some great Odd Object training techniques.

Enjoy this audio bonus!

-Kyle

You can use wrist wraps and straps to get around your grip weakness but eventually, you will be exposed if you have to actually demonstrate your strength in a real-world type activity.

There is a great article I think by T.C. Loma in *Testosterone Magazine*. He talks about how he had been lifting for years and was asked by a buddy to pick up a birdbath with him. He could barely walk or pick it up, although he had been lifting for years and years and years. It gets kind of frustrating when you have only what is called "gym strength." That is really frustrating.

From a health perspective, too, we live in a day and age where people have developed terrible carpal tunnel type symptoms. They have overuse and they do not create any mobility in their hands. There are great ways to do that. You coordinate the digits by using implements such as sandbags. You are changing your grip constantly. You can use stones or climb ropes or use thick bars or sledgehammers.

Everything becomes integrated into the hands and they really become coordinated and a lot healthier. You can even save your shoulders and elbows a lot longer. If you think in terms of, as the old saying goes: "A chain is only as strong as its weakest link." You can think that what usually holds the load will be in trouble at some point.

Other Odd Object Implements

There is a bunch that people can check out. We will be coming out with a whole bunch of different videos on sledge training, steel logs, medicine balls, and so forth. There are more than I can remember! There will be fun things for people to see and integrate into their own training. Once you see the patterns of different exercises you can do, you will start being creative in the different movements you can do. It really spices up your training. There are some challenges you can do such as extreme carries, and training becomes something to look forward to versus, "Oh, let's get this over with today..."



Special Audio Bonus #2

Kettlebells are one of my favorite Odd Object training implements and one of my first kettlebell coaches was Mike Mahler. I attended one of Coach Mahler's kettlebell training classes and learned some awesome kettlebell training tips.

Check out this audio bonus here: <http://www.OddObjectLifting.com/mahler>

You can pretty much use anything for odd object training. For example, Coach Kyle Battis recently told me about how he visited his parents the other day for a New Years celebration. He wanted to ring in 2006 in style, so he did 2006 repetitions of various exercises. Now, understand that he does not always train like that, doing high-rep training, but it was "something fun." You see, Kyle's parents live in northern New Hampshire and they did not have much for training equipment so Kyle got creative with his training.

He took some big sections of logs that his father had chopped up. He used those as odd objects for the workout. He lifted them, he shouldered them, he did clean and jerks, shouldering squats, and he did "farmer's walks" with logs tucked under his arms or on his shoulders. He did all kinds of crazy things as part of our training session with those logs. He used an object of opportunity because it happened to be there. He

had not planned to use the logs; they were just there and he decided to use them. That is the versatility of odd object lifting. You can use anything, anytime, anyplace!

Inexpensive Training Equipment

A good thing is that a lot of the implements we are talking about do not require investing a fortune into. For example, you could go to the hardware store and purchase a sledgehammer. You could easily create your own sandbags for probably about \$20. You can hunt down a keg for about the same cost or less. The nice part is that we are not talking, like we did years ago, about a specific brand, etc. and invest hundreds of dollars to get the implements.



Most people have some type of landscaping in their backyard where they can find a classic rock or find one at a construction or someplace. You can use your vehicle. You can build a sled with a couple of pieces of plywood and so forth. You can get pretty creative. I know a strength coach that is a master at making their own equipment. I think you can look for stuff around the house, which is great. You can go ahead and put a little time and effort into finding pieces you can have fun with, and you will probably appreciate that a lot more.



(A Thing Of Beauty, Coach Henkin's Garage Gym)

Special Un-Advertised Audio Training Bonus!

Here is a third special audio bonus of an interview I did with Coach Josh Henkin. Josh shares some great training tips in this audio that deliver even more awesome value: <http://www.OddObjectLifting.com/josh>

Sandbag Training

I think the most obvious is something we touched on previously which is there is no other object that actually changes shape as you lift it. When you experience that, you are always trying to find a new groove or technique to use when lifting. You are using many forms of grip strength, which would include crushing, pinching, and use of the wrists as the bag changes shape or slip or take a different turn than you expected. It allows for unilateral loading meaning that you can place it on one side or the other side of the body.

Unlike a tool such as dumbbell or carry bell, it actually rests on your body similar to axial loading. Therefore, weight pushes down on you and helps improve trunk strength and increases bone density which is, actual, axial loading. Some people that may be having problems with squats can improve by changing the position of the load. For example, if you have a weight on your shoulder and it becomes too easy, you may want to place the weight in front of your body. You can try putting it over your head. You can try it behind. You can hold it in a headlock type position on your sides.



Each of those positions provides a new benefit. Besides changing the position of the load of the sandbag, you can also change the position of the leverage. Sandbags also lend themselves very well to combination exercises.

For example, we can take a very simple drill such as cleaning the weight to your shoulders, squatting down and pressing the weight overhead. You can do that five or ten times and you'll find that it is a pretty complete full-body workout for muscular strength, endurance, and overall conditioning.



(Coach Ray D'Allesio Performing Shouldering Squats With A Sandbag)

It offers a lot of versatility training all components, and it is actually easy to adapt to people at any fitness level. We have used it with elderly people, those in post rehab, with children, and even pro athletes. It is not used only for advanced trainees; it can be used by anybody. You need only need to find the size and load of the bag that is appropriate for you.

I have been implementing these sandbag exercises into some of my group training sessions. These group sessions often include people 40 and 50 years old and not classified as advanced lifters. They are beginners. Most of them have not done any lifting at all. I can have them do perfect dead lifts and squats and, even snatches in no time compared to teaching them with dumbbells or barbells which might take me considerably longer.

The type of training I have been promoting includes people who run group training classes, team classes, group camps and so forth. The learning curve is easy; it is easy to pick up. People can become successful in the movements in a minimal amount of time. Success leads people to train more. People do not want to continue something they feel they failed at. People are able to pick up the drills and reach certain goals quickly, and that motivates them to continue to do more.

Some people reading this might say, "Well, okay. It sounds good. I understand the benefits. I just do not feel 100% comfortable jumping into this on my own." You may be wondering if I have any other resources available so that you can learn more about how to do some of the sandbag exercises appropriately and safely?

Of course the answer to that question is a resounding YES! Simply head on over to www.SandBagExercises.com to learn more about effective sandbag training.

There are two main resources. Number one is the book called "*Sandbag Fundamentals*." That covers the brief "whys" of sandbag training. I think it is important for people to understand what they are trying to accomplish with the implement. Number two is basically a list of 66 different exercises that people can do with sandbags. If you think about 66 exercises, it is probably more than most people ever do in their training programs. So, it offers a wide variety and the full extent of what people can do.

Once different movement patterns are integrated, it would be outlined on paper to be 300 to 400. Finally, there is a section of different workouts. Someone can say, "Well. Okay. I am really interested in this. I will see that it's like." They can try several different programs. I have listed some that show how to integrate classic dumbbells and barbell exercises so it can be fit into what a person really likes to do and try something different, at the same time.



I would also bring up the release of "*High Octane Sandbag Training*." It is basically a DVD companion to the "E book" which shows a lot of the movements and how to do them properly including important clues and how to perform the drills correctly and safely (also available at www.SandBagExercises.com). It provides some tips on how to get the most out of the exercises. You should be able to pick up some really great tips including stuff that would apply to barbell and dumbbell lifts.

There are some cool sandbag exercises you would never think of doing, some great variations, and some tips that will help you perform your sandbag training a lot more effectively.

Integrating Sandbag Training Into a Training Session

So, let's talk about how you can integrate sandbag training into your training sessions. Let's say your training at home and are interested in fat loss. I'll get into a quick scenario on how you might proceed. I'll go into a quick training session including some things that you might do, how you might start, how you might use sandbags to get the most out of your home training routine.

What I like to do with clients looking, primarily, for fat loss and body composition changes is do what I call a "*Power Circuit*." Now, power circuits are a little different than classic circuit training which is working on full-body lifts. I generally keep the repetitions lower because we are moving faster using heavier weights. I want to keep the quality of work harder. I may take four or five different exercises. A class circuit may look something like the following:

A Sample Sandbag Training "Power Circuit" For Fat Loss!

- We alternate between upper and lower body lifts.
- We could begin with a clean and press overhead for five repetitions. It takes a minute or less.
- Then we might shoulder the bag and do lunges. We might do five or six on each leg, changing the shoulder every five or six repetitions.
- Then, we may go into Sandbag Bentover Rows. We might use a little higher repetition because we also have to take into consideration that we may not be changing the load of the bag. Therefore, we can use an exercise leveraged a little easier, but do ten repetitions.
- Then, we may do a High Pull with the sandbag which is a little easier lift to perform. Again, the load of the bag may be relatively stable permitting a higher number for a little more conditioning which may be 15 repetitions.
- Then we can do one of my favorite drills, simply, taking the bag on a walk. We may want to bear hug the bag, which is like you are holding a child in your arms and going for a long walk. You may want to go for a certain time or distance. As simple as that sounds, it is probably one of the most gruesome exercises you can do!

Other Power Circuit Variations

You can take that workout and change the exercises the next time that you perform it. Sometimes you may want to focus more on upper body work, the next time more on lower body work.

You may want to do some bench press type of movement. You may want to do step ups and, then, lifts. As long as you stay with the basic movement patterns, you can vary the workouts quite significantly.

A third workout can be, actually, focused more on combination lifts. For example, actually shouldering the bag and going into a lunge. You can work on clean squats pressing the weight above the head. There are rotational drills outlined in the book which help the torso and hips at the same time. Usually about four or five exercises, doing two to five sets, depending upon the individual's conditioning level. You can manipulate how long they rep. For example, we may start out a little long and, as a person's conditioning improves, we cut down the time to 30 seconds. You get tremendous conditioning in that type of workout using a single implement.



The basic principles are keeping the rep period short, using big, full-body lifts then going through it in circuit fashion for the most part. And because fatigue can be relatively specific to a movement, it may seem as if it is a killer. But, by the time you come back to the first exercise again, you should feel okay. It is probably a lot different than if you perform clean and presses with a barbell and repeat the same type of movement. We keep the quality of the work really high. That allows you to hopefully get the most out of your program.

Sandbag Training Ideas For Athletes

Let's talk about an athlete, a high school football player without a gym membership and no money. But, they have a sandbag or, maybe, two sandbags and a field, obviously, to work out on. I'll give you a sample workout to build some football-specific strength and conditioning.

Well, early off season is the perfect time to do some power circuit training type work to build a base or foundation to handle higher intensities. There is a hand-over loading for use during the more transitional time of year.



(Sandbag training can be performed by anyone, anywhere!)

One of my favorite exercises for athletes is shouldering when they use a heavier bag and bring the weight from the floor all the way up to the shoulder in one, smooth, movement. It is similar to the power clean, but you bring it to one side. You get the benefit of hip and speed development, as well as unilateral loading with is a special kind of trunk work. It actually teaches the body how to resist movement in different planes which is important, especially if involved in contact sports and collision type of sports such as basketball, football and hockey; similarly, you can go into martial arts and law enforcement.

Definitely, overhead lifts such as the press. The press with sandbags is much more difficult and recruits many more muscles than any other implements. You have to learn how to get your trunk tight and how to drive with the legs and upper body simultaneously. If you have "leakage" (loss of power in certain areas) in your movement, you are not going to be able to lift the implement. Lifting sandbags overhead is one of the best overall upper body and whole body lifts you can do.



(One Of Coach Zach's Athletes Performing a Jerk With A Sandbag)

Another one of my favorite lifts is jerk squats. Jerk squats are done by cradling the bag in front of your body. It is a lot easier for some athletes to do versus a front squat. For some athletes, wrist flexibility and shoulder flexibility is an issue. This allows people to squat with the weight in front of the body (which helps the legs quite a bit) as well as being able to resist to the load pulling you forward. This allows some amazing front stability and core strength. You also tend to squat deeper as you do that which opens up the hips. That is important for all athletes when people want to jump higher, run faster, and so forth.

Training Outdoors with Sandbags

Another nice thing about sandbags is that you can take it to the field to do your speed training or agility training. Even advanced athletes can use light sandbags as they do some of their drills. For example, they can run with it on the back or shoulder or carry it and do some cutting drills, and so forth. It helps simulate someone trying to pull you down or being hit when moving in different directions.

When I was doing some summer outdoor conditioning camps, we did a lot of sandbag training and odd object lifting. It was great! We put the stuff into my vehicle and brought it to the field in a local park. It was so much fun to get outside and train. Most of the people attending in the outdoor conditioning camps were used to the very sterile, boring gym routine. They fell in love with the outdoor training sessions! We did power circuits, medleys, sled pulling, truck pushing, heavy medicine ball work, overhead

walks and a lot of sandbag variations. The attendees absolutely loved getting outside and training. They really enjoyed that. A lot of people are stuck into the gym mentality. I think odd object lifting offers great variety and allows an escape from that sterile gym environment.

Sport (and life) are really very unpredictable and really is never done in a sterile environment. For example, rarely is the field perfect and the conditions perfect. So, allowing the athlete to train in a manner preparing them to handle the unpredictability of an object in a training session enhances their ability to handle similar situations under sporting conditions.



(A Sandbag Lunge Held With A Zercher Grip)

If someone has to have just the right bar in just right place for this and the right flooring and so forth, they may not be developing the type of strength that transfers to going out and participating in a sport, playing in the rain or having a basketball that is not the one they like to shoot with all the time. You have to allow for some variability in training and the ability to handle unpredictability which is, I think, highly under rated. Taking people out to the field to work in teams and in different environments is phenomenal. People learn how to focus on their body and improve their awareness (proprioception or body awareness) and get in tune with how to move efficiently.

Dr. Mel Siff used to call that type of training "imperfection training." Again, it's important to ask yourself if you are training to perform better in a given sport or training to get better at performing in the gym? I think that's an important concept to understand. The best thing with odd object lifting is that, if you implement these lifts with your traditional gym workout, you get the best of both worlds.

A Recap of Odd Object Lifting Methods and Tools

Let's rehash briefly some of the different odd objects and how and why they are beneficial for breaking through those training plateaus.

- Stones
- Tires
- Sledgehammers
- Climbing ropes
- Sandbags
- Kegs
- Sleds
- Cars
- And other objects you can think of on your own or make on your own. I know people have made sandbags out of yoga balls for a variation.

Main Benefits of Odd Object Lifting

The main benefits are that you fill in the holes or your weakness. You fill in the holes where the traditional gym training programs failed. Someone may have a strong back but, when they try to lift something that is non-accommodating or non-conforming, they find out whether or not they really have a strong trunk. That is something that has never died out; for centuries people have believed in having a strong center.

How you develop that varies, but I think one of the best forms doing that is doing some pre-hab work and developing stabilizer strength in the small muscle groups that help support joints so the primary muscles or the biggest muscles and perform to their very best.

You get training variety that offers motivation and fun allowing progression to continued training for, hopefully, the long term. You get amazing grip strength which, as we touched on, is great for building the arms for more functional arm strength so you can be a great athlete and, also, perform everyday activities well. It also improves your gym strength for presses and pulls and so forth.

It seems to me that there does not have to be maximal loading to get the benefits. You can perform many drills using lighter weights as appropriate. That's where you want to start with the drills. You will be amazed by the amount of soreness you will experience in your muscle groups when you start implementing them.

So to wrap it up, there are a lot of great benefits to Odd Object Lifting. Those are some ways you can break through a training plateau with some odd object lifting.

These exercises will hopefully help get you going and break through some of those training plateaus and keep you on the road to results.

Sample Odd Object Lifting Programs

Ok, I know how it is, you learn a whole bunch of new information which is cool, but what do you do with it? Below I have listed some program ideas you could use tomorrow!

Odd Objects with Free Weights Combo Workout

1. Back Squat 5, 3, 3, 10 rest 90 seconds between sets
2. Sandbag Shouldering 4 sets of 6 each side rest 75 seconds between sets
3. Dumbbell Push Press 3 sets of 8-10 repetitions rest 60 seconds
4. Pull-ups 3 sets of 8-10 repetitions rest 60 seconds
5. Sledgehammer Half Body Chops 2 sets of 30 seconds each side rest 60 seconds

Odd Object Only Workout

1. Keg Clean and Press 5 sets of 5 repetitions rest 90 seconds
2. Sandbag Zercher Squat 5 sets of 5 repetitions rest 90 seconds
3. Farmer's Walk 3 sets of 30 yards increasing weight each set, rest 75 seconds
4. Sled Backward Pull 3 sets of 30 yards increasing weight each set, rest 75 seconds
5. Sandbag Shoulder Get-up 3 sets of 5 each side rest 60 seconds

Power Circuit Training Workout For Fat Loss

Perform each exercise one after another with 60 seconds of rest. Every workout reduce the rest by 5 seconds until you are down to 30 seconds.

- A1. Sandbag Shoulder and Squat 5 repetitions each side
- A2. Keg Push Press 6 repetitions
- A3. Sledgehammer Figure Eight Strikes 15 each side
- A4. Stone Rows 10 repetitions
- A5. Sandbag Zercher Carry 50 feet

Closing thoughts

I think that people need to expand their minds and, if they really want to reach new heights, start reading some of the older materials out there on strength training, some of the things from the twenties and thirties and so forth. There were some amazing athletes who could, easily, compete with today's athletes where the technology was not even there then. Some of the techniques and ideas are really innovative and could be appropriate for your own training program.



Train hard,

Josh Henkin

Recommended Odd Object Lifting Resources:

<http://www.OddObjectLifting.com/ultimate.com>

<http://www.OddObjectLifting.com/sandbag>

<http://www.HomeGymSecrets.com>

<http://www.UndergroundStrengthSecrets.com>

<http://www.IFSStrength.com>

<http://www.SandBagExercises.com>

<http://www.dieselcrew.com>

<http://www.UnderGroundStrengthManual.com>

<http://www.EliteFTS.com>

<http://www.DragonDoor.com>

<http://www.IronMind.com>

<http://www.BrooksKubik.com>

<http://www.FunctionalHandStrength.com>