

Homemade Tire Tube Sandbag Construction

With the price of fitness equipment being rather steep in general, we are always looking for cheaper options and perhaps a way to make our own equipment. There are actual websites dedicated to homemade fitness equipment that I feel work just as well or better than some of the pricy stuff on the market. Some of us don't have all the time in the world to be making home made stuff and do like to purchase the new fancier looking toys, self included. If you have a little time on your hands and want a good quality and cheap strength and conditioning tool, look no further.

Sand bag training has gained some popularity over the past few years and is a fantastic way of building functional, full body and grip strength. There are many types of sand bags on the market and most are very good quality, some I even own myself. But, it is nice to have the option of adding to your arsenal for little to no cost. Sand bags are great for training large groups of people/athletes, take up little space and are very portable. Follow the step by step instructions to build your very own "Hard Core Jersey Shore" sand bag. There are many ways of doing this, but I will show one way that works very well and has been time tested by myself as well as some of the beasts that put some punishment down on these bags without any damage done.

Go to the store

You will need to run a few errands first. The first trip you will need to make will be to you're local tire center. I recommend truck tire tubes. Look that up in the yellow pages and make some calls. These guys will be happy to get rid of some of the junk tire tubes they have laying around. I went to one place down by me in Asbury Park, saw some guy named Sanchez who took me into the back room, looked a bit mid evil, but he piled about 25-30 big old nasty tire tubes into my car. Mind you, one big old nasty truck tire tube=two priceless training tools that will last a long time. Make sure to find the tubes that are in the best condition. Most of them may just have a bad valve, that doesn't matter because you will be cutting the valves out anyway.

Now you have your tubes, and these tubes are usually a little scary looking, but that's ok they clean up nicely. Like I said, one large tractor trailer tube can yield two sand bags, depending upon how large or heavy of a bag you will need. These tubes have been battle tested as well, probably traveling down the New Jersey Turnpike at 70 plus miles per hour for many years. Your next trip will be to the Home Depot, Lowes, or whatever is convenient. Here is your shopping list:

- **Bags of construction sand** (cheaper than playground sand), ask if they have any broken ones they will sell for cheaper. They may even give them away. Get whatever poundage you think you will need. You may want to get extra for when you build up to mutant strength and have to add more weight to your bag. We happen to have a client who owns the local hardware store "Big Joe" who supplies us with broken bags of sand free of cost. You may want to check out

your local hardware center as well. Another option would be pea gravel. This will add even more weight to your bag and can be mixed with the sand. I've also seen rice used. This is lighter, a bit more expensive but will have a lesser chance of leaking out of the bag.

- **Heavy contractor's bags.** I found that the "Home Depot" brand is the most durable.
- **Black duct tape** or this new stronger version called "Gorilla Tape" which is more expensive but tougher. If you don't want to spend the extra cash, go with the duct tape, this will work just fine. I chose black so it blends in with the color of the bag, for esthetics only.
- **Nylon twine can be used in place of hose clamps but must be tightly wound around the ends.**
- **Large Metal hose Clamps,** the type you tighten with a screw driver.

Now that you have completed your shopping, you have all you need to build your indestructible sand bag.

Building the Bag

Take your large tire tube and cut it in half. You may need to use a sharp blade utility knife or a pair of heavy duty scissors. Make sure your tube is free of big holes first. If you have some holes in your tube, you will have to make your cuts where the holes are so they are not exposed on the completed sand bag. Make two cuts on either side of the valve to eliminate that. Keep any **scrap pieces** of rubber to be used later on. Be prepared for the stink. The inside of these things smell like dead fish that have been festering for months. Not to worry, the stink goes away.



You should now have two halves or **shells** of the tube of about equal size. Or, you may want two different sizes, one bigger for a heavier bag, and one smaller for a lighter bag, that's all up to you. You may want to wash each half down at this point, that's up to you to.

Take one side of one shell and a **metal hose clamp**, bunch up one end like a sausage, put the clamp over the bunched up end and tighten it down with a screw driver. Make sure to leave enough slack at the end of the clamped down shell so the end can be folded over.



Use a piece of scrap rubber to cover the metal clamp, and **duct tape** over that so no metal is exposed. Now, fold the end over and duct tape it. You may need to use a lot of duct tape to make sure the end is sealed well. The other option is to use the **nylon twine** instead of the clamp to tighten down the end of the shell by wrapping the twine tightly around the end and tying it. This option works well too.



Clamp one end; cover the clamp with scrap rubber to prevent injury. Tape it over, fold slack and tape again.

Now that you have one end of your bag sealed up, take a **heavy contractor's bag** and line the shell with it. Tip: You may want to put a little bit of sand in it first, this will make it easier to stand up on end and will keep the contractors bag from bunching up

inside the shell. Now that you have the liner in the shell it is time to fill up your bag the rest of the way with sand.



Put the contractors bag in here before filling w/ sand

You can place your bag on end with the contractor bag folded over the edges of the shell and start pouring the sand in. Make sure to place it on a scale periodically for desired weight. When you get the desired weight you want, make sure to get the air out of the contractor bag before you tie the end, and cut off the extra. Again, like you did on the other end, give yourself some room to fold over the sausage end. Also, do not pack the bag too tightly; you will want to leave some room in the bag for gripping the rubber folds during workouts. Clamp or tie the end, use the scrap rubber to cover the clamp, duct tape it, fold the end over, and duct tape the heck out of it. You are now the proud owner of an indestructible sandbag that will give you many years of joy and pain.



Clamp the end, fold over the slack, and tape it



Seal it up



Some Fine Points

The unique construction of this sand bag will allow you to grab it by the rubber folds in many different places working your grip in the process. The sausage ends will act as handles to hold on to for exercises like squats and lunges. The sandbag is ideal for throwing with out worrying about breaking it. I've had the same sixty pound sand bag for seven years of slamming it down on concrete with out any leaks. Like I said before, these things have been battle tested.



The unique pliability allows you to grip the bag in any way and my produce GI Joe Kung Fu grip. The grip shown above will work well for shouldering drills.



From this grip you can do many things such as cleans, front squats, overhead squats or lunges, bent over rows, presses, and many types of bag throws.

Some of My Favorites

Here are just a couple of my favorite drills.

Zercher squat



Alternate shoulder clean (sand bag shouldering)



Grip



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