

StrongLifts Simple Grip Training Routine for Deadlifts

Here's the simple grip training routine I've used to Deadlift 225kg (500lb) using a mixed grip and chalk without straps.

It's the same grip training I used to Deadlift 160kg/350lb x5 with a normal grip using chalk only. It won't add more than 5 minutes to your workout, and you don't need extra equipment. Thanks to Mike Tuchscherer, Andy Bolton and Pavel Tsatsouline for their tips over the years.

Start your Deadlift warmup with a 60kg loaded bar. That's 135lb or a plate of 45lb/20kg on each side of the bar. Use the normal grip with both palms facing you. Full grip, low hand, no chalk. White knuckle the bar. Squeeze it as hard as you can. This stops the bar from moving and engages your arms/shoulders more.

Continue your warmup by adding 10-20kg on the bar. If I Deadlift 180kg/400lb, I'll do 5x60kg, 5x80kg, 5x100kg, 5x120kg, 5x140kg, 5x160kg, 5x180kg. I don't stick with five reps if I'm going for a PR (1RM testing). I go down to triples and doubles. But for training, I don't care if the extra set cause tiredness. It's good for grip strength.

NOTE: if you want the optimum sets, reps and weights to warmup with, download the StrongLifts 5x5 apps for iPhone and Android. It has a warmup calculator you can unlock to get a complete warmup breakdown for any weight or exercise. The list would be too long to list here, but's in the app. Download it here.

- Iphone: <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/stronglifts-5x5-workout/id488580022?mt=8>
- Android: <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.stronglifts.app>

From 5x60kg to 5x120kg I do everything with a normal grip without chalk. I'm also holding the weight at the top of the last rep for 10 seconds before lowering it down. At the top I keep my knees and hip locked, lower back neutral and arms straight. I count to ten internally - one-one-thousand, two-two-thousand, etc.

For 5x140kg I use chalk to increase friction and absorb sweat. I hold the weight at the top for 10 seconds with a normal grip, chalk and white knuckling. I don't use the mixed grip yet because I want to challenge my grip. Same for 5x160kg - normal grip, white knuckling, chalk and 10sec hold at the top.

Anything above 160kg I need the mixed grip to pull it for more than five seconds. I can pull 170kg for one rep with normal grip, but not five... yet. So I switch to the mixed grip for the 5x180kg. I'm right handed and used to put my right hand up, but switched it around after an elbow injury from rock climbing (excess gripping, be warned).

5x180kg I pull with right hand facing down, left hand facing up. I've chalked my hands, including my thumbs, as they tend to get beat up from using the normal grip so long on the warmup sets. I hold the weight at the top at the top of my last rep with 180kg before lowering it back down. This increases grip strength for normal grip too.

When I'm done Deadlifting, I walk the plates back to the weight tree. I do this by pinching a plate between my thumb and fingers. One plate per hand, 10kg/25lb is too light, but 20kg/45lb is perfect. Doing this builds pinch strength. It strengthens my thumbs which helps keeping my hands closed during heavy Deadlifts.

In summary: warmup with a normal grip but no chalk. Keep using the normal grip until you can't hold the bar. Then add chalk but continue using the normal grip. Once your grip fails again, switch to the mixed grip. White knuckle the bar, and grip it low in your hands. Hold the weight for 10 seconds at the top of each set. Simple and works.

See also

- <http://stronglifts.com/deadlift/>
- <http://stronglifts.com/deadlift/grip/>