

THE SANDBAG CONSTRUCTION KIT



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Sandbag training offers numerous benefits. You will be hard pressed to find a training modality, which is as intense and effective. To top it off, you can purchase 200-pounds of sand for less than \$15 at your local hardware store.

In previous writings, I have discussed sandbag construction. One common technique is to use small zip-lock bags filled with sand. Each bag will be stuffed approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ full. The bags should then be doubled (two bags) and thoroughly sealed with duct tape. These mini-sandbags will be placed into a

large outer bag. The outer bag should be constructed from a rugged material such as canvas.

This sandbag construction method is very convenient for mess-free weight adjustments. You can quickly increase or decrease the weight of the total bag by adding or removing a few mini-bags. I have had great success with this style of sandbag construction.

Unfortunately, I've received several emails from individuals who were having troubles with torn zip-lock bags. The mini-bags were splitting, which caused a mess inside the outer bag (commonly a canvas sporting bag or military duffel bag).

Common reasons for zip-lock bag tears include:

1. Too much sand is stuffed into the bags. I recommend stuffing the bags $\frac{3}{4}$ full. The bags will feel "soft", as opposed to feeling like sedentary rocks.
2. Not all zip-lock bags were created the same. Many store brand bags are poorly constructed with thin plastic. These bags do not hold up to the abuse of a serious sandbag training program.
3. Failure to double the bags and properly seal the ends with duct tape. This process is tedious, so is often bypassed to save time.

Despite these common problems, many readers ensured that they had followed each step precisely, and were still experiencing bag tears and spills. To combat this problem, I have tested several bags to determine the most effective method(s) of sandbag construction. These techniques will ensure a lifetime of sandbag abuse, minus the spilled sand.

QUALITY ZIP-LOCK BAGS

Consider purchasing a case of top quality zip-lock bags. Forget about using generic bags. You can use purchase much more durable bags, ranging from 2-mil up to 6-mil (or more). Mil or mil thickness is the common measurement of a bag's thickness. One mil equals 1/1000 of an inch. 1/4" equals 250 mils.

You can purchase a case of quality bags through many online providers. Cases typically consist of 100 or 1000 individual bags. For example, the link that follows (page 3) is to a 6-mil recloseable bag. The cost for 100 bags is \$13.75. This is a reasonable price for a very durable bag. A 6-mil bag will hold up to some extreme sandbag training.

Based on the 6-mil thickness, you can get away without doubling these bags. Consider that common carpenter clean-up bags advertise the durability of their 3-mil thickness. A 6-mil bag is obviously extremely durable. I would however recommend sealing the ends of the bag with duct tape.

6 X 9", 6-Mil Clear Recloseable Bags (100 for \$13.75)

http://www.royalbag.com/6_x_9_6_mil_clear_recloseable_bags_1361.asp

A quick search of the web will bring you to several bag suppliers. I have provided a second link below. This company offers cases of 1000 bags. This large quantity may be useful if you plan to create several sandbags for a team of athletes or trainees.

4-Mil White Block Zip Lock Bags

<http://www.budgetpackaging.com/4-mil-white-block-zip-lock-bags.html>

PURCHASING THE SAND

50-pound bags of sand are available at most hardware stores for less than \$3 per bag. I recently purchased four 50-pound bags of sand at Home Depot for \$2.87 each. Where else can you purchase a 200-pound weight set for a total of \$11.48?

FINDING A HOME FOR YOUR SAND

You will need a durable outer bag to hold the individual sandbags. A rugged canvas bag is ideal for the outer bag. Two common bags that I have used with success include canvas sporting bags and sea bag style canvas duffel bags. Another common outer bag is a military style duffel bag.

Next, I have provided illustrations to two of my bags:

Sea Bag Style Canvas Duffel Bag - This bag is approximately 35 inches long. I purchased this bag at a local boating supply store for \$15. The material is very durable. This bag has endured plenty of abuse, with no signs of wear.



I did a quick search of the web and found a link to the following bag. I have not used this particular product, but wanted to provide a link to a sample bag:

Canvas Military Duffle Bag - Sea Bag

<http://www.schoolunif.com/3339.html>

Canvas Sports Bag- This bag illustrated below is approximately 30 inches long. I purchased this bag at a local department store for around \$10 on clearance. I have used this bag regularly for the past 4 years. I have tied the handles down on the bag to avoid distractions. I prefer to grab folds in the bag. By grabbing a fold in the bag, you will experience much greater grip strength benefits. This style of lifting takes some getting used to, as it is common to experience pain in the fingers. You will need to keep the fingernails cut short.



A FASTER OPTION

Okay, so you do not want to spend the time to individually package small zip-lock bags. There must be a faster way to construct a sandbag.

Have no fear, I have the perfect solution. Although this method of sandbag construction does not allow for small changes in weight, you can still make 25-pound adjustments.

Rather than using small zip-lock bags, you can use larger carpenter/contractor clean-up bags. These bags are much thicker than conventional garbage bags.

Two rugged (and inexpensive) clean-up bags include the following:

1. **Husky Contractor Clean-up Bags** – I purchased a box of 32 bags at Home Depot for \$13.72. These bags have 3-mil thickness. The measurements of the bags are 2 ft 9 in x 4 ft (42 gallons).
2. **Ruffies Contractors Bags** – I purchased a box of 18 bags at Walmart for \$8.68. These bags also have 3-mil thickness. The measurements for each bag are 3 ft 2 in x 3 ft 9 in (45 gallon).

In addition to these bags, there are several online providers. Two examples include the following:

3-mil bags

<http://www.abccatalog.com/store/viewitem.asp?idproduct=2293601718>

4-mil bags

https://www.ibnys.org/product_detail.asp?pID=6513

Any 3 or 4-mil bag should suffice. Consider that common household garbage bags often measure up at 1-mil or less. I tested the two products below:

- Hefty Ultra Flex (1.3-mil)
- Hefty Twist Tie Tall Kitchen Bags (.69-mil)

Neither bag was able to endure the intensity of a sandbag workout. After bagging 150-pounds (25-pounds per bag), these bags tore minutes into my workout. If you plan to use a larger bag, stick with higher quality carpenter clean-up bags.

THE STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

Due to the size of these bags, you will need to make some modifications. Let's look at the individual steps. You will need a pair of scissors, some twine, sand, and the clean-up bags.



1. First, you will fill each bag with approximately 25-pounds of sand. You should also remove any excess air from the bag. If the bags are full of air, they will be more likely to break, and will take up more space. This will make it difficult to fit each mini-bag into the larger canvas bag.
2. Next, you will need to trim down the size of the bag. Below, you can see how I have cut the end of the bag. After cutting the bag, I have tied the end tightly with twine. It is important that the twine is tied securely to avoid any leaks from the end of the bag.



3. I recommend that you then double the bags for an added layer of protection. Although this step may not be necessary, it is better to be safe than sorry. You will then tie twine around the other bag as well.
4. Lastly, you will place the 25-pound bags into the large, canvas bag. You are ready for some sandbag fun.



SANDBAG CONSTRUCTION SUMMARY

Whether you choose zip-lock bags or large contractor clean-up bags, you must use a durable product. Personally, I prefer the convenience of the smaller zip-lock bags, but either option is acceptable.

Once the sandbag is constructed, you will have one of the most intense, functional, and inexpensive training tools available. You can perform an infinite number of lifts with the bag.

Train hard, and have fun with it!

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