

USAWA HIP BELT

I was first exposed to the heavy lifts at the 2023 National Championships. While somewhat leery, I eventually managed to put up 650 pounds in the Hip Lift.

Since then, I have been researching how to set up to train heavy lifts at home. I have enough weight to load up to 1000 pounds, but past that I would have to borrow plates from friends.

As there are over 200 lifts in the USAWA rulebook, setting up for heavy lifts could wait as I have only attempted/trained 106 of the lifts in the book so far.

The tipping point came when a fellow all-rounder let me borrow their heavy lift bar, hand & thigh bar, hip belt and neck harness. The hip belt did not fit me quite right, so I pursued making one.

I had already done some homework. None of the commercial options I looked at would meet the specifications and be strong enough, so fabrication was the only option. I reviewed the USAWA forums which had threads in 2011 and 2014. I reached out to several USAWA athletes who were kind enough to send me pictures and specifications. I considered leather, tow strap and agricultural belting. All seemed to have pros and cons. Leather would be riveted. Tow strap would likely be stitched. Agricultural belting is usually assembled with carriage bolts.

Finally, I came across an old flat drive leather belt on Facebook Marketplace and the decision was somewhat made for me. Next was ordering some D-rings online that were large enough for a 4-inch-thick belt. Then it was time for fabrication which included a couple of trips to Tandy Leather to trim, condition and finally rivet the belt together.

After that it was a run to the hardware store. I opted for 3 feet of 5/16" chain, grab hook and quick link and then was ready to go.

I just tested the set up to 590 pounds and everything felt comfortable and secure.

https://www.youtube.com/shorts/kw_OBuC5pcl

For the neck lift, I will probably stick with an Ironmind Harness that I tested up to 170 pounds and felt fine.

I am not sure if I will pursue the harness for a harness lift. This is truly the next level in terms of fabrication and having enough weight to make it interesting.

As far as the heavy lift bar and hand & thigh bar, there is a commercial option that I may pursue down the road. If I am ever in a position to break records, I would have to get something fabricated from solid 1-15/16" steel.