



A helping hand

We test four exercise gloves that'll give a lift to your routine **BY BRIAN TRUITT**

When it comes to lifting heavy weights, your handwear may be as crucial as your muscle power.

If you've visited a gym's free-weights section, you've likely seen people wear gloves while cranking out reps with dumbbells or other assorted bars. Although using gloves is primarily a personal choice, athletic trainers tend to recommend them for people whose palms sweat profusely, which can be a safety issue. Gloves also help when you have an injury or soreness in the elbow,

forearm or wrist; they take some of the strain off the forearm during a lifting session.

There are performance benefits to consider, too. "Some folks feel

strongly that wearing a glove helps them grip the bars better, therefore they can lift more weight and do it more efficiently," says Ralph Reiff, director of sports medicine and sports performance for St. Vincent Hospital of Indianapolis.

Many lifters, particularly surgeons, physicians and others in the medical field, also want to protect their hands from calluses or other scuffing. "For some lifters, calluses are a badge of honor," Reiff says. "But others say, 'Because of the

work I do, my hands are important to me.'"

The gloves' material is an important deciding factor. Leather lasts longer, but it can get smelly because it absorbs sweat, Reiff says. Another option is neoprene gloves. "The grip is really good, but they will tear up if a bar isn't smooth or if it has some grips on it."

Open Air tested several of the newest, most advanced men's gloves on the market to help you get the most out of your next workout. **OA**

If you wear gloves during your lifting session, you may discover you can lift more weight — and more efficiently.



GoFit Diamond-Tac Palm weight lifting gloves \$14.99	Harbinger FlexFit training gloves \$19.99	Schiek Platinum Series lifting gloves \$34.95	Bionic full-fingered fitness gloves \$49.95
COMFORT: Testers found this glove to be very comfortable and well-fitting; a fabric tab under the middle finger makes the glove easy to remove.	COMFORT: Users found that the glove made their hands sweat more, causing the material to become "sticky." Also, this brand's sizes tend to run small.	COMFORT: The fit on the Schiek gloves was good all around, and they slide on and off pretty easily. But one user thought the palm area was a little too thick.	COMFORT: All users were surprised by how comfortable this full-fingered glove was. Said one: "Even though they covered the fingers, they still breathe plenty."
GRIP: The GoFit rated high in this category. More than one user liked the neoprene knuckles, which give the glove a comfortable stretch while gripping.	GRIP: They might not have been the most comfortable, but one user gave them a 4 out of 5 for gripping. However, another said it only helped with grip "just slightly."	GRIP: The rubber pad in the palm, which helps the grip immensely, is this glove's claim to fame. But one user said the pad made the gloves feel "heavy."	GRIP: Covering the entire hand turned out to be a benefit. One tester said the glove "provided great gripping ability and stopped the bar from sliding."
DURABILITY: One user gave it high marks, but another tester worried that the "leather diamond" padding in the palm "wouldn't hold up over time."	DURABILITY: This category was this pair's only saving grace. They're not expensive, and users thought these would hold up well over time.	DURABILITY: One tester found them to be solid on this aspect: "I can totally see a serious lifter liking these. They feel sturdy and hold up well in a workout."	DURABILITY: This pair got top-notch marks here, too. "I think they would hold up well," one tester said. Another preferred these over the other three pairs.
OVERALL: For the money, this was the best value of all the gloves tested, yet there were some questions about its long-term durability.	OVERALL: The weakest of the four gloves tested. Although the price is good and they're quite durable, the lack of comfort is a major minus, and the grip is only so-so.	OVERALL: Being mediocre in fit and grip cannot win the day for this pair. Considering the high price point, mediocrity equates to a negative.	OVERALL: They're expensive for fitness gloves, but they're the top choice among our testers for both comfort and quality. You get what you pay for.

At least two *Open Air* staffers tested each pair of gloves. The testers were given at least a month to use the gloves in their workout routines. Then they filled out a questionnaire on the gloves' grip, comfort, durability, effectiveness during workouts and other criteria. Prices listed are manufacturers' suggested retail prices.