



**9 GYM BAG
MUST HAVES FOR
SERIOUS LIFTERS**

By **Alain Gonzalez**

LIFTING BELT – 10MM+ THICK



If you can't afford to drop 60-100+ dollars on a quality gym belt, I get it.

But if you're walking around the gym with a 300 dollar set of Beats Headphones and squatting with a 13 dollar belt from Walmart, then your priorities are a little fucked up.

Although this is not the case for everyone, the overwhelming majority of lifters can add an additional 50-100 lbs to their lifts by using proper technique with their lifting belt.

If you're squatting 225 for sets of 6 beltless then chances are you could easily squat 255+ for the same amount of reps if you did use a belt (properly).

Let's say you did this for 4 sets. That's a total of 5,400 total pounds (beltless) vs 6,120 total pounds (with a belt).

Despite getting some assistance with bracing your core, who do you think is going to induce more hypertrophy?

Exactly. The person who pushed the higher amount of total volume.

Lever Belts I Recommend: Make sure to select the correct size.

The One I Use: [Lifting Large Lever Belt](#)

LIFTING CHALK



If I look in your gym bag and I see lifting chalk, you're probably a badass.

Lifting chalk = deadlifting and deadlifting = alpha shit.

If you don't have lifting chalk in your gym bag then you might possibly still deadlift. However, it leads me to believe that you are selling yourself short.

I remember when I first started deadlifting regularly and the lift was improving pretty quickly. But I got to a point where either my hands would rip or slip and I just couldn't add any more weight to the bar.

Waiting on my hands to heal before deadlifting heavy again wasn't helping either.

Decided to try lifting chalk. No more ripping or slipping and progression continued.

Lifting Chalk I Recommend:

[Magnesium Carbonate – Lifting Chalk](#): Only 3.99

LIFTING STRAPS



For the use of this particular piece of gym gear, you probably think I am pro-straps because it allows the trainee to pull more weight during their back movements without their grip giving out. Although this is partially the reason, I believe that most people should minimize their use and allow their grip to strengthen when pulling.

My theory behind lifting straps is slightly different.

Scenario: You walk into the gym for a heavy deadlift session which you're going to follow with back training. Despite chalking up, you're going so damn heavy that your hands rip. Unfortunately they ripped early and you still have 2 heavy sets left (not to mention all the back training). You fail to finish your lifts or hit your numbers because quite frankly torn hands is painful. Then you have to finish off your back training with a lighter weight because again, pulling heavy weight with torn calluses is not fun (or sanitary).

Now let's go back to this scenario and change one thing.

This time you have a set of lifting straps. Hands rips, you opt for the straps, the workout continues as planned.

Lifting Straps I Recommend:

[Versa Grips](#)

[Standard Lifting Straps](#)

FOAM ROLLER



I'll be the first to admit. I don't foam roll as much as I should.

You can probably relate and I am not here to judge.

But there will be days where you walk into the gym and something feels a little tighter than usual. Maybe your lower back is a little sore or your hamstrings don't feel fully recovered.

But you came to squat. So you pull out your foam roller, roll the trouble area and get down to business.

Don't have a foam roller? Then prepare for a shitty workout.

Although this is something I recommend you do regularly, at the very least have one available for days like the one mentioned.

Foam Rollers I Recommend:

[Trigger Point Performance Foam Roller](#)

[Standard Form Roller](#)

WORKOUT LOG



If you have ever looked at any of my programs, you will notice that performance based training is a staple in my routines. Not because I am obsessed with getting better (which is totally fine if you are), but because increasing your performance is the ONLY way create a new stimulus in order to yield significant results.

A common goal for anyone following a fitness training program is to increase strength or muscle size. In order to achieve new results, the muscles need to be challenged, which stimulates the natural adaptive processes of the body, which develops to handle the new demands placed on it. If you fail to challenge the muscle, you will fail to stimulate the adaptive response.

So how do we know if we are progressing if we are not tracking?

We don't!

So whether it's an actual notebook (like what I use) or an app on your phone, you should always walk into the gym with a goal. That goal should always be to perform better than you did previously. If you can manage that, you can rest assured that you are doing enough to continue growing.

Workout Logs I Recommend:

[Workout Log – Free](#)

[TrainRite Fitness Journal](#)

KNEE SLEEVES



A knee sleeve provides some support, but does not function in the same way a knee brace would. Knee braces are designed and used to protect a previous injury from further endangerment. **Knee sleeves are designed to protect the knee from future injury or risk of damage.** This protection is especially important for knees put under great daily pressure (running, jumping, weightlifting).

Knee sleeves also add a valuable compression element that increases blood flow and reduces pain, not only during but also after performance. The reason this compression aspect is so important is that a compressed knee encourages blood flow through the blood vessels of the knee. **Here is how I would draw it up on a chalkboard: compression + blood flow = better recovery.** Simply put, using a knee sleeve results in less pain and swelling during and after performance.

Knee Sleeves I Recommend: Make sure to select the correct size.

[Slingshot Knee Sleeves](#)

What I Use: [SBD Knee Sleeves](#)

WRIST WRAPS



Wrist wraps (not to be confused with straps) are a great way to stabilize your wrist, especially when lifting heavy.

Unlike wrist straps, the wraps will not aid in gripping the bar. While the lifting straps are intended to preserve grip when pulling (typically), the wrist wraps simply provide joint stability without limiting range of motion.

I would recommend wrist wraps to anyone with naturally small wrists, anyone experiencing discomfort in the wrist when pushing (bench press, etc.), or anyone who squats low-bar.

Wrist Wraps I Recommend:

[Inzer Iron Z Wrist Wraps](#)

WEIGHTLIFTING SHOES



Weightlifting shoes have a raised heel. This is a massive advantage, as it allows you to squat into a deeper position through increased ankle range of motion.

This will help you to improve your overall position too, as you'll find yourself sitting more upright when squatting. A more upright torso means more chance of keeping hold of that barbell and sending it in the right direction - up! This heel also allows you to activate far more of your musculature to send that bar upwards.

Weightlifting shoes are also more stable than your typical barefoot or minimalist shoe, not just underfoot, but around your foot. Again this ensures you have a strong and consistent base to land on, push through, and push out into - important for performance and injury prevention in equal measure. And the less you get injured, the more you can train. The more you can train, the more you can increase how much you lift!

Lifting Shoes I Recommend:

[Adidas Adipower](#)

[Adidas Powerlift](#) – Less Expensive Alternative

WIRELESS HEADPHONES



You every get your headphone wires caught on the gym equipment?

If I had a penny for every time that happened to me, I would, at the least, double my savings account.

That's why I grabbed the LG Tone Pro headset for my workouts...and for when I am driving and don't want to hold the phone to my ear.

Wireless Headset I Recommend:

[LG Tone Pro Headphones](#)