

# Weight Lifting Belts

The bottom-line on weight lifting belts is that it allows competitive lifters to be able to lift more weight in training and competition. Wearing a belt can help them generate more force and bar speed on the squat and deadlift, which translates into higher one-rep-maxes and more reps with any given weight according to research. But it does put you at risk and if you are not a competitive lifter or athlete I do not recommend their use. I feel it makes you less functional.

I personally do not use them or support their use. I can understand if you are a competitive lifter but for everyone else we need to lift with no assistance so we can carry those strength gains from the fitness center into the real world. Rather than using a weight lifting belt learn how to brace your abdomen to protect your spine while lifting and doing activities of daily living (see bracing). Abdominal bracing is your own built in weight lifting belt strategy.

Training beltless reflects your true, unassisted strength, and forces you to learn how to properly stabilize yourself while you lift.

According to Dr. Stuart McGill, who's widely recognized as the preeminent authority on spinal biomechanics, a weightlifting belt can only improve performance when spinal flexion occurs. In other words, according to Dr. McGill, a belt can only benefit performance when an exercise like the squat or deadlift is done with poor form (your spine should remain neutral in these lifts, never flexed). McGill also suggest that motor and motion patterns are altered by wearing a belt, thus increasing the risk for injury when the belt is not worn. What's more is that those who are injured actually risk a more severe injury when using a belt. See sidebar,

Many other sites like VeryWell.com say many ill effects, such as high blood pressure and abdominal muscle weakness, may result from improper use of weightlifting belts. Thus, they should be used sparingly in training.

[See good article here.](#)



**In the Workplace  
Years ago you saw people  
wearing belts in the  
workplace. Today not so  
much. Why is that?**

A review of the documented effects of belt wearing in occupational settings (McGill, 1993) would support that:

- Those who have never had a previous back injury appear to have no additional protective benefit from wearing a belt.
  - Those who are injured while wearing a belt seem to risk a more severe injury.
  - Belts appear to give people the perception they can lift more and may in fact enable them to lift more.
  - Belts appear to increase intra-abdominal pressure and blood pressure.
  - Belts appear to change the lifting styles of some people to either decrease the loads on the spine or increase the loads on the spine.
- See more here