



March Ebook

# 6 Hacks to Save Money Building Your Weight Room



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## Canvas Your Area

Hewitt + James - Co-Founders @ TeamBuildr

It was time for us to build a TeamBuildr weight room last year - TeamBuildr HQ. Yes, we need it to test our product and continue making software work for strength coaches. Sure.

But, come on, we really just needed a home base where we could attend the Church of Iron after a long day's work AND play our own music AND bang weights as loud as we want AND wear whatever the hell we want (or nothing at all).

Now, like many S&C departments, we're not made out of money and we still had to find a way to build this weight room on the cheap. So, we drew up a game plan to get what we wanted at ~~all~~ little cost.

Our strategy: Hop onto Google Maps and look search for every CrossFit and private training gym in a 30 mile radius. Go to each website and find the contact email (usually info@company.com), and then send an email asking if they have any old equipment that they plan on getting rid of. In our case, we emailed about 36 gyms in the DC Metro area.

You will get the occasional gym that is getting rid of old equipment for \$.50 per lb. or whatever. But what you're really hoping for is what we got (and I think you will get it if you try enough). One CrossFit gym was going out of business and blowing out their inventory. Actually, the landlord had seized their equipment and was selling it for cents on the dollar.

All we had to do was come by and bid on the equipment with about 15 other people (I even called one of our customers in DC and told him to come by with me). Gym Rings? \$15. Rogue Barbell? \$80. Three medicine balls? Less than \$70. We could go on but you get the point.

In summary, our total bill was \$800 and we probably got \$4,000+ worth of stuff that was 18 months used. Did we get lucky? Maybe. But I guarantee if you mass email those gyms every 4 months, you will get lucky as well.

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## Learn to DIY

**Johnny Larson - Director of Athletic Performance @ Manhattan College**

Over the the course of the past 6 months, I have served as the first and only strength and conditioning coach in the history of Manhattan College Athletics. With that said, when I first arrived back home in the Bronx where our campus is located, our first order of business was to put together a fully functioning weight room with whatever equipment was currently in place, as well as adding and changing any pieces with an extremely low budget (less than \$5,000).

Because of the slick Mondo flooring that was already put in place in the weight room prior to my arrival, I knew that my Olympic Weightlifting style of coaching was not going to be possible in a safe and effective manner. Moving forward, instead of looking to large fitness outfitters to obtain thorough weightlifting platforms, I used close to \$400 and took myself to home depot where I purchased plywood, long 2x4x8 pieces of lumber, as well as budget rubber tiling, and pieced together a few stable and very well functioning lifting platforms that were placed in the backside of the weight room so that I could safely and more appropriately coach and teach the Clean, Snatch, Jerk and Dead lift.

Another issue we had was proper storage of physio balls and bosu balls as well as some of our medicine balls. Instead of spending hundreds of dollars on "Strength and Conditioning" specific storage units through brand name companies, we were able to assemble racks on the wall with metal hooks, 2x4's as well as PVC pipe.

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## The 3 Basic Rules

Brian Neal – Director of Strength and Conditioning for Olympic Sports @ Mississippi State & Co-owner of [ONEEightyAthletics.com](http://ONEEightyAthletics.com)

I have been at just about all levels of college athletics. I played DIII football, coached at FCS and now coach at Mississippi State University – which just received nearly \$38 million solely from the SEC Network.

I have seen weight room redesigns on zero dollar budgets and weight rooms with essentially an unlimited budget. That being said, I have learned 3 essential basics when budgeting a weight room:

1. Maximize your resources and don't always think "new." There are a lot of bigger schools that look to remodel their weight room and will donate their old equipment to local high schools. There are also companies that will buy the old equipment, refurbish it and sell it at a fraction of what new equipment would cost.
2. Be wary of putting machines in your weight room. Don't get one lat pull-down machine when you can get a chin up bar that fits 6 athletes. Or don't get a leg curl machine when you can get 10 TRX straps to do TRX leg curls. Machines take up unnecessary space and can only purpose one athlete at a time. I have been on both ends of this and you can get some really good equipment for little to no money.
3. Take care of your equipment with "free labor." At Mississippi State we started assigning our athletes to maintain the weight room as they do the locker room. They will vacuum, mop, disinfect, and wipe our bars down every day with WD-40. Not only does this help the staff save time, keep things clean and new, but it also gives them a sense of pride about the weight room and keeps them accountable to keeping it clean.

With a coat of paint and a couple of turns on a wrench you can make something come alive and have a purpose and function in your weight room. Contact some big schools in your area or state and see what they possibly have to offer, or if they know of a school that might have something to offer. You might be surprised at what you can get!

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## Understand How to Deal With Vendors

Nate Shaw – Head Major League Strength Coach @ Arizona Diamondbacks

Vendors serve an important role and can make your life really easy as a strength coach. However, vendors can also make you have to create excuses to your superiors because of late or unfulfilled promises.

Over the years I have built solid relationships with key vendors. There are vendors who will treat you and your player development staff the same and there are frontrunners that treat you special because you are a MLB Strength coach. If they are capable of treating you and your staff differently from other strength coaches with less recognizability then you can expect that there will be some inconsistencies in the way they deliver the services you need.

I would say that all strength coaches are in the trenches and all deserve the same level of respect from vendors. In general, I appreciate vendors who under promise and over deliver. I am simple and I tell the truth. Naturally, I resonate well with others that do the same.

There are many vendors that hustle to make the sale and upon completion their availability becomes suddenly sparse. I also have had vendors say they could deliver products or services at the MLB Level and have failed miserably. The unsettling part of that is that I am usually the one making apologies and trying to mop a mess. I choose to use vendors that have proven themselves over time with reliability and a quality product. Over the years I have learned that what you **say** and what you **do** needs to match up.

I try not to recommend staff or equipment that does not fulfill standard expectations. So for me, having vendors that I can count on for a specific project is crucial. The list is small, but I am always open to making it bigger. Or smaller.

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# Creativity and Problem-Solving

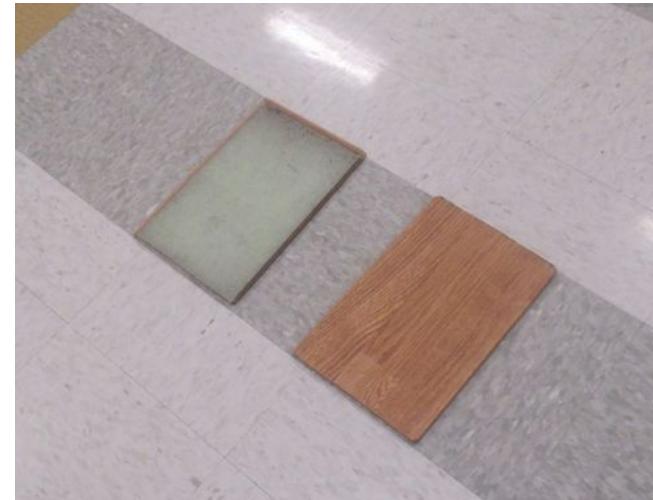
Chris Morland – Director of Strength and Conditioning/Teacher @ Cardinal Gibbons High School

I am known to come up with some creative ways to train according to my volunteer assistants, student, and athletes.

## Homemade Slide Boards

One story is a night I was stretching in my living room while watching TV and looked down at the laminate hardwood flooring, and realized I could cut the leftover laminate and have my athletes do slide board exercises on the linoleum at school.

During my first year and even in some recent cycles we use these boards to pattern lunges and do resistive mountain climbers (see right).



## Homemade Sandbags

These are medium-sized inner-tubes with cable-ties on the ends, playground sand inside, and the bag weight labeled with floor tape. Our set ranges from 15-50 lbs with 5 lbs increments. The most used are from 20-30 lbs for lunges, squat jumps, and step-ups. I wish I could remember which coach gave me this idea but I made a set at NC State and Cardinal Gibbons for about \$50! (Picture with current volunteers Coach Cowick & Coach Rabideau).



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### Step-up boxes

These wooden boxes have cut-out holes along the bottom for weighted sit-ups and medicine ball tosses. This idea came from my first Strength [Coach Javorek](#). Make sure you measure the height so the knee is about 90 degrees when doing step-ups. Our boxes are 16 inches and I actually got them from our theater department when they were done using them in a play! (Picture: Chris Morland, Director of Strength and Conditioning/Teacher at Cardinal Gibbons High School, Raleigh, NC)



### Stability Ball Storage

Stability Ball Storage is up high with this rack. This maximizes our space for our athletes or students and prevents them from playing with them as basketballs!



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## Tractor tires

Tires like this one are used for flipping and pushing movements that can be done anywhere. It is important to get the appropriate sized tire. This one is 325 lbs, and I believe 250-350 lbs works well in high school, but over 400 does not! We use them in the gym like this and just outside the facility on the grass.



## Water Barrels

I was introduced to these a couple of years ago by [John Brookfield](#). They are shorter than regular barrels as they match up the center-of-mass better. Using these as core activation with pushing and pulling exercise for as little as 5-10 minutes can increase strength and power a lot!



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## The Barter System

Josh Bullock – Head Strength and Conditioning Coach @ Emory and Henry College

Trade!

Use what resources you do have and barter them with someone who's willing. Believe it or not, there are a number of companies and private parties out there who won't pay for your used equipment but will work in trade.

As one example, we traded some older squat racks for a few dozen bumper plates. We no longer needed the racks and new bumper plates would have cost us several thousand dollars.



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