

the **CrossFit** JOURNAL ARTICLES

Really Cool Homemade Parallettes

Greg Glassman

Parallettes training is fun and highly developmental. Without gymnastics training we opt out of the most potent neurological training (coordination, accuracy, agility, and balance) available to an athlete, and parallettes training is essential to your gymnastics development.

We hope our fervor for parallettes training specifically and gymnastics training generally will inspire all of you to get hold of a pair of parallettes and begin your gymnastics training in earnest.

To that end we offer this month step-by-step instructions for building a great set of parallettes out of PVC pipe available wherever building supplies or landscaping materials are sold.

Four things inspire this project: 1. They're dirt-cheap (\$10-20), 2. ANYONE could make them, 3. They come out not just good but fantastic – you couldn't ask for better parallettes; we're shocked at how nice they are, and 4. It was a lot of fun building them.

Materials and Tools

Materials:

- 10 feet of 1 1/2" PVC
- 4 Elbows
- 4 T's
- 8 End caps
- PVC glue and primer
- Electrical tape
- Rags
- Newspaper

Tools:

- Fine tooth hand saw
- Tape measure
- Wire brush or sandpaper
- Pencil



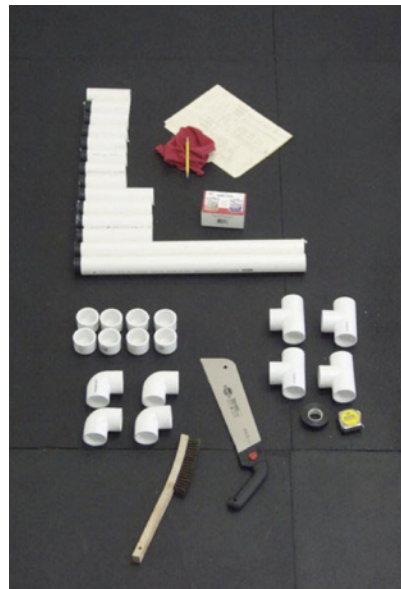
(right) All the tools and materials. The 10-foot pipe is marked with electrical tape, ready for cutting.

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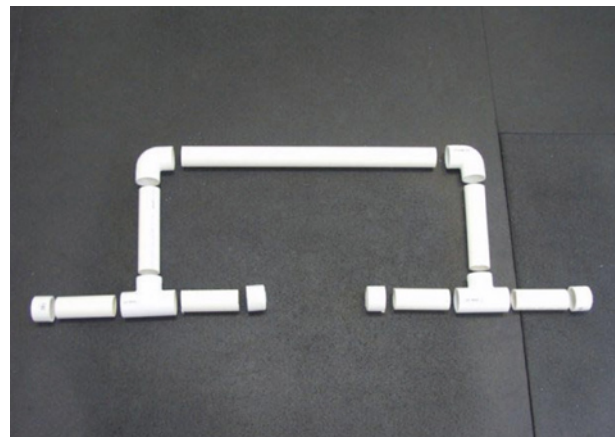
Homemade Parallettes (continued...)

Procedures:

- Clean and dry a ten-foot section of 1 1/2" PVC pipe.
- Measure and mark with a pencil at 24, 48, 56, 64, 72, 80, 85, 90, 95, 100, 105, 110, and 115 inches from one end of the pipe.
- Run electrical tape around the pipe so that the leading edge of the tape exactly aligns with the measured marks.
- Cut the pipe at the leading edge of each band of tape. This yields two 24", four 8", and eight 5" sections. Don't cut into the tape, and keep your cuts reasonably perpendicular to the pipe's length.
- Read the directions on PVC glue and primer carefully.
- Primer and glue (P&G) one elbow on each (4) 8" section. These are the "legs."
- P&G legs to ends of both 24" sections. Make sure that legs are parallel on each piece.
- Set finished "tops" (two assemblies of 24" sections with "legs") aside.
- P&G 5" sections into each of the four T's.
- P&G end caps onto each of the four T assemblies. These are the "feet."
- P&G "feet" to "tops" at "legs."
- Sand or wire brush the top tubes, roughing them up so that they'll hold chalk. (Sanding works best.)



The cut pieces, materials, and supplies, ready to glue.



Pre-assembly check.

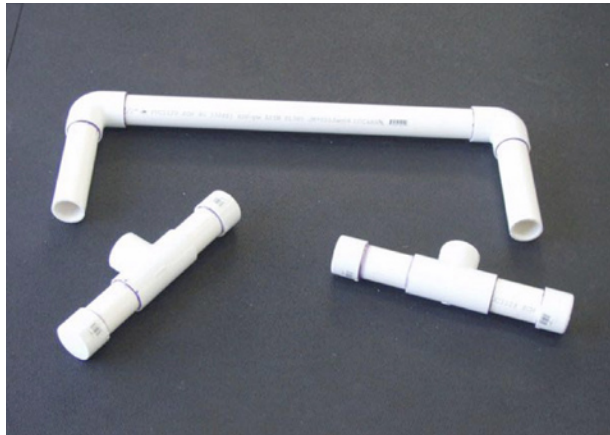


Above: Fine tooth hack saw makes easy work of cutting the pipe.

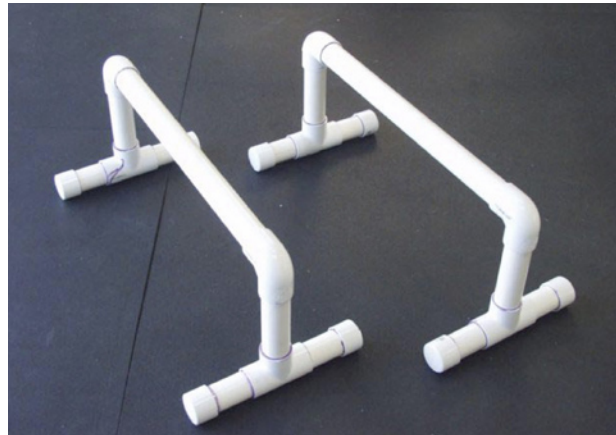


Read the directions for primer and glue carefully. You definitely want a good bond.

Homemade Parallettes (continued...)



"Feet" ready for attaching to "tops".



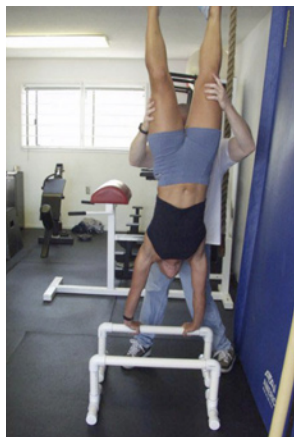
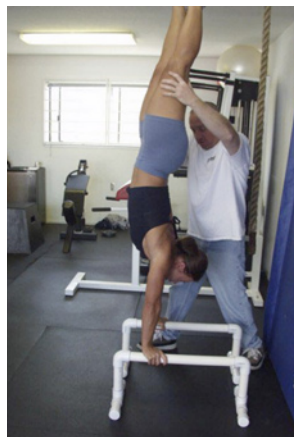
Finished product.

It took us about an hour to put together one of the coolest pieces of exercise equipment ever devised.

We plan to have a parallettes-making party at CrossFit Santa Cruz and crank out half a dozen for the gym and send each participant home with a set.

Gymnastics champions Steve McCain and Jay Thornton of American Gymnast have produced the definitive Internet parallettes training guide titled "[Success in the Gym begins at Home: A Parallette Training Guide.](#)" This program has beginning, intermediate, and advanced lessons. There's enough here to keep you busy for years and years.

Work through the exercises in the Parallette Training Guide and check and date each exercise as you perform it. If you have doubt about your technique, video or photograph your efforts and compare your mechanics to the text and photos in the training guide.



Homemade Parallettes (continued...)

The following list of exercises is culled from the guide. It would be a tremendous accomplishment to complete this list in a year.

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- Tuck Sit
 - L-Sit
 - Tuck Planche
 - Straddle Press to Handstand Against Wall
 - Handstand Against Wall
 - Handstand Pushups Against Wall
 - Push-ups
 - Handstand
 - Handstand Forward ½ Pirouettes
 - V Sit
 - Tuck Planche to Straddle Planche
 - L-Sit Press to Tuck or Straddle Planche
 - Straddle Press to Handstand (no wall)
 - Pike Press to Handstand Against Wall
 - Planche Push-ups
 - Handstand Forward I/I Pirouettes
 - Handstand Reverse ½ Pirouette
 - Pike Press (no wall)
 - Broomstick Presses
 - Straight-body Planche (feet together & on a box)
 - Straddle Planche Press to Handstand
 - Handstand Reverse I/I Pirouettes
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Additionally, there are five presses to handstand that you want to develop and in this order:

- Bent arm, bent hip, bent leg press
 - Straight arm, bent hip, bent leg press
 - Straight arm, bent hip, straight leg (“stiff-stiff”) press
 - Bent arm, straight hip, straight leg (“hollowback”) press
 - Straight arm, straight hip, straight leg (“planche”) press
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These are all performed without a straddle. Some of these presses are partially contained in the training guide. Completing this list in two years would be outstanding!

Many of our athletes, if not most, are fully involved and committed to a sport. For these athletes the WOD (Workout of the Day) and their sport training and practice consume every bit of energy they may have available for physical activity. These athletes’ plates are full.

Other CrossFitters are not committed to any particular sport and have the exciting option of more casual exploration of multiple sports and additional practice of drills and skills designed and selected to improve neurological fitness (coordination, agility, accuracy, and balance). Many of these athletes are soldiers, cops, and firefighters and for them fitness is their sport. These individuals include our best athletes.

With precisely these athletes in mind we will be increasingly posting alongside the WOD (Workout of the Day) skill development tips, drills, and skills for the parallettes and rings. Don’t be left behind; make some parallettes (and buy some rings!).



Greg Glassman is the founder (with Lauren Glassman) of [CrossFit, Inc.](#) and [CrossFit Santa Cruz](#) and is the publisher of the *CrossFit Journal*.