

Ask Tom **IVANKO**, Part IV

This is not an advertisement. It is a public interest article.



By Tom Lincir,
President and Founder,
Ivanko Barbell Company

WHY DO YOU GUYS MARK THE RINGS ON YOUR OLYMPIC BARS WRONG?

Tom,

Why do you guys mark the rings [on] your Olympic bars wrong? No one in weightlifting will buy your bar because it marked wrong. A small industry has popped up: Rogue, Pendlay, Muscle Driver because there is nowhere else to buy an American bar that is marked properly. I believe [a certain Olympic bar reseller] told you guys this before he started to make his own bars. There are rules on this established by the IWF. Just wondering. Always bothered me.

- A Reader in the USA (and a US Olympic Weightlifting Coach)

To answer your question: 1) We have four different and distinct spacing marks on the OB-20KG, OBX-20KG, and OBS-20KG. 2) Our 29mm stainless powerlifting bar (OBSX-29mm) and our 28mm stainless needle bearing Olympic bar (OBSNB) have the knurling you happen to like. 3) Historically, all spacing marks were created by various manufacturers and the designs were approved by the organization promoting the contests who donated the most cash or other benefits. 4) Great lifters make the lift regardless of the spacing marks on the knurling. 5) Olympic lifters and powerlifters are only a minority; most athletes are just trying to get stronger in order to be better at their chosen sport. 6) As far as I know, nobody knurls a bar after it's been hardened, except for Ivanko. This fact, among others, dictates the way we knurl and the marks we put on some of our bars.



knurling on OBXS-29MM & OBSNB

When we introduced ETD-150 to the industry back in the early 80's (a steel that incidentally, most others' higher end bars now contain), that type of steel machines like butter. You can do anything you want to it. As we progressed to higher strength steels over 200,000 PSI, we were met with more challenges. And as I've noted in previous articles, there is a geometric progression in difficulty (and therefore cost) between knurling a steel at 150,000 and 200,000 PSI. It's not a simple matter of ratios as some advertising copy would lead you to believe.

CUSTOM DUMBBELL HANDLES.

Dear Tom,

I am looking to make some of my own custom "big handle" loadable dumbbells. I would like them to be about 18" long and no one makes anything like this. Sure I could buy some and cut them but than again that would cost me a LOT. So I would like to make some of my own. I am just worried about material selection. I realize with a short dumbbell it doesn't matter as much but I would still like to do it right. So I was wondering if you could tell me what material you use/recommend. This would be greatly appreciated.

Thanks, T. L. (via e-mail)

Dear T.L.,

If you are going to make the handles out of solid one piece steel and for Olympic plates, 1018 CRS would be OK. For small hole, regular plates, I would use 1045 CRS.

Thanks,
Tom

FURTHER REPLY TO LAST RESPONSE:

Thanks for the help in this matter. Now lets just say I wanted to make the "best" dumbbells out of the "best" material. I see that your barbells are rated at 218,000 PSI tensile strength. 1018 is only rated to 63,000 PSI. 1045 is rated at 82,000 PSI hot rolled or 90,500 cold drawn. So my question is this: if I wanted to make a pair of loadable dumbbells out of the best and strongest material (218,000 PSI) what would I be using? Would 4340 be the material of choice or a tool steel like D2 or O1 or H13? And if I wanted to them to not rust and made them out of stainless would I want to use 17-4 PH.

Just for the record, I'm not really asking "what would work" like most people do. I want to know, "what is the best." I am not doing this to save money. I am doing this because I want to make products that can't be bought. 2.5" handles for example. The 2" bars aren't really big enough for me. As well as some other custom stuff. If I wanted a straight forward Barbell or Dumbbell I would definitely buy Ivanko! Ya know what I mean?

- Thank you, T.L.

Dear T.L.,

You could make out of Vaxco-Max 350 if you could find it.

That's what they make warheads for the Tomahawk missiles out of. If it is only 18", you would gain little to nothing by using an expensive steel, especially if you wanted a 2-1/2" handle turned town to slightly under 2" for Olympic plates. I have very good luck with 1045 CRS. It is tough but not brittle. I use that for



You can make dumbbells from same steel as the Tomahawk Missile.

35-mm dumbbell handles and have never had one break or bend, so far. Be careful with some of these exotic steels. They may be designed for different purposes and not good for barbells. We've found this out the hard way.

Carry on,
Tom

DO I NEED A STAINLESS STEEL OLYMPIC BAR?

Hi Tom,

I'm planning to buy my first ivanko olympic bar for my home gym. The bar will be mainly used for bodybuilding movements perhaps some olympic lifts later on. Is the obx 20kg a good choice for me? The stainless steel is just way out of my budget. Any advice would be appreciated.

Thanks,
Gerald

Hi Gerald,

First thanks for considering IVANKO. I don't think you need stainless steel. That is more for outdoor, ocean front, high humidity areas. The best bar for you would be a OB-20KG. This bar is perfect for bodybuilding movements and will work well for Olympic lifts, if you decide later to try them. The OB-20KG is a really strong bar that will last you a lifetime. the bar is sonic and mag tested, so, it is safe, as well. I look forward to hearing your comments after you try an Ivanko bar.

STAY STRONG,
Tom Lincir

LETTERS FROM READERS IN RESPONSE TO OUR PREVIOUS ARTICLE, "MADE IN THE USA: IVANKO QUALITY KNOWS NO BORDERS."

Dear Tom,

The Article was great -- and I think it summed up why I love companies like yours in the very first paragraph: "There's often a market for the best, despite production costs."

However, the problem that I even fail to really come to terms with is the very LAST sentence of the article: "If you're doing the right things, you rarely want to limit yourself to limit yourself to

one roof. Those who do live in a room without a view."

That's so true, and while it's great to be an idealist and say that everything must be made in the USA (though I'm perfectly happy to accept European, Australian, Japanese, etc., as they're equally as good to their employees), however the reality is that we live in a world where it's plain and simple: countries like China and Taiwan make some things much, much better than we do (and in some cases, making some things that we can't and don't make here or anywhere else).

J. H., (via e-mail)

Hello!

First off, thanks to Tom and your team for continually striving towards excellence! His articles and information on your website are priceless. Nothing compares to the honesty, straightforwardness, reasoning and work ethic of why you all do what you do!

I especially liked the story about a company wanting to buy your steel for the pins in their power rack and how you wouldn't sell to them because of their view towards not having a warranty for the Olympic bar itself.

Question: Do you offer the OB-20KG Olympic bar without the black oxide finish? In other words, just the bare steel. We are also considering the stainless steel bar.

Thanks,
Joe & Helen

Dear Joe & Helen:

Thanks for your comments and support. We can leave the finish off any bar if you like. There's a long history of Olympic bar manufacture with companies like Schnell forgoing a finish on their bars with a raw, unfinished bar. As long as you wipe the bar down regularly, you should be fine.

Carry on,
Tom

OBZ-40 PROTOTYPE: We are currently testing prototypes of our extra-long (6', 2") Olympic EZ-Curl bar designed to fit in a wide-grip rack. It's a heavy-duty, no compromise, US-made bar and should see a full production run in late 2012. This version replaces the imported version we used to offer. Photos & updates of the new OBZ-40 prototype may be seen on our facebook page.

Ivanko Barbell Company was founded by Tom Lincir in 1967 and is the most respected manufacturer of professional and commercial grade barbell and dumbbell products worldwide. Your comments or questions are welcome.



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For product information, pricing, and our newsletter sign-up, see our website ivankobarbell.com or call (310) 514-1155.