

# Pound-For-Pound – Why Tap Handle Weight Matters

by Ben Weston, Hoptown Handles

Tap handle weight is an often overlooked feature of custom tap handles. "Yeah, let's do a cool wrought iron welded handle!" Sounds great, right? If you care about your taps, your draft accounts, and your bottom line, you might want to rethink that idea. Tap handles that are too heavy can cause serious problems.

First, a heavy handle can cause significant wear on the internal joints in the tap itself. Wear can cause leaks and beer loss as well as having to replace your taps frequently. Second, a heavy tap handle can cause damage to itself. For example, if you have a tall and heavy resin handle, and the person pouring doesn't know to pull the tap handle gently from the bottom, they may wrench on it from the top where the most torque is going to be applied. \*SNAP\*, you just broke your tap handle. Now, a well-made resin handle will be light enough and sturdy enough to withstand this. Lastly, a heavy handle makes a tap easier to open, so if the bartender accidentally knocks it when pouring the tap next to it, boom, you've got beer pouring, and nothing to catch it. Over time, that's gonna cost you.

We've found that you generally want to keep the weight of a tap handle under 1 lb, however, if you can get closer to 1/2 to 3/4 lb, you'll be sitting pretty. The less dense the material you're using, the more flexibility you'll have in terms of design. Here's how different materials measure up in terms of their density:

## Material and Density

- Wood (Hard Maple): 720 kg/m<sup>3</sup>
- Wood (White Oak): 770 kg/m<sup>3</sup>
- Polyurethane Resin: 1000 - 1300 kg/m<sup>3</sup>
- Aluminum: 2,710 kg/m<sup>3</sup>
- Stainless Steel: 7,980 kg/m<sup>3</sup>
- Acrylic: 1,163 kg/m<sup>3</sup>

[Various Material Densities](#)

(continued with Material Notes)

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### Material Notes

- Wood is a great choice if you want a lightweight and durable handle. When dropped, the wood is just going to dent as opposed to chipping, cracking, or breaking. Just because the handle is made of wood, doesn't mean it has to look like wood either. There are some awesome metallic paints out there, and if applied right, you can get a handle that looks like metal, but is as light as wood. [Check out some wood tap handle ideas!](#)
- Metal tap handles can be very heavy for obvious reasons (see density chart above). If you are going for a completely metal tap handle, you are either going to want it to be very thin, hollow, or made with aluminum which is lighter than most other metals.
- Cast Polyurethane Resin, one of the more common materials for highly sculpted custom tap handles can be heavy if they are completely solid all the way through. Some manufacturers have the ability to make the pieces hollow, thereby reducing the weight significantly. Be careful with resin handles though, a good drop and they're likely to chip or break.
- Acrylic tends to be similar in weight to resin. It is less impact resistant, and you don't get quite the design flexibility.



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