



SKULL HOOKER: MYTHBUSTERS THE EASTMAN WAY BY ADAM BENDER & RYAN HATFIELD



Soon after we started offering the Skull Hooker on eastmans.com, we started to get a lot of questions from customers about whether or not the Big Hooker could support an elk or heavier trophy. It's a legitimate question, as these trophies are among a hunter's most prized possessions.

That got us to thinking. Made out of steel and with a very sturdy design, just how much could these little devices hold? The packaging gives a recommendation as to what it's capable of, but the question was still looming - just how much could it hold?

We grabbed a 2x4, some drywall, some gym weights and a couple of Skull Hookers and did a little "Mythbusters...Eastmans' Style." Here is what we found...

In order to test this as accurately to the most likely real life situation as possible, we simply braced a 2x4 with some legs, stood it upright and attached a small piece of sheetrock. After all, a stud and piece of drywall is what you're most likely going to be mounting yours to at home. Also, in order to test it at its weakest point, we put the hook in the flattest position possible - where the weight would have the most leverage on the prong.

We started with the Big Hooker. Knowing that it is intended to hold the skulls of the largest big game, such as elk, Cape buffalo, etc., we went straight to 25 lbs. - no problem. From there, we figured we'd pony up and try 50 lbs. - again, no problem. Incrementally, we put on the weight by 10 lbs. At what point did we stop? Well, we had to come up with a new strategy at 60 lbs. because the rope we were using snapped as we lowered the weights down onto the prong.

Quick thinking found us running out to the pickup and grabbing a tow strap - this ought to hold! With the new rope in place, we



The subject at hand - Skull Hooker's "Big Hooker".



Lab monkeys Ryan and Adam, prepping a load for the Big Hooker.



The Big Hooker, bearing a monstrous 100-lb. load. At this point, we gave up, knowing it would be more than adequate for any North American big game European mount.

kept adding 10 lbs. at a time until we ran out of weights - and that ladies and gentlemen, was at 100 lbs. While we absolutely do not recommend hanging that much weight on it (it's always wise to back off a bit), it appears

that any worries about the Big Hooker not being strong enough to hold your European elk rack is out of the question (when mounted properly, of course).

Next on the myth-busting block was the Little Hooker. The Little Hooker is designed to hold smaller skulls, such as deer, bear, antelope, etc. While this smaller model doesn't have the brawn the Big Hooker does, what we found during the testing sure surprised us.

We started testing at 25 lbs.; piece of cake. We jumped up to 50 lbs. and it held, so 55 was next. At 55 lbs., one of the prongs bent a little. Knowing that it was still holding the weight, we went to 60 lbs. and the whole unit failed. Since most skulls you'll be putting on the small hooker will weigh between 5-10 lbs., this handy little apparatus is more than up to the job.

The one "medium-sized" skull that we'd recommend using the Big Hooker for would be sheep skulls. While according to our test, it would likely be just fine, we just don't think anything as rare and coveted as a set of sheep horns is worth any risk - use the Big Hooker and sleep better at night.

Our testing was done in a way to ensure it was as accurate as possible - a single stud and piece of drywall was all we mounted it



The Little Hooker finally completely failed under a 60-lb. load. Considering most trophies you'll be hanging on it will be under 10 lbs., it's easily up to snuff.

to. There was no smoke, mirrors, or extra supports to ensure they'd withstand the weight we put them up against. After testing, we know that we won't hesitate to put any of our European mounts - large or small - up on one anytime soon.



HARDCORE FIELD TEST NOTES

Overall Design:	Very innovative. It leaves us scratching our heads wishing we would've thought of it.
Ease of Use:	Hands down the simplest way to display a European mount. It's also great for quickly switching out trophies for a fresh look.
Durability:	Considering both held significantly more weight than you'd ever put on them, the durability is outstanding.
Appearance:	Very streamlined and appealing on the wall.
Improvements:	Make the posts that go into the coupler longer for added integrity.
Contact:	Available at www.eastmans.com

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