

Easyrig Vario 5 Strong



A year ago at NAB, Easyrig presented Vario 5, an adjustable version of the wildly popular Easyrig. For the past year, they have been busy working on a new, heavier payload model.

At NAB 2016, they introduced the Vario 5 Strong. It supports camera packages from 30-55 lb (14-25 kg). The original Vario 5 model supports payloads of 11-38 lb (5-17 kg).

The Vario 5 and Vario 5 Strong share similar technology. The adjustable tension system is patent pending (take note: USA 15/054 832, EU 15157184.1 and China 201610102236.5. Serious Swedish patent attorneys are on alert and standing by.) I mention this because shamelessly crude copies have been flaunted by companies with names that sound like Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves. But when you're balancing a camera package weighing upward of 35 pounds with the price tag of a Maserati Quattroporte, you don't want the entire thing dropping onto your toe because its inferior steel spring snapped and you were too cheap to buy the real deal.

Easyrig's Vario 5 Strong is made in Sweden using, among other things, SKF ball bearings, Lesjofors springs and gas shock absorbers. These prominent Swedish companies have been making quality components since 1907. Johan Hellsten and his team have been building Easyrigs in their factory in Umeå, Sweden since 1994.

As a cameraman for Swedish news, Johan realized that hand-holding heavy, badly-balanced cameras would quickly shorten his shooting career. So Johan invented Easyrig. Think of it as a backpack with an adjustable arm that curves above your head. A retractable and tensioned cable takes the weight of the camera. The camera is neutrally buoyant. It's brilliant. Many cinematographers agree; more than 8,000 Easyrigs have been sold worldwide.

The key to the Vario 5 Strong is the new internal adjustment system that allows for changes in the weight of the system. Let's say you change lenses from a lightweight prime to an almost Hubble telescope sized zoom. The Vario 5 Strong is easy to adjust.

The first Vario 5 Strong Easyrigs were sent out with several DPs on 3 continents in a variety of climates, conditions and locations.

Stefan Kullänger (at left, top 3 pictures), DP in Sweden, writes, "I've used the Vario 5 Strong for six days and found it very easy to adjust. The combination of the GimbalRig Vest, the extended arm and the Vario 5 Strong...relieved the weight of the camera very well, especially when you operate in low positions for longer periods. The extended arm also helps you perform with better control over camera moves and stability. I haven't felt any strain on my back after a shooting day which involves up to 90% operating with the camera hanging at different heights. The Vario 5 Strong is well suited for me since most of the productions I work on are shot with camera rigs weighing between 15-22 kg (33-50 lb). Even if you choose to shoot with an Arri Alexa Mini, you'll probably end up with a rig weighing over 15 kg (33 lb) with all the accessories, monitor, and lens."

David Paul NZCS (bottom left), writes, "I have had the chance to use the Vario 5 Strong for various shots over the past 4 weeks on a TV Feature I am doing here in New Zealand. I used it for my heavy rigs. One rig was Sony F55 + Flowcine Gravity One + Kenyon KS8 gyros. This was not anywhere near a challenge for the Vario 5 Strong."

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