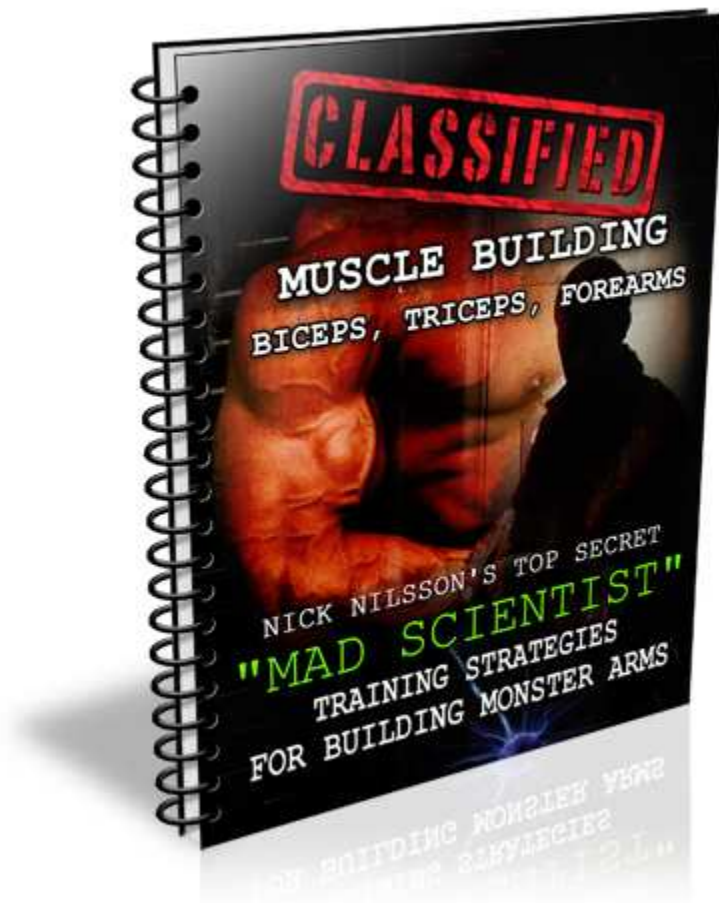


Classified Muscle Building

Biceps, Triceps, Forearms



Nick Nilsson's Top Secret "Mad Scientist" Training Strategies For Building Monster Arms

FOR YOUR EYES ONLY

Welcome to "Classified Muscle Building...
Biceps, Triceps, Forearms"

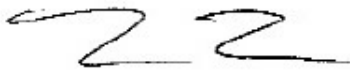
From:
Nick Nilsson

Ok, you're reading this because you want bigger, better arms...the kind that scare children when you flex them. Well, you've come to the right place.

Here's what you need to keep in mind when reading and using these tips...this is not frills...**no pictures, no videos, just INFORMATION.** Read and understand each tip before trying so you know exactly what you're doing. Use at your own risk...uncontrolled explosions of muscle growth and strength may result. **Please read "Terms & Conditions" at the bottom of the report.**



If you have questions about any of the techniques, my secret contact drop box is betteru@fitstep.com



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WARNING!

Any exercise program contains an element of risk. Be aware that the exercises and training techniques in the book may not be familiar to you and, even though every attempt has been made to ensure safe instruction, how and if you decide to execute the exercises is ultimately your responsibility. Consult your physician before taking part in any exercise program. By reading the information in this book you hereby agree to the Terms and Conditions of use, found in this book.

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THE EXERCISES

1. STRAIGHT BARBELL CURLS

Grasp a barbell with a palms-up, shoulder-width grip. Without swaying or lifting at the shoulders and keeping your arms at your sides, curl the barbell up in a wide arc from your thighs up to shoulder level. Lower and repeat.

Comments:

A narrow grip works the biceps harder, i.e. inside shoulder width, by reducing shoulder involvement.

This exercise can be hard on your wrists if you do it too much. If your wrists hurt, switch to dumbbell curls. The reason for this is that the biceps want to supinate the forearm but the bar prevents that movement so there is wrist stress.

Do not grip the bar too hard, as this will involve the forearms more - cradle, don't strangle.

All a very wide grip does is put stress on your joints - it doesn't work the outside of your biceps, contrary to popular belief.

Keep your chest high and your shoulders down and back.

Move your chin back from the neck so you don't curl in a vulture position.

It is very important that you keep your knees slightly bent in order to take stress off your lower back. This is especially important when doing cheat or hammer curls.

Tricks:

1. Cock the wrists back as you curl the bar up to keep the tension on the biceps. To use this trick to make a set harder, curl up without cocking, then lower the weight while cocking (makes the negative harder).
2. Stand with your back against the wall to prevent body motion. This is also good for people with sensitive necks as it eliminates any body momentum that could be transferred up through the neck area. Be sure to keep your knees bent and keep your head back against the wall as well.
3. Lean slightly forward at the top of the motion to get an extra squeeze.
4. At the top, hold the contraction for a second and try to push your elbows together hard. This is like forcing supination. It will intensify the contraction.
5. Back and forth partner curls. This is a good way to burn out on curls. You do a set to exhaustion then you pass the bar to your partner who is standing in front of you. He goes to exhaustion then passes the bar back to you. Go back and forth until neither of you can move the bar. This is one of the only exercises where you can do this kind of passing. It also helps to have a partner who has similar strength levels as you so one of doesn't tire out way before the other on the same weight.
6. If you find this exercise hurts your lower back, try doing them in a kneeling position. Having your feet as a support behind you will ease the pressure from the lower back.
7. Barbell curl shockwave cheating – the bar is resting on your thighs. Keep some tension in your biceps. Rise up on your toes then drop quickly, jarring your heels against the floor. The instant your heels hit, explode up with the biceps. The rebound energy of the shock of your heels hitting the floor will travel up your body and will give your biceps the extra bit of starting

kick. A bit of stretch reflex will also kick in to help as long as you have tension in the biceps. This technique works with other standing barbell movements as well (e.g. standing barbell shoulder press).

Variations:

1. Reverse grip - take a palms-down grip and curl. This grip will work the brachialis muscle underneath the biceps and the forearms. Keep your shoulders down and don't let your elbows flare out to the sides. If they have a tendency to do so, it means your brachialis muscle is weak.
2. Seated barbell curl - sit on a bench with the barbell in your lap. Curl up. This version only works the top half of the range. Rest the bar in your palms and grip with your fingertips.
3. 21's - a good way to burn out. Do 7 reps in the bottom half of the range of motion, do 7 more in the top half of the range of motion then do 7 full range reps.
4. Cheat curls - swing the barbell up with a little body momentum then hold the negative hard on the way down. Do not cheat excessively by using a lot of momentum. A little forward thrust of the hips and a little lean back should be all. One thing to remember with these is that even though the weight is greater, the tension on the muscle is not necessarily greater due to the momentum involved.
5. Body drag curls - start in the standard hang position. Raise your elbows up behind your back, dragging the bar up the front of your torso. Squeeze hard. This is a contracted position movement. To work the brachialis and the brachioradialis, do these reverse grip. These can also be done in the Universal bench machine by standing in between the handles, facing the stack, with a curl grip. Pull the handles up beside your body and lean forward, elbows behind. Use a neutral, thumbs forward grip to work the brachialis. A reverse grip may also be used. It is also possible to do body drag curls with dumbbells.
6. Top range partial curls – these are partial curls or holds in the very top, contracted position of barbell curls. Set the pins in the power rack so that they are a few inches below the top position. These can be done free in the middle of the rack or up against the supports. Pushing against the supports will allow you to use more weight while free standing will be more like curls. Bend your knees slightly and grasp the bar with your regular grip in the top range. Stand up, squeezing the biceps hard. If you are pushing against the supports, push up and forward as you stand up.

These can also be done on the Universal bench machine or a shoulder press machine. A Smith machine will work for this too. To do this on a Universal bench, kneel in front of it. Set the pin so that the handles are just below the top position. Grasp the handles, push forward and up. The same thing can be done on a shoulder press machine if the height is right. The Smith machine version is exactly like the barbell version where you push against the supports. The brachioradialis is strongly affected when these are done on the Universal bench machine due to the wide grip used. The angle of the arms hits that muscle hard.

7. Squatting curls – squat down to a rock bottom position with your hamstrings on your calves (be flat on your feet). The very low end of your triceps just above the elbow should be braced on your knees. Curl up. This position emphasizes the stretch position because of the pressure from your knees. You must move your body to counterbalance the weight, letting it sit back more as you lower the weight then bringing it up closer as you curl up. This exercise also allows you to use bodyweight to help get the weight up. You can use the body ratcheting technique by letting your weight fall backwards holding the weight isometrically to

move it up. Using your body position to adjust tension and to spot yourself makes this a useful exercise. This position can also be used with cables or dumbbells. If you are using dumbbells it can be done in a lunge position one arm at a time instead of squatting.

8. Scoop curls – these look like uppercut curls. As you curl up, pretend as though you are scooping up an armload of something. This movement looks like a front raise and a curl executed simultaneously. Finish with the bar up by your forehead and your elbows pointed directly forward. Concentrate on squeezing the biceps the entire way up. This will put more of a peak contraction on your biceps at the top of the movement.
9. Mixed grip curls – hold the bar with one hand regular grip and the other reverse grip. Alternate hands by set. This gives you a different feel to the exercise.
10. Machine curls – these are done in a curl machine. Curl like a barbell curl with your elbows on the pads. The grip you use will vary the stress on the biceps. To increase the contraction at the top, drop the seat down low and drop your head down to mimic overhead curls. You can also raise the seat for a preacher-curl type movement.
11. One arm barbell curls – curl while holding the barbell in only one hand. This version will force you to balance the load. This will work your forearms and grip as well due to the balancing involved.
12. Bent over curls – start in the bent-over position like a bent-over row. Instead of rowing the bar, curl it. It is very similar to a concentration curl or spider curl. You can also use dumbbells for this one.

2. E-Z BAR CURLS

These curls are exactly like barbell curls but using the cambered E-Z bar. The standard grip is to hold the bar so that your thumbs nestle into the two high points on the bar. Curl up like in straight barbell curls.

Comments:

This bar was originally designed to mimic barbell curls but be easier on the wrists. The standard grip is not as effective for biceps as straight bar curls but is easier on the wrists.

Tricks:

1. Change your grip - hold the bar so that the pinkies are higher instead of the usual grip where the thumbs are higher. Rather than grip on the outside high point, nestle your pinkies into the high points on either side of the straight middle part. The key is pinkies higher. This provides maximal supination of the hands all the way through the movement.

Variations:

1. Reverse grip - use a palms-down grip, same execution. A trick you may wish to try with this is to hold the bar in a thumb and forefinger cradle-loop grip at the inner bends. This means you don't want to grip the bar firmly but let it just rest on your thumb and fingers. Start the movement with your shoulders maximally inwardly rotated. As you curl up, externally rotate your shoulders and try to push your elbows together in front of you. This is the same idea as supination for the biceps in a regular grip curl but this is pronation for the brachialis. The reason you want a sort of feather grip on the bar is that in order for this to work the best, the

bar must remain in the same vertical orientation throughout with the inner bends pointing up to the ceiling. The bar should slide in your hands as you do this one.

2. Close grip - grip on the straight middle part, same execution.

3. DUMBBELL CURLS

Stand with two dumbbells hanging at your sides, palms facing in. Curl one up but as you curl it up, rotate your forearm (supinate) so that your pinky is higher than your thumb at the top of the curl. Lower and repeat with the other arm. These are alternating dumbbell curls.

Tricks:

1. Start with your palms facing back at the bottom so that you get more forearm rotation.
2. Do not reverse the supination of the wrist on the way down. This takes tension off the biceps. Keep the palm facing forward the entire way down. This is very important to get the most out of the negative of the movement. Turn the forearm at the bottom of the movement when there is no tension.
3. Cock the wrists back as you curl up. This increases the stretch on the biceps.
4. Grasp the dumbbells off-center with your thumbs and forefingers pressed against the inner face of the outer plates. This gives you more resistance on the supination. You can also try attaching Plate Mates (light magnetic weights) onto the inside plate.
5. The opposite of the above trick is to grasp the dumbbell with the pinky against the inside of the inner plate. This tips the dumbbell over to the outside, automatically supinating the forearm as much as is anatomically possible. Curl up with the dumbbell tilted over to the outside. This is a good teaching technique for showing the value of supination. It resembles an upsidown hammer curl.
6. This may sound strange but try push the dumbbell out as far forward in the upward arc by moving your upper arm forward a little as you curl up, i.e. your elbow will come away forward from your body. Cock the wrist back as you do it and cradle the dumbbell in your fingertips. You will feel this in the belly of the muscle. If you raise your upper arm up as well (using the anterior delt in a sort of front raise as you curl), you will get a greater contraction. Your upper arm will be about horizontal at the conclusion of the movement. The bicep muscle does cross the shoulder joint; therefore it is involved in raising the shoulder. That is why this works. Make sure you go slowly and do not use any momentum whatsoever as that defeats the purpose of raising the arm. The first quarter of the curl movement should occur at the shoulder to develop tension through there. This technique puts a better stretch on the biceps at the beginning of the movement.
7. Try reverse alternating curls: start with both dumbbells at the top of the curls. Hold one dumbbell at the top while lowering and curling the other one. Hold that one at the top while you curl the one that was at the top before. A trick you may want to try with the dumbbell you are holding at the top is to press the pinky side plate into your forehead. This will intensify the contraction at the top. It is also possible to do simultaneous alternating dumbbell curls where as you curl one up, you are bringing the other one down. This may throw off your balance, however. You will find your upper body rocking forward and back when doing this one.

8. As you curl up, when you reach 90 degrees of flexion, stop and bring your elbow back behind your body, bringing the dumbbell close into your body. This will give you an extra squeeze. Continue up from there.
9. Ratcheting – curl up a little until you stop. Hold the dumbbell there. Lean your upper body over forward. It is important to keep the dumbbell at the same point in space. By leaning forward, you will decrease the angle at your elbow without actually doing any work. Straighten back up with your arm locked, moving the dumbbell up with your body. Repeat.
10. To mimic close grip barbell curls (which affect the biceps stronger than wide grip), push your shoulder forward then brace your elbow on your midsection, keeping your arm as central as possible.
11. Here is a technique to maximize supination. Use the close grip technique above, pushing both shoulders forward and resting your elbows on your abs. Curl up. Rotate your hands as much as you can at the top, so your pinkies are closer to your face (supination). Hold the dumbbells at this point then force the dumbbells together. The near plates will touch, forcing your hands to rotate even more until the far plates touch as well. Your knuckles will be facing each other. Separate the dumbbells then lower and repeat.
12. Torso rotation cheating is good method of set extension. Hold the dumbbell behind you and down. Rotate your torso back around to the same side as the dumbbell. In a smooth motion, quickly rotate your torso the other way, transferring the momentum to the arm to curl the dumbbell up. This technique will help you get more reps without leaning back. Contract your biceps hard at the top. Use this technique to make the set harder, not easier.
13. If you want to do strict dumbbell curls, try them seated backward in a preacher bench. Press the backs of your arms against the pad of the bench and hold them there for the duration of the exercise.
14. Dumbbell curls can be done from a kneeling position as well. This is easier on the back. Sit back on your heels.
15. Try doing power dumbbell curls. Do them fast but powerfully, squeezing the biceps as hard as you can to make up for the use of some momentum. Lower with a controlled negative.
16. To self-spot on dumbbell curls for negatives, do a hammer curl up, catch it with the other hand, hold, then turn it and do a one arm negative curl with a regular grip.

Variations:

1. Double dumbbell curls - curl both dumbbells up at the same time. This is a stricter movement and will reduce the amount of weight you are able to handle.
2. One arm dumbbell curls - only hold one dumbbell and curl it. Don't hold anything in the other hand.
3. Seated dumbbell curls - sit on a bench and curl, alternating, one arm, or double. You may need to use less weight as you won't be able to use your legs to assist. If you sit backwards in the preacher bench, you can brace the backs of your arms against the pad. This also works with the Smith machine bar. Lean back against that and brace your arms.
4. Hammer curls - take a neutral, thumbs-up grip. Curl up. This works the brachialis muscle underneath the lower biceps, the lateral biceps head as well as the brachioradialis muscle in

the forearm. Don't let your wrists bend back. Hammer curls are good if you have wrist pain.

These are great for cheat curls as you can use a lot of weight with proper application of momentum. Start with the dumbbells hanging straight down at your sides. Swing your upper body forward a little to get the weight moving, applying power with the arm. As the dumbbell comes up to the sticking point just below the halfway mark, push down hard with the ball of the foot on the side you are curling on and jerk yourself backwards a little. This will help get it to the top. Try to resist the downward momentum as much as possible. This technique can work for building biceps as well. Since you can use more weight with hammer curls than regular curls, curl up as a hammer curl then rotate the dumbbell and lower as a regular curl.

5. Cross-body hammer curls - same execution as hammer curls but curl across your chest to the opposite shoulder. This works the peak area of the biceps. Push your shoulder out in front of your body at the start then curl up. These can be done keeping your upper arm vertical or by bring your elbow up slightly for a greater involvement of the shoulders and a little different type of contraction. Bringing your upper arm up to about 45 degrees will really hit the area of the biceps that produces the peak
6. Reverse dumbbell curls – hold the dumbbells at your sides. Your pinkies should be against the outer dumbbell plates. This is opposite to regular dumbbell curls. This will help keep the movement from becoming a hammer curl. Your palms will be facing down as you curl up. Rotate the forearm as you come up as well. On the way down, don't rotate your forearm back until the dumbbells are almost at the bottom, otherwise the tension will be taken off the brachialis muscle. Make sure the forearm rotation on the way up occurs in the bottom half of the curl, otherwise the tension gets shifted to the biceps. For a full range of motion, start with the dumbbell in a regular curl grip position and rotate the forearms completely around. Don't let your elbows flare to the sides on this movement as is the tendency, especially on the negative. Reverse curls can also be done cross body.
7. Zottman curls – curl up using the regular curl grip. At the top, rotate your hands around so that they are in reverse grip position. Lower and repeat. This allows you to work all the muscles in your arms in one movement. Also, since you can use more weight for regular curls, the brachialis gets worked negatively with more weight. If you have to go to a hammer style on the way down, you're using too much weight. These are not as effective if done reverse style, i.e. reverse grip up and regular grip down. This exercise is more easily done alternating style. There are few hand positioning tricks that will force this exercise to work better. When you curl up, hold the dumbbell so your thumb and forefinger are against the inner plate. This will help with supination. At the top, rotate your hand then slide it over so that the pinky side is against the outer plate. The counterbalance effect of this will force your hand into pronation. The slide at the top will entail a little jump of the weight in order to slide. Switch grips again at the bottom.
8. Incline dumbbell curls - sit back in an incline bench (set at about 30 degrees), letting the dumbbells hang straight down, palms forward (to get a better stretch at the bottom, do not rotate your forearms—keep them facing palms forward the whole time). Curl up, keeping your elbows pointed down and the dumbbells close to your body. Try to keep your elbows stationary for at least the first 90 degrees of the movement to limit shoulder recruitment. After 90 degrees, if the dumbbells are heavy, your elbows will tend to move forward. Keep your head on the bench. If your hands are not completely rotated at that point, supinate as much as possible and squeeze. These can also be done with the dumbbells flared out wide. Keep your upper arms as vertical as possible throughout the movement. Body position is very important on this exercise. Arch your back and puff your chest out, with your head back. Pinch your shoulder blades together to force your arms back behind you as much as possible. It is better to put your feet up on something, e.g. a dumbbell rack, to eliminate

unnecessary and stressful arching of the back. Having your feet on the ground forces your back to arch.

These can be done two arms at a time or one arm at a time. If you do one arm at a time, lean over to the other side to get a better stretch, e.g. if you are curling with your right arm, lean over to the left. The lower the angle of the bench, the greater the recruitment of the long head of the biceps.

If you don't have access to an incline bench or want to try something different, try incline curls against a wall. First, stand with your back against a wall. Now bend your knees so you drop down about a foot and a half. Keep your upper back and head against the wall and walk your feet out forward until your body is straight from your rib cage on down. Puff your chest out and keep your upper arms hanging straight down. This mimics the incline curl but without a bench. Keep your abs tight. You will actually be able to use more weight with this version because you can drive with your legs.

9. Incline hammer curls - same execution as above but use a hammer grip.
10. Flye curls - lie on a flat bench with your arms out wide in a flye position (full stretch position) holding dumbbells at arms length. Curl up without moving your upper arms (keep them out wide while the dumbbells come in). These can also be done on the Swiss Ball. The ball will actually support your upper arms and will ease any overstretching you would otherwise feel on your shoulders.
11. Gripleless dumbbell curls - these are done with one dumbbell. With your palms on the upper inside surface of one dumbbell, cradle the dumbbell then curl up. To totally take the grip out of the equation, move the dumbbell down to your forearms.
12. Kneeling dumbbell curls – same execution using any of the variations of standing dumbbell curls. Doing them kneeling is better if you have lower back pain that flares up when you do the standing versions. Have your glutes right down on the backs of your ankles.
13. Dumbbell hammer body drag curls – hold the dumbbells hanging at your sides with your palms facing your body. Lift them vertically beside your body bringing your elbows behind your body. This is the contracted position for the brachialis. Regular grip or reverse grip body drag curls can also be done with dumbbells.
14. Lying dumbbell curls – lie flat on your back on a flat bench. Let your arms hang vertically down. Curl up from there. This is like an extreme version of incline curls. These can also be done on a decline bench (where there is enough clearance underneath) to get the absolute maximum stretch possible at the bottom on the biceps. Let your arms stretch back as far as you can when you do these.
15. Uppercut dumbbell curls – exactly like the name says, as you curl up, do an uppercut movement. Keep the dumbbell close to your body and do the uppercut explosively. Your elbow should be pointing forward at the top and the dumbbell should be up by your forehead. This increases the force of the contraction on the bicep and works the bicep-shoulder tie-in using the compound movement. Be sure to squeeze the bicep hard on the way up. You can also do these cross-body style. Internally rotate your shoulder and curl up across in front of your body.
16. Two on one hammer curls – grasp one dumbbell hammer style with both hands (either interlocking fingers or one high and one low). The high/low style will stress mostly the top hand arm with the other helping while the interlocking style will work both more equally. Curl

up in front of your body. The high/low style is good for doing two arms up, one arm down negative training. Keep the high hand on the dumbbell and lower. The bottom plates will go right into your crotch at the bottom providing a great incentive not to let the weight drop quickly. This style of grip can also be as a concentration curl. Sit with your elbows braced against the insides of your knees and curl up. It can also be done with a preacher bench.

17. Lateral curls – externally rotate your shoulders. Your hands will go directly out to the sides. Curl up from that position. This position puts a different kind of stress on the biceps. It is also possible to do hammer or reverse curls from here. To get a bigger stretch on your medial biceps, do these one arm at a time on a preacher bench. Just sit sideways on the seat with your arm out to the side. You can use the bench to get the most stretch by rotating yourself away as much as you can. It is also possible to go across your body with the lateral curl. This is better on the preacher bench as you have something to push against. If you are using your right hand sit sideways so your left shoulder is against the pad. Cross your right arm across your chest and curl from there.
18. Hide and seek curls – this variation of alternating curls ensures complete forearm rotation. Start with one dumbbell behind your back with your palm back (pronated). Curl the other one up like normal. As you bring it down (no pronation until you get to the bottom of the curl), rotate the hand around to a palms back orientation and hide it behind your back. As you are bringing that one behind your back, bring the other one around in front and curl it up with a complete supination. Holding the dumbbell behind the back will serve to counterbalance the one in front and prevent you from hunching forward, improving form as well as giving you complete rotation of the forearm from full pronation to full supination. These can also be done as a reverse curl. Simply reverse the wrist rotation pattern, e.g. start with a regular curl grip behind the back, pronate on the way, etc.
19. Sticky stretch curls – put an obstacle in front of the dumbbell in the stretch position. Push against the obstacle when the dumbbell is in the stretch position (a position where you usually get very little tension). When you get peak tension, back off the obstacle and curl up explosively. The Smith machine bar works well for this. The preacher bench top pad can also work. Try stepping forward, dragging your arm behind you to increase the stretch. Another option is to have a partner stand behind you and hold your arm back while you develop tension in the biceps in the bottom, behind the body stretch position.
20. One dumbbell curls – curl with only one dumbbell, leaving the other hand empty. This will give you even more focus on the one bicep. You can use any of the variations above in conjunction with it. Another variation you can try is leaning one dumbbell curls. Hold onto a pole with your empty hand and lean over to the side so your working arm hangs away from your body. This will give you a different angle, coming up across the body.
21. Ski jumper curls – hold one dumbbell behind your back to counterbalance. Lean forward like a ski jumper as you curl up. This increases the contraction component of the dumbbell curl.
22. Maximum forced supination curls – hold the dumbbell with your pinky up against the inside plate instead of in the middle or with the thumb against the plate. This will overbalance the hand down on the thumb side, forcing it to tip down, maximally supinating it. This forced supination movement can be done during the movement or from the beginning. The pinky will lead the curl up. Externally rotate your shoulder for the line of pull up.
23. Seated double arm one dumbbell curls – sit on the end of a bench with your knees apart. Hold a dumbbell with both hands – one high, one low like on baseball bat. The dumbbell should be positioned like you are going to do a hammer curl. Your forearms will be touching your inner thighs. Curl up, keeping your arms in contact with your legs as a brace. Curl into your upper

abs. Keep your back tight and lean slightly forward. Your elbows will be on your thighs at the top. This exercise is similar to a hammer concentration curl.

4. PREACHER CURLS

This exercise is done using the preacher bench (the slanted one with a seat). You can use a straight bar, E-Z bar, dumbbells or a cable for this exercise. Rest your upper arms on the slant of the bench. You can either have your elbows up at the top with most of your upper arm off and the top of the bench pushing into your lower chest or have the top of the bench wedged into your armpits and your entire upper arm resting on the bench or somewhere in between. Start with the bar at the bottom and curl up without using momentum. Lower slowly and go all the way down but do not hyperextend your elbow. Keep tension in the biceps at all times.

Tricks:

1. Cock the wrists back as you come to the top to keep tension on the biceps.
2. Use a standing preacher bench or remove the seat if you can. This allows you to use some body momentum to help cheat the weight up.
3. Use a bench with a convex face and high-density foam padding. The convex face puts a greater stretch on your biceps at the bottom of the movement. Be very careful not to allow the weight to drop down quickly or you risk hyperextending your elbows.
4. To get a peak contraction, bring the bar all the way up over your head. You'll have to duck your head down. Your armpit will have to be wedged into the top of the pad for this one.
5. Use the pinky higher version of the E-Z curl or use a narrow grip.
6. Use a little body momentum to help when nearing failure - swing your lower body underneath the pad where your arms are. This momentum will help move the bar.
7. Ideally, the rack where the bar is taken from should be adjustable as well. The less distance you have to go to pick up the weight the better. It is also better when you reach failure as you can drop the bar quicker.
8. Use the dumbbell / cable hybrid technique to get tension throughout the whole range of motion (see the Intensity Techniques section).
9. The body ratcheting technique works well with this exercise. Curl up to the sticking point then hold. Use your elbows as a fulcrum. Sit up and lean forward so upper arms come up off the bench. Quickly drop your body back down, transferring the momentum to the arms, moving the weight up a little.
10. The preacher curl works very well with partial movements. These can be done at the bottom in the stretch position or at the top. If you do them at the top, be sure to only go down a few inches. You don't want extremely heavy weight falling and breaking your arm. Use dumbbells for heavy partials so you can use the other hand to spot.
11. Unroll your fingers at the bottom of the preacher curl for a full contraction. Reroll then curl up.
12. At the bottom of the movement, for a little extra stretch, lift your upper arms up off the pad a

little and let the pivot move down from your elbows to the forearms just below the elbows (the point where the bottom edge of the pad is). Push your biceps forward at this point. Be sure to keep tension in the biceps and DO NOT do this quickly. If done quickly, you may hyperextend your elbow. Done slowly it will give you extra stretch.

Variations:

1. Reverse grip - palms down, straight bar, E-Z bar, dumbbells or cable. Your hands should grip the bar a few inches closer in than your elbows.
2. Hammer preachers - hammer grip dumbbell curls.
3. Cable preachers - use a low pulley in front of the preacher bench. Curl as usual. This work especially well with the behind the head preacher curl trick. It can be done with the rope attachment as well. One arm, two arm, reverse grip, etc.
4. Dumbbell preachers - keep your elbows close together and your hands out wide to force supination and get a greater contraction. These can be done with two dumbbells or one dumbbell at a time. Doing these one dumbbell at a time allows you to do negatives by using the other hand to assist by pulling up on the working hand (don't grab onto the dumbbell, grab over the hand). When you are approaching failure on the negatives be aware of the sudden loss of strength at the bottom half. Do not allow the weight to drop out of control. Be ready to catch it with your other hand if you have to.

These can also be done full rotation. At the bottom of the movement, have your hands completely pronated (palms down). As you come up, rotate to full supination. Lower with your hands fully supinated to keep the tension on the biceps. At the bottom, turn them to full pronation again and repeat. A good way to do these is alternating, keeping one dumbbell at the bottom while you curl the other one. This gives you a chance to concentrate on the arm rotation one arm at a time. It is also possible to use this technique with reverse preacher curls. Start with your hands supinated at the bottom then pronate as you curl up. Lower in the pronated position then turn your hands at the bottom.

5. Diagonal dumbbell preacher curls – do these one arm at a time. Rest your arm diagonally on the pad. There are two different ways to do this. If you are curling with your right arm, for example, move over to the right and go diagonal across your body to the left. This will affect your medial biceps head more. To work the lateral head more, move your body off the seat to the left so your right armpit is over the left side of the bench. Go diagonal away from your body to the right.

5. CABLE CURLS

There are many variations on the theme of a simple curl motion with the cables, employing the standard tricks of cocking the wrists back, turning up the pinkies, etc.

Low pulley variations:

1. Standing – facing the stack – these can be done one arm or two arms. Same execution as barbell curls but with a different force curve. The pulley version gives you more tension at the contracted position of the movement. You can change the force curve by changing the distance you stand from the pulley. These can be done with the straight bar, with the rope handles, with a single handle, regular grip, wide grip, reverse grip, etc.

Try standing far away from the stack (five to six feet) instead of close to it (one to two feet). Your arms will be out in front of your body at the start of the movement. Curl up. As you curl up, do a front raise with your shoulders so that your upper arms become vertical (elbows pointed high) and the handle or bar ends behind your head. This will give a stronger contraction at the top. Try to force your elbows together in front of your face at the top of the movement.

When doing one arm cable curls (any orientation), push your pinky up against the handle as far as possible. This will stress the supination aspect of the curl more. Do the opposite for the reverse curl.

2. Standing – facing away from the stack – these are more easily and less painfully done one arm at a time. If you are using your right hand, stand to the left of the stack to get a straight line of pull. These can be done normal grip, reverse grip or hammer grip (using a rope). There are several ways to do this that focus on different aspects of the movement.

The first way is to just curl up and down like a regular pulley curl with no special emphasis on anything in particular. This will still give you results if you work at it. Stand vertical and keep your upper arm pinned to your side.

The second way is to focus on the stretch position aspect of the movement. This version can be a better stretch-position movement than incline curls if done properly. Stand with the cable back behind you so your arm is angled back behind you. If you are using your right arm, rotate your body to the left in a smooth motion (similar to a slow golf swing), leaving your arm behind you. You should feel the stretch in your biceps and shoulder. When you come to the point where you can't stretch anymore and your arm is starting to come forward, start the curl not by curling but by bending back the wrist and pushing your arm forward almost like a front raise. Imagine as though you are trying to push a button with your bicep. This will intensify the stretch you are already getting. At the point where you can't push your bicep forward without raising your arm, start the curl with a powerful squeeze. Don't use momentum but squeeze your bicep as hard as you can through to the top of the curl. As you come to the top of the curl force your elbow in towards the midline of your body. Your hand will drift out a little to the side. Make sure your forearm is maximally supinated for a full contraction. At that point, you have the option of stopping there are going back down or letting the cable run down your forearm using your elbow as the new pivot point of the cable and continuing the curl up beside your head for a full range of motion. Now is it is time for the descent. As you lower down, force your elbow and shoulder forward as though curling over a ball. Allow your wrist to bend back. Do this all the way to the bottom. These can also be done with a reverse grip. Bend your wrist in at the bottom then sweep up doing a reverse wrist curl as you come to the top. Try to force your elbow in towards the midline of your body to maximize the contraction.

When you are using the trick with the cable running down the forearm, you can use another body position trick with that. The higher you raise your elbow, the more complete the contraction of the biceps. The further you lean back, the higher you can raise your elbow.

The third way is for peak contraction. Bend over at the waist with your head pointing directly away from the stack. Keep your upper arm horizontal. Stretch back then curl up and squeeze. This is like a standing cable concentration curl. You can also do these with your body perpendicular to the stack so that your are curling in across your body.

3. Standing – perpendicular to the stack – these are essentially cross-body cable curls. Keep your elbow pointing to the stack and come up in front of your body.

4. Kneeling – this position takes much of the body movement out of the exercise and can be better for your lower back by providing a greater base of support behind you.
5. Squatting – squat down facing the low pulley holding a straight or cambered bar. Your butt should be down to your heels and your elbows will be on top of your knees (if you find that painful, you can place a towel or a solid pad on top of your knees). Start the movement with your arms stretched as much as possible over your knees. Lean back and down. Curl up and into your chin or forehead, depending on how far down you've squatted. Squeeze hard at the top. A good way to cheat with this exercise is take advantage of bodyweight leverage. Hold the bar stationary with your arms locked. Rock your body forward a little then rock back, allowing your body momentum to transfer to the bar and curl it up a little more. Keep doing this like a sort of ratchet effect. You can also do partials with this exercise by moving yourself closer to the weight stack. You should be almost in the contracted position when there is no tension on the bar. Pull back from there. If you are going to do a static hold, you should move further back so you can get a full range negative after you fail on the static hold. To get the maximum stretch at the end of the rep, lower your shoulders and use your knees to push your elbows up.
6. Lunging – this is very similar in execution to the squatting cable curl except it is a one arm variation. Go down on one knee into a bottom lunge position. Your elbow should be on your thigh just above the knee (same leg up as arm you are working). Curl up, bracing your elbow on your knee. Curl to your forehead. If you are using this exercise as a static contraction hold, press your fist into your forehead for better tension. This is also good for one arm negative training. Use your other hand to pull the handle back up to the top position.
7. Full ROM spinning cable curls – this version hits the entire range of motion for biceps in one movement. Stand four to six feet away from the low pulley facing away from the stack. These are done one arm at a time. If you are curling with your right hand, have your left forward and your right foot back in a straight line split stance about a foot apart. Execute like the stretch-accentuated facing away cable curl as explained above. Hold at the top position. Here is the trick. Spin on the balls of your feet 180 degrees to the right so you are now facing the stack. Do not lose tension in the bicep. Your right foot is now forward. Continue curling up, bringing your upper arm up as high as you can, turning the movement into a behind the head curl. You may wish to use your other hand to push your elbow up higher overhead than you could with just arm power. Before you start the overhead curl phase you might want to also try lowering the handle slightly to get a bit more bicep action as you bring the handle up (it will resemble a bit of a dipping motion). Lower the handle down to the regular top position of a curl, spin around to the left so you are facing away again then lower slowly the rest of the way down. When you curl with the left hand, start with your right foot forward. These can also be done with a reverse grip though that can be a bit awkward.
8. Reverse grip behind the back curls – stand or kneel so that the low cable is directly to your side. Place yourself a little forward of it to get a better angle. Grasp the cable behind your back with a reverse grip. Your elbow will be slightly up and you shoulder inwardly rotated. Curl up directly to the side.
9. Close grip cable bicep rows – this is a compound exercise for the biceps. It is easiest to do these on a seated cable row machine. Using an underhand close grip, row the bar back but instead of pulling to the lower abdomen, pull as high as you can on the chest.

bent-over, facing the stack, facing away from the stack, standing beside the stack, lying down with your feet at the base of the stack, incline bench, preacher bench, rope, lying on your side, squatting, bent-over facing away from the stack – cable between legs, bent-over almost cross-

over style (touch knuckles but don't move upper arms), lying down, preacher bench, rope, standing between cross-over pulleys - curl up from the sides, kneeling one knee perpendicular with cable under knee and arm braced on leg.

10. Cross bench low cable curls - set the bench perpendicular to the low cable. Rest your upper arm across the bench so your elbow is just off the edge. Drop your body lower than your arm to get a full stretch then curl up and towards you. There are several different ways to position your body beside the bench. The first is facing the stack on your knees. Drop your head and body as low as you can, pushing your elbow as high above your head as you can. This will give you the absolute fullest peak contraction the biceps are capable of. The second position is body parallel to the bench so your arm is straight out to the side. Drop your body low. The third is sitting on the floor (vertical body position) facing the stack with your shoulder at approximately 90 degrees.
11. Decline low cable curls – set a decline bench in line with the pulley. Lie on the bench with your arms extended directly overhead. Your head will be at the bottom of the bench. Curl the bar up and behind your head. This works the peak contraction position of the biceps. It is almost like a lying pulldown movement. It will also work on a flat bench if you have your head hanging over the end. These can also be done with the decline bench facing the other way (with your feet closer to the pulley). Keep your upper arm horizontal and curl one arm at a time. This will give a contracted position movement with your arm behind your body. It is not as complete a contraction as facing the other way but it is different.
12. Mixed cable curls – this is done using a crossover setup. Curl facing the pulley with one arm and facing away with the other arm. Use any combination of techniques you wish. High and low pulleys can also be mixed in for variety. Switch after each set. You can also try spinning around after each rep to re-orient which hand curls from which direction. If you spin, only use the two low pulleys or you will dislocate your shoulder.
13. Seated cable/barbell curls – attach a bar to a cable. Sit down on the floor with your knees bent a lot. Rest your forearms just below the elbows on your knees. Get the stretch and curl it up. The pivot changes from forearm on knee to elbow on thigh as you come up. It is like doing a preacher curl and a concentration curl in one movement.

High pulley variations:

1. Overhead curl behind the head - kneel by a high pulley or sit in a lat machine. Take a curl grip, then, while keeping your upper arms vertical over your head, curl the bar down behind your head. You can also do these with one arm. Use your non-working arm to push your elbow back overhead as far as possible to maximize the contraction. When doing these with a bar in the lat machine, you can use body momentum to spot yourself. When you can't do anymore strictly, start the movement with a quick lean backwards, pulling the bar with you. Stop your body momentum and transfer that momentum into the bar, at the same time curling it back behind yourself as far as possible.
2. Lying overhead curl - lie down on a flat bench with your head by the weight stack. Grip the bar with your upper arms perpendicular to the ground. Curl the bar down to your face without moving your upper arms. This one can also be done one arm at a time for greater concentration. Brace the elbow with the non-working hand and use it to push your arm back more. This increases the contraction. This can also be done grippless using a closed handle. Hook it over your wrist (wedge one finger of the other hand below it to prevent the handle

from rolling up the forearm. This forces all the tension onto the biceps and removes grip as a factor. It is better for high reps and light weight.

3. Double biceps curl - position yourself between two high pulleys, arms straight and wide. Curl the handle into your head without moving your upper arms. When you start to fatigue doing both arms simultaneously, go to one arm at a time. If you wish to continue past that, hold the handle steady and move your body towards the pulley, keeping tension on the biceps. To get the maximum contraction from this exercise, step forward from the midline to force your elbows back. This will also slightly increase the stretch on the medial head of the biceps. You can also do these by stepping back a little. As you curl in, step back a little more, squeeze your elbows together then try to bring your upper arms to vertical. This will give a maximum biceps contraction. This exercise can be alternated with two arm pushdowns to the sides to work your triceps at the same time.
4. One arm or two arm biceps pulldowns - kneel by a high pulley or sit in a lat machine. Do a pulldown with a curl grip, keeping the bar or handle as close to your body as possible while keeping your body straight vertical. Concentrate on pulling with the biceps.
5. Standing cable curls to the face – stand a few feet away from the high pulley. Keep your upper arm horizontal and curl the bar or handle directly into your face, touching it to your forehead. To really get a peak contraction, hold the handle there then drop down on one knee, trying to force the handle back behind your head at the same time if possible.
6. Pull in cable curls – do these as a compound exercises, using your back to help. Pull the cable into your face, keeping your elbow low.

Low Pulley / High Pulley Combinations:

1. Get into position facing away from one stack and facing the other. If you are working your right arm, grab the low handle behind you with the right hand and hold the high pulley handle in your left hand. Start with the low pulley facing away single arm curl. At the top of the curl, use your left hand to transfer the high pulley handle onto the fingers of the right hand above the low handle (don't let go of the low handle). Raise your upper right arm to horizontal (with help from your left arm if necessary), opening it up to full extension. Do a standing curl to the face then drop down on one knee and finish it behind the head. Let the low handle's cable run directly down your forearm. This gives you the full stretch, the mid-range and the peak contraction in one movement.

6. CONCENTRATION CURLS

Sit on the end of a flat bench with your knees apart. Grasp a dumbbell in one hand with your arm hanging straight down between your legs. Brace the back of your upper arm just above the elbow against the inside of your leg. Do not rest your forearms on your leg. Curl up as high as you can, squeezing hard. Rotate your hand so your pinky is higher at the top. Don't lean back at the top of the movement, as this will take tension off the muscle.

Comments:

This exercise works great for self-spotting. Just help out with your other hand. Remember to supinate as much as possible at the top.

Variations:

1. Standing concentration curls - bend over at the waist and either support yourself with your hand on a bench or on your knee. Let your arm hang straight down then curl up without bracing your arm against your knee. Try to keep your upper arm vertical. This can also be done with a neutral grip, hammer style. They can also be done with a barbell in bent-over row position or with two dumbbells at the same time.
2. Cable concentration curls - same execution, use the low pulley.
3. Overhanging concentration curls - also known as spider curls. Same execution using a barbell or dumbbells. Hang over the top end of a preacher bench (so you're hanging over the seat) or other vertical surface so your arms hang down vertically. Curl up. Keeping your wrists back as you come will increase the tension on the biceps. When doing these with dumbbells, try pushing the dumbbells together as you come to the top. A Smith machine bar also works well to brace your elbow on (you can put a foam pad over the bar). The advantage of this is that you can easily change the orientation of the exercise as you fatigue. For instance, start in the vertical position. As you tire, lean back a little to a preacher-like angle. As you tire further you can be curling almost horizontally. The Smith bar also enables you to move your body under to give the weight a little better leverage if you need it.
4. Barbell concentration curls – these are essentially spider curls without the bench. Just bend over 90 degrees, keep your upper arms vertical and curl from there.
5. Outside leg concentration curls – instead of bracing your arm on the inside of your thigh, turn your upper body, keeping your legs tight together, and brace your opposing arm on the outside of the thigh (e.g. right arm on left leg). To develop tension on the stretch, lean back slightly so the upper arm is at an angle. For the contraction, lean over at the top. This variation of the concentration curl can give tension in both positions. When these are done with a low pulley, the contraction position is hit extremely hard.
6. Forearm brace concentration curls – using your left arm as an example, sit on the end of the bench with your right elbow on your right thigh and your right hand on your left thigh like a bridge between your legs. Place your left arm over this brace and curl from there.

Tricks:

1. A good way to get extra contraction on the biceps is to do a complete supination. Start with your knuckles forward then, as you curl up, supinate smoothly around. Unlike during standing dumbbell curls, the body will not get in the way of the supination movement.

7. LEG CURL MACHINE CURLS

This is a strange-looking but extremely effective exercise. Set the ankle pad as close possible. Put your elbow down where your knee usually goes (do these one arm at a time). Hold the ankle pad in your hand. Curl up. This works great for heavy negatives because it doesn't fatigue your grip, you have a large weight stack to work with, and you can use the other arm to help get to the contracted position.

Comments:

Fight the negative all the way down. It will be hardest to control at the bottom of the range. Change the effect of the exercise by leaning back or leaning forward during the up and down phases.

Tricks:

1. Place a pad underneath your elbow if you can't quite reach the ankle pad or sit on the end of the machine and place your elbows on your knees. If you sit on the machine, lean over at the waist like a concentration curl.
2. When doing negatives, try to pull in as well while you are fighting the weight on the way down.

Variations:

1. Reverse curls - to work the brachialis rest the pad on the back of your hand instead of in the palm then curl up. You may need to prop something underneath your elbow. A pad or your other hand will work. A hammer grip will work as well.
2. Overhead lying leg curl machine curls – lie facedown on the leg curl machine bench with your head closer to the ankle pads. Extend your arms directly overhead and place your hands underneath the pads. Adjust your body position on the bench if necessary. Keeping your body and head down, curl up over your head. You may have to lift your elbows off the bench to go through the full range of motion due to the solid lever of the machine.

8. CLOSE GRIP BEHIND THE NECK PULLUPS

Get into regular close grip pull up position, palms back, hands shoulder width apart or closer. Pull yourself up so that the bar goes behind your head. Squeeze hard, lower slowly.

Tricks:

1. Use a Smith machine bar and set it so that your feet can touch throughout the movement. Use your feet to push yourself forward (and up if you need it). This helps the biceps do most of the work.
2. Try to push your elbows together as much as possible to force supination and ensure a stronger contraction.
3. Use a thumbless grip when doing these with a reverse grip.
4. Raise your shoulder girdle and keep it up throughout the entire movement in order to minimize lat involvement. When your shoulders are up, your lats cannot contract effectively.
5. You can execute partials on the pull-up by setting the height of an adjustable Smith machine bar to where it is set at almost your contracted position. This also allows you to use weight.

Variations:

1. Close grip behind the neck pulldowns – same execution but using a pulldown machine. Try to push the bar behind your head as much as you can to get the maximum contraction. You may wish to do these one arm at a time so you can use your free hand to push your elbow back as far as it can go. This can be done on any high pulley setup.
2. Reverse close grip pulldowns/pull ups – same execution but with a reverse grip.
3. Biceps cable crunches – stand in front of a pulldown machine or high pulley. Take a shoulder width curl grip. Pull the bar down so that it is at forehead level. Keep your body straight.

Hold this position and squeeze your biceps. At this point bend over like a cable crunch and duck your head under the bar. Crunch forward and down, squeezing your biceps hard the whole way. This ensures a maximum contraction for the biceps. It is good for static contraction training.

9. LYING BAR PULLUPS

Lie down underneath a bar set just beyond arms length. Grasp the bar with a regular, close, curl grip. Pull yourself up, focusing on the biceps by keeping your body as straight as possible, not moving much at the shoulder, and concentrating on moving mostly at the elbow and pulling in to your face. Don't throw your head back. These can be done with one arm if you're strong enough. This exercise is similar to the inverse row. The difference is in pulling to the face with the biceps and not to the ribcage.

10. FLEXED ARM HANG

These are the same as reviewed in the back exercises. Hold at the top with the bar right up in your face. To focus on the biceps, keep your body vertical and straight. Hold it for as long as possible and fight it all the way down.

11. PEC DECK BICEP CURL-INS

Grasp the left pole or pad with the right hand. Your body should be 90 degrees to the machine. Pull hard in to the shoulder, squeezing hard. Repeat on the other side. Try to push inwards as you pull the hand back. This forces a harder contraction.

14. SANDBAG CURLS

Get an army surplus duffel bag and some sandbags (usually around 50 pounds). You can also make your own by cutting a section of an inner tube. Tie one end off, fill it full of sand then tie the other end off. Curl like you would curl a bar. The sticking point is different. The hardest point will be at the top. It will also give you a good grip and forearm workout.

15. CABLE / DUMBBELL / BARBELL HYBRIDS

This type of curl changes the resistance curve of the exercise, making it much more effective than either free weight or cable work. You are essentially affixing a cable to either a barbell or dumbbell and curling it.

Variations:

1. Barbell curls – loop the cable around the center of the bar. The cambered brachialis bar works well for this exercise as you can just hook into the loop without fear of slipping. If the cable has a tendency to slide on the barbell you are using, try putting a piece of cloth or one of the foam pads under it. This will give the cable something to dig into. Stand facing the low pulley and curl up from there. This variation gives you more resistance at the top of the curl than you get from free weight.
2. Preacher curls – this variation can be done with a barbell or with dumbbells. It gives you a full

stretch at the bottom and big contraction at the top. It doesn't allow any tension off the biceps at the top like free weight.

3. Dumbbell curls – can be done facing the stack or away from it. Attach the cable onto the pinky side of the dumbbell to give resistance on the supination. These can be done reverse or hammer style as well. When you do the hammer curl style, tie the cable onto the lower end of the dumbbell. As you come to the top, the cable will hit the dumbbell plate. This is good as it will actually give you a little extra kick of tension at the top.
4. Weighted handle curls – these are different from the previous barbell curls in that you don't attach the cable onto the barbell. You put weight directly onto the handle that hooks up to a low pulley. You need to get small standard size collars to do this. Put the weight on the handle then put the collars on the outside to prevent it from slipping. You can either use your hands as inside collars, add inside collars or let the weights slide into the middle next to the cable. Do barbell curls from there. This technique gives you the same advantages of above but with a different setup.

14. FOREARM BRACED CHINS

These are best done in a power rack. The easiest way is to use the two, bottom safety rails. Set one in the highest hold, set the other one at just above where your elbow would be if you were hanging from that top rail (use your forearm measure). Grip the top bar and brace your forearm against the bottom bar (you may want to use a pad for your forearms). Keeping your forearms against rail, curl yourself up. Keeping your forearms braced reduces the involvement of the lats at the shoulder and places most of the tension on the biceps. Squeeze hard at the top. This is an excellent compound movement for the biceps, working it at two joints rather than just one and with much heavier weight than is normally used.

Tricks:

1. These can be done weighted with a dumbbell between your feet. If you wish to do negatives with a dumbbell for extra weight, set the dumbbell on a bench, step up to the top position, pinch the dumbbell then move it off the bench and lower yourself down. This gives you good isometric ab work as well.
2. Doing these reverse grip will affect the brachialis. Your elbows will have a tendency to slide out so consciously force them in.
3. Try to push your body as far away from the bar as possible, making the widest arc possible.
4. Using a very close grip will increase biceps contraction even more.
5. Two Olympic bars in a power rack can also be used. Set on in the racks at the very top on the inside of the power rack cage. Set the lower bar on the outside of the cage. This will give you more of a stretch at the bottom, making the exercise resemble a preacher-type chin.
6. These can be done at home using a ladder. Grasp one of the rungs and brace your forearms against the next lower rung and curl up.
7. If you are really ambitious, try one arm. This can be done for 2 up, 1 down negatives. If you do these, you may wish to keep your other hand on the bar. Just remove your fingers so you don't grip. Simply brace your palm on the bar. This will keep your body from spinning and throw most of the tension onto the gripping side.

8. These can also be done in the Smith machine. Set a bar on top of the guard pieces at forearm length and use the actual Smith bar to hand onto.

BICEPS TRAINING NOTES

Larry Scott Biceps Tri-Set

1. Dumbbell preacher curls – 6 reps
 - don't let your armpits touch the bench
 - go completely down and uncurl wrists
 - do 4 to 6 half-rep burns (bottom range)
2. Barbell preacher curls – strict – 6 reps
 - wide grip – 4 inches wider than shoulders
 - nestle armpits and body into bench
 - do 4 half-rep burns
3. EZ Curl bar preacher curls – reverse grip – 6 reps
 - armpits shouldn't touch bench
 - do 4 half-rep burns

Do this entire tri-set three to five times.

Don't forget about training the brachialis muscle. When doing lactic acid training try 5 biceps, 3 brachialis, then 2 biceps again.

Good biceps workout

Partial top range curls

Then superset incline dumbbell curls and flexed arm hang behind the head with a close grip.

Full bicep contraction also involves shoulder extension.

Go slower when training your brachialis (about 15 to 20% slower than regular curls).

Here is a good range of exercises to do for a single, extended set:

Start with strict, full rotation dumbbell curls, then regular curls, then hammer curls, then cheating hammer curls.

When doing light arm cable work, try flexing the antagonist at the stretch position. This will force the muscle you are working to relax, e.g. at the bottom of the curl, flex your triceps.

With any cable version, to use a hammer grip with both arms, attach a single handle and grip on the sides of it rather than on the actual handle.

To create the illusion of fuller biceps, you need to fill in the gap near the elbow. This can be done using preacher curls and reverse curls (which work the brachialis muscle that runs near the elbow). Working the brachialis will also push the biceps up, creating greater peaking.

Good biceps combo – forearm braced chins to lean back dumbbell curls (incline curls), to spider curls/standing curls superset.

TRICEPS EXERCISES

Primary movers: triceps - long, short and lateral heads

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 - Smith machine bar dips
 - One arm bench dips
 - Swiss ball dips
 - Manta Ray bench dips
6. LYING TRICEPS EXTENSIONS
 - Behind the head extensions
 - Incline triceps extensions
 - Decline extensions
 - Flared elbow extensions
 - Cross-bench flat extensions
 - Lying dumbbell extensions
 - Cable barbell extensions
7. OVERHEAD DUMBBELL EXTENSIONS
 - Two dumbbells at a time
 - Two hands, one dumbbell
 - Barbell extensions
 - Cable overhead extensions
 - Behind the head cable extensions
 - Partial dumbbell overhead extensions
 - Leg press extensions
8. KICKBACKS
 - Reverse grip

- Forward grip
- Side kickbacks
- Cable kickbacks
- Vertical kickbacks
- Elbow forward kickbacks

9. LYING DUMBBELL CROSS BODY EXTENSIONS

10. REVERSE PEC DECK LOCKOUTS

- Pec deck triceps extensions

11. ONE ARM CABLE VARIATIONS

- Regular grip
- Reverse grip
- Neutral grip
- Rotational pushdowns
- Hugging one arm pushdown/extensions
- Side-standing one arm pushdowns
- Low pulley forward kickbacks
- Overhead extensions to kickbacks
- Side lying extensions
- Behind the back pushdowns
- Simultaneous front and behind the back pushdowns
- One arm negative pushdowns
- Upside down kickbacks
- Over knee kickbacks
- Simultaneous extensions and kickbacks

12. DOUBLE BENCH PUSHDOWN-UPS

THE EXERCISES

1. CLOSE GRIP BENCH PRESS

Lie down on a flat bench. Take a shoulder width grip. It is not necessary to go closer than that, as it can be hard on your shoulders and does not make the exercise any more effective. Lower the bar to the bottom of your pecs then press straight up with your triceps. Keep your elbows close into your sides throughout the movement.

Tricks:

1. When unracking the bar, do it with your elbows flared out wide. This is better for balance.

Variations:

1. Decline close grip bench - same execution but in a decline bench. More weight can be used this way, as the range of motion is smaller. The angle also improves leverage. A good trick you can use for a better contraction as you come to the top, move the barbell in a backwards arc. It will almost look like you are trying to rack it with each rep (don't though). The amount of weight you can use will be about the same as you can use for similar reps on the standard flat barbell bench.
2. Incline close grip bench - same execution - incline bench. Greater range of motion is possible but it can be hard on your elbows and shoulders. This is a good bench press assistance exercise.
3. E-Z bar close grip bench - same execution as flat, use an E-Z bar gripping on the straight inner part. It is harder to get into position with lots of weight. Have a partner hand you the barbell, set it up in the flat bench supports, or whip it up and back while you lie down.
4. Close grip machine press - on the vertical bench machine. Drop the seat to the bottom, grip the handles on the innermost part with a thumbs-up grip. Press, keeping your elbows tight beside your body.
5. Reverse grip benches - move your hands out wider and use a curl grip. It is a fairly awkward movement. This is often used as a bench press assistance exercise. It works the rear head of the triceps, adding to the top of the triceps under the rear delt. Try supersetting it with kickbacks.
6. Close grip push-ups - same execution as regular push-ups but set your hands so that the thumbs and forefingers of your hands form a triangle in front of your face at the bottom. To make these harder, put your feet up on a bench or the Smith bar (raise it higher to make it harder), or get someone to sit on your back. It is also possible to do these with your hands about shoulder width apart. Another variation that will hit the lower triceps more is to do them on your fists. You can also do these with your feet up on a wall. If you want a bit greater range of motion, put your hands on dumbbells. Make sure they are set up in a neutral grip though, otherwise they may roll out and away (if your feet are up higher).
7. One-arm push-ups - split your feet out wide and lean over so you're almost on your side. Place one arm where you can balance. Lower yourself down and push up.
8. Upright close grip benches - set up like you're doing shoulder presses but use a close, palms-forward grip. Lower the bar to the front and flare your elbows out wide. Press up with your

triceps. This hits the triceps by the elbows. Use the Smith machine if balance is a problem. Start with a light to moderate weight with this one.

9. One arm close grip bench on Universal bench press - move the bench underneath the handle on the side you are working. These are good for doing two-up, one-down negatives. Hook your forearm around the other handle to keep your body from rolling to that side. Try not to actually grab the other handle or you will inadvertently take some of the stress off the working side.
10. Tiger bends – this is a variation of the close grip push up. Place your feet on a low bench and place your hands in close grip push-up position. Lower yourself down until your forearms touch the ground then push up. This will hit the lower triceps hard.
11. Swiss ball push-ups – place your hands on the ball about 8 to 10 inches apart. They should be on the downward slants of the ball on either side. Spread your fingers wide for balance (this increases your surface area). Walk your feet out behind you. The further back you put your feet, the harder it is. The easiest position is from your knees. Do close grip push-ups on the ball. Keep your elbows in tight. You will be very shaky on these when you start doing them. Roll the ball towards you for more push-up. Roll it away from you to turn the exercise into more of an extension. It will also be more like an extension if you roll it towards you and keep your head down. Going away makes it easier (better leverage) while coming closer makes it harder. With this one, you can do it as a combo: go down as an extension then roll the ball back and go up as a push-up. To make this even harder, raise your feet up on a bench or a bar (the Smith machine bar works well for this purpose as it is adjustable in height and allows you to hook your feet over it). Put your hands on the ball first then put your feet up one leg at a time. Your knees should be bent so your lower leg is vertical. This also works your abs isometrically. To increase difficulty, increase the height of the bar. Try changing your orientation and hand position. Get ready to burn.
12. Small ball push-ups – do close-grip push-ups with your hands on two medium size balls (volleyballs work well for this – make sure they are well inflated and strong). Use something you can get a good hand-wrap around. The instability will maximally activate your muscle fibers. These can also be done extremely close-grip by only using one ball though the two ball version is more unstable and therefore somewhat more effective. Lower yourself down so the ball is hitting you in the center of the chest. Raise your feet up to make these harder.
13. Flared elbow close grip bench – this version is often done with an E-Z curl bar. Take a close grip and flare your elbows out wide during the movement. Lower the bar to your lower chest. This is a good flat bench press assistance exercise.
14. One arm barbell bench press – this version strongly works the balancing aspect as well (be sure to use a spotter). Grip the bar in the very center. Unrack then lower, keeping your elbow very close to your body. Don't let the bar hit your chest or it will bounce off and unbalance you. Go slowly with this one.
15. Leg press close grip press – this is a variation of close grip press done using the leg press machine. Start with no weight on the leg press until you get the hang of this one. Kneel on the backrest facing the foot plate with your toes hooked over the back edge of the pad. Put the heels of your hands on the top edge of the plate. Your face should be right over the top edge of the footplate. Keep your back and abs tight. Push the sled up like a close grip press, keeping your elbows in. You can vary the angle of push by varying the angle of your body. The motion is very similar to a close-grip shoulder press.

2. BODYWEIGHT TRICEPS EXTENSIONS

Set up the Smith machine bar about 1 to 2 feet off the ground or use the Universal bench handles. Stand in front of the bar. Place your hands about 6 inches apart with a thumbless (false) grip. Step back so that your body is almost horizontal. Lower your body forward so that your head goes under the bar. Keep your elbows tucked in the whole way. Extend back up. Keep your entire body tight and stiff. The only movement should occur at the elbows. This exercise can put a lot of stress on your elbows so don't do them if you have elbow problems or sore elbows. This exercise will build up the long head of the triceps.

Tricks:

1. To make it easier, move your feet closer to the bar or lower yourself down to your forehead instead of behind the head. You may also wish to do these on your knees. This is the easiest position.
2. To make it harder, come up on your toes as you press up. As well, you can move your feet back or place them on a bench to increase the angle.
3. These can be done one arm if you're very strong. You will have to spread your feet out further to maintain your balance. Using a higher bar may be necessary or you may have to go on your knees. Try them for negatives as well. Down on one arm, up with both or put your hand on the floor to push yourself back up. When you lower yourself with one arm, put your other fist on the floor to moderate the speed of your descent as you will most likely not be strong enough to do it free with one arm. Another way to moderate resistance is to put down only one knee, keeping the other one straight and back. This keeps more tension on than kneeling with both knees.
4. Keep your elbows in tight. Don't let them flare out. This is accomplished by externally rotating your shoulders (the inside of your elbows will be facing up) without moving your hands.
5. As you get stronger, stretch forward as far as you can at the bottom of the movement.
6. To increase the resistance, raise your feet up higher. A couple of ways to do this are benches, boxes or people. One of the best ways is the preacher bench. It is adjustable in height. The hardest way is to do a close-grip handstand push-up type extension. This puts your bodyweight on your triceps completely.
7. To use a neutral grip, loop a towel or rope around a low bar and grasp the ends of the towel or rope. You will also find it makes the exercise more unstable and gives you more freedom of movement. This makes it even harder. Another way to get a neutral grip is to use the legs of a chair. Put the chair up against something solid so it doesn't slip out and go from there. It doesn't even necessarily have to be a chair. Anything with vertical bars will work.
8. These can also be done on the small ball or balls. Hold them at arms length in front of you with your feet out back behind you and your body straight. These are easier if done from the knees or harder when feet are back or raised up on a bench or bar. Two balls will be more unstable. Lower yourself down until the ball hits your forehead then extend back up. If you do them with your feet on the floor, your range of motion will be less than if you do them with your feet raised.
9. Here are a few examples of things you can use to do this exercise on: bars, railings, chair legs, benches (duck your head under the bench and brace it), table edges, sinks, ladders,

etc. Anything that is reasonably low and has clearance underneath for your head will work. In the absence of a bar, you can try looping a towel around anything that is low and is solid. Hold onto the ends of the towel.

10. Raise your shoulder girdle up at the beginning of the rep to eliminate help from the lats. Raising the shoulder girdle will force the lats to relax, placing all the stress (including the stabilizing stress) on the triceps.
11. This exercise can be done as a drop set by utilizing the various body positions. Start with your feet elevated, then feet on the floor stretched out, then closer, then from your knees, then fall down.
12. Another way to vary the tension of this exercise is to support your body on the Swiss ball. Lie on your stomach on the ball and grip the bar. Roll forward then push back and roll backwards. The further back the ball is on your body, the harder the exercise will be. It gives a great stretch and provides instability.
13. If you don't have access to a bar that can spin freely, use a power rack and a regular Olympic bar. Set the pins where you want the bar then put the bar on the outside of the rack so you are pushing it into the frame as you go down.
14. Body extensions can also be done to the side (with one arm). Lean against something such as a bar or wall and extend back up using your triceps. These can be done kneeling as well.

3. PUSHDOWNNS

Stand facing a high pulley with a straight, cambered or V bar. Grip the bar with a palms-down, less than shoulder width grip. Start with the bar at about chin level and your upper arms angled slightly up. Begin the movement by bringing your elbows down in line with your body. This involves the long head of the triceps. When your elbows are pointing down, continue the movement by pushing down and around in a wide arc. Keep your elbows pinned tightly in to your sides and your wrists straight. Do not let your wrists bend back. Squeeze hard. Let the bar up. Let up your upper arms angle up again until the bar is at chin level. Repeat. Keep your lower back arched and your chest out.

According to MRI studies, the V bar (the bar that uses a close grip with your hands at an angle) is the one that maximally activates the triceps. The straight bar tends to take the medial head out of the mix somewhat.

Tricks:

1. When using heavier weight, lean forward with one foot forward and one foot back. This will give you a better base of support from which to work from.
2. Set your body in the best position before each rep. Drop your shoulders, expand your rib cage, keep your chest high and arch your back slightly.
3. You can use the slight upward elbow rise to your advantage on the way down to help move heavy weight or to keep the weight moving when you get tired. Don't do it until you have to, though.
4. To maximally affect the long head, do these in a kneeling position. Allow your arms to go up almost directly over your head instead of just to the chin. One of the functions of the long

head is to bring the arm down towards the body and this trick will target that function. Bring the bar or rope down until your elbows point down then push down as usual. At the bottom of the movement, lean your upper body back somewhat and finish the movement with your hands behind your back. This will hit almost the entire range of motion of the triceps in one movement.

5. Another method of hitting the long head is to start in the normal position at the top. Let your elbows drift up until they are up about 45 degrees rather than pointing straight down. Push down in a wide, round arc as far away from your body as possible. Your arms will still be angled away from your body. When you lockout in that position, continue in a stiff-arm pushdown movement to hit the arm adduction function of the long head.
6. Your body position affects the area of the triceps you hit with the pushdown. When you lean back, you hit more of the upper area of the triceps. When you are vertical, you hit the main belly. When you lean forward, the stress moves down to the lower area of the triceps.
7. Pushing with the blade of your hand will hit the lower outside horseshoe bit.
8. Instead of standing right under the high pulley, step back a few feet and do the pushdown. This places a different stress on the triceps. Moving forward underneath it will do the same thing as turning around and stepping away and is more doable if the pulley is right in the machine. Try going around the world as you do pushdowns. That is, keep stepping in a circle to the left or right with each rep to vary the tension placed on the muscles. This also applies to where you stand. Try moving forward, back and to the sides while you are executing. In short, change your orientation to the pulley.
9. Drop your shoulders down at the bottom as though trying to push your body up. This will increase the contraction.

Variations:

1. Rope pushdowns - use the rope attachment, pinkies at the bottom. Push down and around but do not let your upper arms drift up as above. This is a good exercise if you have sore elbows but still want to work your triceps. There is very little elbow strain. At the bottom of the movement, try to split your hands apart to fully contract the triceps. If you don't have a rope attachment, you can loop a towel through a handle attachment, around a bar or through the hook. You can tie knots in the end if you like. As you pushdown with a towel, push more with the thumb/forefinger bit.
2. Reverse grip - use the same bar as before but use a palms-up grip. Same execution except for the slight raise of the arm.
3. One arm pushdowns – see One Arm Cable Variations.
4. Flared elbow pushdowns - same position as above. Keep the bar close into your body and flare your elbows out to the side throughout the movement. The path of the bar should be straight up and down. Really get your torso over the bar on this one. The advantage of this version is that heavier weight can be used. This is the style powerlifters use because of the heavier weight. This version will build more mass than arced pushdowns, which are better for shape. Vary the side of the cable you put your head to keep it even. To get the cable down to the start position with a very heavy weight, do a whole body pushdown then jerk your body back up while keeping the bar down. Use a powerful momentum pushdown while you are forcefully dropping your entire body.

5. Almost dip pushdowns - these are a combination of one arm, flared elbow pushdowns. Use a fairly heavy weight and a palms-down grip like in regular pushdowns. Use your other hand to get the handle down to the starting position. Your elbow will be out to the side, bent less than 90 degrees, with the handle in close to your body. Press it down close to your body using your other hand to steady the handle. Concentrate on the negative.
6. Partial pushdowns – this variation is easiest done on a machine with adjustable height pulleys. Set it so that you only get the last few inches of the range of motion. This allows a great deal more weight to be used in the exercise. This can also be done on a non-adjustable machine by using a long chain or a series of hooks made into a chain to lower the bar down. Another option is to stand on a chair or bench. If you are using more than your bodyweight, place a heavy dumbbell on the floor and slide your foot under it. This will keep your body down. Before you start the push, raise your foot to get tension on the dumbbell, then push. You can also have someone push down on your shoulders to keep you down. This variation can be done with any of the grips of attachments. You will need to use much less weight when doing it with reverse grip as grip strength will limit you. The partial pushdown can also be done one arm at a time.
7. Bent-over pushdowns – stand back a few feet from the high pulley, facing it and bend over 90 degrees at the waist. Stretch your upper arms overhead. Your elbows will start bent 90 degrees. Push down only at the elbows, keeping your upper arms horizontal. This exercise will hit the little bit of tricep down by the elbow.
8. Behind the back rope pushdowns – these are done with both arms at the same time. Face away from the stack. Bring your arms up and back behind your body, grasp the rope with your pinkies down and your knuckles touching each other. Your hands will be together and your elbows wide. Push down, forcing your elbows in. Spread your hands out as you finish the movement. This exercise gives a great contraction as the contraction occurs behind your back. Be careful of your shoulders on this one. Use a moderate weight and do not jerk.
9. Mixed grip pushdowns – use a cambered bar and take a mixed grip (one overhand, one underhand). Same execution from there.
10. Preacher bench pushdowns – set the preacher bench under a low pulley. Rest your upper arms on the bench like normal but do a pushdown instead of curling, keeping your arms on the bench. Any variety of pushdown can be done. This eliminates any cheating you may unknowingly (or knowingly) be doing.
11. Side to side pushdowns – use two arms and the short bar attachment with this one. Push down to the side of your body instead of directly in front. Your right arm will finish on the outside of your left hip. Come up then push down to the other side. You can lean in the opposite direction you are pushing. This gives a different angle of pull and is especially good for athletes using rowing or paddling movements. Alternate sides with each rep.
12. Double one-arm pushdowns – use two single handles for this one. Attach one hook to the cable then attach 2 handles on with 2 more hooks to the one hook. This gives greater freedom of movement. You can execute a variety of one-arm pushdowns like this, alternating arms each time and keeping both hands on the handles at all times.
13. Split push away pushdowns – set up like double one-arm pushdowns. You will be pushing down with hands at the same time. Grip the handles with your knuckles facing each other and together at the start. Your shoulders will be internally rotated and your elbows flared out. As you come to the bottom try to push your hands away from each other directly out to the sides and squeeze hard. This hits the rear head. These can also be done with a reverse

grip. This technique is very similar to the type of split you can achieve with a rope.

14. Bent over pushdowns – this is essentially an upsidedown overhead cable extension. Stand facing the high pulley then take a step back. Crunch over so your head is down like the bottom of a cable crunch with the bar behind your head like the bottom of an overhead extension. Extend down over your head. This eliminates any back stress you may encounter from an normal overhead movement. It does, however, increase blood pressure in your head.

4. PARALLEL BAR DIPS

Set up in the parallel or V dip bars, palms facing in. Dip down keeping your elbows close into your sides. Keep your body straight up and down throughout the movement. It is only necessary to go down until your arms are about 90 degrees. Do not rebound at the bottom of the movement.

Tricks:

1. Try to lean back a bit as you come up. Look directly up at the ceiling and lean back when you lock out. Other lockout tricks include externally rotating your shoulders and thrusting your chest forward. This puts arms further back behind your body, increasing the contraction.
2. Do jump up negatives when you can't do any more reps. Simply jump up into the starting position and fight gravity all the way down. It is also possible to set up a bench or two and stand up on it each time, then lower yourself down. This is an excellent way to gain strength if you are not strong enough to do the positive phase of the dip.
3. To do pure negatives with dips, use a hip belt. Set up two benches beside the dip bars. Stand on them with the weight hanging between your legs. Remove your feet from the benches and lower yourself down. Instead of allowing your feet to go down to the ground, rest your toes on the benches (don't let them help, though). When you get to the bottom, stand up on the benches back to the starting position and repeat. You can allow your feet to go all the way to ground if you want, though. Simply climb back up onto the bench again. If you are doing dips for chest, that is how you're going to have to do it. Weighted dip negatives can be done with extremely heavy weight. It is also possible to do them as partials or as lockout holds. This technique is one of the best ways to gain mass and strength in the triceps, chest and shoulders very quickly.

Here are a few tips for setting up the weight. Lean the plates against one of the benches. Kneel behind them. Run the chain of the belt through holes. Clip it on then stand up on the benches. To stand on the benches, step up and pull yourself up with your hands, too.

4. Another way to do negatives without a hip belt is to use a dumbbell between the feet. Place a bench or box behind the dipping bars then place a heavy dumbbell on its end on top. Get your hands into position on the dipping bars then hook your ankles around the handle of the dumbbell. Swing it up and off into position then lower slowly. At the bottom, release the dumbbell, pick it up and put it back on the bench. Repeat.
5. Try dips without gripping the bar. Keep you fingers splayed out wide and push off with the heels of your hands (even if you must grip the bar, try to push mainly with the heel of the hand). This activates the rear head of the triceps more.

6. Use dips as an auxiliary exercise until you can do 20 non-weighted dips. At this point, you can use dips as a core exercise by adding weight in the form of a weight belt or dumbbell between the feet.
7. Try to push more with the heels of your hands to further activate the triceps.
8. Dips can be done with your hands on two unstable surfaces, e.g. rings.
9. Dips can be used to work the serratus anterior muscles as well. Hold yourself in the locked out position. Without bending your arms at all, lower your body down at the shoulders. Push yourself back up using shoulder action. This action is basically raising and lowering the scapula which is the function of the serratus muscle.
10. If you don't have access to dipping bars, you can also dip between the railing of a stair machine. Hold your legs straight out in front of you or crunched up in a cross-legged position to keep your feet from hitting the pedals.

Variations:

1. Machine dips - same execution, elbows in, straight up and down body position. When using these machines it is more productive to sit backward (facing away from the pivot point). This puts more stress on the heel of the hand at lockout, which in turn places more stress on the triceps. It is the same idea as leaning back at the top when doing regular bar dips.
2. Bench machine dips - same set-up as for chest. Set the handles as high as they'll go by lifting the handles high up then setting the pin. Do this if dipping bars are not available.
3. Dumbbell cable dips – these can only be done with a portable dip station (usually seen in combination with a hanging ab chair). Move the dip station in front of a low pulley. Tie the cable onto a dumbbell. Stand between the handles and place the dumbbell in between your feet as though doing dips with the dumbbell. The cable should be running over the top of the dumbbell. Get up into position then start dipping. This variation gives backwards resistance as you push up, which focuses on the triceps. It is also good when you don't have access to heavy dumbbells or a hip belt to increase dip weight with.

5. BENCH DIPS

Set up two benches parallel about three feet apart. Rest your feet on one. Place your hands fingers forward, with your back to the bench on the other one. You should be able to touch your thumbs behind your back (you can go wider though, if it hurts your shoulders). Dip down flaring your elbows out to the sides if your hands are in close or straight back if they are farther out. Push up.

Tricks:

1. To make these more effective, put your feet up higher than your hands.
2. To add resistance, get a partner to push down on your shoulders or pile weight plates on your legs. You can also pick up a dumbbell between your legs. Using a partner is the best solution as a partner supplies interactive resistance. Your partner should stand on a bench or chair behind you to get better leverage and lean down on your shoulders. They can add resistance on the negative and let up on the positive. You can tell your partner to ease up when you need it and bear down when you need it. You can't do that with a dumbbell. Using a partner

push also places the resistance directly over the triceps where you want it rather in your lap where you must add a lot of extra weight to make it effective. This can mean a pile of loose 45-pound plates in your lap sliding around.

3. Another way to add resistance is to use a low pulley. Hook a cambered bar onto the low pulley. Set the bench where your hands will be as close to the pulley as you can. Your feet will be pointing directly away from the stack. Hook the bar over the top of your thighs with the cable between your legs. Push up.
4. The easiest position for this exercise is with your body in a sitting position with your feet on the floor in front of you (knees bent 90 degrees). As you get stronger, move your feet further and further out until your legs are straight. After that, put your feet on a bench.
5. These can also be done with your hands on the front edges of two benches. This eliminates the possibility of your back contacting the bench.
6. Try doing bench dips on your fists with knuckles pointing forward to increase wrist strength and tricep activation.
7. Lift your fingers straight and try to push with the heels of your hands.
8. To do a bench dip drop set, use varying positions of decreasing resistance. Start with your feet up high, then even, then on the floor stretched, then close in.

Variations:

1. Reverse grip - same execution, hands out wider, fingers pointing backwards.
2. Smith machine bar dips - Use the Smith machine bar set low instead of a bench to set your hands on. This is a good way to use the reverse grip (palms forward) with as forearm flexibility will not limit you. This is because your fingers are able to wrap down and around the bar instead of having to lie flat. When doing reverse grip, you should place your hands a few inches outside of shoulder width instead of trying to keep them in close. This will ease the pressure on your shoulders and make it a more natural movement. As with any dipping exercise, try to push more with the heels of your hands.

Another variation possible with the Smith machine bar is to have your fingers pointing directly out to the sides. The bar should be between your second and third fingers.

3. One arm bench dips - rest one hand on a bench behind you and space your feet out wide on the other bench to keep your balance. Dip with the one arm. These can also be done with your feet on the floor. To keep your balance, reach across your thighs with your other hand to keep your center of gravity in the middle. This will reduce the torque on the elbows due to uneven force application. This is a very advanced exercise.
4. Swiss ball dips – sit on the ball. Place your hands in the same position as for a regular bench dip. Make sure you spread your fingers wide for control. Dip down. Keep strict control so you don't overextend your shoulders. Raise your feet up to make them harder.
5. Manta Ray bench dips – the set-up is exactly the same as with regular bench dips. The only difference is you will have the Smith machine bar on your back using the Manta Ray device to keep the bar from rolling off. This is a technique that allows you to use extra weight without putting plates or dumbbells in your lap and without requiring a partner. The front edge

of the bench your hands are on should be directly underneath the bar.

6. LYING TRICEPS EXTENSIONS

These are also known as skullcrushers, nosebreakers, or French curls. Lie on your back on a flat bench. Take an E-Z curl bar or straight bar with a shoulder-width, palms down grip and hold it straight above you. Bending only at the elbows, lower the bar to your forehead then extend back up. Keep your elbows in.

Tricks:

1. Angle your upper arms back towards your head and keep them there to keep tension on the triceps at the top of the movement. If you keep your upper arms vertical, you will lose tension at lockout.
2. Alternate these with close-grip benches, i.e. 1 extension, 1 bench, 1 extension, 1 bench, etc. then burn out with benches when you can't do any more extensions.
3. Doing these to the throat will help with bench press lockout power.
4. When doing strict extensions and you need to spot yourself, do a short pullover movement to help get some momentum while keeping tension on the triceps.
5. Try doing these with your feet squeezing onto the bench post. Squeeze your abs hard at the instant you change direction to send a shot of force up to the triceps. If your feet are on the ground or on the bench, you will not be able to do this effectively, as your feet will shoot up.

Variations:

1. Behind the head extensions – bring the bar down behind the head. You can let your shoulders go so far back as to have your upper arms horizontal. This will cause you to start the movement as a pullover, which affects the long head of the triceps. These can be done with dumbbells and cables.
2. Incline triceps extensions - sit on an incline bench and bring the bar behind your head. These can also be with dumbbells and cables. Instead of using an incline bench, these can also be with your upper back supported on the angled face of a preacher bench. This will give you a little more stretch in the shoulders as well. This works if the incline bench you have is too long in the backrest and the dumbbells or barbell hit it at the bottom.
3. Decline extensions - same execution, bring the bar to your forehead again. These can also be done with dumbbells and cables. This is one of the best exercises for developing your entire triceps. When doing these with dumbbells you have the option of which grip you wish to use. A pronated grip will mimic the barbell version. You can also use a neutral or reverse grip. When using the pronated grip, try to press the inner dumbbell heads together to minimize unnecessary movement. When using a neutral grip, bring the dumbbells down right beside your head as though scratching your ears with them. This will make you keep your elbows in because if you don't you will get a dumbbell in the face.
4. Flared elbow extensions – do these on a flat bench. Instead of bringing the bar down in an arc towards your head with your elbows in, flare your elbows wide and bring the bar in a straight line down over your upper chest. At the bottom, your forearms should be in contact with your biceps. Your elbows should be just short of lockout at the top. This movement is

almost like a close-grip press/extension combo. Many powerlifters do this kind of movement. Another version of this is called the Paul Dicks press or the California Press. It is like a close grip press to the upper chest with your elbows close to your sides. It is 75% extension, 25% bench press. It is a good assistance exercise for the bench press. A good starting weight for this exercise is halfway between your extension weight and your close grip bench weight.

5. Cross bench flat extensions – set up two benches in a T. Put your head where the benches meet. Put your arm overhead with a dumbbell in it. Your upper arm will be supported by the bench, though it is not necessary to keep your upper arm on the bench at all times. Lower down then extend up, keeping your upper arm resting on the bench. This will work the rear head. Another version of this can be done with a bar. The execution is the same but using a bar.
6. Lying dumbbell extensions – same execution but using one or two dumbbells. Angle your upper arms slightly back to keep the tension on the triceps all the way up to the lockout position. Keep your elbows close together or you may hit yourself in the face with the dumbbells (it may be useful to have a spotter hold them together when you first start doing this exercise. Lower the dumbbells to either side of your head then extend back up. Inhale at the bottom then exhale forcefully at the point where you change direction to give yourself a little kick-start.

One of the advantages of dumbbells is that you can vary the grip. The neutral grip (hands facing each other) will work the lateral head of the triceps more. You can also do reverse grip or prone (regular) grip. A good trick you can use with this movement is to go down using the reverse grip then rotate your hands and come up using the neutral grip. This will allow the use of more weight. The prone grip will closely simulate the grip used with a barbell but will allow more freedom of movement in the shoulders and arms.

A variation of this is the pronating dumbbell tricep extension. Use a neutral (palms-facing) grip at the start. Keep your elbows stationary and lower until your forearm touch your shoulders. Lift up by extending your arms and pronating your hands, turning your palms towards your feet while straightening your arms. This recruits the small triangular muscles near the elbows.

7. Cable barbell extensions – attach a low pulley cable to a barbell (the bent brachialis bar works well). Lie down on the floor with your head closest to the barbell. Move yourself away so that you can just reach the bar when you reach overhead. Grasp the bar with a neutral grip (if you're using the brachialis bar) or a pronated grip (if you're using a regular bar) then wiggle away a little more to ensure the weight plates don't touch at the bottom. Execute a lying barbell extension. Use a little pullover movement at the start to increase the involvement of the long head. This variation keeps tension on the triceps even at the top of the movement where usually there is none. It works very well alternating reps with a close grip bench (or go to exhaustion on the extensions then finish with the press). Instead of getting no tension at the top of the close grip press, you will actually get a lot. These can also be done with a dumbbell attached instead of a barbell. This will allow you greater freedom of movement. It will also allow you to start in a neutral grip and pronate your hand against resistance at the top of the movement to increase the stress on the tricep.

You may also choose to use different variations of this exercise. Doing it on an incline bench will increase the stretch component. Doing it on a decline bench will increase the contraction component. Doing it on a flat bench and using an exaggerated pullover movement will stress the long head of the triceps more.

There is a very good way to use your bodyweight to cheat out a few more reps when doing the floor version of this exercise. Hold the barbell at the stretch position. Raise your legs up

into the air then drive them down forcefully. Transfer this downward momentum by contracting your abs and sending the energy into your triceps. This will throw the bar up. The higher you kick your legs up, the more momentum you will be able to transfer.

7. OVERHEAD DUMBBELL EXTENSIONS

Stand, sit on the end of a bench or backwards in a preacher bench (this is the easiest on your back). Hold one dumbbell over your head with your pinky against the inside of the top plates. Keeping your upper arm vertical, bend at the elbow so the dumbbell is lowered behind your head. Extend up.

Comments:

The single arm version can cause more elbow pain than the two-arm version because you are able to get a greater stretch at the bottom of the movement.

The long head is stretched at the shoulder and elbow at the bottom of this one. Let the dumbbell bend your arm back and stretch greatly as though trying reach a spot down your back and scratch it with the dumbbell.

Tricks:

1. In order to prevent your elbow from swinging out to the side when doing the one arm version, hold it in place with the other hand.
2. You can lower the dumbbell directly behind your back or alternatively, back behind your head in a frontal plane instead of a sagittal plane.
3. When you start using heavier weight, you can lock yourself onto the bench (preventing excessive torque on the back) by gripping under the edge of the bench with your other hand.
4. This exercise can be done using a pronated (palms-forward) grip. It will resemble a dumbbell version of the barbell version. A reverse grip can also be used though it can be difficult to hold onto the dumbbell. Hang on tight so it doesn't slip.

Variations:

1. Two dumbbells at a time - same execution. It is possible to do these with the dumbbells pressed together to stabilize them somewhat or kept apart to destabilize them.
2. Two hands, one dumbbell - same execution, hold the dumbbell around the bottom of the top plates with the handle between your thumbs and forefingers. Keep your elbows in.
3. Barbell extensions - same execution, hold a barbell with a shoulder width grip and lower it behind your head. The E-Z bar works well for this. Try reverse grip as well, though be careful of your grip as it much weaker in that position.
4. Cable overhead extensions - on the low pulley or high pulley, face away from the stack and execute like you're doing barbell extensions. Extend arms overhead. You will be leaning over at an angle in a lunge position (almost horizontal) when you're doing the high pulley version. The rope or towel can also be used. When doing these with the high pulley, allow your upper arms to stretch back and up before bringing them down to horizontal and extending forward. This will maximize the effect on the long head of the triceps. Another alternative is to stand straight upright (use a lighter weight), keeping your upper arms vertical,

and extend the bar up to directly overhead.

Cable overhead extensions can also be done one arm at a time. When doing this cable version, cradle the bar or handle in your fingers (between second and third knuckles) and not in the palm of your hand to get more tension in the triceps. Don't do this with heavy weight, though, where a solid grip is important. Using the bar or single handle attachment will allow you to use a supinated or a reverse grip. Using the rope attachment will allow a neutral grip.

With cable extensions, your palms should be facing in towards your head at the bottom. As you come up, pronate your hands to get full activation of the triceps. This means turning your hand so that your palm faces forward. This is only possible with the single handle or with the rope. To do this both at the same time, you can attach two handles onto one hook. Vary the distance you stand from the stack and the angle you lean to vary the stress on the triceps.

Cable extensions can be done with your elbows supported on a bench, e.g. a flat bench when doing low cable extension or a jacked-up preacher bench when doing high-pulley extensions. This prevents cheating due to arm or body movement. You may also wish to try bracing your arms on a Swiss ball to add the element of stabilization to the mix.

It is possible to do the low-pulley version kneeling. To get the bar into position by yourself, face sideways to the stack, reverse curl the weight up then, in a smooth motion without slowing down, sweep it up and around allowing one arm to whisk over your head. Go directly into the bottom position and face away from the stack. The execution is a little simpler with one arm. Start in a curl position with your arm already partially bent. Moving only at the shoulder, front raise the handle up then, halfway up, pronate your forearm and go directly to the bottom position. Do the opposite of these movements when bring the bar or handle down from the exercise position.

Getting the stretch reflex can be done using bar movement or by using body movement. To use bar movement, simply move the bar. To use body movement, jerk your body forward a little when you are down in the stretch position, then start the movement.

5. Behind the head cable extensions - stand in between two high pulleys and grab opposite handles (left with right hand, right with left hand) and cross the cables behind your head with your hands in by your head, palms facing in. Start with your upper arms angled up a little. Extend your arms simultaneously out to the sides bringing your upper arms horizontal and squeezing hard at the end. Keep your upper arms horizontal until the near the end of the rep. Bring your upper arm down near full extension in order to engage the long head more. It is also possible to do these with a pronated grip, i.e. regular grip. These can also be done one arm at a time behind the head and/or with the rope. If you don't have a rope you can use a towel as explained in rope pushdowns.
6. Partial one arm dumbbell overhead extensions – do these standing. Keep your feet fairly wide and your knees bent. Swing a heavy dumbbell up with both arms up to the top position. Lower only to the point where you feel you can lift it back up. Repeat. On the last rep, do a negative, lowering the dumbbell to rest on your shoulder, then bring it down to the floor and repeat with the other arm. This type of movement can be done as negative reps by using the other arm to help move the dumbbell up to the top position after you drop it onto your shoulder.
7. Leg press extensions - start with no weight on the leg press until you get the hang of this one. Kneel on the backrest facing the foot plate with your toes hooked over the back edge of the pad. Put the heels of your hands on the top edge of the plate. Close grip press the sled up overhead. Lean your body forward under the sled. Keeping your upper arms directly overhead, lower the sled in an overhead extension movement, bending only at the elbows.

Lower the sled until the footplate contacts your forearms then extend back up. Pivot forward on your knees as you extend up. This hits the lower triceps strongly. Keeping your body further back on the backrest is harder due to the angle of push. To hit the lateral heads of the triceps, make fists and turn your hands to a neutral position. Come down on the sides of your fists. Your hands will tend to rotate to pronation as you come up. This works the extreme lateral and lower aspects of the triceps.

8. KICKBACKS

Bend over at the waist with one hand and one knee (of the same side) on a bench so that your upper body is horizontal. Hold a dumbbell in the other hand with a neutral grip (thumbs forward). Your upper arm will be just higher than level with your body. Your forearm will be hanging straight down so your elbow is bent about 90 degrees. Extend your forearm up until your arm is straight and squeeze. Do not move the upper arm at all. Keep it pinned to your side. Lower and repeat.

Tricks:

1. Rotate your hand so that your palm ends up facing up in the air as you get to the top.
2. A good way to do all variations of the kickback is to do a set that rotates through every variation during the set. Do one rep of each variation and continue through the cycle until failure. This will hit the muscle from every angle.
3. If you have a tendency to swing your arm or your shoulder tires before your triceps do, try this: prop your upper arm on a bench. The top of the incline bench or preacher bench works well for this – if you are using the preacher bench, you can put your arm on the angled face to change the focus of the exercise and use heavier weight. Drop your upper body slightly below that point and squeeze hard with each rep.
4. On kickback variations that include supination or pronation, hold the dumbbell off center to increase the resistance of the rotation component, e.g. if you are going from palms-forward to palms-back, hold the dumbbell with your pinky against the plate. If you are going the other direction, hold your thumb and forefinger against the plate.
5. To use a heavy weight when doing kickbacks, stand up and lean forward slightly, decreasing the range of motion of the exercises. Your upper should be about 20 degrees off vertical. This shortened range of motion and improved leverage combine to allow much more weight to be used. Squeeze hard at the contraction as that is the only value of doing this variation.

Variations:

1. Reverse grip - kick back so that your palm faces down with your knuckles up at the top of the movement.
2. Forward grip – kick back so that your palm is facing up at the top of the movement. Try to push more with your forefinger to maximize the contraction.
3. Side kickbacks - same execution, hold your upper arm straight out to the side throughout the movement.
4. Cable kickbacks - same execution, various grips and side kickbacks. See One Arm Cable Variations.

5. Vertical kickbacks – put your knee on a bench (same side as working arm), put your other hand on the floor then put your forehead on the bench. This crunches your upper body over. Set your upper arm vertical then kickback from there (your elbow should be pointing at the ceiling). This changes the point of tension. Use any variety of grip and rotation.
6. Elbow forward kickbacks – internally rotate your shoulder and point your elbow forward as much as possible. This is a fairly awkward movement.

9. LYING DUMBBELL CROSS BODY EXTENSIONS

Lie flat on a bench, holding a dumbbell above you arms length. Keeping your upper arm vertical, lower the dumbbell down to your opposing shoulder by bending at the elbow then extend up.

Variations:

1. Lower to beside your head instead of over your chest (use two dumbbells). This will resemble a lying barbell tricep extension but using dumbbells. The range of motion is greater as you won't brain yourself with the bar. Try it on a decline bench as well.

10. REVERSE PEC DECK LOCKOUTS

This is an incredible peak contraction exercise for triceps. Sit facing backwards in the pec deck machine. The set should be set low or even removed completely. Put your arms out to the sides. The pads of the pec deck should be on the back of your forearm (don't let your upper arm touch the pads or this will change the focus of the exercise). Start with your arms slightly bent. Push back using the strength of your back muscles at the start, then extend your arms forcefully, locking them out and squeezing hard. The range of motion is not great but the contraction is. These can be done static contraction style or partial style. This exercise only works on machines that use pads, not handles. Change the angle of your arms (higher or lower on the pads) to change the effect on the muscle. Try rotating your arms at the shoulders to hit different areas of the triceps (internally or externally).

Tricks:

1. A good trick for moving more weight on this exercise is the drop. In the instant you start the push backwards, drop your upper body. It is like taking a run at it. The momentum of the drop should transfer into backwards momentum, moving the weight.
2. At the peak contraction, try to force your shoulders forward while pivoting your forearms around the far edge of the pad. This brings your arms back further behind your body and gives you an extra hard contraction.
3. To hit the lateral head of your triceps, externally rotate your arms maximally at the shoulder so your palms face forward. This rotation puts direct tension on the lateral head, working directly on the horseshoe of the triceps.
4. If the weight stack you are working with is too light, kneel with one leg on the seat. Reach around with the other leg and put your foot on the stack. Lean on the stack to increase the resistance. If you have a partner, have them lean on the stack.

Variations:

1. Pec deck triceps extensions – sit sideways in the pec deck. Put your arm up 90 degrees out at the shoulder. Bend it and place the pad on your forearm. Your upper arm will be pointing straight forward from your body. Keep your upper arm stationary. Extend your arm back.

11. ONE ARM CABLE TRICEP VARIATIONS

Tricks:

1. Squeeze hard at the bottom and try to drop your shoulder down to get an extra squeeze especially on the reverse grip. Try it standing sideways as well.
2. A trick you can do when using the single handle is to try and push more with the outside blade of your hand (pinky side). This is best done with an overhand grip. Keep your pinky side pushed up against the handle sides. This will hit the lateral head more, building your horseshoe. Use a light weight for higher reps to do properly and feel the tension on target. If possible, take your fingers completely off the handle and push only with the outside palm knuckle of your hand. To increase this tension even more, externally (outwardly) rotate your shoulder as you come down to lockout. Your palm will be facing your leg at the bottom
3. Try doing these kneeling and leaning your upper body back 10 to 15 degrees (hold onto something if you have to for balance). At the bottom your arm will be down and behind your body. This improves the tension especially in the long head as its range of motion is much greater. This position is also the triceps fully contracted position. Use the arm rotation to the outside to hit the lateral head. Drop your shoulder down as low as possible and lean down over to that side for an absolute peak contraction. When these are done with a reverse grip, they will hit the belly of the triceps right in the upper back part where the split between the long and lateral heads is. This can help with muscle separation in that area.
4. A good way to get a pre-stretch without leaning back is to bring your elbow behind your body so your arm forms a triangle behind your back.
5. Try pushing away as far forward as you can as though reaching for something. Bring them back and down, squeezing hard. This hits the triceps a little differently.
6. With cable kickbacks, change the pivot point by bracing the cable with your other hand and bring the handle around your back more. This will give you a stronger contraction.

Variations:

1. Regular grip pushdowns – palms down grip. Using one handle at a time allows for more freedom of movement as well as rotation of the forearm. For a change in path, try pushing down to your opposite hip rather than the same side hip.
2. Reverse grip pushdowns - palms up grip. This grip will hit the horseshoe of the triceps. These can be done from a variety of positions, e.g. standing facing the stack, standing perpendicular and pushing down across the body. They can also be done with both arms simultaneously by crossing the cable in front of you. You can alternate or pushdown at the same time.
3. Neutral grip pushdowns – thumbs up grip using a rope attachment. Same execution.
4. Rotational pushdowns – start with one grip then as you push down, rotate to the other. This

is same concept of supinating for the biceps as applied to the triceps. Go from reverse to regular or vice versa.

5. Hugging one arm pushdown/extensions – stand perpendicular to the pulley with your right side to the stack. Reach across your body with your left hand. Grasp the handle with a reverse grip. Turn your body to the left so that you now face away from the stack. Your upper arm should be across your chest. Keeping your upper arm close, extend your tricep out and down in a diagonal line. This puts a different kind of stretch on the triceps. This movement can be done reverse grip or regular pronated grip.

These can also be done both arms simultaneously. This is called a crucifix kickback. Keep your elbows about chin level and step a few feet back from between the stacks. Bring your elbows back and to the sides, kick back wide and back, throwing your head back, puffing your chest out, arching your back and trying to squeeze your shoulder blades together. It should look as though someone is jamming a pole into your back. These can be done standing or kneeling. This version can also be done lying on a bench on your back using the two high pulleys. It is the same execution only you are lying down. This lying on your back version can also be done one arm at a time. At the top of each rep, let your arm straighten and stretch forward and up at the shoulder. Sweep it back and down first using the back muscles allowing the elbow to bend then straighten the elbow as part of a fluid motion when the elbow won't go down and further. This will enhance the rear-delt / tricep tie-in area. Another way to do these is with the same body position but using the low pulley and extending up instead of pushing back down. Keep your upper arms vertical throughout the movement and use a reverse grip.

You may also wish to try this variation with your forearms vertical (hands pointing to the floor) like a reverse grip one arm pushdown but with both arms at the same time or alternating.

6. Side-standing one arm pushdown - if you are using your right hand, stand so that your right hand is closest to the stack and you are facing 90 degrees from the stack (sideways). Pushdown using any grip you choose (normal, reverse, rope, etc.). Keep your elbow pointing directly to the side when doing this one. This will hit the long head of the triceps. These can be done both arms simultaneously in a crossover setup. Lean back and arch your back for a full contraction.
7. Low pulley forward kickbacks – bend over, facing away from the stack. If you are using your left arm, reach under and grasp the pulley so the cable is coming from your right side. Internally rotate your shoulder so your elbow is pointing forward as much as possible. Keep your upper arm close to your chest and kickback forward.
8. Overhead extensions to kickbacks – do these standing. This will make the transition smoother. Start with an overhead tricep extension. On the way down, spin 180 degrees (rotating towards the arm that is working). Drop down immediately into kickback position and do a kickback. Lower down then spin around, raise the handle to do another overhead extension. This combination hits the peak stretch position and the peak contracted position in one movement.
9. Side lying extensions – lie on your side on a bench perpendicular to the stack, facing it. Point your elbow directly up to the ceiling at 90 degrees from your body. Your forearm will be bent. Extend up from there. This is the low pulley version. When using the high pulley, keep your upper arm at your side at push down and back behind you.
10. Side cable kickbacks – do these bent over with your body perpendicular to the stack. Hold your elbow out to the side the whole time. A variation of this is to do the same execution of

wide to the side but have your head pointing to the stack. This places more stress on the rear areas of the tricep as you pushing back as well as out to the side.

11. Behind the back pushdowns – stand facing the stack. Grasp a handle on the high pulley using the right hand as an example. Spin 270 degrees around to the left. This will result in the cable and handle being behind your back. It will look as though you are trying to break your own arm. Internally rotate your shoulder as you spin. The most comfortable way of doing this is with a reverse grip though the pronated grip can be used as well. To execute, push your hips forward, bend your knees and lean back a little to give the cable a little clearance behind you. Extend your arm down and to the side behind your back. This will hit the long and lateral heads of the tricep well. Do not use momentum on this one at all. If you have a crossover setup, this can be done with both arms at the same time or alternating arms. It can be tricky to get into and out of position, though, and it is probably better to stick with one arm at a time behind your back.
12. Simultaneous front and behind the back pushdowns – do regular in-front-of-body reverse grip pushdowns at the same you do behind the back pushdowns for the other arm. You will have one cable in front and one cable behind so they won't get in each other's way.
13. One arm negative pushdowns – push the handle down with both arms, but do the negative with only one arm. This can be done with all varieties of grips and styles (reverse, normal, flared elbow, etc.). Do not put your helping hand on top of the working hand.
14. Upside down kickbacks – your head will be away from the stack or near to the stack (both versions work well) and your body bent completely in half. Your upper arm should be vertical with your elbow pointed up towards the ceiling. Kick up and back.
15. Over knee kickbacks – go down on one knee (working side leg up away and opposite from pulley) with your body perpendicular to the pulley. The cable should go under your far leg. Rest your upper arm on your thigh to support it for side kickbacks.
16. Simultaneous extensions and kickbacks – these are done in a crossover setup. Face away from one pulley and set it up as a one arm over head extension from the high pulley. With your other arm, do a cable kickback from the opposing low pulley. Going down on one knee (on the same side as the extension) will help with support. These can be executed at the same time or alternating.

12. DOUBLE BENCH PUSHDOWN-UPS

This is a bodyweight triceps exercise that can be extremely challenging. Set two flat benches parallel (they should be the same height), shoulder-width apart. Start in a bench dip position with your feet on the floor and your hands on the ends of the benches. Your body will be in between the benches. Lower your body back and down between them, bending only at the elbows. Lower until your bodyweight is resting completely on your forearms. Push yourself back up to the start position using only tricep power in a sort of pushdown movement.

Tricks:

1. You can alter the stress by leaning forward or back. You can also help by using your shoulders if you need to, turning the exercise into more of a dip.
2. To include the long head of the triceps, lower yourself down one more notch so your upper

arms are on the bench as well. Use your triceps to pull back up onto your elbows then up the rest of the way. This extra movement is especially good for swimming and skiing training (double poling).

TRICEPS TRAINING NOTES

Locking out on triceps exercises activates the rear head more.

If your triceps tendons hurt, use movements where your arms stay at your sides. This position puts less stress on the tendons.

Always keep your wrists in a neutral position when doing triceps. This will prevent wrist injury. In other words, don't allow your wrist to bend back when training your triceps. This causes a pulling stress on the wrist flexors and can lead to inflammation and pain in the inner elbow area. This condition was previously called medial epicondylitis but is now called flexor tendinosis.

Most tricep/elbow pain is from the forearm flexors. This is aggravated by fast, whip-like movements to get momentum on the last few reps.

Exercises for the long head:

Lying, decline, overweight and body extensions, pullover and press, close-grip bench, weighted dips.

Lateral head:

Seated EZ bar extensions, overhead cable extensions, pushdowns, kneeling rope extensions (twist the handle out), one arm pushdowns, bent-over rope extensions, dumbbell extensions – parallel grip. A good superset for the lateral head is neutral grip body extensions and one arm tricep extensions rotating the arm to the outside at the bottom.

Medial head:

Close grip push-ups (fists), bench dips, parallel dips, one arm extensions.

The lateral and medial heads are worked in pressing movements while the long head is not as much. Don't forget to include exercises to work the long head.

Triceps full range double combo – overhead extensions on low pulley then pushdowns, leaning back and bringing arms behind body.

Supersetting one arm partial overhead dumbbell extension and preacher bench top partials are good because you can use the same dumbbell.

The greatest activation of the lateral head of the triceps is seen with the reverse narrow grip bench press. The pullover and press is good too.

FOREARM EXERCISES

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THE EXERCISES

1. WRIST CURLS

These can be done with a barbell, dumbbells or cables. Straddle a flat bench holding a barbell in your hands with an underhand grip, keeping your thumbs on the same side of the bar as your fingers. Place them a comfortable distance apart (3 to 4 inches is best). Hang your hands over the edge. Your elbows should be between your knees with your forearms on the bench and your knees around the bench. If this exercise gives you wrist pain, force your elbows in very close so your forearms almost touch (by the elbows). Your hands should still be apart, though. Start with your hands bent down at 90 degrees. Do not roll the bar down your fingers as this will prematurely fatigue the fingers and limit forearm flexor work. Do finger rolls separately at the end of your forearm workout. Curl up and back.

Variations:

1. Cross bench wrist curls - squat down beside a bench so that only your forearms across the width of the bench. Same execution. This version allow you to keep your body mass below the bar, which in turn allows you to use body momentum to move heavier weight. Simply drop down as you curl up the bar, transferring your downward momentum into the bar's upward momentum like a lever. For maximum forearm strength, use this technique and only do a partial range of motion (middle 3/5 or so - don't go all the way down or up) and use a lot more weight.
2. Upside-down cable wrist curls - use a high pulley with handle. Hold the handle out in front of you like you're at the halfway point of a pushdown. Use an overhand grip. Cock your wrist up and back. Curl down from the wrist without moving your upper arm or forearm. This version is easier on the wrists.
3. Behind the back wrist curls - grasp a bar behind your back with a shoulder-width, overhand grip. Keep your arms vertical and unmoving. Curl up at the wrists. You can use some momentum as the forearms fatigue by giving a little thrust up with your legs. These are easy on the wrists because at the bottom position the wrists are straight and the compression of the wrist joint is reduced.
4. Wrist curl partials – when doing these, just do the middle 3/5 of the range of motion. Try and keep your hips lower than your forearms in order to get leverage. Superset these with light full range wrist curls.
5. Concentration forearm curls – these are done sitting on a bench. Anchor your elbow in the upper/inner part of your thigh, just to the right of your crotch with your legs wide. The tip of your elbow should be just below your hip bone. Let your forearm dangle down at about 45 degrees with your hand pointing diagonally to your other knee. Bend over at the waist. Stabilize your forearm by gripping your right bicep with your left hand just in the crook of the elbow. Do a wrist curl from there. This will hit the belly of the muscle. When you fail with this technique, switch to the regular supported style. Alternate arms with no rest for three to five sets. Move around a little to find the groove of the exercise.
6. One arm barbell wrist curls – do these gripping the barbell with one hand in the middle. Balancing the bar in your hand will greatly increase the forearm work done by involving many more stabilizing muscles.

2. REVERSE WRIST CURLS

Sit on the end of a flat bench. Take an overhand grip about 6 inches apart. Let your hands hang over at 90 degrees. Your forearms should be resting on your thighs or knees. Curl up and back. This can also be done with a barbell, dumbbell or cable.

Variations:

1. Cross bench reverse wrist curls - same execution and set-up as the variation of regular wrist curls except with an overhand grip.
2. Upside-down cable reverse curls - same execution as above. Use an underhand grip and extend down.
3. Reverse wrist curls partials – use the middle 3/5 of the range of motion then superset with full range of motion.
4. Concentration reverse wrist curls – sit on the end of a bench with your legs wide. Place your right elbow on right thigh 4 to 5 inches above the knee. The palm of your right hand and underside of your right forearm should be towards your left knee. Lower your forearm until it is parallel to the floor. Your right arm should be bent at 90 degrees at the elbow like an upside-down L. Your forearm should be free. Do reverse wrist curls in that position. These can be supersets with concentration wrist curls as explained above for a full forearm set. To really fatigue the forearms after that, do some hammer and reverse curls. Your biceps strength will push the forearm to greater overload.

3. REVERSE ARM CURLS FOR THE FOREARMS

Do these after the other wrist curls to ensure the forearms fatigue before the brachialis muscles. Use an overhand, shoulder-width grip. Curl up like usual, gripping the bar hard. Flip the wrists back and contract your forearm muscles strongly as you reach the top to get a peak contraction.

4. ROTATIONS

These can be done with a dumbbell or with a special bar. For the dumbbell version, hold a dumbbell in your hand with a hammer grip, sitting on a bench with your forearm resting on your thigh. Your pinky should be pressed down against the bottom plate of the dumbbell and the hand should be off the edge of the knee. Use your other hand to cradle your working side's elbow to prevent slippage. Rotate the dumbbell down and over to the right then back and over to the left, etc. Switch arms. The bar designed for this simply has a weight plate only at one end. The execution is the same. Any adjustable dumbbell will accomplish the same thing. Just load a plate on one end only.

5. PINKY AND FOREFINGER LIFTS

Do these either with a dumbbell or the same bar as above (one loaded end). To do a pinky lift, hold the dumbbell at your side, palms in, with your thumb and forefinger pressed up against the plate. Lift the other end of the dumbbell up and back with pressure from your pinky. To do a forefinger lift, press your pinky back against the plate and lift up with pressure from your forefinger. If you are using a single-end-loaded bar, for the pinky lift, have the weight to the rear and for the forefinger lift, have the weight to the front.

Finger curls on a cable can also be used for strengthening fingers one at a time. Use either a single handle or hook your finger directly into the cable hook itself. Do a bicep curl from there. If you are using the handle, you can hook several fingers at a time. This will increase finger and forearm strength. The same idea can also be applied to pushdowns.

6. GRIPPING EXERCISES

To work your grip, simply hang onto heavy things for as long as possible, e.g. dumbbells, barbells, hanging from a bar, etc. Lifting heavy weights without straps, especially during back work, will help build grip strength. A method that powerlifters use to strengthen their grip is to do power rack holds. Set the pins so that they are just below arms length. Stand sideways beside a loaded barbell. Hold the barbell squarely in the middle with one hand, palm in. Hold for as long as possible. This will develop the stabilizing forearm muscles as well because you will have to balance to load while holding. Another method is called pinch gripping. Hold a plate with a pinch grip (thumb and forefinger only) for as long as possible. Work your way up the plate denominations. Try holding the plates up and out to the side as well.

One good grip exercise is the farmers walk. To do this simply walk around carrying two heavy dumbbells. The slight up and down bounce with each step will make it harder than simply holding two dumbbells.

Thick bar power holds are a good grip strengthener. Use a bar that is 2 to 2½ inches thick and an overhand grip. Set the pins to where your top range deadlift height is. Hold it with your hands slightly wider than your thighs so they don't jam against your thighs for assistance. Lift the bar and hold it for as long as possible till it drop out of your hands. If you don't have a thick bar, try holding the outer plate section of an Olympic bar for a static hold (one arm at a time – stand outside the rack or set one end of the barbell on the floor and hold from a seated position).

You can make your own thick handled dumbbells by wrapping tape around the handle then slide two inch steel pipe around it.

7. GRIP STRENGTHENERS

There is a wide variety of gripping devices, ranging from squeeze balls to hand springs. Each has their advantages and disadvantages.

Squeeze balls - convenient but one size fits all. Unfortunately, there is no way to increase or decrease resistance without getting another ball. You can even use a tennis ball if you want to go low budget.

Hand springs - convenient but have the same resistance problems as a ball: there is no variation without using another gripper.

Super gripper - this is probably the best grip device on the market. It is fairly convenient, can be adjusted for hand size depending on where you grip, and has moveable springs for varying the resistance. You can do light tension, high rep work, high tension, low-rep work, you can do two-hands in, one hand hold negatives, you can do static contraction holds (this exactly mimics the action you use when lifting weights which therefore makes it the most functional variation).

A good way to use this is by doing one static hold for each hand every night before you go to sleep. Try to increase the time of your hold every time. When it gets too easy, increase the tension and keep going. If you are also doing a lot of heavy barbell work, reduce the frequency to

every other day to prevent excessive forearm strain. If you find your hold time decreasing, take a day off it. You will come back stronger the next time.

Another trick you may wish to try in order to develop the weaker, pinky side is to hold the gripper upsidedown and try to put more pressure on the pinky side while easing off on the forefinger side.

Try using a sand bucket to work the extensors on the back of your hands and forearms. Fill a bucket up with sand. Work your fist into the bucket then open your hand against the resistance of the sand for reps.

8. FOREARM ROLLER

The forearm roller is a device easily made at home. All it is a bar with a rope nailed onto the middle. Tie a barbell plate onto the other end of the rope and wind it around the bar, raising the plate off the ground and up. This is a simple and effective grip strengthener that works all the way up to the top of the forearm. It can be rolled overhand or underhand to work different aspects of the forearm. The overhand will work more of the top of the forearm while the underhand will work more of the underside of the forearm.

9. BARBELL ROTATIONS

These are done on a barbell or freely spinning dumbbell handle. They are easiest to do on your knees to start. Put your hands on the bar as though doing push-ups on it. Rotate the bar away from you, letting the wrist bend forward. Rotate your wrist back using your bodyweight as resistance. Rotate back the other way then up again. Go back and forth. To increase the resistance, lift your knees off so you are in push-up position. The hardest is in handstand position (where you will be using most of your bodyweight as resistance).

FOREARM NOTES

Static holds in a neutral wrist position of the regular wrist curl and reverse curl can be used to rehabilitate wrist weakness in cases where it is painful to move them and they are weak. Hold in the static contraction until strength starts to give out then remove the weight.

Forearms, along with calves, should be trained with higher rep ranges as they have a higher percentage of type 1 endurance muscle fibers.

There are four basic aspects of grip strength:

1. Crushing
2. Pinch grip
3. Vise grip
4. Wrist strength

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