

The Best Exercises You've Never Heard Of - Sample Version



By Nick Nilsson http://www.thebestexercises.com

Please Note:

Any exercise program contains an element of risk. Be aware that the exercises in the book are not 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. By reading the information in this book you hereby agree to the <u>Terms and Conditions</u> of use.

Exercise #1

<u>Nilsson Curls</u>

Exercise #2

Bench End Dumbell Presses

Exercise #3

Full Range Pulldowns

Exercise #4

Rear Delt Rope Pullbacks

Exercise #5

Bodyweight Tricep Extensions

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Note: The information found in this program does not constitute medical advice and should not be taken as such. Consult your physician before taking part in any exercise program.





Nilsson Curls Forearm-Braced Chin-Ups



Why Is This Exercise So Effective?

The Nilsson Curl, which can technically be described as a forearm-braced chin-up movement, is a unique biceps exercise. The reason: **it uses your total bodyweight for resistance!**

Most biceps exercises, such as barbell and dumbell curls, require that you move the resistance around your body while your body remains anchored.

While this is certainly effective, it has been established that exercises which require you to move your body around a fixed object (such as occurs during a chin-up) fire many more muscle fibers. This results in a much more effective exercise for the muscle!

And if that wasn't enough to make this a killer exercise, have a look at this:

The majority of biceps exercises are isolation exercises. They work the biceps across only one joint (the elbow). This seriously limits the amount of weight you can use and hence limits your ultimate biceps development.

The Nilsson Curl is a compound exercise for the biceps that uses the lats only as secondary movers to assist your biceps during the exercise. Working the biceps at two joints rather than just one (such as in this chin-up movement), drastically increasing the amount of weight you can use on a biceps exercise.

Now throw almost all of the resistance of the chin-up (your entire bodyweight) onto the biceps and you'll know the meaning of the word "pump!"

Combine these three features (moving your body around a fixed object for more muscle activation, using a two-joint movement, and having your entire bodyweight as resistance) into a biceps exercise and you have yourself **one incredibly powerful movement!**



This exercise is best done using the safety rails of a power rack. There are other methods of setting up that you can use that are just as effective. I will detail these at the end of this section.

- The absolute easiest way is to use the two, bottom safety rails of the rack.
- They need to be the type that you can slide completely out of the rack for this method to work, as you'll be placing them on the same side of the rack uprights.
- Place one of the rails in the highest set of holes in the rack.
- Set the other rail in the set of holes approximately one foot down from that top one in the same side uprights.
- Your setup will look like two rungs in a ladder.



Now you're all set!



Grip the top bar and brace your forearm against the bottom bar (you may want to use a pad or a towel wrapped around the bottom bar for your forearms).

- Keeping your forearms pressed against the bottom bar throughout the entire exercise, curl yourself up.
- This is the most important point to remember about this exercise, as bracing your forearms is what sends all the tension to your biceps. It does this by reducing the involvement of the lats.
- Also, try to keep your shoulders back in a neutral position. Don't allow them to hunch forward during the exercise. This keeps them in a more stable position.
- Squeeze hard at the top. This instruction is kind of unnecessary to be honest. You won't really have a choice at that point - the tension on your biceps is just incredible!

How to incorporate this exercise into your workouts:

This exercise should be the first biceps exercise you do in your workout. It requires a lot of strength and therefore is best done with fresh biceps.



1. Pulling Straight Up

For best results, pull yourself up in an arc. This will most strongly affect the biceps. Pulling straight up will still work, just not

2. Using Momentum

Always do this exercise deliberately and under control to maintain maximum tension on the biceps. Moving quickly will only decrease the effectiveness of the exercise.

It is especially important not to use momentum as you come to the bottom of the exercise as your elbows are braced against a rail. You could injure your elbows if you slam down into the bottom of the rep.

3. Hunching the Shoulders Forward

Try to keep your shoulders back and in a neutral position. Do not allow them to hunch forward. This will help to maintain a more stable position for the shoulder joint.



1. Using Barbells To Set Up

If you don't have access to a rack that uses the removable bottom safety rails you can also use two barbells inside the rack.

- Start by setting the racking hooks in the highest holes.
- Set an Olympic bar in those racks.
- Load some weight onto that bar to keep it from shifting during the exercise (I use a couple of 45 pound plates on either side but you may choose to use more or less weight).
- Now set the safety rails in the holes about one foot below the top bar that you've already set up.
- Set another Olympic bar across there and you're done.

Note: You will be doing this exercise from inside the rack so that your forearms are pushing the bottom bar against the rear uprights. If you work from the other side, your forearms will have nothing to push the bottom bar against and it may roll or slide away.

2. Weighted Nilsson Curls

This exercise can also be done weighted with a dumbell between your feet or with weight hanging from your waist using a hip belt. The execution of the exercise is exactly the same.

If you wish to do negatives with a dumbell for extra weight, follow these steps:

- Set the dumbell on a bench in front of you.
- Step up on the bench and get into the top position,
- · Grasp the dumbell between your feet then move it off the bench
- Lower yourself down.

As a bonus, using a dumbell between your feet also gives you some really good isometric ab work.

3. Using A Reverse Grip

Doing the Nilsson Curl with a reverse grip will affect the brachialis muscle strongly. Be aware that your elbows will have a tendency to slide out to the sides as you pull yourself up, so you should consciously force them in.



I hope you enjoy trying out this exercise the next time you go for a workout! Believe me, you will be astonished at how your biceps feel at the end of your first set. I was almost in shock at how well it worked the first time I tried it (I actually couldn't wipe the grin off my face for about 10 minutes).

And, after trying it, you think that this exercise is good, **imagine the results you'll get with 52 other exercise like it** for your entire body!

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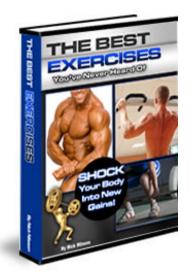
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Bench End Dumbell Presses



Why Is This Exercise So Effective?

The flat dumbell bench press is an excellent exercise building up the muscles of the chest. But did you know that the standard, laying-down-flat body position on the bench is not the most effective for maximal muscle stimulation?

By changing how and where you set yourself on the bench, you can **dramatically increase the muscle fiber stimulation** you get from the flat dumbell bench press.

I've also found, with the better leverage I can get on the chest in this position, that I am actually **stronger and can get more reps and use more weight.**

At the same time, this position reduces the involvement of the anterior (front) deltoids in the pressing movement while increasing the involvement of the upper pec fibers.

The key to this exercise lies in opening up your rib cage. In the standard flat position, your chest is not expanded.

Your pectoral muscle can fire most effectively when your shoulders are back, your lower back is arched and your chest is puffed out. While this can be done somewhat in the regular bench position, it does not feel natural and can actually put stress on the lower back.

This exercise is done by placing yourself off the end of the flat bench, accomplishing the optimal position for the pectoral muscles to fire.



- The basic position of the exercise is as follows: your upper back (from just below the shoulder blades on up) will be resting on the end of the bench with your upper torso essentially flat. Your hips will be down below the level of the bench, and your lower back will be arched so that your lower abdomen is angled down. Your knees should be very bent.
- You will look as though you are trying to wrap your back around the end of the bench. Practice this position once without any weight to get a feel for it.
- To get into position with weights, sit on the very end of the bench with the dumbells on your upper thighs.
- Quickly move your butt forward off the bench, dropping into a squat, and allow your upper back to rest against the lead edge of the bench.
- Thrust your hips up and throw your upper body back onto the bench, kicking the dumbells into the bottom position of a dumbell bench press. Press up to the top position.



- If you are not completely in position with your entire lower back off the bench (the bottom of your rib cage should be in line with the end of the bench), weasel yourself down somewhat. Note: "Weasel" is the technical term for shifting back and forth as you slide yourself down the bench a little.
- Do the press from there and really try to expand the chest in the stretch position.
- When the exercise gets hard, fight the urge to lift your hips up. Consciously force them down. This is good practice for keeping your butt down on the regular flat bench press.

How to incorporate this exercise into your workouts:

You can place this exercise anywhere in your chest workouts. It doesn't require tremendous skill, balance or stability to execute properly.



1. Too much of your back is on the bench

The end of the bench should be hitting you just below the shoulder blades. If you have much more of your back on the bench, you will lose the opening up of the rib cage, which is the major benefit of this position.

2. Thrusting your hips up and down during the exercise

Allowing your hips to come up also negates the benefits of the opening up of the rib cage. You will flatten your torso as though you are doing a regular flat bench. Keep your hips down!

3. Raising your head off the bench

Be sure to keep your head on the bench during the exercise. Raising it up and off can lead to neck strain.



1. Getting the weights into position

A good way to get heavy dumbells up into position is to set them on your knees at the start of the exercise. After you drop into your initial squat, kick one knee up hard, throwing the dumbell up into position, then kick the other dumbell up and into position. Be sure to practice this movement with light weight before attempting with heavy dumbells.

2. Taking the shoulders out of it

At the start of the rep when you are holding the dumbells at arms-length above you, try to wriggle your shoulders together underneath you. This will reduce anterior deltoid involvement in the exercise by forcing your shoulders back. Imagine you are trying to touch your shoulder blades together behind your back.

3. Expand your rib cage

At the bottom of every rep, take in a huge breath and try to expand your rib cage as much as possible to maximize the stretch on the pecs. Your body position on the end of the bench will allow you to get a greater stretch than is possible in the regular position.



Be sure to try this exercise out on your next chest day. You'll be amazed at how effective it is for maximizing the tension on your chest. So if you want pecs that "pop", imagine what this and all the other chest exercises in this book will do for you!

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Full Range Pulldowns



Why Is This Exercise So Effective?

Think of how your back feels after doing a good set of pulldowns. Nice and pumped up, right? Now think of how your back feels after doing a set of cable rows. Thick and wide, perhaps? Now imagine the incredible feeling you'll get by combining those two exercises into one power-packed movement!

That is exactly what the Full Range Pulldown accomplishes. You get the **benefits of the pulldown AND the benefits of the cable row PLUS** the synergistic benefits of combining the two exercises into one!

Typical weight training exercises very rarely work the muscles through a full anatomical range of motion, but I'll show you how you can do it for your back. For example, the typical pulldown has to stop when the bar hits your chest. But your lats haven't achieved their full potential contraction by that point.

How do we overcome this? By utilizing a two-part movement. In essence, you will start with a pulldown and finish with a cable row. Voila! The Full Range Pulldown!

How To Do It

- These can be done with any of the grips (reverse, pronated, neutral, wide).
- To execute, do a pulldown to the bottom position.
- Hold the weight at that point in space and lean your upper body back and down until it is horizontal.
- Continue the pulldown movement as a rowing movement and squeeze hard at the bottom of the rep.
- The key with this movement is to maintain the tension in the lats as you lean back and to hold the bar motionless in space as you do the transition from pulldown to row.

- Come back up in one smooth motion.
- At the top you can push yourself forward to get a bit of a stretch on the back before you start your next rep. This gives your back constant tension throughout its entire range of motion.
- Use a lighter weight (I recommend using only 50% or more to start with) than you would ordinarily use for pulldowns and focus on continuous tension.







How to incorporate this exercise into your workouts:

This is a good finishing movement for the back.

- It is not done with heavy weights but provides an extremely strong contraction in the back.
- This is not to say you can't do it first, of course.
- In fact, it is a good way to pre-exhaust your back without burning out your grip for other heavy back exercises.



1. Not keeping tension on back when switching from pulldown to row

One of the keys to the success of this exercise is maintaining tension in the lats as you transfer from the pulldown movement to the row. Always concentrate on keeping that tension on.

2. Using momentum

Never use momentum with this exercise. The whole point of the exercise is to put tension on the lats through their entire range of motion. Using momentum defeats the purpose.

3. Not arching the lower back

Keeping the lower back arched is essential to activating the lats. The lats are the muscles we're trying to focus on with this exercise so anything we can do to maximally activate them is important.



1. Hitting different areas of the back

- To involve the lower back, pull the weight down (any grip) to the bottom of the pulldown movement, lock your arms at that bottom point then do a lower-back pulldown by leaning back down until you are horizontal without bending the arms.
- Using a pronated grip (palms forward) will hit the lower lats hard. Pull to the bottom of the rib cage and try to push the bar forward, away from your face as you finish the rowing portion of the movement.
- When using a wide grip, you can do the rowing part to the upper chest to hit the upper back or pull to the bottom of the rib cage to hit the lower outer lats (try to push your elbows forward, away from your head).

2. One arm

These can also be done one arm at a time. This has the benefits of greater range of motion and the ability to rotate your shoulder during the movement.

3. Varying angles

During the movement, try varying the angles of the pull. Change the point where you leave the bar hanging in space, the point where you row the bar down to on your body, how far you lean back, etc. Using a great deal of variation in this way will work more of the muscles of the back.

4. Stretch forward at the top

To get a little extra stretch on the lats at the top of the movement, use your feet to push your torso forward under the bar. This will give you a little pre-stretch before starting the movement again.



This exercise is sure to fire up your next back workout. You'll be blown away by how effective the Full Range Pulldown is for working the entire range of motion of the lats.

So if you're looking for a back exercises that will **add a dimension of tension that you've never experience before**, imagine what this and all the other back exercises in this book will do for your physique!

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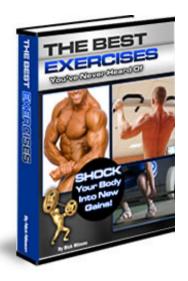
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Standing Rope Pullbacks



Why Is This Exercise So Effective?

The rear delts (technically known as the posterior deltoids) can be difficult muscles to develop. They are hard to isolate and are normally not worked with heavy weights.

This exercise changes that.

Not only does it **target the rear delts like a laser**, it allows you to use heavy weights and momentum in a way that actually makes the exercise **MORE** effective!

The keys to this exercise lay in your arm position and the angle of pull of the resistance. These two things combined properly give you an exercise that flies in the face of traditional shoulder training wisdom by **allowing and even encouraging you to use momentum.**



- Stand facing a high pulley. Use a double handle or rope attachment. Grasp the rope so that your thumbs and forefingers are on the bottom by stoppers or knots. You can also use a towel looped through the hook if you don't have a rope attachment.
- You will probably need to brace your foot up against either the seat if you're using the lat pulldown machine or the bottom of the weight stack if using the plain pulley (that is when you start using relatively heavy weights only).
- Start with your arms straight out in front of you, thumbs towards you.





- Pull back with your rear delts by drawing your elbows as far back as you can while externally rotating your shoulders so that you form "L" shapes (with a 90-degree bend in your elbows) at the peak of the movement.
- You should attempt to make your forearms vertical at the top of the movement. When you start using heavier weight, you won't be able to do this but by attempting to do it, you'll increase rear delt activation.
- You will almost look like you're doing a double biceps pose.
- It is imperative you keep your elbows as high as possible or you will turn the exercise into a biceps exercise.

How to incorporate this exercise into your workouts:

The Standing Rope Pullback can be done anywhere in your workout.

- Normally, I prefer to start with heavier pressing movements in my workouts.
- Since this is an isolation exercise, I would suggest doing it later on in a workout.



1. Keeping your arms horizontal

This will turn the movement into an upright-row type movement, which is undesirable. As you come to the top of the movement, your forearms should be vertical.



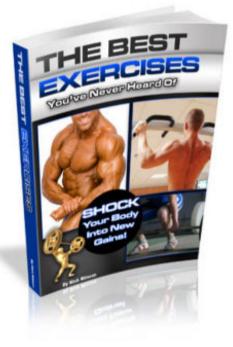
1. Pull the rope apart

To fully activate the rear delts, try to pull the two ends of the rope as far apart as possible as though trying to rip it in two (the longer the rope you are able to get a hold of the better - a two foot rope is perfect). Hunch your shoulders forward at the start then force them back as you pull back.

2. Going fast

Usually rear delt exercises require strict attention to form in order to isolate the muscles. This one doesn't.

- As long as you keep your elbows high and try to pull the rope apart, you can get away with fast, pumping reps.
- Pulling the rope apart activates the rear delts automatically.
- Using fast, pumping, high reps (a technique that normally wouldn't work with rear delts but does in this exercise) is great for developing blood flow to the normally hard-to-reach rear delts, and can lead to much greater rear delt development than is possible with traditional rear-delt exercises.



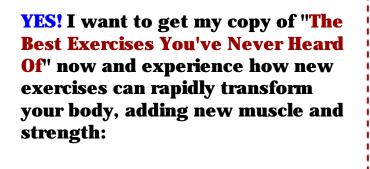
Try this exercise out the next time you work your shoulders. Not only are you able to work your rear delts strongly without ever bending over, you can work them with heavy weight (I've used the equivalent to my entire bodyweight on the weight stack for this one - try to find that in any other rear delt exercise!) and fast reps.

This exercise is only the tip of the iceberg of the shoulder exercises that are in this book. If you thought this one was good, picture what the rest of them will do for you!

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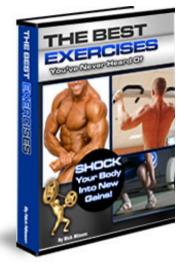
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Bodyweight Tricep Extensions



Why Is This Exercise So Effective?

The position you can place the most stretch on your triceps is when your upper arm is directly overhead. By loading the triceps in that position, you can get an incredibly effective and powerful stretch on the muscle.

This exercise not only places the triceps under **maximum tension in the maximum stretch position**, it does so using a bodyweight exercise. Bodyweight exercises are known for achieving a **greater level of muscle fiber activation** than exercises where you are moving a weight instead.

Combine these two factors and add in the fact that you can do this exercise just about anywhere, and you get an extraordinary movement that has enormous strength and muscle-building potential.

How To Do It

- Set up the Smith machine bar about 1 to 2 feet off the ground or use the Universal bench handles.
- Essentially, any horizontal bar that is 1 to 2 feet off the ground will do. It should have clearance underneath it.
- Stand in front of the bar. Place your hands about 6 inches apart with a thumbless (false) grip.
- Step back a little.
- Lower your body forward so that your head goes under the bar.



- Keep your elbows tucked in close together 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 soreness in the joint.
- This exercise will build up the long head of the triceps which runs along the undersides of the arm.



How to incorporate this exercise into your workouts:

This exercise should be placed close to the beginning of your triceps workout.

- It not only requires a great deal of strength to perform, it is a stretch position movement.
- Stretch position movements are more effective when placed near the start of a bodypart workout as they help to activate more muscle fibers.



1. Dropping down too fast

This can lead to overstretching of the elbow ligaments. Go slowly into the stretch position. Going down too fast also makes it a lot harder to come back up.

2. Letting the elbows flare out

Keep them tucked in by externally rotating the shoulders before starting the exercise.

- Hold your arms out in front of you with your palms down.
- Now turn your palms up.
- Notice what occurred at your shoulders.
- This is external (to the outside) rotation.
- Now place your hands on the raised surface, palms down.
- Keeping your palms down and on the surface, turn at the shoulders as though trying to turn your palms up.
- The inside bends of your elbows will be facing up.
- This will keep your elbows tucked in.



3. Not keeping the body stiff

To do this exercise properly without hurting your back you must keep your abs and lower back very tight and your whole body stiff. Failing to do so will put a lot of stress on the lower back.

4. Bouncing out of the bottom

It is extremely important not to bounce out of the bottom in this exercise as you can overstretch the tendons in your elbows. Change direction deliberately, not with a rebound.





1. Making it easier

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. Making it harder

To make it harder, come up on your toes as you press up.

- As well, you can move your feet back or place them up on a bench to increase the angle.
- By elevating your feet, you force your triceps to work against more of your bodyweight.

3. Keep your elbows in

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 (see <u>Common Error #2</u>).

4. Stretch forward

As you get stronger, stretch forward as far as you can at the bottom of the movement.

5. What else you can do it on

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 and execute as above.

6. Using a power rack

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 braced against the rack. You will now be pushing it into the frame as you go down.

7. One arm at a time

These can be done with one arm at a time 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 do these on your knees.
- The one-arm version works well for negatives.
- Go down on one arm, then come up with both, or put your other 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.
- Another way to moderate resistance is to set one knee on the ground, keeping the other one straight and back. This keeps more tension on the triceps than kneeling with both knees.

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, e.g. a wall.
- It doesn't even necessarily have to be a chair. Anything with vertical bars will work.

9. Raise your shoulder girdle

Raise your shoulder girdle up at the beginning of the rep (like you are shrugging your shoulders) 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.

10. Increasing the resistance even more

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 to do this is to hook your feet over the pad of a preacher bench. Some preacher bench pads are adjustable in height.

The hardest position is to do a close-grip handstand push-up type extension. This puts nearly all of your bodyweight on your triceps.

11. Drop setting

This exercise can be done as a drop set by cycling through 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.

Unstable Bar Bodyweight Tricep Extensions

This is a special variation of the bodyweight extension that is reserved for advanced trainers only. Not only does it require you move your bodyweight (which is more effective for activating muscle fibers) but what you are pushing against is moving around freely as you are doing the exercise!

This combination of body movement, extreme instability and maximum stretch is guaranteed to make your triceps work in a way they've never worked before.

Attempt this exercise only after you've become experienced with the solid, stable-bar version of the exercise.



You will be using a high pulley with a cambered bar attachment. Take the pin completely out of the stack - you won't be needing it for this.

- Push the bar down as far as it will go and hold it there. The weight stack should hit the top of the pulley and jam there. Ideally, the bar should be several feet off the ground when the bar stops. This is what you'll be pushing from instead of the solid bar.
- When you first start doing this exercise, practice doing it from a kneeling position before moving to doing it with your body completely suspended. This will give you an idea of how the instability will affect your exercise technique.
- You will notice that the cable will angle slightly back towards the stack as you stretch forward into the bottom of the exercise. This enables you to have something to push back against.
- When you do this exercise in a standing position, place your feet closer than you would for the solid-bar version. You will find out why, the moment you start the exercise. It is a lot harder!
- Be sure to clench your abs as tight as you can during the movement as your abs will be working extremely hard to stabilize your body. This is a great bonus!
- You will really notice your abs working when you become advanced enough to come up on your toes during the exercise.





This exercise may seem easy at first but after only a few reps, with all the shaking and adjusting, you will find out just how effective unstable exercises can be.

Here are some pictures of the kneeling body position and the full-stretch body position:





How to incorporate this exercise into your workouts:

This exercise should definitely be placed first in a triceps routine.

- It requires great strength and stabilization.
- It can also be incorporated whenever you feel like you need to punish yourself!



This tricep exercise is sure to take your arm development to the next level. Done properly, it can help you to fully develop the large, long head of the tricep which runs down the bottom of your arm.

This exercise is only the tip of the iceberg of the shoulder exercises that are in this book. If you thought this one was good, picture what the rest of them will do for you!

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