

Triceps



MAKE THE PERFECTLY-PROPORTIONED ARM

When most people picture a well-developed arm, they tend to think of an enormous, pumped-up bicep muscle. The truth is that the triceps are actually the larger and more complex muscle group. The perfectly-proportioned arm consists of two-thirds triceps and one-third biceps. So, if you want your arms to look good from any angle, keep in mind that it's the triceps that give the arms most of their size.

To achieve this ideal size and proportion yourself, you'll need to shock the muscles with focused, high-intensity exercise, using variety and the maximum amount of weight possible. Keep in mind, however, that doing so doesn't mean you should load on an unreasonable amount of weight and sacrifice form and technique.

As with many other exercises, using improper form when training the triceps

will shift the focus of the exercise onto a different muscle group.

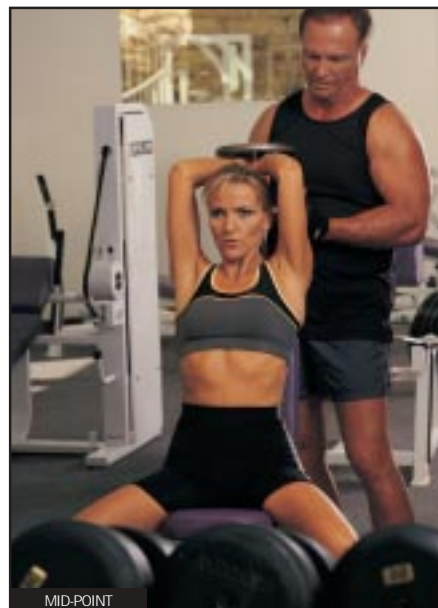
In many triceps exercises, for example, being unaware of the direction of your elbows will result in the transfer of the work onto your shoulders. At this point, your triceps are merely along for the ride. So stay focused!

1 seated triceps presses

If you want to target the three separate heads of the triceps, the seated press is for you.

Starting Position: Sit on a bench with a straight back, feet flat on the floor, and back firmly against the bench. Grasp one end of a dumbbell with both hands (palms up) and raise it above your head, locking the elbows.

The Exercise: With your elbows held in place and squared, slowly lower the dumbbell behind your head until you feel a stretch in your triceps. Pause briefly, then press the weight back up, following a slight arc until the elbows lock and the weight is once again above your head.



TIP DON'T LET ...

your elbows creep out to the sides. Keep them close to your head and pointed straight up throughout the exercise. This will restrict the focus to the triceps and not involve the shoulders.

TIP THIS EXERCISE...

can be done seated or standing. You can also train one arm at a time.

Triceps

2 lying triceps presses

This is an advanced exercise that really allows you to overload the triceps muscles for a great burn. You may wish to use a spotter.

Starting Position: Sit on a flat bench holding an EZ curl bar with an overhand grip. Lie back so that the top of your head is even with the end of the bench. At the same time, extend your arms over your head so that the bar is directly over your eyes. Keep your elbows in tight and your upper arms stationary throughout the exercise.

The Exercise: Holding your upper arms in a fixed position (this is key), slowly lower the bar until it almost touches your forehead. Pause briefly, then press the bar back up in a slow, sweeping, arc-like motion. At the finish, lock your elbows completely.



TIP DON'T LET ...
the elbows flare out. Keep them in and pointed straight up.



“Discipline weighs ounces,
but regret weighs tons!”

3 triceps kickbacks

The triceps kickback will develop the upper area of the triceps. High intensity is critical, but just as important is control and a smooth technique.



Starting Position: Stand to the right of a flat bench. Bend your left knee and rest it on the bench, and place your left hand ahead of you on the bench for balance. Your back should be as flat as possible. Pick up a dumbbell in your right hand. Bend your arm and raise your elbow up to shoulder height. Make sure the elbow stays close to the side of your body. Let the dumbbell hang.

The Exercise: Press the weight back until your forearm is parallel to the floor. Pause briefly, then slowly return the weight to the starting position. Finish one complete set, then repeat on the other side.

TIP LOOK STRAIGHT...

ahead while you perform the exercise. This will help you keep your back flat.



TIP MAKE SURE...

only your forearm moves and not the upper arm or elbow.

Triceps

4 triceps pushdowns

If you use proper technique, this exercise will work the triceps throughout the entire range of motion.



Starting Position: Using a high-cable pulley, grasp a short straight bar with an overhand grip. Your hands should be about 10 inches apart. Position your forearms so they are parallel to the floor. Keep your feet shoulder-width apart and bend your knees slightly. Keep your elbows locked in close to your body and your wrists straight.

The Exercise: Keeping your whole body steady, push the bar down as far as possible toward your legs, locking your arms and feeling the triceps fully contract. Keep the upper arms close to the body and briefly hold the lockout at the bottom. Release and let the bar come slowly back up to the starting position.

TIP YOUR ELBOWS...
should not move during this exercise; keep them tight against your sides from start to finish.

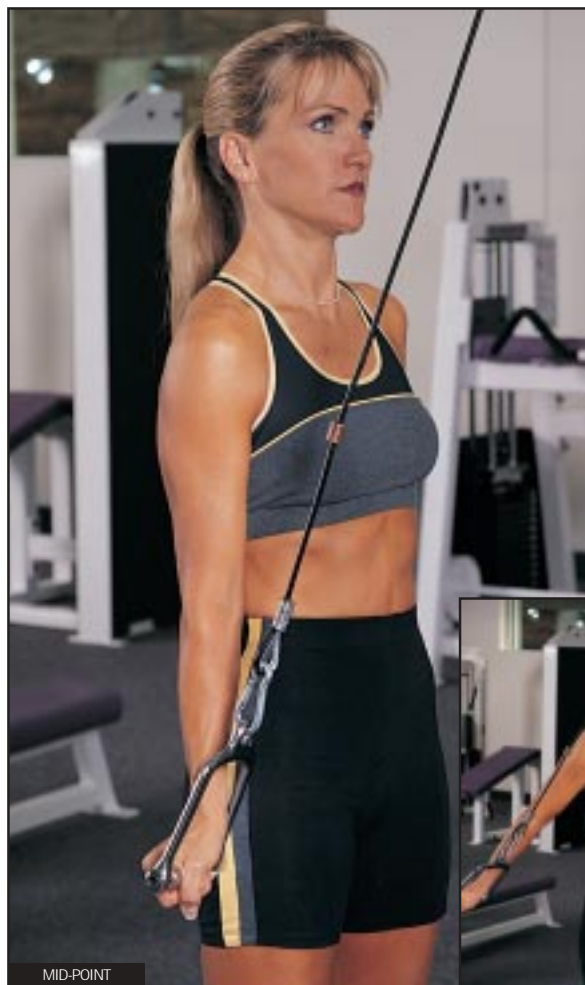
“An obstacle is something you see only when you take your eyes off the goal!”

5 cable extensions

This exercise is great for fine-tuning and polishing off a complete triceps workout.



START/FINISH



MID-POINT

Starting Position: With your right hand, grasp a stirrup handle attached to the high-cable pulley using an underhand grip. You should be standing directly in front of the weight stack. Pull the handle down so that your upper arm and elbow are locked in to the side of your body and your upper arm and forearm form a right angle.

The Exercise: Feeling the contraction in your triceps, pull the stirrup handle down to your side until your arm is straight. Pause briefly, then slowly return the handle to the starting position. Finish a complete set, then switch to the other side.



TIP DON'T MOVE...

your arm back behind you as you pull the handle down. This takes the focus off your triceps. Keep your elbow tight against the side of your body.

Triceps

6 bench dips

A classic triceps exercise, this one allows you to use your own body weight for resistance. This is another good exercise for finishing off your workout.



Starting Position: Place two flat benches parallel to each other, about three to four feet apart. Sit on one bench facing the other, with your hands grasping the side of the bench. Using your hands to support your weight, lift your feet to the top of the other bench so that the rest of your body is suspended between the two benches. Cross one foot over the other.

The Exercise: Slowly lower your body toward the floor by bending your elbows until your upper arms and forearms form a right angle. Do not go below a 90-degree angle, as this can stress your shoulders. Pause briefly at the bottom, then slowly raise your body back to the start position by straightening your arms.



TIP IF YOU CAN ONLY DO A FEW REPS...

with your feet up on a bench, try performing the exercise with your feet placed on the floor in front of you, with your knees bent. You can gradually build up to placing your feet on a bench.