

the triceps concept

report: Cathy Brown

are your arms simply refusing to grow or shape? A lot of us think of arms and think biceps and therefore neglect the triceps. This is the first of a series of articles to highlight exercises, both old and new, that target those forgotten muscles

There are so many exercises for the triceps and you don't have to be in the gym to do all of them. Try these with your clients:

DIPS – All you need is a sturdy surface although the advanced exerciser may also want to balance a weight on the knees. With your back to the surface rest your hands upon it. Bend at the elbow and lower yourself down smoothly to a 90° arm angle. There are special dip machines in the gym that will allow you to put weight on the machine to aid you during the lift but the more advanced user can lose the weight and instead fasten a belt around the waist with extra weight attached. Crossing the legs during the exercise will aid stability. Try and keep your back straight and head up during the exercise.

PRESS UPS – For the first set place your hands shoulder-width apart. It is very important to keep your elbows tucked into your sides to get a maximum push, for the second set place your hands together so that your fingers are touching and bring your chest to your hands. For the less advanced do the press ups off the knees but make sure the bum is not waving in the air and the chest and stomach move towards the floor together (i.e. the chest does not dip before the stomach).

USING A DYNO BAND – Bring one arm behind the back and the other above the head with the dymo band ends wrapped around the wrists. Make sure your upper arm points directly to the sky, don't move this throughout the exercise. Whilst keeping the arm behind the back static, move the lower part of the upper arm from a bent to an extended position – making sure the resistance is kept in the band – the more advanced user can wrap the band around the wrists more to give more resistance.


OVERHEAD TRICEP EXTENSION – Using the same movement as above – place a dumbbell in your hand keeping your upper arm straight and static – you can use your other arm to make sure that no movement occurs – lower the dumbbell behind your head as far as is comfortable and then extend your arm straight – making sure you don't lock your arm out.

KICKBACKS – Kneel comfortably on a bench with the same leg that you hold the weight with. Now with your back straight and keeping your body parallel with the bench, keep your head looking straight ahead and start with the weight at

a 90° angle. Extend the weight, keeping your elbow completely stationary. Make sure there is no movement from the upper arm throughout the exercise. If you have no bench place your feet in a sturdy stance and bend at the hips so your body is parallel to the floor and use the same movement. Don't lock out your elbow.

TRICEPS PUSH DOWN – These are done on a cable machine – where you will find a number of different handle options: Rope, V bar, straight bar and EZ bars are all used in the triceps push down but again using varying degrees of the triceps. This gives you so many more options to change your exercise when your body gets used to it.

SKULL CRUSHER (or French press) – Lying down on a bench with a weighted bar, elbows pointed towards the sky – keeping your upper arms static – lower the bar towards your head.

It is important that you do at least one exercise using one arm only triceps exercises as when you are using push down or bar exercises with both arms – your strong arm will slightly compensate for the weaker arm – using single arm exercises promotes strength in each arm individually and gets your arms balanced. As you can see, an effective triceps workout offers a whole range of options relative to movement, grip and variation. As your clients become more advanced in their training, be sure to learn and include many of these movements and variations. My policy is not to shun any exercise – as variety will always work best. We are constantly working never to reach a plateau, both physically and mentally, and by varying your exercises as well as changing your reps and sets from time to time is the best way to keep in the game. 

Cathy Brown has boxed professionally for the past six years and is the current



European Flyweight Boxing Champion. Cathy has a diploma in Sports Therapy, a YMCA Gym Instructor qualification and is the winner of a range of Sports Injury awards. She also teaches kickboxing to women, young girls with special needs and mixed-sex boxing classes. She has a number of celebrity clients including Sara Cox and Alexander McQueen. Cathy has a World Title fight scheduled for late 2004.