

It's very rare to have a svelte body and flabby arms.

Question: I would like a routine that will get my triceps and biceps nice and firm. I really would like to show off my arms this summer, but the way I look now I will be wearing long-sleeve garments. Please help!!

Pam

Answer: First I have to ask, is the rest of you nice and firm? Because if it isn't, your arms won't be, no matter what routine I give you. I wish people would be a little more specific; are your arms flabby or really skinny and you're ashamed to show rubber bands on two twigs? I have to tell you, it's very rare to have a svelte body and flabby arms. This is because your arms are auxiliary muscles and are usually worked when you perform compound movements, such as a Bench Press or Horizontal Row. So let's say, and I'm guessing here, your arms are flabby. I hope I guessed right because you're getting the flabby arms workout. I like people to use their own bodyweight so here's two all-around good upper body exercises that will get your arms slim and trim for the summer.

First: Negative Pushups: Start yourself off in an up Push up position (not the wussy modified ones on your knees either), now lower yourself on a six count, 1...2...3...4...5...6, then bend your knees and raise yourself back to the up position and straighten your legs, and repeat the repetition again for 20 repetitions. Your triceps should burn and when you're finished whining you can do Negative Pull-ups: You need a pull-up

bar or a broomstick and two chairs for this one. If you have a pull-up bar, stand on a chair and hold on to the bar with your palms facing you, hopefully your chin is above the bar (if it isn't get a bigger chair). Now, bend your knees so that your feet aren't touching the chair and lower yourself on a six count. Place your feet back on the chair and repeat until your arms burn or until twenty, whichever comes first.

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How can I regain inches I've lost?

Question: I recently went through a divorce and lost some weight, I have since put the weight back on but lost 2 inches in my hips. I have gone from a size 2-3 to a 1. How can I regain the inches and gain weight? I am tired of shopping in the juniors department; at my age, most clothes are not career appropriate.

Tonia

Answer: O.K., maybe I'm crazy. Well, no, we have established that already. Umm... O.K. let's start that all over. Maybe I'm not getting all the information here but what I am getting is a little confused. You lost weight because of your divorce but now you want to gain it back in your hips. I'm sorry but almost every question I get has to do with taking inches off the hips. I'm going out on a limb here so bear with me. Let's not put inches on your hips, let's put good solid muscle on your butt and your thighs because we want you back on the market looking hot! The exercise that I recommend the most is... of course "The Lunge" (25 reps the same leg), but I want you to also find about a six-floor staircase and do the stairs two at a time for 2 sets. If you go into the askROCCO archives you should find a description of Mountain Climbers. Mountain Climbers do nothing but build your butt. So do at least 2 sets for 60 seconds and you'll be out of the juniors department before long.

It's like taking a hammer to your legs for 39 miles!

Question: Two years ago I did a Breast Cancer Charity walk where I walked 26 miles one day, then 13 the next. I did well overall with the exception of my ankles. I couldn't wear anything but flip-flops for almost a week due to the swelling. I'm doing the same walk in June 2006. Any suggestions for conditioning them?

Theresa

Answer: Wow! That's some walking there, kid. The damage you did to your ankles in this charity walk was like taking a hammer to your ankles for 39 miles. The weight from your body just kept crashing down on your ankles with each step. So the first thing I would do is go to a running shoe/sneaker store (a store that has actual runners selling their shoes) and talk to someone about serious shock-absorbing walking shoes/sneakers. You haven't told me how much you weigh, but I would consider losing a bit if you are overweight before doing this walk again. I know this is an ankle question but the reality of this situation is that you need to work out not just your ankles but the whole leg. Your hips, thighs, hamstrings and calves take in all the stress of walking. If there is a weak link such as the muscles of the thigh being weak it may place undue stress on the ankle and sometimes the lower back. I would recommend doing high rep sets of lunges on the same leg somewhere in the vicinity of 45 reps for 2 sets and then do at least 2 sets of 35 reps of calf raises on a step, making sure

you stretch the calf all the way down and raise all the way up.
Don't be a wuss: Push through the burn, because it will burn,
baby!

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Sporting a classic “Bird Chest”

Question: I’m 18, a runner, and currently sporting the classic “bird” chest. What exercises would you recommend to strengthen this area? Also, since I’m so skinny, will I fill out naturally over my college years?

Phil

Answer: I’m really not sure if the “Bird Chest” is classic but I do feel for you. This is a great question, though, because most people would think that training the chest would be the most important thing to do. Not so. Training your back and building muscle in that region will help create a wider look for you and will make your chest actually “look” bigger. While you are training your back you should shy away from doing any bench presses (with a straight bar) and do much of your work with dumbbells. Your back workout should consist of 2 sets until failure of pull-ups. If pull-ups are too hard at this point, wide grip lat pull-downs will suffice (2 sets 20 reps) some sort of horizontal row (either cable or machine) 2 sets 20 reps. For your chest, 2 sets 20 reps dumbbell press (keeping the weight over your nose), and dumbbell flyes for 2 sets of 15. To answer your second question: I’m not sure how your genetic makeup is, but usually before you hit twenty-five you will have filled out. Take a look at your father and see if he still has a “bird chest”; if he does then you’ll probably have one too. Just keep training and at least you’ll have a stronger better-looking “Bird Chest” than you did before.

And the questions they keepa comin’.

Question: Ok Rockhead. Since I’m so stupid, why don’t you enlighten me and my “let me be a wussy” workout regime, per your “A little note for stupid people” column. This is what I want, to get big. Not big, but BIG. Currently my max on squats/dead lifts/bench is at 350/315/275. I want my bench up. I want to be able to do 315 for 5 or 6 reps easily. This is my current 4-day workout routing with reps listed for each set, excluding warm-ups. Legs: Squats 10/8/6/4, Leg press 15/12/10/10, Leg ext 4x15, Leg curl 4x15, Calves 4x15 Shoulders: Clean and press 10/8/6/4, Seated military 10/8/6/4, seated db military 10/8/6/4, rear delt flyes 4x10, shrugs 3x10 Chest: Incline 10/8/6/4, Flat 10/8/6/4, Flyes 10/8/6/4, Dips 3x15, pullovers 3x15 Back: Deads 10/8/6/4, 50 pull-ups, T-bar row 10/8/6/4, close grip row 10/8/6/4 Bi’s (with chest): barbell curl 10/8/6/4, seated incline dumbbell curl 10/8/6/4 Tri’s (with back or legs): close grip bench 12/10/8/6, skulls 10/8/6/4, 1 arm overhead ext 3x10 I’ll switch the manner in which I lift every 3rd week (eg. switch barbell with dumbbell, or use a machine where appropriate), and on the 4th week I’ll change the order of the muscle group (e.g. legs on Monday instead of chest) for another 3 weeks and the cycle repeats. So wise one, enlighten me on how I may lift to get bigger and stronger, while avoiding the affects of atrophy, while at the same time keeping the 4-day-a-week lifting regime.

Chris

Answer: You sound like a hell of a statistician. First of all you’re doing more of a power-lifting workout it sounds like to

me. It can and will make you stronger when doing short rep ranges. For you to gain size, oh stupid one, you need to recruit more muscle fibers. The more muscle fibers that you recruit, the more that have the capacity to grow. You are not doing that. And you're wasting an awful lot of time doing nothing that is going to get you big. If you want to get big you need to up the rep ranges for everything; the 10/8/6/4 thing is stupid and a waste of fucking time. Since you're so strong and so big try doing a rep range of 15 to twenty reps with the same weight as you do the set of 10, with a partner of course. Throw some forced reps in and a couple of negative reps and when you're done puking then e-mail me back.

Reply to answer:

Thanks for replying to my email, but I still have a couple of questions:

1. I misspoke earlier; let me clarify my main goal: to get a big bench. I've been sticking with the 10/8/6/4 rep range for a while and it has improved my bench from approximately 245 in early June to 275 in late November. I do understand the concept of recruiting more muscle fibers because I perform drop sets regularly, but won't changing my rep ranges like that work for more of an endurance or fat-burning routine?
2. With goals such as mine to be stronger and bigger (in not only bench, but everything else as well), how would I avoid atrophy and incorporate that into the muscle groups that I exercise on certain days of the week?
3. Also, should I change my rep ranges on squats, leg press, clean and press, seated military, incline, deadlift, etc. to all sets of 15?