

Men'sHealth

**BEST.  
EXERCISES.  
EVER.**

# ARMS & ABS

**Work Your  
Core with  
Every Move**

**Build  
Strength  
& Power**

- SHOULDERS
- CHEST
- BACK

BICEPS  
THAT POP!  
P. 10



SIX-PACK  
SECRETS  
P. 46



**ALL GAIN,  
NO PAIN**  
Reduce  
Injuries &  
Stay Strong  
for Life

**HEARST**  
specials



**Men'sHealth**

**ARMS**  
**& ABS**

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# ARMS & ABS, DEFINED

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**Work the muscles in your shoulders, arms, chest, back, and your entire core to create not only greater strength gains but improved functional (a.k.a. real-world) fitness.**

 NEXT TIME YOU'RE AT THE GYM, LOOK around. How many of the guys are trying to build bigger arms and sculpted abs? Lots of them, right? Few of them, unfortunately, are going to succeed.

And that's too bad, because you use your arms and abs in virtually every movement that matters: Lifting. Running. Jumping. So the stronger they are, the harder and longer you'll be able to play.

That's where we come in. Inside these pages, you'll find the tools you need to work your upper body, midsection—and every muscle in between. So whether you're bending, twisting, leaping, or chilling, these exercises ensure that you and your muscles will perform better and last longer.

And, on the off-chance that you need to remove your shirt before bending, twisting, leaping, or chilling, your hardworking, multitasking arms and abs muscles will make that a painless experience too. Ready to get started? Dive in!

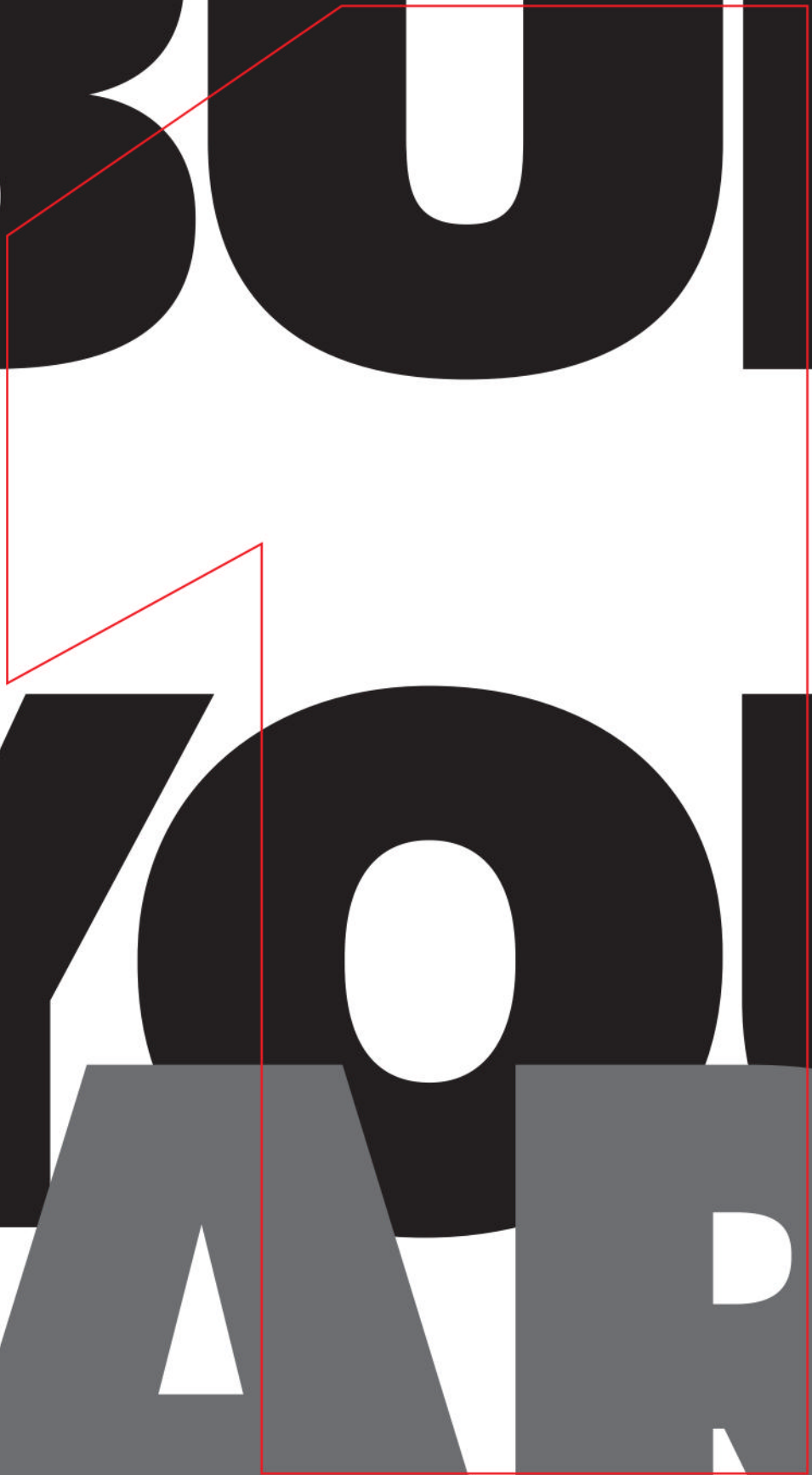


These workouts  
will make your  
arms bigger, your  
belly smaller,  
and your abs pop.

**BU**

**YO**

**ARE**





LINK  
UP  
DOWN  
MS

# BICEPS THAT POP

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**Stretch the limits of your shirtsleeves by learning a completely new way to sculpt your arms.**

» Warning: There are no biceps curls in this plan. That may strike you as odd, considering the title of this chapter. But lots of guys complain that they have small arms despite having done tons of biceps curls. But the trouble isn't their biceps. What's limiting them is weakness in the muscles of their upper back, shoulders, and core. This routine, created by Alwyn Cosgrove, C.S.C.S., owner of Results Fitness in Santa Clarita, California, shores up any weak spots to build your arms from every angle.



This 3-D workout will make you stronger in almost any upper-body exercise.



## DIRECTIONS

Complete this workout 3 to 4 days a week, with a day of rest between sessions. Do the exercises in the order shown, using these guidelines.

### EXERCISE 1

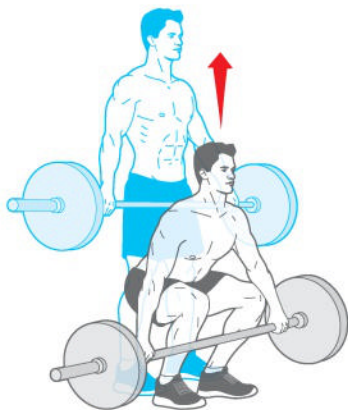
Perform straight sets, completing all your sets before moving on to exercises 2A and 2B. Rest for the prescribed time between sets.

### EXERCISES 2A AND 2B

Perform these exercises as a pair: Do 1 set of 2A, rest for the prescribed time, then do 1 set of 2B and rest again. Repeat until you've completed all your sets. Treat 2B as a single exercise: Do the prescribed number of reps (8 to 10) for each of the 5 movements (Y, T, W, L, and I), and then rest.

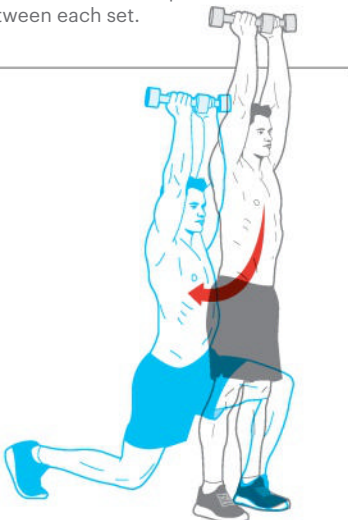
### EXERCISES 3A AND 3B

Perform these exercises as a pair: Do 1 set of exercise 3A, rest for the prescribed amount of time, then do 1 set of exercise 3B and rest again. Repeat this sequence until you've completed all your sets.



#### 1 Wide-grip deadlift

Load a barbell and roll it against your shins. Bend at your hips and knees and grab the bar with an overhand grip, your hands about twice shoulder-width apart. Your lower back should be slightly arched, your arms straight, and your knees bent about 90 degrees. Without allowing your lower back to round, pull your torso back and up, thrust your hips forward, and stand up with the barbell. Pause momentarily, and then take 3 seconds to reverse the movement and lower the bar to the floor, keeping it as close to your body as possible. Complete 2 or 3 sets of 6 to 8 reps. Rest 2 minutes between each set.

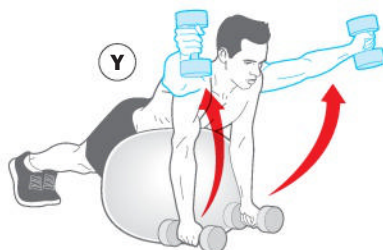


#### 2A Dumbbell overhead reverse lunge

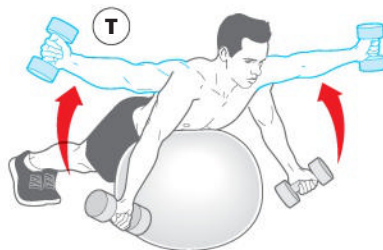
Hold a pair of dumbbells above your shoulders with your arms straight and your feet shoulder-width apart. Step backward with your right leg and lower your body until your front knee is bent 90 degrees and your rear knee nearly touches the floor. Your front lower leg should be perpendicular to the floor and your torso upright. Pause, and then push yourself back up to the starting position as quickly as you can. Finish all your repetitions and then repeat the motion with your left leg. Complete 2 or 3 sets of 8 to 10 reps. Rest 1 minute between each set.

#### 2B YTWLI raises on a swiss ball

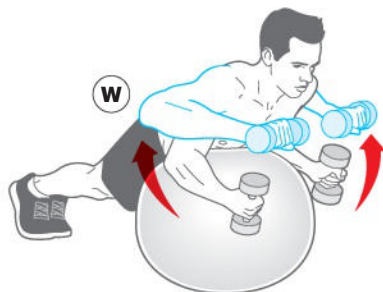
Complete 2 or 3 sets of 8 to 10 reps. Rest 1 minute between each set.



**Y:** Lie facedown on a Swiss ball so your back is flat, your legs are straight, and your chest is off the ball. Let your arms hang straight down from your shoulders, your palms facing each other. Without bending your elbows, raise your arms until they're in line with your torso and they form a Y. Pause, and then slowly lower them to the starting position.

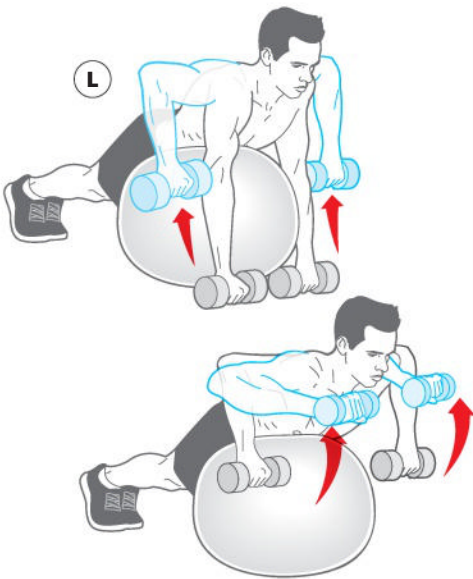


**T:** Turn your arms so your palms face out. Now raise your arms straight out to your sides until they're in line with your body. Pause, and then slowly lower them to the starting position.

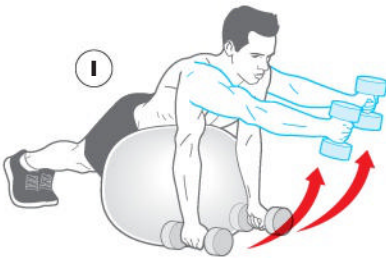


**W:** Bend your elbows slightly wider than 90 degrees and hold them at your sides, your palms facing each other. Without moving your elbows, squeeze your shoulders together as you raise your upper arms and rotate your forearms outward. At the top of the movement, your arms should form a W and align with your body.

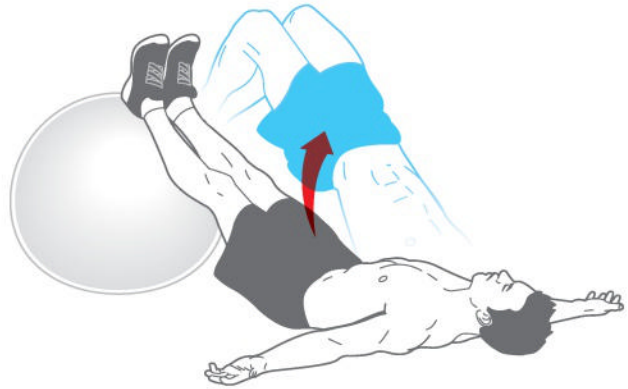




**L:** Let your arms hang straight down from your shoulders, your palms facing back. Keeping your elbows flared out, lift your upper arms by bending your elbows and squeezing your shoulder blades together. Keeping your elbows bent, rotate your upper arms back as far as you can. Pause, and then lower the weights back to the starting position.

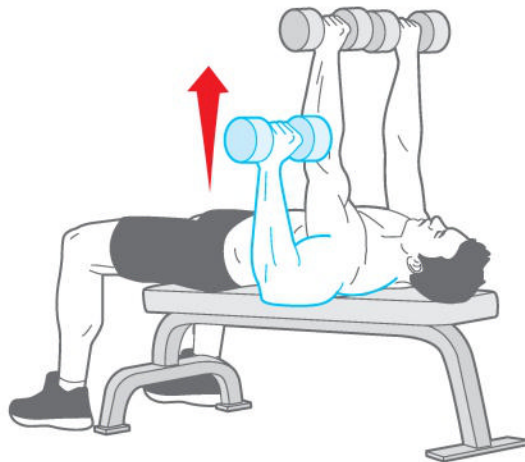


**I:** Let your arms hang straight down from your shoulders, your palms facing each other. Raise your arms so they're straight and in line with your body and form the letter I. Pause, and then slowly lower them to the starting position.



### 3A Swiss-ball hip extension and leg curl

Lie on your back on the floor and place your lower legs on a Swiss ball. Place your arms out to your sides at a 90-degree angle, your palms facing up. Now push your hips up so that your body forms a straight line from shoulders to knees. Without pausing, pull your heels toward you and roll the ball as close as possible to your butt. Pause and reverse the motion by rolling the ball back until your body is in a straight line. Lower your hips back to the floor and repeat. Complete 2 or 3 sets of 8 to 10 reps. Rest 1 minute between each set.



### 3B Alternating dumbbell bench press

Lie faceup on a flat bench and hold a pair of dumbbells over your chest so they're nearly touching each other. Slowly lower one dumbbell to the side of your chest. Pause, and as you press the weight back up to the starting position, lower the dumbbell in your other hand. Continue to alternate back and forth until you've done 8 to 10 reps with each arm. Complete 2 or 3 sets of 8 to 10 reps. Rest 1 minute between each set.

## By the Numbers

**1,868**

Number of one-armed pushups completed by the U.K.'s Paddy Doyle in one hour—a world record

**3,416**

Number of pushups performed in one hour by Canada's Roy Berger—a world record

**612**

Most consecutive chinups done by Lee Chin-Yong of South Korea in two hours and 40 minutes—a world record

**925**

Weight in pounds of the deadlift performed by Vlad Alhazov—a powerlifting record

**3,000**

Number of combined pounds lifted in the deadlift, squat, and bench press by Donnie Thompson—a powerlifting record

# TARGET: TRICEPS

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**Blast your biggest little muscle with these moves.**

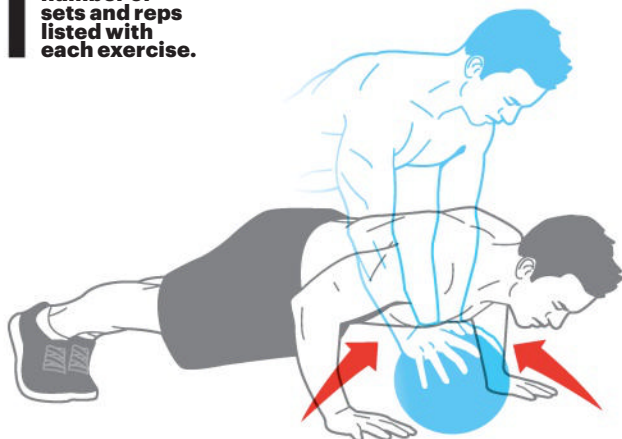
» You probably know your triceps comprise more of your arm than your biceps do, but most men still pay their triceps less attention. The equalizer: Recast exercises like pushups and core moves as arm builders. You won't skip exercises you already do, and these variations will help you build bigger, fuller arms.



When it comes to larger upper arms, your strongest allies come from behind.

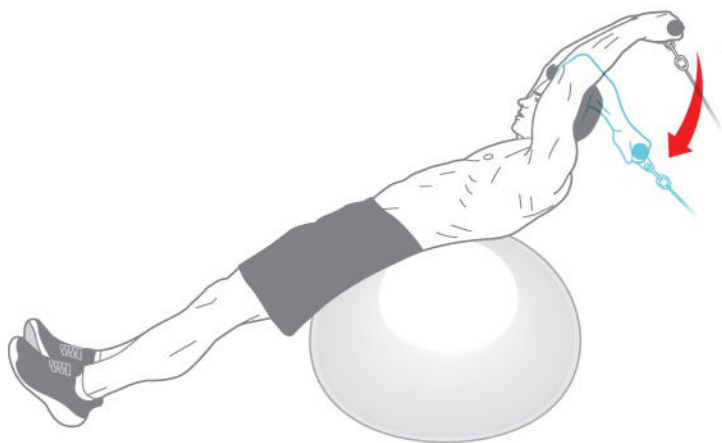
## DIRECTIONS

Add these triceps moves to your regular strength workout to achieve better strength, power, endurance, and balance in your triceps. Follow the prescribed number of sets and reps listed with each exercise.



### 1 Triceps power pushup

Place a large medicine ball on the floor and get in pushup position with the ball under your chest. Bend your arms to lower your chest to the ball. Push up forcefully so that your hands leave the floor, then land with your hands on the ball. Straighten your arms. Do a pushup with your hands on the ball, then drop your hands to the floor and repeat. Aim for 3 sets of 8 to 12 reps.



### 2 Straight-leg lying triceps extension

Grab a straight bar underhand from a low pulley cable and lie on a Swiss ball so your butt and lower back touch the ball. Your legs should be straight, pointing away from the weight stack. Extend your arms overhead, beside your ears. Without changing your elbow position or body angle, bend your arms to lower the bar toward your shoulders. Then reverse. Do 3 sets of 12.

# YOUR MUSCLES IN ACTION

## A: Long Head

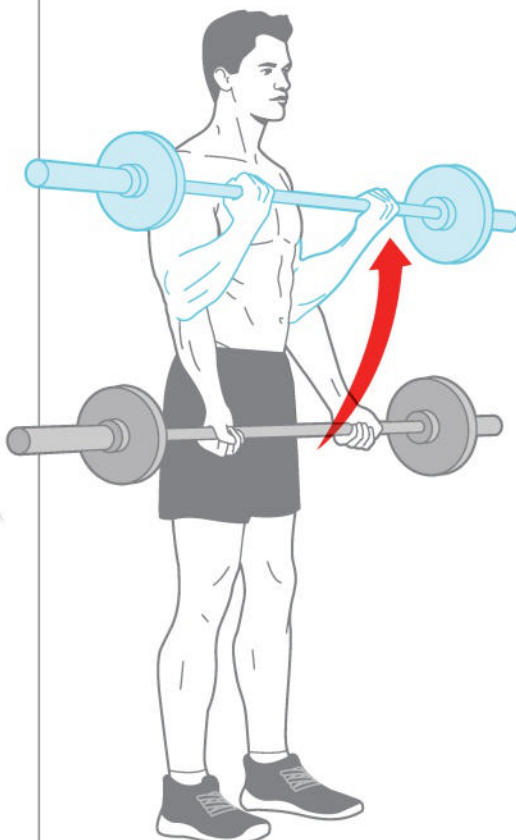
This muscle, on the back of your arm, gives the triceps its bulk. Overhead exercises, in which your arms are by your ears, target the long head of your triceps.

## B: Lateral Head

Exercises such as dips, in which your upper arms are beside or behind your body, best work the lateral head, located on the outside of your upper arm.

## C: Medial Head

This smaller muscle lies between the long head and lateral head. The straight-leg lying triceps extension in this workout works all three heads.



### 3 Pumped-up barbell curl

Make the last set in your biceps routine a barbell curl and use light weight—about 50 percent effort—for 8 to 12 reps. Focus on pulling the bar down with your triceps as if you were performing a pushdown. This creates a neuromuscular link between biceps and triceps, to prepare your triceps for action.





A

B

C

# BOLDER SHOULDERS

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**Simple secrets for stronger shoulders: Shore up weak spots for bigger gains.**

» Walk into any gym and you'll find one common scene: men bitching about their shoulders. "Man, I used to be stronger," they moan. "More shredded, more this, more that. But my shoulders, man, my shoulders!" Strains and pains force guys to avoid exercises, leading to decreased muscle. The secret isn't to avoid your pain. Instead, add moves that strengthen your joints, like these from Bill Hartman, P.T., C.S.C.S., cofounder of Indianapolis Fitness and Sport Training.





Follow this routine and you'll see less shoulder strain and more serious muscle.

## DIRECTIONS

Perform the following workout routine as part of your total-body workout or on your upper-body day. Complete all the sets in each sequence (1A and 1B, for example) before moving to the next number in the program. For added variety, you can substitute one of the extra options listed to help fix your shoulders and build the ultimate upper body.

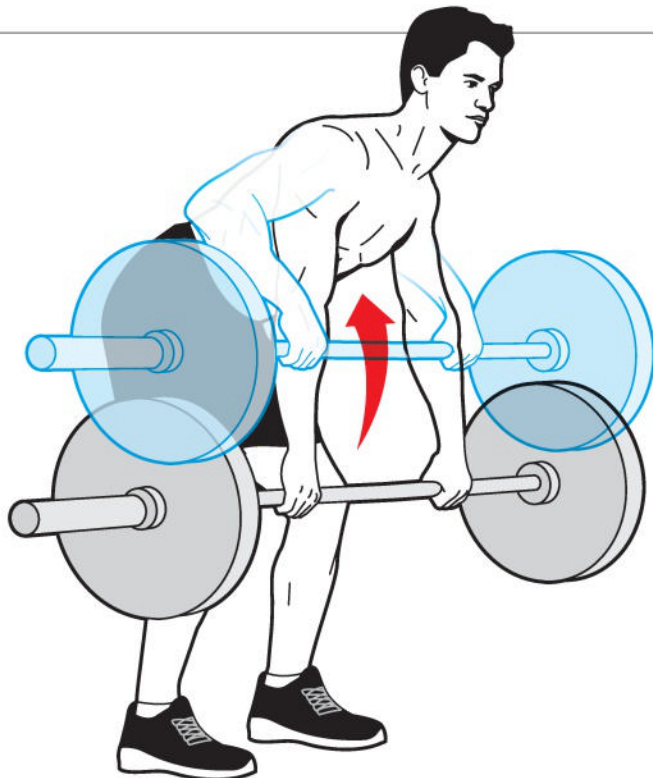
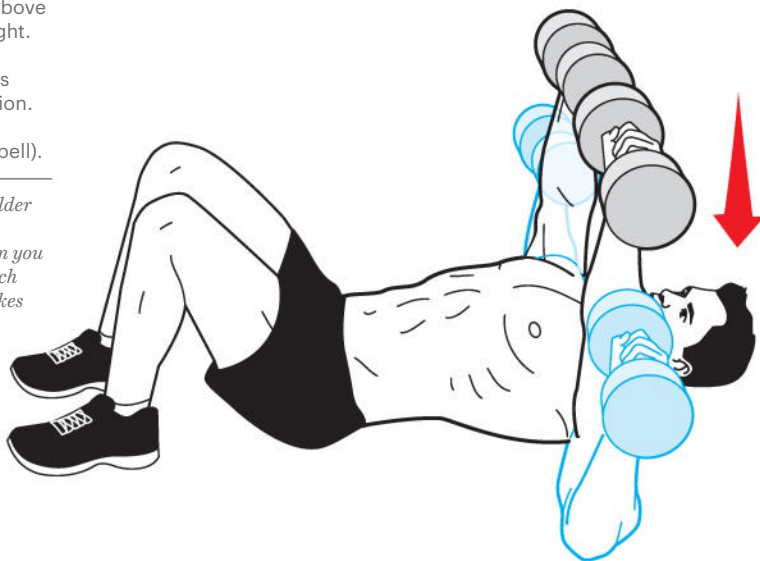
### 1A Floor press

Grab a pair of dumbbells and lie faceup on the floor with your knees bent and feet flat. Start with the dumbbells above your shoulders and your arms straight. Lower the weights until your upper arms touch the floor, and then press the weights up to the starting position. That's 1 rep. Do 3 or 4 sets of 6 to 8 reps (can also be done with a barbell).

**Benefit:** This movement restricts shoulder extension—that's the stretching of the muscles in front of your shoulders when you lower the weights to your body. Too much stress on the front of your shoulder makes the area unstable and leads to injury. This is a good sub for the bench press when your shoulders are acting up, or to reduce strain.

#### OTHER OPTIONS:

Dumbbell bench press, dumbbell incline press



### 1B Medium-grip barbell row

Grab a barbell with an overhand grip with your hands about shoulder-width apart, and hold it in front of your thighs with your knees slightly bent. Bend at your hips, lower your torso about 45 degrees, and let the bar hang straight down from your shoulders. Pull the bar up to your torso, pause, and then slowly lower it. Do 3 or 4 sets of 6 to 8 reps

**Benefit:** Too many men only focus on “mirror muscles,” such as the chest and arms. Exercises that use the muscles in your back provide balance to your training plan, and help maintain the natural movement of your shoulders to help you avoid weaknesses and pain.

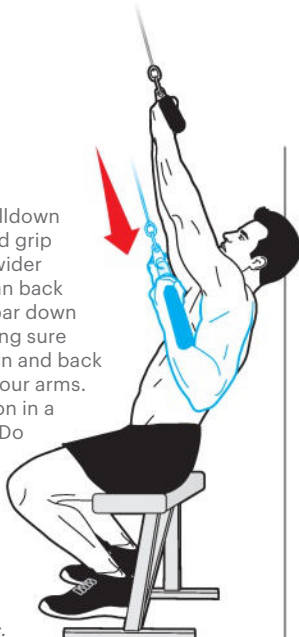
#### OTHER OPTIONS:

Medium-grip cable row, dumbbell row



## 2A Lean-away lat pulldown

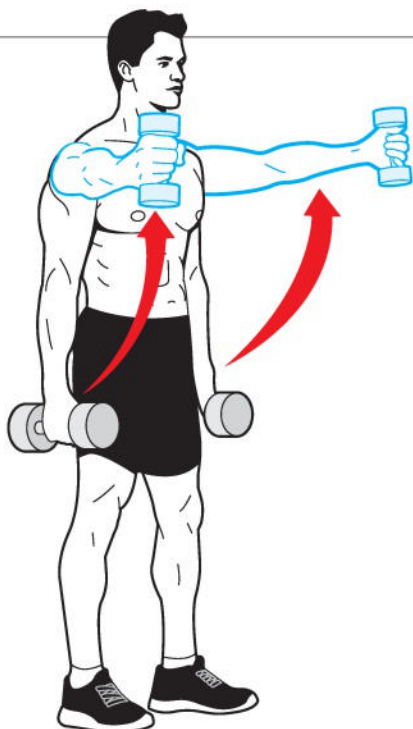
Sit at a cable tower or lat pulldown machine using an underhand grip about one and a half times wider than your shoulders, and lean back about 30 degrees. Pull the bar down to your lower sternum, making sure you pull your shoulders down and back as you follow through with your arms. Return to the starting position in a smooth, controlled motion. Do 2 or 3 sets of 10 to 12 reps.



**Benefit:** *The angle of your body reduces demand on the rotator cuff, promoting a more stable shoulder joint. Also, a 30-degree lean-away can increase activation of your lats.*

### OTHER OPTION:

Underhand closed-grip pulldown



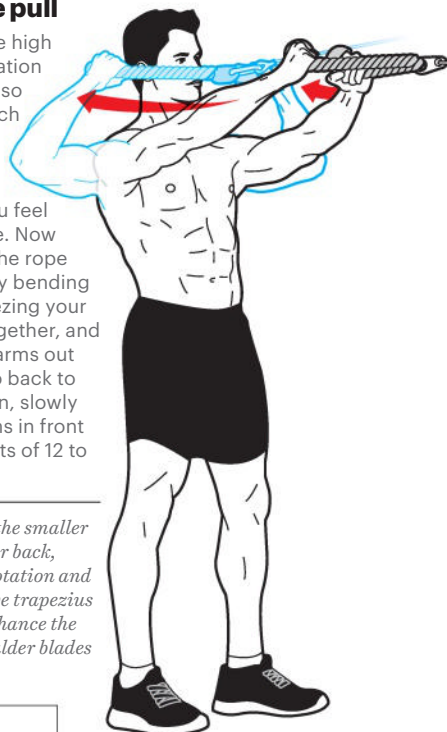
## 2B Scaption

Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart and hold a pair of dumbbells at arm's length by your sides, your palms facing each other and elbows slightly bent. Without bending your elbows, raise your arms until they're parallel to the ground while keeping them at a 30-degree angle to your body. Pause, and then lower your arms back to the starting position. Do 2 or 3 sets of 10 to 12 reps.

**Benefit:** *The muscles around your shoulder joint and shoulder blade are activated so you can build more muscle and strengthen your shoulders at the same time.*

## 3A Cable face pull

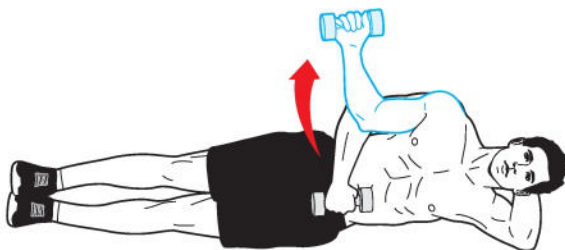
Attach a rope to the high pulley of a cable station and grab each end so your palms face each other. Step away until your arms are straight out in front of you and you feel tension in the cable. Now pull the middle of the rope toward your eyes by bending your elbows, squeezing your shoulder blades together, and flaring your upper arms out to your sides. To go back to the starting position, slowly straighten your arms in front of you. Do 2 or 3 sets of 12 to 15 reps.



**Benefit:** *You'll work the smaller muscles in your upper back, maintain shoulder rotation and strength, and improve trapezius strength; these all enhance the stability of your shoulder blades and shoulder joints.*

### OTHER OPTIONS:

Pushup, inverted row



## 3B Side-lying external rotation

With a dumbbell in your right hand, lie on your left side with a rolled towel under your right elbow. Bend your left arm and rest your head on your left hand. Flex your right elbow to 90 degrees and rest the weight in front of your stomach. Don't bend your wrist. Keep your upper arm at your side as you rotate your right forearm to raise the weight until it's above your body. Slowly return to the starting position. Do 2 or 3 sets of 12 to 15 reps on each side.

**Benefit:** *Because you're on your side, you activate the rotator-cuff muscles on the back of your shoulder; these help maintain shoulder position during activities. This exercise also reduces the risk of tendinitis in your rotator cuff. And it limits shoulder impingement, a painful condition that occurs when the front of your shoulder blade exerts pressure on the muscles or tendons of your rotator cuff as you lift your arm.*



Use these smart moves to boost your shoulder strength without getting hurt.

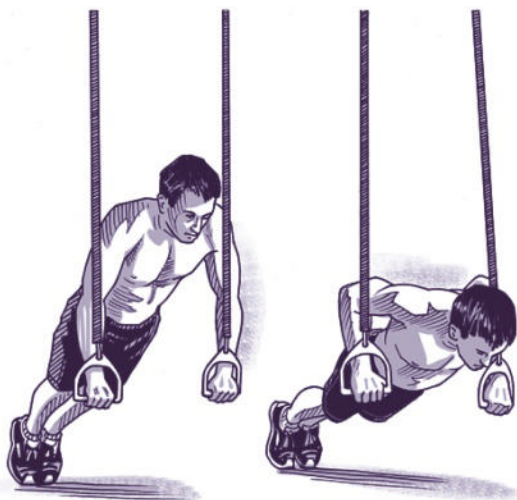
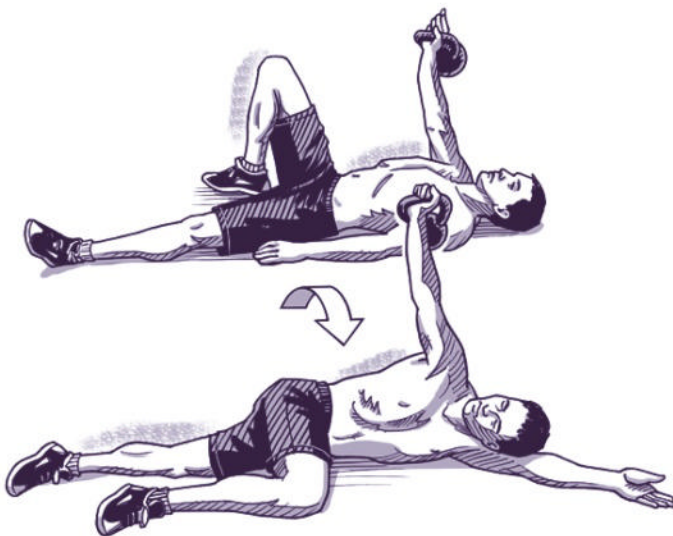
# SHORE UP YOUR SHOULDERS

Shoulder pain? Do these moves. No shoulder pain? Do them anyway. Here's why.

Adding one of these mobility-boosting moves to your routine will reduce your risk of shoulder injury and lessen any pain you're already feeling, says Doug Kechijian, D.P.T., of Resilient Performance Physical Therapy in New York City. His favorite is the arm bar, but you should find the one that's right for you.

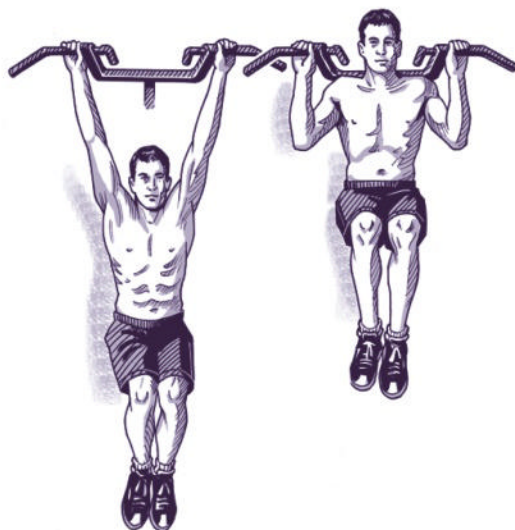
## TRY THIS: ARM BAR

Start as you would for a getup: left leg straight, right leg bent (foot flat), a kettlebell in your right hand pressed over your shoulder. (Keep the bell here throughout.) Slowly roll left as you lift your right leg (still bent) and bring it over to your left side. You'll end up on your side with your right leg on the floor. Do 3 sets of 6 to 8 reps per side.



## EASIER: RING PUSHUP

Assume a pushup position with your hands in rings or TRX handles that are 6 to 12 inches above the floor. (The higher you go, the easier the move will be.) Try to keep your body perfectly straight from head to heels as you perform a pushup. Do 4 sets of as many reps as you can, stopping 2 reps short of failure.



## HARDER: CHAIR PULLUP

Hang from a pullup bar. Bend your knees so your thighs are parallel to the floor, as if you're sitting in an invisible floating chair. Maintain that position as you slowly perform a pullup, pulling your body up and then lowering yourself back down. Do 4 sets of as many reps as you can, stopping 2 reps short of failure.

# CHISELED CHEST

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**Get jacked: Build size where you really want it.**

» This chest-building program created by Todd Durkin, C.S.C.S., founder of Fitness Quest 10 in San Diego, takes advantage of your muscles' versatility by working your pecs and all their buddies, using every angle and rep range. The result: You'll end up with more beef in your back, shoulders, and arms, and develop bigger chest muscles than you'd thought possible.

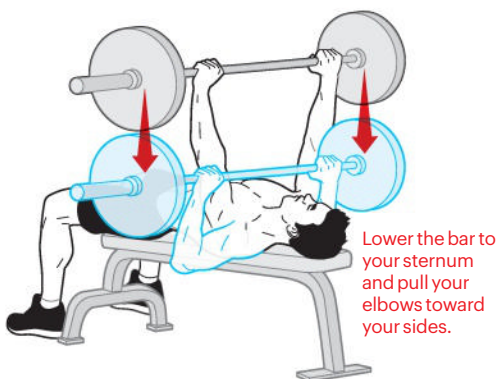




Your chest muscles respond to low reps, high reps, and everything in between.

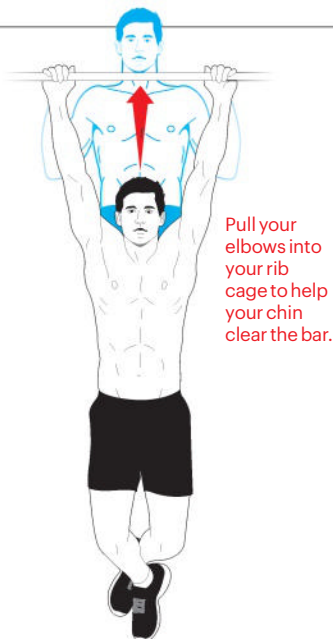
## DIRECTIONS

Do this workout twice a week, resting for at least 2 or 3 days in between. (Work your lower body on a separate day.) Alternate between exercises of the same number until you complete all the sets in that pairing. So you'll do 1 set of exercise 1A, rest for 45 seconds, do 1 set of exercise 1B, and rest 45 seconds again. Repeat until you complete all sets, and then rest 2 minutes before moving to the next pair.



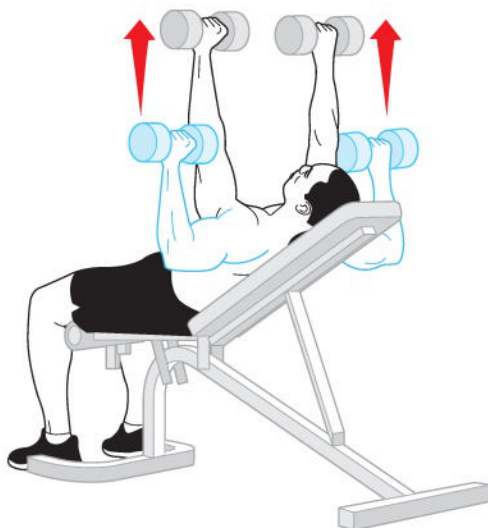
### 1A Barbell bench press

Grab a barbell with an overhand grip that's just beyond shoulder width, and hold it above your sternum with arms straight. Lower the bar, pause, and then press it back to the starting position. Do 1 set each of 15 reps, 10 reps, and 8 reps, increasing the weight each time. Immediately after the 8-rep set, reduce the weight by 20 percent and complete as many reps as you can.



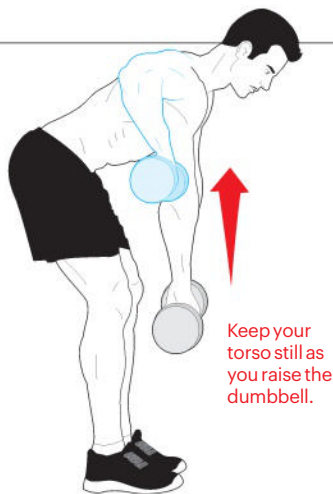
### 1B Pullup

Grab a pullup bar with a shoulder-width overhand grip and hang at arm's length. Pull your chest up to the bar. Lower back to the starting position and repeat. Perform 3 sets and complete as many reps as you can in each set.



### 2A Incline dumbbell bench press

Lie faceup on an incline bench and hold a pair of dumbbells with your arms straight. Lower the dumbbells to your chest, and then press them back to the starting position. Do 1 set each of 15 reps, 10 reps, and 8 reps, increasing the weight each time. After the 8-rep set, reduce the weight by 20 percent and do as many reps as you can.



### 2B Single-arm dumbbell row

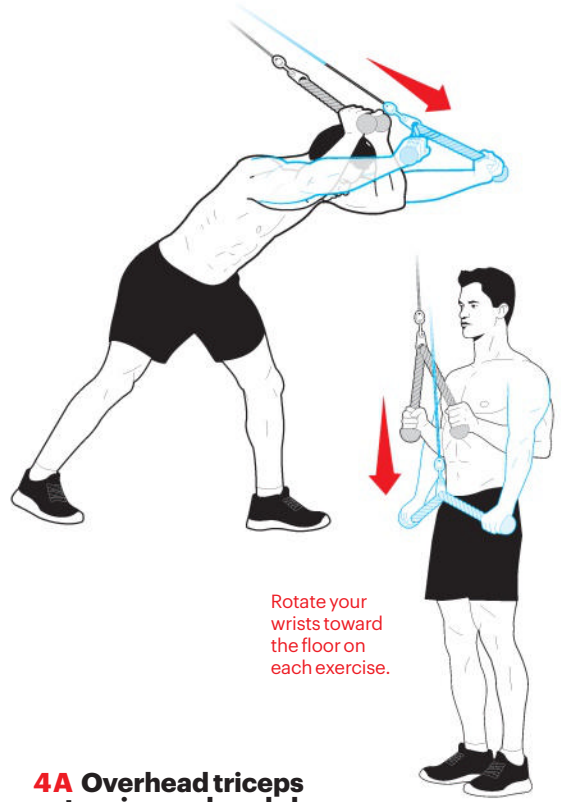
Grab a dumbbell in your right hand, bend at your hips and knees, and lower your torso until it's almost parallel to the floor. Let the dumbbell hang from your shoulder. Pull the dumbbell to the side of your torso, keeping your elbow tucked close to your side. Perform 1 set of 15 reps with each arm, followed by 2 sets of 10 reps with each arm, increasing the weight each time. Immediately after the last 10-rep set, reduce the weight by 20 percent and complete as many reps as you can.





### 3A Dip

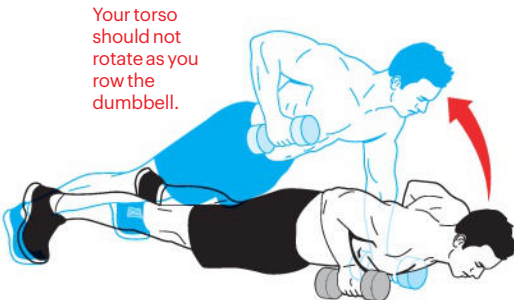
Grab the bars of a dip station and lift yourself until your arms are completely straight. Slowly lower yourself by bending your elbows until your upper arms dip just below your elbows. Pause, and then push back up to the starting position. Do 2 sets of as many reps as you can.



Rotate your wrists toward the floor on each exercise.

### 4A Overhead triceps extension and pushdown

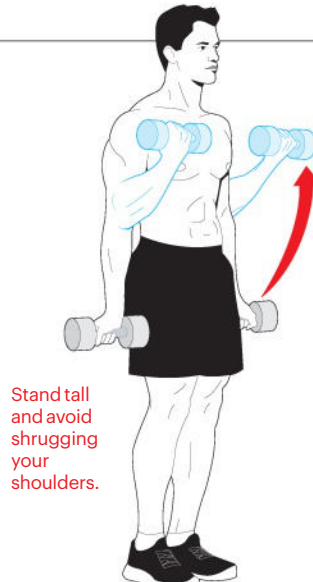
Attach a rope to the high pulley of a cable station and face away from it. Grab an end of the rope in each hand and bend over. Without moving your upper arms, push your forearms forward, pause, and return. Do 15 reps, turn around, put your upper arms at your sides and your forearms at 90 degrees, and pull the rope down. Do 10 reps. That's 1 set. Do 2 or 3 sets.



Your torso should not rotate as you row the dumbbell.

### 3B Pushup and row

Place a pair of hex dumbbells on the floor and grip them while you do a pushup. Once you're back in the starting position, row the dumbbell in your right hand to the side of your chest. Lower the weight and repeat on your left side. That's 1 rep. Do 2 sets of 10 reps.



Stand tall and avoid shrugging your shoulders.

### 4B Dumbbell biceps curl

Grab a pair of dumbbells and let them hang next to your sides. Turn your arms so that your palms face forward. Without moving your upper arms, bend your elbows and curl the dumbbells as close to your shoulders as you can. Pause, and slowly lower the weights back to the starting position. Do 2 or 3 sets of 10 reps.

# BROAD BACK

---

Experience gains like never before.

» Your back houses a complex system of muscles, from your lats to your rotator cuffs to your upper, middle, and lower traps, with each area performing a variety of functions. That's why sculpting a V-shaped torso isn't as simple as doing "back" exercises, such as chinups and lat pulldowns. To help you broaden your entire back, Bill Hartman, P.T., C.S.C.S., cofounder of Indianapolis Fitness and Sport Training, has identified five key back-building obstacles and their fixes.

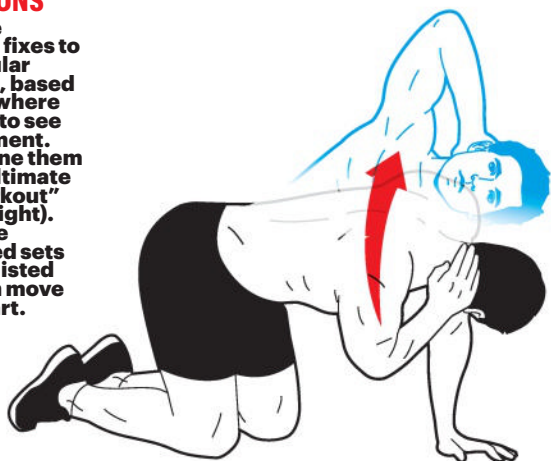




The secret to a bigger, stronger back: Quit thinking of it as one big slab of muscle.

## DIRECTIONS

Apply the following fixes to your regular workouts, based on areas where you want to see improvement. Or combine them in “The Ultimate Back Workout” (bottom right). Follow the prescribed sets and reps listed with each move in the chart.



## PROBLEM

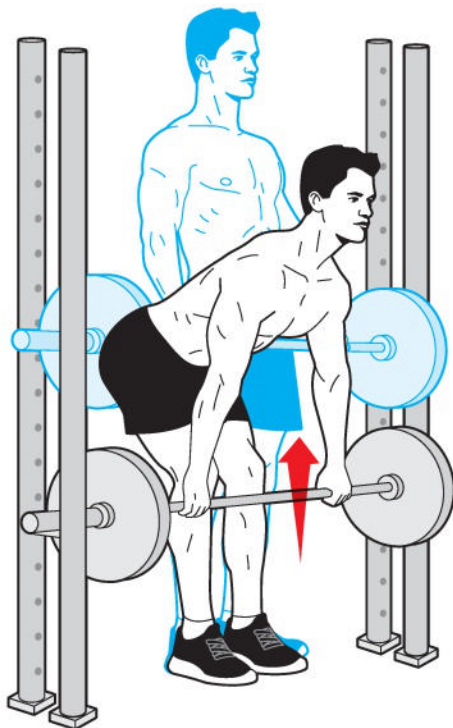
### YOUR UPPER BACK IS TIGHT

When you spend a lot of time in one position—sitting at your desk, for example—the muscles of your upper back stiffen, which can lead to poor posture, weak shoulders, and neck and back pain.

## TRY

### Thoracic rotation

Kneel down, place your right hand behind your head, and point your elbow out to the side. Brace your core and rotate your right shoulder toward your left arm. Follow your elbow with your eyes as you reverse the movement until your right elbow points toward the ceiling. That’s 1 rep. After you’ve done the prescribed number of reps, switch arms and repeat on the other side.



## PROBLEM

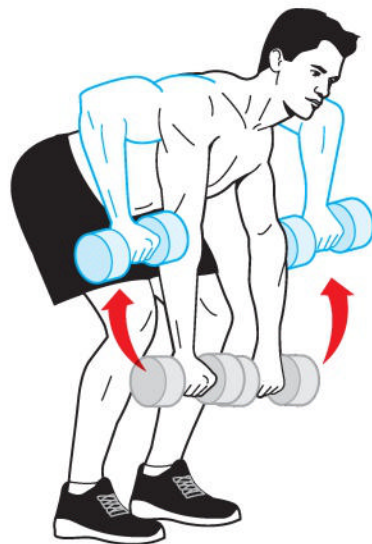
### YOU HAVEN'T MASTERED THE DEADLIFT

If you allow your lower back to round when you deadlift—as most guys do—you place your lumbar spine in danger. Trouble is, many men are too weak to keep their lower back naturally arched—the key to safe lifting—as they lift the bar from the floor.

## TRY

### Rack pull

Set a barbell at knee level in a squat rack. Assume a shortstop stance—your hips back, knees slightly bent, and knees against the bar. Your lower back should be naturally arched. Now grab the bar overhand with your hands just outside your legs. Stand up by pushing your hips forward. Begin with no weight until the exercise feels natural, and then start adding weight. Once the exercise becomes easy from the rack, lift the barbell from the floor using the same form.



## PROBLEM

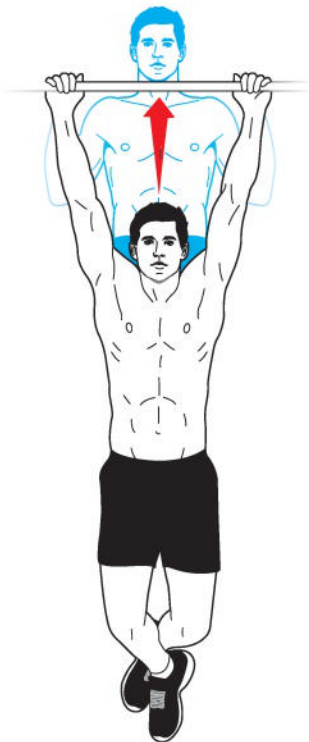
### YOUR ROWS MISS THE BOAT

The row is a great exercise for your middle traps and rear shoulders, but only if you do it right. Many men lift with just their arm muscles instead of working their traps and rear delts.

## TRY

### Two-part dumbbell row

Grab a pair of dumbbells, bend at your hips and knees, and lower your torso until it's almost parallel to the floor. Let the weights hang at arm's length from your shoulders. First pull your shoulders back and hold that position. Then pull the weights to the sides of your torso by squeezing your shoulder blades toward your spine. Lower to the starting position and repeat.



**PROBLEM**

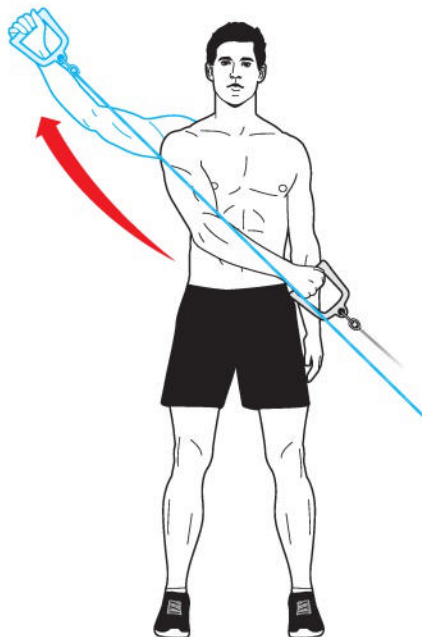
**YOU HAVE A GLARING WEAK SPOT**

Most men have weak scapular muscles, which stabilize your shoulder blades and provide the foundation for every upper-body lift. If these muscles are weak, your ability to lift more weight on exercises such as the bench press will suffer.

**TRY**

**Pullup hold**

Hang from a pullup bar with an overhand grip, your hands at the exact width you use when you do a bench press. Pull your chest up to the bar and hold for 10 to 20 seconds. Once you can do more than 5 reps, add resistance with a weighted vest or a dumbbell between your feet or do regular pullups.



**PROBLEM**

**YOUR TRAPS ARE TOP-HEAVY**

Shrugs build your upper trapezius muscle, making it too strong relative to the middle and lower sections. This can cause shoulder impingement, a painful condition in which the muscles and tendons in your rotator cuff become pinched by your shoulder joint.

**TRY**

**Cable diagonal raise**

Attach a handle to the low pulley of a cable station. Standing with your left side toward the pulley, grab the handle with your right hand in front of your left hip and bend your elbow slightly. Pull the handle up and across your body until your hand is over your head and your thumb is pointing up (a Statue of Liberty pose). Return to the starting position. Complete all reps and repeat with your left arm.

# The Ultimate Back Workout

**Too much chest work overtrains the muscles on your front, leaving your back undertrained. Turn your workout around with this plan.**

Complete this upper-body workout twice a week, resting at least 3 days between sessions. Do the exercises in the order shown, using the heaviest weight that allows you to complete the prescribed number of reps. Perform exercises 1, 2, and 5 as straight sets, completing all sets of each exercise before moving on. Do exercises 3A (not shown) and 3B, and exercises 4A (not shown) and 4B, as alternating sets. That is, do 1 set of 3A (not shown), rest for 1 to 2 minutes, do 1 set of 3B, and rest again. Repeat until you've done all sets of both exercises. Use the same procedure for 4A (not shown) and 4B.

Exercise	Sets	Reps	Rest (min.)
1. Thoracic rotation	2	20	1
2. Rack pull	3	6	2-4
3A. Dumbbell bench press (not shown)	3	8-10	1-2
3B. Two-part dumbbell row	3	8-10	1-2
4A. Alternating dumbbell shoulder press (not shown)	3	8-10	1-2
4B. Pullup hold	3	3-5	1-2
5. Cable diagonal raise	2	10-12	1

# V-SHAPED TORSO

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Work your entire upper body and watch your muscles grow.

» Even if you're unfamiliar with unilateral training, you practice it every day. Any movement in which your arms or legs function independently—even walking—is unilateral. Single-arm or single-leg exercises require a great deal of balance and thus limit the amount of weight you can lift. Others, like the moves in this workout, help you lift more by focusing your strength on one limb. The benefit, says Robert Dos Remedios, C.S.C.S., is that you'll build a bigger, more balanced body in just four weeks.





This workout includes single- and two-arm moves to eliminate imbalances.

## DIRECTIONS

You'll train three days a week for four weeks, resting at least a day between workouts and alternating between Workout A and Workout B. Refer to the set and repetition protocols listed with each exercise, and rest for 60 to 90 seconds between sets.

### WORKOUT A

#### 1 Side-to-side pullup

Grab a chinup bar with an overhand grip, your hands wider than shoulder width. Pull yourself up and to the right with the goal of bringing your chin to your right hand. Lower yourself. Next, pull yourself up and toward your left hand, then lower yourself.

**The plan:** Do 4 sets of 5 reps with each arm in weeks 1 and 3. In weeks 2 and 4, perform 5 sets of 3 reps with each arm. If you can't complete all the repetitions, place a step or bench under the bar so you can step up to the bar and complete the negative, or downward, portion of each rep.



#### 2 Dumbbell single-arm row

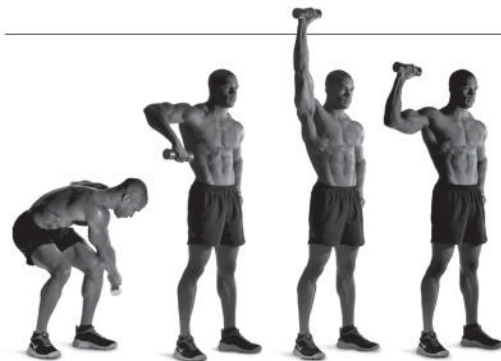
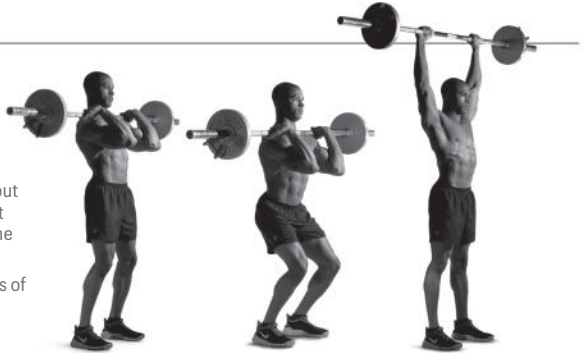
Holding a dumbbell in your right hand, place your left hand and knee on a bench. Your right arm should be straight and hang just in front of your shoulder. Keeping your back flat and your right elbow close to your body, pull the dumbbell up and back toward your hip. Pause, then slowly lower the weight.

**The plan:** Perform 4 sets of 10 reps with each arm in weeks 1 and 3. Do 4 sets of 5 reps with each arm in weeks 2 and 4.

#### 3 Push press

Stand with a light barbell across the front of your shoulders, your hands slightly wider than shoulder-width apart and your elbows pointed straight ahead. Bend at the hips and knees to descend about 6 inches, then quickly rise back up and explosively push the weight overhead until your arms are fully extended. Lower the weight to the starting position.

**The plan:** Do 4 sets of 8 repetitions in weeks 1 and 3. Perform 4 sets of 5 reps in weeks 2 and 4.



#### 4 Dumbbell corkscrew to single-arm Cuban press

Stand holding a dumbbell in your right hand. As you squat, rotate your torso to the left and reach behind your left leg with your right hand. Push back up, twisting your torso to the right and bending your right arm 90 degrees. Leading with your elbow, lift your arm until you're standing and your elbow is in line with your shoulder. Now rotate the weight up until your forearm is vertical, then press the weight overhead. Return to the starting position.

**The plan:** Do 4 sets of 8 reps with each arm in weeks 1 and 3. Perform 4 sets of 6 reps with each arm in weeks 2 and 4.

## WEIGHTS & MEASURES

51

Percentage of men whose hips are as wide as their shoulders

31

Size of a *Men's Health* cover model's waist

37

Size of the average guy's waist

81

Percentage of men who say they can do at least five pullups with proper form

40

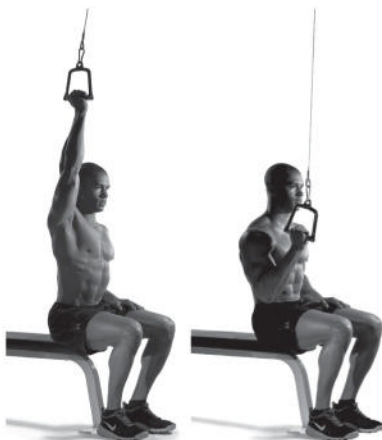
Percentage of men who can do five pullups with proper form, according to an *MH* survey of expert trainers

## WORKOUT B

### 1 Cable single-arm pulldown

Attach a stirrup handle to the cable of a lat pulldown machine. Grab the handle with your right hand so your palm faces left and sit on the seat. Keeping your back straight, pull the handle down to the right side of your chest. Resist the weight back to the starting position.

**The plan:** Perform 4 sets of 10 reps with each arm in weeks 1 and 3. Do 4 sets of 6 reps in weeks 2 and 4.



### 2 Seated row to chin

Attach a lat pulldown bar to the cable of a cable-row station. Sit on the bench and bend forward at the waist to grab the bar with a wide grip. Keeping your back straight, pull the bar inward and upward toward your chin. Resist the weight as it pulls your arms back out in front of you.

**The plan:** Do 4 sets of 10 reps in weeks 1 and 3. Perform 4 sets of 6 reps in weeks 2 and 4.



### 3 Single-arm leaning shoulder raise

Stand with your right side toward a squat rack or a sturdy machine. Hold a light dumbbell in your left hand and grab the rack with your right hand. Lean to the left as far as you can. From here, raise your left arm in front of you. Pause when it's parallel to the floor, then lower your arm. Next, raise your arm out to your side until it's parallel to the floor, then lower it. That's 1 rep.

**The plan:** Do 4 sets of 10 reps with each arm in weeks 1 and 3. Perform 4 sets of 6 reps in weeks 2 and 4.



### 4 Side bridge reach

Holding a light weight in your right hand, lie on your left side with your feet stacked. Bend your left elbow 90 degrees and prop yourself up so that only your forearm and left shoe touch the floor and your body is straight. Extend your right arm. Now bring the weight down and under you, reaching with your arm until the weight is behind you and you face the floor. Reverse the motion to the starting position.

**The plan:** Do 4 sets of 10 reps in weeks 1 and 3. Perform 4 sets of 5 reps in weeks 2 and 4.

## THE PAYOFF

### Wider Lats

Performing the single-arm pullup demands nearly superhuman strength, which is why so few men attempt it. But you can still emphasize one side of your body at a time—and build bigger latissimus dorsi—with the side-to-side pullup in this workout.

### Bigger Muscle

Just because you can't see a muscle in the mirror doesn't mean you should ignore it in the gym, especially when your goal is building a V. The exercises in this plan develop your back while building your shoulders, abs, and arms.

### A Harder Core

The corkscrew and side bridge reach in this workout condition the rectus abdominis—a.k.a. the six-pack muscle—and the obliques, located along the sides of your torso. The result: a powerful midsection that looks great from every angle.





**SO LLI**

**SIX-**

**DIEFY**  
**YOUR**  
**-PACK**

# LOSE YOUR GUT

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Slash fat so your abs will really show.

» If your father is more Dad Bod than Dad God, you might assume you'll eventually grow portly yourself. After all, nearly 100 gene variants are linked to obesity. The good news: Some genes can turn on and off depending on your habits and environment. You could plunk down a few hundred on a DNA test, but why? Instead, try these smart strategies to flip your fat switch.





Before you can  
uncover your abs,  
you've got to lose  
the lard that  
surrounds them.



## 1 Depend on Protein

Chicken, eggs, and other protein-rich foods are more than just muscle builders. A study published in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* found that people who carry a variant of the FTO gene linked with higher obesity risk had less appetite and fewer cravings when they ate a low-calorie diet with 25 percent protein. Protein fills you up and requires more energy to digest than other nutrients do, says study author George Bray, M.D., of Pennington Biomedical Research Center.

■ **HIT THE SWITCH** *Include at least one protein-rich component, like turkey or peanuts, in every meal and snack. "Spreading protein intake throughout the day helps your body best utilize it for function and rebuilding after exercise," says Rebecca Clyde, M.S., R.D.N., a dietitian in Salt Lake City.*



## 2 Eat Early in the Day

Your body runs on an internal clock, which is why you feel like crap when you wake up at the wrong time. This clock ticks in every cell of your body and influences your metabolism as well as your sleep habits. A study in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* found that overweight people who carried a certain variant of the PLIN1 gene associated with obesity lost more weight when they ate lunch earlier in the day. And the earlier they took that midday meal, the better the results.

■ **HIT THE SWITCH** *Eat breakfast and don't work through lunch. There's a simple way to determine how many calories to consume for breakfast and a.m. snacks, says NYC-based dietitian Dina D'Alessandro, R.D.N.: Count the hours between breakfast and lunch on a typical day and multiply by 100.*



## 3 Increase Your Workload

Take a cue from the Amish on this one. In a landmark study of an Old Order Amish community, researchers from the University of Maryland concluded that a lifestyle with abundant physical work may help offset the impact of carrying risky variants of the FTO gene. The most active men in this community burn about an extra 900 calories a day, thanks to several hours of farming, carpentry, blacksmithing, and other activities—and this basically overrides that genetic demerit.

■ **HIT THE SWITCH** *You don't have to live on a farm to be as active as the Amish. There are many ways to log an extra 900 calories a day. For example, walk briskly for 8 miles over about 2 hours. Or try to run 7 miles in an hour. Or bike to work for 50 minutes each way.*

# OUTWIT YOUR FAT GENES

Bad genes do matter, but not as much as you think. Here's how each bad habit can raise the BMI of someone who falls in the top 10 percent of people with genetic obesity risk. (A normal BMI is between 18.5 and 24.9.)

### BAD



#### **+0.52** EATING FRIED FOODS EVERY DAY

Say you're a 6-foot guy with a French fries habit. Bad genes make you about 4 pounds heavier than a genetically gifted guy with the same vice. Bake potato slices in your oven for a less oily treat, says Marisa Moore, R.D.N., a dietitian in Atlanta.



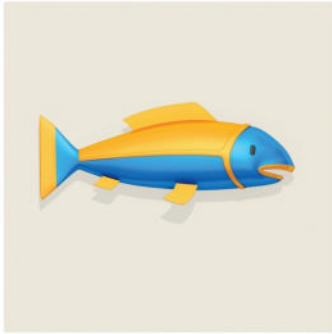
#### **+0.79** DRINKING SODA ON THE DAILY

Frequent fizz fixes can cost a 6-foot guy with bad genes 6 extra pounds. Instead of soda with ice, try seltzer with frozen fruit, says Danielle Battram, Ph.D., R.D., who teaches food and nutritional sciences at Brescia University College.



#### **+1.02** EATING A TYPICAL AMERICAN DIET

In other words, too much processed junk and not enough produce. Try to ease into 3 servings each of leafy greens and fruit a day, says Robert Ostfeld, M.D., director of preventive cardiology at Montefiore Health System.



#### 4 Go Mediterranean

A variant of a gene called MC4R predisposes its carriers to obesity and type 2 diabetes. But there's hope: A Mediterranean-style diet may cancel out that increased genetic risk, recent research suggests. This famously healthy (and delicious!) diet is rich in olive oil, fish, poultry, fruits, vegetables, legumes, and nuts. An occasional glass of red wine is perfectly OK. The fiber and antioxidants prevalent in the diet seem to fight fat and improve glucose metabolism. Ciao, bella!

■ **HIT THE SWITCH** *As you eat more Mediterranean foods, think about the tasty stuff you're adding, not what you're missing. When you begin, focus on eating quality meals, not counting calories. Log your food for the first few weeks to stick to it, says dietitian Erin Peisach, R.D.N., of San Diego.*



#### 5 Guzzle Green Tea

This beverage might boost the activity of several genes that regulate metabolism, like one known as GLUT4. In a 12-week study, rats fed a high-fat diet plus green tea showed greater GLUT4 expression than rats fed the same diet with water. In humans, green tea antioxidants have been shown to improve blood sugar control. But take note: Researchers who study tea typically don't add sugar or cream. We're not talking about the 430-calorie Starbucks Green Tea Creme Frappuccino here.

■ **HIT THE SWITCH** *Drink a glass a day. Try regular Lipton Pure Green Tea (\$12 for 100 bags), which had the most antioxidants per bag in a ConsumerLab test. Steep green tea at 185°F for 3 minutes. This maximizes both flavor and antioxidant content, a Turkish study suggests.*

# THE STAT ONE

Number of daily cups of coffee that, when exceeded, diminishes the influence of gene variants linked to obesity, according to research from Harvard and Tulane

(BMC Medicine)

## → WORST



### +1.05 DOING JUST AN HOUR (OR LESS) OF HARD EXERCISE A WEEK

Start hard immediately after your warmup, says Iowa State kinesiologist Panteleimon Ekkekakis, Ph.D. Then gradually turn down the intensity over 10 to 15 minutes until you hit your cooldown pace.



### +1.32 DOING LESS THAN 7 HOURS OF MODERATE EXERCISE A WEEK

Every Sunday, set aside a few minutes to schedule a week's worth of workouts on your calendar. "Prioritize it like you would a dentist appointment," says University of Minnesota kinesiologist Beth Lewis, Ph.D.



### +1.97 WATCHING 4-PLUS HOURS OF TV A DAY

It's tough to resist a steady stream of Netflix, but all that time on your butt isn't doing your butt (and the rest of your body) any favors. Grab dumbbells and turn to any of the workouts in this book to build muscle during TV time.



### +2.13 SPENDING 5-PLUS HOURS A DAY SITTING

This costs 15 extra pounds for a 6-foot guy who's cursed with bad genes. Each time you hit "send" on an email, stand up and stretch, says Emily Mailey, Ph.D., an associate professor of kinesiology at Kansas State University.



# TORCH BELLY FAT

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Shear off layers of lard and pack on slabs of muscle—in no time at all.

» This workout, designed by Pat Davidson, Ph.D., a New York City-based personal trainer, will help you burn stubborn body fat and build solid muscle allover. To do it, you'll need a medicine ball, box, dumbbell or kettlebell, cable machine, Swiss ball, barbell, bench, prowler plus weight plates (optional), low step, and mat. Get ready to elevate your overall fitness to phenomenal new heights.



Lose lingering belly fat and make your abs really show with this cutting-edge routine.

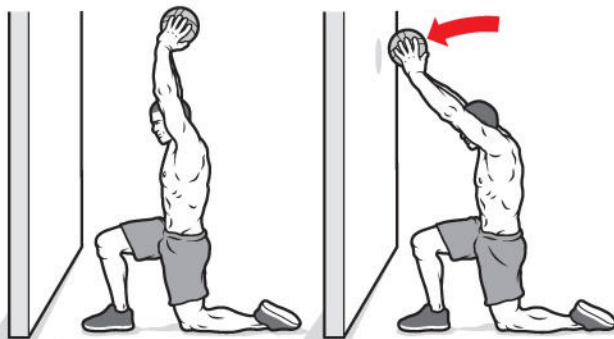
## DIRECTIONS

For the warmup, complete 3 sets of the first exercise and then 3 sets of the second one. Then do 3 rounds of circuit A, followed by 3 rounds of circuit B. For each circuit, complete all your reps of one exercise, rest 60 seconds, and then move on to the next exercise. For an additional challenge, perform one of the finishers in "Fry More Fat" (below right) after you've done this workout.

## WARMUP

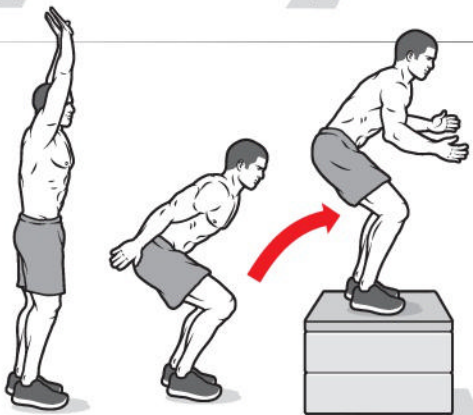
### 1 Half-kneeling overhead med ball slam

Grab a medicine ball and put your right foot forward and left knee on the floor. Hold the ball overhead. Brace your core and explosively slam the ball against the wall. Catch it close to the wall and immediately slam it again. Do all your reps; switch legs and repeat. Do 10 reps on each side.



### 2 Box jump

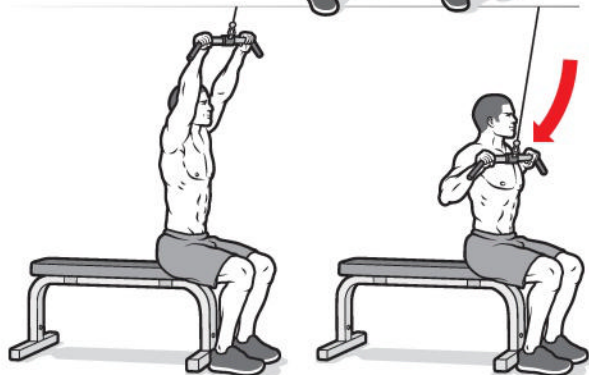
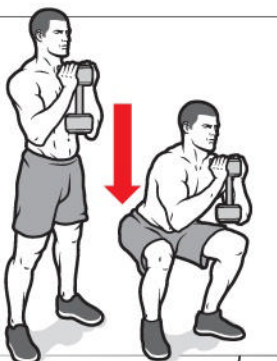
Stand facing a box. Raise your arms and squeeze your glutes. Quickly lower your arms and drop into a quarter-squat position, your hips back and knees slightly bent; then explosively jump onto the box. Land softly with your knees bent. Step down and repeat for a total of 8 reps.



## CIRCUIT A

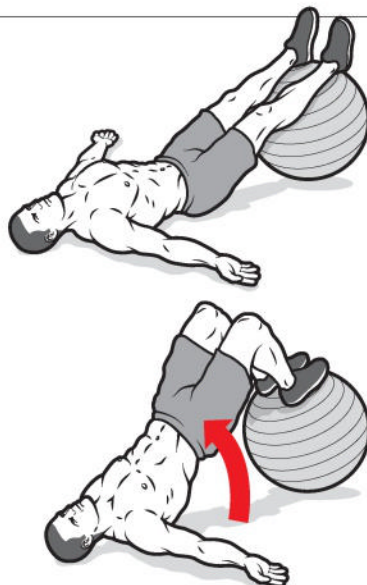
### 1 Goblet squat

Grab a dumbbell or kettlebell and stand with your feet just beyond shoulder width. Cup one end of the dumbbell with both hands and hold it vertically next to your chest. Push your hips back, bend your knees, and descend as far as you can while keeping your back straight. Pause; push yourself back up to the starting position and repeat. Do a total of 8 reps.



### 2 Lat pulldown

Sit at a cable machine. Grab the bar using an overhand, shoulder-width grip. Moving only your arms, slowly pull the bar down to your chest. The bar should pass directly in front of your face. Pause and squeeze your shoulder blades together. Now slowly return the bar to the starting position. Repeat for a total of 8 reps.

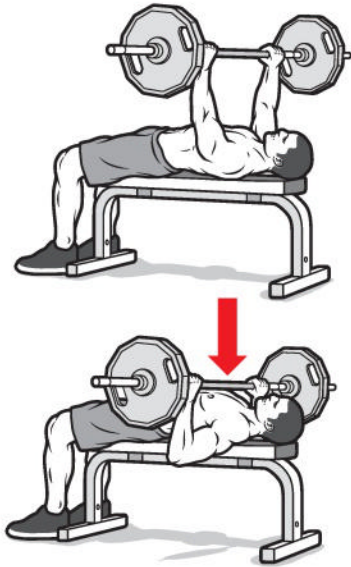


### 3 Swiss ball hip raise and leg curl

Lie on your back on the floor and rest your lower legs on a Swiss ball. Place your arms out to your sides, palms facing up. Now raise your hips so that your body forms a straight line from shoulders to ankles. Without pausing, pull your heels toward you and roll the ball as close as possible to your butt. Pause and reverse the motion by rolling the ball out until your body is once again in a straight line. Lower your hips to the floor and repeat for a total of 5 reps.



## CIRCUIT B

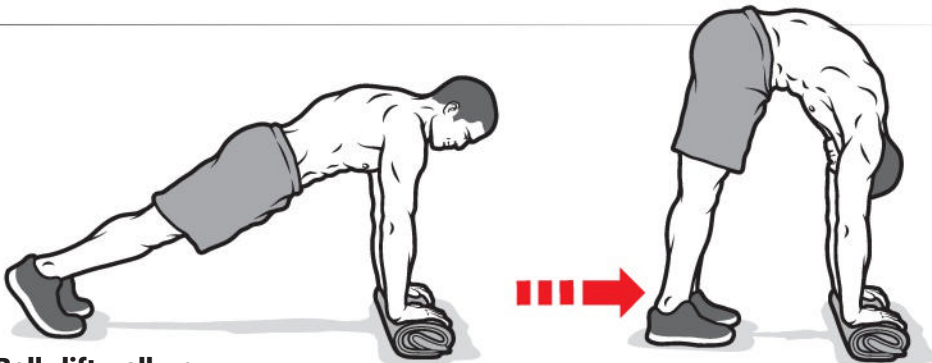
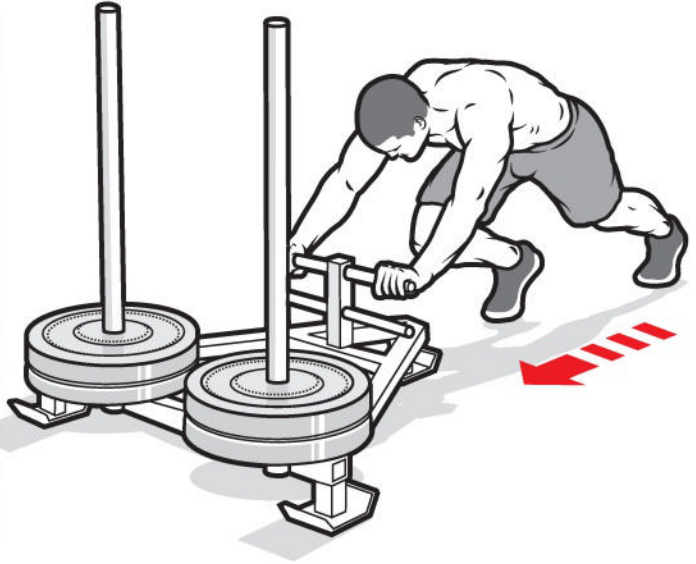


### 1 Barbell bench press

Lie on a flat bench. Using an overhand, shoulder-width grip, hold a barbell above your chest, arms straight. Lower it, pause, and press it back up. Keep your elbows tucked so that when you're in the down position, each upper arm forms a 45-degree angle to your side. Do 8 reps.

### 2 Prowler push

Grab the high handles of a loaded prowler sled and push it 100 feet. No prowler? Perform 10 dumbbell reverse lunges (step back, knee to floor) with each leg.



### 3 Belly lift walkup

Assume a pushup position, your hands elevated on a low step or a rolled mat. Keeping your legs straight, "walk" your feet as close as possible to your hands, rounding your upper back. Actively push your heels into the floor and your palms into the step or mat. Stop when you can no longer keep your legs straight. At that point, take a deep breath in and then exhale fully. That's one breath. Complete for a total of five breaths. Don't shrug your shoulders or rush your breathing.

## Fry More Fat

Cap off your workout with one of these do-anywhere finishers.



#### THE FINAL COUNTDOWN

Choose 4 body-weight exercises. Do 9 reps of each. Repeat, this time doing 8 reps, then 7, and so on until you're doing just 1 rep.



#### THE TWISTER

Move your body into different positions for 5 straight minutes, incorporating planks, pushups, walkouts, and various yoga poses.



#### THE BOXER

Grab a jump rope and do 5 skips. That's 1 round. Repeat, adding 5 skips to each round until you've hit 75 skips.

# SIX-PACK SECRETS

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**MH Fitness Director Ebenezer Samuel gets his core tested by Andy Speer, creator of *The Anarchy Abs Workout*.**

» This isn't what I expected: It's early in the morning in Brooklyn Bridge Park and I'm getting worked over by trainer Andy Speer in an odd abs-and-cardio session. First I'm learning to jump all over again; then I'm doing a reverse plank. It's 30 minutes of surprises from *The Anarchy Abs Workout*, Speer's workout video program. The plan blends metabolic training with strength work and gymnastics to fry your core. And it taught me a six-pack of lessons.

There's no denying it: This workout will kick your ass.





## HOLLOW HOLDS MOLD ABS

Conventional wisdom tells us to push our shoulder blades down and in during most traditional gym exercises. It's a way of countering the hunch associated with desk jobs. But in the gym, this posture causes your abs to relax, allowing your rib cage to expand and limiting oxygen intake.

Enter Speer and the hollow-body hold: A textbook gymnastics move, it's a key part of his abs-and-cardio routine. Lie on your back with feet together, arms overhead, and entire body tight. Now raise your arms; keep your shoulder blades, head, and legs a few inches off the floor and your lower back pressed into the floor. This forces your abs to contract deeply, pulling your rib cage downward.

## SMALL MOVES EQUAL BIG GAINS

Over the course of our workout, Speer finds other ways to make the hollow-body hold, a challenging move in its own right, even harder. First I'm rocking back and forth while maintaining the position, then kicking my feet in and out, and then flaring my arms out to my sides while remaining in the hold.

Each tiny adjustment challenges your already stressed core to counterbalance the movement and stabilize your body.

Add a challenge to your own workout: The next time you do, say, a plank, lift one foot off the floor and contract your glutes. Different feeling in your core, right?

## HEART RATE FUELS RESULTS

Speer's routine mostly alternates between hollow-body hold variations and a series of jumps—basic vertical jumps, 180-degree jumps, side-to-side bounds, and more. Everything is done against the clock. We perform the hollow-body hold for 45 seconds, rest briefly, and then immediately begin the next 45-second set of jumps.

The purpose of this alternation is simple: It's a creative way to raise my heart rate between sets of hollow-body work, adding to the challenge of the core training while also honing athleticism. "You can do a plank or hollow-body hold when you're fresh," he says. "But maintaining those positions with an elevated heart rate is a really athletic way to train."

## PROGRESSION IS A WORKOUT

I've probably jumped a million times in my lifetime, but this morning we're starting from square one. I explode onto my tiptoes but never leave the ground during my first set of "jumps."

But this is by design. Speer is guiding me through the often-overlooked technique of a jump, learning to load my hamstrings correctly before



eventually leaping side to side. And it all combines to nudge my heart rate upward. "Sometimes it seems a little like, 'All right, when are we getting to the workout?'" Speer says. "But if you do the steps properly, you're going to get a workout from the technique work." It's a way to turn any complex athletic motion into its own workout. Try working through the phases of a running motion the next time you're planning to run.

## TIME COUNTS MORE THAN REPS

It's incredibly easy to fall into a habit of counting reps and sets in the gym, especially if you train alone. But a separate 15-minute arm workout with Speer, which he puts me through after the abs-and-cardio routine, is a reminder that there's another way.



Use this expert advice to elevate your abs routine.



Every *Anarchy* workout pits you against time—working 40 to 50 seconds and resting 10 to 20 seconds. Speer adapts that same formula for the arm session as I battle the clock in JM presses for triceps and curl-to-presses for biceps. Incorporate this into your next arm workout, banging out curls for 40 seconds and resting for 20 during a four-minute set. You'll want to use a lighter weight than usual, but the change in the pace of your workout will leave your biceps crying.

### SPIDER LUNGES ARE SCARY GOOD

Speer introduces a variety of stretches throughout the *Anarchy* workout, but today he has me performing just one: a variation of the spider lunge. To do it, start by assuming a pushup

position; then, keeping your left glute tight, move your right foot just outside your right hand. Finally, reach your right arm overhead.

This is the one stretch you should do daily, says Speer, whether you're working out or not. Do 5 to 8 reps per side, two or three times a day. "You get a whole lot of bang for your buck with the spider lunge," he says. "It's a commonly used stretch drill for a reason."



#### CUT TO YOUR CORE

Torch fat fast and make your abs pop with *The Anarchy Abs Workout* by Andy Speer, available on the All / Out Studio app.

# SCULPTED CORE

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**Build an enviable physique with this four-week plan.**

» In this program, created by Bill Hartman, P.T., C.S.C.S., cofounder of Indianapolis Fitness and Sport Training, you'll work out 5 days a week. On days 1, 3, and 5, you'll lift. Here's how: In the first exercise, you'll "autoregulate" your sets. Afterward you'll complete two different circuits. You can follow this program for anywhere from four to 12 weeks to blast your abs into shape.



Your entire  
upper body will  
benefit from  
this routine.



## DIRECTIONS

On your strength-training days (1, 3, and 5), start with the Primary Exercise. Each Primary Exercise is done using "autoregulation" sets; that is, you'll do anywhere from 3 to 6 sets, depending on your form. If your form breaks down on, say, set 4, you're done for that day. Some days you'll be able to crank out 6 sets; others just 3. This method gives you a perfect muscle-building dose. Afterward, do the circuits: Perform the listed exercises in order and for the prescribed number of reps. The workout is over after you complete your circuits.

### DAY 1 PRIMARY EXERCISE 1

Sets: 3 to 6

Reps: 4, using a weight you can lift 6 times

Rest: 2 to 3 minutes between sets

### CIRCUIT 1

Exercises: 2, 3, 4

Reps: 6 to 8 each

Rest: 75 seconds

Rounds: as many as you can until your form fails

### CIRCUIT 2

Exercises: 6, 12

Reps: 8 to 10 each

Rest: 75 seconds

Rounds: 2

### DAY 2 Cardio: 45 to 60 minutes at a conversational pace

### DAY 3 PRIMARY EXERCISE 5

Sets: 3 to 6

Reps: 4

Rest: 2 to 3 minutes between sets

### CIRCUIT 3

Exercises: 4, 7, 8

Reps: 6 to 8 each

Rest: 75 seconds

Rounds: as many as you can until your form fails

### CIRCUIT 4

Exercises: 6, 12

Reps: 8 to 10 each

Rest: 75 seconds

Rounds: 2

### DAY 4 Cardio: 45 to 60 minutes at a conversational pace

### DAY 5 PRIMARY EXERCISE 9

Sets: 3 to 6

Reps: 4, using a weight you can lift 6 times

Rest: 2 to 3 minutes between sets

### CIRCUIT 5

Exercises: 10, 2, 11

Reps: 6 to 8 each

Rest: 75 seconds

Rounds: as many as you can until your form fails

### CIRCUIT 6

Exercises: 6, 12

Reps: 8 to 10 each

Rest: 75 seconds

Rounds: 2



## 1 Barbell floor press

Lie on your back and hold a barbell above your chest with your arms straight and knees bent. Lower the barbell until your upper arms touch the floor. Pause and press the weight back up to the starting position. If you don't want to lie on the floor, do a regular bench press.



## 2 Dumbbell alternating low-incline bench press

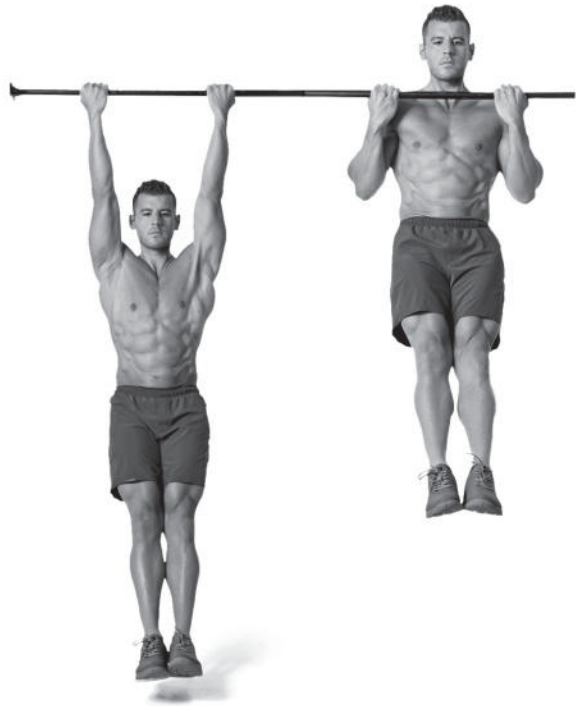
Lie faceup on an incline bench set to a low angle. Hold a pair of dumbbells above your chest with your arms straight and palms facing forward. Slowly lower your right arm to the side of your chest while keeping your left arm extended above your body. Press back up with your right arm, lower your left arm, and return to the starting position. That's 1 rep.





### 3 Dumbbell straight-leg deadlift

Hold a pair of dumbbells at arm's length in front of your thighs. Without rounding your lower back, bend at your hips and lower your torso toward the floor. Pause and return to the starting position.



### 5 Chinup

Hang at arm's length from a chinup bar using an underhand, shoulder-width grip. This is the starting position. Pull your chest to the bar as fast as you can, pause, and take 2 seconds to lower yourself to the starting position.



### 4 Lat pulldown

Attach a lat pulldown handle to the high pulley of a cable station. Grab the handle and sit in front of the weight stack. Slowly pull the handle to your chest. Pause and slowly reverse the move.



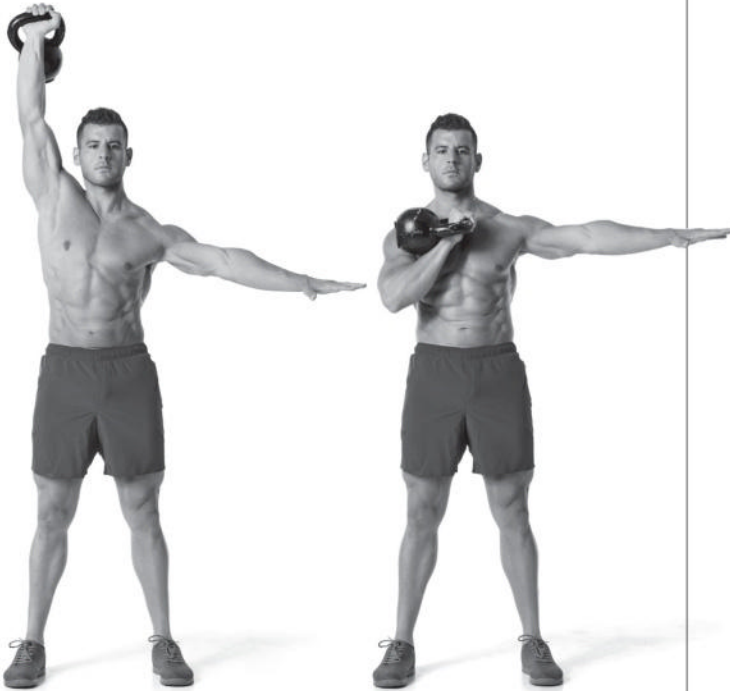
### 6 Suitcase carry

Grab a heavy dumbbell, hold it at your side, and walk. Keep your torso straight throughout. Walk 100 feet; then switch sides and walk the 100 feet back.



### 7 Dumbbell front squat

Hold a pair of dumbbells with your palms facing inward, upper arms perpendicular to the floor. Push your hips back and lower your body into a squat; then push back up.



### 8 Standing single-arm kettlebell push

Stand holding a kettlebell in your right hand with your arm bent, the kettlebell just outside your right shoulder. Extend your left hand out to the side. Press the weight overhead until your arm is straight; then lower it to the starting position. (You can use a dumbbell instead of a kettlebell.) Do all your reps; then switch hands and repeat. Don't rest between sides.



### 9 Deadlift

Bend at your hips and knees and grab a barbell using an overhand grip, your arms just outside your legs. Now stand up, pulling the bar off the floor and thrusting your hips forward. Lower it back to the floor.



### 10 Single-arm dumbbell row

Hold a dumbbell in your left hand and place your right hand and right knee on a flat bench. Lower your torso until it's almost parallel to the floor. Let the dumbbell hang at arm's length from your shoulder. Pull the dumbbell to the side of your chest. Pause and return to the start. Do all your reps, switch sides, and repeat.



### 11 High-knee stepup

Grab a pair of dumbbells and place your left foot on a bench or step. Press through your left heel and slowly lift yourself onto the bench as you raise your right knee to a 90-degree angle. Take 2 seconds to lower your right foot back to the floor. Do all your reps, switch legs, and repeat.



### 12 Kettlebell pullover

Lie on your back, holding a kettlebell by its horns above your chest with your arms straight. Bring your hips and knees to 90 degrees and feet together. Take in a big breath. As you breathe out, slowly lower the kettlebell directly behind your head, keeping your lower back on the floor. Pause; then breathe in as you pull it back up.



## CROSS-TRAIN YOUR CORE

Incorporate the right cross-training activities into your routine, and you can boost the strength and stamina of your abdominal muscles even on days when you don't do a single crunch. Here are five of the best ways to work your abs while cross-training. Just remember that whenever you're performing an activity in which your arms and/or legs are moving away from the center of your body, you should engage your abdominals by consciously pulling in your stomach to get maximum abs-building benefit.

### **Swimming**

Since you are practically weightless, all the force in swimming is generated from the core. To increase this power, exhale on the part of your stroke that requires the most effort.

### **Rock climbing**

It isn't just upper-body strength that gets you up a route. Reaching for a hold requires dynamic movement and isometric contractions of your abs.

### **Kickboxing**

The punching and kicking combo requires moving forward, backward, and laterally, and all the while the core works hard to stabilize the body.

### **Racquet sports**

When you hit a ball, the abdominal muscles are the bridge between the lower body and the upper body to help transmit force to the ball. As your abs get stronger, there is less stress on your shoulder as you hit the ball.

### **Yoga**

The entire focus of yoga is on the core—both strengthening it and using it to control movement of other parts of the body. With every exhale, focus on tightening the chain of muscles running from the pubic bone to the lower rib cage.



Weight training  
isn't the only  
way to sculpt  
your abs.



# FAST- TRACK ABS

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**Add this core finisher to your routine and you'll shred your abs fast.**

» These moves might look old-school, but add this 10-minute core finisher to your routine and you'll cut major muscle in less time than you think. "Now that many guys think they should never do situps, they're incredibly weak in the movement. But you need situps to perform better in many sports, and for more-defined abs," says trainer Bobby Maximus, who created this workout. Prepare to be sore for days!



You don't need  
to spend hours  
in the gym to get  
abs like this.





## DIRECTIONS

Do these exercises as a circuit, performing them in order for 30 seconds each. Once you've completed all 4, rest for 30 seconds. That's 1 circuit; do 4.



### 1 Situp

Lie on your back with your heels firm and knees bent 90 degrees. Keep your hands in a fist in front of your chest. Now raise your torso to meet your upper legs, keeping your back straight throughout. Lower your torso back to the floor.



### 2 Flutter kick

Lie on your back with your arms by your sides, palms down. Lift your feet and shoulders slightly off the floor. Now make small, rapid scissor kicks in the air—one leg rises while the other falls—while keeping your abs contracted.





**“You need [situps] to perform better in many sports, and for more defined abs.”**

### **3 V-Sit kickout**

Sit in a V position—feet off the floor, hips and knees bent, torso at a 45-degree angle. Your arms should be straight out in front of you. Lower your torso and straighten your legs, keeping your legs off the floor. Return to the V-Sit.



### **4 Plank**

Assume a pushup position, but with your elbows bent and your weight resting on your forearms. “Push” your upper back toward the ceiling. Brace every muscle in your body, especially your abs and glutes, as if you’re about to be punched in the gut.



# KICK UP YOUR CORE

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Challenge yourself with this routine inspired by mixed martial arts.

» A fighter's body should be a streamlined machine, as lean and muscular as it needs to be—no more, no less. That requires efficient training, says mixed martial arts trainer Chad Waterbury, M.S., author of *Elite Physique*. This workout develops upper-body strength, size, and endurance simultaneously, packing so much exercise into 15 minutes that you'll shrink your waistline in the process.

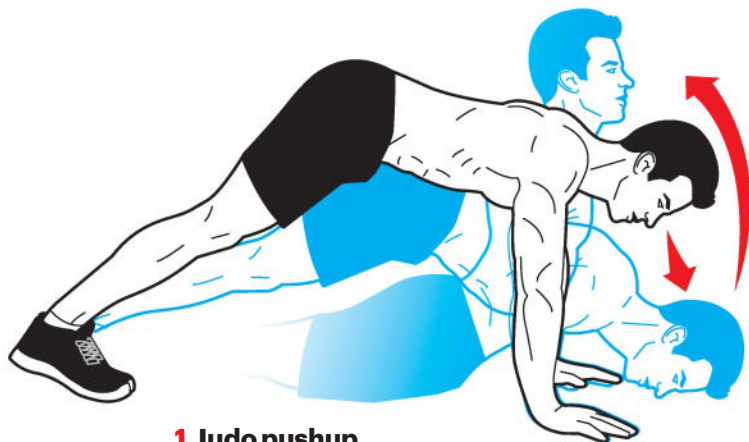




Use these kick-ass moves to build a body that's fit and functional.

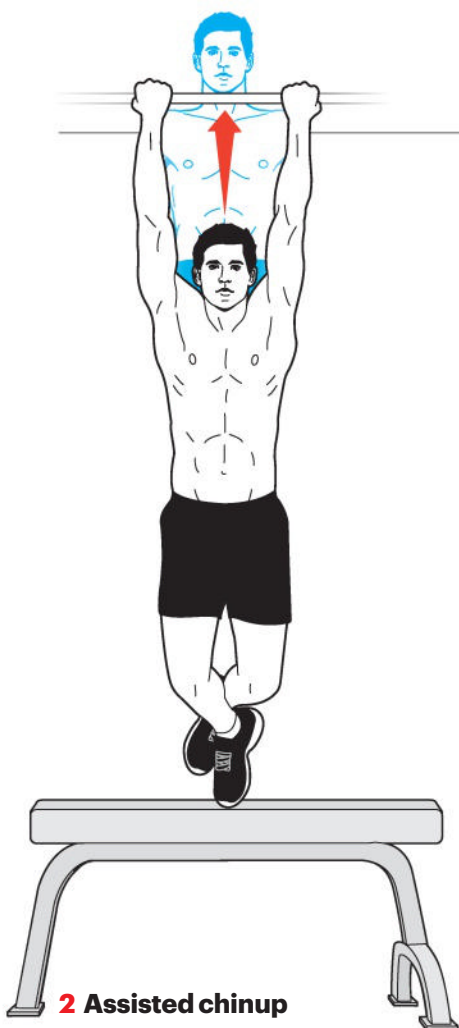
## DIRECTIONS

Start with 6 reps of each exercise, with no rest between moves. Then do 5 reps of each, and continue to count down until you do 1 of each. If you complete the workout in less than 15 minutes, add a rep to your first set next time—so you'll start with 7 instead of 6. If you can start with 8 reps and finish in 15 minutes or less, consider yourself ready to rumble.



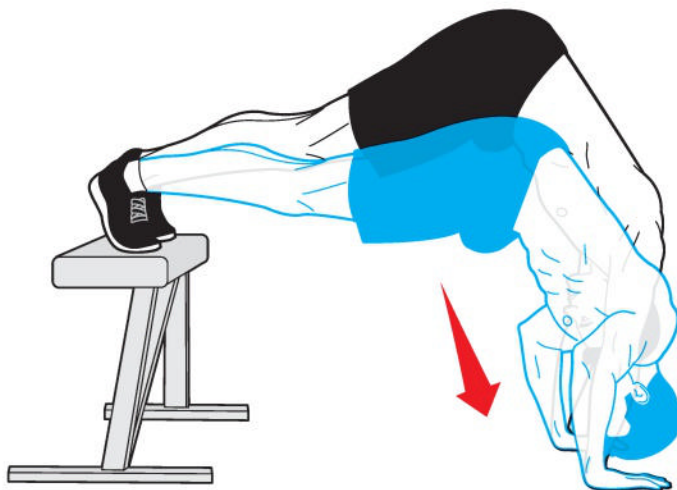
### 1 Judo pushup

Start in a modified pushup position, with your hands directly beneath your shoulders and your feet far enough forward that your hips rise. Now lower your body until your chin nearly touches the floor. In a continuous motion, raise your head and shoulders while lowering your hips until they almost touch the floor. Reverse the move to return to the starting position.



### 2 Assisted chinup

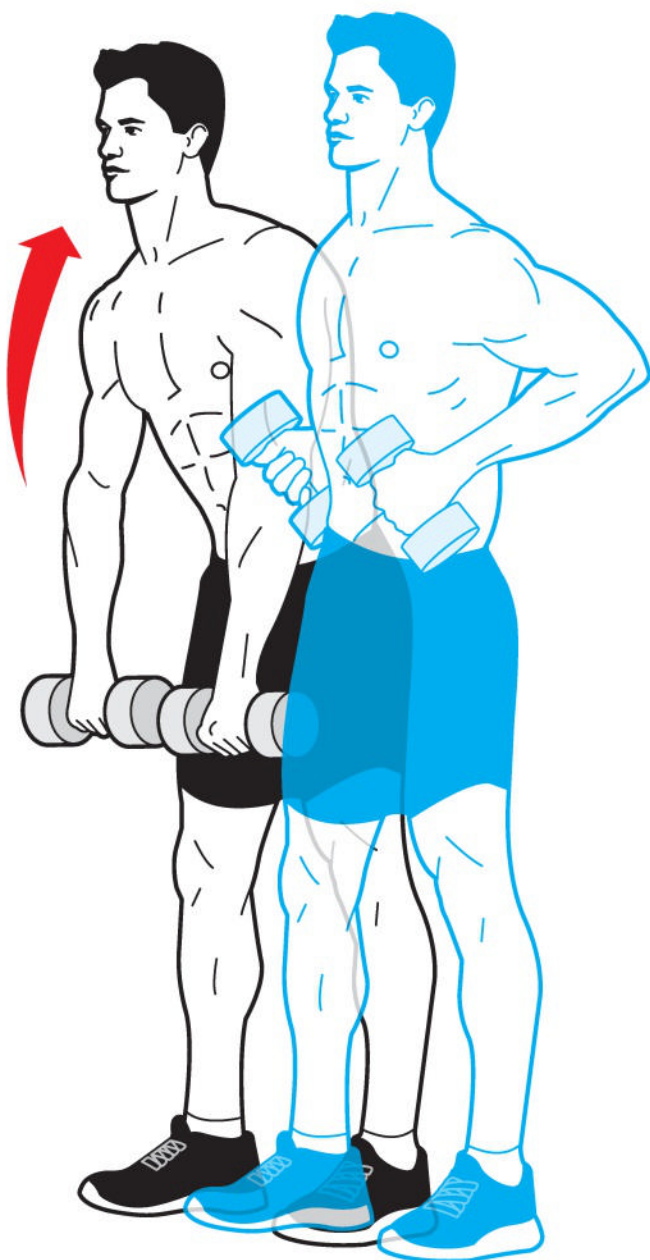
Stand on a bench beneath a chinup bar. Grab the bar using an underhand, shoulder-width grip. Cross your ankles behind you, with the toes of one foot resting on the bench. Hang from the bar with your arms straight and knees bent. Pull your chest to the bar, pause, slowly lower yourself, and repeat.



### 3 Inverted shoulder press

Place your feet on a bench and your hands on the floor, shoulder-width apart. Raise your hips so your torso is nearly perpendicular to the floor; your arms should be straight and your hands directly beneath your shoulders. Bend your elbows and lower your body until your head nearly touches the floor, and then push back to the starting position.

**“A fighter’s body should be a streamlined machine, as lean and muscular as it needs to be—no more, no less.”**



#### **4 Upright power row**

Stand holding a pair of dumbbells in front of your thighs, palms toward your body. Lean forward slightly from your hips. This is the starting position. Pull the weights up and to your sides as you straighten your torso, turning your palms toward each other on the way up. Reverse the movement to return to the starting position.

## **2 MINUTES OF HELL**

**Try this triple-threat leg drill after the upper-body workout**

Chad Waterbury’s fighters often end their workouts with a quick set of squats holding a medicine ball against their chests. “It’s great for building leg and core endurance,” he says. For a regular guy, Waterbury recommends using a 25-pound ball, dumbbell, or weight plate.

While conditioning your legs’ endurance, the drill also builds size. “The quadriceps respond well to higher reps,” Waterbury says, noting that cyclists and speed skaters, who work these muscles for hours a day, often develop giant thighs. The drill burns fat, too, working your muscles in continual motion while you lift your body weight—plus whatever weight you’re holding.



# ATTACK YOUR SIX-PACK

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**A radical way to strengthen your core? Focus elsewhere.**

» As L.A.-based trainer Shawn Phillips, who's been building his ripped midsection for nearly four decades, puts it, "Training your abs to get a six-pack is like trying to become a celebrated author."

Translation: Abs are less a result of targeted training and more a byproduct of working hard to get lean while building muscle.



When your abs  
are strong,  
your whole  
body benefits.

## BURN OFF THE BAD FAT

“If the goal is to see your abs, you can do that without directly training them,” says Alwyn Cosgrove, C.S.C.S., owner of Results Fitness in Santa Clarita, California. He specializes in fat loss, but not from hours of cardio.

Cosgrove builds around relatively brief but tough strength workouts. It initially seems counterintuitive: If you look at total calories burned, endurance exercise is ahead of strength training and intervals. Your heart rate stays elevated longer as you inhale more oxygen and exhale more carbon dioxide, signs that you’re burning calories swiftly.

**“The effect of all these processes—restocking energy, rebuilding muscles, restoring oxygen—adds up to lots of calorie burn.”**

Strength sets and intervals make you breathe much harder for shorter periods, with recovery time in between. Nonetheless, Cosgrove says he sees better results with clients who focus on these types of sets.

Studies show three major ways that high-intensity strength and interval training do more than you’d expect to get you lean.

### ENGAGE MORE MUSCLES

Exercises that use a lot of different muscles, like squats, burn more calories than ones that isolate smaller muscles, like crunches. Cosgrove enhances that effect by using unbalanced loads, which force muscles in the shoulders, core, and hips to act as stabilizers.

He increases the amount of unbalanced work by using unilateral moves, like lunges. So while you’re doing 8 reps per arm or leg, your stabilizing muscles are doing 16 per set.

You’re draining energy that you’ll need to restore after the workout. And you’re shifting work to your abdominals—targeting them “accidentally on purpose,” Cosgrove says.

### WORK THOSE MUSCLES HARDER

Muscle fibers come in different sizes, and your body activates the ones it needs. Your goal is to activate the biggest fibers, which use more energy and burn more calories.

You can do that two ways: First, increase the load, because you utilize bigger fibers when you lift heavier weights. Second, you can move the weights faster, because that’s more demanding than moving them slowly.

Don’t take either mechanism to the extreme, but work hard. As Cosgrove says, “It won’t work if you don’t work.”

### MAKE YOURSELF UNCOMFORTABLE

Novelty seeking may not go over well with the wife, but it works in the gym. Unfamiliar exercises burn more energy because you’re not efficient at them, so your body uses extra energy to learn the required coordination.

They’re also intimidating, activating adrenaline. That increases your heart rate, releasing fat from fat cells. And they create more muscle damage, triggering the calorically expensive process of rebuilding.

The effect of all these processes—restocking energy, rebuilding muscles, restoring oxygen—adds up to lots of calorie burn.

“The whole is greater than the sum of the parts,” Cosgrove says.

And it works: The more fat you lose, the more your abs will come into focus.

# Listen to Your Heart

**Most interval programs use the clock; you work for 30 to 60 seconds and then recover for twice that. There’s a smarter way, says Alwyn Cosgrove, C.S.C.S.**

**ACCELERATE TO 85** The type of exercise doesn’t matter. Run, ride, swim, swing a kettlebell, dance. Determine your work and rest by your heart rate. Build up to 85 percent of your max heart rate; it should feel like hard work.

**DECELERATE TO 70** Slow down to 70 percent until your breathing recovers. With each interval, the scant recovery builds an oxygen deficit. Your heart and lungs have to work extra hard to restore oxygen levels.

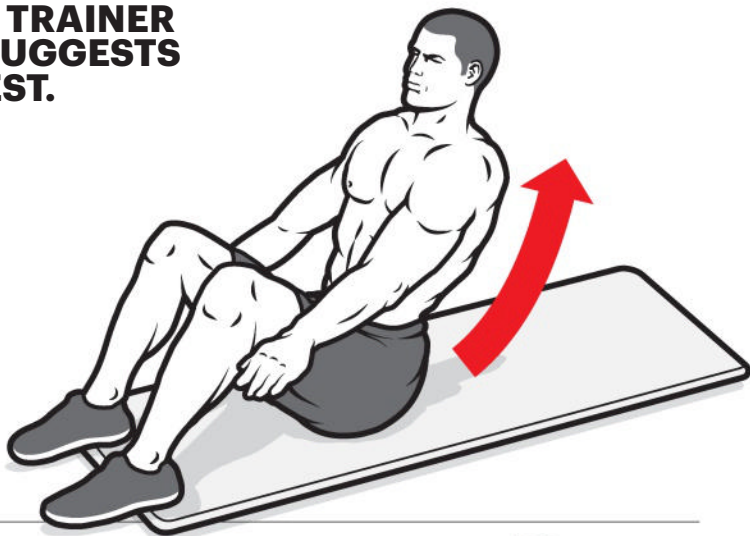


# STRONG MOVES

**WORRIED YOU'LL LOSE CORE STRENGTH IF YOU DON'T TRAIN YOUR ABS DIRECTLY? TRAINER NICK TUMMINELLO, SUGGESTS PERFORMING THIS TEST.**

**1**

Lie on your back with your knees bent and feet flat on the floor. Your arms should be at your sides. If you can sit up without jerking, lifting a leg, or otherwise generating momentum, you pass the first test.



**2**

Same thing, but with your legs straight and your hands on the tops of your thighs. If you can sit up without lifting either leg off the floor, you're pretty strong. Tumminello has seen bodybuilders and other fit-looking guys fail this test.



**3**

Same as Level 2, but with your arms crossed over your chest and fingers resting on the front of your shoulders. A smooth situp from this position is really tough and marks you as someone with really strong abs, even if you can't see them...yet.



## What now?

If you passed all three levels, you're good. Didn't pass Level 2? You probably should do some direct core work, especially for sports. Try practicing the Level 1 movement once a week for 10 to 12 reps.

# ENVIABLE OBLIQUES

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**Strong obliques will support you in every move you make. What's not to love?**

» Obliques help you flex and rotate your spine, and they protect your back from injury when you move something heavy. These three exercises from trainer BJ Gaddour, C.S.C.S., creator of [thedailybj.com](http://thedailybj.com), strengthen your obliques and burn fat so those side abs really show.



Your obliques  
form a vital part  
of your core's  
internal source  
of strength.

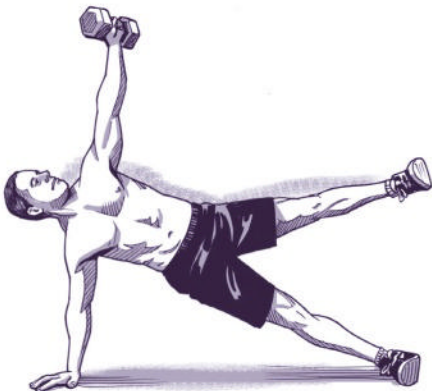
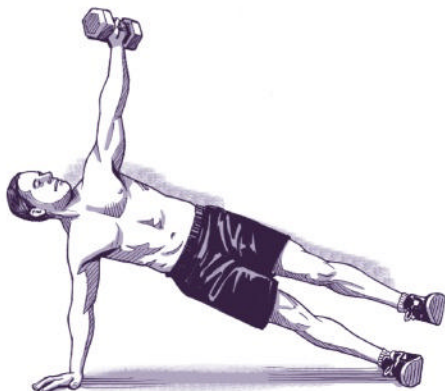


## DIRECTIONS

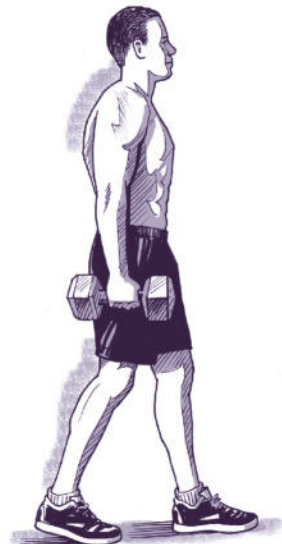
If you want to see a noticeable difference in your abs, you've got to work them from all directions. In this chapter, we've compiled the three best moves to target your obliques. Tack them on to your regular workout routine to cut extra flab, reveal chiseled muscles, and stimulate more gains.

### 1 Weighted side plank

Using a challenging weight, hold for 30 seconds on each side, resting 30 seconds in between. Do 3 to 5 sets per side. Make it harder by raising your top leg (below).



**Why it works:** *This total-body exercise is also great for working your hips, glutes, and shoulders.*



### 2 Single-arm carry

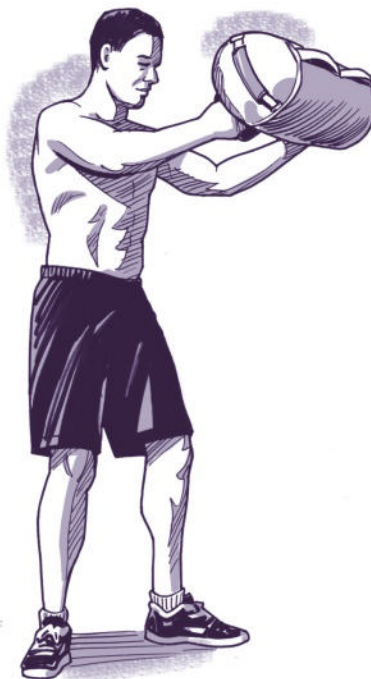
Hold a heavy dumbbell at your side with your arm straight. Walk while keeping your torso straight. Keep at it for 5 to 10 minutes, switching hands every 30 seconds. Too easy? Hold the weight at shoulder level or overhead.

**Why it works:** *This strengthens your grip too.*

### 3 Sandbag shoveling

Pivot your feet and bend your knees as you turn to the right, dropping your hips as you lower the bag. Push up and arc the sandbag across your chest and back down to the left.

**Why it works:** *Your obliques will work hard as you do 5 to 10 rounds of 30 seconds on, 30 seconds off.*





These exercises will keep your torso lean and strong and your spine injury-free.

# STRONG LOWER BACK

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**Give your abs the support they need. Bonus: You'll stand straighter and appear leaner as a result.**

» The lower back is a muscle group that no one thinks about until it gets hurt. But you must concentrate on it if you want the rest of your muscles to grow bigger and stronger in the safest, fastest way. The lower back works with the abdominals to maintain your posture—essential for any exercise that requires a straight back. Work your lower back too soon, though, and it'll be too weak to help support you when you're exercising other muscle groups. The smartest order: upper back first, lower back last.





The lower back is a vital player in your quest for overall health and strength.

## DIRECTIONS

After performing the seated row (below), pick one exercise from section A (lower back and glutes) and one from either section B (if you're in a gym) or C (if you don't have access to equipment). Then build your program using the chart on p. 76. If you want to work your core even more, try the "Challenging Changeups" on p. 77.

# THE SEATED ROW

**THE SEATED ROW IS IDEAL FOR DEVELOPING THE ENTIRE BACK. IN THIS VERSION, YOU BEND AT THE WAIST TO ISOLATE MUSCLES OF THE LOWER BACK. ADD THIS MOVE TO YOUR REGULAR STRENGTH WORKOUTS 3 TIMES A WEEK FOR GREATER STRENGTH AND SUPPORT.**

## How to Do It

Sit at a rowing machine (or a low-pulley cable) with your feet flat on the footrests and your knees slightly bent. Bending at the waist, lean forward and grasp the handles of a parallel-grip bar, palms facing each other. Slowly draw the handles toward your midsection while leaning back until your torso is perpendicular to the floor. The handles should touch you just below your chest as you become upright. Pause, then slowly lean forward from the waist, straightening your arms, until you return to the starting position. Use the numbered tips at right to improve your form and boost your results.

## Maximize Your Gains

- **No-slip grip.** If your biceps tire out before your back muscles do, try wrapping your thumbs on the same side as your fingers. This makes it harder for the biceps to get involved.
- **Less arms, more back.** Instead of using your arms to help pull the weight toward your midsection, use less weight than you normally use and keep your arms straight—elbows unlocked—throughout the move. This keeps your upper back and biceps from helping out, so you isolate the muscles in your lower back.
- **Aim higher.** Instead of pulling the handles toward your stomach, pull them toward the middle of your chest. This tweak isolates more of your trapezius, latissimus dorsi, and rhomboid muscles to add extra power to your stroke, swing, or serve.

## The Payoff

### EXTRA STRENGTH!

Pulling, swinging, and throwing hard all rely on transferred power that comes from twisting your torso. Building up your lower-back muscles reinforces your core so your waist can deliver more twisting power when you need it.

### BIGGER MUSCLES!

The stronger your lower-back muscles are, the more supportive they'll be during exercises that work other muscles. You'll see better results with less risk of injury from improper posture.

### MORE ENERGY!

A stronger spine allows you to eliminate unnecessary steps or motions as you move. A healthy lower back can help your body perform tasks with less effort and fatigue.

### A FLATTER STOMACH!

Standing straight takes strong muscles along the spine and throughout the lower back. The stronger these muscles are, the better they'll minimize the slouching that pushes your stomach out.







### 1 Feet

Both feet should be pressed flat on the platform in front of you at all times. If the footrest is a rounded bar that doesn't accommodate your entire foot, place your heels on the bar. Raising either foot as you perform the move disrupts your balance and places excessive stress on the knee of the leg that's still in place.

### 2 Legs

Sit with your legs slightly bent, knees unlocked, and hold them in this position throughout the move. Bending and straightening your legs lets your quadriceps help pull the weight, cheating your back muscles out of some of the stress.

### 3 Hands

Grab the handles firmly with both hands, palms facing in.

### 4 Wrists

Don't let your wrists bend in as you pull; it can cause your forearm muscles to give out before your back does. Keeping them straight will distribute the weight throughout your arms, so more of the effort focuses on your back.

### 5 Eyes

Focus on the handles when they're in front of you, but avoid tucking your chin down to watch them move toward your midsection. Instead, stare straight ahead.

### 6 Head

Keep your head and neck in line with your spine throughout the move. Turning or raising your head can strain neck muscles that are already contracted during the exercise.

### 7 Arms

Let the weight pull your arms out in front of you at the start of the move. As you begin to lean back, slowly bend your arms to help draw the handles toward your body.

### 8 Elbows

At the start of the exercise, keep your elbows unlocked. As you pull the handles toward your midsection, concentrate on drawing your elbows back behind you.

### 9 Abs

Keep them tight. The handles should end up directly in front of your upper abdomen, right below your chest. If you feel your shoulder blades rise as you pull, you've pulled the handles too high.

### 10 Lower Back

Your lower back should remain as flat as possible. Hunching forward places unnecessary stress on your lower back and spinal column. If you find it difficult to perform the move without hunching, you're probably using too much weight.

### 11 Butt

Sit flat on the bench so your body is even with the pulley in front of you. Sitting too much to one side can alter the angle of the exercise and make it more difficult to keep your wrists in line with your forearms.



# KNOW YOUR MUSCLES

The erector spinae—or spinal erectors—is a deep-muscle group running along both sides of the spinal column, from the iliac crest (the back of the pelvis) to the ribs, vertebrae, and skull. Each erector is made up of three separate vertical columns of muscle—the **1** iliocostalis (farthest from the spine); **2** longissimus (in the middle); and **3** spinalis (closest to the spine). Each of these three muscles divides into three segments, each named for one of four locations along the spinal column: the capitis (nearest the skull), cervicis (in the neck), thoracis (in the midback), or lumborum (in the lower back).

Together, they work to extend the spine (straightening it after it's been flexed forward) and bend it posteriorly (arching your back). They also help support your spinal column and assist with the extension and rotation of your head.



## Build Your Workout

Your level	Work your lower back	Sets	Reps	Speed of each rep	Rest between sets
<b>Beginner</b>	Three times a week	1–3	12–15	3–4 seconds up, 3–4 seconds down	30–60 seconds
<b>Intermediate</b>	Twice a week	2–4	8–12	2–3 seconds up, 2–3 seconds down	60–120 seconds
<b>Advanced</b>	Twice a week	3–5	8–12	2–3 seconds up, 2–3 seconds down	90–240 seconds

## SECTION A



### 1 Stiff-legged dumbbell deadlift

Stand with a pair of dumbbells on the floor in front of you, with your feet hip-width apart and your knees unlocked. Bending at the waist, reach down and grab the dumbbells so they're near your ankles and your palms face your feet. Keeping your back flat and legs straight (knees still unlocked), slowly raise yourself back up into a standing position, keeping your arms straight. Pause, then lower the weights back to the floor.

**Get more:** Leave the dumbbells on the floor and lift your left foot an inch. Slowly raise yourself into a standing position, then lower yourself back down—keeping your back flat and your knees at the same angle. Touch the weights. Then repeat the move with your right foot raised.



### 2 Incline kickback

Place your left knee on the end of a bench set at 30 to 45 degrees and put your chest against the pad. Grab the sides of the bench for support, then straighten your right leg, keeping the knee slightly bent. Slowly raise your right leg as high as you comfortably can. Pause, then lower your leg, keeping your foot off the floor to maintain tension on your muscles. Finish your reps, then switch positions to work the left side.

**Get more:** To raise your leg against more resistance, wrap exercise tubing around the ankle of the working leg and tie the other end to either the bottom of the bench or a dumbbell placed in front of the bench.

## SECTION B

### 1 Bench twist

Lie facedown on an exercise bench with your torso hanging off the end of the bench. Your hips should be touching the edge of the bench so you can bend at the waist. Raise your torso until your body is perfectly straight, and extend your arms out to the sides. Slowly turn your torso to the left. Pause, then slowly turn to the right.

**Get more:** *Instead of extending your arms out from your sides, add some weight by holding a light weight plate or medicine ball across your chest.*



### 2 Hyperextension

Lie across a hyperextension bench, tucking your ankles securely behind the footpads. Your thighs should lie flat against the wide pad in the front, leaving you enough room to bend at the waist without restriction. Fold your arms and slowly bend forward at the waist as far as you comfortably can, keeping your back flat as you go. Slowly raise your torso until your upper body is slightly higher than parallel to the floor. Pause, then slowly lower yourself to the starting position.

**Get more:** *Switch your arm position by either extending your arms out to the sides or placing your hands by your head, lightly touching your ears. At the top of the movement, twist your body to the left. Lower yourself; then repeat, this time twisting to your right.*



## SECTION C

### 1 Lying hyperextension

Lie facedown with your arms behind you and your fingers interlaced behind your lower back. Raise your arms behind you, pressing your knuckles toward your feet, then slowly raise your chest off the floor as high as you comfortably can. (Your feet and legs should stay on the floor.) Hold this position for a few seconds, then lower your chest.

**Get more:** *Lie facedown on a Swiss ball—with just your abs and chest touching—and place your hands alongside your ears. Being positioned on the ball allows you to work your back through a greater range of motion, since you can lower your upper body past parallel to the floor.*



### 2 Dry-land swimming

Lie facedown with your arms straight in front of you and your legs straight. Keeping your head facing the floor, simultaneously raise your arms and legs about 6 to 8 inches off the floor. Slowly kick your legs up and down while drawing your arms out to the sides and back in behind you. Continue for as many repetitions as possible.

**Get more:** *Every time you sweep your arms behind you, bring your legs back together—keeping them raised off the floor—and hold this position for 2 seconds.*



## CHALLENGING CHANGEUPS



### WIDE-GRIP SEATED ROW

Attach a straight bar to the cable and grab the bar with your hands more than shoulder-width apart, palms down. Slowly draw the bar toward your abs while leaning back until your torso is perpendicular to the floor. This works more of the muscles along the sides of your back (latissimus dorsi), adding width to your back.



### ROPE-HANDLE SEATED ROW

Attach a rope to the cable and grab an end with each hand, palms facing each other (thumbs up). Doing the seated row this way gives you more maneuverability at your wrists and works the muscles of your hands and forearms.



### SINGLE-ARM CABLE ROW

Attach a single handle and grab it with your left hand. Perform the seated row with one hand. This teaches your lower back to work with other muscles to help maintain your balance.

**SHO**

**WWE**



**OR RE**  
**UP**

**AK**

**ANKS**

# CAN'T- MISS MUSCLE

---

**They get little publicity, but these hard-to-pronounce muscles in your upper body and torso pack plenty of power.**

» Success typically depends on behind-the-scenes help, and your body is no different. While your abs and biceps receive all the glory, here's a secret: It's the little-known muscles that make the big ones stand out. The problem is, working the muscles you can't see—like the ones deep inside your core, hips, and shoulders—can be a difficult process. But target those areas, and your whole body benefits. You'll look better, have more strength, and suffer fewer injuries.



Small muscles  
may never earn  
top billing, but  
they'll ignite new  
growth.



## SERRATUS ANTERIOR

**KNOW IT:** This muscle, located on the side of your chest along your ribs, attaches to and allows you to rotate your shoulder blade (a.k.a. scapula). It plays a vital role when you raise your shoulder to flex your arm and move it away from your body; that's why it's prominent in boxers but not your average guy. The reason? Blame the bench press. Because of the support provided by the bench, the serratus anterior doesn't receive much direct challenge during this popular exercise, says Mike Robertson, C.S.C.S., a strength coach in Indianapolis.

**TEST IT:** Do a pushup without wearing a shirt and have someone look at your back during the move. If you have a winged scapula, your shoulder blade will stick out; this means your serratus is weak, says Robertson. A strong one suction your scapula in during the movement, eliminating the winged look.

**IMPROVE IT:** Standard pushups strengthen the muscle, but doing pushup variations is the quickest way to correct a weakness, says Robertson. Use a power rack to perform incline pushups on a barbell (1). Start with your body at the lowest incline that doesn't allow your shoulders to wing—which means placing the bar relatively high. Perform 3 sets of 8 to 12 repetitions. As you become stronger and learn to control your scapular motion, work your way down the rack until you're doing regular pushups with perfect body alignment.

## PIRIFORMIS

**KNOW IT:** This muscle near your gluteal (butt) region helps with thigh rotation and tends to suffer from overuse. Why? Because weak hamstrings and glutes force the piriformis to take on some of the work those big muscles should be doing, says Keith Scott, C.S.C.S., a strength coach based in New Jersey. This creates back and hip pain, and weaker lower-body performance.

**TEST IT:** Sit on a chair and cross one leg over the other, with the crossing ankle of one leg resting on the bent knee of the other. If you can't get your top leg parallel to the ground, your piriformis is probably tight.

**IMPROVE IT:** Increase your mobility with windshield wipers, says Robertson: Lie on your back with your knees bent and your feet placed wider than shoulder-width apart on the ground (2). Press your knees together, and then return to the starting position. Do 2 sets of 10 to 15 repetitions. Now add some soft-tissue work: Sit on a foam roller with your weight shifted to your right butt, and place your right ankle on your left knee. Roll your right glutes from top to bottom, working any painful areas. Continue for 45 to 60 seconds, and switch sides. Do this daily.

## PSOAS

**KNOW IT:** The psoas (so-az) muscle runs through your hips to connect the lower portion of your back to the top of your thigh. It's one of your body's main back stabilizers and hip flexors (the muscles that line your hips and allow you to bring your knees toward your chest). If you sit all day, the psoas becomes rounded like a banana; then, when you stand up, the psoas pulls on your back, making you more prone to pain and lower-back injury. "A weak psoas also means you'll end up with assorted knee issues, because other secondary hip flexors take over and cause pain," Robertson says.

**“A tight TFL can mean you're at an increased risk for lateral knee pain, because it attaches directly to your iliotibial band.”**

**TEST IT:** Lie on your back and pull one knee to your chest. Keep your other leg straight. If the psoas is of normal length, your straight leg will rest on the floor. If your leg sits above the floor, your psoas is either stiff or shortened, says Bill Hartman, C.S.C.S., a strength coach based in Indianapolis.

**IMPROVE IT:** The only way to strengthen a weak psoas is by bringing your knee above 90 degrees. Sit with your knees bent on a low box or bench (6 to 10 inches high) (3). Maintaining good posture and keeping your abs tight, use your hips to raise one bent knee slightly higher than your hips. If you lean forward or backward, you're not performing the exercise correctly. Hold for 5 seconds, and return to the starting position. Complete 3 sets of 5 repetitions per leg. To help release some of the pressure you may feel as you perform the move, use your thumb to press on your hip flexor; it'll be on your side and a little lower than your belly button.

## TENSOR FASCIAE LATAE

**KNOW IT:** This muscle (also known as the TFL) starts along the outer edge of your hip and can affect lateral movement (abduction), which is movement away from your body. A tight TFL can mean you're at increased risk for lateral knee pain, because it attaches directly to your iliotibial band—tissue that runs vertically along the outsides of your thighs to help stabilize your knees. Weak or tight abductors means you're constantly getting beat off the dribble, or you're late getting to the ball on the tennis court.

**TEST IT:** Try old-fashioned leg lifts. Lie on your side with your legs straight, and raise your top leg to about a 40-degree angle. Then lower it. You should be able to lift your leg in a straight line, without your hip or thigh moving forward, says Jeff Plasschaert, C.S.C.S., a strength coach based in Gainesville, Florida. Make sure you're using hip strength, though; many people substitute motion from their core and lower back to finish the movement.

**IMPROVE IT:** Stretching the TFL is the secret to improving your performance and protecting yourself from injury, say Robertson. To stretch your left TFL, stand with your left hip adjacent to a wall (4). Cross your right foot in front of your left foot. From this position, contract your core and left glute, and then push directly into your left hip. Don't let your hips move backward, and instead make sure your left hip pushes to the side. Hold for 20 to 30 seconds, and then switch legs so your other side faces the wall. Perform 2 or 3 reps on each leg every day.

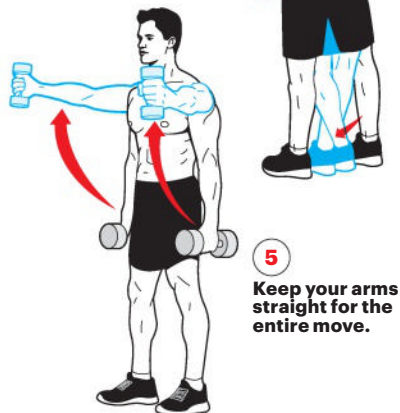
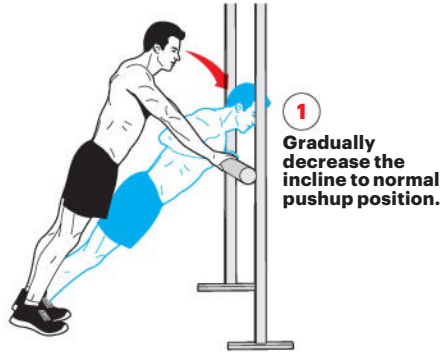
## SUPRASPINATUS AND SUBSCAPULARIS

**KNOW THEM:** The supraspinatus is one of the small muscles at the top of your shoulder that makes up the rotator cuff; the subscapularis is a large muscle on the front of your shoulder blade. Blame your desk job for weak shoulders: If your upper body is rounded, it's most likely because your chest is tight, which means the opposing muscles in your shoulders are weak. Strengthen the stabilizing muscles, and you'll see improvement on your bench press and in overhead sports like swimming or tennis, as well as in your overall upper-body power.

**TEST THEM:** Bring your arms straight out in front of you at about a 45-degree angle, your thumbs pointed up—like you're about to hug someone. Have a friend stand in front of you and push your arms downward with moderate pressure. (The friend's hands should be positioned above your wrists on your forearms.) If you feel soreness in your shoulders or can't resist the pressure, you probably need to strengthen your supraspinatus, Plasschaert says.

**IMPROVE THEM:** "A lot of people think they need to work the rotator muscles like crazy," says Scott. But a simple move is all you need, says Robertson. Stand holding a light pair of dumbbells in front of your thighs, palms facing each other (5). Keeping your thumbs pointed up, raise your arms up at a 30-degree angle to your torso until just above shoulder height. Hold for 1 second, and lower to the starting position. Do 2 sets of 8 to 10 repetitions. The exercise will help you add pounds to your bench by improving the stability of your shoulders.

# FIVE FUNCTIONAL FIXES



# A STRONG GRIP

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**You'll never grow if you can't carry the weight. L.A.-based trainer Andrew Heffernan, C.S.C.S., shows you how to keep strength and power from slipping through your fingers.**

» A large study suggests a link between weaker grip and higher risk of cardiovascular disease and early death. Plus, a weak grip is an invitation for injury at any age.

A strong grasp can also help you lift more and rack up gym PRs. "Often it's your hands that limit you when you lift," says Jedd Johnson, a five-time North American Grip Sport champ.

Want to hone a viselike grip? Here are the best ways to do it.





Use these exercises to build forearms of iron and strengthen your entire body.

## 1 CRUSH IT

Whenever you pick up a weight, squeeze the bar as tightly as you can. Actually, “crush the bar to a pulp,” says Pavel Tsatsouline, CEO of StrongFirst. Amp it up by squeezing your nonworking hand on single-arm moves like dumbbell rows.

## 2 GET FAT

Find extra-thick barbells, dumbbells, or handles for all your deadlifts and pulling exercises. Don't have a fat bar? Find a towel and wrap it around a standard bar to make it more difficult to grasp. The larger bars—which are roughly twice the thickness of a standard bar—force you to squeeze harder to get a secure grip, so relatively light weights feel heavier, Johnson says.

## 3 HANG OUT

For manlier mitts, strength coach Dan John recommends adding this simple challenge into your workout once a week: Do a pullup and then hang on the bar for 30 seconds. Without letting go of the bar, repeat until your grip fails or you can't complete a pullup. Ten reps translates into five-plus minutes on the bar—and proof that you have a badass grip.

## 4 MIX IT UP

Your brain's motor cortex puts to work more than 30 muscles just to control your hand. To strengthen all that sinew, think outside the barbell. “Towels hanging from the bar, thick ropes, and PVC pipes all place a different demand on your grip,” says David Jack, a personal trainer in Phoenix. Each week, do at least 3 sets of towel pullups or chinups, or pulling exercise variations with ropes.

### FOREARM EXTENSORS

The muscles on the back of your forearm work together in order to open your fingers and extend your wrist backward.

#### ■ TRAIN THEM

*Spread and open your hands as wide as you can while bending your wrists back. Hold for 30 seconds. Rest; then repeat.*

### THENAR MUSCLES

These help your thumb pinch toward your fingers, and they don't get much love in most gym workouts.

#### ■ TRAIN THEM

*Plate pinches. Start with two 5-pounders, smooth sides out. Work up to a 60-second hold.*

### PINCH PERFECT

The smooth-sides-out plate pinch is a gold standard of grip strength, but it's not the only way.

#### ■ STRUGGLING?

*Turn the smooth sides of the plates inside and hold; you'll still train your thenar muscles, but it's slightly easier.*

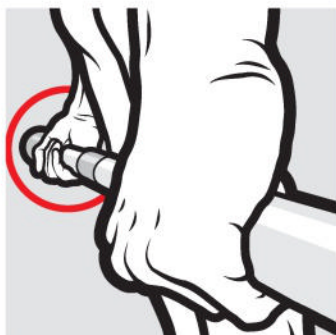
### FOREARM FLEXORS

The muscles on the pinky side of your lower arm help grab and grip: key actions in nearly all sports.

■ **TRAIN THEM** *Do wrist curls or any of the challenging moves at the bottom of the next page.*

# TRUE GRIPS

## GIVE YOURSELF A HAND.



### Deadlift

Use a mixed grip to handle heavy loads.

On lighter sets, use a conventional double-overhand grip. But on your heaviest sets, use a mixed grip—one palm facing you and the other facing away. This keeps the barbell more secure throughout the move. Each set, switch it up (so the hand facing you now faces away) to avoid repeatedly twisting your back in one direction.



### Olympic Lift

The hook grip may not be the best here.

Stick to a standard double-overhand grip, with your thumb outside your fingers, wrapping your fingers tightly. Elite powerlifters may tell you to use the hook grip (wrapping your fingers around both your thumb and the bar) on snatches and power cleans. If you're not a powerlifting beast, you might want to reconsider.



### Front Squat

Can't grab the bar? Use your wraps.

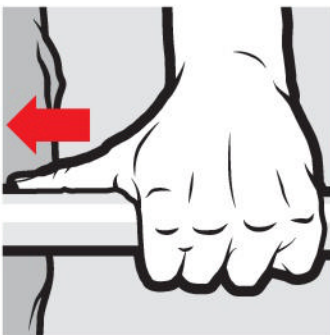
You want the bar across the front of your shoulders, using an overhand grip. If that causes shoulder, elbow, or wrist pain, just tie wrist straps or ropes to the bar, grab the ends, and then lift your elbows high beneath the bar. This will allow you to grip the bar even if you have mobility limitations.



### Bench Press

Wrap your thumb; skip the monkey grip.

While the monkey grip (fingers and thumb on the same side of the bar) is sometimes advised for shoulder comfort, it makes you more liable to drop the bar. Always wrap your thumb around the bar and focus on the distance between your hands. Keep your forearms perpendicular to the floor when the bar touches your chest.



### Power Clean

Put your hands just outside your hips.

This one is all about hand placement. To determine your optimum hand position, hold the bar in front of your thighs, extend your thumbs so they point toward each other, and shift your hands so your thumbs just touch the sides of your legs. This will enable your knuckles to rest outside your shoulders when the bar is at your chest.



### Running

Keep your hands loose and relaxed.

You may not be thinking about your grip when you go for a run, but you should be, says ultramarathoner Adam Chase, author of *The Ultimate Guide to Trail Running*. Avoid clenching your fists when you run, and focus on keeping your hands relaxed and loose, minimizing forearm strain and conserving energy.

## Getting a Firm Grasp

To beef up your grip, end each of your workouts with one of these techniques.



**KETTLEBELL CRUSH**  
Squeeze a kettlebell by its sides as if you're trying to deflate a basketball. Hinge forward and do rows. Do 3 sets of 10 to 12 reps.



**TOWEL GRIP**  
Drape a towel over a bar. Do chinups, one hand grasping the towel, the other the bar. Switch hands each set. Do 4 sets of 4 to 6 reps.



**BOTTOMS UP**  
On kettlebell shoulder and floor presses, hold the kettlebell with the weight pointing up. Do 3 sets of 10 to 12 reps.



# ALL GAIN, NO PAIN

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**Build your upper body, tighten your core, and reduce your injury risk with these moves.**

» Fitness should boost your body, not break it down. “Most nagging injuries are caused by pressure, friction, or tension,” says Sean Collins, P.T., Sc.D., professor of physical therapy at Plymouth State University in Massachusetts. Adjust your approach with this guide from Todd Bumgardner, C.S.C.S., a strength coach in New York City.



Keep yourself off the sidelines by injury-proofing your workout with these moves.



## DIRECTIONS

Alternate Workout 1 and Workout 2, with at least 48 hours between them. Treat the letters as mini-circuits, performing all your sets in the "A" workouts before completing your sets in the "B" workouts. Rest as needed throughout. In Workout 1, do 2 or 3 warmup sets for the rack pull. In Workout 2, do at least 1 warmup set for the front squat. Your goal is to lift a little more each time.

## WORKOUT 1

### A1 Rack pull

Set up the barbell on boxes so it reaches midshin level. Grab the bar overhand, push your hips back, and pull the bar up forcefully. Lower the weight under control. Do 4 sets of 4 reps.

### A2 Dumbbell incline bench press

Grab two dumbbells and hold them over your chest, arms straight. Lower them for 5 seconds; then, when they're just above your chest, push back up explosively. Do 4 sets of 4 reps.

### A3 Half-kneeling thoracic rotation

Inhale, then exhale deeply as you rotate your head and shoulders to the left without moving your lower body. Return to start. Do 4 reps, switch legs, and repeat to your right. Do 4 sets.

### B1 Kettlebell overhead press

Swing two kettlebells up into the rack position. Brace your core, tighten your glutes, and forcefully press the weights overhead. Lower them under control. Do 4 sets of 6 reps.

### B2 Dumbbell Romanian deadlift

Hold dumbbells in front of your thighs, push your hips back, and lower for 5 seconds. When they're below your knees, thrust your hips forward and return to the starting position. Do 4 sets of 6 reps.



## WORKOUT 2

### A1 Front squat

Swing two kettlebells into the rack position and stand with your feet shoulder-width apart. Push your hips back and descend slowly for 5 seconds before pushing back up forcefully. Do 4 sets of 4 reps.

### A2 Chinup

Grab a chinup bar underhand, keeping your hands roughly shoulder-width apart. Pull your body up explosively until your chin is above the bar. Take 5 seconds to lower your body. Do 4 sets of 4 reps.

### A3 Hip rotations

Raise your right knee until your thigh is parallel to the floor. Move it out to the side, and then rotate your thigh so your shin is parallel to the floor behind you. Revert to the start and repeat in reverse. Repeat with your left leg. Do 2 reps in each direction with each leg. Do 4 sets.

### B1 Rear-foot-elevated split squat

Hold a dumbbell or kettlebell in the goblet position. Put the top of your right foot behind you on a bench. Lower yourself for 5 seconds, tightening your left leg muscles. Push back up forcefully. Do 6 reps, then switch sides and repeat. Do 4 sets with each leg.

### B2 Chest-supported row

Set a bench to an incline of 35 degrees. Grab two dumbbells and put your chest against the bench so your chin is above the top and both feet are on the floor. Pull the weights up explosively, then lower them for 5 seconds. Do 4 sets of 6 reps.

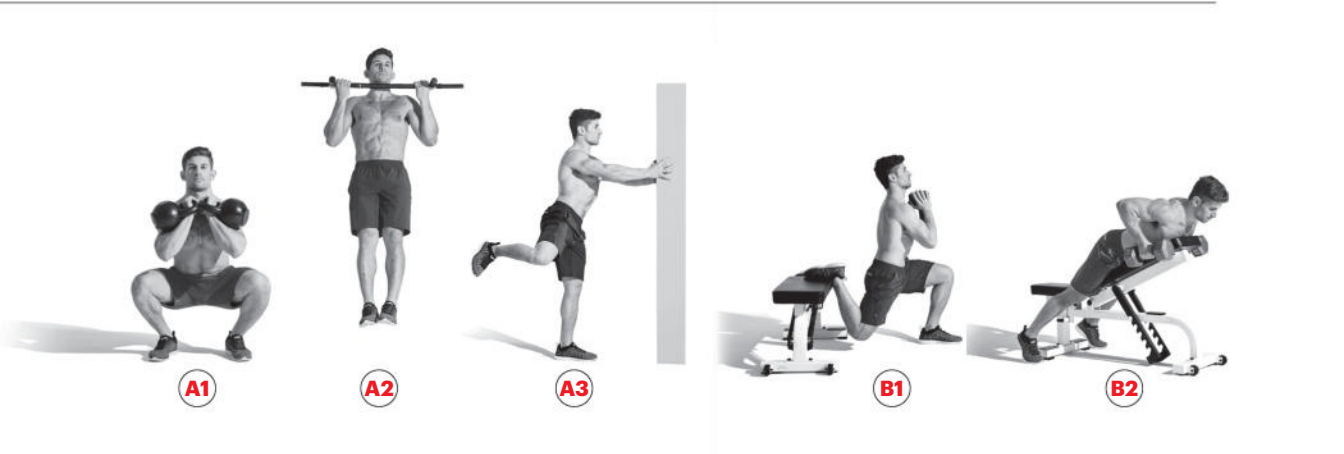




B1

B2

A3



A1

A2

A3

B1

B2

# PERFECT PUSHUP

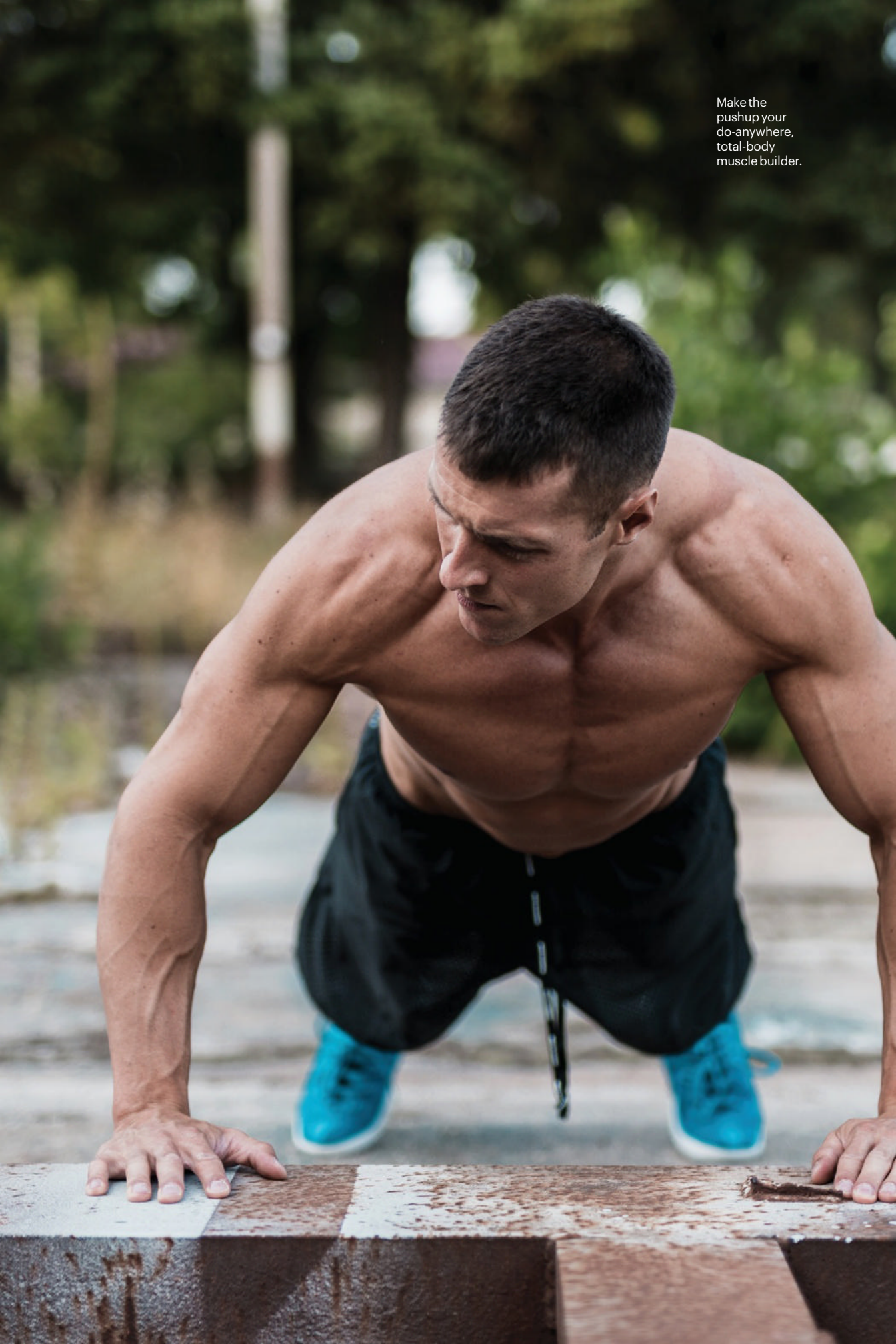
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**A well-executed pushup works your arms, abs—and every muscle in between.**

» The pushup is probably the first muscle-building exercise most guys ever master, and also the first one they abandon. At some point they discover the bench press, come up off the floor, and never look back. But if you want a truly athletic physique, that's a big mistake. Use our advice to turn the average pushup into a body-weight challenge that's sure to make you a believer in the power of the pushup.



Make the  
pushup your  
do-anywhere,  
total-body  
muscle builder.





# 1 Use the Pushup to Test Your Strength and Power

Performing 50 pushups in a minute is a classic fitness benchmark. "But you rarely see guys do even 1 rep with perfect form," says Rob Shaul, C.S.C.S., founder of the training facility Mountain Tactical Institute. "So whenever a guy tells me he can do 50 in a minute, I tell him to do it with the dead-stop pushup, where you lower yourself to the ground and lift your hands." That pause eliminates help from the stretch reflex—the tendency of a muscle to spring back to a shortened state when stretched—and forces you to move through a full range of motion. The result? No cheating. "It's a true test of strength," says Shaul. Read on to test yours, and then follow Shaul's plan to increase it.

## Dead-Stop Pushup Test

Assume a pushup position with your feet together, your body straight, and your hands below but slightly wider than your shoulders, as shown at right. Lower your body to the

floor. Lift your hands off the floor, pause, and then place them back on the floor and push up explosively. Do as many as you can in 60 seconds. Twenty is average; 30 is exceptional.

## Boost Your Strength

Add the dead-stop pushup to 3 of your weekly workouts. Do 5 sets, using the chart below to guide your reps. Retest yourself after 4 weeks. Repeat the 4-week cycle until you reach your goal: 30 perfect reps.

<b>WEEK 1</b>	40% of your test number
<b>WEEK 2</b>	40% of your test number
<b>WEEK 3</b>	50% of your test number
<b>WEEK 4</b>	60% of your test number

If your hips sag, consider that rep your last and end the set.



# 2 Transform the Pushup Into a Total-Body Workout

If you see the pushup as only an exercise, you're not realizing its full potential. "By combining different variations, you create a workout you can do anywhere," says Martin Rooney, C.S.C.S., founder of Training for Warriors. See for yourself with his pushup pyramid at right.

## Directions

Start at the base of the pyramid on the bottom left. As you work your way up one side and down the other, perform the number of reps indicated for each exercise. (See the descriptions at right.) Rest as needed according to your fitness level, below.

**BEGINNER:** Rest between each exercise.

**INTERMEDIATE:** Rest at the top (between sets of knee-to-elbow pushups).

**ADVANCED:** Rest at the end. Repeat.



## 1 Single-leg

Perform a pushup, but elevate one leg instead of keeping both feet on the floor.

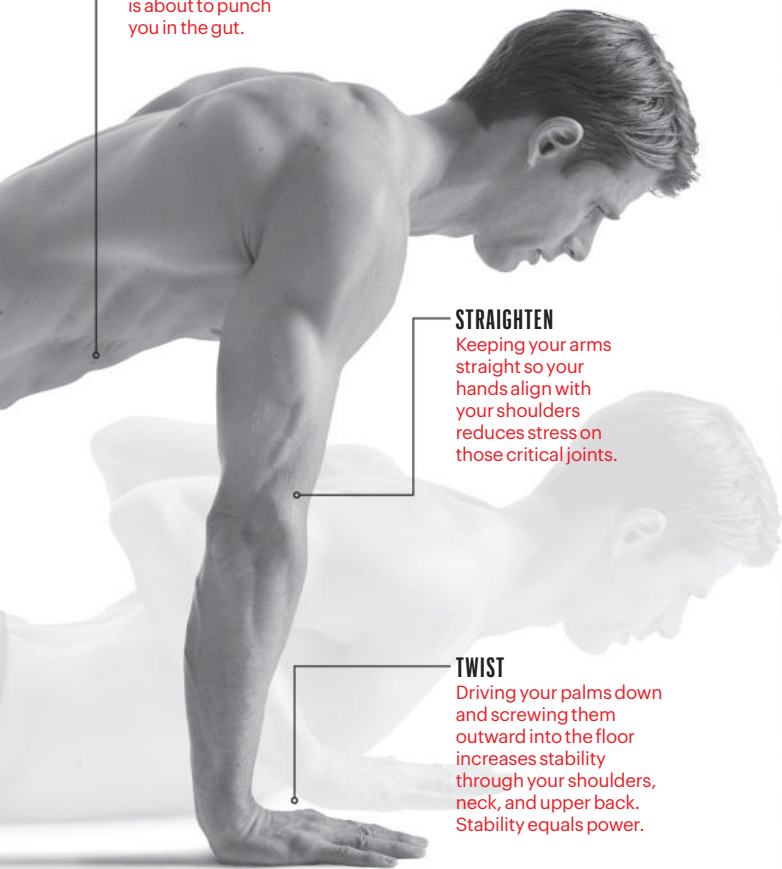


## 2 Dive bomb

Start with your hips up; then pull your body forward, lower your hips, and straighten your arms.

### BRACE

Increasing core tension boosts stability all over. Imagine someone is about to punch you in the gut.



### STRAIGHTEN

Keeping your arms straight so your hands align with your shoulders reduces stress on those critical joints.

### TWIST

Driving your palms down and screwing them outward into the floor increases stability through your shoulders, neck, and upper back. Stability equals power.



### 3 Knee-to-chest

As you press up, bring a knee toward your chest. Alternate knees with each rep.



### 4 Clapping

Do a pushup, but press up with enough force to launch off the floor and clap.



### 5 Knee-to-elbow

Do a pushup, but touch your knee to your elbow at the bottom. Alternate sides each rep.



### 3 Try the Single-Arm Pushup Challenge

Blame Rocky Balboa for making the single-arm pushup the benchmark that separates chumps from champs in the gym. "It's a high-skill, high-strength pinnacle exercise," says Mike Fitch, C.S.C.S., of Global Bodyweight Training. "The move ensures that both of your arms are equally strong, and activates your core more than a standard pushup does, forcing it to work harder to stabilize your body."

### Conquer It

Twice a week, do the exercises in the single-arm pushup progression below as a circuit, moving from one to the next with 60 seconds of rest after each move. Do 3 circuits. Each week, do the elevated single-arm pushup slightly lower (so you might progress from a high box to a bench to an aerobic step) until you can do 5 reps on the floor with perfect form.

## SINGLE-ARM PUSHUP PROGRESSION



### 1 Elevated single-arm

Spread your feet. Put one hand on a bar or tall box. Do 1 to 5 reps, switch arms, repeat.



### 2 Skydive

Lift your left leg. Put your left palm, right fingers, and right knee on the floor. Do 5 reps, switch sides, repeat.



### 3 Archer

Move one hand farther out to the side than the other. Do 10 reps, switch arms, repeat.



postscript

# WAKE UP, WORK OUT

Want to get a jump start on building your arms and abs? Then add this quick morning move to your routine.

**YOUR A.M. PRIORITIES (AFTER PEEING):** OPEN UP YOUR joints and raise your heart rate. This will boost fat burn, loosen you up, and energize you, says Ryan Parsons, D.C., coauthor of *The Four-Pack Revolution*. He likes the kettlebell swing, a whole-body, full-range-of-motion exercise that works your lungs, core, grip, and legs. Start with a 20-pound bell (or a 40-pounder if you got to bed early) and do 100 swings; keep your chest and head up and squeeze your glutes. No kettlebell? Do a body-weight circuit: 50 squats, 25 pushups, and 30 seconds each of a hollow-body hold (on your back with legs and shoulders raised), a superman hold (on your stomach with legs, arms, and shoulders raised), and a plank.

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