

# CRITICAL EXERCISE GUIDE



Traps

Deltoids

Lats

Back

Chest

Arms

Abs

Glutes

Quads

Hamstrings

**EXERCISES**



 **CRITICAL BENCH**.com

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The advice and tips given in this course are meant for healthy adults only. You should consult your physician to insure the tips given in this course are appropriate for your individual circumstances.

If you have any health issues or pre-existing conditions, please consult with your physician before implementing any of the information provided in this course.

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# INTRODUCTION

**I can't believe it has been close to a decade since I launched Critical Bench!**

Anyway...over the course of 10 years, I have built up an incredible resource of knowledge and photos (with the help of many other people). One of the most valuable resources I have on the site is called "The Exercise Database". It is a monster section!

**This database has grown into 200+ info packed pages on the website.**

I have always wanted to package this into an ebook format, but never found the time to get around to doing it. There is a lot of wisdom contained in those descriptions and photos.

**Luckily I was approached by someone who saw the value as well.**

Rusty Moore, who runs a high traffic fitness website as well called Fitness Black Book asked if he could create an ebook out of this vast amount of info. We made a deal...He would spend the time digging through the site and making it into an ebook and then we would both have rights to the final product.

**So here it is...**

This was created to easily navigate to whatever muscle group you need info on. If you want chest exercises, simply click that in the "Muscle Group Index". To get back to the listing of muscle groups, simply click the link [Click Here to Go to Muscle Group Index] at the bottom of any page. Simple enough.



My hope is that this is a resource that you will come back to again and again for new ideas.

As I always say...

**Keep training hard!**

-Mike Westerdal  
<http://criticalbench.com>

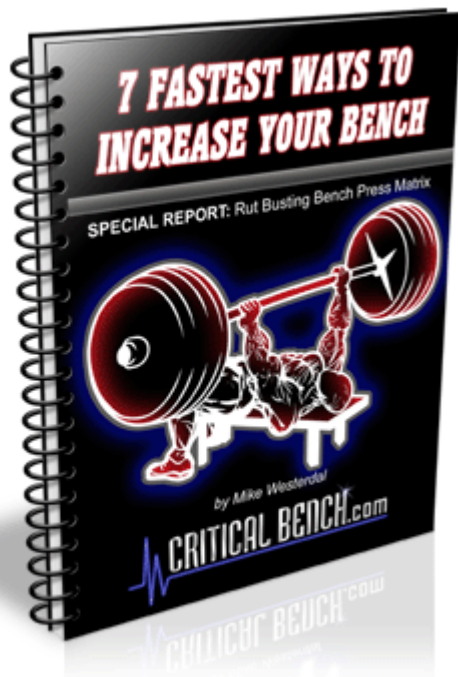
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## One more thing...

I am a fanatic when it comes to proper form and technique on the bench press.

I was compelled to write a free report that teaches people the perfect bench press technique, because I see mistakes that are holding guys back from their full potential. My specialty is teaching guys to bench 300+...and some guys will eventually blow that number away.

...but only if they get the proper technique down.



So how do you know if you are benching in a way that gives you the most explosive pushing power?

Well...make sure and go ahead and download my free report.

I've helped a lot of people get through sticking points by just making small tweaks.

**\*\*Click Here to Download\*\***  
[it will open in a new window]

## Finally...

The online database is constantly growing...

<http://www.criticalbench.com/exercises/exercises.htm>

Make sure and bookmark this page and check back from time to time for even more ideas. This ebook will should keep you busy for a long-time, but I still plan on adding to this database over time.

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# MUSCLE GROUP INDEX



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# FOREARM EXERCISES



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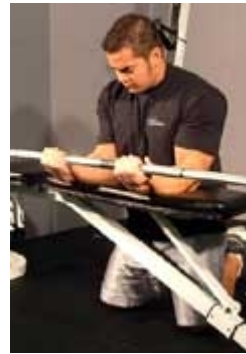
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## PALMS-UP BARBELL WRIST CURL OVER A BENCH

Pick up a barbell off the floor and sit on a flat bench with your legs straddling either side. Space your hands about 3 inches apart on the bar and let your wrists hang off the end of the bench with your palms facing up. Curl the weight towards your body until your forearms are fully flexed. Pause briefly at the top, and then lower the weight down as far as you can. Continue until you have reached muscular failure.

Tips: Make sure to use a full range of motion by fully flexing your forearms and getting a complete stretch at the bottom of the movement.



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## REVERSE CURLS WITH AN EZ CURL BAR

Grasp bar with a shoulder width over hand grip. With the elbows to the side, raise the bar until forearms are vertical. Lower until the arms are fully extended. Repeat. When the elbow is fully flexed, the elbow should only travel forward a few inches allowing the forearm to be no more than perpendicular to the floor to allow for a relative release of tension in the muscles between repetitions.



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## PALMS-UP DUMBBELL WRIST CURL OVER A BENCH

Pick up a dumbbell off the floor and sit on a flat bench with your legs straddling either side. Let your wrist hang off the end of the bench with your palm facing up. Curl the weight towards your body until your forearms are fully flexed. Pause briefly at the top, and then lower the weight down as far as you can. Continue until you have reached muscular failure.

Tips: Make sure to use a full range of motion by fully flexing your forearms and getting a complete stretch at the bottom of the movement.



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# DUMBBELL REVERSE FOREARM CURLS

Grasp a set of dumbbells. Let them hang at arms length in front of your body with a pronated grip. Your palms should be facing your body. Tighten your abs, look straight ahead and keep your shoulders back. You should be standing with your feet shoulder width apart. Your elbows should remain stationary against your sides throughout the entire movement. Now curl the dumbbells either both at the same time or one at a time so that you bring the back of your hand towards your shoulder. Lower and repeat. Make sure to breathe out as you contract and take a deep breathe in as you lower the weight during the negative or eccentric phase.

Tips: Keep your elbows locked to your sides. Your upper arm should not move during this exercise.



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## BEHIND THE BACK BARBELL FOREARM CURL

Set the pins on a squat rack so that the barbell will be at the height of your hands. Back up to the bar and grip the bar slightly wider than shoulder width. Lift the bar up and let the bar roll down your fingers. Close your fingers and roll the bar back up for a wrist curl. Use a full range of motion and squeeze the forearms muscles at the top of the movement. Your arms should be steady with only your wrists moving throughout this lift.



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## REVERSE GRIP BARBELL CURL

Grasp bar with hands at shoulder width with palms facing down. Keep elbows close to side and don't allow to move forward. Raise the bar to chest level in a curling motion. Squeeze at the top, lower and repeat.



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## BETWEEN THE LEGS KETTLEBELL PASSES

Grab a kettlebell by the handle with your feet shoulder width apart and with a slight bend in the knees. Swing the kettlebell between your legs and reach with your opposite hand behind your leg and grab and swing it from behind to around in front and through the legs again. This exercise is great for grapplers. It stresses the forearms and fingers in every direction and increases overall hand strength.



## BETWEEN THE LEGS PLATE PASSES

Grab two plates smooth side in pinching them together with your thumb on one side and other four fingers on the opposite side. Spread your feet shoulder width apart and with a slight bend in the knees. Pass the plates between your legs and reach with your opposite hand behind your leg and grab and swing it from behind to around in front and through the legs again. This exercise is great for grapplers. It stresses the forearms and fingers in every direction and increases overall hand strength.



## REVERSE BARBELL WRIST CURLS

Pick up a barbell from the floor and kneel over a flat bench with your forearms hanging off the edge. Space your hands about shoulder-width apart with your palms facing down. Curl the weight towards your body until your forearms are fully contracted. Pause briefly at the top and then lower the weight back to the starting position. Continue until you reach muscular failure.

Tips: Use a weight that is light enough for you to use a complete range of motion. You should be able to curl the weight all the way up and feel a full stretch at the bottom.



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# STANDING DUMBBELL WRIST CURLS

Pick up a pair of dumbbells off the ground and stand with your feet spaced shoulder-width apart. With your palms facing in, curl the weight in towards your body until your forearms are fully flexed. Squeeze your forearms in this position and then lower the weight down and away from your body until your forearms are fully extended. Repeat this motion until you reach muscular failure.

Utilize a full range of motion by fully flexing and extending your forearms on every rep.





# BICEP EXERCISES



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# HAMMER CURLS

Stand with your feet about shoulder width apart and pick up a pair of dumbbells off the ground using your legs (not your back). With your palms facing inward, curl the dumbbells up one at a time. When you get to the top of the movement, squeeze your bicep, pause briefly, and then return the weight to the starting position. Alternate between arms until you reach muscular failure.

Tips: Make sure to move naturally throughout the movement by swaying your body slightly as you lift the weights. This will help to protect against injuries and will also maximize muscle stimulation. It is also important not to curl the weights past the point where tension will leave the biceps.



## STANDING TWO-ARMED CABLE CURLS

Stand between two pulley machines and grasp the handles of each side with an underhand grip. Allow your arms to extend straight out to your sides at shoulder level, parallel to the ground. Keeping your elbows set in place, slowly curl your hands toward your shoulders making sure that both of your biceps are doing the work. Squeeze both biceps at the peak of the movement for a one-count and return to the start position and repeat.



## CROSS BODY ONE-ARMED CABLE CURLS

Hold a stirrup handle attached to a low pulley machine with your left hand using an underhand grip. Slowly curl the handle up so as to try and touch your hand to your opposite shoulder, really focusing on having your biceps do the work. Slowly return to the start position and repeat with your right arm.

Tips: It is important that you move naturally throughout the entire movement rather than keeping your back completely straight and rigid. It is okay to sway back and forth slightly as you lift and lower the weight as this is a more natural movement and will maximize muscle stimulation. Also remember not to curl the weight to the point where tension leaves your biceps.



## DUMBBELL PREACHER CURLS

Using a preacher bench, hold one dumbbell in your right arm with your palm up. Support your arm and elbow against the pad and do not move them during the lift. Curl dumbbell up until the forearm touches the bicep. Lower to starting position using the same path. Finish set and switch arms. Can also be done with 2-arms or a regular barbell.



## INCLINE DUMBBELL CURLS

Sit on an incline bench and hold a dumbbell in each hand. Keep your shoulders square and your chest up. Press your upper back and shoulders against the bench. Let your arms hang downward with your palms facing each other. Slowly curl the weight in your right hand out and up to shoulder level, while turning your wrist so that your thumb is on the outside. Squeeze your bicep at the top and then slowly lower the weight back down. You can also do this standing or by doing one arm at a time.



## CONCENTRATION CURLS

Sit on a bench with your feet on the ground. Bend over and grasp a dumbbell with your left hand (your palm should be facing up). Your elbow should be slightly touching the inside of your thigh above the knee. Slowly raise your hand toward your upper arm. Slowly lower the dumbbell to the initial position without locking the elbow joint to complete one repetition. Repeat this exercise with the right arm.



## CROSS BODY DUMBBELL HAMMER CURL

Stand with your feet about shoulder width apart and pick up a pair of dumbbells off the ground using your legs (not your back). With your palms facing inward, curl the dumbbells up one at a time across your body. When you get to the top of the movement, squeeze your bicep, pause briefly, and then return the weight to the starting position. Alternate between arms until you reach muscular failure. Hammer curls are a good mass building exercise for the biceps.

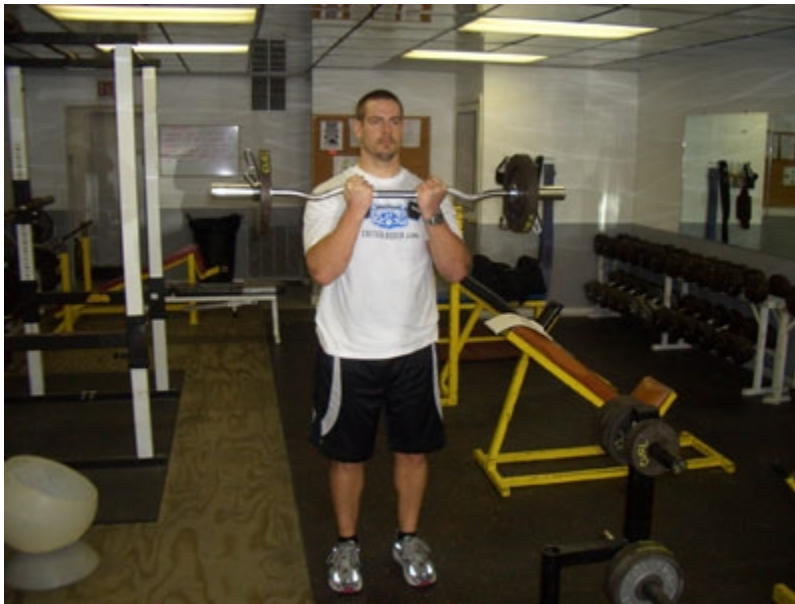
Make sure to move naturally throughout the movement by swaying your body slightly as you lift the weights. This will help to protect against injuries and will also maximize muscle stimulation. It is also important not to curl the weights past the point where tension will leave the biceps. You want to contract at the top of the lift not rest.





## EZ-BAR BICEP CURL

Keep hands slightly closer than shoulder width apart. DON'T rock weight for momentum or allow elbows to move forward. Curl the weight up, squeeze, and lower. Be sure to fully extend your arms at the bottom of the lift. Feet should be about shoulder width apart.



## TWO-ARMED DUMBBELL PREACHER CURLS

Using a preacher bench, hold one dumbbell in each arm with your palms up. Support your arms and elbows against the pad and do not move them during the lift. Curl dumbbells up until the forearms touch the biceps. Lower to starting position using the same path. Do not rest at the top of the movement, simply squeeze and lower.



## CLOSE GRIP CHIN UP

Use an underhand grip, about 6-12 inches apart. Have a partner assist by "hooking" arm under ankles if needed. Concentrate on contracting biceps, NOT pulling with back. You MUST fully extend arms at the bottom. Never swing body for momentum.



## KETTLEBELL BOTTOMS UP CLEAN

Hold the kettlebell by the handle while standing and swing the kettlebell back and then up while curling the kettlebell up. The bottom of the the kettlebell should be facing up toward the ceiling. This exercise builds forearm and bicep strength.

Depending on the weight you will really need to grip and squeeze the kettlebell handle very tightly while you are balancing the kettlebell upside down to ensure the kettlebell does not roll toward your head or off to the side. The harder you squeeze the more you activate your forearms in the movement.



## KETTLEBELL TOWEL HAMMER CURLS

Loop a towel through the kettlebell handle. Perform a normal hammer curl with a neutral grip while holding on to the towel.



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## KETTLEBELL TOWEL CURLS

Loop the towel through the handle of the kettlebell and grab the towel and do a standard curl. The towel end leading toward the kettlebell should be going to the outside of your hand (the thumb). This puts the appropriate stress on the biceps and also increases forearm activation. This one will really burn up your biceps.



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## RESISTANCE BAND BARBELL CURLS

Loop a band around the middle of a barbell. Stand on the opposite end of the band. Grasp the barbell in both hands about shoulder width apart. Contract the biceps muscle and curl the bar up toward your chest. The band overloads the top portion of the lift and increases the difficulty at the easiest portion of the lift.



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# BARBELL CURLS

Stand with your feet shoulder width apart to give your body a solid base. Grip the bar with your palms facing in spaced about shoulder width apart and bend slightly forward. Pick the bar up off the ground using your legs (not your back) and extend your arms, giving your biceps a full stretch. Curl the weight towards your body, pause briefly at the top, and then return the weight back to the starting position.

It is important to allow your body to move naturally throughout this exercise. Your back should not be completely straight and rigid, but instead should move with a slight sway as you curl the weight up. This does not mean that you should cheat and be sloppy with your form, it just means that you should move in a natural motion to prevent injury and allow you to handle more weight. It is also important that you do not curl the weight so high that the tension leaves your biceps. Simply curl the weight to the point where you feel a full contraction in your biceps, and then let the weight down.





## STANDING DUMBBELL CURLS

With a shoulder width stance, pick up a pair of dumbbells and hold them at your sides, palms facing in. Starting with one arm (you will perform this exercise one arm at a time, alternating back and forth) curl the weight towards your body. As you curl the weight, rotate your palm forward so that it is facing you at the top of the movement. Pause briefly at the top, squeeze your bicep and then return the weight to the starting position. Repeat that same motion with the other arm.

Instead of keeping your back completely upright and rigid, allow yourself to move naturally throughout the motion. This means leaning forward slightly at the bottom of the movement and allowing your back to sway naturally as you curl the weight up. This will prevent injuries and allow you to handle more weight. Also, do not curl the weight to the point where the tension leaves your biceps.



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## SEATED DUMBBELL CURLS

Sit on the bench holding a dumbbell in each hand. With your palms facing each other, curl each arm one at a time by rotating your wrist so that your palm is facing in at the top of the movement. Pause briefly at the top, squeeze your bicep and then return the weight to the starting position. Alternate between arms until you reach muscular failure.

Do not use jerky motions or momentum to lift the weights. Allow your body to move naturally, but keep the weights under control at all times. Also try not to curl the weight too high to the point where tension leaves your bicep.



# TRICEP EXERCISES

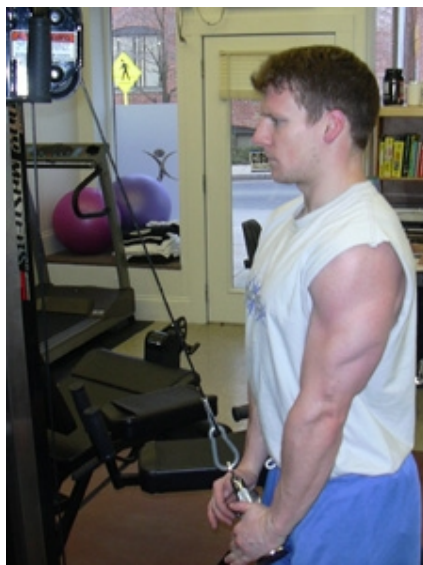
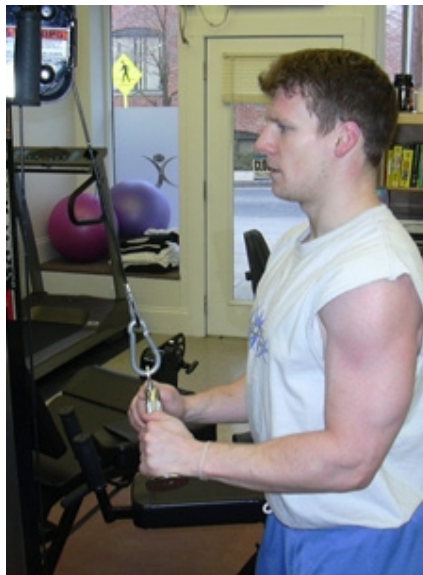


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## TRICEP CABLE PUSHDOWN

Take a few steps back from the machine and using an overhand grip, space your hands on the bar slightly less than shoulder-width apart. You can also perform this movement with one foot in front of the other if it feels more comfortable. Lean forward and start with the bar touching your forehead. With force, drive the weight down to your waist by extending your elbows. Make sure to keep your elbows close to your sides at all times. Once you have locked your elbows out at the bottom, squeeze your triceps and then return the bar back to the starting position by touching your forehead.

Tips: Make sure to move naturally throughout this movement by leaning forward as you drive the weight down to your waist. By moving naturally you will be able to use more weight and maximize muscle stimulation. Also remember to use a full range of motion by bringing the bar all the way up to your forehead and fully locking out at the bottom of the movement.



## CLOSE GRIP BENCH PRESS

Lie down on a flat bench and grip the bar anywhere from 8-10 inches apart. With your feet, butt and shoulders firmly planted on the bench, un-rack the bar. Keep control of the weight, lower the bar until it touches the middle of your chest. Pause briefly at the bottom and then drive the weight back up to the starting position.



# OVERHEAD DUMBBELL EXTENSIONS

While sitting on a flat bench, pick up a dumbbell off the floor and place it on your thigh. Grip the weight by placing both hands, one overtop of the other, inside the dumbbell and holding the top set of plates. Use your thigh to help kick the weight up and up onto your shoulder. Extend the dumbbell directly overhead and fully extend your arms. Start the movement by lowering the dumbbell behind your head until you feel a complete stretch in your triceps. Pause very briefly at the bottom and then drive the weight back up by extending your elbows until they are fully locked out.

Tips: Try to keep your elbows as close to your head as you can during this lift in order to maximize the stress on your triceps. Also remember to use a full range of motion by fully stretching your triceps at the bottom and locking the weight out completely at the top. Having a spotter is very important for this exercise to make sure you don't injure yourself.



# TRICEP DIPS

Grip the dip bars about shoulder width apart and start the movement with your arms fully extended and your body upright. Lower your body until your upper arms are just below parallel to the ground, pause briefly at the bottom, and then drive your body back up until your triceps are fully contracted and locked out.

Tips: Make sure not to grip the bars too wide as this will shift the stress from your triceps to your chest. Also remember to stay upright throughout the movement rather than leaning forward. If you can perform more than 7 reps using your own bodyweight, use a weight belt and dumbbell to add extra resistance



## ONE-ARM TRICEP CABLE PUSHDOWNS

Standing a few steps back from the machine and hold the attachment using an underhand grip. If it feels more comfortable you can also stand with one foot in front of the other. Start the movement with the handle at your chin. Drive the weight down to your waist while keeping your elbow at your side at all times. Lock your elbow out at the bottom, squeeze your tricep and then return the handle back to the starting position. Repeat the same motion for the other arm.

Tips: Make sure to keep your elbow at your side at all times in order to keep the tension on your tricep at all times. Also make sure to use a full range of motion by bringing the handle as high as it will go and locking your elbow out at the bottom.





## OVERHEAD TRICEP EXTENSIONS - EZ CURL BAR

Sit on the bench and grip the bar about shoulder-width apart on the angled portion of the bar. Start by lifting the bar directly overhead. Keeping the weight under control, lower the bar behind your head by bending at the elbows until you feel a full stretch in your triceps. Pause briefly at the bottom and then drive the weight back up to the starting position by fully locking out your elbows. Repeat the motion until you reach muscular failure.

Tips: Make sure to use a full range of motion on this exercise by lowering the bar until your triceps are fully stretched. Do not sacrifice your form to lift heavier weight. It might also help to have a spotter assist you on this lift by handing you the loaded bar and taking it from you when the set is complete.



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## SEATED ONE-ARM DUMBBELL TRICEP EXTENSIONS

While seated on a flat bench, grab a dumbbell and lift it straight overhead. Keeping your elbow in place at all times, lower the weight behind your head until you feel a full stretch in your triceps. Pause briefly at the bottom and then drive the weight back up to the starting position, fully locking out your elbow at the top. Repeat the exercise using the other arm.

Tips: Make sure to use a full range of motion on this exercise in order to maximize muscle stimulation. This means lowering the dumbbell until your triceps are fully stretched, and locking the weight out at the top of the movement. You don't have to be super-strict with your form, but try and keep your elbow as in place as possible.



## LYING TRICEP EXTENSIONS - SKULL CRUSHERS

Pick the loaded bar up off the ground and sit yourself down on a flat bench. With the bar resting on your thighs, lie back on the bench and bring the bar to your chest. Push the bar directly over your chest and fully extend your arms. Start the movement by bending at the elbows and lowering the weight behind your head. Once you feel a full stretch in your triceps, drive the weight back up by extending your elbows until they are fully locked out. When you have reached muscular failure you can either hand the weight to a spotter or simply lay it on the ground behind your head.

Tips: Using a full range of motion is very important on this exercise. When most people perform this lift, they simply bring the bar down until it touches their forehead. This limits the amount of muscle stimulation they can achieve since they aren't using a full range of motion. Make sure to bring the bar behind your head rather than simply touching your forehead. A spotter can be very helpful on this exercise by handing you the weight when you are in the lying position and taking the weight from you when you are finished. You can also perform this lift with dumbbells.



## TRICEP DUMBBELL KICKBACKS

Lean forward and place one arm on the bench in order to support your body. Pick up a dumbbell off the ground and hold it at your side. You should keep your elbow close to your side and form an "L" shape with your arm. Start the movement by extending your elbow and pushing the weight behind you. Squeeze your tricep as you lock out your elbow and then return the weight to the starting position.

Tips: It is important to let your arm move naturally through this motion rather than trying to keep it completely straight and rigid. You should not use jerky motions or momentum to lift the weight, but remember to loosen your form up slightly in order to maximize muscle stimulation and prevent injury.



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## CLOSE GRIP DUMBBELL PRESS

Lie down on a flat bench holding a set of dumbbells. With your feet, butt and shoulders firmly planted on the bench, lower the dumbbells until they touch the middle of your chest. Pause briefly at the bottom and then drive the weight back up to the starting position. The difference between this exercise and the chest press is the fact that you will NOT let your elbows flare out. They need to stay close to your sides the entire movement to fully target the triceps.

Tips: Make sure to use a full range of motion and stay in control of the weight at all times.



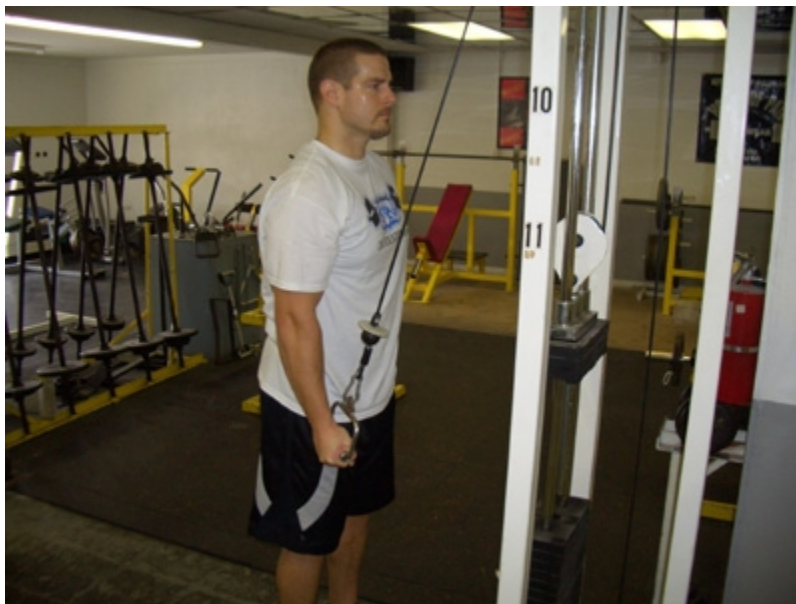
## TWISTING DUMBBELL TRICEP KICKBACK

Kneel on bench with working elbow at hip and palm facing forward. Keep elbows close to body and twist dumbbell on movement until palm facing away and SQUEEZE!



## REVERSE GRIP CABLE TRICEP PRESS-DOWN

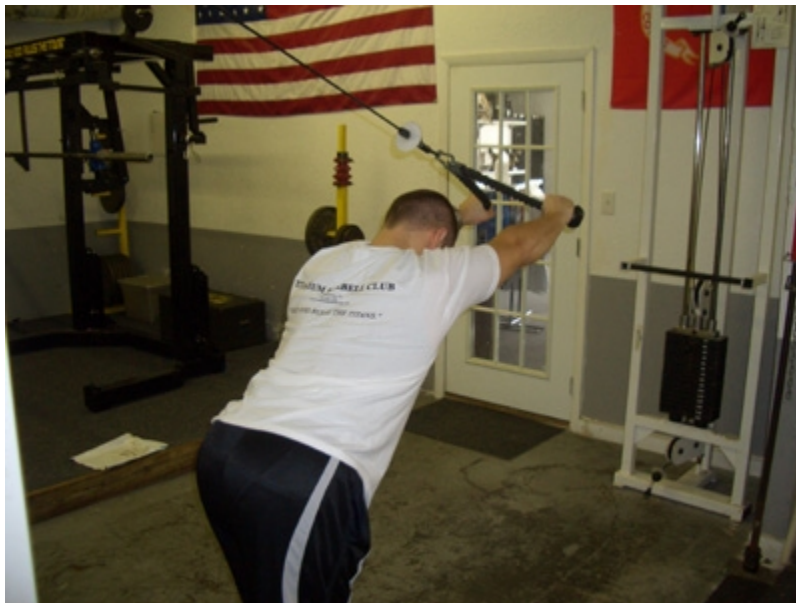
Use underhand grip (supinated) with single-grip attachment, working one arm at a time. Keep arms close to side and bend fully at elbow. Fully extend and squeeze at bottom. Don't raise arms beyond 90 degrees at top of the movement.



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## OVERHEAD CABLE TRICEPS EXTENSION

Grasp high cable with rope attachment. Face away leaning forward with elbows at temples. Keep upper arms locked, fully extend and squeeze. Make sure you keep your elbows nice and close to your head so that they do not flare. You may need to lower your head just a bit to keep it out of the way. A staggered stance is usually best for balance. You can put the heel of your back foot up against the cable machine for support. The degree of the bend in your torso can vary.





## LYING DUMBBELL FRENCH PRESS

Lie on flat bench, arms extended, palms facing out. Keep upper arms locked bending only at elbows. Lowering dumbbells toward forehead, rotating until palms facing in. Reverse, squeezing triceps.



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# KETTLEBELL TRICEPS EXTENSIONS

Grab a kettlebell by the handle and extend it overhead. Bend your arm at the elbow and let the kettlebell come behind your head and flex your tricep and extend it overhead. Using a kettlebell for this exercise will decrease the amount of stress on the elbows and shoulder joints.



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## RESISTANCE BAND TRICEP PUSHDOWNS

Stand on a band and reach down and grab the ends with each hand. Extend your arms out and up with your shoulders. The end of the movement should finish at finish position of a military press. This exercise really works the shoulders and rear delts. This also increases overall flexibility in the shoulder joint.



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## DIPS USING WEIGHT BENCH

This exercise can be performed on many different pieces of equipment. If using a flat bench, start by sitting sideways on the bench with knees and legs together slightly bent.

Grasp both hands down by your side onto the bench making sure that your hands are parallel to your shoulders. Slowly walk your feet out keeping your legs together and raise your body up until your arms are fully extended. Slowly lower your body bending at the elbows until you've reached the lowest point. Then raise your body back until your arms are fully extended again.

Tip: Keeping your body straight throughout this exercise is extremely important. You can also add in different options on where or how high to place your feet once you're ready to increase more strength.



# STANDING EZ-BAR FRENCH PRESS

In a very controlled and precise manner, start flexing (bending) at the elbow joints and begin to lower the EZ-bar downward and backward in a semicircular arc behind your head. Lower the EZ-bar down behind the head to the "bottom-stretch position." This is achieved when the forearms reach a parallel to the floor position or slightly beyond, until you feel a good stretch contraction in the triceps. Press the EZ-bar by extending (unfolding) the forearms upward (from the bottom-stretch position) in a semicircle to an overhead, arms-locked position. It is important always to fully extend the forearms at the top end of the movement, with poised deliberation, so that they are in line with the upper arm.



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## CLOSE GRIP PUSH UP

By keeping your hands close together-about two inches apart-the traditional push-up emphasizes the triceps. To do this exercise, lie on the floor with your feet together and your hands flat on the floor-thumbs facing inward. Keep your body straight and your elbows tucked in at your side while you push up until your arms are fully extended. Hold for a second and then lower yourself until your chest is about two inches off the floor and then repeat.



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# SHOULDER EXERCISES



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## SEATED DUMBBELL PRESS

Pick up a pair of dumbbells off the ground (using your legs, not your back) and sit down on the bench. Place the dumbbells on your thighs, just above your knees. Use your knees to kick the weights up into the starting position with the dumbbells at shoulder height, elbows out and palms facing away from your body. Your feet should be planted firmly on the ground and your back should be flat against the bench. With your abs nice and tight, drive the weights up straight overhead but do not lock your elbows out. Pause briefly at the top and then return the weights back to the starting position.



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## STANDING FRONT DUMBBELL RAISE

Pick up a pair of dumbbells (using your legs, not your back) and stand with your feet about shoulder-width apart. Bend both your arms and knees slightly and hold the dumbbells so that your palms are facing your body. One arm at a time, raise the weight up straight out in front of you until it is slightly higher than shoulder height. Lower the weight back down over the same path and perform the same movement with the other arm. Alternate back and forth between arms until you reach muscular failure.

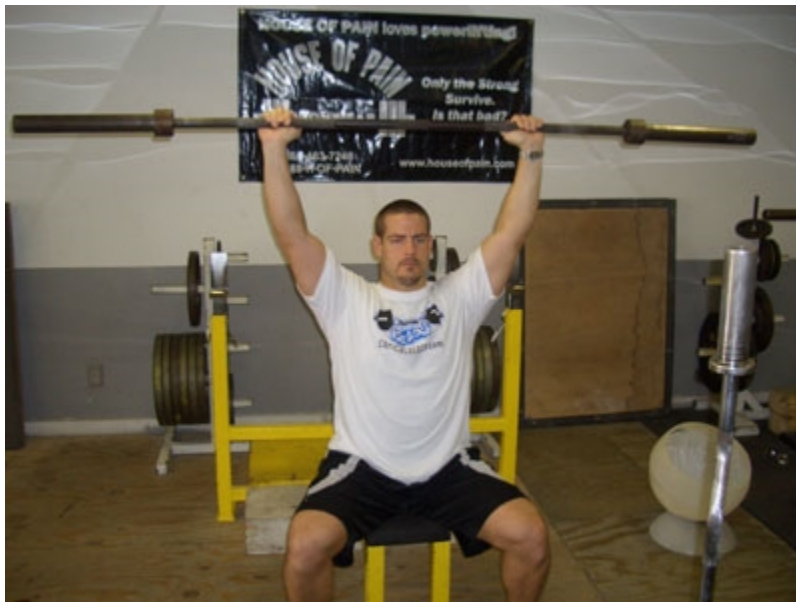
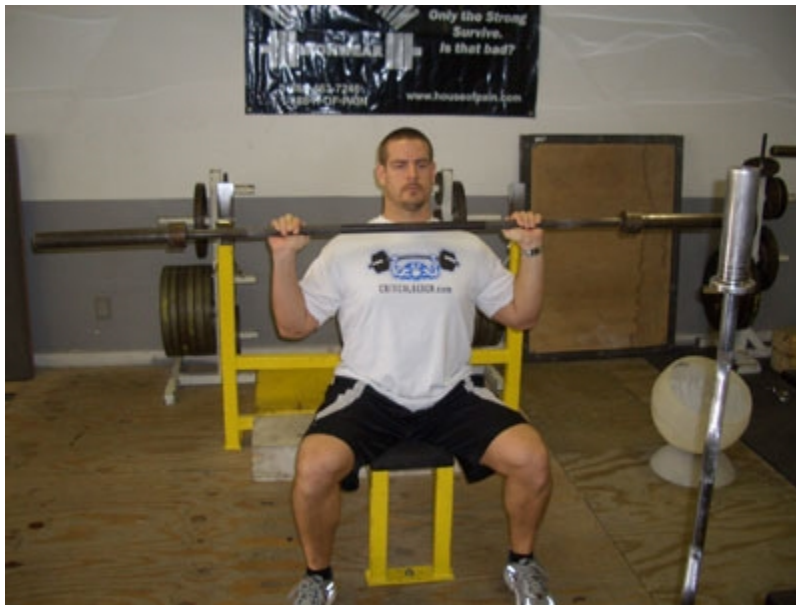
Tips: Make sure not to be too strict with your form on this exercise. In order to maximize muscle stimulation and prevent stress to your lower back, try to move naturally by allowing your back to lean slightly forward and back as you lift and lower the weights. Don't get sloppy with your form, but moving naturally is probably a good idea. You should also make sure not to raise the weight too high as this will shift the stress away from the front of your shoulders.



## SEATED BARBELL MILITARY PRESS

Place your hands on the bar slightly wider than shoulder width and un-rack the weight. Keeping your abs tight, lower the bar down below your chin until it touches your upper chest. Drive the weight back up straight over your head but do not lock your elbows out at the top. Continue the movement until you have reached muscular failure and then have a spotter help you re-rack the bar.

Tips: It is very important to have a spotter when performing this exercise so that someone is there to help you re-rack the bar when you reach muscular failure. Also remember not to lock your elbows out at the top of the movement as this will keep the stress on your shoulders throughout the entire exercise. Keeping your abs tight is also very important as this will help to support your spine and lower back.



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## DUMBBELL UPRIGHT ROW

Hold dumbbells, hanging, against your upper thighs. Keep dumbbells about 10 inches apart, thumbs facing in. Pull dumbbells straight up until nearly even with your chin. Keep your elbows up and out! Keep weights close to your body and slowly return to the starting position.



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## BENT OVER LATERAL RAISE

Lean forward at the waist, place your left hand on a bench for support, and hold a dumbbell in your right hand with your arm extended. Raise the weight straight out to the side until parallel to the floor. Repeat for reps and switch arms.

Tips: Do NOT swing the dumbbells up. Keep your body rigid. The rear deltoids are a very small muscle group. You will not be able to use as much weight.



## STANDING DUMBBELL LATERAL RAISE

Stand in a 30 degree forward-leaning position with cervical and lumbar spine in neutral. Contract the abdominals, retract and slightly elevate the scapula, and bend elbows in a modified short-lever position. Keeping wrists neutral, raise elbows out to the sides of the body and then up to shoulder height.

Tips: It's important to keep your palms turned downward as you lift the dumbbells so that your shoulders, rather than your biceps, do the work.



## STANDING ONE ARM DUMBBELL LATERAL RAISE

Grasp dumbbell and position in front of pelvis. Position other hand for support. Bend over at hips slightly with knees bent. With elbows slightly bent, raise upper arm to side until elbow is shoulder height. Maintain elbow's height above or equal to wrist. Lower and repeat. Make sure to keep your shoulders square so that you do not use momentum to cheat in this exercise.

Tips: It's important to keep your palms turned downward as you lift the dumbbell so that your shoulders, rather than your biceps, do the work.



## STABILITY BALL SHOULDER PRESS

Position yourself in a pike position with your torso straight up and down. Maintain this position and bend your arms allowing your body to move downward towards the floor. Before your head makes contact with the floor push with your arms like you're doing an overhead barbell press using your body as the load.





## TWISTING DUMBBELL MILITARY PRESS

Start with palms facing each other for better range of motion. Finish at top with palms facing front. DON'T lock out arms at top.



## KNEELING REAR DUMBBELL LATERAL RAISE

Kneel on floor supported by non-working hand. Looking straight ahead, raise dumbbell rapidly to shoulder level. DON'T allow wrists to travel above elbows.



## KNEELING REAR CABLE LATERAL RAISE

Kneel on floor supported by non-working hand and with working hand furthest from low cable. Raise straight arm rapidly to shoulder level. DON'T allow wrists to travel above elbows.



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## LYING CABLE PULLOVER

Lie on ground with feet toward low cable pulley. Using rope attachment, raise arms over head without bending arms too much.



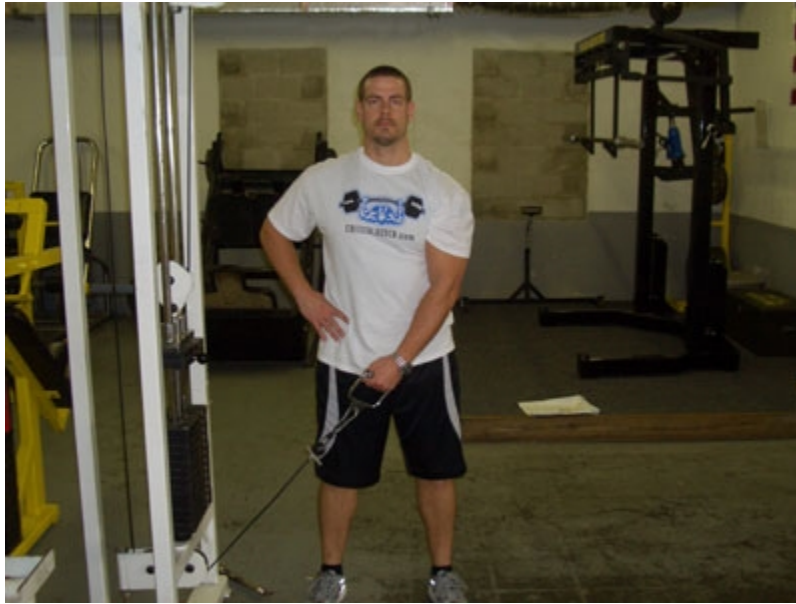
## FRONT DUMBBELL RAISE - PALMS IN

Hold dumbbells at sides as the pictures demonstrate. Raise straight right arm keeping palm turned in. The dumbbell should be raised to shoulder height. While exhaling slowly lower the weight. Alternate arms. Important Note: Make sure dumbbell is facing "up" at the top of the movement.



## CABLE LATERAL RAISE

Grab low cables opposite to the working arm. Keep arms slightly bent. Raise arms rapidly to shoulder level. DON'T allow wrists to travel above elbows.



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# ARNOLD PRESS

Variation of dumbbell press that hits all three deltoid heads. Start with palms facing you and rotate as you press up, finishing with palms facing out. Reverse rotation to starting position.



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## RESISTANCE BAND SNATCHES

Stand on a band and reach down and grab the ends with each hand. Extend your arms out and up with your shoulders. The end of the movement should finish at finish position of a military press. This exercise really works the shoulders and rear delts. This also increases overall flexibility in the shoulder joint.



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## BAND EXTERNAL ROTATION (ELBOW OUT)

Tie a band to a head level rack or machine and grab the other end with your hand. Facing the machine you tied the band to laterally extend your shoulder with a 90 degree bend in your elbow. Pull and rotate back on the band and squeeze the muscles in your shoulder.

This builds up the muscles in the rotator cuff and is a good way to warm up and prevent injury.



## BAND EXTERNAL ROTATION (ELBOW IN)

Tie a band to a head level rack or machine and grab the other end with your hand. Stand sideways so you are not facing the machine. Grab the band with the hand farthest from the machine. Keep your elbow close to your side and bend your arm at a 90-degree angle. Now pull and rotate back on the band and squeeze the muscles in your shoulder.

This builds up the muscles in the rotator cuff and is a good way to warm up and prevent injury.



## RESISTANCE BAND SHOULDER DISLOCATIONS

Grab a band at the ends. One end in each hand. Extend your arms overhead and reach back behind you. Roll your shoulder blades back and bring the band behind your back and reach toward behind and back toward your butt. Then return back up to the top position and repeat. This exercise greatly increases shoulder flexibility and enhances your range of motion.



## RESISTANCE BAND REAR DELTOID FLY

Grab a band with your hands and hold it out in front of you with arms extended and elbows locked. Squeeze your shoulder blades together and pull your arms back until your arms are out at full extension and out at your sides laterally.

Tips: When doing this exercise be sure to keep your traps relaxed and your arms straight so that you do not cheat by using your traps and triceps.



## KETTLEBELL UPRIGHT ROW (ONE HAND)

Grab the handles of the kettlebells with both hands with the kettlebells in front of you. Lift them up towards your head while extending your shoulders laterally. By using kettlebells for this exercise you take stress off the shoulder capsule. It also feels better on the wrists.



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## KETTLEBELL UPRIGHT ROW (TWO-HANDS)

Grab the handle of the kettlebell with both hands with the kettlebell in front of you. Lift it up towards your head while extending your shoulders laterally. By using a kettlebell for this exercise you take stress off the shoulder capsule. It also feels better on the wrists.



## KETTLEBELL SIDE LATERAL RAISE

Grab a kettlebell by the handle. Extend the shoulder laterally and outward like you would a normal DB Side Lateral. By using a kettlebell for this exercise you increase the lever length of your arm and greatly change the dynamics of the exercise and make it A LOT easier.



## HEAD PRESS WITH BANDS

To perform head press with bands, you'll need access to a squat rack, barbell, an adjustable incline bench and 2 bands. First set up the squat rack as though you were going to do incline barbell bench in it. Drag the bench into the squat rack and set the bench to an almost upright position. If your bench doesn't go straight upright a 75 degree angle will be fine. Sit down on the bench and take notice of where the safety pins should go. You want the safety pins to be at the level of where the top of your head would be if you were sitting down. Place the safety pins at head level and lay the bar on the pins

Take a seat down on the bench again and the bar should be just slightly above your head. This is the perfect position for this exercise. Now take two heavy dumbbells and place on either side of the squat rack on the outside. Take two bands and choke them off on each dumbbell and run them up onto the barbell. You should probably start off with mini bands and move up from there with added plate weight on the barbell. Take a seat and grab the barbell with a shoulder width grip and press the barbell straight up and overhead. Also keep your elbows all the way out to maximize the use of your side deltoids.

Think of this exercise as a deadlift for your shoulders. You are starting for a stopped unloaded position and pressing the weight directly over head and back. The added resistance from the bands will take some of the stress off of the wrists and will overload the top of the overhead press movement which is usually where most people fail on the last reps of a overhead press exercise.





## BAND FACE PULLS

To perform a band face pulls, take a resistance band and tie it around a vertical pole or portion of a machine at above head level and choke it off at one end. Facing the pole, grab the band in each hand with an overhand grip with only one part of the band in each hand. There should be about 8-10 inches of band between your hands. Take a step back so that the band is taught and arms are out in front of you parallel to the floor.

Now perform an elbows out row type motion bringing your hands back toward your ears. At the same time, hands outward and away from your face. Doing so will really get your upper back and rear delts to contract hard and build some solid mass on your upper back. Remember, the more mass you put on your upper back the more stable base you'll have to bench off of.



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# STANDING BARBELL MILITARY PRESS

Set the pins on the squat rack at shoulder height so that you can comfortably un-rack the bar. Grip the bar just outside of shoulder width, bend your knees slightly and lift the bar off the pins. Start with the bar below your chin and touching your upper chest. With your abs tight and back straight, drive the weight up straight overhead but do not lock out your elbows at the top. After a brief pause, lower the bar back to the starting position and repeat the motion until you have reached muscular failure. When you have reached failure you can either set the bar down on the floor or re-rack it on the pins.

Tips: Make sure not to lean back too far as you press the weight up as this will place undo stress on your lower back. Also remember not to lock your elbows out at the top of the movement as this will keep the stress on your shoulders throughout the entire lift.



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# STANDING DUMBBELL PRESS

Bend at the knees and pick a pair of dumbbells up off the ground. Using body momentum, lift the weights up into the starting position. The starting position should have the dumbbells at shoulder height, elbows out and palms facing away from your body. Keeping your abs tight and back straight, drive the weights up straight overhead, pause briefly at the top and then return them back to the starting position. When you have reached muscular failure simply place the dumbbells back on the ground.

Tips: Try not to lean too far back as you press the weights up since this will place undo stress on your lower back. Also remember not to lock your elbows out at the top, as this will keep the stress on your shoulders throughout the entire exercise. In order to support your spine and lower back, make sure to keep your abs tight.



## SEATED DUMBBELL SIDE LATERALS

Pick up a pair of dumbbells and sit on the edge of a flat bench. At the start of the movement the dumbbells should be facing each other and your arms should be slightly bent. Raise the dumbbells out to your sides until they are a bit higher than shoulder height. At the top of the movement your pinky fingers should be pointing slightly up and your thumbs should be pointing down. Lower the weight over the same path and continue until you reach muscular failure.

Tips: Instead of keeping your back completely straight and rigid, try to move naturally throughout this exercise by using a little bit of body momentum. It is okay to let your body sway forward and back as you lift and lower the weights, since this will maximize the amount of muscle stimulation you can achieve and will also prevent stress to your lower back. You should be in complete control of the weights at all times, but loosening up your form is a good idea. Also remember not to raise the weights much higher than shoulder height as this could lead to an injury.



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## STANDING FRONT BARBELL RAISE

Pick up a bar off the ground using your legs and stand with your feet shoulder-width apart. Bend your knees and hold the weight in front of your body with your hands space about shoulder-width apart. Bend your arms slightly and raise the weight up in front of your body until it is slightly higher than shoulder-height. Lower the weight back down over the same path and continue until you reach muscular failure.

Tips: There is no need to raise the weight any higher than just above shoulder-height as this will move the stress away from your shoulders. Also remember to keep your arms slightly bent throughout the entire exercise. In order to maximize muscle stimulation and prevent lower back stress, try to move naturally throughout this movement rather than keeping your back completely straight and rigid. Allow your form to loosen up a little bit and use a tiny bit of momentum as you lift and lower the weight.

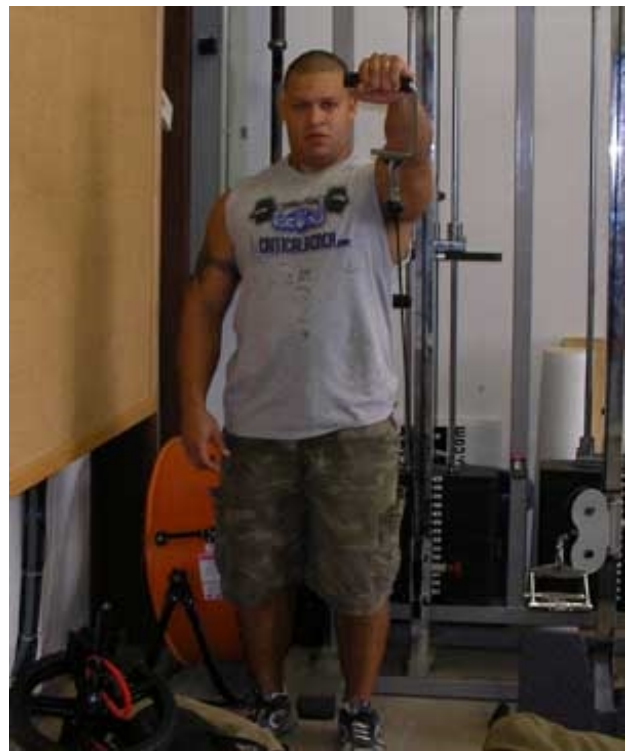
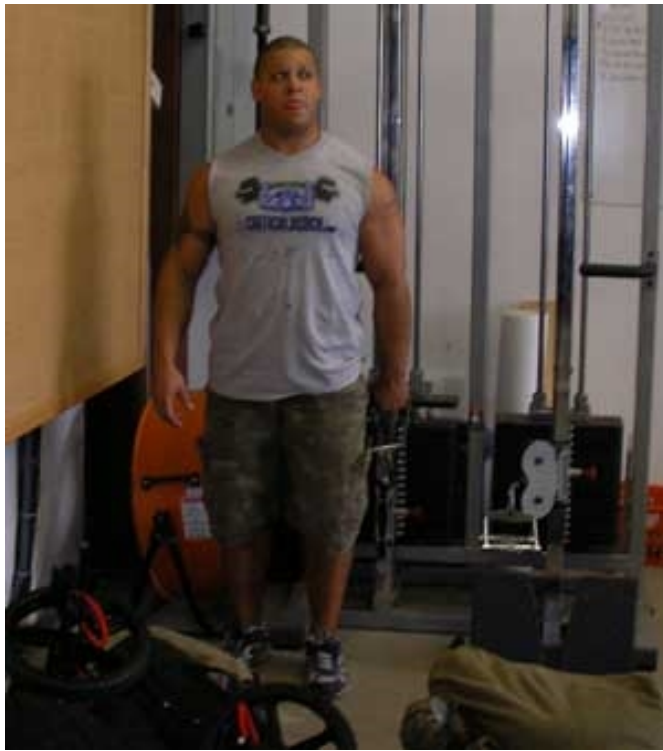


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## STANDING FRONT CABLE RAISE

Stand with your back facing away from the machine and space your feet about shoulder-width apart. The cable should be between your legs. Bend down and pick up the bar with an overhand grip, hands shoulder-width apart. Keep a slight bend in your arms and knees and raise the handle up in front of your body until it is slightly higher than your shoulders. Lower the bar back down over the same path and continue until you reach muscular failure.

Tips: Keep a slight bend in your arms throughout the movement and make sure not to lift the handle much higher than your shoulders. Also make sure to loosen up your form a little bit and move naturally throughout the lift. You must still maintain complete control of the weights, but allowing yourself to move naturally will minimize lower back strain and will result in greater muscle stimulation.



## SEATED FRONT DUMBBELL RAISE

Sit on the edge of a flat bench and pick up a pair of dumbbells. Your palms should be facing your body and your arms should be slightly bent. With your feet planted firmly on the ground, raise one of the dumbbells up (you should alternate between arms) until it is slightly higher than your shoulders. Lower the weight over the same path and then perform the movement with the other arm. Continue the exercise until you reach muscular failure.

Tips: Make sure you don't raise the dumbbells much higher than your shoulders and also make sure to keep your arms slightly bent throughout the entire lift. You can allow your body to sway slightly as you lift and lower the weight instead of staying completely rigid and upright. Moving naturally will maximize muscle stimulation and prevent stress to your lower back.



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## SEATED BENT-OVER REAR LATERAL RAISE

Sit on the edge of a flat bench with a pair of dumbbells underneath your legs. Lean forward until your chest is touching your legs and pick the dumbbells up off the ground. Bend your arms slightly and hold the dumbbells with your palms facing in. Raise the dumbbells out to your sides until your upper arms are slightly higher than your shoulders. Lower the weights over the same path and continue until you reach muscular failure.

Tips: Make sure to stay bent over throughout the entire lift and keep your arms bent. You should be in complete control of the weight at all times. Do not swing the weights up or use jerky motions. This is an exercise where you'll have to go fairly light in order to allow for a full range of motion.





## STANDING BENT-OVER REAR LATERAL RAISE

Stand with your feet about shoulder-width apart and bend over at the waist until your body is parallel to the ground. Hold a pair of dumbbells with your palms facing in and bend your arms. Keeping your knees bent and back flat, raise the dumbbells out to your sides until your upper arms are slightly higher than your shoulders. Lower the weights under control and continue the motion until you reach muscular failure.

Tips: Make sure to keep your lower back flat throughout the entire exercise in order to prevent injuries. Make sure you choose a weight that is light enough for you to completely control the weight at all times without having to use momentum or jerky motions.



## BENT-OVER CABLE REAR LATERAL RAISE

Stand in the center of the unit and grip the each handle with your opposite arm (grip the left pulley with your right arm and the right pulley with your left arm). Place your feet about shoulder width apart and bend over at the waist until your body is parallel to the ground. Keeping your back flat and knees bent, raise the weights out to your sides until your upper arms are slightly higher than your shoulders. Lower the weight over the same path and continue until you reach muscular failure.

Tips: You should be in complete control of the weight at all times and it is very important that you avoid using jerky motions or body momentum to lift the weight. You'll have to go fairly light on this exercise in order to allow for a full range of motion and maximal stimulation of the rear shoulders.



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# PLATE RAISES

This exercise works the deltoids really well. Start by standing with your legs about shoulder-width apart with your knees just slightly bent. Grasp a plate with both hands. Your arms should be down with the plate in front of your thighs. Keeping your arms as straight as you can raise your arms up until they are parallel to the floor. Hold them there for one second count and then slowly return to the starting position and repeat. Avoid injury by not swinging or jerking as you do the movements. Use your shoulder muscles, not your back.



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## FACE PULLS

This exercise works the deltoids really well. Start by standing with your legs about shoulder-width apart with your knees just slightly bent. Grasp a plate with both hands. Your arms should be down with the plate in front of your thighs.

Keeping your arms as straight as you can raise your arms up until they are parallel to the floor. Hold them there for one second count and then slowly return to the starting position and repeat. Avoid injury by not swinging or jerking as you do the movements. Use your shoulder muscles, not your back.



# CHEST EXERCISES



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[Incline Barbell Bench Press](#)  
[Dumbbell Pullover](#)  
[Dumbbell Fly](#)  
[Dumbbell Chest Press](#)  
[Dumbbell Incline Chest Press](#)  
[Incline Dumbbell Flies](#)  
[Swiss Ball Chest Bounce & Hold](#)  
[Swiss Ball Push Up \(Hands on Ball\)](#)  
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# BARBELL BENCH PRESS

Lie down on the bench with your feet, butt and shoulders firmly planted on the ground. Space your hands evenly across the bar slightly wider than shoulder width. Un-rack the weight and lower the bar until it makes contact with the lower portion of your chest. Drive the weight back up into the starting position and complete this motion until you have reached muscular failure.

Tips: The bar should always come to a complete stop after it touches your chest. It is very important that you do not bounce or jerk the weight up using momentum. You should also make sure to keep your butt planted on the bench at all times throughout the lift, and also try not to arch your back too much. In order to avoid injury and stress, do not lock your elbows out at the top of the movement. Obviously if you are competing in the bench press you will want to arch your back to shorten the distance the bar travels and you'll have to lockout your triceps for a good lift or rack command.



## INCLINE BARBELL BENCH PRESS

Lie on the incline bench and grip the bar evenly, just outside shoulder width. Keep your feet, butt and shoulders planted firmly on the bench and un-rack the weight. Lower the bar to your upper chest, pause briefly, and drive the weight back up into the starting position.

Tips: Make sure that the bench is angled at no more than 30 degrees. If you tilt the bench too high you will end up placing too much emphasis on the shoulders rather than the chest. Also remember to avoid bouncing and jerking the weight and instead use a smooth and controlled motion. It would also be wise to avoid locking your elbows out at the top of the movement, as this could lead to an injury.



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# DUMBBELL PULLOVER

- 1) You will be performing this exercise on a flat bench.
- 2) Lie on your back with your head at the edge of the bench.
- 3) Hold the weight in your hands, arms extended above your chest. Try to keep your wrists and arms from flexing. Do not lock your elbow.

Note: This exercise can also be done with two dumbbells. One in each hand. You can position your feet on the bench or on the floor for more stability.





# DUMBBELL FLY

Lying down on a flat bench, begin the exercise by holding the dumbbells at arms length with a slight bend in your elbows. Your palms should be facing in. Slowly lower the weight out to the sides until you feel a comfortable stretch. Now squeeze the dumbbells back together as if you were hugging a barrel.

Tips: Be sure that you do not bend your arms too much. If you have to bend your arms to a 90-degree angle to complete the rep, than the weight is too heavy. Plant your feet on the floor for stability or put them on up on the bench to activate your core.



# DUMBBELL CHEST PRESS

Lie on an flat bench, keep your feet firmly pressed down on the floor for stability. Start with a dumbbell in each hand held overhead as if you were holding a barbell. Now lower them from arms length to as low as possible on your outer chest. The bar should be lowered under control until your arm reaches a 90-degree angle. There should be a brief pause on your chest before you return the bar to arms length position.

Tips: Do not lower your upper arms below the plane of your body. Do not lock your elbows at the top of the movement. You can vary the distance between your sides and elbows to take pressure off the shoulders.



## DUMBBELL INCLINE CHEST PRESS

Lie on an incline bench, keep your feet firmly pressed down on the floor for stability. Start with a dumbbell in each hand held overhead as if you were holding a barbell. Now lower them from arms length to as low as possible on your outer chest. The bar should be lowered under control until your arm reaches a 90-degree angle. There should be a brief pause on your chest before you return the bar to arms length position.

Tips: Do not lower your upper arms below the plane of your body. Do not lock your elbows at the top of the movement. You can vary the distance between your sides and elbows to take pressure off the shoulders.



## INCLINE DUMBBELL FLIES

Lying down on an incline bench, begin the exercise by holding the dumbbells at arms length with a slight bend in your elbows. Your palms should be facing in. Slowly lower the weight out to the sides until you feel a comfortable stretch. Now squeeze the dumbbells back together as if you were hugging a barrel.

Tips: Be sure that you do not bend your arms too much. If you have to bend your arms to a 90-degree angle to complete the rep, than the weight is too heavy.



## SWISS BALL CHEST BOUNCE & HOLD

A great ballistic exercise. Hold your body in a prone position with your hands on the ball, feet on the floor in a strong push-up position. Let your body drop to the ball making contact at your chest with enough force to bounce back up and catch yourself by re-establishing control of the stability ball with your arms. This is an advanced exercise and may take some time to master.



## SWISS BALL PUSH-UP (HANDS ON BALL)

While in a regular prone push-up position, place your hands on the top sides of the ball with your fingers pointing downwards. Push your hands in towards each other to increase tension on your chest. Feet are shoulder width apart but can be slightly wider or narrower. Simply press your bodyweight off the ball, hold and lower in a controlled fashion. The straighter your back, the harder the push-up. A very advanced variation would be to use two swiss balls, one for each hand.



## SWISS BALL PUSH-UP (HANDS ON FLOOR)

Place hands on the floor just wider than shoulder width apart. Place the swiss ball under your legs. The beginner can start with the stability ball under their thighs while the more advanced trainee can start with the ball under their feet. Lower your chest to the ground and press. Variations include using only one leg on the swiss ball or even using two stability balls, one for each leg. Obviously the more advanced you make the exercise the more unstable it becomes thus involving additional muscle groups.



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## LOW CROSS CABLE RAISE

Hold low cables as shown with hands pronated. Pull up on transversus and pelvic floor. Inhale. Raise slightly bent arms rapidly forward to head level while supinating palms. Lower arms slowly to start position while exhaling.





## INCLINE PUSH UP

Elevate feet on bench. Use push up bars or dumbbells to allow deep stretch at bottom. Keep body straight throughout movement. Have a partner assist by pushing down on shoulders if able to exceed target reps.



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## DUMBBELL PRESS TO NECK

ALWAYS use Smith machine or dumbbells for safety.....NEVER use a barbell. Now with shoulder-width position lower the dumbbells toward your neck. Keep elbows pointing out and raise quickly. It is not necessary to lock arms at the top. If you have shoulder pain this may not be the best exercise for you.



## DUMBBELL PRESS WITH RESISTANCE BANDS

Take a band and wrap it around your back with each end in your hands. Grab a pair of dumbbells and lay down on a bench and press the dumbbells straight up. The band will add more resistance to the top portion of the lift and increase the triceps recruitment for this exercise. This movement will greatly help build the raw bench.



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## BAND PUSHUPS

To perform a band pushup, take a band and hold one end and take the other end in the other hand and wrap it across your back. Get into a normal pushup position and do pushups. The band overloads the top portion of the lift and really hits the triceps. Your body will be forced to explode off the floor to the top to beat the extra resistance at the top.

A mini band is a good place for most people to start with. A more advanced lifter could easily work up to a green band.



# BENCH PRESS WITH BANDS USING POWER RACK

Depending on the bands you are using you may need 100+ pound dumbbells to counteract the tension of the bands pulling in the opposite direction. Take the band and lay it on the ground perpendicular to the barbell on the bench. Place the heavy dumbbell over the band then grab each end of the band and bring it on up to the barbell and make sure you have weight on the opposite side of the bar or it WILL tip over. Doing it this way is easiest while training alone however doing barbell bench by yourself isn't the best idea because you can easily pin yourself to the bench when you approach failure.

Adding bands to any exercise greatly increases the effectiveness of the exercise. The eccentric motion of the lift is accelerated and encourages the body to produce a greater force against the weight plus tension to get it moving. This is known as accommodating resistance. This particular exercise allows you work with a weight much lower than your max at the bottom of the lift and overloads your triceps at the top of the lift. Training the barbell bench press with bands will greatly increase your bench press especially while training for an equipped meet.



## CRAZY PLATES BENCH PRESS

To perform crazy plates, place a barbell on a bench and grab 2 light/purple bands. Take the bands and fold them in half twice. So that the band loops twice and the ends are touching. Slide this over the end of the bar. Visualize that with the band going through a plate. The first step might seem pointless but it will give you an idea as to how to set this exercise up. Take the band off the bar and run it through the center of a plate and back around OVER the edge of the plate and back through again. This forms the hanging plate portion. Slide that over the end of the bar and do the same thing for the other side and bench as you would normally except come down slowly. The movement of the plates coupled with the elasticity of the bands will greatly increase your ability to hold heavier weights and will help you with your stability.



# PUSH UPS

Start a push up by lying down on the ground placing your hands flat on the floor a little wider than shoulder width apart. Keep your legs straight and feet together. Raise chin up so that you are looking straight ahead and then push your body up off the floor using your arms for strength. It's important to prevent your upper and lower back from rounding or bending as your motion is going up. Pause and hold for 2 seconds in upward position. Then lower your body to the floor until your chest touches and hold for 2 more seconds. You should be inhaling while releasing down and exhaling when raising up body. Repeat. Tip: It's extremely important to keep you arms and body straight throughout this entire exercise. Keep your knees from hitting the floor and always be looking forward while keeping your chin up.



## PERFECT PUSHUPS

Place the perfect pushup handles on the ground about 24 inches away from each other and get into a plank position with your hands grasping the handles. With your elbows flared out lower your body down to the floor and press back up with your chest, shoulders and triceps back up to the top position. The handles will allow your shoulders, elbows, and wrists to move very fluidly in the way your body was intended. Because of the natural motion all the stress on the joints will be removed you will be able to do more reps due to the streamlining of the movement.

If you aren't strong enough yet to do high reps with this movement you can drop your knees to the floor so you are moving less of your own bodyweight. For those that need a challenge you can easily add weight to this exercise by employing bands behind the back or using a weight vest or having a partner place a plate on your back. To increase tricep involvement you can pull the handles closer together and this will take most of the chest out of the movement.





## PEC DECK MACHINE

Place your arms on each padding of the pec deck machine, get a good grip on the handles, while you are seated. Keep back straight and chest out. Inhale.

Exhale as you push with both arms to meet towards your chest but not covering your face. Use your chest muscles more when pushing, using your arms only to guide them to the center. Concentrate on your inner chest to get a good "burn". You will feel the inner part of your chest compress. Slowly release your hands back to the original position while inhaling. You will notice your chest expanding so just go with the flow. Expand your chest while your arms are stretched out. This will work the outer muscles of your chest.



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## CABLE CROSSOVERS

Hold the stirrup cable attachments that are attached to a high pulley. Stand about one foot in front of the weight stacks with a handle in both hands. Lean slightly forward and put one foot in front of the other (for balance). Your front knee should be slightly bent. Bring your hands around and in front of your body in a hugging motion with your elbows slightly bent. You should be pulling down at a slight angle.

Focus on using just your chest muscles. When your hands meet directly in front of your midsection, squeeze the muscles and then slowly return to the starting position. Your elbows should stay in the same slightly bent position the whole time. Do not walk out too far in front of the pulley system or bend over too much!



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# BACK EXERCISES



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## BENT-OVER BARBELL ROWS

Using an overhand grip, hold the bar just inside of shoulder width. Pick the bar up off the ground and place your feet about shoulder width apart. Position your back so that it is slightly above parallel to the ground and full extend your arms toward the ground. Keeping your back flat and arched, pull the weight up to the area just below your rib cage. Keep your elbows close to your body throughout the entire movement and squeeze your back together as the bar touches your body. Hold the bar in the contracted position for a brief second and then lower the weight back to the starting position.

Tips: It is very important that you do not round out your lower back as you perform this exercise as this could easily lead to an injury. Instead, focus on sticking your butt out and keeping a nice arch in your lower back. It is also okay to move naturally throughout the exercise and allow your back to rise up slightly as you lift the weight.



# HYPEREXTENSIONS

Adjust the bench so that your waist is in line with the top of the pad and position your feet firmly on the platform. Bend at the waist and lower your body towards the ground until you reach about 65-75 degrees. Pause briefly at the bottom and then raise yourself back up to the starting position where your back is in a straight line with your lower body.

Tips: Focus on keeping the tension on your lower back throughout the entire motion. In order to add extra resistance to the exercise you can hold a weight plate against your chest.



# BARBELL SHRUG

Position the bar on the power rack so that you can easily un-rack it into the starting position. Grip the bar with your palms facing in, slightly narrower than shoulder-width. Place your feet about shoulder-width apart and fully extend your arms. Keeping your abs and lower back tight, shrug the weight up towards your ears as high as you possibly can. Squeeze your traps at the top of the movement, pause briefly, and then lower the bar back into the starting position.



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# LAT PULLDOWNS

Grip the bar about 6-8 inches wider than shoulder width with your palms facing out. Adjust the lap bar so that your body is held firmly in place throughout the entire exercise. Start the exercise with your arms fully extended so that you feel a full stretch in your lats. Pull the weight down to the top of your chest, squeeze your lats briefly, and then return the bar back to the starting position.



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## DUMBBELL SHRUG

Grab a set of dumbbells. Hold them with your palms facing in toward your body. Shrug shoulders in an upward movement contracting your trap muscles. Lower slowly and repeat.

Tips: Don't make the mistake of rolling your shoulders back as you shrug the weight up, as this could lead to an injury. Instead, you should simply shrug the weight straight up and down. Try to keep your arms completely straight rather than bending your elbows.



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# ONE ARM DUMBBELL ROW

Starting by putting your right knee and right hand on a bench. Make sure to flatten your back as it should be parallel with the floor. Your left leg should be placed nice and wide to offer balance. You should feel most of your bodyweight on your left leg rather than on your right arm. Next grip a dumbbell with your left arm with your palm facing inward toward your body. Now you will contract your back muscles rowing the weight up to your side. Keep your elbow close to your body and try to keep your shoulders square during the movement. You don't want to twist your entire body to cheat. Switch and perform a set with the other arm.

Tips: It is very important that you do not round out your lower back as you perform this exercise as this could easily lead to an injury. Instead, focus on sticking your butt out and keeping a nice arch in your lower back. It is also okay to move naturally throughout the exercise and allow your back to rise up slightly as you lift the weight.



# DUMBBELL PULLOVER

- 1) You will be performing this exercise on a flat bench.
- 2) Lie on your back with your head at the edge of the bench.
- 3) Hold the weight in your hands, arms extended above your chest. Try to keep your wrists and arms from flexing. Do not lock your elbow.

Note: This exercise can also be done with two dumbbells. One in each hand. You can position your feet on the bench or on the floor for more stability.



## TWO ARM DUMBBELL ROW - OVERHAND GRIP

Stand with feet shoulder width apart and a bend in the knees. Bend at the waist with your head up and grasp a pair of dumbbells with an overhand grip. By bending your arms, lift the dumbbells straight up until they touch your upper abdominals. Reverse the movement to lower the dumbbells but do not let them touch the floor until after your last rep.

Tips: It is very important that you do not round out your lower back as you perform this exercise as this could easily lead to an injury. Instead, focus on sticking your butt out and keeping a nice arch in your lower back. It is also okay to move naturally throughout the exercise and allow your back to rise up slightly as you lift the weight.



## STABILITY BALL PULLOVER ROW

Kneel on the ground with the stability ball in front of you. Keep the ball anywhere from 1-2 feet in front of your body and place your arms on the ball with your elbows bent at a 90 degree angle. Lean into the ball and let your body rock forward. As you control your motion forward extend your arms and stretch as far as possible. When you've reached maximal range of motion start to pull your body back to its original position pushing down into the ball. This exercise primarily works your lats and back muscles but also includes your chest and ab muscles as well.



## STABILITY BALL SUPERMANS

Lay over the ball in a relaxed position and extend your legs straight so the balls of your feet remain on the ground to stabilize your body. In one motion, fully extend your upper body reaching your arms straight out over your head with your hands in a neutral position for at least 1-3 seconds. Release allowing your body to relax and contour again to the ball. Keep your legs tensed the entire time maintaining a sturdy position and continue. Strengthens low, mid and upper back and buttocks.



## WIDE GRIP LAT PULLDOWNS

Keep grip wide with palms facing away. ALWAYS start each rep fully extended at top. Use hands as "hooks" and focus on pulling elbows down rather than pulling the body up. Squeeze shoulder blades together at bottom (imagine squeezing a pencil between them).



## WIDE ARM CHIN UP

Keep grip wide with palms facing away. Have a partner assist by "hooking" arm under ankles if needed. ALWAYS start each rep fully extended at bottom. Use hands as "hooks" and focus on pulling elbows down rather than pulling body up. Squeeze shoulder blades together at top (imagine squeezing a pencil between them).





## WIDE ARM CABLE ROW

Use wide-arm attachment. Always keep back arched and head up. DON'T lean forward at start position. Pull bar to upper chest with elbows turned out. Squeeze shoulder blades together and return to start.



## TWISTING DUMBBELL ROW

Fully extend arm at bottom with palms facing to rear. Pull dumbbell to armpit area while twisting dumbbell until palms facing toward. Keep head up and back straight. Squeeze back at top of movement.



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# SUPERMANS

Lie on stomach with hands fully stretched out to front. Raise arms, shoulders and legs off ground at the same time. Squeeze and hold for a 3-count and repeat.



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## STRAIGHT-ARM PULLDOWN

Stand facing cable machine gripping lat bar attachment at shoulder width with arms stretched above head at the "top" starting position. Keeping arms straight but not locked, pull bar down to upper thigh. Focus on using back muscles as much as possible.



## REVERSE BACK EXTENSIONS

Lay face down on flat bench (the higher the better) with legs of bench. Grasp onto sides of bench for support. Keeping legs straight, raise as one unit to just above buttocks level. Hold for 1-2 count before lowering.

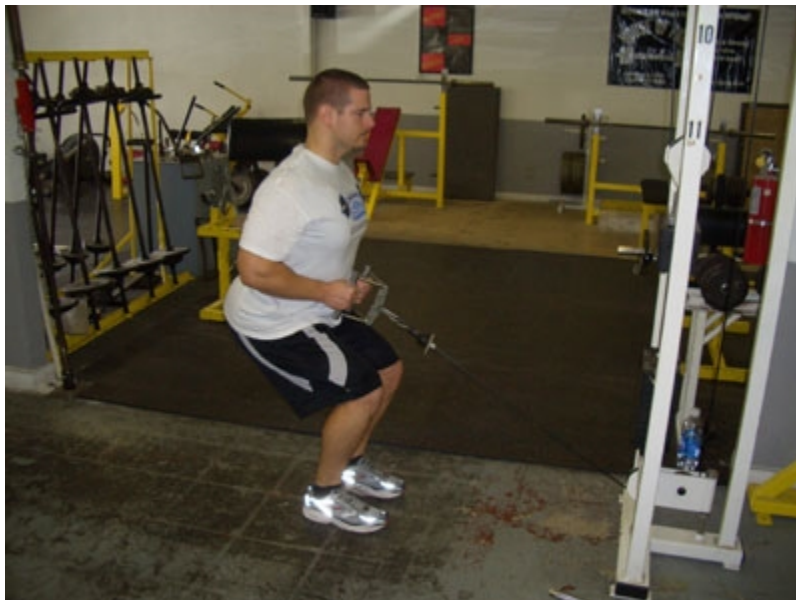


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## JOCKEY ROW

The Jockey Row was developed by the legendary Vince Gironda, who knew more than a thing or two about weight training. It exercises the entire upper back.

Hold low cable and stand as shown. Pull up on transversus and pelvic floor. Inhale. Pull handle into chest while keeping body low in a jockey position. Return handle slowly to start while exhaling.

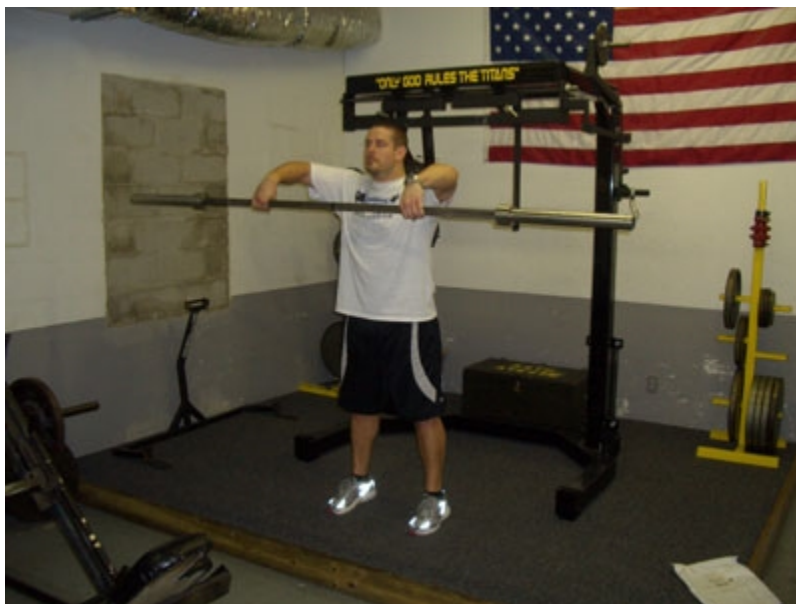


## HIGH PULL

Like the power clean the high pull moves weight to shoulder height. But because the weight is suspended away from the body, the high pull is better for training the muscles of the back.

Crouch with back straight and eyes looking straight ahead as shown. Place feet parallel just over shoulder width apart. Pull up on transversus and pelvic floor. Inhale. Raise bar rapidly as shown to shoulder level. Lower slowly to start position while exhaling.

This exercise is a variation of the deadlift. Use light weight on the barbell to avoid being a leg exercise. Tip: Arms should be only very slightly bent so bar is suspended away from body.



## HANGING ROW

Grab barbell resting above ground about 3' (such as on lowest setting of squat rack). Elevate feet on structure so feet are about the same height as bar. Keep body straight and raise body to bar at nipple line. Add weight belt or vest when possible.





## CLOSE GRIP PULLDOWNS

Use close-grip attachment with palms facing each other. ALWAYS start each rep fully extended at top. Use hands as "hooks" and focus on pulling elbows down rather than pulling the body up. Squeeze shoulder blades together at bottom (imagine squeezing a pencil between them).



## CLOSE GRIP SEATED CABLE ROWS

Use close grip attachment. Always keep back flat and head up. DON'T lean forward at start position. Pull handle to lower chest, pulling shoulder blades down and back. Squeeze shoulder blades together and return to stop.



# PULL UP

Keep grip at shoulder width with palms facing away. If necessary a partner can assist by hooking under ankles. Always start each rep fully extended at bottom. Think of your hands as hooks and focus on pulling elbows down rather than pulling body up. Squeeze shoulder blades together at top (imagine squeezing a pencil between them).



# RESISTANCE BAND BEHIND THE NECK PULL APARTS

Grab each end of the band in each hand and extend your arms overhead. As in doing a pullup up motion pulldown the band behind your head and contract all the muscles in the back and squeeze.

This exercise forces scapular retraction and greatly increases flexibility and overall shoulder health.



# KETTLEBELL SINGLE HANDED SWINGS

Stand with your feet slightly wider than shoulder width and grab the kettlebell by the handle with one hand and stand up. Swing the kettlebell down between your legs and sit back as if you were squatting. Explode your hips forward and the momentum will carry the kettlebell up and forward. I like this one a lot it really works your grip and builds proprioception in the hips and helps your balance. You can also trade off hands whilst in the air which is dangerous challenge but fun if you are outside.



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# KETTLEBELL DOUBLE HANDED SWINGS

Stand with your feet slightly wider than shoulder width and grab the kettlebell or kettlebells by the handle(s) with each hand and stand up. Swing the kettlebell(s) down between your legs and sit back as if you were squatting. Explode your hips forward and the momentum will carry the kettlebell up and forward. You can obviously use more weight on this if you use two separate kettlebells. It also takes some of the strain off your wrists if you use 2 hands on one heavy kettlebell.



## KETTLEBELL TOWEL SWINGS

Loop a towel through the kettlebell's handle and perform a standard kettlebell swing holding on to the towel as a handle. Doing it this way brings the forearms into the exercise and will build up your grip immensely. You may want to stand on some wood blocks based on your limb length as you may hit the floor with the kettlebell holding it like this.



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## KETTLEBELLS RENEGADE ROWS

Place two kettlebells in front of you and get into a pushup position with your hands on the handles of the kettlebells. Widen your feet placement as far out as comfortable. While bracing yourself with the one arm row the second KB to your body and alternate sides. This one will torch your abs also.



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## BANDS BARBELL PULLDOWNS

Take two equal bands and suspend them from the top of the squat rack like you would a reverse band bench press. Suspend a barbell in the bands and tighten/loosen the corresponding bands to get the bar to sit straight across the bands and perfectly parallel to the floor. Sit down below the barbell and reach for the bar and pull the barbell down. Pulling with the elbows and focusing on the contraction of the muscles in the upper back will allow you to get the most out of this exercise. Since you are using two bands for resistance in this exercise you maybe finding yourself floating up off of the floor. To remedy this have somebody lay a plate or dumbbell on your lap while doing this. If that doesn't work too well you can take another barbell and lay it across the bottom of the rack and take the safety pins and set them at about the level of your knees while slightly bent. Take that second barbell and place it underneath the safety pins and the barbell will act like a knee pad on a normal lat pulldown machine.



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# BANDS PULLDOWNS

To perform band pulldowns it requires at least one band or two bands. To setup band pulldowns with one band, take the band and choke it around the one of the frame members along the top of the rack. You will probably start with a purple band and work up from there to a green band or blue band.

The band should be hanging perpendicular to the floor at this point. Sit down on the ground below the band and grab the band with both hands and pull down with your elbows down to the floor. You can wrap your hands around the bands once to increase the resistance of the band a bit. You can also widen your grip on the band to bring the rear delts more into the exercise.



## SEATED BAND ROWS WITH HANDLE

To perform seated band rows, take the barbell out of the squat rack and place it on the outside of the backside of the rack. Take a band and lay it perpendicular to the barbell and put the barbell on top. Take the opposite ends and pull them together and run it through a normal close grip handle.

Now sit down in front of the squat rack (the opposite side of the where you put the barbell) and brace your feet up against the rack and perform a normal row with the close grip handle. Using a band for rows overloads the peak portion of the exercise and forces you to work much harder at getting the elbows and shoulder blades back and tight.



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# BAND ROWS

To perform a band rows, you can set them up a couple of different ways. The first way which is the easiest way to setup involves 2 bands and a stable pole or machine to tie to. Take two bands and tie them together to make one long band. Attach one end to a high horizontal machine and take the other end and hold it one hand. Step back so that the band is taught and row the band toward your side and contract the muscles in the upper back.

You may have to use a split stance for this exercise because the tension of the band can easily pull you forward if you keep a stable base while doing these. You can also completely take the biceps out of the movement by looping the band around the back of your elbow/triceps and hold on to the band lightly with your hand to keep it from flying off and shooting across the gym. This is good for those working around bicep injuries.



## BAND RESISTED PULLUPS

To perform a band resisted pull-up, take the pins from a squat rack and drop them to the lowest setting. Take your resistance band and loop it around both pins at the floor. The band should be running parallel to the floor at this point. You can do the next step one of two ways. You can either wear a weight lifting belt and run the band through the belt and then put it on tightly. If you don't have a weightlifting belt you can also use a dip belt and run the band through the chain. With the band attached to your belt, reach up and grab the pull-up bar on the rack or use the frame of the rack as your pull-up bar.

This exercise is very tough and should be only be used by advanced lifters. For the really freaky strong, you can use both parts of the band and run them through the belt. You can use either a pronated or supinated grip.



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## BAND ASSISTED PULLUPS

To perform a band assisted pull-up, take the squat rack pins and set them up at about hip level. Loop a band over each one so that the band lays parallel to the floor. Stretch the band down towards the floor and step on it with both feet. Grab the pull-up bar or the frame of the squat rack and perform a normal pull-up. The tension of the band will take some of your bodyweight off the lift and make it much easier for both very heavy lifters and new trainees who haven't built the necessary strength to perform a regular pull-up yet.

There are a few ways to either add more assistance or to make the exercise harder. The easiest way to make an assisted band pull-up harder is to use a weaker band. If you go from using a green band to using a purple band you make things harder just because you are using more of your own bodyweight. If you don't have different bands you can try using an extra band to make it easier also. You can also increase or decrease the height of the pins on the rack to make the exercises easier or harder.



## BAND GOOD MORNINGS

To perform a band good morning, stand on the inside of a band lying on the floor. Take the opposite end and put it across your band and hold onto it with your hands so it doesn't fly off. Stick your glutes back and with your lower back tight bend forward till you are about parallel with the floor. Good mornings are a great way to build glutes and hamstring strength and will greatly help your deadlift lockouts and teach you to stay more upright while squatting.



# TRAP BAR SHRUGS

Stand in the trap bar and deadlift it to lockout and then shrug the weight up with your traps. Really contract the traps and try and bring the shoulders up to your ears. Also let the weight stretch your traps as this is what will cause the most growth. Huge traps lead to a huge squat.

Tips: Try to keep your arms straight so you don't cheat by using your biceps. Don't roll the shoulders, move straight up and down.





## UNDERHAND NARROW-GRIP CHIN-UPS

Grip the bar about shoulder width with your palms facing in. Start with your lats fully stretched in a hanging position. While looking towards the ceiling, pull your body up until your chin is over the bar. Hold yourself over the bar briefly and then lower your body back into the starting position.

Do not use momentum by swinging your legs as this will take away from the effectiveness of the lift. A weight belt and dumbbell should be used if you are able to perform more than 7 reps using your own bodyweight.



## REVERSE-GRIP LAT PULLDOWNS

Adjust the lap-bar so that your body stays firmly in place throughout the exercise. Using a shoulder-width grip and palms facing in, extend your arms fully so that you feel a full stretch in your lats. With a slight arch in your back, pull the bar towards your lower chest, squeeze your lats briefly and then return the bar to the starting position.

Instead of keeping your back completely rigid and straight, allow yourself to move naturally throughout the exercise. It is okay to lean back anywhere from 45-55 degrees as you pull the weight down.



# UPRIGHT ROWS

Using a narrow grip and shoulder width stance, hold the bar with an overhand grip. Fully extend your arms in front of you, and keeping your elbows up high, pull the weight towards your chins. Pause briefly at the top and then lower the weight back to the starting position.

Make sure to keep your elbows higher than your wrists throughout the entire movement. Also focus on keeping the bar close to your body as you lift and lower the weight.



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# LEG EXERCISES



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[Single Leg Lying Curl](#)

# BARBELL SQUAT

Step into the squat rack and adjust the pins so that you can easily un-rack the bar. You should also make sure that the safety catches are in place in case you reach failure and can't lift the weight out of the bottom position. Space your feet slightly wider than shoulder-width apart with your toes pointing slightly outward and rest the bar on your lower traps and rear shoulders. Grip the bar with your hands spaced evenly apart and clear the bar off of the pins. Keeping your head up and abs tight, take a step back. Make sure that you are in a secure position with the bar balanced and with a solid base. Start the movement by bending at the knees and squatting down toward the floor. As you squat down make sure that your head is up, your abs are tight and your lower back is arched. Continue to descend until your thighs are at least parallel to the ground. Once you reach the bottom, drive the weight back up until you are in a standing position. Continue until you have completed your desired number of reps and then re-rack the bar.

Tips: Squats are a big power movement and it is important that you use good form at all times. If you get sloppy by using momentum or twisting and jerking around you will be at high risk for an injury. Make sure that your abs are tight at all times and that your head is up. Your lower back should also be arched throughout the exercise rather than rounded out. When you reach the standing position, don't lock your knees out as this will stress the joints. I wouldn't recommend taking this exercise to all-out failure since you could easily hurt yourself. You should simply continue the exercise until you are one rep short of failure and then re-rack the bar. You should start out by using very light weights until you get a good feel for the lift and can execute it with perfect form.



# HANG CLEAN

This exercise is for the development of the technique used in the full extension, and for strength in the muscles taking part in the second phase of the pull. Stand over the barbell. Position your feet underneath at hip width. The bar should cross your feet at the metatarsal toe joints just in front of your ankles. Point your toes slightly out. Hold your head erect and tighten your spinal muscles. Rotate your shoulders forward.

Now bend over while squatting down and grasp the bar with a shoulder width grip. Lock your elbows and position your body so that your arms are vertical to the bar with flexed wrists. Keep your back tight and take a 3/4 breath. Lift the bar up off the floor pushing with your legs and pulling with your back until your standing upright.

The bar will be hanging in front of you at groin height. Release your breath and semi relax your spinal muscles. Take another 3/4 breath and tighten your spinal muscles again. Now bend over while squatting down until the barbell hangs at your knee height or just above it. As soon as you reach the correct position explode the bar upward, pushing your hips in and pulling with your back. This action will bring the bar into contact with your legs at mid-thigh.

At the moment of contact, accelerate the bar upward with your legs and back until your body reaches a full extension. At full extension, contract your calves and trapezius muscles simultaneously, raising up on your toes and shrugging your shoulders. This movement will put maximum momentum into the barbell, allowing it to continue to rise while you drop under it. Bend your elbows, pulling the bar up with your arms as you jump your feet out to the sides and descend into a full squat as quickly as possible. With the bar moving up and your body going down, twirl your elbows under the bar.

The barbell should come to rest on your anterior deltoids and clavicle bones on or before you reach the bottom position. Keeping your back muscles tight, stand with the bar.



## DUMBBELL LUNGES

Pick up a pair of dumbbells off the ground using your legs (not your back). Stand with your feet about shoulder-width apart. With your back straight, head up and abs tight, take a large step forward with your right leg and lunge down toward the floor until your left leg is parallel to the ground. Once you reach the bottom, drive your body back up with your right leg until you are in a standing position. Perform the same movement with your left leg and continue alternating until you reach muscular failure.

Tip: It is very important that you maintain proper form at all times when performing this exercise. Make sure to keep your back straight, head up and abs tight throughout the entire movement. Also remember to stay in complete control of the weights rather than using jerky motions or body momentum.



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## LEG EXTENSIONS

Position your body in the leg extension machine and adjust the leg pad so that it is resting on your ankles. Grip the handles and fully extend your legs until you feel a full contraction in your quads. Pause briefly at the top to squeeze your quad muscles and then lower the weight back to the starting position.

Tips: Remember to use a full range of motion on this exercise by fully extending your legs and getting a good stretch at the bottom. Do not allow your legs to rest at any point during the movement because this will take the tension off of your quads and will decrease the amount of muscle stimulation you can achieve.



# HACK SQUAT

Position your body in the hack squat machine by placing your feet about shoulder-width apart in the center of the platform. Keep your back and shoulders resting firmly against the pad at all times and point your toes slightly outward. Press the weight up with your legs and remove the stoppers. With your abs tight and head up, lower the weight down until your thighs are at least parallel to the platform. When you reach the bottom, drive the weight back up over the same path until you are in a standing position, but do not lock your knees out at the top. When you have completed your set, stand upright and put the stoppers back in place.

Tip: Make sure that you never lock your knees out when you are in the standing position as this will place undo stress on your knee joints and will also maximize the stimulation of your thigh muscles. Also remember to maintain proper form by keeping your back flat against the pad, head up and abs tight to support your spine.



# BARBELL DEADLIFT

**The Stance:** Approach the loaded barbell and assume a stance about as wide as your own shoulders while gripping the bar such that the inner aspects of your arms are slightly outside of your thighs. Another way to determine your optimal deadlift foot placement is to jump down from a box which is half your own height and "stick" the landing. Now look at your feet...this will approximate your ideal stance width and degree of foot turn-out.

**The Ascent:** As you stand up with the weight, imagine pushing the earth away from you with your feet. When viewed from the side, your hips and shoulders should ascend together; if the hips rise before the shoulders, it means you're using your back rather than your legs. If this happens, reduce the weight until you can perform the lift correctly and add more specific quad-strengthening exercises to your program.

**The Lockout:** Competitive powerlifters are required to demonstrate control over the weight by standing up and then extending the hips forward in an exaggerated manner. If you're NOT a competitive lifter, simply stand up with the weight without this exaggerated maneuver.



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# DUMBBELL SQUAT

Stand with your feet about shoulder-width apart and with your toes pointing slightly outward. There should be a pair of dumbbells on the ground resting just outside of your feet. Squat down to the floor and grip the pair of dumbbells. Your thighs should be parallel to the floor and your knees should be in line with your toes. Keeping your head up, abs tight and lower back arched, drive the weight up with your legs until you are in a standing position but do not lock your knees out at the top. Once you are standing straight up, squat back down over the same path and continue until you have reached muscular failure.

Tips: Always maintain proper form throughout this exercise by keeping your head up, abs tight and lower back arched. Squats are a big power movement and you must execute them with full concentration in order to prevent injuries. Do not use jerky motions or body momentum to lift the weight. Also remember to not lock your knees out when you are in the standing position as this will maximize muscle stimulation to your legs and will prevent stress to the knees joints.



# SMITH MACHINE SQUAT

Stand with your feet slightly wider than shoulder-width apart and rest the bar on your lower traps and rear shoulders. Grip the bar with your hands spaced evenly apart and un-rack the weight by pushing the bar up and twisting the hooks. With your head up, abs tight and lower back arched, begin the movement by bending at the knees and squatting towards the ground. Continue to lower yourself until your thighs are at least parallel to the ground. Once you reach the bottom, drive the weight back up until you are in a standing position. Continue the movement until you have completed your desired number of reps and then set the bar back on the machine by twisting the hooks.

Tips: When you reach the standing position, remember to not lock your knees out. Doing this will keep full tension on your thighs at all times and will also prevent stress to the knee joints. Always maintain proper form throughout this exercise by keeping your back arched, head up and abs tight. If you get sloppy with your form you will be putting yourself at risk for an injury. I would also recommend that you don't take this exercise to all-out failure since it will be very difficult to safely re-rack the weight. Simply continue the exercise until you are one rep short of failure and then stop.



# FRONT SQUAT

Step into the squat rack and adjust the pins so that the bar will rest at about shoulder-height. Cross your arms in front of your body so that they are parallel to the ground and rest the bar across the front of your shoulders. Lift the bar off of the pins and take a small step back. With your feet spaced shoulder width apart, toes pointing slightly outward, back flat, abs tight and head up, begin the movement by squatting down toward the ground. Continue lowering yourself until your thighs are at least parallel to the ground. Once you reach the bottom, drive the weight back up until you are back in a standing position. When you have completed your desired number of reps, walk back to the pins and re-rack the bar.

Tips: Front squats are a very awkward exercise to perform at first so make sure you start out with light weight in order to get a proper feel for the lift. Make sure that you maintain proper form at all times by keeping your lower back arched and by avoiding jerky motions or body momentum. When you are in the standing position, remember to not lock your knees out as this will keep the stress on your quads and minimize the stress on your joints. Taking this exercise to all-out failure can be potentially dangerous and because of this I would recommend that you stop your set one rep short of failure and safely re-rack the bar.



## 45 DEGREE LEG PRESS

Sit down in the leg press machine and place your feet on the upper half of the platform spaced slightly wider than shoulder-width apart. With your toes pointing slightly outward, press the weight up, remove the stoppers and grip the handles firmly. Lower the weight down as far as you can without putting any stress on your lower back. Drive the weight back up to the starting position but don't lock your knees out at the top. When you have completed your set, put the stoppers back in place and set the weight down.

Tips: It is important to use a full range of motion on this exercise instead of piling on the weight and only performing half reps. Lower the weight down as far as you comfortably can to maximize muscle stimulation. Also remember not to lock your knees out at the top of the movement as this will keep the stress on your thigh muscles at all times and will prevent injuries to the knee joints.



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## BARBELL LUNGES

Step into the squat rack and adjust the pins so that you can easily clear the bar off. Position the bar on your lower traps and rear delts and lift the bar off the pins. Step back far enough so that you will be able to take a large step forward to perform this movement. Stand with your feet about shoulder width apart and take a large step forward with your right leg. As you are stepping forward, lower your body toward the ground until your opposite thigh is at least parallel to the floor. Once you reach the bottom, drive your body back up with the same leg until you are in a standing position. Repeat the motion with the opposite leg and continue to alternate until you reach muscular failure.

Tips: Maintaining proper form is very important on this exercise. Throughout the entire movement your back should be flat, head up and abs tight. Avoid twisting your upper body and using jerky motions to lift the weight. Doing this will definitely put you at risk for an injury.





## DUMBBELL STEP UPS

Stand with dumbbells grasped to sides facing the side of a bench. Place foot of first leg on bench. Stand on bench by extending the hip and knee of the first leg and place the foot of second leg on bench. Step down with second leg by flexing the hip and knee of first leg. Return to original standing position by placing foot of first leg to floor. Repeat first step with opposite leg alternating first steps between legs.

Tips: Keep torso upright during exercise. Stepping a distance from the bench emphasizes the Gluteus Maximus; stepping close to the bench emphasizes Quadriceps.



# DUMBBELL DEADLIFT

Dumbbell deadlifts are very similar to dumbbell squats. Stand in an upright position while holding dumbbells at your sides. Lower the dumbbells down toward the floor by first sitting your hips back, then bend your knees and torso until you reach the floor or just slightly above. Keep your back flat and your head in a neutral position throughout the movement. Make sure you keep the dumbbells near your sides. Don't let them swing out in front of your body. This is a great exercise for developing your legs and back.



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## STABILITY BALL SPLIT SQUAT

In a standing position place the stability ball on your back up against the wall. It should reside between your upper back and helps contouring your natural spinal curvature. Place one leg out in front of you a reasonable distance and one leg behind you close to the wall. This is just like the regular squat only in this exercise your front leg will perform most of the lift. Slowly lower yourself until the front and rear leg have come close to or just past 90-degrees. Now push hard with the front leg to return to the starting position. After finishing your set, switch legs and repeat.



## STABILITY BALL STATIONARY LUNGE

This is a very advanced movement. Stand with one leg bent at a 90-degree angle and place the stability ball under the shin area. Carefully position your standing leg slightly further forward so you have created a distance between your working leg and your rear leg. Slowly begin to bend the working leg and at the same time guide your rear leg straight back behind you. Only go down as far as you feel comfortable and push up with your working leg until you've reached the starting position again. As you push with the working leg pull the stability ball back towards your body making sure to keep your leg firmly on top for stability.



## STABILITY BALL WALL SQUAT

Find a wall with a flat surface void of any obstructions. Place the stability ball on the wall behind your body and lean against it. Place your feet forward slightly and your stance can range from narrow to wide depending on the desired results. Slowly lower yourself until your knees bend to 90-degrees or slightly more. The beginner doesn't have to go down as far but for the ultimate results a full range of motion is encouraged. At the bottom of the motion push through your heels and drive your body back to the starting position.

Tips: Keep your back nice and flat, do not round it. Keep your knees lined up with your feet, do not let your knees buckle together. Look straight ahead or slightly up while squatting. The wider your stance, the more glutes you involve. It is okay to point your toes slightly outward.

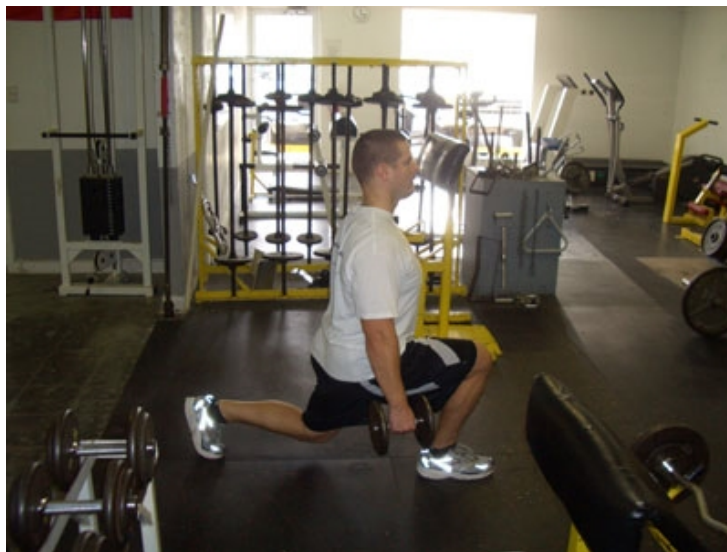


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## BACKWARD DUMBBELL LUNGES

Pick up a pair of dumbbells off the ground using your legs (not your back). Stand with your feet about shoulder-width apart. With your back straight, head up and abs tight, take a large step backward with your right leg and lunge down toward the floor until your left leg is parallel to the ground. Once you reach the bottom, drive your body back up with your right leg until you are in a standing position. Perform the same movement with your left leg and continue alternating until you reach muscular failure.

Tips: It is very important that you maintain proper form at all times when performing this exercise. Make sure to keep your back straight, head up and abs tight throughout the entire movement. Also remember to stay in complete control of the weights rather than using jerky motions or body momentum. Be careful not to hit your knees on the ground.



# KETTLEBELL SQUATS

Stand with your feet slightly wider than shoulder width and hold the kettlebell by the handle in front of you with the kettlebell up against your chest. Sit your butt back and between your legs with your back arched until your hips are lower than your knee.



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## BAND TERMINAL KNEE EXTENSIONS

Tie a band around a machine at knee level. Loop the band around your knee and position your foot at a distance from the machine to where the knee is being pulled slightly forward by the band. Contract the muscles in the quads against the pull of the band. This should focus primarily on the Vastus Medialis and promote a healthy knee joint.

Mainly a rehab exercise especially beneficial to powerlifters that use gear that shelters the inside of the knee leading to muscular imbalances.



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## BODY WEIGHT KNEE JUMP

This exercise is very crucial for creating a higher vertical jump, quickness and explosion for athletes. Begin by starting in a similar squatting position with your knees slightly bent and your back straight. Jump up with both feet while tucking your knees into your chest. You should be using the motion of arms to really help that jump get higher and higher. Return to starting position and repeat.



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## BODY WEIGHT WALL SIT

This is a great way to increase endurance in your lower body. Find a wall that gives you enough room to lean against with a floor where your feet have a good grip to. Start about 2 feet away from the wall facing away. Slowly lean back so that your back is flat along the wall. Slide your body down until your knees are at a 90-degree angle and hold there. Start off holding for 1 minute in the perfect 'chair-like' position. Increase your endurance by adding minutes each time you perform this exercise.

Tips: Be sure to keep your body low in the 90-degree angle. Your back should always be perfectly straight along the wall. To increase resistance, try holding dumbbells in each hand down by your side.



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# HIGH BAR BACK SQUATS

Bar rests high on the traps. Back out of the rack slowly. Feet are less than shoulder-width apart. Head is up and back is straight. Inhale a deep breath of air and begin descending by bending at the hips and knees. During the descent, the buttocks stay in line with the body, knees extend over the insteps of the feet. When you reach the point where the top of the thighs are parallel to the floor, forcefully push back to the erect position breathing out as you do so. Don't allow the knees to drift towards each other. Don't allow the back to bend forward or "cave in".



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## LYING LEG CURLS

Position your body in the leg curl machine by lying face down and gripping the handles in front of you. Adjust the leg pad so that it rests on your ankles. Keep your body flat against the machine and curl the weight towards your body. Squeeze your hamstrings at the top of the movement and then lower the weight back to the starting position. Continue the exercise until you have reached muscular failure.

Tips: Use a full range of motion on this exercise by curling the weight as high as possible and allowing for a full stretch at the bottom. In order to keep the tension on your hamstrings at all times, do not rest the weights at the bottom of the movement.



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## STIFF LEGGED DEADLIFT

Pick up a barbell off the ground using power from your legs (not your back). Space your feet slightly narrower than shoulder-width apart and hold the bar with an overhand grip just outside of your legs. Keeping a slight bend in your knees, bend forward at the waist and lower the weight toward the ground. As you lower the weight your lower back should remain arched as this will keep the tension on your hamstrings throughout the entire exercise. Lower the weight down until you feel a full stretch in your hamstrings. The distance that you are able to lower the bar will vary from person to person and will depend on body structure and flexibility. Once you feel a full stretch in your hamstrings, pull the weight back up into the standing position but stop just short of being fully erect. By not allowing your body to stand up completely straight you will keep the stress on your hamstrings at all times. Continue the motion until you have reached muscular failure.

Tips: It is extremely important that you do not round out your lower back at any point during this exercise but instead maintain a slight arch at all times. In order to keep your back flat, really focus on sticking your butt out and keeping the bar close to your body. You must also remember to keep a slight bend in your knees as you perform your reps as this will keep the tension on the hamstrings and will minimize your risk of injury.



## SEATED LEG CURLS

Position your body in the seated leg curl machine by sitting down and adjusting the leg pad so that it rests on your ankles. Grip the handles at your sides and curl the weight towards your body. Squeeze your hamstrings at the bottom and then return the weight back to the starting position. Continue the exercise until you have reached muscular failure.

Tips: Make sure to keep full tension on the hamstrings by utilizing a full range of motion. This means curling the weight all the way down and by getting a full stretch at the top of the movement. Remember not to rest the weights at any point during the exercise as this will take the stress off the hamstrings and minimize muscle stimulation.



## STANDING LEG CURLS

Position your body in the standing leg curl machine by firmly planting one foot on the ground and resting the leg pad on the back of your ankle. Grip something in front of you and curl the weight up towards your body. Fully contract your hamstring when you reach the top of the movement and then lower the weight under control back to the starting position. Continue until you have reached muscular failure and then switch legs.

Tips: To maximize the stimulation to your hamstrings, make sure that you use a full range of motion. This means curling the weight all the way up towards your body and getting a full stretch at the bottom. Do not rest the weights at any point during the exercise as this will take the stress off of your hamstrings.

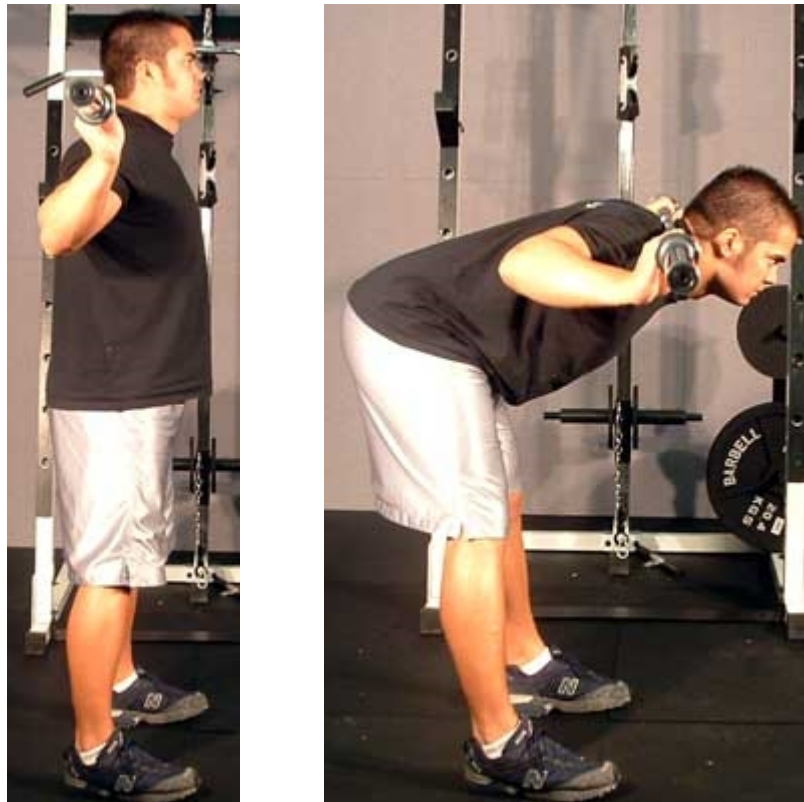


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## BARBELL GOOD MORNINGS

Step into the squat rack and adjust the pins so that you can easily clear the bar off. Rest the bar on your lower traps and rear delts and lift the weight off the pins. Take a large step back and space your feet about shoulder width apart. With a slight bend in your knees, head up and abs tight, begin by bending forward at the waist and lowering your body toward the ground. Continue to descend until you feel a full stretch in your hamstrings. The distance that you are able to lower yourself will vary from person to person and will depend on body structure and flexibility. Once you have reached the bottom, raise your body back up into the standing position but stop just short of being fully erect. Continue this motion until you have completed your desired reps and then re-rack the bar.

You must maintain good form throughout the entire exercise by keeping your lower back arched, head up and abs tight. Also remember to keep a slight bend in your knees as this will keep the tension on the hamstrings and will minimize stress to your joints. I wouldn't recommend taking this exercise to all-out failure as it will be very difficult to safely re-rack the bar if you get stuck in the bottom position. Simply take the lift to the point where you are one rep short of failure and then stop.





# STIFF LEGGED DUMBBELL DEADLIFT

Pick up a pair of dumbbells off the ground using power from your legs (not your back). Space your feet slightly narrower than shoulder-width apart and hold the dumbbells with an overhand grip just outside of your legs. Keeping a slight bend in your knees, bend forward at the waist and lower the weight toward the ground. As you lower the weight your lower back should remain arched as this will keep the tension on your hamstrings throughout the entire exercise. Lower the weight down until you feel a full stretch in your hamstrings. The distance that you are able to lower the bar will vary from person to person and will depend on body structure and flexibility. Once you feel a full stretch in your hamstrings, pull the weight back up into the standing position but stop just short of being fully erect. By not allowing your body to stand up completely straight you will keep the stress on your hamstrings at all times. Continue the motion until you have reached muscular failure.

Tips: It is extremely important that you do not round out your lower back at any point during this exercise but instead maintain a slight arch at all times. In order to keep your back flat, really focus on sticking your butt out and keeping the dumbbells close to your body. You must also remember to keep a slight bend in your knees as you perform your reps as this will keep the tension on the hamstrings and will minimize your risk of injury.



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## STABILITY BALL LEG CURL

In a supine position on the floor position the stability ball under your legs between your knees and feet. The further the stability ball is from your hips the more difficult. Raise your hips into the air as you push down into the exercise ball. At the top of the lift your body should be straight on a 30 degree angle with the floor. Hold the position. Pull the physio ball in towards your glutes keeping your hips off the floor. Bring it in as far as possible and slowly release it back to the start position. The exercise is more difficult when you maintain your hips off the floor in between each curl but it might be better to begin by resting your hips back to the floor between each rep until you become comfortable with the exercise.



## STABILITY BALL HIP EXTENSIONS

Lay on the floor in a supine position. Place the stability ball under your legs somewhere between your calf and heel. Your arms should remain at your side on the floor slightly under your body to help control your position. Push your legs down into the ball as you push your hips upward until your body has created a straight line. Hold at the top and slowly lower your body back to the floor. Squeeze your hamstrings and glutes at the top of the movement to increase intensity. The further the stability ball is from the hips the more difficult the exercise.



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## KETTLEBELL HAND TO HAND SWITCH SWING

Performed as a normal single handed kettlebell swing but puts more stress on the upper back. At the top of the swing, you grab the kettlebell with the opposite hand and take it down on the eccentric and swing it back up and the switch again. Switching hands increases the efficiency of the exercise and also builds more coordination into the movement.



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## BAND LEG CURLS

To perform a band leg curl, choke a band around machine or stationary object at about ankle level. Then take a bench and put it about 2 feet away from the machine. Take the end of the band that isn't attached to the machine and place it over your ankle so that it wraps around your ankle. Sit down on the bench and push it back some so that the band has constant tension on your leg. While sitting simply curl your hamstring and pull your foot back towards the bench you are sitting on.

A beginner lifter could easily start with a purple/light Jumpstretch band and a more advanced lifter could move up to a green/average band or even a blue/strong band. Aim for higher reps on this exercise. 10-25 is best. It is also great for working around knee injuries when you can't squat or deadlift.



## GLUTE HAM RAISES

Hook your feet into the rollers and butt your heels up against the foot plate. You will probably need to adjust the machine to get your knees directly onto the pad. With your knees on the pad, extend your body all the way out and then flex at the hip and the knee and bring your body up to perpendicular to the floor. The exercise is extremely hard at first but will add slabs of meat to your ass and hams. It will also directly affect your leg strength for squats.



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## SINGLE LEG LYING CURLS

This is another exercise for the hamstring but this one is performed on a lying curl machine. Choose a lighter weight because you'll be doing one leg at a time. Start by positioning yourself on the machine, grasping the handles to help keep your body tight against the machine. Position the roller pads so that they're just above your heels. Curl your heel up towards your butt until it just about touches it. Do eight to twelve repetitions and then do the other leg.



# CALF EXERCISES



- [Standing Calf Raise](#)
- [Seated Calf Raise](#)
- [Standing Dumbbell Calf Raise](#)
- [Donkey Calf Raise](#)
- [Stability Ball Hip Extension For Calves](#)
- [Calf Raises on Stairs](#)
- [Standing Barbell Calf Raises](#)
- [Seated Barbell Calf Raises](#)
- [One-Legged Dumbbell Calf Raises](#)
- [Toe Press On Leg Press](#)



# STANDING CALF RAISE

Getting started: Get your shoulders situated under the pads of the calf machine or under the bar if you are doing these on a Smith machine. Then, situate your feet on the platform or block. The platform you use should be high enough to get a really deep stretch on the calves at the bottom of the motion. Make sure your feet are pulled all the way back off the edge with the balls of your feet still securely on the platform. You can do these in a variety of foot position angles to target different parts of the calves. If you do not already have some significant calf development, don't do these different foot positions immediately. Stick with the basics for awhile.

Start at the top by standing up on your tip toes as high as you can, flexing the calves and holding the contraction for a second, then releasing slowly (inhale here) into a deep stretch. Pause at the bottom for a second, absorbing the stretch into the calf, then flex it back up to the starting position (exhale here). The key to great form is getting the full range of motion and flexing at the top.



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## SEATED CALF RAISE

Place the balls of your feet on the platform and secure your knees under the pads. Remove the stopper and fully extend your calves by letting your heels come down as far as you can. Using only your calves, drive the weight by coming up on your toes until your calves are fully flexed. Pause briefly at the top and then lower your heels back down. Continue until you reach muscular failure and then put the stopper back in place.

Tips: Make sure to use only your calves during this exercise. Avoid rocking your body and using momentum to lift the weight. It may also be helpful to use a spotter during this exercise in order to help you place the weight stopper back in place as soon as you reach failure.



## STANDING DUMBBELL CALF RAISE

Place two dumbbells on the floor side by side. Make sure the dumbbells are not circular because you do not want them to roll. It is best to use hexagon dumbbells for this exercise. Step onto the handle of the dumbbells with the entire balls of your feet. In the example the trainee is holding an exercise bike for balance. It is important that you do not cheat by using your arms to lift your bodyweight. To complete a repetition simply stand up on the balls of your feet contracting your calf muscles. It is okay to perform this exercise with either bent knees or straight knees to fully recruit the gastrocnemius muscle. Go as high as you can on each rep and descend under control. This exercise can also be performed with one dumbbell and one leg at a time. To add resistance you can even hold a set of dumbbells in your hand if you can keep your balance.



## DONKEY CALF RAISE

Step onto the handle of the dumbbells or any raised platform with the entire balls of your feet. Lean forward at a 90-degree angle and hold onto something for support. In this example the trainee is holding an exercise bike for balance. This exercise is called a donkey calf raise because someone could sit on your lower back to add resistance. It is important that you do not cheat by using your arms to lift your bodyweight. To complete a repetition simply stand up on the balls of your feet contracting your calf muscles. It is okay to perform this exercise with either bent knees or straight knees to fully recruit the gastrocnemius muscle. Go as high as you can on each rep and descend under control



## STABILITY BALL HIP EXTENSIONS FOR CALVES

In a supine position on the floor place the stability ball as far from your hips as possible with only the top half of your foot on the top side of the stability ball. Push down into the stability ball and lift your hips like a regular hip extension but focus now on your calves. Since the stability ball is such a great distance from your hips and only your toes are in contact with the stability ball, the calf muscles are under great strain to maintain that bridged position. Lift the hips up and down keeping the exercise ball as far as possible and flexing your calves. This one can really burn.



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## CALF RAISES ON STAIRS

Place the ball of one foot on the edge of a block or stair. Wrap the other foot behind the lower leg that is positioned on the block. All weight should be on the standing foot. Use a support for balance and slowly lower the heel of the working leg as low as possible; then rise up on the toe until the calf is fully flexed. Lower and repeat. This exercise maybe varied by holding a dumbbell in the hand on the same side of the working leg.



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# STANDING BARBELL CALF RAISES

Using a squat-rack, place the pins at a level where you can comfortably un-rack the bar. Place the bar on your rear shoulders and comfortably grip it with your hands. Un-rack the weight and take a few steps back. With your feet planted firmly on the ground, drive your body up by standing as high on your toes as possible. Squeeze your calves at the top of the movement and then lower your heels back to the ground. Continue the motion until you reach muscular failure and re-rack the bar.

A spotter should definitely be used for this lift in case you lose your balance. This exercise should be approached with caution as it will be difficult to safely use a considerable amount of weight.



## SEATED BARBELL CALF RAISES

Sit on a flat bench and place a loaded bar on the bottom of your thighs. You can place a pad or towel underneath the weight to relieve some of the stress on your thighs. Place some sort of platform underneath your feet to allow you to achieve a full range of motion on the exercise. A block of wood or a stepping platform will work well. Place the balls of your feet on the platform and drive the weight by coming up on your toes as high as you can. Squeeze your calves at the top of the movement and then return them to the starting position by letting your heels down.

Avoid using jerky motions or body momentum and focus on moving the weight with your calves only. Utilize a full range of motion by coming up on your toes as high as possible and dropping your heels down as far as they will go.



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## ONE-LEGGED DUMBBELL CALF RAISES

Pick up a dumbbell in one hand and stand on the platform (you can use any type of platform as long as it allows you to perform a full calf raise and is near something that you can hold onto for support). Place the ball of the same foot (if you are holding the dumbbell in your right hand, use your right foot) on the edge of the platform with your heel hanging off the edge. Hold on to something with your opposite hand in order to support your body and then move the weight by coming up on your toe as high as you can. Squeeze your calf at the top, pause briefly and then return back to the starting position. Repeat the motion for each leg.

Make sure to keep a slight bend in your leg in order to avoid stressing your knee joint. As with all calf exercises, make sure to use a full range of motion by fully extending and flexing your calves as you lift and lower the weight.



## TOE PRESS ON LEG PRESS

This exercise is done on a leg press machine and works the calf muscles of the leg. Position yourself in the leg machine as you normally would but lower your feet until about two-thirds of your feet are below the platform. Push the platform up until your legs are almost straight and then, using just your toes, raise the platform as far as you can. Hold this position for a one-second count, return to the starting position and repeat until failure. Start without weight to get used to the movement so that you're using just your calf muscles.



# AB EXERCISES



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## BICYCLE CRUNCH

Lay flat on your back as if doing a crunch. Lift your legs up with the upper leg being parallel to the floor but not resting on it. Start the exercise just like a normal crunch whereby you lift your upper shoulders off the floor but in a twisting motion. Perform a "one shoulder at a time" crunch and in a bicycle fashion, bring the left knee and your right shoulder off the floor towards the center of your body. Next repetition, switch your crunch so that your left shoulder and your right knee come closer together.

Tip: Remember to slowly but deliberately lift your shoulder off the floor and focus on the abdominal muscle doing the work. Don't aim to get your shoulder off the ground as much as possible but to feel the abdominal contraction. You should not focus on bringing the shoulder up with any other muscle group such as the neck and shoulder.



## STABILITY BALL: CRUNCH, REACH, PASS

Lay on the floor in a supine position with your arms over your head holding the stability ball while it rests on the floor. Begin to crunch and raise your arms up at the same time begin to raise your legs up until the two meet. Now pass the ball from your hands to your feet and lower your arms and legs back to the floor. Continue to firmly hold the stability ball between your legs and continue with the same motion raising your arms and legs using your midsection bringing the two together.



## STABILITY BALL LOG ROLL

In a prone position with the stability ball under your legs between your knees and feet hold a stiff push-up position. Twist your body from the hip/torso area keeping your upper body from shifting too much. Twist as much as 90-degrees to the right and than to the left. Be sure to reposition the stability ball if it shifts out of place.



## STABILITY BALL PIKE

Get in pushup position, then rest the tops of your feet on a Swiss ball [1]. Keeping your legs as straight as possible, bend your hips and try to pull your feet toward your chest so that the ball rolls forward [2]. Hold at the top for three to four seconds, then slowly roll back to the starting position. Continue rolling the ball backward (letting it move up your legs) until your body forms a straight line about 30 degrees to the floor [3]. That's one rep. Perform two to three sets of 10 repetitions, resting 45-60 seconds between each set. Save this exercise for the end of your workout.

While the "pike" action at your hips works the abs through a wider range of motion than you're probably used to, extending your body at the end of the movement hits even more muscle. Your chest and shoulders play a big part, too, balancing your upper body as you safely stretch the limits of your ab development.



## STABILITY BALL OBLIQUE CRUNCH

Place the ball on the floor in close proximity to a wall. Kneel on the floor between the wall and the ball placing your hand on top of the stability ball for balance. Extend one leg forward and one leg backward bracing them where the wall meets the floor. It is very important that the bottom leg of the side you are exercising is the one extended forward. Otherwise the movement is subjected to unwanted rolling and instability.

Once you've secured your foot position, your hip placement becomes equally important. The hip of the side you are laying on should reside high up on the ball. If your body is not high enough on the ball it could kick the stability ball out to the side and cause you to begin all over again. Relax and stretch yourself sideways over the stability ball with your arms bent and hands clasped behind your head. Push your hips downward into the stability ball and crunch your body lifting off the ball in the direction of the wall. until maximal range of motion is reached. Hold and slowly lower yourself back to your original position.



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## STABILITY BALL OBLIQUE CRUNCH VARIATION

Lay on top of the ball in a supine position with your legs bent at a 90-degree and feet firmly on the ground. The stability ball should be between your hips and shoulders following the curvature of the spine. Arms should be held behind your head, but be sure not pull on your neck to assist the abs. Relax in this position to obtain a stretch of the abdominal wall. Now flex flex your midsection raising your shoulder blades off the stability ball. As you raise your shoulder blades twist your torso so that the your right elbow reaches across your body.



## STABILITY BALL AB TUCK

In a prone push-up position place the ball under your legs between the knees and feet. The closer the ball is to the knee the easier the exercise, the closer the ball to the feet the more difficult. Holding yourself in a strict push-up position begin to pull the stability ball in towards your chest raising your hips upward until your body has formed a tucked position. Once you've brought your knees close to your chest as possible, slowly extend your body back to a straight line. A more advanced progression involves toes only on the stability ball or even one leg at a time!



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## STABILITY BALL AB CRUNCH

Lay on top of the ball in a supine position with your legs bent at a 90-degree and feet firmly on the ground. The stability ball should be between your hips and shoulders following the curvature of the spine. Arms should be folded across your chest or you can put them behind your head. If you do place them behind your head be sure that you Do Not pull on your neck to assist the abs in the movement. Relax in this position to obtain a stretch of the abdominal wall. Now flex flex your midsection raising your shoulder blades off the stability ball.

Be careful not to come up too high because the tension in the muscles will decrease. Squeeze the abs at the top of the motion and slowly lower yourself back to a fully relaxed and stretched position.



## HANGING KNEE RAISE

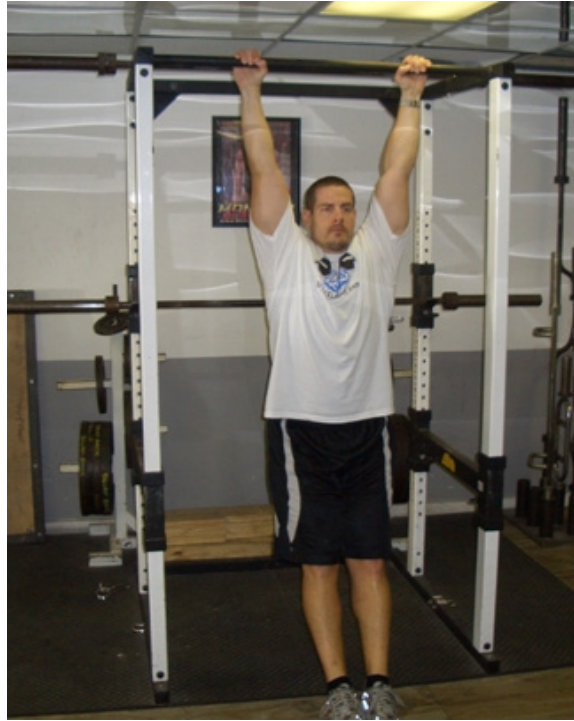
Hang from a chin-up bar. Rapidly kick knees up toward chin, rounding back slightly during movement. Hold and squeeze at the top. Don't swing body for momentum.



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## HANGING LEG RAISE

Hang from a chin-up bar with back slightly rounded and toes pointing forward. Raise legs up to horizontal position until a 90 degree angle is reached with your body. Keep your toes pointing up. Hold and squeeze. DON'T swing body for momentum.



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## TWISTING ABDOMINAL CRUNCH

Lie on back, legs bent and cross one leg over other so ankle is on other leg. Put hand opposite bent leg behind head. Without pulling head, bring elbow toward opposite knee. Switch sides after target reps.



## LYING LEG RAISE

Lie on back with hands grabbing sturdy equipment or furniture behind head. Raise legs rapidly to a ninety degree angle with your body. Squeeze abs for 3-count and slowly lower legs to floor.



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## FULL ROTATION HANGING KNEE RAISE

Hang from chin-up bar. Rapidly twist hips to left or right (alternate with each set) bringing knees up toward chin. Continue rotation by lowering down other side in a circular pattern. Concentrate on bringing knees up toward chin by rounding back slightly during movement. DON'T swing body for momentum.





## BENT LEG ABDOMINAL CRUNCH

Lie on back with legs bent. Keep hands at ears or crossed on chest. Raise only head and shoulder blades off the ground. Don't pull head up with arms. Contract abs at top. Your chin should be tucked far enough that you could fit a tennis ball between your chin and upper chest.



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## KETTLEBELL TURKISH GET UP

Lie on the ground on your back and grab the kettlebell by the handle with the bell on the back of your wrist. Extend your arm straight up so the kettlebell is over your body and use whatever means necessary to get off the ground. (Do not use any objects around you to do so.)



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## BAND WOODCHOPS

To perform band woodchops, take two bands and loop them together to make one long band. Tie it and choke it off to a vertical pole or a horizontal portion of a machine. Preferably choke the band off at above head level so that the band is hanging a foot off the floor. Take the band with your right hand and hold it out straight overhead. Take your opposite hand and hold onto the other hand to brace it. Step away from the anchor point of the band until the band is taught with tension. Forcefully contract your abs and turn sideways at the same time making a diagonal with the arc of your hands. This exercise is great for building the musculature of the core and building a strong base to squat from.



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## STANDING BAND ABDOMINAL TWIST

To perform standing band abdominal twist, tie two bands together and attach one end to a machine at about shoulder level. Grab the other end with BOTH hands. Now with your arms straight out and the band at a 90 degree angle of your extended arms. Twist your body away from the band and into the resistance. This exercise is rough and will really tear up your abs. The upper back and rear deltoids will also get pumped to from supporting the tension of the bands.



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## STANDING BAND AB CRUNCHES

To perform a standing abdominal crunches find a vertical portion of machine and loop a band around it and choke it off at the machine. Grab the end of the band with your hands and turn and face away from the machine. Put your hands behind your head and hold them there up against the back of your head. Perform a crunch down till your back is parallel with the floor flexing your abdominal muscles at the bottom. Control the motion back till you are standing straight again. Depending on your bodyweight, you may need to brace your back up against the machine that the band is looped around. This exercise is great for building abdominal strength. You can easily twist your body to left or right to work the corresponding obliques on either side.



## ELBOW PLANK

Begin by lying down placing your elbows directly under your shoulders and your stomach flat on the floor. Make sure your shoulders and forearms are parallel to each other. Lift yourself up onto your toes and elbows only putting your body into a plank position. Start timing yourself once your back is completely straight. Hold that position for as long as you can or start by timed goals and increasing each rep.



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## AB WHEEL

This is probably one of the hardest exercises to work your core as it focuses in on both the top and bottom portions of your abdominals. With the ab wheel on the floor, get on your hands and knees and grab the handles of the ab wheel and extend straight out so that core is parallel to the floor and then return to the beginning position. Like most bodyweight exercises, you can this one slightly easier or harder by pulling your knees off the floor or keeping them on the floor. To work the obliques, you can curve the path of the wheel slightly to the right or left and target those sides.

Ab wheels come in different sizes. The one from the video below is a bit larger than many of the smaller ab wheels you'll typically see in the gym, but they all work the same way.



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## TWISTING CRUNCHES

Lie on the floor and position your legs over a flat bench at a 90 degree angle. Place your hands behind your head and keep your lower back rounded and flat against the floor. Curl yourself up and rotate your body until your elbow is touching the opposite knee. Pause briefly at the top and then lower yourself back to the starting position. Repeat the same motion using the other elbow and alternate back and forth until you have completed your set.

Do not pull on the back of your head with your hands as you perform this movement. Also make sure to not lift your entire body off of the floor but instead focus on working only your abs and obliques. You should aim to keep the tension on your mid section the entire time by not resting at any point throughout the exercise.





# JACK KNIVES

Sit across a flat bench with your upper body leaning back and your legs fully extended out in front of you. Place your hands on the front of the bench to secure your body in place. With your lower back rounded, bring your upper body forward and simultaneously curl your legs in until your knees are touching your chest. Squeeze your abs in this position and then return back to the starting position.

Make sure to keep your lower back rounded as you perform your reps rather than arched. It is also very important to keep the tension on your abs throughout the entire exercise by not allowing yourself to rest at any point and by utilizing a complete range of motion.



## ONE DUMBBELL SIDE BEND

Standing upright, hold a dumbbell in your right hand at your side. Place the left hand behind your head (bicep next to ear). Simply bend directly sideways toward the side holding the dumbbell, return to starting position and repeat. After completing all the reps for one side switch the dumbbell to the other hand. Keep the back straight and the head up and don't lean forward.



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