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EXCUSES

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# Armed for duty

■ BY MATT BRZYCKI

Who doesn't want to have upper arms that are stronger and look better? Among other things, having strong arms can help the major muscles of the torso in the performance of a wide variety of movements and activities. Plus, having well-developed arms can improve a police officer's "command presence."



Matt Brzycki

## ANATOMY 101

The two major muscles of the upper arms are the biceps and triceps. Let's take a quick look at their location and function.

The biceps are located on the front of the upper arm. As implied by the name, the muscle has two separate parts or "heads."

When the biceps are fully contracted, this separation can be seen as a groove on a well-developed upper arm. The primary function of the biceps is elbow flexion (bending the arms). The biceps assist the upper back in pulling and climbing.

The triceps are located on the back of the upper arm. As its name suggests, the muscle has three distinct heads: the long, lateral and medial. When the triceps are fully contracted, these three heads produce a horseshoe-shaped appearance on a well-developed upper arm.

The primary function of the triceps is elbow extension (straightening the arms). The triceps assist the chest and shoulders in pushing and throwing.

## PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

Most discussions about training the upper arms prescribe the same exercises along with the same – or similar – set/rep scheme. Instead of the "same old, same old," here's a simple yet effective sequence of four exercises that can be performed in a time-efficient manner.

**Exercise 1:** Start with any standard exercise for the biceps with any type of equipment. For example, you can do the bicep curl while using a barbell, dumbbells or a machine. Do one set of the exercise using strict form. This means

employing a controlled and deliberate speed of movement without any jerking or bending backward. Use a resistance that allows you to reach the point of muscular fatigue between eight and 12 repetitions.

**Exercise 2:** Immediately after doing the bicep exercise, move quickly to a chinning bar and do one 30/30 chin-up (preferred) or pull-up. A 30/30 chin-up is done by taking 30 seconds to raise your body and 30 seconds to lower your body. The idea is to move slowly and steadily rather than do a series of small tugs. To be clear, perform one repetition that takes 60 seconds to complete: 30 seconds on the way up and 30 seconds on the way down.

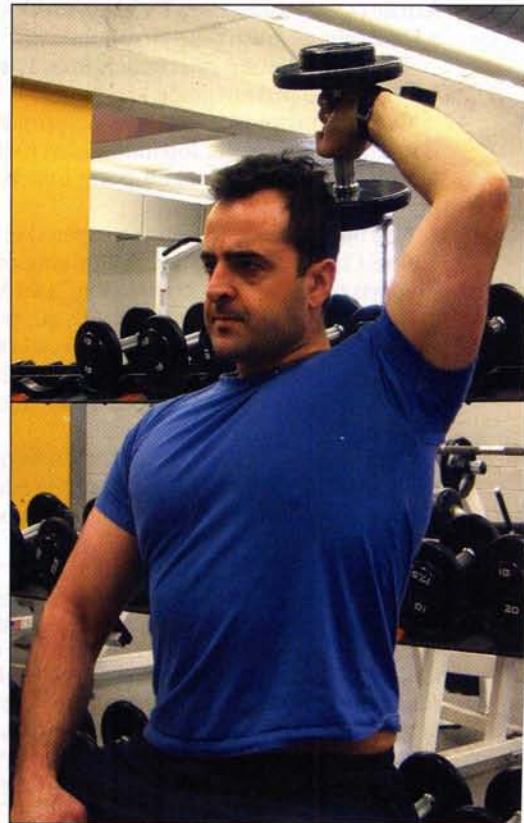
**Exercise 3:** Immediately after doing the 30-30 chin-up (or comparable exercise), do any standard exercise for the triceps with any type of equipment. For example, you can do the tricep extension with a barbell, dumbbell or machine. Do one set of the exercise using strict form (as described in Exercise #1.) Here again, use a resistance that allows you to reach the point of muscular fatigue between eight and 12 repetitions.

**Exercise 4:** Immediately after doing the tricep exercise, move quickly to dip bars and do one 30/30 dip (starting from the "down" or stretch position). A 30/30 dip is done by taking 30 seconds to raise your body and 30 seconds to lower your body.

To summarize, do the bicep curl, 30/30 chin-up, tricep extension and 30/30 dip. Take as little time as possible between the four exercises but don't speed through the repetitions. Let your muscles do the brunt of the work, not momentum. You'll get much more out of the exercises that way.

## NOTES

In a total-body workout, this arm "routine" should be done after training the major muscles of the torso (the chest, upper back and shoulders). And it won't take long: One time through the four exercises should only take about five or six minutes, assuming that the duration



between exercises is minimal.

If a 30/30 chin-up is too difficult, you can substitute a comparable exercise such as a lat pulldown; if a 30/30 dip is too difficult, you can substitute a comparable exercise such as a bench press.

If a 30/30 chin-up or dip is too easy, simply add extra resistance around your waist. Another way of making the chin-up and dip more challenging is to do a 30/30/30 repetition. In this case, you'd lower your body in 30 seconds, raise your body in 30 seconds and then lower your body in 30 seconds. So, a 30/30/30 repetition would take 90 seconds to complete.

## THE BOTTOM LINE

For a variety of reasons, training the upper arms is important. In this way, you'll be "armed for duty." 📌

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