

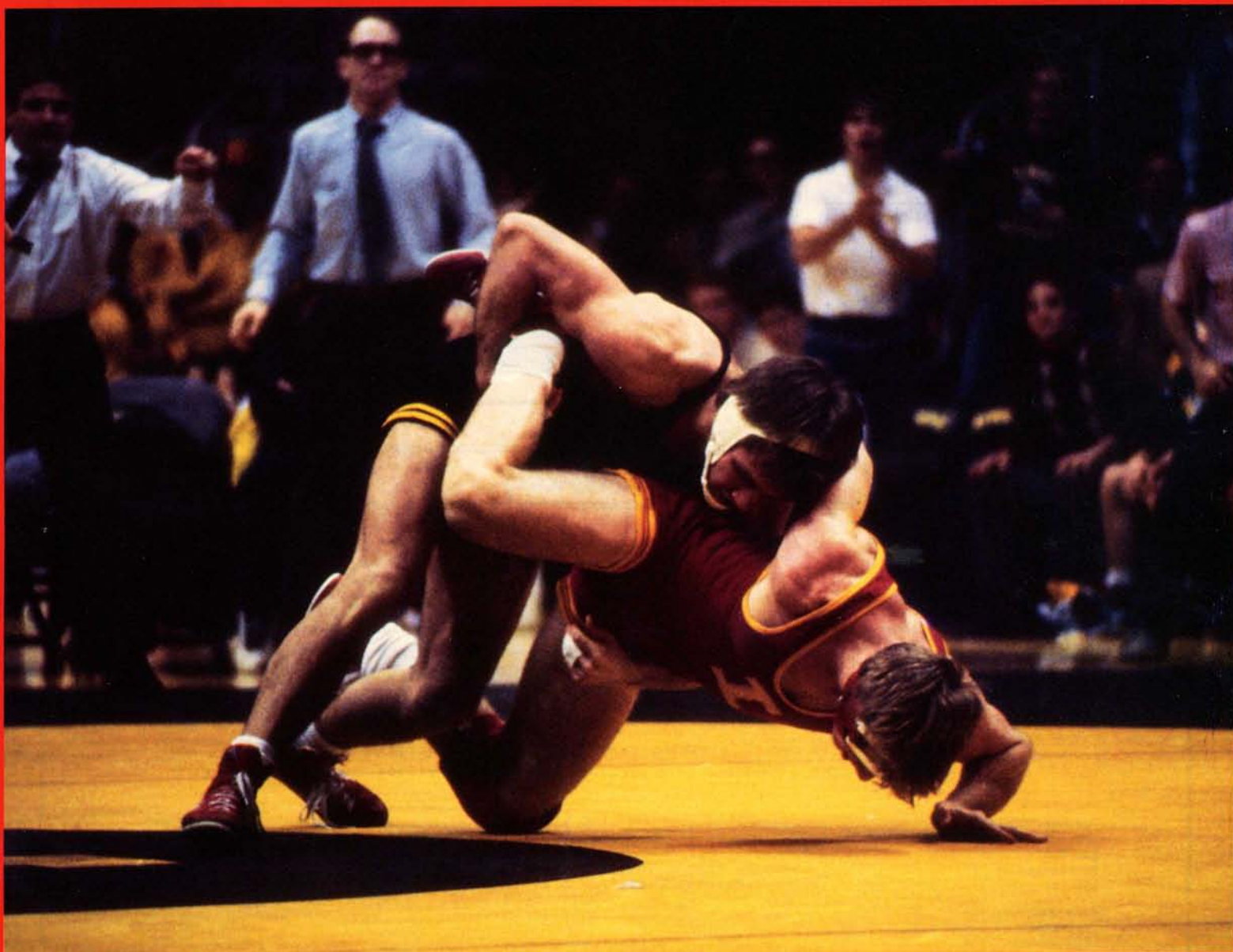
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Wrestling Masters



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OFFICIAL MAGAZINE

STRONGER ARMS FOR PEAK PERFORMANCE

by **Matt Brzycki**

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Rutgers University**

Increasing the strength of the arm musculature will aid an athlete in his execution of virtually every wrestling movement. Takedowns, hand control, riding an opponent and maintaining a solid base are just a few examples in which stronger arms will be to a wrestler's advantage.

Basically, the muscles of the arm include the biceps, triceps and forearms. The biceps flex (or bend) the arm while its antagonistic counterpart, the triceps, are primarily used to extend (or straighten) the arm. Although the forearm musculature has a variety of functions (i.e., flexion, extension, supination, pronation), we will concern ourselves with flexion to increase grip strength.

Briefly, each arm exercise (regardless of the type of equipment used) should be done throughout a full range of motion, raising the weight without momentum (in about 2 seconds), pausing distinctly in the contracted position and returning slowly to the starting/stretched position (in about 4 seconds). One set consisting of 6-12 repetitions for each exercise should be performed to the point of momentary muscular failure followed by 2-4 post-fatigue (or "forced") reps with the aid of a partner.

Bicep Curl. The main exercise used in isolating the biceps is the bicep curl. There are many variations of this exercise, but a simple manual resistance exercise will be described that has proven to be effective in building size and strength.

The lifter sits with his arms extended over the top of a preacher bench. He should grasp a bar (or broomstick) with his palms facing up and his hands spaced slightly wider than shoulder width apart. The spotter should face the lifter and grasp the bar with his palms facing down just outside the lifter's hands. To begin the movement, the lifter should pull the bar underneath his chin while the spotter provides resistance evenly throughout a full range of motion. The lifter should now pause briefly in the contracted position before returning slowly to the starting/stretched position against the spotter's resistance.

Care should be taken to ensure that movement oc-

curs only at the elbow in order to isolate the biceps. This exercise can also be performed on the low pulley of a Universal Gym, any of several Nautilus biceps machines or with free weight.

Tricep Extension. When done in a strict manner, triceps extensions are an excellent exercise for increasing the size and strength of the triceps. This exercise can be performed best on a flat bench with a tricep extension adaptor using manual resistance.

The lifter should lie supine on a bench, place his elbows against the pads of the adaptor and grasp a bar (or broomstick) with his palms facing up. The spotter should stand behind the lifter's head and grasp the bar with his palms facing down just outside the lifter's hands. To begin the exercise, the lifter should push the bar up while the spotter provides resistance evenly throughout the full range of movement. The lifter should now pause briefly in the contracted position before returning slowly to the starting/stretched position against the spotter's resistance.

This exercise can also be done on a flat bench without the adaptor although it will be more difficult to perform correctly and, therefore, less effective in isolating the triceps. The lifter must concentrate on keeping his upper arm perpendicular to the ground and his elbows pointed in the direction of his knees. Rotation should only occur around the elbow joint. This exercise can also be done on the high pulley of a Universal Gym, any of several Nautilus tricep machines or with free weight.

Forearm Curl. This exercise represents a productive way of increasing grip strength. The lifter sits on a bench and grasps a barbell with his palms facing up and his hands spaced approximately 4-6 inches apart. The lifter may place his forearms on the top of his thighs or between his legs on the bench. To begin the movement, the lifter should curl his hands toward his body, pause briefly in the contracted position and return slowly to the starting/stretched position.

To increase the range of motion, the lifter can place his thumbs underneath the bar with the rest of his fingers. The lifter must keep his arms directly over his legs throughout the movement. Rotation should occur around the wrist. This exercise can also be done on the low pulley of a Universal Gym or on the Nautilus Multi-Exercise Machine.



BICEP CURL



TRICEP EXTENSION



FOREARM CURL