

Tone up your triceps with these top strength exercises

March 12 2019, by Len Canter, Healthday Reporter



(HealthDay)—Working your triceps might not always be top of mind,

but toning the muscles that run along the backs of your upper arms is key to the smooth functioning of your elbows and to also give bare arms a sleeker look.

For a study sponsored by the American Council on Exercise (ACE), scientists from the University of Wisconsin, La Crosse, evaluated eight popular triceps strength-training exercises.

Tops for Triceps Training

- Triangle push-ups
- Triceps kickbacks
- Overhead triceps extensions
- Bar push-downs
- Rope push-downs
- Closed-grip bench press
- Lying barbell triceps extensions
- Dips

From this list, triangle push-ups, dips and triceps kickbacks best engaged these muscles. Here's how to do them. (For each exercise, do 10 to 15 reps for a complete set. Progress from one to three sets as you get stronger.)

Triangle push-ups are a variation on the classic push-up. The difference is that the hands are placed next to each other, directly under the upper chest, with thumbs and [index fingers](#) making a triangle shape. Flex your feet and contract your core and leg muscles. Keep your head in line with your spine as you slowly lower your body until your chest touches the floor. Focus on moving only your arms. With control, press back up until your arms are fully extended. Repeat. (If this is too hard, you can do the exercise with knees bent on the floor.)

Triceps kickbacks are done with light weights. To work the right side, stand along the right side of a workout bench and place your [left knee](#) and left hand on it for support. Your back should be nearly parallel to the floor. Hold a dumbbell in your right [hand](#) and bend your elbow to bring your upper arm flat against the right side of your torso, also parallel to the floor. Without moving the upper arm, exhale and straighten your lower arm behind you. Inhale as you slowly return to start. Complete all your reps and sets with the right arm, then switch sides and repeat with the left arm.

For **dips**, sit on the edge of a sturdy low bench, chair or platform. Place your hands on either side of your hips, palms down and fingers curled around the edge of the bench, arms straight. With feet together, heels on the floor extend your legs out in front of you. Slide your rear off the bench. This is the start position. (If this position is too difficult, you can bend your knees to shift some of your weight to your legs.) Keeping hands firmly in place, use control to lower your rear toward the floor (without actually touching it) as elbows bend and your upper arms become parallel with the floor. Then press through your hands to straighten your arms and return to start. Repeat.

More information: Read the full ACE study on [top triceps exercises](#) on the Council's website.

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Citation: Tone up your triceps with these top strength exercises (2019, March 12) retrieved 18 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2019-03-tone-triceps-strength.html>

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