

The essential upper arm shape-up

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(HealthDay)—Just because your upper arms are temporarily hidden under sweaters and jackets doesn't mean you should neglect them. Here's how to tone them with weights for better definition now and when they're fully back in view.

Hammer Curls: These are an effective variation of the bicep curl. Stand straight, a dumbbell in each hand, arms at your sides, wrists facing inward. Without moving your upper arms, raise the dumbbells until the ends closest to you touch the fronts of your shoulders. Hold briefly, then slowly lower the weights to the start position. If lifting both arms simultaneously is too difficult, do this exercise with alternating arms.

Alternating Hammer Curls: This advanced variation of the Hammer Curl is done in the basic plank position. Get on all fours. If you're strong, extend your legs straight behind you, with toes flexed. If not, keep your knees bent on the floor. Arms should be straight, but rather than having palms flat, each hand holds a dumbbell flat on the floor. Contract your abs and keep your upper body straight as you press your bodyweight onto your

left hand. Now raise the weight in your [right hand](#) until the end closest to you touches the front of your shoulder. You're moving only your forearm and keeping your right elbow close to your right side. Lower with control to the start position. Repeat, alternating sides with every [lift](#).

Triceps Swing Backs: This move tones the backs of your arms. From a [standing position](#), lower your [upper body](#) toward the floor to a tabletop position—your back is flat and parallel to the floor. Press your upper arms against your sides, elbows at a right angle, forearms perpendicular to the floor. Without moving your [upper arms](#), straighten your forearms behind you, hold briefly and then bend to return to the start [position](#).

Depending on your ability, start off with 2- to 5-pound weights. Build up to three sets of 12 reps each. Once you can comfortably complete all those reps, increase the weight.

More information: The American Council on Exercise has more on these and other [biceps](#) training exercises.

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