

You probably will notice right away that I didn't provide the number of reps and sets you should do for each exercise, or even which group of exercises you should do. This is because I want you to figure out what works best for your specific needs.

My suggestions...

- 1) Do as many reps as you can do while still maintaining proper form. When the burn gets so bad that feel you cannot possibly go on, do one or two more. This is what will help you build muscle. For a majority of these exercises, if you can complete 15 reps without feeling a burn, you need to make the exercise more intense. The best way to do this with arm exercises is to increase the weight you are using.
- 2) I have tried to put the exercises in an order that makes sense and is easy to follow. I pick an exercise or two for each muscle group in my legs, and follow that routine for 2 weeks. At that point, I make a new routine, using some of the moves I already used, as well as some new ones. This will help prevent your muscles from getting used to doing any one exercise. The reason you want to prevent that from happening is it can slow down how quickly you see improvements and gains.
- 3) While I judge how many reps to do by the "burn" level, I do set a time limit. For example, I started out by picking 7 exercises. I decided I would work out for 10 minutes. If that meant I only did one set of each exercise, great. If I didn't get all the way through each of the 7 exercises, oh well! You need to know how long your body can tolerate exercising, and only push it a little. You don't want to push yourself too much and end up unable to exercise for a few days from overdoing it. This was hard for me at first because conventional exercise advice always tells us to push ourselves even when our bodies are tired. Well folks, our bodies are anything but "normal" so don't overdo it!
- 4) Keep track of how many reps and sets you are doing as well as if you are adding weight or not. If one exercise seems really difficult to complete or causes a symptom, note it! I use a heart rate monitor, so I note my starting heart rate. When I am done, my heart rate monitor tells me my maximum and average heart rate during the workout. I record this as well. You will have a very hard time noticing changes in your ability if you don't keep track of whatever you are able! When you are chronically ill, something as small as 2 extra reps, or 1 extra minute several days in a row can be a sign of major progress! I have included pre-made charts under the "exercises" tab, so no excuses. ☺

These exercises are not intended to be taken as medical advice. Consult a physician before beginning any exercise program. These exercises and their descriptions were taken from my personal experience, doctors, and websites listed under "websites with exercise", which can be found under the "resources" tab. I do not give permission to copy any of the content on this page for use on their own personal/business website without asking first. If you just ask, I'll probably say yes! ☺

Okay, now that we got the legal jargon out of the way, on to the exercises!

Lying Dumbbell Pullovers

Chest

Holding a dumbbell in the palms of both hands, lie on your back on a flat bench/floor with your feet firmly placed on the floor. Slowly lift the dumbbell off your chest. Straighten your elbows until the dumbbell is positioned directly above your face and is hanging from your hands, vertically to the floor. Inhale. Slowly and carefully, bend your elbows. Then lower the dumbbell behind your head. Exhale and slowly return to your start position while maintaining the position of your torso on the bench. Try to avoid your elbows flaring out. Keep your elbows within a few inches of each other throughout the exercise.

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Chest, Shoulders

Knee Version: Come to a hands and knees position on an exercise mat positioning your knees underneath your hips and the crease of your wrists directly underneath your shoulders. Your fingers should be pointing forward. Stiffen your abdominal muscles to position your spine in a neutral position, avoid any excessive sagging or arching. Engage your core and abdominal muscles. Imagine you are tightening a corset around your waistline. Slide your right hand forward, about 6 to 12 inches, to a staggered stance position. Rotate both arms so that your fingers turn inward. Hold this position for 5-10 seconds. Switch hand positions and repeat.

Pushup Position Version: From the plank position with straight elbows, shoulders directly over your wrists, and head in line with your spine, brace your abdominal muscles. Pull the shoulder blades toward your hips. Do not allow the hips to hike up or the low back and ribcage to sag. Keep the legs straight and strong. Your toes are tucked under. Slide your right hand forward, about 6 to 12 inches, to a staggered stance position. Rotate both arms so that your fingers turn inward. Hold this position for 5-10 seconds. Switch hand positions and repeat.

Dumbbell Flies

Chest, Shoulders

Lie down with your back flat on the floor and your knees bent. With one dumbbell in each hand, hold your arms straight out from your sides with your palms facing up while gripping the dumbbells. Keep your arms straight throughout the exercise without locking your elbows. Lift the weights off the ground slowly toward the center of your body, and monitor your breathing, keeping it slow and even. Take about 2 seconds to raise the weights all the way up and meet in the middle, then about 3 seconds or longer to lower them back to the ground in the starting position.

Front Shoulder Raises

Shoulders

Hold your dumbbells with your hands resting on your thighs. Slowly lift your arm(s) up, shoulder height with your arms extended straight out. Pause at the top and slowly lower back down.

Lateral Shoulder Raises

Shoulders

Hold your dumbbells at your sides and slowly lifting your arm(s) out to the sides, shoulder height. Pause and control your weight back down.

Contra Lateral Limb Raises

Shoulders, Back

Lie on your stomach with your legs outstretched behind you. Reach your arms out overhead with your palms facing each other. Keep your head aligned with your spine. Deepen your abdominal/core muscles to stabilize your spine and slowly float one arm a few inches off the floor. Keep your arm straight and try not to rotate your arm or shoulder. Your head and torso should not move, avoid any arching in your back. Do not lift your chin or lower your head. Hold this position briefly. Gently inhale and lower your arm back towards your starting position without any movement in your low back or hips.

Seated Overhead Press

Shoulders, Triceps

You can do an overhead press with a weighted barbell or with a set of dumbbells. Sit on a weight bench or chair with your feet planted firmly on the floor and your back straight. Keep your abs engaged, and hold your hands with the weight at your shoulders. Your palms should be facing out and your elbows bent. While you exhale, press the weight up above your head by straightening your elbows. Hold at the top of your range for a second, and then lower the weight back down.

Tricep Extensions

Triceps

Lie on your back with a dumbbell in one hand. Use your other hand to support the dumbbell as you lift your arm overhead. Bend your elbow to a 90-degree angle, placing the opposite hand behind it for support. Raise the dumbbell, straightening your arm and working your triceps. Lower your dumbbell slowly back to the 90-degree angle.

Tricep Overhead Extension

Triceps

Bring the dumbbell over your head. Place your elbows in by your ears and slowly bend at the elbows to lower your weight behind your head. Squeeze your triceps and slowly straighten your arms back overhead.

Tricep Kickbacks

Triceps

Stand with your elbows pressed against your sides, holding your dumbbells in both hands and bending your elbow(s). Hinge at your hips, leaning your core forward and press your dumbbells up towards the ceiling, by straightening your arm(s). Pause at the top and slowly lower back down.

Tricep Dip (BE CAREFUL!!!!)

Triceps

Sit on the edge of a stable chair or bench. Stretch both legs out in front of you. Move your body until you are no longer on the chair. Raise and lower your body, using your tricep muscles.

Downward Facing Dog

Triceps

Come to an all-fours (quadruped) position on the floor mat, with your hands under your shoulders hands fingers facing forward. Engaging your abdominals to support the spine, step back one foot at a time, coming to a push-up position (plank). Your hands should remain under your shoulders. Reposition your feet as needed to allow full extension of your body. Do not allow the ribcage or low back to sag toward the floor or the hips to hike up toward the ceiling. Shift your weight back toward the wall behind you. This will cause your hips to rise up in the air forming an inverted V position. Your head should be aligned with your spine or slightly tucked. Try not to lift the head. Press your heels toward the floor. If your hamstrings are tight, you may allow a slight bend in the knees. Work toward straight knees, reaching the heels toward the floor. Inhale and return your body to the starting push-up position, maintaining the alignment of all your body segments.

Bicep Curls

Biceps

Perform bicep curls holding your dumbbells with your palms facing up and your hands at your side. Slowly bend your elbow(s) and bring your weight up to your shoulders. Control your weight as you lower back down to your starting point.

Bicep Hammer Curls

Biceps

Perform bicep curls holding your dumbbells with your palms facing each other and your hands at your side. Slowly bend your elbow(s) and bring your weight up to your shoulders. Control your weight as you lower back down to your starting point.

Half Moon Rotations

Biceps

To perform this workout, stand straight (sit if needed) with shoulder width distance between your legs. Keep your toes pointing forward. Now, lift both your arms up so that they are parallel to your shoulders. Keep the palms facing down. Now rotate your arm so that the palm is facing up, again rotate the hand till the palm is facing down.

Wrist Circles

Forearms

Stand or sit up straight with your feet shoulder width apart. Your arms are outstretched and form 90 degree angle with your body. Slowly move your hands drawing a circle with your finger tips. Make sure your arms do not move.

Wrist Curls

Forearms (flexors)

To perform wrist curls, you can work one hand at a time with a dumbbell or both hands using a barbell. Either method will provide the same basic results for the forearms flexor muscles. If using a dumbbell for single arm wrist curls, start by positioning the arm along a flat surface, palm up, with the hand holding the dumbbell off the edge of the bench/chair/flat surface at the wrist. Allow your hand to extend toward the floor to fully stretch the targeted muscles. Curl the wrist in an upward motion to fully contract the flexor muscles. Briefly pause before slowly extending the wrist back toward the floor to the starting position. If performing a double wrist curl with a barbell, start in the same position with both wrists off the edge of the bench and palms up. Perform the same curling movement as previously described.

Reverse Curls

Forearms (flexors)

Regular curls mainly hit your biceps, but reverse curls give your forearms a good workout. A reverse curl is done the same way as a normal curl, except with an overhand grip. You can do this exercise with a pair of dumbbells, but a straight barbell will hit your forearms better and make it harder to cheat. It's important that every time you curl the bar, you bring your wrists all the way up to your shoulders and extend your arms all the way back down.

Wrist Extensions

Forearms (extensors)

You can wrist extensions as a single or double arm exercise with your arms in the same basic position as the wrist curl (see above), except that your palms should be facing down. Hold the dumbbell in one hand or the barbell in both hands and extend your knuckles upward to fully contract the forearm extensors. Briefly pause before slowly allowing your knuckles to lower toward the floor.

Arm Circles

Triceps, Biceps, Shoulders

Standing straight, or sitting in chair without a back, if you need to sit, stretch both arms out to your sides. Also flatten your hands, palms down. Begin by making small circles in a clockwise motion. Keep arms strong and firm. Do as many as you can in one direction, then reverse and go counter clockwise.

Pushups

Forearms, Shoulders, Triceps, Biceps, Chest

Place your hands about shoulder-width apart, and step your feet back until your hips and torso are in line. Start each pushup with your arms fully extended, and descend until your chest is 2 inches from the floor, making sure to push

back up explosively. If body-weight pushups are too tough to begin with, try doing them from your knees. Make them tougher by placing your hands closer together.

Inverted Hand Pushups

Forearms, Shoulders, Triceps, Biceps, Chest

Inverted hand pushups focus significantly on the back of your upper arm (triceps). On your knees or toes, decline into a pushup position, placing your hands beneath your shoulders, fingers facing toward each other. It doesn't really matter how far down you go, but you do want to feel the contraction in the back of your arms as you lower your body weight to the floor.