

AMAZING ARMS



TRICEPS KICK-BACK
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VIDEOS.

Add these super moves to your walking workout
and wave good-bye to unwanted “bingo flaps” for good.

by Selene Yeager

WE WOMEN have our pet-peeve body parts. And ranking near the top are our arms—specifically, the backs of our arms, which often keep waving long after we’ve stopped. Since Michelle Obama took residence in the White House flashing those lean, sculpted limbs of hers, we’re, well, up in arms over them more than ever.

It doesn’t help that the upper arm is one of the places women store excess fat, says strength-training expert William Kraemer, Ph.D., a professor of kinesiology at the University of Connecticut. “When you get your body fat tested using calipers, the back of the upper arm is one of the key spots they measure—that’s why,” he says. “Women also tend to not work their arms as much as they should to see results. Women need to do more upper-body strength training to help improve their muscular definition and follow a proper diet to help reduce body fat.”

The good news is that you’re already ahead of the curve, so to speak, as the Curves workout hones in on those trouble spots to give you more-toned triceps (the muscle that can be a bit flabby at the back of your upper arm), firmer biceps (the front of the upper arm), and shapely shoulders.

“Women get very focused on the backs of their arms, but they need to remember that toned shoulders can really make your arms look great from the front and the back,” says Katie Mitchell, Curves director of exercise and research. “The Bicep/Tricep machine is great for your main arm muscles. I also really love the Shoulder Press/Lat Pull, the Chest/Back, and especially the Dip Shrug machine for arm and shoulder toning.”

ARMED AND FABULOUS

Because they’re trouble spots, however, your arms might need a bit more attention for maximum firming and toning. To more quickly sculpt arms that will make you want to go sleeveless this summer, supplement your circuit with a handful of targeted triceps and shoulder moves.

We cherry-picked the best exercises based on an American Council on Exercise-sponsored study on the best triceps exercises, in which researchers from University of Wisconsin-La Crosse pitted the most popular moves (eight in all) against one another to see which ones elicited the highest muscle-fiber activity.

The clear winner was the triangle push-up, followed very closely by the dip and the triceps kick-back. You’ll

find all three here, plus a biceps move to round it all out. The best part is that these moves require no special equipment, so you can work them into your regular walks, no additional “gym time” required. Or, if you prefer, do them at home on days you can’t get to Curves (or even if you can).

Perform 2 or 3 sets of 8 to 12 reps of each exercise 3 days a week. If you’re

diligent, you should see results within a few weeks. Research shows that because we carry proportionately less weight above our waists, women’s arms respond more quickly to strength training than our lower bodies do. As a big bonus, stronger arms make everything in life, from picking up kids and grandkids to carrying groceries to pushing shopping carts, that much easier.

“WE CHERRY-PICKED THE BEST TRICEPS EXERCISES BASED ON A STUDY SPONSORED BY THE AMERICAN COUNCIL ON EXERCISE.”

1



TRICEPS KICK-BACK

You can do this move without weight, but it works better with some resistance. Carry a water bottle on your walk and use that. Holding the bottle in your right hand, keep your back straight and bend slightly from the hips with your arm bent at 90 degrees, elbow at your side. Straighten your right arm and extend the bottle behind you, turning your palm up toward the sky once your arm is fully extended. Pause and then return to start. Do 8 to 12 reps and switch sides.

2



DIP

Sit on the edge of a park bench (or a sturdy chair at home) with your feet flat on the ground and knees bent 90 degrees. Grasp the seat on either side of your hips. Walk your feet out slightly and inch yourself off the seat. Bend your elbows straight back and dip your rear end toward the ground. Return to start. Complete a set (or as many as you can).

3

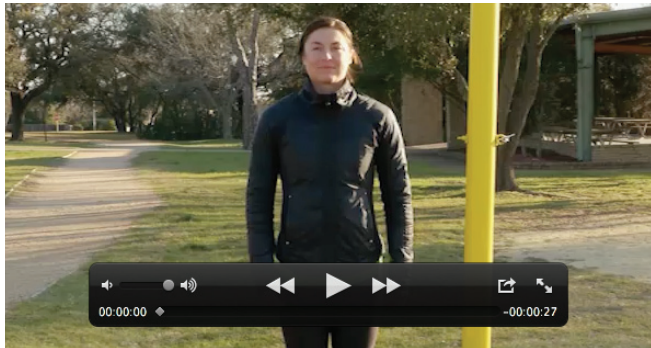


TRIANGLE PARK PRESS

Stand facing a low wall or the back of a park bench. Place both hands on the wall, so they are below your breastbone, index fingers and thumbs touching to create a triangle and elbows pointing out and back. Walk your feet back until you’re balancing on the balls of your feet and your body forms a straight line from head to heels. Slowly bend your elbows and your lower chest toward the bench. Pause a second, and then slowly push back up.

Alternate version: If you find a nice patch of grass (or are doing this at home), you can do the modified triangle push-up on the ground. Placing your hands in the same configuration, assume a push-up position with knees bent and ankles crossed, and perform the move that way.

4



POLE SIDE PULLS

Stand to the immediate right of a flagpole or skinny tree. Grasp it with your left hand and lean to the right until your left arm is nearly extended. Slowly bend your left elbow and pull your body back until you’re standing almost vertically, and then slowly drop back again. Do 10 reps and switch sides.