

You want big arms, then you need big triceps!

Researched and Composed by Adam "Old School" Knowlden

Important Editors Note:

There are three words that sum Old School up best. The first is genius, the second is innovative and the third hardcore, and I mean hardcore like the bodybuilders of Arnold's day! The man is a literal "mental giant!" I have an extremely vast amount of knowledge and experience in the field of training, and even with that, Adam has continually opened up my eyes to new and exciting training techniques that are literally mind boggling! The following triceps program is certainly a tremendous example of this! It is one of the most hardcore and innovative tricep programs ever assembled! Strap yourself in!

Let's face it, what bodybuilder doesn't want to have enormous looking arms? The arms signify one's power and strength. Big, muscular guns send a message to the world...you're a force to be reckoned with!

To help achieve this goal, you're going to need massive triceps. After all, the triceps make up about 2/3s of your upper arm. So intense training in this area is crucial to achieving big gun success! Don't slag off on tris day, Arnold made that mistake and he had to play catch up later...learn from the great one's mistakes!

Use The Triceps Anatomy To Your Advantage

Let's start with a little basic anatomy to fully understand how the triceps work, and how this 8 week routine is set up to put you on the way to huge arms.

The two heads of the biceps and the three heads of the triceps have separate attachments near the shoulder but a singular attachment for each muscle just below the elbow. Even though body mechanics don't allow for complete isolation of any one given head, you can slightly shift the emphasis from one head to another by using a variety of exercises and angles. To sum it up, the more angles the more mass! This rule holds true, not just for the triceps, but all the muscle groups in your body.

Editors Note: Studies have also proved this!!! One such study done on the upper body found that 12 weeks of triceps training which people have typically felt to be middle portion exercises, produced significant growth in the middle portion of the muscle with virtually no change anywhere else.

4.Kawakami, Y., T. Abe, S.-Y. Kuno, and T. Fukunaga. Training-induced changes in muscle architecture and specific tension. *Eur. J. Appl. Physiol.* 72:37-43 1995.

A leading expert in the field of electromyography, Dr. Antonio has stated this concerning *compartmentalization*, "An individual muscle is more than just a collection of fibers spanning the entire muscle belly with a single muscle-nerve interaction. In other words, different portions of the *same* muscle can be called into play, depending on the task demands of the situation."

1. Antonio, J. Nonuniform response of skeletal muscle to heavy resistance training: can bodybuilders induce regional hypertrophy? *J. Strength Cond.*

End Editors Note

For example, the lateral and medial heads of the triceps are stressed most by press-downs and kickback movements. While, arms-overhead movements will slightly favor development of the long head.

Program's Strategy!

One other note is that this 8-week plan changes depending upon your level of conditioning. My general philosophy is the basic meat-and-potatoes exercises are used for the first two exercises, followed by some isolation movements to top the workout off. This rule can change a little, when using say pre-exhaustion, but for the most part it's my rule of thumb.

For beginners, simply perform the first two exercises in the beginning of every workout, and stick to 4-6 total sets all together. For an intermediate bodybuilder perform the entire workout, but adjust the sets to your fitness level. This holds true for advanced as well. You can also change the time between sets depending on your goals. I'll give my recommendations, but every one is different, so adjust volume and intensity to your level of fitness.

Also, when to train your triceps is something that will be up to you. Some people like to train them after chest and delts, some like to have an all arm day. I prefer both, I'll often switch my routine around to keep my body guessing and growing.

If you have an all arm day, make sure you've given a few days between training delts or chest. Whether your tris are sore or not, they have been heavily taxed from your chest and delts workouts, so make sure they are well rested so you don't fall into over-training.

Also, these 8 weeks will be based on Jacob's philosophy of changing the reps to shock the body. For the first cycle (1st 4 weeks) the rep range will be lower, followed by cycle 2 (2nd 4 weeks), of higher reps.

Warming Up

Here's a little pre-workout warm-up advice. Make sure you loosen up your tris real good. I like to do this by including two warm-up sets of the first exercise in the routine. The first warm-up set being light weight in the 12-15 rep range, and the next warm-up set in the 5 rep range using 50 %-60% of the heaviest weight I'll be using in the first working set. Don't go to failure in either of these sets, the light set just helps get the blood flowing, and the semi-heavy set prepares the body for the

heavy lifting. If you've already worked your chest and delts, warming up on the first exercise is all the warm-up you should need, because the tris have already taken a pretty good beating. If you are just working arms, warm up for the first two exercises.

Also, I would recommend stretching and flexing before and between sets. Stretching not only prevents injuries, but also helps keep the blood flowing. Flexing between sets also helps keep the blood flowing, and will increase muscularity. To help prevent any tricep strain don't let the muscle go "cold", in other words resting too long between sets. The idea is to give the tricep enough time to recover, without letting it rest too much. My opinion for a good amount of rest time is 1 to 2 minutes. But that may change according to the individual. I wouldn't recommend going any longer than 3 minutes though.

My only other advice is to get lots of sleep and eat nutritiously dense foods. Then sit back and watch your arms grow! Listen to the feedback your body gives you, fine-tuning your workout (sets, reps) as needed.

With all that in mind lets thrash those tris!

Week one!

Phase One



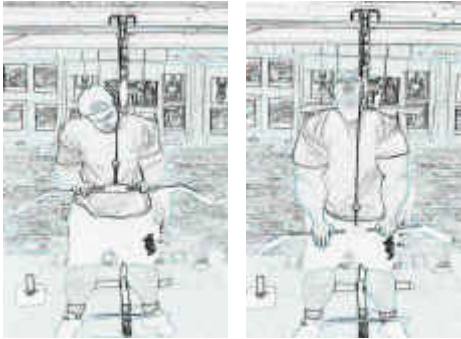
Lying barbell or cambered (EZ-curl) bar press:

This exercise is a total mass builder, probably the best overall. The middle elbows position allows you to get the benefit of both the shortened and lengthened triceps position. Whether you chose the cambered bar or the barbell is entirely up to you. Beginners may have a hard time with the barbell's weight. For this exercise to be effective, use the bar that you can control for proper form for the set.

To do this one lie on your back on a flat bench, grasping an EZ-curl bar just inside shoulder width, extending your upper arms straight overhead. Now lower; your elbows about 45 degrees toward your head and stabilize them in this position; simultaneously, bend your elbows to allow the bar to arc over your forehead. In a controlled motion, press back upward, keeping your arms angled at 45 degrees, but you shouldn't be able to rest at the top. This will keep optimal stress on the whole triceps muscle complex. The key is to not cheat, by moving your elbow, keep them in the same position throughout the set.

Recommended sets: 3 for beginner/intermediate, 4 for advanced. Rep range 6-9 for first cycle. If you are intermediate or advanced, I would suggest 1 [rest-pause](#) rep per working set, or 1 or 2 [forced reps](#) if you have a partner.

Phase Two



Close-grip cable press-downs:

Attach a straight bar or cambered bar to a high pulley. Grab the bar with an overhand grip, hands 3 or 4 inches apart. Keep your upper arms stabilized by your sides throughout the entire movement. In a smooth motion press the bar toward your thighs (just a few inches short) until your arms are extended. Allow the weight to bring your forearms just above parallel before repeating another rep.

Recommended sets: Same as above, this is still the mass building phase.

For the last set, destroy the remaining muscle fibers with the [drop set principle](#).

beginner = one drop set
intermediate = double drop set
advanced = triple drop set.

Phase Three

Superset of cable kickbacks with One-arm dumbbell overhead extension

This is the real pump-up of this week. Do one arm at a time, in other words, superset both of these exercises together working one arm at a time. If you do this, your rest period will come as you are working the other arm. This not only saves time, but also gives your triceps plenty of time to rest before the next set.

For the one-arm overhead extension, grab a dumbbell in one hand and extend that arm straight overhead. Bend your elbow (keeping it stabilized in this position) so that the weight tracks behind your head then press back upward.

The cable kickback really adds good peak to your triceps so emphasize [static contraction](#) big time for this one. Attach a handle to a low pulley, and grab it with an overhand grip. Your working arm stays parallel to the floor, with a 90-degree bend in your elbow. Kick your hand back in a smooth motion.

Recommended sets: 3 per arm. 8-10 reps. Really squeeze your tris hard for these, both of these motions stress the triceps's heads at different angles to get total triceps development.

That's it for week one! Slam down a post-workout shake and rest your arms for 5-7 days! You're going to need it for next week's workout!

Week 2:

Phase 1

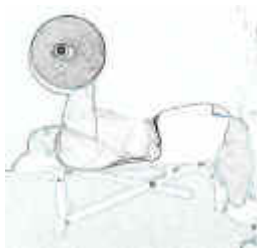
Seated high-pulley concentration extension:

Attach a handle to a high pulley and position a flat bench sideways in front of the cable station. Sit on the side of the bench, opening your legs like you're doing a concentration curl. Grasp the handle with your far hand with a palms-up grip, bending over slightly and placing your elbow against the inside of your far thigh. Keep your elbow firmly in this position. Like a reverse-grip press down, extend your elbow to full extension. Keep your wrist locked, don't let it bend forwards or backwards.

Recommended sets:

2 sets per arm. Do one arm in between the other. This is just an isolated pre-exhaust exercise so don't go to total failure, just one or two reps short of it. Go for higher reps between 10 and 15.

Phase 2



Close-grip bench presses

This is one of the best triceps mass builders, so they have to be part of this program!

The correct hand positioning is the key to this one, so adjust your hands so optimal stress is placed on the triceps. I prefer 4-6 inches. To perform these, lie on a flat bench, and lower the bar to your chest, trying to keep your elbows in close to your body and pointing towards your knees, not out to your sides. Press back up to extension.

Recommended sets: 4 total for super mass! 8-10 reps each

If you have a partner go past failure using 1-2 forced reps per set.

If you do not have a partner use the rest pause method to accomplish the same thing.

Phase 3

Incline overhead cable extension

Attach an EZ-curl bar to a low pulley. Place the back of an incline bench next to the bar. Grasp the bar, making sure you're sitting squarely on the bench. With your elbows extended overhead beside your ears and stabilized in this position, smoothly press the bar upward until full extension. You can also do these with the rope or done standing or seated against a back pad.

Recommended sets:

3 total. reps - 10-12 This exercise should give you a great blood pump. Also, the stretch from this one is perhaps unmatched!

Phase 4

Repeat seated high-pulley concentration extension.

One last set!

Destroy the remaining muscle fibers with the [drop set principle](#).

beginner = one drop set, before you drop hold for a static/peak contraction for approximately 30 seconds, then strip and repeat!

intermediate = double drop set, same static procedure until sets are complete

advanced = triple drop set, same static procedure until sets are complete

reps. 8-10 per drop

You're done with week 2! Congratulations, you're on your way to horseshoe triceps! For those of you who don't know, that's the ideal shape of a completely developed triceps.

Week 3

Phase 1

Lying Triceps Cambered Bar Kickback:

This exercise will shock the heck of your tris, and give great growth!

Lie on your back on a flat bench, grabbing an EZ-curl bar behind your head. With your elbows positioned by your ears, kick the bar upward and outward, bringing the bar level to your body. Before going heavy make sure your delts are stretched really well, also squeeze hard at the top. Here's the shocker for the intermediates/advanced. Have a dumbbell ready to grab nearby (approximately 50-60% less than your bar weight). As soon as failure hits, perform this exercise in the same manner, but with a dumbbell.

Recommended sets: 3-4, reps = 8-10

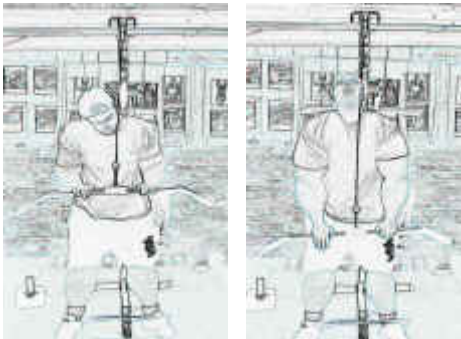
Phase 2

Decline Lying Barbell or Cambered Bar Extension:

The technique is the same as the flat extension in week one, except perform this one on a decline bench. This will help hit a different part of your tris, and the different angle will make your triceps bust out!

Recommended sets: 3 total. reps = 8-10

Phase 3



Ascending/Descending sets of Press Downs

The rep scheme to follow on this tricep destroyer is, on the ascending reps 6-8-10, then for the descent just keep dropping until your arms are so engorged with blood they no longer move!

Recommended sets: 1-3 sets, depending on your level.

That ends week 3, at this point your tris should be getting stronger, and starting to shape up better, keep plugging away and those huge guns will be a reality!

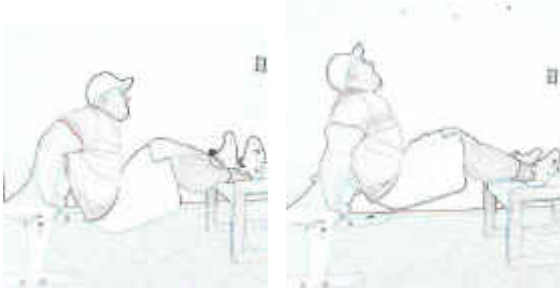
for more info on these shocking methods, click on the following:

1. [Ascending Sets](#)
2. [Descending Sets](#)

Week 4:

Giant Set Super slam! For this week, all of these exercises are performed right in a row, with no more than 10-12 seconds between exercises. This is brutal, but the shock will really make your triceps scream in pain. Repeat the whole routine accordingly: once for beginners, twice for intermediates, and 3 times for advanced. Give your self 2 minutes rest before repeating the giant set. This Giant set is designed to hit the triceps from several angles for the best possible growth. Its also

designed so you can go from one exercise to another, to keep the pump, and so you're not occupying 4 different stations for the sake of working out in a public gym. Nothing angers me more than having a giant set or superset interrupted by a gym moron taking the station while you walk away!



Weighted Behind-the-back Dips:

If you're a beginner or intermediate (or you can perform more than 10-12 reps with your bodyweight) use the dip station for massive triceps. This one of my personal favorites, and it really pumps the whole tricep to the extreme. Make sure your upper arms are locked to your sides and apply enough weight to get 6-9 reps for the first 4 weeks. After failure, remove the added weight, and go to failure again.

Next, perform High-cable triceps extension: Attack an EZ-curl bar to a high pulley. With your back to the unit and a staggered stance about 2 feet from the weight stack, grasp the bar with an overhand grip over your head and lean forward. Position your elbows so they're pointing in the front, about parallel with the floor. Extend your elbows, and don't let your elbows flare out too much during the movement. Also, try not to throw your bodyweight into the movement.

Next, using the same high-cable perform reverse cable pushdowns. The only difference between these and regular grip is that the palms are up facing you. This different angle may feel weird at first, but you'll like the pump. But by now, your arms will be so engorged with blood, you won't be able to barely move them, but you still have one more exercise to go! Also, if you are using lightweights at this point that's fine, as long as you are taking each exercise to utter failure.

Finally, end the giant set with Rope-press downs. Go light enough on these so you can splay your arms apart as you press down. Really squeeze hard on these at the end of the movement. Make every rep count on this Giant Set, it may be a short workout, but I'll have huge rewards if done with high intensity.

That ends the first 4-week cycle. For the mass building exercises stay with-in the rep range of 6-9, and change that up to 10-12 for cycle 2. Or, if you wish you can keep the whole routine in the 60-second range, as Jacob suggested in last month's magazine, and just repeat the entire program for the next 4 weeks.

Good luck with those tris, I promise if you stick to this routine, and stay dedicated to the gym and your diet, you're going to be sporting big guns by summer!

BONUS WORKOUT:

If you prefer to have an all arm workout, or if you just want a change in pace try this upper arm super setting blitz workout!

Depending if you are lagging in biceps or triceps will determine which muscle group you start with.

Super set 1:

Barbell curl 21's, with Barbell extension 21's (or cambered bar).

This super set will get right to the point...a huge total upper arm pump-up!

On each exercises go for 7 reps from the bottom of the range of motion to half way up, then 7 reps from the top half of the range of motion to half-way down, followed by 7 total full range of motion reps.

If you want to reverse the order of where you start that's fine. I would suggest adjusting it depending on which area you are lacking in most.

Super Set 2:

Dumbbell preacher curls, with lying dumbbell kickbacks.

These are both awesome mass builders, and will make your arms look twice as big after the first complete set! This is definitely cut-off T-shirt day!

Superset 3:

Alternating Incline dumbbell curls, with Alternating Tricep Kickbacks.

This superset is gonna kill ya! But you are gonna love it!

Go to failure, and then alternate out 3 extra reps per arm. For the extension bend over, and perform regular kickbacks, again perform 3 extra extensions per arm.

Superset 4:

Again as with the 8 weeks program, do the appropriate amount of exercises for your level of conditioning.

Tricep High-pulley concentration extension with bicep cable concentration curl:

Concentration is the key here, these are peak builders, so again really get static contraction and feel the burn!!!

That's how you build your triceps, Old School style, hope you like it, and I know you like your new gains!!!

Later,

Adam Knowlden