

How to build bigger arms

By Stuart McRobert

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First follow “The Program” detailed in Chapter 17 of **BUILD MUSCLE, LOSE FAT, LOOK GREAT**. Only after the minimum period of 12 months on “The Program” should you consider implementing this arm specialization program.

Introduction

If you’re a bodybuilder you’ll want to develop as good a physique as possible, but not everyone wants to develop their muscles to the maximum degree. Whatever your training-related goals are, **BUILD MUSCLE, LOSE FAT, LOOK GREAT** shows you how to achieve them.

IT’S NOT NECESSARY TO BE HUGE TO BE IMPRESSIVE! Even average genetics can produce a TERRIFIC physique.

Imagine if you were to build 10 to 20 pounds of muscle, and lose the same amount of fat. Although you’d remain about the same weight, your physique would be **TRANSFORMED**. This is a realistic potential achievement for most men. You may, however, be able to make an even greater change to your physique.

But you need to be knowledgeable on training and recuperation savvy.

Here are the three main genetically determined factors that affect arm girth potential:

1. **Muscle belly length.** If the tendons of your biceps and triceps are long, the “meaty” part of the muscles is reduced accordingly, thus reducing ultimate size potential. Big-armed bodybuilders are usually blessed with long meaty parts and apparently short tendons. This gives greatly increased muscle growth potential.
2. **Bone structure.** Generally, heavier bone structure produces a bigger arm size potential. Wrist size is representative of bone structure. Six and a half inch wrists, for an average height man, will usually accompany an ultimate size potential substantially less than someone whose wrists are close to eight inches.

3. Arm length. If your arms are longer than average for your height, that will likely reduce your ultimate size potential. When you're next to a big-armed man of about your height, casually compare arm length. If you're having trouble building big arms, chances are your arms are longer than his.

Although your heredity is out of your control, your training, recuperation and dedication are FULLY IN YOUR CONTROL. And what you DO with your heredity is more important than the heredity per se.

Everything you need to know to build the best physique that's possible for you is included in CS Publishing's books and the back issues of **HARDGAINER** magazine.

BUILD MUSCLE, LOSE FAT, LOOK GREAT is the single most complete instructional guide on body transformation. Much of the guidance in that book isn't common practice, but it **WORKS WONDERS** when implemented correctly.

General comment on specialization programs

If balanced routines are used -- like in "The Program" detailed in **BUILD MUSCLE, LOSE FAT, LOOK GREAT**-- and each exercise is trained with comparable effort, all bodyparts will develop as well as they can according to individual genetic potential. But if some areas are neglected, they may lag behind other areas, comparatively speaking.

One of your bodyparts (and the exercises that train it) may be more responsive to training than the rest of your physique, because of a greater genetic potential in the former. There may be a big difference. For example, a few people have huge calves even though they have never done any exercise for them other than everyday activities. Some people have potential in several bodyparts that's out of proportion to that of the rest of their physiques.

If you have a lagging bodypart because of neglect, you may be able to bring it up to the level of the rest of your physique if you train it progressively for long enough. But if the imbalance is genetically determined, and substantial, it may not be fully correctable no matter how much specialization is done.

A specialization routine may help to correct or minimize a lagging bodypart or exercise. If, however, the specialization work is overdone, it will hinder progress, not help it.

The arm specialization program

You can't build big arms on a small body. And conversely you can't have a well-developed body without also having well-developed arms. For a man, if you weigh 140 pounds, or even 170 pounds, you're not big enough to have large arms unless you're short. And if the best you can squat is 200 pounds for ten reps, or even 250 for ten reps, you're unlikely to be able to develop big arms. The route to big arms isn't by specializing continuously on your arms.

The way to build much bigger arms is to build a much bigger muscled body **OVERALL**. It may, however, be possible to add between a quarter and a half inch to your arm girth over a two-month period on an **OCCASIONAL** basis. **THAT** is what the following program is designed to achieve. But it's not possible to progress on your arms at that rate every two months.

During most of your training, focus on building your **WHOLE body, which of course will include your arms.**

Arm musculature

The biceps brachii -- usually abbreviated to "biceps" -- is the two-headed muscle (long, and short heads) of the front or anterior surface of the arm, which connects the upper scapula or shoulder blade to the radius (forearm bone) and forearm muscle, and flexes the forearm and thus the elbow joint, and supinates the forearm. Exercises that train the biceps include curls, pulldown, and rows.

The brachialis is the muscle of the front of the arm beneath the biceps, which connects the humerus to the ulna (forearm bone), and flexes the forearm and elbow joint. Exercises that train the brachialis include curls, pulldown, and rows.

The triceps brachii -- usually abbreviated to "triceps" -- is the three-headed muscle (long, medial, and lateral heads) on the rear or posterior surface of the arm, which connects the humerus and scapula to the ulna, and extends the forearm (and the elbow joint). Just the long head of the triceps adducts the arm.

Training

This program will focus on your arms but without neglecting the rest of your body. Make progress **ONLY** on your arms. For the rest of your body, just **MAINTAIN** what you've currently got. Just for two months, give yourself a break from progressing on your entire physique, and instead focus on making progress on your arms **ONLY**.

For the two months of the arm specialization, train your arms twice a week, but each other bodypart just once a week.

Work out just twice each week. Don't train more frequently on this program. You'll hit your arms at both workouts, with a different routine for each day. But training for the rest of your body will be **SPREAD** over both workouts each week.

Backing off from work for the rest of your body will give you the chance to focus your effort, concentration, recuperation, and progress on your arms.

Many bodybuilders seem to specialize on their whole bodies all the time. That, of course, is overkill, which causes overtraining, and stagnation or only minimal progress. But if you reduce your training frequency and volume for the rest of your body, then for short periods **ONLY** you may be able to benefit from a moderately increased volume and frequency of training on a single bodypart.

I'll list the arm training for Monday and Thursday workouts. Of course, you could train Sunday and Wednesday, or any other similar pairing of days.

Use an abbreviated program for the rest of your body -- see the pair of routines given on page 487 of **BUILD MUSCLE, LOSE FAT, LOOK GREAT**. Do sufficient to **MAINTAIN** your strength and development there. Don't try to progress over the rest of your body for the duration of this program. Focus on arm progress.

Outside of the arm exercises, no specific work is required for your chest because two of the tricep exercises -- parallel bar dip, and close-grip bench press -- provide more than sufficient work for your chest. From the pair of routines given on page 487 of **BUILD MUSCLE, LOSE FAT, LOOK GREAT**, exclude exercises one and four from the second workout, and add the following to the **BEGINNING** of the workouts:

MONDAY

Standing barbell curl: warm-up plus 2 x 6-8

Parallel bar dip: warm-up plus 2 x 6-8

Incline dumbbell curl: warm-up plus 2 x 6-8

Pushdown: warm-up plus 2 x 6-8

Keep accurate records of your workouts.

THURSDAY

Seated dumbbell curl: warm-up plus 2 x 10-12

Close-grip bench press: warm-up plus 2 x 10-12

Seated hammer curl: warm-up plus 2 x 12-15

Close-grip push-up: warm-up plus 2 x 12-15

Keep accurate records of your workouts.

The close-grip bench press is a misnomer. It shouldn't actually involve a close grip. Use a shoulder-width grip. Some trainees use a closer grip, but that commonly irritates the wrists and sometimes the elbows, too, and it causes balance problems. The shoulder-width bench press is safer and more effective.

EXERCISE TECHNIQUE PRIORITY!

Properly done, weight-lifting is safe, but the use of correct exercise technique is the exception in nearly all gyms. Gyms are usually terrible places for learning correct exercise technique. Few trainees practice correct technique because hardly anyone knows what it is, and this includes most gym instructors, and personal trainers. Exercise technique isn't secondary to program design, and training intensity. Technique comes first!

Exercise technique isn't simple. It requires detailed instruction, and serious study, if you're to master it.

I sustained most of my training injuries because I used incorrect exercise technique. All of these injuries were avoidable.

*See **BUILD MUSCLE, LOSE FAT, LOOK GREAT** for extensive detail and many photographs on the correct technique for safe, effective training, including arm work. No other book covers exercise technique with the same care, thoroughness and accuracy.*

For your arms, train with comfortable weights and moderate intensity in the first week. Train harder and heavier at the second week, but not flat out. Then in the third week, train as hard as possible with the most weight you can handle for the target reps **IN CORRECT EXERCISE TECHNIQUE** and with a **CONTROLLED** rep speed -- see **BUILD MUSCLE, LOSE FAT, LOOK GREAT** for details.

And each week thereafter, aim to add **AT LEAST** two pounds to each non-dumbbell arm exercise, and **AT LEAST** one pound to each dumbbell in the other arm exercises.

For the close-grip push-up, increase resistance by elevating your feet little by little.

NEVER add resistance at the expense of loosening exercise technique.

For exercises for the rest of your body, perform just one per bodypart: warm-up work plus two work sets each of your preferred rep count. But **DON'T** train them at your fullest intensity. For example, for an eight-rep work set, use a weight you could get ten reps with, but do just eight reps. And for the duration of this program, stay with the **SAME** poundages.

Again, don't try to make any progress in non-arm exercises. All progress must be focused on your arms.

For each arm exercise, take two minutes between sets, and give your all to getting the target reps. As an illustration, for the standing barbell curl, do your warm-up set with 65 pounds for six reps, rest two minutes, do your first work set with 100 pounds for eight reps, rest two minutes, then do your second work set with 100 pounds, for six reps. Because you're to rest only two minutes between sets, your reps will fall a little for the second work set of each exercise.

And of course, eat well, rest well outside the gym, and get all the sleep you need so that you wake of your own accord every day and are alert all day without needing coffee or tea to revitalize you. Do all of that, train hard in the gym on your arm exercises, and you should easily be able to make the minimum weekly poundage progress.

Resist any temptation to add sets, exercises or sessions to the arm program. Instead, add more focus, effort and progress to the arm training!

In the third, fourth and fifth weeks of this program, train as hard as possible with the most weight you can handle for the target reps **IN CORRECT EXERCISE TECHNIQUE** and with **CONTROLLED** rep speed.

For the final four weeks of this program (weeks six through nine), implement a boost in intensity. At the first workout each week, descending sets are to be used -- also called drop sets. And for the second workout, the rep count for the arm exercises has been changed. Here's the revised program of arm work:

MONDAY

Standing barbell curl: warm-up plus 2 x 6-8

Parallel bar dip: warm-up plus 2 x 6-8

DESCENDING SETS incline dumbbell curl

DESCENDING SETS pushdown

Keep accurate records of your workouts.

THURSDAY

Seated dumbbell curl: warm-up plus 2 x 8-10

Close-grip bench press: warm-up plus 2 x 8-10

Seated hammer curl: warm-up plus 2 x 10-12

Close-grip push-up: warm-up plus 2 x 10-12

Keep accurate records of your workouts.

For the descending sets -- **ONLY** at the first workout -- do this:

Incline dumbbell curl

Do a warm-up set first of six reps with about two thirds of your first work set weight. Rest two minutes, and set up three pairs of dumbbells at the sides of the incline bench -- for example, 40s, 30s, and 20s -- with the heaviest of the dumbbells being what you can **JUST** squeeze out five reps with. Do the five reps with the heaviest dumbbells, immediately put the dumbbells down and get the next heaviest pair. Immediately perform maximum reps with them -- perhaps three or four -- and immediately put them down and get the final pair of dumbbells. Rep out fully with those -- perhaps another three or four reps. That's one descending set. Rest for two minutes, and repeat. Your reps will be reduced for the second wave, but still do your best.

Pushdown

Do a warm-up set first of six reps with about two thirds of your first work set weight. Rest two minutes, and set the resistance at what

you can **JUST** squeeze out five reps with. Do the five reps, immediately reduce the weight by about 25% and immediately perform maximum reps with them. Immediately reduce the weight by a further 25% or so, and rep out fully with it. That's one descending set. Rest for two minutes, and repeat. Your reps will be reduced for the second wave, but still do your best.

Done correctly, descending sets are grueling. Never save something for the next sequence of reps with a lighter weight. Consider each batch of reps your final batch, and give your all to each, but in **CORRECT** exercise technique, of course.

You must train hard to stimulate progress. See page 499 of BUILD MUSCLE, LOSE FAT, LOOK GREAT for valuable tips on how to train hard but with discipline.

Again, resist any temptation to add sets, exercises or workouts to the arm program. Instead, add more focus and effort!

During the final four weeks of the arm specialization, give your recuperation between workouts a boost. Make these adjustments:

1. Sleep more. Get yourself into bed 90 minutes earlier than usual, read something relaxing for half an hour or so, then get to sleep.
2. Over the course of each day, consume an extra 50 grams or so of protein each day. For example, eat a big tin of drained tuna **ON TOP OF** what you normally eat -- but spread it out over several meals.
3. Reduce by half any cardio work you may have been doing.
4. If you're doing any physically demanding exercise outside of the gym, eliminate it for just four weeks.

Be 100% dedicated to training and training-related matters. Compromise on anything and you'll compromise on your progress.

Follow this program as written, be 100% dedicated, and you should easily be able to make the **MINIMUM** weekly poundage progress of two pounds to each non-dumbbell arm exercise, and one pound to each dumbbell in the other arm exercises. But **NEVER** add poundage at the expense of loosening your exercise technique.

Once the two-month arm specialization is over, return to a full-body program in order to get your **WHOLE** body growing as a unit.

In summary, you can't build much bigger arms unless you build a much bigger body. You may **OCCASIONALLY** be able to add a quarter or, at most, half an inch to your arm girth from a two-month specialization period. But regular arm specialization probably won't add anything further **UNLESS** in the meantime you've built a bigger physique **OVERALL** -- a bigger body that is capable of sustaining bigger arms.

Figure on needing to build something like 15 pounds of muscular bodyweight over your whole body for each inch of girth on your arms.

FURTHER HELP . . .

See BUILD MUSCLE, LOSE FAT, LOOK GREAT for all the details on how to train, and a treasure trove of everything related to training. At over 600 pages, and with nearly 400 photographs, this is the most complete book on body transformation. But if you don't agree, you may return it for a refund.

For further information, visit
www.hardgainer.com
or www.buildmusclelosefatlookgreat.com