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**STAY
SHREDDED
WITHOUT
CARDIO**

p108

**ARMY
RANGER
TRAINING**
HOW THE STRONG
GET STRONGER p138

**CARVE OUT A
ROCK-HARD
CHEST** THE FIVE BEST
MOVES FOR
CHISELED PECS

**THE RIGHT
WAY TO
TRAIN YOUR
LEGS**

16

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1 2 >
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p56

Fill Your Sleeves

Losing the arms race? This unconventional three-pronged approach will **load your guns** in a hurry

BY MYATT MURPHY // WORKOUT BY JOSH BRYANT, MFS, CSCS, SSE, ISSA-CFT, SSC // PHOTOS BY IAN LOGAN

THERE'S A DEFINITE irony in arm training. For most guys, building an eye-catching pair of guns is an ego-driven pursuit, but this cuts two ways. The same ego that has us curling and skull-crushing until the cows come home just happens to be the one that holds us back from doing what *really* works.

"Most guys either use more weight than they can handle out of pride or are too afraid to do certain movements that use less weight because they require more effort or coordination," says Josh Bryant, MFS, CSCS, SSE, ISSA-CFT, SSC, a world record-holding powerlifter and trainer at Metroflex Gym in Arlington, Texas. "This program shows you how to hit your biceps and triceps in a way that gets the job done."



The Proper Ammo

Bryant likens his program, which incorporates three advanced

lifting strategies into one highly effective plan, to a muscle-building pie — one that's guaranteed to pack on serious size by shocking your arms with unique movements they haven't felt before. "It doesn't take much to activate a different arrangement of muscle fibers that otherwise never get their due," Bryant says. "Having the resistance come from various angles throughout the workout means you'll utilize and exhaust more muscle fibers, which can translate into faster strength and size gains."

Bryant's blend of moves and the tempo he recommends for certain exercises also put your arms through three types of muscular contraction. With most conventional arm exercises, the primary focus is on the concentric portion of the rep, where the muscles shorten to lift a load. This program incorporates lifts that capitalize on both eccentric and isometric moves — the negative and static parts of a lift — within an individual workout, which Bryant says causes a deeper integration of muscle fibers for maximum growth. "The more time your muscles spend under tension, the more effectively you can push them to the limits they need to reach to grow bigger and better than ever before," he says.

EZ-BAR CLOSE-GRIP DECLINE BENCH PRESS

START: Lie faceup on a decline bench and have a partner hand you an EZ-bar. Hold it above your chest using an overhand grip, hands 6-8 inches apart and arms perpendicular to the floor with your elbows locked.

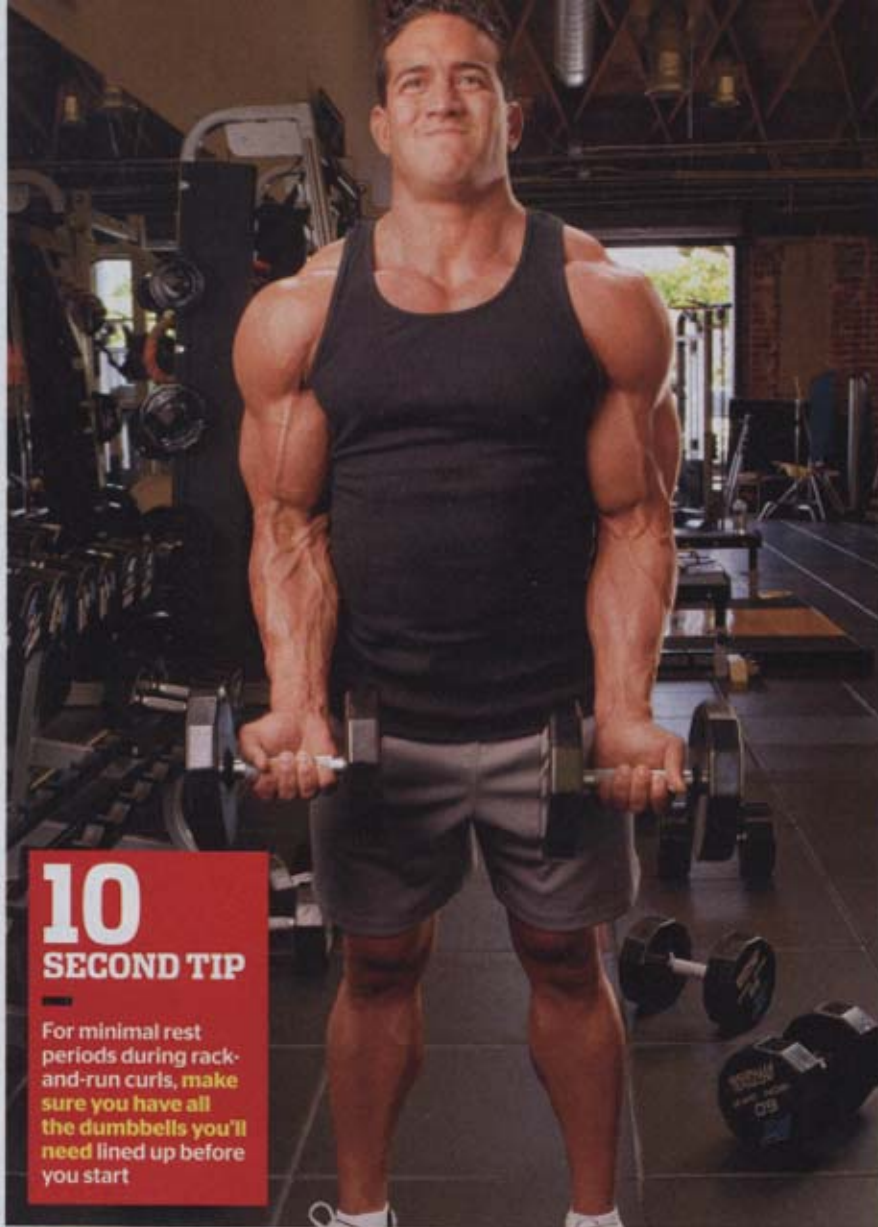
EXECUTION: Keeping your upper arms close to your sides, slowly lower the bar until it touches your lower pecs. Press the weight back above your chest, keeping your elbows unlocked at the top.

• YOUR FOUR-WEEK PLAN

DAY	EXERCISE	SETS	REPS
1	EZ-BAR CLOSE-GRIP DECLINE BENCH PRESS	5	15,12,8,6,20 ¹
	CHEAT CURL	4	10,8,6,12 ²
	FLOOR DUMBBELL LYING TRICEPS EXTENSION	5	12
	ONE-ARM ECCENTRIC BARBELL CURL	5	5 each side
	ONE-ARM PUSHDOWN	4	15 each side
	DUMBBELL INCLINE CURL	3	12
	RACK AND RUN ZOTTMAN CURL	1	8 each weight
	CLOSE-GRIP BENCH-PRESS BURNOUT	1	25
	WRIST ROLLER	3	1
	2	ISOMETRIC BARBELL CURL HOLD	4
PAUL DICKS PRESS		5	10
BARBELL SCOTT CURL		4	12,10,8,15 ³
PUSHDOWN		3	15 ⁴
— superset with —			
BENCH DIP		3	to failure
FAT-BAR REVERSE CURL		4	10
DUMBBELL KICKBACK		4	15 each side

¹ Do pyramid-style reps, increasing the weight after each set so you get 15, 12, eight and six reps, then strip some weight and do a final set of 20 reps. ² Do pyramid-style reps, increasing the weight after each set so you get 10, eight and six reps, then strip some weight and do a final set of 12 reps. ³ Do pyramid-style reps, increasing the weight after each set so you get 12, 10 and eight reps, then strip some weight and do a final set of 15 reps. ⁴ Do 15 reps of pushdowns, then immediately move to dips and do as many reps as possible.





10 SECOND TIP

For minimal rest periods during rack-and-run curls, make sure you have all the dumbbells you'll need lined up before you start



RACK AND RUN ZOTTMAN CURL

START: Stand at the dumbbell rack and begin with a weight you can curl for eight full reps. Grasp a dumbbell in each hand, arms at your sides and palms facing forward.

EXECUTION: Curl the weights to your shoulders, pause, then rotate the dumbbells inward so your palms face forward. Return the weights to full-arm extension and rotate the dumbbells outward so your palms face forward again. Do eight reps, then choose a lighter pair of weights and repeat. Continue working down the rack, using lighter weights each time to failure.



WRIST ROLLER

START: Stand erect with your arms extended straight in front of you, grasping the roller with an overhand grip.

EXECUTION: Slowly begin rotating one wrist upward at a time to raise the weight off the floor. Once the weight reaches the roller, reverse the motion by rotating one wrist downward at a time until the weight's back on the floor.



DUMBBELL INCLINE CURL

START: Lie faceup on an incline bench holding a dumbbell in each hand, arms hanging straight toward the floor and palms facing forward.

EXECUTION: Keeping your upper arms stationary, slowly curl the weights to your shoulders.

The Formula

If biceps and triceps growth is your main training goal, Bryant says these muscles must take precedence over improving your strength levels in other lifts. He recommends training arms twice per week, resting at least 72 hours between workouts, while training every other bodypart just once a week for the entire length of this four-week cycle.

"Training your larger muscle groups less than usual may feel as if you're taking a step backward in the gym, but you'll experience faster and far more substantial results," Bryant says. "All that extra strength will show in pressing and pulling movements — where the bi's and tri's act as stabilizers and secondary movers — allowing you to train your back, chest and shoulders with heavier weight than normal for even bigger gains."

Because many of these exercises are so physically demanding, you may need to rest longer between sets. For the first four exercises of Day 1 and the first two exercises of Day 2, rest two minutes between sets. For other exercises, rest only 45–60 seconds between sets. Your workouts might take longer than you're used to, but this format will allow you to train with heavier loads while increasing the intensity of the higher-rep finishing moves in each workout.



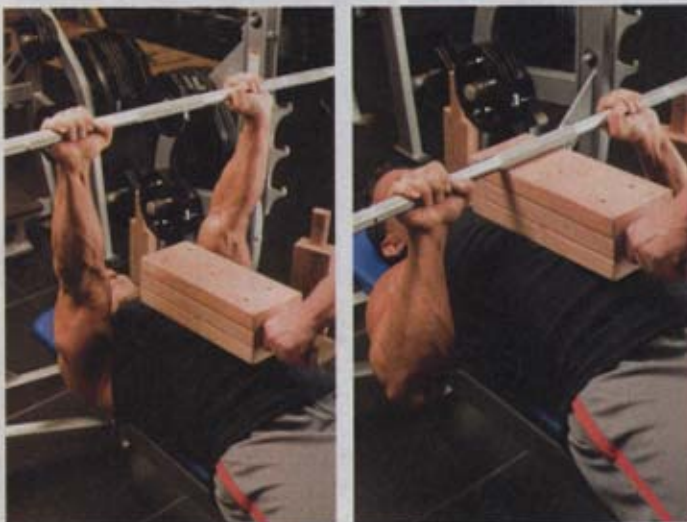
WHAT NOT TO DO

Don't bounce the bar off the board. Let it settle in, then press back up to the top.

CLOSE-GRIP BENCH-PRESS BURNOUT

START: For this exercise you'll need four small 2x4s and a training partner. If you're an intermediate or advanced lifter, load the bar with 50%–55% of your bench-press max. Beginners should start with 40%–45% of their max.

EXECUTION: Lie faceup on a flat bench with your knees bent and feet flat on the floor. Grasp a barbell using an overhand grip with your hands inside shoulder width. Start with your arms fully extended above your chest. Slowly lower the bar to your pecs, press it back up and repeat for five reps. Keeping the weight pressed above you, have your partner place a 2x4 down the middle of your torso. Repeat the exercise for another five reps, lowering the bar to the board. Have your partner stack an additional board every five reps to decrease your range of motion until you've done five reps with all four boards on your chest.

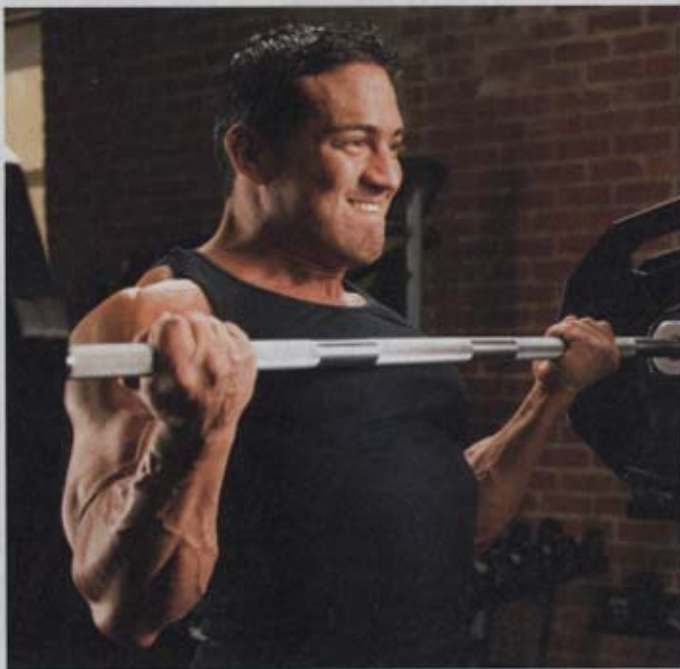




CHEAT CURL

START: Stand erect and grasp an overloaded barbell (more weight than you typically lift) using an underhand grip with your hands shoulder-width apart.

EXECUTION: Quickly curl the weight up, using your hips and shoulders to help lift the load. Avoid raising your heels and rising onto your toes. Pause for a second at the top of the curl, then slowly lower the weight for a two-count.



FLOOR DUMBBELL LYING TRICEPS EXTENSION

START: Lie faceup on the floor with a light dumbbell in each hand. Extend your arms straight above your shoulders with your palms facing each other.

EXECUTION: Keeping your upper arms stationary, slowly bend your elbows and lower the weights toward your shoulders until the end of the dumbbells touch the floor above your delts. Pause for a second, then straighten your arms to return to the start.



ONE-ARM PUSHDOWN (NOT SHOWN)

START: Attach a handle to a high-pulley cable and grasp it in your left hand using an overhand grip. Tuck your upper arm against your side and stand erect with your feet shoulder-width apart.

EXECUTION: Without moving your upper arm, press the handle straight down to full-arm extension with your elbow locked and your palm alongside your thigh. Control the return to the start. Repeat for reps, then switch sides.

ONE-ARM ECCENTRIC BARBELL CURL (NOT SHOWN)

START: Sit at a preacher-curl bench and grasp the center of an Olympic barbell with your left hand, resting the back of your upper arm on the slanted pad in front of you with your palm up. The weight should be in the top position of the curl with your palm in front of your shoulder.

EXECUTION: Slowly lower the barbell for a count of eight seconds and pause for a second at the bottom. Use your right hand to help curl the weight up. Repeat for reps, then switch sides.

10 SECOND TIP

When performing reverse curls, lean forward during the last few reps of each set to keep the movement strict



FAT-BAR REVERSE CURL

START: Stand erect and grasp a fat bar (or a barbell made thicker by using towels) using an overhand grip with your hands shoulder-width apart. Your arms should hang straight down so the bar rests in front of your thighs.

EXECUTION: Keeping your back straight and your elbows tucked into your sides, slowly curl the bar until the top of your forearms touch your biceps. Pause, then return to the start.



ISOMETRIC BARBELL CURL HOLD

(NOT SHOWN)

START: Load a bar with roughly 50% of the weight you can typically curl for 8-12 reps. Stand erect and use an underhand grip, hands shoulder-width apart.

EXECUTION: Keeping your back straight and elbows tucked into your sides, curl the bar 25% of the way up and pause for 20 seconds. Continue curling until your arms are parallel to the floor and pause for another 20 seconds. Curl the weight 75% of the way up and pause for 20 more seconds, then do eight full reps to end the set.

PUSHDOWN/ BENCH DIP SUPERSET

(NOT SHOWN)

START 1: Stand erect in front of a high-pulley cable and grasp the bar using an overhand grip with your hands 6-8 inches apart. Tuck your upper arms into your sides and bring your forearms parallel to the floor.

EXECUTION 1: Keeping your back straight, slowly push the bar down until the bar touches your thighs.

START 2: Immediately find a flat bench or sturdy chair and sit on the edge, cupping the edge of the bench next to your hips. Place your heels on another bench that's parallel in front of you. Your legs should be extended, with your arms straight and supporting your weight.

EXECUTION 2: Scoot off the edge of the bench and slowly bend your elbows to lower your glutes as close to the floor as possible. Push back up to elbow lockout.

PAUL DICKS PRESS

START: Lie faceup on a flat bench with your knees bent and feet flat on the floor. Grasp a barbell using an overhand grip with your hands shoulder-width apart, then press it above your chest so your arms are fully extended with your elbows unlocked.

EXECUTION: Keeping your elbows in, lower the weight to approximately 1 inch above your chest. Push your elbows up as you shift the bar toward your chin. Maintaining this position, press the weight back up — leading with your fists — until your arms are straight.



4

heads of the triceps brachii found in cows, dogs and pigs. Although rare in humans, such muscular anomalies could cause compression of nerves or blood vessels in the arm



DUMBBELL KICKBACK

(NOT SHOWN)

START: Grasp a light dumbbell in your left hand, and place your right hand and same-side knee on a flat bench, keeping your back flat and allowing your left arm to hang straight down with your palm facing in.

EXECUTION: Pull your elbow up until your upper arm is parallel to the floor. Keeping your upper arm stationary, extend your left arm behind you until it's straight. Bend your elbow to return the weight to the start position. Repeat for reps, then switch sides.



BARBELL SCOTT CURL

START: Reverse the pad at a preacher-curl bench so you lean your triceps against the side that's perpendicular to the floor. Grasp a light barbell using an underhand grip with your hands shoulder-width apart and drape your arms over the pad so they point toward the floor.

EXECUTION: Keeping your upper arms against the pad, slowly curl the weight to your shoulders. **M&F**