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YOUR BEST MOVES FOR A BIGGER CHEST

REVEALED!

Find out what five bodybuilding experts have to say about the most underrated — and overrated — exercises, techniques and strategies for building a massive chest

By Mike Carlson

Lead photo of IFBB Pro Peter Putnam by Robert Reiff
Photos of IFBB Pro Antonio Morales by Jason Breeze

Our Panel of Experts



Johnnie Jackson,
IFBB Pro



Art Atwood,
IFBB Pro



Josh Bryant,
Trainer



Monica Mark-Escalante,
IFBB Figure Pro



Andy Haman,
IFBB Pro

REVEALED!

YOUR BEST MOVES FOR A

BIGGER CHEST

Josh Bryant Trainer

BACKGROUND: When Bryant was 22 years old he became the youngest person to ever bench press 600 pounds. In 2005 he won the Atlantis Strongest Man in America competition. He's now a trainer at the world famous Metroflex gym in Arlington, Texas, where he coaches powerlifting champions Al Davis and Orlando Green, who are becoming known as power-builders — strength athletes who look more like bodybuilders than the stereotypical wheezing slabs of muscle and fat you might see at a powerlifting meet.



AGE: 30 **HEIGHT:** 6'

WEIGHT: 268 pounds

HOMETOWN: Fort Worth, Texas

CONTACT: www.joshstrength.com

✓ MOST EFFECTIVE CHEST MOVE: HEAVY WEIGHTED DIPS

WHAT'S SO GOOD ABOUT HEAVY WEIGHTED DIPS?

You have to use your core to stabilize the load, so it's almost like a squat for your upper body. The squat is the king for overall growth and hormonal release, and I put dips into that category for the upper body. When you do a weighted dip, go to parallel. Don't make it a partial movement and don't make it too deep to put any undue stress on your shoulders. To hammer the chest, get a little bit more of a forward lean.

WHAT'S YOUR BEST-EVER BENCH PRESS?

It was 620 pounds.

HOW OFTEN DO YOU ADVISE YOUR CLIENTS TO TRAIN CHEST?

For bodybuilding-type goals I advise once a week. For a strength-oriented program I'd say two days a week.

WHAT SETS AND REPS DO YOU USE?

I like between 20–25 sets total, attacking the chest from different angles. For instance, myofibril hypertrophy is going to come from more of your strength stuff, 6–10 heavy reps. But your sarcoplasmic hypertrophy is going to be your higher rep range. For bodybuilding, you have to attack it from all angles; heavy weight, high reps and continuous tension.

ANY SPECIAL TECHNIQUES OR TRICKS FOR TRAINING CHEST?

"If an athlete I'm training needs a break from going heavy, I'll have them do tempo training. The goal is to be under tension for at least 45 seconds, but hopefully closer to 60 seconds, for each set of dumbbell bench presses. We'll do a five-count down, a one-count at the bottom and then a three-count up for six reps. Then, they'll immediately do six reps as explosively as they can. It's like training beyond failure."

IS THERE A NON-CHEST MOVE YOU USE TO IMPROVE CHEST DEVELOPMENT?

I like a lot of triceps work, heavy front raises, and a lot of heavy upper-back work. They indirectly develop your chest because if you bring up your weaker areas you'll get a stronger bench press, lift more weight and get bigger pecs.

ARE BUM SHOULDERS JUST A FACT OF THE WEIGHT-TRAINING LIFESTYLE?

There's a lot you can do for your shoulders. First of all, you need to make sure you have a balance with the backside of your body, so you need to do a lot of heavy back work. A lot of it has to do with the way your body is built, too. If you have a long humerus bone you're going to be way beyond 90 degrees at the bottom of a bench press, and that puts a lot of pressure on your shoulder joint.

WHAT'S AN OVERRATED CHEST EXERCISE?

I think the **pec deck**. The hormonal response your body gets from heavy training with free weights is unprecedented over any single-joint cable or machine move. I'm not saying machines are bad, but to me, they're the condiments while the bench press and dips are your steak.