

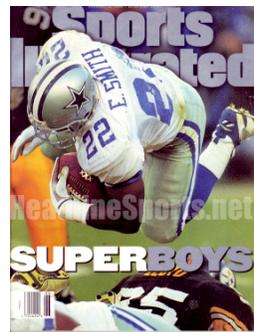
Tri This Movement

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Joshstrength.com

Blast through bench plateaus and arm yourself with triceps mass with a unique combo exercise.

Intro



Your bench hasn't budged since the Dallas Cowboys were America's Team. You've tried everything to fix it: an uber complicated conjugate periodization program to develop your bench press through a system of wave loaded sets, pyramiding, and ramping up the number of bench training days per week. You've ended up confusing yourself by poring over countless YouTube videos covering bench press technique and trying to incorporate a book's worth of corrective exercise into your training program. While the efficacy of each system, bench tip, or corrective exercise modality on improving bench press performance won't be discussed, an enlightening, yet overlooked concept will.

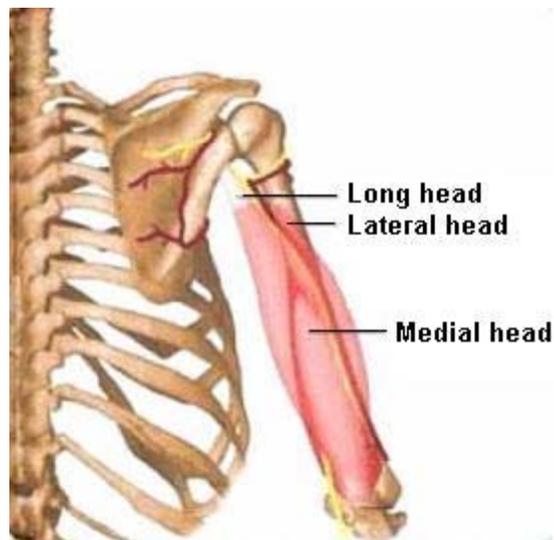
Have you TRied training the triceps?

Does your lockout strength suck and does your seven year old niece's triceps development rival yours? If so, it's about time that you make triceps training a priority.



A Quick Anatomy Refresher

The Triceps Brachii consists of three heads: the long head, the lateral head, and the medial head. The long head, the largest aspect of the triceps brachii muscle, originates from the infraglenoid tubercle of the scapula; the lateral head's originates from the posterior humerus above the spiral groove, and the medial head, also originating from the posterior humerus, but below the spiral groove. Together the three aspects of the triceps insert into the posterior region of the olecranon process of the ulna and posterior capsule.



The corresponding origin and insertion of the long head simultaneously helps stabilize the shoulder and extends the humerus. The long head really comes into play during presses, where scapular stability is crucial and assists the lateral head with elbow extension during any overhead or over-the-torso extension movements, such as overhead dumbbell and rope extensions, skull crushers and face pulls. The medial head retracts the capsule of the elbow joint, permitting a greater degree of elbow extension.

Observations

I've observed throughout the years of working as a personal trainer and training at numerous health clubs and gyms that gym-rats short change their bench press range of motion for primarily three reasons – poor scapular stability, inadequate thoracic mobility, and weak triceps. While the former two issues aren't as prevalent in high level powerlifters or combine warriors, the latter can be the missing link to improved max bench and max rep PRs. For the individuals wanting to bolster their bench or for those who want to maximize a hypertrophic response via time under tension, "tri" the exercise below, which will hit all heads of the triceps in concert.

The Movement

Grasp a pair of dumbbells which represent roughly 35% of the load you use on flat dumbbell bench presses. For simplicity's sake, we'll say you rep out the 100's in sets of 10, so grab a pair of 35's. Walk them over to the decline bench. Kick the guy off who's using it for a horrendous looking, lumbar shearing, oblique twist and sit-up combo, while jamming out to Coldplay on the free poor quality headphones he was given by the sleazy membership sales dude, for bringing in a few people to redeem guest passes (sign up).

Be conservative at first and focus on the quality of the movement, which is the reason you should grab lighter dumbbells. If you're a "balls to the wall" guy, who if left to their own devices, would grab the heaviest dumbbells on the rack and perform the combo exercise, by all means do, just don't send me your dental bill.

Execution

Get set and perform a Neutral Grip Dumbbell Press then at the top of the movement, hinging at the elbows, lower your forearms and the hands that are grasping the dumbbells, to each side of your head. Extend at the elbow, essentially performing a Dumbbell Skull Crusher, before getting in position to lower the dumbbells behind the head, with your upper arm facing the ceiling. Extend at the elbow again, essentially performing a Dumbbell French Press. That's one rep. Do four more.

This combo exercise is a great way to finish off the triceps after a bench training session or if you're hypertrophy first, body part split kind of dude, a great way to engorge the triceps full of blood for an amazing pump on your arm day. Oh, and I almost forgot -- the reason for the decline bench? To limit forward head movement -- often an issue during skull crushers and pressing movements performed on flat benches. I promise you that's the reason, unless you want to kick someone's ass who still listens to Coldplay.

***Joe Giandonato** [insert a bunch of acronyms that don't matter to people outside of the fitness industry HERE], a regular contributor to joshstrength.com, is a sought after personal trainer and performance coach in the Philadelphia-area. He does not have a blog, website, or even a Facebook. He's focused on getting people results and isn't out there to market bogus products or to engage in pissing matches with other coaches. He quietly goes about his business, which includes helping people achieve their fitness goals, writing, and toiling at a desk job during the day, while serving as a de-facto health coach.*