



TONING UP

Get party dress ready with stronger, firmer, shapelier arms. Leading personal trainer Michael Garry shares some of his award-winning advice for toned arms you'll want to show off.

When exercising through our twenties and thirties, arms tend not to be high on our agenda. But as celebrity personal trainer Michael Garry (*michaelgarry.london*) explains, 'As we get older, if we haven't trained the muscles of our arms, maybe because our focus has been on our lower body, the small muscles in our arms get even smaller, and fat starts to accumulate there.' The good news: it's easier than we think to add some targeted arm moves to a workout.

For starters, Michael recommends we make every workout a full-body workout, and this includes training arms. 'When we're already exercising regularly, arms do benefit to some extent. Cardio and weight training help us burn fat all over the body by speeding up metabolism. But we do

need to remember to also target arms specifically if we particularly want to tone the muscles.'

For those who worry that weight training might make arms look bulky, there's really no need for concern. Michael says, 'To get bulky arms, you have to eat a lot! The guys with big arms you see in the gym might be body builders who eat six meals a day. With the correct diet and exercise, this shouldn't be a worry.'

Creating definition

The muscles we should be looking to target for more defined, firmer, stronger arms are the biceps (front of the arm), triceps (back of the arm) and deltoids (shoulders). But, as Michael reminds us, we should work these alongside all the major muscle groups in the body. 'It's important to keep things balanced

to avoid injury, as well as helping to speed up the metabolism and burn fat, including on our arms.'

Some of Michael's favourite arm exercises can be done at home with minimal kit. A pair of dumbbells might be all that's needed. 'Dumbbells can be used for shoulder presses, bicep curls and hammer curls. A weight of 3-5kg should suit most people. If you're starting out, you can begin with lighter weights. I also have female clients who use 10kg. If you're happy with the results you're getting from 4kg, there's no need to go up.'

The hammer curl is an exercise Michael uses with many clients. 'I would recommend two sets of hammer curls to every one set of bicep curls. Hammer curls give greater elongation in the bicep, so they give an effect of the arms being streamlined, not bulked.'

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Wellbeing HEALTH

Body weight exercises can also be effective for toning the arms. 'There's really no better weight than your own body weight, as it provides natural resistance. You can complement your dumbbell exercises with close-arm press-ups and tricep dips. You might even want to try some pull-ups - your local park might have a bar.'

For fans of the gym, the lat pulldown, the hanging leg raise (for tricep dips), and chest press (also for triceps) machines are worth using. 'Keep weights fairly low and your repetitions quite high. I suggest 12-15 repetitions,' says Michael.

We need to be consistent to see results, Michael advises. 'I've seen good results in women who train only twice a week, every week. If you're just starting out training your arms, you might experience some delayed onset muscle soreness (DOMS), but this should improve with time. Begin with one set of ten repetitions and build up to two, then three, sets. Bar exercises like pull-ups are good for strengthening the wrists because you're gripping the bar all the time.'

If loose skin is a concern, exercise might help. 'With curls and dips, you're toning the front and back of the arms.

Once the muscles are firmer, loose skin might not completely disappear, but you should see an improvement.'

Also remember to check your speed. 'When we do exercises quickly, momentum comes into the equation, which makes them easier. It's therefore best to keep the exercises slow and concentrated. Trying to do bicep or hammer curls quickly can mean we start to use our back, which can cause lower back pain,' Michael cautions.

Because arm muscles are relatively small, the end of a workout is a good time to fit these exercises in. Your future self will thank you! **46**

Try including these exercises in your next session.



BICEP CURLS

Use slow, controlled movements to help avoid any swinging. Engage your core and glutes, bending into a squat as you lower the dumbbells, straightening to lift to chest height.



HAMMER CURLS

So-called because you hold the dumbbell like - yes, you've guessed it - a hammer. As with bicep curls, keep elbows tucked into your sides. Can be single-handed or both hands together.



SHOULDER PRESS

You can sit on a bench with back support at the gym to do these. Alternatively, they can be performed standing. You can also combine them with a lunge, pushing up as you lunge.



PULL-UPS

These are tough! Try them first using the assisted pull-up machine at the gym, which will help support your weight. Keep your shoulders back. Try to keep your legs still and avoid swinging to build momentum.



CLOSE-ARM PRESS-UP

Bring your hands closer to your body than you would in a normal press-up. This will focus the work more on your triceps and less on your chest. This variation is more difficult, but more effective for your arms.



TRICEP DIPS

You can use a step or chair to do these, as long as it won't move. If you're new to them, have your knees bent, soles against the floor. To make it more difficult, stretch your legs straight in front of you, heels to the floor.