

the total dumbbell workout

TRADE SECRETS OF A PERSONAL TRAINER

STEVE BARRETT



A L O M E R I P Y

exercise 1 bicep curl, under grip

● **stability** ● **strength** ● **power** ● **isolation**



- Stand with your feet together, i.e. as wide as your pelvis or you will hit the sides of your legs with the dumbbell.
- With your palms facing forward and your upper arm hanging vertically*, lift the weight up until you have closed your elbow joint as far as it will go.
- Then, lower the dumbbell back to the start position.

* Some personal trainers tell you to keep your elbows in, to encourage you to isolate the bicep muscle, but that's not really how the body works. Personally, if a little bit of additional muscle is recruited in a move, I don't mind – and it's natural.

tricks of the trade

What can you possibly do to a bicep curl to make it more interesting? With my clients, if their attention starts to wander I make them change their foot position every couple of reps, so they shift their weight from one foot to the other and stand in a slightly split stance (one foot forward). This has no adverse effect on the curl and is also beneficial for coordination.

exercise 2 bicep reverse curl, over grip

• stability • strength • power • isolation

a



b



- Stand with your feet no wider than your pelvis and hold the dumbbell so that your knuckles are facing forward.
- Keep the upper arms hanging vertically, then using your biceps lift the dumbbell up until you have closed the elbow joint completely.
- Then, lower the weight back to the start position.

tricks of the trade

There is a huge temptation to lean forward during this move. When my clients cheat in this way I make them touch their butt cheeks and shoulders against a wall (touching, not leaning), and then do the curls – you simply can't cheat.

exercise 3 bicep curl 21s

• **stability** • **strength** • **power** • **isolation**



These are deceptively hard! The aim is to perform the three sets of seven reps immediately after each other. Why do we do this? Mainly because the biceps are very resilient muscles that do not often have to function through their full range every time they are used, so this approach is very good at creating a reaction.

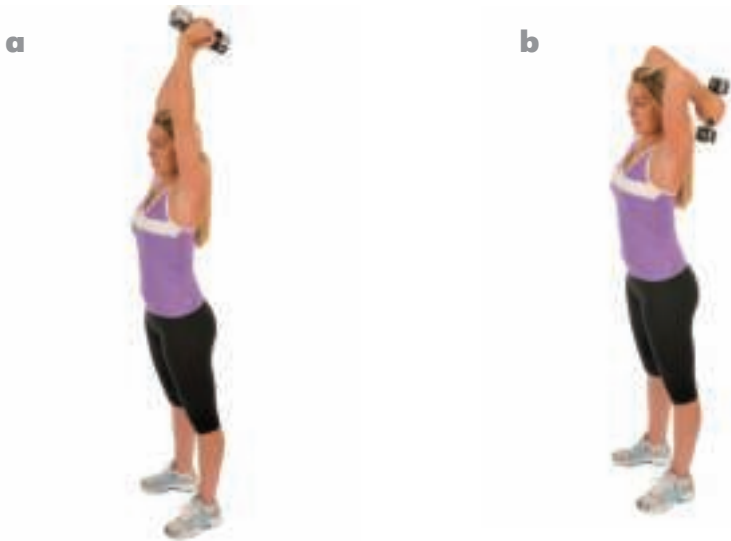
- For the first seven reps, lift the dumbbell through the first half of your range of motion.
- Follow with the second set of seven reps, where you should lift the weight from halfway to the end of your range of motion.
- Finally, for the third set of seven reps lift the weight through the complete range of motion.

tricks of the trade

Whatever weight my clients think they can lift during this move, it will usually be 25 per cent less in reality. A nice personal trainer will tell you this, a nasty one will let you suffer and potentially fail the set.

exercise 4 overhead triceps press

• stability • strength • power • isolation



This exercise is best done in front of a mirror so you can see where the dumbbell is.

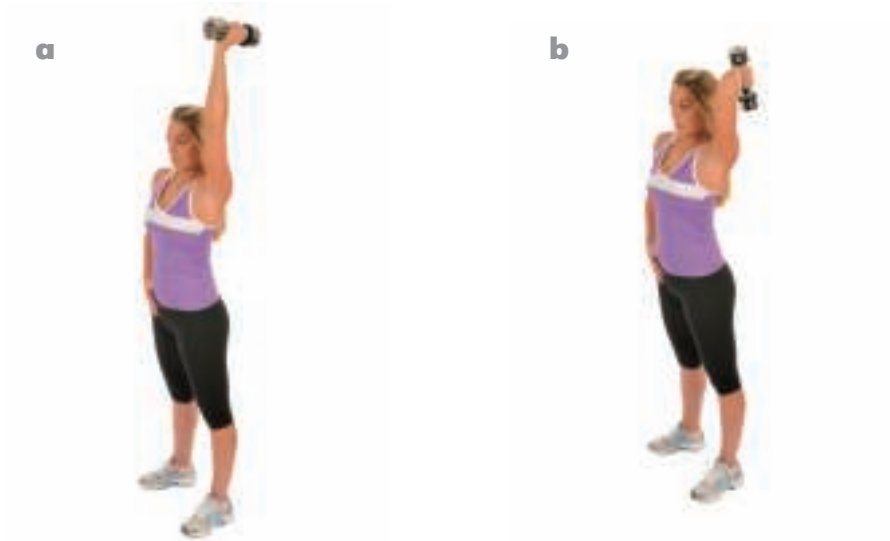
- Stand with your feet a little bit wider than pelvis width.
- Lift the dumbbell above your head and hold the shaft with both hands.
- Start at the top and lower the dumbbell behind your head, bending at the elbow.
- As soon as it touches your body push it back up to the start position.

! tricks of the trade

The mirror is good because you should be able to look at yourself throughout the move. As a personal trainer, I act as the mirror and make my clients aware of when they are in the wrong position. The best solution is simply to stand in front of my clients, as this means they naturally keep their head up to maintain eye contact.

exercise 5 single-arm triceps press

• **stability** • **strength** • **power** • **integration**



This exercise is also best done in front of a mirror so you can see where the dumbbell is. If you start with your right arm, have your right foot slightly in front of the left. The nice thing about doing one arm at a time is that you will get some work out of the pecs as well because you naturally shift your weight forward as you drive the dumbbell into the air.

- Hold the dumbbell in one hand and lift it above your head, with your arms fully extended.
- Bend your arm at the elbow and lower the dumbbell.
- Push it back up again using the triceps.

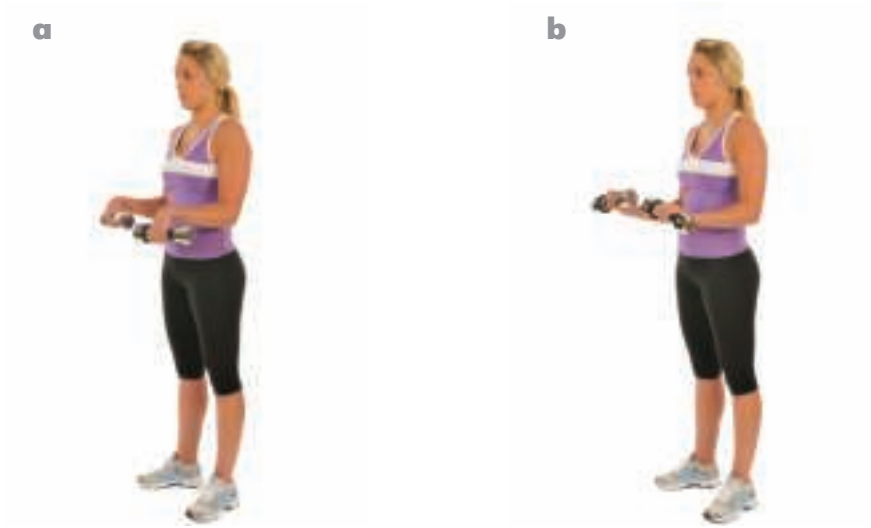


tricks of the trade

Shift your bodyweight around from foot to foot and also to the ball of the foot and heels – try it, you will find that you actually stay more focused on the arm movement than when you were standing still.

exercise 6 wrist curls, over grip

● strength ● power ● isolation ● bench



The muscles used in this movement tend to be weaker than the under grip version – if you look at your wrist this is understandable because you have more flesh on the underside than you do on the top. This exercise can also be performed standing or sitting on a bench.

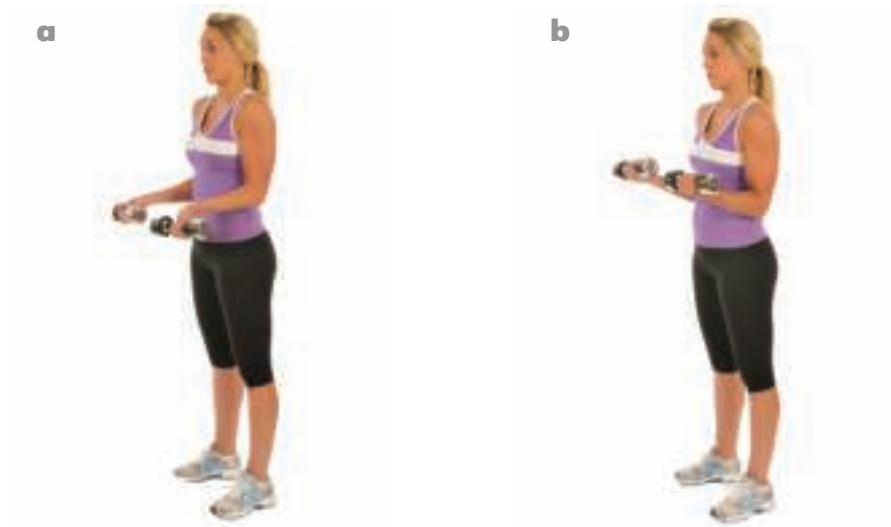
- Stand up and hold your wrist in a position that allows it to move like a hinge above your knee.
- Keep your palms down and lower and lift the dumbbell.

! tricks of the trade

This is the weakest range of motion for most people, so leave this move until the very end of a workout otherwise your grip will be affected for the rest of the exercises.

exercise 7 wrist curls, under grip

● strength ● power ● isolation



- Stand with feet apart, elbows at right angles and palms up.
- You need to remember that the range of motion here is determined by bones rather than flexibility, so don't force the joint to go further than it wants to.
- Relaxing the fingers at the end of the down phase will create work for the hand muscle as well as the wrist, but don't relax the grip too much as you are likely to drop the weight.

tricks of the trade

Despite the small amount of muscle bulk in the wrist area you will be surprised how much you can lift on this move. However, be sure to start light and progress slowly because the wrist is full of ligaments and tendons that take longer to condition than the blood-rich muscle tissue.

exercise 8 dead lift

• stability • strength • power • integration



My mantra 'learn it, then work it' is key here, so practise this movement without any weights before you add extra load to your muscles and joints.

- Stand with your feet as wide apart as your armpits.
- Let the weights just hang in front of you then lower them towards the floor (that's the easy part because gravity is in charge).
- When your hamstrings reach the point that they want to stop you going any lower, stand up.
- Watch the line that the dumbbells go through – they should be going straight down and straight up again, any swing forward or back suggests the weight is too light or that you have a tight spot somewhere in your hamstrings or glutes.

tricks of the trade

The smart people practise the dead lift without a weight so that they almost pre-programme the move into their muscles and brain. An excellent practice tool is a wooden pole, because if the pole hits your knees you are too stiff or unstable to do this move with heavy weights.

exercise 9 deltoid raise front

● stability ● strength ● power ● integration



Just to clear one thing up here. When we work the deltoids we don't isolate the anterior, middle or posterior section of the muscle. Each of the sections works all of the time, but depending upon the movement each section will take on variable amounts of the load.

- Except for when using really heavy weights on this exercise, stand with your feet in whatever position is most comfortable, which means either with your feet hip width apart or in a split stance (one foot forward). If you are braving a very heavy dumbbell then a wide stance will be better.
- Before you start the lift you **must** retract your scapular (in other words, pull your shoulders back) otherwise your deltoids (one of the shoulder muscles) can't function as well as they should.
- Lift the dumbbell up to chin height. Any higher and you will again be asking the slightly isolated anterior deltoid to move in a way that it isn't designed to. I find that lifting slightly off centre is kinder on the shoulder joint than lifting straight up in front.
- And please, lower the weight under control – the eccentric phase is more than half the reason for doing this move.