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## Chest

### Dumbbell bench press

- You can pick the variant that is most comfortable for your shoulder. Recommended angles include a [low incline](#) (at 15 degrees or so), flat, or even a decline. The only angle not recommended is a high (45 degree or higher) incline. 30 degrees is negotiable.
- Flare your elbows out in the bottom as much as your shoulders tolerate.



- Go as low as a.) what your shoulders tolerate b.) until you feel a good stretch on your pectorals.
- Don't try to touch the dumbbells together at the top – there is no tension on the pecs there, so there is no point in doing that.

### [Dumbbell fly-press](#)

- This movement is like a dumbbell bench press and dumbbell fly hybrid. Unlike with the classic fly, you bend your arm slightly more (closer to a press) on the positive phase, whereas you let it down with a more straightened arm (closer to a fly).
- In the video, **Bryan Boorstein** is bending his arm a bit more on the negative, you can do it a bit straighter if it's comfortable for your shoulders.

### [Bayesian- fly](#)

- Try to set the seat height (if it's adjustable) so that you initiate the movement with your upper arms roughly at nipple height – under that is fine too. If it's above that, it should be only slightly.

- At the end of the movement (in the contracted position) your hands (if you stretched them out) should still be under your shoulder's level.
- The movement is done with an internally rotated shoulder (if your shoulders can tolerate it), so your palms facing downwards. If it's easier on your shoulder, you can rotate your hands outward in the stretched position (when your arms travel behind your torso)
- Don't just try to move the weight back and forth, in this case, focusing on your pecs moving is a good idea. Think about pinching a penny in between your pecs, if you want to get some extra work in the contracted position (and don't tell anyone in evidence based fitness that you did that! Well, if you do tell, at least use a fake name and sunglasses.)
- If you feel discomfort in your elbow area, try bending your elbows slightly more in the stretched position, and then straightening it out more at the contracted (top) position.
- At the top, you can [cross your arms slightly](#) to hit the pecs in their peak contracted position even more.

### Cable chest press

- You will need a cable stack [where the pulleys are not very far apart](#). (this one is on a slight incline, but it could be flat as well, up to you)
- You execute the movement the same way you would do a dumbbell bench press – deep stretch in the bottom, pressing the handles up
- The main difference compared to a dumbbell press is that you can more actively think about moving your hands inward and not just up (since there is also resistance coming from the side).
- If the range of motion is too short – you can't go deep enough in the bottom position to get a good stretch in your pecs – you may need to either elevate the bench, or do it in an incline angle.

### Lats and teres major

#### Chin up

- Ideally use a neutral grip (palms facing one another) or a [rotating implement](#). Only use a supinated grip if you know from experience that your elbows tolerate it even with heavier loading.
- Pulling the bar (or whatever you're holding) to your chest completely is fine, but it's also fine if you just pull yourself until you basically elbow yourself in the ribs.
- If you'd like to make the movement more focused on the lats, try to think of [reaching forward](#) and not just up with your hands – this should emphasize the lats better.
- You should reach a dead-hang in the bottom, but there should still be tension on the lats. Don't allow your shoulders to shrug up to your ears.
- No kipping is allowed. [This video](#) is an example of already excessive momentum use.
- Pause before doing your first rep to avoid swinging back and forth.
- A bit of diagonal angle in your torso is fine during the concentric phase (the way up) but avoid turning it into an inverted row
- You can load the movement with dumbbells between your ankles (up to about 30 kgs it's totally ok) or a chin-up/dip belt.

## Pull-ups

- Grab the bar outside shoulder width. You should feel intuitively what's too wide and what's too narrow. It helps if you think about the fact that the goal of the movement is to adduct the shoulder (bring your arms down at the side of your body)
- Use a pronated grip, or rotating handles if you have the chance to do so.
- You should let yourself down until there is a full stretch on your lats, (almost a dead-hang) but don't let your shoulders shrug up to your ears completely.
- **Note:** the above doesn't mean partial range of motion. From the outside it should look like a dead-hang, but you will feel the point at which there is no more tension on the muscles anymore and it's just stressing your shoulder excessively.
- Pull yourself up until the elbows are in line with your torso (you might be able to even touch the elbows to your side).
- You don't need to touch the bar to your chest.

## Lat pulldown

- Grab the bar outside shoulder width. You should feel intuitively what's too wide and what's too narrow.
- The wider you grab it, the more you will emphasize pure shoulder adduction (bringing your arms in from the side) and minimize shoulder extension (bringing your arms down in front of you). The former will likely increase upper back activity and lower the stimulus for the lats, and vice versa. Both approaches are fine, it's up to you what you want to emphasize more.
- A neutral or pronated grip both work, and rotating handles are also great here.
- Lean back slightly as you're pulling the bar down, otherwise the movement will become a very awkward feeling (and looking) shitshow. More importantly though, you won't be able to effectively stretch out the lats, nor the upper back muscles if you don't create at least a tiny bit of diagonal angle.
- You can use some momentum, and it's fine, as you will get some extra ROM for the rear delts and mid-traps as well. Just make sure that you control the weight on the way back. This is a form of eccentric overloading.
- You will often be able to touch the bar to your chest, but at the very least you should pull the bar down until the elbows are in line with your torso.

## Lat prayer

- Perform this movement kneeling – you will have much more stability that way.
- Use a rope or a bar attachment.

- If you use a bar attachment, use a grip slightly narrower than shoulder-width
- Lean forward at the top of the movement to get a better stretch on your lats. You should feel your lats stretching out a lot.
- [Think of reaching forward during the movement, not just up.](#)
- Don't allow your arms to go all the way up, even behind your head/neck. At that point, you will lose tension on your lats, and you will just stress your shoulder further.
- Bring your arms down, while simultaneously leaning back. You will be rocking back and forth from a forward lean to leaning backwards during the movement.
- You don't necessarily need to pull your arms all the way to your side. Just like with the chin-up, it can suffice to basically elbow yourself in the ribs at the end-point of the movement. This will emphasize the lengthened phase of the movement more.
- Don't just heave the weight – try to feel your lats stretching and contracting.
- It helps to focus on the top of your upper arm moving as opposed to focusing on bringing the bar/rope down.
- It's normal to feel a ton of tension in your triceps – the long head of the triceps is working heavily in an isometric fashion here!

You can also perform this movement [one arm at a time](#). Once you get fairly strong on it and you developed a decent amount of mind-muscle connection, you will probably prefer that.

### [Unilateral pulldown](#)

- Note the rotation of the hand and wrist
- Thinking of pulling your elbows down and back
- [Lean back as you're pulling the handle down](#) – it will create a better angle for the lats. If you're using a regular lat pulldown station, you might have to lean back quite a lot to achieve this.
- You can turn away from the line of pull slightly to stretch the lats out even more.
- The movement ends when the elbows are in line with your torso, you don't need to pull the handles further back, although if the momentum takes you a bit further, it's fine

## Erector spinae (lower back)

### [Back extension](#)

## Other back-stuff

### Cable-rows, Arnold Style

- This movement involves some small amount of back rounding
- The lower back should stay relatively steady, and most of the torso-movement should come from your upper back
- Full ROM constitutes having your arms stretch maximally at the bottom and at the top, touching your hands to your body

## Lateral delts and upper traps

### Cable lateral raise

- Lean forward slightly at the bottom position: this increases the range of motion, takes the front delts out of the movement more and reduces the risk of shoulder impingement
- Don't change the bend in your arm midway through the movement – completely straight and slightly bent arms are both fine. Often a slight bend makes it more comfortable for the elbow
- Your shoulder should be either neutral or slightly internally rotated (palms should be either facing down or slightly backwards)
- The top of the movement is roughly at shoulder height – this should prevent shoulder discomfort

## Lateral and front delts

### Cable lateral raise

- Lean forward slightly at the bottom position: this increases the range of motion, takes the front delts out of the movement more and reduces the risk of shoulder impingement
- Don't change the bend in your arm midway through the movement – completely straight and slightly bent arms are both fine. Often a slight bend makes it more comfortable for the elbow
- Your shoulder should be either neutral or slightly internally rotated (palms should be either facing down or slightly backwards)
- The top of the movement is roughly at shoulder height – this should prevent shoulder discomfort

### Lying cable lateral raise

Use this if it's convenient to set up. If not, a standard cable lateral raise, performed standing, with 1 or 2 arms at a time will do so as well.

### Behind the back cable lateral raise

- A narrower double-pulley tends to work here.
- The movement should happen in the scapular plane – not completely out to the side, but also not out in front like with a front raise, but somewhere in between.
- The best way to set up for the movement is to grab the handles, extend the arm in the position which would be the end-point of the positive (concentric) phase of the movement, and then walk out with them to see where exactly you should stand.
- In the bottom, the cables might annoyingly bump together – the best way I found to prevent this is to slightly rotate the hands inward at the bottom.
- The end position should be roughly when your hands are around in line with your thighs, or maybe your butt. You don't need to bring the hands all the way behind your back, that would feel very uncomfortable for your shoulders anyway.

### Dumbbell overhead press

- The dumbbells should be rotated at the bottom to get a better range of motion
- Once the dumbbells get heavy, it's often worthwhile to do it one arm at a time, standing. (in these cases, hold onto something so that you don't get balance issues).
- Lower the dumbbells as low as you can still safely can, without shoulder discomfort (in the joints). [This ROM for example is still pretty good](#), you don't necessarily need to get deeper if it feels uncomfortable.

### Dumbbell lateral raise

- You can use a bit of momentum on these
- Lean slightly forward
- Don't raise the dumbbells completely out to the side, try to do them in the scapular plane (very slightly out forward, but still to the side)

### Lying dumbbell lateral raise

- You can do this on an incline bench
- You can play around with the angle of the bench but don't do it on a flat bench because then there is no tension on the lateral delts in the mid-range of the movement

### Cable overhead press

- It's best to do this one arm at a time
- Hold onto the cable stack to keep your balance
- Go as far down as you can until it still feels comfortable for your shoulder (going too deep can cause joint discomfort)
- Think a bit about pressing the cable handle inwards, not just up (this will work the lateral delts at the top more, and you will also get some extra work for the upper traps).



## Biceps

### [Bayesian curl](#)

- You should be facing away from the cable stack to get a better stretch on the biceps
- For many, keeping the elbow by their side strictly and moving the forearms back and forth is uncomfortable, and it greatly helps if they do it a somewhat sideways pattern, [like this](#)
- You should take a step or two forward – there should be high tension on the biceps in the bottom position, but you don't need to go forward so much so that your arms are being dragged backwards by the cable.
- You can make the resistance profile of the exercise more complete by standing erect (straight) at the bottom position and leaning forward at the top (as you curl the weight up).
- Rotate your hands slightly inwards to a more neutral position (palms facing your body, thumbs pointing forwards) discomfort in your elbow/bicep tendons in the bottom of the movement to prevent discomfort in the elbow and bicep tendons.

### [Messi-world cup curl](#)

This is essentially a modified concentration curl with somewhat elevated feet, and leaning away from the resistance as opposed to leaning towards it, so that you can get a bigger stretch on the biceps

### Facing the stack bicep curls

- 1.) [Unilateral](#)
- 2.) [Bilateral, with a bar](#)

I recommend doing it either unilaterally or with two single (D) handles, making use of both pulleys of the cable stack.

## Triceps

### [Skull overs](#)

(video demonstration)

- This is like a skull-crusher exercise but with an extra pullover motion in it
- The bar should end up behind your back
- An EZ bar tends to work the best here
- Try to end the top of the movement with a slightly diagonal angle for your arm, so that there is still some tension on the triceps in the contracted position.

### Overhead triceps extension

- Raise your arms up as high as you comfortably can.
- Bend your elbow during the movement as much as you can without elbow discomfort
- You can use both a rope and a D-handle attachment.
- You can do it one or two handed, but doing it one hand at a time makes the setup a lot more comfortable, as you don't have to drag the rope over your shoulders
- There should be minimal back and forth movement in your upper arm during the movement. Ideally, the only thing that moves is your forearm.

### Modified triceps pushdown

- This is like a regular pushdown, but you modify the angle so that you get a bigger hit in the stretched position
- A longer rope (or a double-rope setup) can make it considerably more comfortable for your elbows
- For elbow health, you want to flare your elbows out

### Cross body pushdowns

- This exercise hits the long head in their fully shortened position.
- [You can do it with both pulleys at the same time](#)
- [You can also do it with 2 long ropes attached to one of the pulleys, or with 1 arm at a time.](#)

### Messi the GOAT tricep-extension

You can do this standing as well, but many will get strong enough eventually so that a kneeling position helps a lot with keeping your balance.

## Rear delts and mid-traps

### Modified reverse fly

This is like a regular reverse fly, but you intentionally finish the movement with retracting your scapulae at the end to hit the middle trapezius muscle more.

- You initiate the movement with your upper back hunched forward.
- Once your arms are roughly in line with your torso, you start "cheating" a bit by retracting your scapulae while pulling the arms behind your body.

### Face-pull

- You can use some momentum on these
- Use the longest rope available or try to use the double rope setup shown in the video above
- The elbows should go past your head and torso

## Seal row

- [Bald Omni man has some creative ways to set up the movement](#)
- Use the setup that feels most comfortable (barbell, dumbbell)
- Make sure that you get a decent stretch at the bottom
- The elbows should travel behind your body at the top

## Upper traps

### [Wide grip shrugs](#)

There is no golden rule about how wide you should grab the bar, but it helps if you think of the fact that this is an “out → in” movement during the shrugging motion, and not just an “up and down” one.

- Lean slightly forward and keep your head down, otherwise you won't be able to contract the upper traps as well
- Avoid heaving and using body-momentum
- Keep your arms straight, don't bend your elbows during the movement.
- You can also do this movement in a smith machine, or you can also use [two lower pulleys wide apart](#) (though it will be inconvenient as you get stronger).

## Hamstrings

### [Seated leg-curl](#)

- Ideally use a machine with a thigh-pad (that locks your thighs down)
- Adjust the seat and the foot-pad so that you get a good stretch in your hamstrings in the top position.
- If you feel that it's hard to complete the leg-curl movement all the way, you may need to lean forward a bit during the movement (but your butt shouldn't come off the seat)
- Point your feet towards the ceiling at all times (as if you were in the bottom position of a calf-raise)
- Always set the machine up in the same way so that we can accurately track your progress
- If your machine doesn't have a thigh-pad, do the movement unilaterally (one leg at a time).

## Lying leg curl

- Preferably, perform this movement one leg at a time.
- Set the machine up (or position yourself in a way) so that your knees are straight in the bottom, but not over-stretched. Going too low can cause strange pains in the back of the knee.
- If the machine doesn't have a natural bend in it to elevate your pelvis, you can try putting something under your hips. You will notice that you can bend your knees more if your hips are a bit more flexed (bent).

## Romanian Deadlift

### Longer tutorial

This is a hip-hinging exercise that focuses on hip extension.

- Push your butt back as far as possible, while keeping your lower back flat or slightly arched. (There should be no change in the shape/posture of your lower back during the movement).
- Your knees should be unlocked but not bent purposefully – so you shouldn't be actively bending your knees like you would do with a squat, or even with a conventional deadlift. This should all happen automatically if you simply don't force your knees backwards like you would do with a completely stiff legged deadlift.
- The optimal range of motion is not determined by where the bar goes – once your butt is not going back any further without lower back rounding, that's the end of the ROM. That said, for most people, the bar will usually end up just slightly below knee height.

## Quads

### High bar squat

- Go as deeply as you safely can. You should never allow your lower back to round and your pelvis to curl under (i.e. butt wink)
- Your stance width is up to you – pick whichever is most comfortable for your hips
- If you have trouble going to at least parallel without lower back rounding, a heel elevated shoe or using squat ramps is advisable.
- Avoid prolonging the rest periods in between reps – it makes tracking your progress more difficult. So always have a standard amount of rest time between reps, or if you're going to extend the rest period, standardize that (for example, you allow an extra 1-2 breaths for the last 2 reps of the set).

### Leg-press

- Always set the back-padding as far down as possible. The less your hips are flexed from the get-go, the better
- Place your foot as low down on the platform as you can while never losing contact between your heels and the platform
- All of the above is in order to get the biggest range of motion at the knee (your knee should bend at the bottom of the movement as much as possible)
- Never lose contact between the back-pad and your lower back. If your lower back curls up during the movement, you're going too deep for what your mobility or the mechanics of the machine allows for.
- Don't lock your knees out fully – on the leg press it's easy to overdo it and hyperextend your knees by accident.

### Unilateral leg extension

- Ideally, do the movement with one leg at a time. (you will be gassed out less easily and you're also stronger unilaterally)
- Set the seat as far back as possible (the more you're lying back the better)
- The more your knees get bent in the bottom, the better
- Don't lock your knees out fully

### Bulgarian split squat (from deficit)

- Your feet should be relatively close under you – think of where you would put your feet if you did a regular barbell squat. Now, you simply take one leg out. In practice you will have to put it in front of you a bit, but not too far.
- Your rear leg should be behind you only so far so that your knee can stay roughly under your pelvis. Avoid over-stretching your hip flexors by putting the rear-leg too far behind
- By putting your front-feet on a stepper or any kind of elevation, you extend the range of motion, so the exercise becomes much more effective (and difficult).
- If you have balance issues, you can also hold onto something with one arm while you're doing the movement. This will limit the amount of weight you can hold (since you will only have one hand to hold dumbbells in) so you can also put a back-pack (or weighted vest, if you have it) on with weights in it to compensate.

### Bulgarian sissy squat

This is the same movement as the regular split squat, the only difference being that you will allow your toes to come up in the bottom position, thus being able to go into much deeper knee flexion.

You should feel a major quad stretch with this exercise.

### Reverse Nordic curls (bodyweight leg-extension)

This is effectively a body-weight leg extension movement. Since you're able to do this with your hips fully extended, it majorly stretches the quads.

You can progress the difficulty of the movement in the following way:

- Put something under your butt or back at first to reduce the range of motion and progressively reduce the height of this implement.
- [Elevate your knees and feet](#) at first and gradually reduce the elevation
- [Support yourself with bands](#) and [progressively reduce the band tension](#) by either using weaker bands or positioning yourself closer to the anchoring point of the band.

## Calves

### Straight-leg calf raise

You can perform this movement in several ways, the motion that you execute is fundamentally the same. Viable options include:

- [Unilaterally](#), with a dumbbell in your hand
- On the leg press, [unilaterally](#) or [bilaterally](#)
- Using a [standing calf-raise machine](#)
- In the smith machine, [unilaterally](#) or [bilaterally](#)

Be sure to go all the way down, until you get a full stretch in your calves, and then go all the way up, until your ankles are fully locked out.

## Abs

[Crunch with extended ROM with a bosu ball](#)

[Ab crunch off the bench](#)

[Regular ab crunch](#)