

BENCH-BOOSTING WORKOUT

HOW IT WORKS

Most guys who are in a bench-press rut have weak stabiliser muscles of the upper back and shoulders, particularly the rotator cuffs. These areas are neglected by the majority of lifters, but they have to be strong in order to allow safe and stable benching. While you'll still be training hard, the exercises will give your shoulders a break so they'll be fresh and ready to bench press heavy next month.

DIRECTIONS

FREQUENCY

Perform the workout twice a week for four weeks. Rest for at least two days between each lifting session. You may perform lower-body and other upper-body training on other days, but don't do any other pressing exercises.

TIME NEEDED

30 minutes.

DO IT

Perform the exercise pairs ("A" and "B") in sequence, completing one set of each and resting in between as needed.

SQUEEZE FOR STRENGTH

ALWAYS GRIP THE WEIGHTS AS TIGHTLY AS POSSIBLE TO ACTIVATE YOUR GRIP MUSCLES AND TRANSFER THE MOST ENERGY INTO THE LIFT.

2A PUSH-UP PLUS

SETS: 2 REPS: 15-20

Perform a push-up as normal, but at the top, spread your shoulder blades and let your torso rise a few more centimetres.



1A ONE-ARM FLOOR PRESS

SETS: 2 REPS: 8-12 (EACH SIDE)

Grab a dumbbell and lie on your back with knees bent and feet flat on the floor. Use both hands to bring the dumbbell straight over your chest and then hold it in one hand. Keep your elbow close to your side and your palm facing your ribs. Lower the weight until your triceps touch the floor. Pause and then press the weight back up. Complete your reps and then repeat on the other side.



1B THREE-POINT DUMBBELL ROW

SETS: 2 REPS: 8-12 (EACH SIDE)

Hold a dumbbell in one hand and, keeping your lower back in its natural arch, bend at the hips and rest your other hand on a bench for support. Allow the arm with the weight to hang straight down. Row the weight to your side. Complete all your reps and then repeat on the opposite arm.



WHY?

THE 'PUSH-UP PLUS' ACTIVATES THE SERRATUS ANTERIOR MUSCLE. STRENGTHENING THIS AREA (IT DOESN'T GET WORKED DIRECTLY WHEN YOU BENCH PRESS) WILL HELP YOU LIFT MORE.



2B BAND EXTERNAL ROTATION

SETS: 2 REPS: 15-20

Grab a light- to moderate-resistance band with your palms up and hands shoulder-width apart. Bend your elbows to 90 degrees (a mid-curl position) and hold them close to your sides. Pull your shoulderblades down, creating as much space as you can between your shoulders and ears. Rotate your forearms out against the band tension while simultaneously pulling your shoulder blades together. Pull until the band touches your lower rib cage.



3A PULL-UP HOLD

SETS: 2 (HOLD FOR 20-30 SECONDS)

Hang from a pull-up bar with palms outside shoulder width and facing forward. Pull yourself up and hold the top position – actively try to pull your shoulder blades down.

MAKE IT EASIER
IF YOU CAN'T PERFORM A PULL-UP, STAND ON A BENCH AND JUMP INTO THE TOP POSITION OF THE PULL-UP.



3B DUMBBELL INTERNAL ROTATION

SETS: 2 REPS: 12-15 (EACH ARM)

Grab a light dumbbell and get on all fours at the side of a flat bench. Reach over the bench with the weight and rest your upper arm on the bench so your forearm dangles straight down (your elbow is bent 90 degrees). Rotate your shoulder downwards so your forearm points back at you.

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KILOS**

THE RECORD
FOR THE
HEAVIEST
BENCH PRESS
WITHOUT
THE USE OF A
SUPPORTIVE
BENCH SHIRT.



4A DUMBBELL Y

SETS: 2 REPS: 8-12

Set an adjustable bench to a slight incline and hold a light dumbbell or weight plate in each hand. Lie face-down on the bench and let your arms hang with palms facing each other. Squeeze your shoulderblades together and raise your arms out in front of you, making a "Y" shape. Pause at the top.

DO IT RIGHT

USE LIGHT WEIGHTS AND PERFORM EACH REP WITH CONTROL. DON'T SWING THE WEIGHTS UP. THIS MOVE TARGETS THE MIDDLE AND LOWER TRAPS, WHICH ARE OFTEN WEAK.

4B SIDE-LYING DUMBBELL EXTERNAL ROTATION

SETS: 2 REPS: 8-12

Hold a dumbbell in one hand and lie on your side on a bench. Bend the arm holding the weight 90 degrees and keep it tight against your side. Now rotate your forearm away from your body until it's pointing straight up. Complete your reps, then repeat on the other side.

