

THE
SECRETS

TO ACHIEVING TONED ARMS

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Introduction

The benefits of toning your arms are many. For women, it means that you can wave your arm without worrying about the bingo flap. You know, that section of your upper arm that hangs down when you raise it. Toning your arms means that you never have to worry about that again. Instead, you'll get compliments on your arms, and inquiries about how you got such great arms.

For both men and women, it's nice to be able to wear more revealing shirts in the summer months when it's hot – the last thing you want to wear is a long-sleeved shirt. In the summer, or any time of year, you can rock a tank top, a sun dress, or a short-sleeved shirt with confidence and pride.

And let's not forget that just about any arm toning exercise you perform will strengthen your back, shoulder, and core muscles as well. You'll have better posture, your clothing will be more flattering on you, and you'll feel more confident.

As you tone your arms, you also improve your strength and mobility. That means you may no longer experience those painful pops and clicks when you reach for something on the top shelf of your kitchen cabinet.

Many people, women specifically, worry about becoming bulky when they do strength training. Let's talk about that next.



The Difference Between Toned and Bulky

To make sure we're on the same page... bulky muscles are those that you might see in a weightlifting magazine. They bulge. There is little fat over the muscle and you can often see the definition of the muscles.

Toned muscles are muscles that are ready for action. You haven't made them bigger; what you have done is improve their appearance.

There's a big difference in how a person achieves toned muscles versus how they build and bulk up their muscles.

To achieve bulkiness, you need:

- Genetics – Regardless of time and effort, some people just cannot bulk up. In fact, most people (and most women) are genetically unable to get bulky.
- Heavy weights – To achieve increased muscle mass, aka bulk, you have to lift heavy weights. You have to work toward maximum weight effort and you have to do it often.
- Hours in the gym – Bulk doesn't come easy. It requires a commitment to time in the gym every day, and we're not talking about quick high intensity training sessions. We're talking about strength training major muscle groups on a regular basis.

To achieve toned arms, you need:

- Light dumbbells (5-20 pounds); even bodyweight is good for many movements.
- Less than 20 minutes 3 times a week.
- No gym, you can do these movements in your home.



The bottom line is that with a few minutes each day, you can have toned arms. If you want to build muscle and add bulk, then you're going to need heavier weights, a gym membership, and the right genetics.

How to Use This Guide

This guide is divided into three categories. The categories include beginner, intermediate, and advanced. It's divided this way so you can approach your toned arms program with confidence. There's something for everyone. Each exercise is modifiable, meaning you can make it easier or harder depending on your strength, mobility, and needs.

Each movement also includes instructions on how to perform it, necessary equipment, tips on success, and guidelines on reps and rounds.

Beginner Arm Movements

Beginner movements are movements that most everyone can do. They are movements that don't require heavy weights. In many cases, they don't require weights at all. With each movement, stand up and try to work through the steps. Get the feel for it before you add it to a workout.

Standing V Raise

Equipment Required:

- Light dumbbells – one to three pounds each

What Does It Tone?

- Anterior deltoid (shoulder)
- Biceps (upper arms)
- Pectoralis (chest)

How to Perform the Movement

Start this arm exercise by standing with your legs hip width apart. Now, holding a light dumbbell in each hand, begin the movement with your hands at your sides.



Raise your arms in front of you and out diagonally so that they form a V shape, with your torso being the bottom of the V. Your arms should be parallel to the floor. They should also be straight, but your elbows shouldn't be locked.

Hold your arms in front of you, in this V shape, for a count of 5 seconds, then lower your arms back to your sides. As you lower, keep control over the weight.

Perform three sets of 8-12 movements. Rest in between each set.

Tips:

- You can perform this movement without any weight.
- As you gain strength, you can add weight and reps.

Shoulder Press

Equipment:

- Light dumbbells – one to three pounds to begin.
- Chair

What Does It Tone?

- Deltoids (shoulder)
- Biceps (front of upper arm)
- Triceps (back of upper arm)

How to Perform the Movement

Hold a light dumbbell in each hand and sit on a bench with back support. Plant your feet firmly on the floor about hip width apart. Bend your elbows and raise your upper arms to shoulder height so the dumbbells are at ear level and your arms are bent at 90 degree angles. You'll look like a football goal post.

Now, tighten your stomach muscles and feel your core create a slight gap between the small of your back and the chair. Keep your core tight and push the dumbbells up and in until the ends of the dumbbells touch lightly, directly over your head, and then lower the dumbbells back to ear level.

Repeat 3 sets of 8-12 repetitions

Tips:

- Often, as this movement gets difficult, there is a tendency to arch the back to push the weights up. Don't do this. It can cause back injuries.
- Instead, perform fewer reps and build strength and stamina over time.

Bent Row

Equipment:

- Light dumbbells

Muscles Worked

- Latissimus – (chest and upper back)
- Rhomboids – (upper back)
- Deltoids (shoulders)
- Biceps (upper arms)

How to Perform the Movement

Stand with your feet hip width apart. Holding a dumbbell in each hand, palms facing toward your body, bend your knees slightly and bring your torso forward by bending at the waist. The weights should hang directly in front of you as your arms hang perpendicular to the floor and your torso.

Now lift the dumbbells to your side, keeping the elbows close to your body and squeeze your back muscles as you pull the weights up. Hold it for a second or two, then slowly lower the weight back down to your starting position. Inhale as you pull up, exhale as you lower.

Repeat 3 sets of 8-12 repetitions

Tips:

- As you bend make sure to keep your back straight until it is almost parallel to the floor.
- Make sure that you keep your head up, don't look at the ground.



Pushup (From knees)

Equipment:

- None

Muscles Worked

- Deltoids
- Pecs
- Biceps

How to Perform the Movement

Start by laying on your stomach on the floor. Bend your legs and cross them at the ankles. Now, place your palms on the ground beside your shoulders. Your elbows should be in tight, near your body, not out like wings. Now, inhale and tighten your core. Push up until your arms are straight.

Lower your body back to the floor. Repeat.

Start with sets of maximum reps. Do three sets of as many pushups as you can do.

Tips:

- Your chest should touch the floor before you push back up.
- Keep your eyes looking ahead of you. Find a spot a foot or two ahead of you on the floor. This will keep your back in alignment.
- Exhale as you lower, and inhale again before you push back up to keep your core tight.

Intermediate Arm Movements

Plank

Equipment:

- None

Muscles Toned

- Latissimus
- Deltoids
- Rhomboids
- Core muscles (abdominal and back)
- Glutes

How to Perform the Movement

Lie on your stomach on the floor. Place your forearms on the floor, and lift your body so that you're supported on your arms and your toes. Your elbows should be directly beneath your shoulders, and your body should form a straight line from your head to your feet.

Hold the position for as long as you can. Your goal should be to hold it for two minutes or longer.

Tips:

- To make this movement easier, you can push up and plank from your hands.
- Don't hold your breath. Breathe while you're holding your plank.



Pike Pushup

Equipment

- None

Muscles Worked

- Deltoids (shoulders)
- Arms (triceps and biceps)
- Chest (pecs)
- Back (trapezius)
- Core (abdominals)

Assume a pushup position on the floor with your hands shoulder width apart and your arms straight. Raise your hips into the air so you are forming an upside-down V. Your arms and legs will stay straight (no bent knees or elbows).

However, you may be on your toes. Bend your elbows and lower your upper body until the top of your head gently touches the floor. Push yourself back up until your arms are straight. That's one rep. Perform three sets of as many reps as possible. Rest in between each set.

Tips:

- If you're worried about losing balance or strength, place a pillow where your head will tap the floor. It provides a softer landing.
- If you are unable to touch the floor due to mobility or strength, lower your head as much as possible so that you're still able to push back up.

Reverse Fly

Equipment:

- Incline Bench
- Dumbbells – 5-10 pounds

Muscles:

- Shoulders
- Back

How to Perform the Movement

Lie chest down on an incline bench. Hold the dumbbells in each hand with the palms facing each other. Extend your arms in front of you, and below the bench and your body, so that they are perpendicular to your body.

Keeping your elbows slightly bent, bring your arms up, keeping your palms facing the ground. Imagine you're a bird and your wings are open. You're flying. This is the top of the movement. Continue raising your arms until they are parallel to the floor. Slowly lower the weights back down to the starting position.

Perform 3 sets of 8-12 reps

Tips:

- Squeeze your shoulder blades together as you raise your arms.
- Inhale as you lower your arms, exhale as you raise your arms.

Box Pushups

Equipment

- Stable surface that can support your weight. A coffee table, exercise bench, or a chair against a wall can work.

Muscles it Works

- Pectorals (chest muscles)
- Deltoids (shoulders)
- Triceps (back of upper arms)
- Abdominals
- The “wing” muscles directly under your armpit, called the serratus anterior.

How to Perform the Movement

Start by placing your hands shoulder width apart on the box or stable surface. Tighten your core so your body forms a straight line from head to toe, and keep your legs together.

Your arms should be straight, but don't lock your elbows. Slowly bend your elbows and lower your chest to the box. Once you reach the lowest position, press your body back up to the starting point.

Complete 3 sets of 8-10 reps.

Tips:

- If this is too easy, add reps to each set. Try 15 or 20 a set. If they're too difficult, try widening your feet. Position them a foot or two apart and try the pushup.
- Don't hold your breath. Inhale at the bottom and exhale at the top of your pushup.

Advanced Arm Toning Movements

Pushup from Toes

Equipment:

- None

Muscles Worked

- Pectorals (chest muscles)
- Deltoids (shoulders)
- Triceps (back of upper arms)
- Abdominals
- Serratus anterior

How to Perform the Movement

Get into a plank position with your hands positioned just outside your shoulders. Your feet can be together or spread apart. Some people prefer to do pushups with their feet a foot or so apart. Do what feels most comfortable for you.

Take a deep breath. Tighten your core and your backside, then, with your arms straight, steadily lower yourself until your chest touches the ground. Keep your elbows at your sides and try to prevent them from winging out.

Find a spot on the floor that is about a foot ahead of you and keep your gaze on that spot. This keeps your neck and spine in line and prevents you from smacking your face on the ground or from hurting your neck.

Once your chest touches the floor, push back up into the plank position with your arms fully extended.

Perform three sets of 8-20 pushups. If you feel your form starting to weaken (and you're doing the worm to push back up), then it's time to rest.

At first, you may only be able to perform a few reps. There are a few options to help you get stronger. You can perform as many pushups as possible and then finish your set on your knees or on a box. You can also take a longer rest between sets.

Tips:

- Take a breath at the top of the movement, when your arms are extended.
- Lower quickly, and push up as quickly as possible.
- Exhale at the top, inhale, and repeat. Inhaling helps you keep your core tight.



Side Plank

Equipment

- None

Muscles worked

- Shoulders
- Abdominals
- Back
- Glutes
- Hamstrings
- (it's a full body workout!)

How to Perform the Movement

Lie on your side with your elbow on the ground in line with your shoulder. Your forearm should be perpendicular to your body. Position your top foot on the ground in front of your bottom foot. Rest your other hand on your side or put it on your hip. Push your hips up to form a straight line with your body from head to toe.

Tighten your abs, glutes and quads. Hold this position. Repeat on your opposite side.

Work to hold the position for as long as possible. You may only be able to hold it for 10-30 seconds initially. That's okay. Eventually you will be able to hold it for a minute or longer. Cher says she can hold a plank for 7 minutes.



Tips:

- To make this movement more difficult you can perform it from your hand instead of your forearm. You can also balance your top foot on top of your bottom foot. You can also lift your top leg, also called a star plank.
- This is a core strengthener, for sure, including your back muscles. You'll also work your shoulder muscles and tone your arms.

Dips

Equipment

- Chair, stable table, or parallel bars able to support your full weight. You may find them at the playground or at the gym.

Muscles Worked

- Pecs
- Triceps
- Front deltoids

How to Perform the Movement

If you're using bars, place your hands on the bars and jump up so that your arms are fully extended. If you're using a chair or a stable table, plant your feet with your back to the chair or table. Place your hands on the table behind you. Lower your body by bending your arms. Continue lowering until your shoulders are below your elbows at the bottom. Push your body back up to the starting position by straightening your arms.

Repeat with 3 sets of 8-20 dips. Or perform three sets of maximum reps.

Tips:

- if you're on a chair or a table, you're going to have your feet on the ground. That's okay (you'll need them for stability) but try to use your arms to push your body up, not your legs.
- If you're on parallel bars, then bend your knees so that your feet aren't touching the ground OR leave your toes on the ground and use your arms as much as possible.

Dumbbell Plank Row

Equipment

- Dumbbells – start light (1-3 pounds) and increase weight as you get stronger.

Muscles Worked

- Lats
- Traps
- Pecs
- Deltoids

How to Perform the Movement

Position your dumbbells under your shoulders. Begin in a plank position with your legs a foot or so apart. A wider distance between your feet helps you be more stable. Hold onto your dumbbells, keeping your wrists in line with your forearms.

Inhale, tighten your core and squeeze your glutes. Exhale as you lift your right elbow to row. You should feel your scapula pulling toward your spine as you lift your arm up. Your elbow should be pointing toward the ceiling. Staying tight, return the weight to the ground and repeat the movement on your other side.

Perform 3 sets of 8-12 reps per arm

Tips:

- Add weight to make the movement more difficult. You can also perform the movement without weights – bodyweight is always an option and can provide you with a great workout.
- Stop if you feel your body tipping to one side or your form faltering.

Tips for Adding Exercise into Your Day

You probably noticed that each of these movements required three sets of max reps or 8-20 reps depending on your strength, endurance, and abilities. That means you can fit two to three movements into one twenty-minute exercise session.

You can also spread the movements throughout the day. For example, you can do pushups in the morning, plank in the evening, and dips from your desk at lunch. Because these movements are designed to be performed with body weight or light weights, they're easily done in just a few minutes and from anywhere that works for you.

To get started, if you've never worked out before or never performed body weight strength movements (and many people haven't), then consider starting with one movement at a time. For example, you might work on knee pushups on Tuesday. Then, on Wednesday, try the Standing V Raise. Familiarize yourself with the movements and with integrating a few minutes of exercise to your day.

Once you've worked through the movements, create your plan. Do you want to exercise every day or every other day? When do you want to exercise? How many movements or how much time are you able to reasonably commit to each day?



Be realistic about how much time you can commit each day. It's okay to start small and build on your time commitment. You can, for example, start by working out for five minutes a day. It's more important to start and create the habit than to try to exercise for a long time but not be able to commit to that on a regular basis.

Patience is key. It takes time and consistency to tone your muscles and you may not see changes overnight. However, when combined with dietary changes, like reducing your sugar intake, and adding other exercises like walking more, you will see results more quickly.

Conclusion

Toned arms give you a sense of confidence, improved posture, and a more flattering wardrobe. You'll also increase your strength, mobility, and ability to achieve improved fitness. With a little time, a few pieces of equipment, and some dedication, you can have the arms that you want, and deserve, to have.

Don't forget that there's lots more info about weight loss, nutrition and fitness motivation on our website: www.HowToGetFlatAbsFast.org