



Do More Curls To Do More Chin-Ups...

One of the most important principles in program design for the fastest results is:

“A chain is only as strong as its weakest link. Strengthen the weakest link and the whole chain gets stronger...”

Especially in women the weakest link and therefore the limiting factor in training chin-ups, is the bottom quarter of the range - the initiation of the chin-up from a fully extended elbow position. In this case the limiting factor is the strength of the elbow flexors.

There are 4 main elbow flexors – biceps brachii, brachialis, brachioradialis and the pronator teres.

The brachioradialis and the pronator teres are statistically the weakest and therefore the most limiting elbow flexors.

Is your brachioradialis and pronator teres too weak? The simplest indicator is the ratio between your chin-ups with a supinated, shoulder width grip and your reverse EZ bar Scott curls with a shoulder width grip. The optimal ratio is 1:0.37. This means if you want to do a chin-up with 60kg bodyweight, you have to be able to reverse curl 22kg with an EZ bar at a shoulder width grip. If you curl less than that your limiting factor is your elbow flexor strength in training chin-ups. The same ratio applies if you can do more reps on chin-ups or you are able to use additional weight. Calculate and optimise the ratio of your supinated, shoulder width Chin Ups to your reverse EZ bar Scott curls with a shoulder width grip for more chin up power.

Here's a sample progression for curls over 12 weeks – to strengthen the elbow flexors:

Phase 1 - 6 workouts/3 weeks

EZ bar curls, standing, shoulder width grip, 4×6-8, 4010, 120s

Phase 2 - 6 workouts/3 weeks

45° DB Incline hammer curls, 4×4-6, 4010, 150s

Phase 3 - 6 workouts/3 weeks

65° DB incline curls, supinated grip, 4×5-7, 4010, 120s

Phase 4 - 6 workouts/3 weeks

Reverse EZ Bar curls, shoulder width grip, 5×4-6, 40×0, 150s

Every rep starts and ends with a fully extended elbow.

It is crucial to increase the weight and/or reps at every workout. The progression of the weight is critical to increase the strength of the elbow flexors.

Perform every exercise 2 times per week for 3 weeks as the first exercise of your upper body routine and after the 3 weeks change to the next phase.

For these 4 phases do eccentric chin-ups as the second exercise of your upper body workout with the goal of lowering yourself for 30 seconds. After these 4 phases do chin-ups as the first exercise of your upper body routine.

Have fun chinning...

Picture: IFBB Bikini Pro Kate Abate does reverse EZ bar curls with a shoulder width grip (left) and 45° DB incline hammer curls (right)