

Super Arm Routine 5

Multi Grip/Pathway System

Rationale

I first got exposed to this concept of training by reading the bodybuilding articles of Don Ross who was probably of Southern California's most avid training system fanatic.

The rationale behind this training system is to use different grips to allow the extension of the training stimulus of a particular set to increase the time under tension and to tap in as many motor units as possible.

The order of recruitment of motor units is fixed for a muscle while performing a given movement even if the rate of force development and the speed of contraction change. However in the case of a change in position (or in the case of a multi-functional muscle accomplishing different movements, the order of recruitment is changed. Certain motor units within a muscle have a low recruitment threshold for exercise X and a high recruitment threshold for exercise Y.

In the case of biceps brachii, preferential recruitment for a specific task is related to the location of MUs within the biceps (long head). Medially located MUs are preferentially recruited in supination and exorotation. Laterally located MUs are preferentially recruited in flexion. MUs involved in all tasks are located centrally and medially). This variation in recruitment order according to movement pattern may be partially responsible for the specificity of training that has been observed and may support the notion long held by strength training practitioners that full development of a muscle is possible only when all its possible movements are trained

In elbow flexor training, the weakest to strongest grips go from pronated to supinated to semi-supinated.

The pause between changes in grip or bar pathway should be respected, taking longer or shorter rest intervals will compromise the training effect.

Routine one Elbows Flexors:

Do the following steps:

1. Paused Standing Reverse Mid-Grip EZ bar Curls 4-6 R.M. on a 3210 tempo (pause taken at 30 degrees of elbow flexion)
2. rest 10 seconds
3. Standing Barbell Curls 4-6 R.M. on a 3020 tempo
4. rest 10 seconds
5. Seated Hammer Dumbbell Curls 6-8 R.M. on a 2010 tempo
6. Rest for 2 minutes

7. Repeat steps 1 to 6 twice, you probably will have to drop the weight 5 lbs every new Staggered Grip Extended Set

Routine 2: Triceps Specialization (Multi Pathway system)

Do the following steps:

1. Lying Barbell Triceps Extension to top of forehead 6-8 R.M. on a 2210 tempo
2. rest 10 seconds
3. California Press 6-8 R.M. on a 3010 tempo (A.M.R.A.P.).
4. rest 10 seconds
5. Lying Dumbbell Triceps Extensions 6-8 R.M. on a 2210 tempo
6. Rest 2 minutes .
7. Repeat steps 1 to 6 twice, you probably will have to drop the weight 5 lbs every new Staggered Grip Extended Set

Exercise Descriptions

1. Paused Standing Mid Grip EZ-Bar Reverse Curls

Use an overhand (semi-pronated grip) on a EZ curl bar. Once the bar is gripped, your little fingers should be lower than your thumbs. Most brands of EZ-Curl bars will have you use a shoulder width grip. You may choose to use the narrower grip provided by some bars. The width of your grip will not affect much the brachialis development as much as it will change the percentage of contribution of the two different heads of the biceps.. The 2-second pause is performed at 30° of elbow flexion; that is, the bar is stopped for a full 2 seconds before completing the concentric range. This change in technique increases the involvement of the brachialis as it involved in keeping the elbow flexed under tension (Clemente, 1981). Also, don't swing the bar or flare the elbows outwards to complete the range of motion--if you must do this to perform the exercise, the weight is too heavy.

Using a pronated grip in curls reduces the effectiveness of line of pull the biceps brachii muscles which increases the overload on the brachialis and brachio-radialis muscles.

Curl the bar up until the top of the forearms make contact with the biceps. To maximize isolation have your shoulder blades supported by a Swiss Ball.

2. Standing Barbell Curls

The starting position has the hands held at shoulder width with a supinated grip. The stance should be erect with the feet shoulder width apart, the knees slightly bent.

To minimize cheating and maximize isolation, many authors recommend to have the back and gluteal muscles are pressed against a wall, with the elbows slightly touching the sides of the torso. As an alternative you can put your shoulder blades on a 45 cm Swiss Ball. This will ensure isolation without putting stress on your lower back or shortening the range of motion like resting your back as your back would.

For the ascent, the bar should be moved in a semi-circle by using the elbow flexors, without lateral movement of the upper arms.

The wrists are kept neutral and the humerus stays in line with the torso for at least the first 90 degrees of range of motion.

The repetition is completed when the forearms come in contact with the biceps.

At the initial portion of the lift, the athlete breathes in, but the breath can be held during the sticking point of the exercise. Exhalation should take place once the bar passes the sticking point.

For the descent, the bar is lowered in a smooth fashion keeping the upper arms perpendicular to the ground.

The bar is lowered until the arms are fully extended.

The return to the starting position should be slow to maximize the effort.

There must not be any shrugging of the shoulder muscles to assist the movement.

The ascent of weight is done solely by using the elbow flexors. To accomplish this the wrists must remain in a neutral position throughout the movement.

There should be no bending of the knees at the sticking point and no lateral movement of the elbows during the exercise.

There should be no bouncing at the bottom of the movement.

Body sway should be minimized to ensure that the elbow flexors are doing the work.

Concentration should be on keeping the elbows behind the bar at all times.

Initiating the curl with the elbows drawn back and already bent drastically reduces the range of motion and resulting strength gain..

The pelvis should not move forward to initiate the movement. This type of action will break inertia.

The neck should stay in line with the torso. Also the mouth should be open to equalize pressure within the chest cavity.

Some authors recommend you brace your upper back against a post to minimize cheating, I offer to use a Swiss Ball placed in between a wall and your rhomboids. This will permit better pelvic alignment and will be much more comfortable for your upper back.. Richard Bourgon.

3. Seated Hammer Curls

The hammer curls are done with in a semi-supinated grip; like if you were holding a paid of hammers. It offers the advantage of shifting the overload in elbow flexion to the brachioradialis and the brachialis at the expense of the biceps brachii.

To minimize cheating, try resting your upper back against the chest rest pad of the Scott bench. Be sure to keep your lower back locked into place. For that purpose, I prefer to use the Atlantis bench B-178, the foot rest allow to lock your lower back into position.

4 Lying Triceps Extensions

Lie on bench with a loaded EZ bar at arm's length. Your hands should be placed so that they are 10-12 apart with a pronated grip. Bring the EZ bar down to forehead, and by just moving the elbows, bring the bar up at arm's length, elbows going short of lock-out.

5. California Press

The California Press is an hybrid movement which is actually a cross between a close grip bench press and a lying triceps extension.

It is a very popular assistance movement used in powerlifting circles, particularly in the ones who need to increase their triceps mass and strength to bring their bench press poundages upwards.

Get in the same start position as the close grip bench position, and lower the barbell to the upper pecs by allowing the elbows to drop down forward as you lower the bar. At this point you will experience a great stretch in the triceps.

In the bottom position, the forearms should come in contact with the biceps, and the bar comes in contact with the upper chest. From this position, push the bar away and upward from your chest. Elbows just go short of lock-out when you get to the top position to maintain tension on the triceps.

A good starting weight would be somewhat half way between what you use in the lying triceps extensions and the close grip bench press.

6. Lying Dumbbell Extensions

Lie on a flat bench, holding two dumbbells at arms' length. Make sure that the triceps are fully stretched in the bottom position, the forearms should be in contact with the biceps at that point in the range of motion. Use a semi-supinated grip.

Don't get too anal about wanting the tips of the elbows as close as possible, as it creates a lot of strain on the supportive structures of the elbow.