

The Ultimate Tank Top Workout: No Gym Required

Summer is right around the corner, and that means warmer temperatures (scorching ones if you live in the south, like me) and cooler clothing! Many of us will be lounging by the pool, heading to the beach, running outside, or simply running errands in shoulder and arm-bearing attire.

Not surprisingly, “toning up my arms” is a frequent fitness goal I hear from clients this time of year.

We all want to feel confident in our clothing, yes, but even more important than how we look and feel is how strong we truly are. As I wrote in another article recently, weight training provides a plethora of benefits, such as increased energy, fat loss thanks to a revved up metabolism, improved memory and intellectual capacity, better sleep and stronger bones. Whether your goal is to lose weight, build strength or tone up, lifting challenging weights will help you reach it while simultaneously promoting a healthy body from head to toe.

With that in mind, the workout below features both weight-bearing and bodyweight-only exercises intended to engage major muscle groups so that more calories are burned and your heart rate is elevated, as well as isolate smaller muscles like the biceps and triceps to correct any muscle imbalances and build size, or, for any bulkiness-fearing ladies reading this, “enhance definition”).

The only equipment you will need for this workout is a pair of moderate and lightweight dumbbells. The first four exercises will be performed in a circuit, meaning you go from one movement to the next without resting. After you complete the circuit one time, you can take a timeout to catch your breath,

grab a sip of water, or reply to a text ... if you must).

Once the circuit portion is done, rest about two minutes and perform what I call “The Finisher” (sounds ominous, doesn’t it?), which will isolate the biceps and triceps. Ready? Great!

Complete the following circuit three times. Perform 8-10 reps of each exercise. Use a weight at which the last two to three reps are particularly tough!

Bent-Over Dumbbell Row With Underhanded Grip

1. Stand with knees bent and your torso at a 60-degree angle. Grasp the dumbbells with an underhand grip so your palms face up.
2. With arms fully extended, pull the weights straight up to your chest, contracting your shoulder blades fully.
3. Slowly return to the starting position.

Burpees (no dumbbells)

1. Lower your body down using proper squat form. Place hands on the ground in front of you.
2. Jump your feet back to a plank position, then quickly lower your chest to the ground.
3. Push yourself back up to a plank position and jump your feet back in toward your hands.
4. Jump back up and simultaneously clasp your hands behind your head. Stand all the way, extending the hips fully before beginning your next rep.

NOTE: *To modify this exercise, you may eliminate the push-up component. To further modify for beginners, you may also walk your feet out and back in instead of jumping them out and in.*

Renegade Row

1. Place a pair of dumbbells side by side on the floor. Then get into a plank position with hands gripping either dumbbell, feet hip-width apart. Make sure dumbbells are about shoulder-width apart.

2. Bend your right elbow and pull the dumbbell until your elbow passes your torso. Keep the elbow tight and close to your body. Keep abdominals engaged and neck in a neutral position. Press the left dumbbell into the floor for balance.

3. Lower your arm and repeat on the opposite side.

Tricep Push-Ups (no dumbbells)

1. Lie face down on the floor and place your hands closer than shoulder width for a close hand position.

2. Using your triceps and some of your chest muscles, press your upper body up to a plank position. Squeeze your chest and exhale as you perform this step.

3. Lower yourself until your chest almost touches the floor as you inhale.

***NOTE:** To make this exercise a bit easier, you may either bend your legs at the knees to take off resistance, or perform the exercise against the wall instead of the floor.*

Finisher

Perform the two exercises back to back. Do as many triceps extensions as you can (until “failure,” we say), then do the same with the biceps curls. Rest two minutes, then repeat this sequence two more times.

Triceps Extension

1. Stand up with a dumbbell held by both hands. Your feet should be about shoulder width apart from each other.

2. Slowly use both hands to grab the dumbbell and lift it over

your head until both arms are fully extended.

3. The resistance should be resting in the palms of your hands with your thumbs around it. The palm of the hands should be facing up towards the ceiling. This will be your starting position.

4. Keeping your upper arms close to your head with elbows in and perpendicular to the floor, lower the resistance in a semicircular motion behind your head. The upper arms should remain stationary and only the forearms should move. Inhale as you perform this step.

5. Exhale as you go back to the starting position by using the triceps to raise the dumbbell.

Biceps Curl

1. Stand with feet about hip-width apart, abs engaged as you hold dumbbells in front of your thighs.

2. Squeeze your biceps and bend your arms, curling the weights up towards your shoulders.

3. Keep your elbows still and only bring the weight as high as you can without moving your elbows. Slowly lower the weights, keeping a slight bend in the elbows at the bottom.

Enjoy! Do this workout one to two times a week—not on consecutive days—each time trying to add a few more reps to your sets (up to 15), or more weight if you have heavier dumbbells available.

For over 100 at-home workouts, check out my book, *Perfect Fit: Weekly Wisdom and Workouts for Women of Faith and Fitness*.

Diana Anderson-Tyler is the author of *Creation House's Fit for Faith: A Christian Woman's Guide to Total Fitness*, *Perfect Fit: Weekly Wisdom and Workouts for Women of Faith and Fitness*, and her latest book, *Immeasurable: Diving into the*

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