

Forearm Development: The Right Way

If you want to learn how to develop a bodypart, never ask a person with outstanding genetics in that area. I always want to slap a person born with 18" god-given calves who tells me how to train them 'properly'. Listening to these people makes as much sense as heeding the advice of a pro bodybuilder on leg training who is using enough drugs to gain an inch on his thighs from squatting on the toilet.

What is even more amazing is that these same gifted people actually believe that they have somehow earned their development. 'Oh, I had a paper route as a kid with huge hills. My calves got big from pedaling those hills!' Sorry Mr. Reeves, I ain't buying it. We all played soccer, we all climbed hills and trees, and somehow 90% of us have puny calves.

The only other bodypart with as much genetic variation as the calves must be the forearms. How often have you seen an untrained individual with huge, vascular upper arms? Probably never. But forearms abound. And with them come the BS stories about how they built them from manual labor or even golf! But the worst advice may be that which seems sensible.

The folks with massive, ripped forearms often preach the value of wrist curls, even though their forearms were every bit as big before they ever touched a barbell. Being a highly responsive bodypart for these individuals, wrist curls cause their forearms to pump wildly with striations dancing under the skin, and automatically become a favorite exercise.

Unfortunately for the poor average Joe watching the genetic phenom, wrist curls will not only prove ineffective but may actually increase injury potential. Listen to someone with horrid genes who managed to build a winning pair : there is a MUCH better way.

Pump Up Those Forearms!

Step one: Throw out the straps.

If you can't hold it without them, don't pick it up. Your forearms will never reach their potential while you use straps. Forearm mass is directly related to grip strength. Increasing gripping ability is the fastest way to build the forearms, which is why wrist curls of any sort will not cause appreciable growth.

You may have to make some temporary accommodations in your workouts to compensate for your weakened grip, such as using the power rack to place the barbell in position for shrugs, as you may lack the strength to pick it up from the floor without straps. You will quickly learn just how much aid those little cotton devils provided you, and how much benefit you will enjoy from doing it on your own.

Even if you read no further and only practice this advice, your forearms will quickly advance past any sticking points you have encountered. Remember, straps, like machines, make training easier, and that should never be your goal. No one ever grew from training easier.

Step two: Use a thick bar.

Our gym uses an old three inch diameter axle. You can find your own in junkyards or purchase one new from equipment suppliers on the net such as www.atomicathletic.com. Look for used equipment whenever possible to greatly reduce price. Once you have your bar, use it as much as possible.

Shrugs will be your most effective movement for the forearms, using an overhand grip and a static hold at the end of each set. Cleans and deadlifts also thicken the forearms far faster than any lame wrist curl. Bent over rows, upright rows and reverse curls are also excellent for the grip.

Even pressing moves will force the forearms to work much harder than normal. The added diameter will shock your forearms into growth overnight.

Step three: Drop the wrist curls if you are still doing them.

Forearms respond to heavy weights in a static position, the exact opposite of wimpy wrist curls. They do not work. Furthermore, they can easily strain the wrists if done with a full range of motion. An injured wrist is a nightmare that will prevent all upper body moves and hurts like Hades when squatting, so avoid it.

If you desire extra forearm stimulation, perform an extra set of heavy dumbbell shrugs on your off days. Forearms recover quickly, so you should be fine to do this if you choose.

Step four: Recognize your own genetics.

Heredity makes a huge difference in the strength and size potential in the forearms. The greatest limitation isn't the forearms at all, but the hands instead. Big hands equal an enormous advantage in grip strength, simply because they cover a larger surface area. So if your new partner has paws like Shaq, expect his grip to exceed yours with little work.

These individuals also usually possess large wrists and other bones, which is indicative of size potential. Secondly, observe the length of your flexors. Do your forearm flexors extend to the wrist, or are they tucked close to your elbow? The potential for mass is determined largely on volume, so reducing the length of the muscle belly compromises the end product. If you are in this category, fear not.

I have hands like a ten year old girl, and my flexors are about 4" long, but I have still managed to pack on inches.

In Conclusion

Forearm development amongst competitors may not appear to be in decline, but like the rest of the physique, it is. The truth is, without the drugs, most competitors are clueless about how to build the forearms. The large, plastic looking lower arms displayed by today's pro's have nothing to do with hard work and intelligent training.

Competitors from years past often possessed forearms that were much more impressive than the current crop, and it came from lots of old fashioned training (no straps!). Concentrate on the tips in this article to build real muscle, and just as importantly, strength.

Well developed forearms and grip not only enhance the physique, they benefit all areas of training. Try these methods for 6 months and discover just how much they can help your quest for larger, stronger forearms.

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