The Dip

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The dip is an excellent exercise for developing muscular endurance or strength in the triceps and anterior shoulder muscles. Using only body weight resistance, it is a muscular endurance exercise. To progressively overload and use it as a strength exercise, add weight to a dip belt.

Dips can be performed on any set of bars that are approximately shoulder-width apart. Begin the exercise with the arms fully extended on the bar. Cross the ankles and bend the knees, keeping lower body as still as possible. Avoid touching the ground during the body’s descent.

Lower the body slowly to the position where the upper arm is parallel to the floor, with 90 degrees of elbow flexion. Then press the body upward by extending the arms. Remember, the more upright the torso, the greater the emphasis on the triceps. If the torso leans forward, the anterior shoulder muscles will also be used. Always maintain a controlled speed throughout the exercise to avoid a loss of body control.

The dip exercise can improve upper body strength and endurance. It can be used by beginners or advanced weightlifters because of the simple technique. To vary the effect of the exercise, adjust the program design. For a beginning athlete or one who requires muscular endurance, use body weight as the only resistance and increase the number of repetitions ranging from 10 to 40 for an overload. For an athlete who wants muscular strength, add weight to the dip belt and keep repetitions in the five to 15 range. ■
Technique Checklist for the Dip

The Start

- Assume shoulder-width grip, with arms fully extended and locked on dip bars
- Cross ankles and bend knees

The Action

- Lower body slowly to a position with the upper arm parallel to the floor, elbow flexion at 90 degrees
- Press body upward to starting position by extending arms

Coaching Points

- Maintain controlled speed throughout exercise to avoid loss of body control
- Inhale while lowering body
- Exhale while raising body
- To prevent shoulder injury, do not lower shoulders and upper arm below parallel