

Creating a Chiselled Chest

Pecs are one of the most popular muscles to build. When performing an initial assessment on a male client it is usually one of the first goals that they tell me. A big, chiselled chest is linked with powerful physiques as well as the beach model bodies. As it is one of the most desirable body parts to work on, it is important that you work it optimally, after all- more isn't always more in the weight training world. Without further ado, here are some top tips to create a bigger and a more defined chest as well as some science on why.

- 1) **Muscle:** The Pectoralis Major (main chest muscle) has two main muscle fibre directions. These are the Clavicular and the Sternal. The Clavicular fibres are what are known as the upper chest and the Sternal fibres are the lower portion. This is why you see incline and decline exercises in your favourite muscle building magazine. Although it is one muscle- the two portions can be emphasised. Incline presses will focus on the upper portion and decline work will focus on the lower portion.
- 2) **Posture:** This muscle has one of the highest rates of hypertonicity (muscular tension) which creates a hunched posture. This will put the muscles in your shoulders in sub-optimal positions causing weaker power output. In short, correct your posture for a stronger chest and train your back for a stronger chest.
- 3) **Rotator Cuff:** A weak rotator cuff can limit your chest strength as they are the stabilisers in chest exercises. Train your external rotators and your bench press can go up- even if you don't do any pressing work.
- 4) **Stretch Technique:** The tension that occurs in this muscle means exercises which feature a stretch of the chest can be very effective. Going into a chest stretch at the bottom of a press or fly exercise will go some of the way to releasing the tension. They therefore work very well for building muscle.
- 5) **Press Technique:** Press with a semi-supinated (neutral grip). Doing this serves two main purposes. 1) It deemphasises the medial shoulder rotators allowing for healthier shoulder function and better posture. 2) It allows you to go deeper especially when using heavy dumbbells. When you are pressing large dumbbells you will have to chop the range short due to it hitting your chest very early in the movement. This results in a decrease of the involvement of the Pectoralis Major as it turns it into a half-press type of exercise. Keep in mind- the chest is most involved at the bottom of pressing movements so do not cut the exercise short just to use a heavier weight.
- 6) **Fly Technique:** You will keep the tension on the pectorals throughout fly exercises by using cables rather than dumbbells as dumbbells allow you to rest and recover at the top. Partial recovery between reps is great for strength training but is lesser utilised when you want to hypertrophy the muscle.
- 7) **Lean:** Fat storage on the chest is associated with a heightened rate of testosterone to estrogen conversion. The man boobs epidemic is ever increasing as the rate of testosterone is declining. Decreasing your estrogen conversion through sleep, nutrition and supplementation will result in a leaner

chest. It makes sense to do this before trying to increase your testosterone levels if you have a lot of fat on your pecs.

These will work irrespective of your current level of conditioning so it doesn't matter if you are the next Mr Olympia or just starting out. Go away and implement the above to make faster changes in your physique!

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