

CRAFTING A

CLASSIC★PHYSIQUE

VOLUME 4: GOLDEN ERA SHOULDERS



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INTRODUCTION

Arguably the most important element in giving the illusion of a tight waist is the very top of your V-taper, the shoulders. Neck, trap, and shoulder thickness can have a huge impact on the flow and balance of your physique, and although they are relatively small muscle groups, it is important for you understand not only how to grow them, but how to create balance and appeal.

There are a few key pieces of advice I can give you for growing and shaping your shoulders, but much of the onus is placed on you. You have to work very hard and often on your shoulders to create that sought-after 3D look. Your biggest responsibility is to understand the function of the shoulder, and that your deltoid muscles do not work independently, and they are part of a larger system of movement for your upper body.

You'll want to space your shoulder training away from your other upper body training when you can so that you allow your shoulder and the shoulder joints some recovery time. However, because your upper traps and shoulders are small muscle groups, they require minimal recovery time even if you destroy them every work out, assuming your nutrition is spot-on. However, as you'll notice later, we will be strategically dividing our weekly training volume into two shorter, more hardcore training sessions throughout the week, which will allow you enough recovery time without wasting too much time between workouts when you could be breaking down muscle tissue and growing again.



ANATOMY AND FUNCTION

As you may know, the shoulders are a fairly complex set of muscles that work together to allow you to perform almost all upper body movements. Therefore it stands to reason that you should understand exactly how they work and the best way to use them to your advantage. For our purposes, we mostly just want them to grow as much as possible while maintaining a balanced look. However, efficient function will lead to better movement patterns, which will in turn lead to increased growth capacity.

Before we get to the obvious discussion of the front, medial, and rear heads of the delts, let's talk a little bit about other muscles that make a functional shoulder possible.

Repositioning the shoulder to perform various functions is not to much the direct function of the delts, but the rotator cuff, which is comprised of muscles in the back and the chest. When you put your arms in position to do a military press, for instance, the muscles of your back are responsible for externally rotating and elevating the arms. Then, the traps are responsible for retracting the upper back to get locked into a safe position for pressing. So you can see that it's also important to have strong and stable muscles surrounding the shoulders to keep them safe while you grow them.



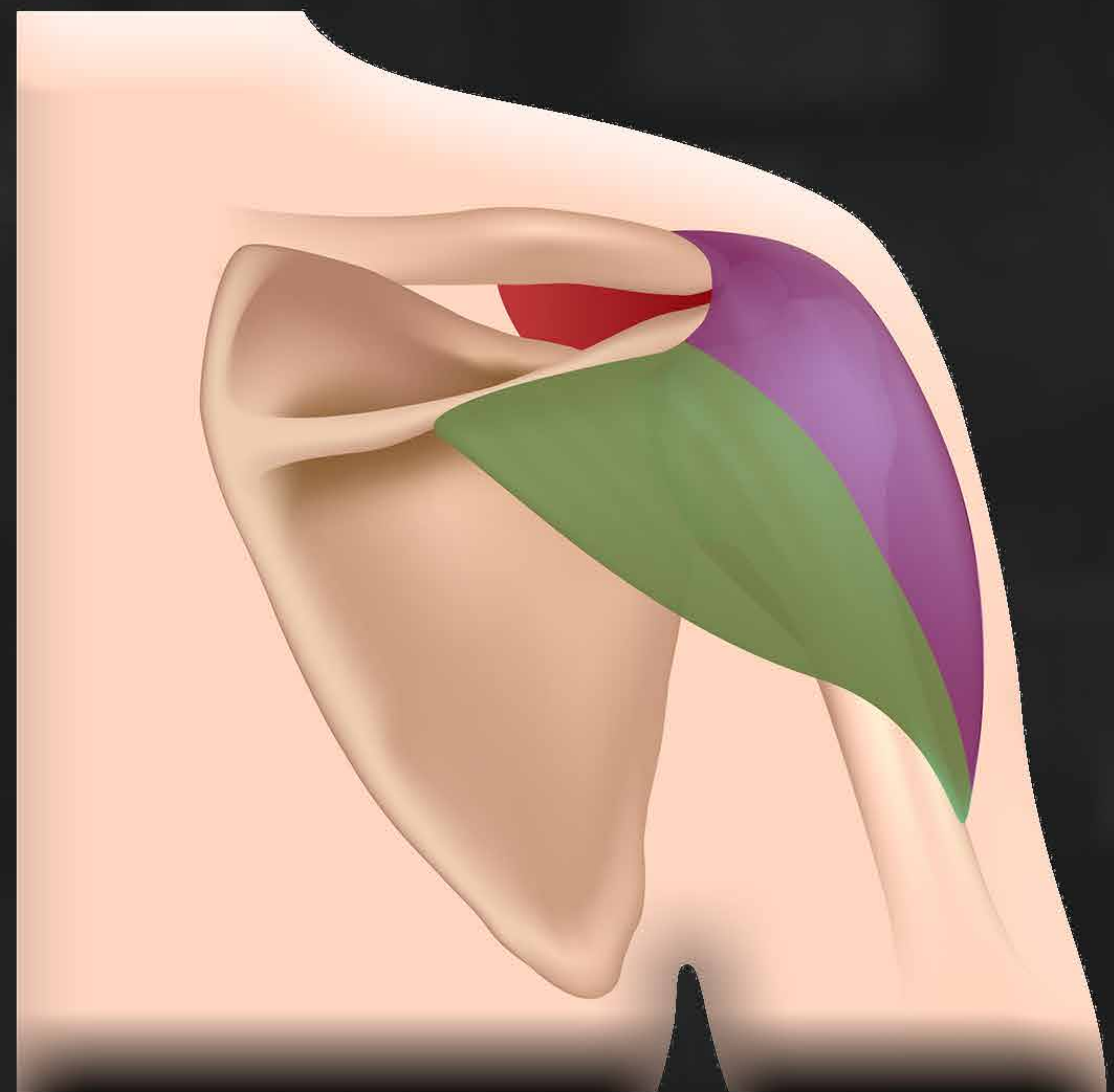
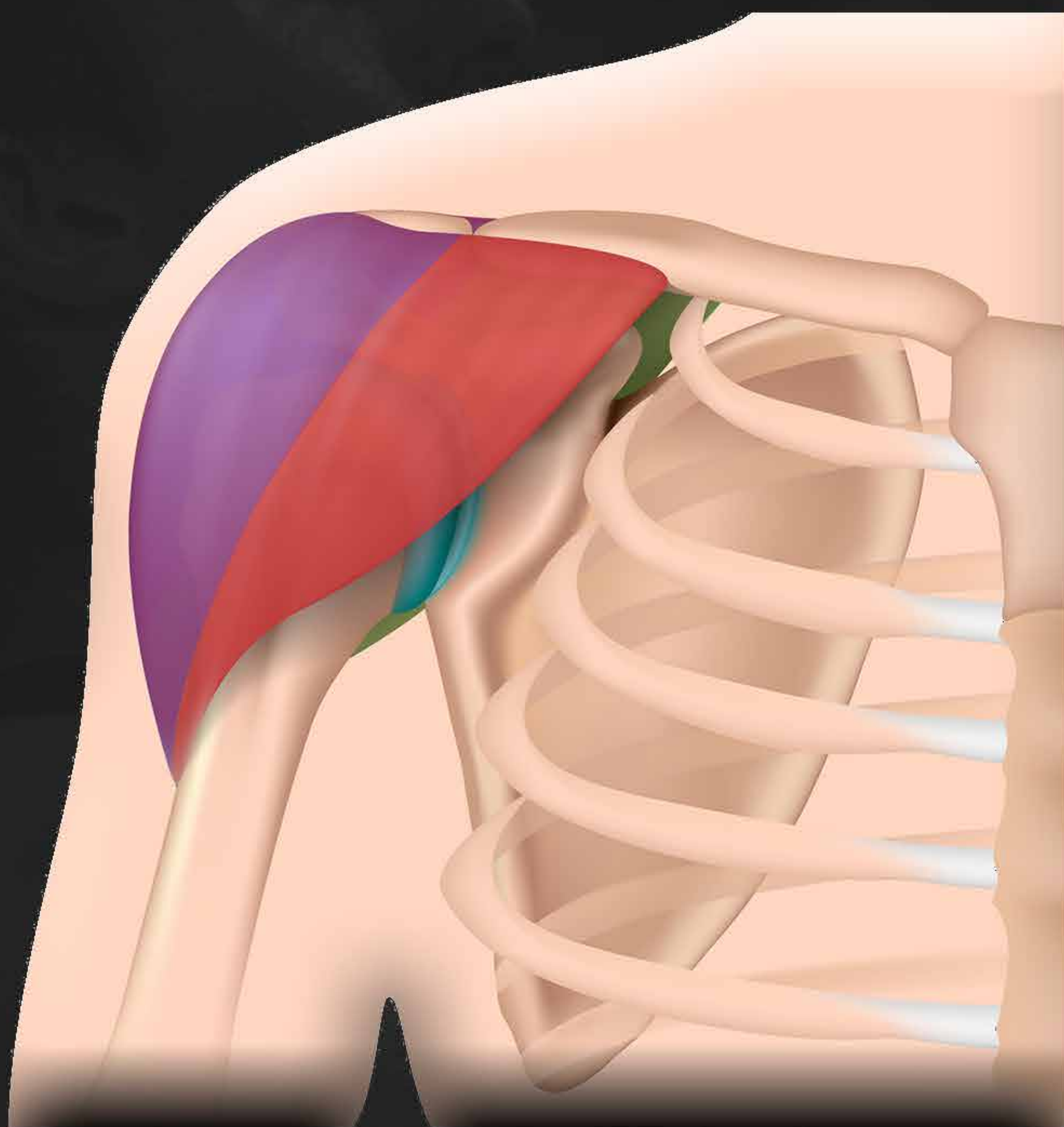
ANATOMY AND FUNCTION

Deltoid Muscle

(right shoulder)

Anterior view

Posterior view



- Anterior deltoid
- Lateral deltoid
- Posterior deltoid

DELTOID

The primary function of the front delt is flexion, bringing your arm upward in front of your body and secondarily bringing the arm up and across the chest. The medial delt abducts the arm, and the rear delt transversely abducts your arm, as in a reverse fly. When you're training, be conscious of which one of these muscles is activating so better adjust your movement and body position to target the exact area of your shoulders that is weak or under developed.



CLASSIC DELT DEVELOPMENT

DELTOID (CONTINUED)

As you can see from the diagram, the each head of the shoulder is quite small, and therefore doesn't require too much work to be sufficiently stimulated for growth. The best approach to take with smaller muscle groups like these is to stimulate them every 3 days or so, which will allow enough time to recover, assuming your nutrition is on point, but not allowing too much time to elapse between training sessions so that you miss the soonest opportunity to stimulate them again.

A great approach to take here is to train shoulders twice per week with two slightly different approaches to technique. Day 1 will be a heavy, basic day for overall mass building and the second day will incorporate intensifying techniques like drop sets, supersets, and forced reps. Involving both of these training types will ensure that you have a local response to stimulus as well as a systemic, CNS (Central Nervous System) response that will allow you to increase your overall work capacity over time as long as you're recovering sufficiently.

No matter how you split up your training throughout the week, you should aim to perform 12-20 working sets in the course of 7 days. Those sets can be allocated to any exercise you might need to bring up weak parts of your shoulders. I suggest that you continue to hit everything pretty much evenly unless you have a real problem area. If you are like many people and your rear delts are still lagging even though you hit them a lot, you can try to add in some more working sets for rear delts on your back day(s). If you choose to do this, just make sure that you leave 24-48 hours between training times so that you are allowing your body to recover. If you fail to do this, you could over-train the muscle and begin regressing.



THE CLASSIC BROAD-SHOULDER LOOK

THE LOOK

The classic look relies heavily on broad shoulders tapering down into a tight waist. The following program is a bare-bones, proven approach to building round, popping delts that will improve the overall appearance of every other aspect of your physique.

Our day one looks short and sweet because it is. We're going to use heavy movements under control stimulate both the muscle locally as well as a central nervous response. Today is just about lots of stimulation – We'll go in and fine-tune the shoulders with a few lighter and more specialize exercises on day two.

With every rep performed, it is important to initiate the movement with the muscle you want to stimulate in an explosive fashion and then resist the weight slowly on the eccentric portion of the rep for a two-count. This will both increase the speed at which you're able to contract the muscle and allow adequate time under tension to elicit growth.

Before you perform any shoulder exercise, make sure that you're not shrugging and that your scapula is slightly retracted. This will put your shoulders in a safe position that is less vulnerable to an impingement.

Okay, you're ready.



THE CLASSIC BROAD-SHOULDER LOOK

HEAVY DAY I:

Exercise	Sets	Reps	Rest
Dumbbell Overhead Press	4	8	60 Sec.
Upright Row	4	10	30 Sec.
Single Arm Hanging Lateral Raise	4	10	45 Sec.
Incline Rear Delt Fly	4	12	30 Sec.
Face Pulls	4	12	30 Sec.

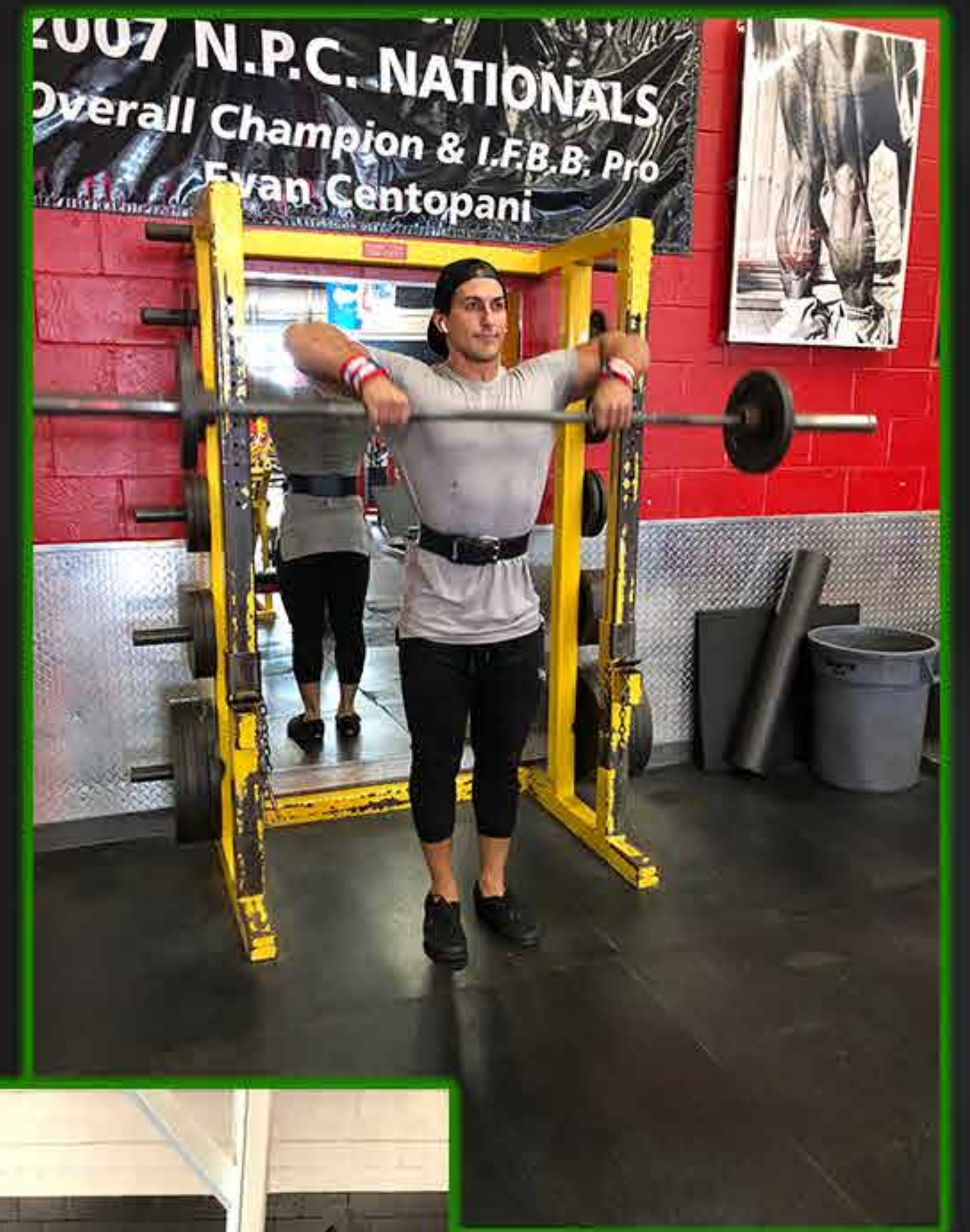


THE CLASSIC BROAD-SHOULDER LOOK

VOLUME DAY 2:

NOTE: This workout is comprised of 3 supersets and a finisher. For the supersets, each "set" shown should be performed as two exercises with as little rest as possible.

Exercise	Sets	Reps	Rest
Seated Lateral Raise	4	15	-
Dumbbell Overhead Press	-	15	2-5 Minute Rest upon completion
Front Raise	4	15	-
Upright Row	-	15	2-5 Minute Rest upon completion
Rear Delt fly	4	15	-
Face Pull	-	15	2-5 Minute Rest upon completion
Smith OHP	2	25	-



CLASSIC FORM

DUMBBELL OVERHEAD PRESS

The key to performing a strong and safe OHP is keeping the shoulders down and the scapula retracted to create stability in the shoulders. Think about keeping your lats tight through the entire exercise and always keep your elbows under the weight to avoid rotator cuff injury.

Once you safely kick the dumbbells up into a starting position, push upward, initiating the movement with your delts. You don't need to lock your elbows at the top, as that will remove the load from your delts and triceps.



CLASSIC FORM

UPRIGHT ROW

This exercise should be performed with care. It inherently is forcing you to internally rotate your humerus and drive your hands up in a fixed position. Because this is an awkward and unnatural position, you can opt to use dumbbells. However, if you choose to use a barbell, take a shoulder-width grip and think about crunching down on your abs so that there is less rotator cuff work being done at the top of the movement.



CLASSIC FORM

SINGLE ARM HANGING LATERAL RAISE

Grab something sturdy, like the rail on a cable machine and hang so that your torso is at a slight angle. Keep your abs tight to stabilize. This position will allow you to use a bit more weight than usual, so take advantage of that but don't allow your form to deteriorate. Let the dumbbell hang against gravity and then engage your medial delt to raise the weight, keeping your palm facing the floor at all times.



CLASSIC FORM

SINGLE ARM HANGING LATERAL RAISE

This is a great exercise to give yourself a little form check. Being seated takes the momentum out of the movement so you'll have to stay lighter and strict. Keeping your chest up, raise the weights so that your arms are not parallel to the floor at the top of the movement. Raising the weights too high can cause an impingement, which can lead to shoulder pain. The best cue for these is pretend you're trying to touch your knuckles to the walls – Think outward, not upward.



CLASSIC FORM

INCLINE REAR DELT FLY

Lay with your chest on a bench set to a 45° incline. Keep your elbows flared to be aligned with your rear delts and traps and spread your arms apart in the same way you would perform a chest fly. On this one, it's okay to keep your shoulder blades more relaxed, which will help remove the traps from situation so that your rear delts are the muscle that engage to lift your arms. Keep your arms as straight as possible throughout the movement.



CLASSIC FORM

FACE PULLS

Think of this exercise as a compound movement version of the rear delt fly. Pull a rope toward your face by initiating the movement with your rear delts and allowing the biceps to come in half way through the movement to assist putting your rear delts into the most shortened position. Make sure to flair your elbows so that your rear delts get all the action and hold the contraction for a quick one-count at the top.



CLASSIC FORM

FRONT RAISE

If you remember our earlier discussion about the function of the front delts, you'll know that the best way to activate the most contractile tissue in the front of your shoulder is not only by raising your arm up in front of you, but also slightly inward. So, when you perform the front raise, bring your hand up to shoulder height and into the midline of your body. Do not raise the weight over the height of your shoulder or even over your head. I know, Arnold used to do it back in the day, but it can lead to a shoulder impingement, so it's best to stay safe so you can keep training without issues.



CLASSIC FORM

SMITH OHP

The smith OHP is a stabilized movement that is great if used strategically. Be very cognizant of the fact that when you get under the bar, you need to be set up in a position where your elbow will remain under the weight the entire time you're pressing the weight. A good frame of reference is that your chin should almost graze the bar when you're sitting in the smith machine. This will allow you to push in a mostly natural way without forcing your shoulder joint through any planes of motion that put it at risk for injury. Keep your grip about shoulder width and your elbows directly under the bar. Locking your elbows at the top is unnecessary, as it will remove the load from the delts and reduce the time your muscle is under tension.

