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## body sculpting

# Look Great Sleeveless

By Brad Shoenfeld, CSCS

The warm weather's here and so are those sultry sleeveless fashions. Tube tops, strapless dresses, sports bras... the offerings are seemingly endless. But in order to look your best in these outfits, your upper body has to be up to the task. This is where the "Look Great Sleeveless" body sculpting routine comes in. By following the program as outlined, you'll tone up your chest, shoulders and arms, developing an upper body that looks great regardless of what you wear! Sound enticing?

### Look Great Sleeveless: Protocols

When creating a routine, most trainees make the mistake of randomly stringing together a few exercises, neglecting to consider how these movements interact with one another. The net effect is a hodgepodge of maneuvers with little cohesion. Needless to say, this isn't the way to get a terrific upper body. Ultimately, if you want to rise above the ordinary and look great sleeveless, a more scientific approach is in order.

It's a kinesiological fact that certain exercises complement one another, working synergistically to produce optimal results. Others merely overlap, providing little additional utility. Unfortunately, even many seasoned fitness professionals do not fully comprehend this reality and continue to train in a haphazard fashion. This misguided approach is not only extremely inefficient, but it actually compromises results.

Realize that each muscle is comprised of thousands and thousands of threadlike fibers. A single exercise will work many, but not all, of these fibers. In order to optimize muscular development, the Look Great Sleeveless body sculpting routine classifies each muscle complex into "groups," with each exercise targeting a different part of the muscle complex. You'll perform one exercise from each group for a total of three exercises per muscle complex. This ensures that all fibers in the muscle

complex are stimulated, thereby producing a shapely, symmetrical physique.

To heighten intensity of effort, I recommend performing the exercises in succession, as one giant set. Thus, you'll perform the Group 1 exercise, followed immediately by the Group 2 exercise and then the Group 3 exercise. Take a short rest (approximately 30 seconds) and repeat the process two more times for a total of three giant sets.

As far as repetitions go, choose a rep range that's consistent your goals. Consider the following:

- **High Reps:** If you want to improve the "tone" of a muscle without substantially increasing its bulk, it's best to train in a high rep range employing between 15 to 20 reps per set. High reps target your slow-twitch muscle fibers (also called Type I fibers). These fibers are predominantly utilized during continuous activities sustained for long periods of time. Because of their endurance-oriented nature, slow twitch fibers have only a limited ability to increase in size. Thus, by targeting these fibers, you'll attain a lean, toned physique while tempering gains in muscular mass.

- **Moderate Reps:** If you want to maximally increase the size of a muscle, the use of moderate reps is warranted. This entails training with "heavy" weights, using between six and 10 reps per set. The goal here is to stimulate your fast-twitch mus-

Photography by Paul Snydman • Fitness model: Rachel Moore

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cle fibers—the ones that have the greatest potential for growth. These fibers (also called Type II fibers) are activated during intense, short-term activities. They are strength-oriented and therefore expand in size in order to accommodate the demands of heavy lifting. As a rule, they're the only fibers that have the ability to promote muscular bulk.

Regardless of what rep range you choose to employ, make sure to apply the principle of progressive overload. Your body is a very adaptive organism and strives to maintain a stable environment (called homeostasis). The only way to overcome homeostasis and promote muscular development is by taxing your muscles beyond their present capacity. Accordingly, choose a weight that causes you to struggle on the last few reps. If you can easily complete the set without much effort, the weight is too light!

Okay, now that you're armed (no pun intended!) with the basics of the routine, let's discuss the specifics for each muscle complex:

### Shoulders

The shoulders (i.e., deltoids) delineate the contour of your entire body. Not only are they aesthetically pleasing in their own right but, when properly developed, they help create the illusion of a smaller waist. That's why fashion designers frequently insert shoulder pads into their garments. But, the problem is, you can't hide poor shoulder development when you go sleeveless; there are no shoulder pads in a tankini. Only by training with a multi-angled approach can you get your delts into

shoulder-baring shape.

- **Group 1 exercises focus on overall shoulder development, with an emphasis on the anterior (frontal) deltoid.** This is accomplished by performing various types of shoulder presses. During pressing movements, the anterior delt is the primary muscle mover, with supplemental involvement from the medial and, to a lesser extent, posterior, heads. In addition, the trapezius, clavicular (upper) portion of the pectorals, triceps and many other stabilizer muscles, also are active to varying degrees.

- **Group 2 exercises target the medial (middle) head of the deltoid.** This is accomplished by performing movements that employ shoulder joint abduction (bringing your upper arm out to the side and away from the midline of your body, such as with variations of the lateral raise and upright row). From an aesthetic standpoint, the medial delt is the most important of all the shoulder muscles. It is responsible for promoting shoulder width and, when properly developed, creates the illusion of a smaller waist.

- **Group 3 exercises target the posterior (rear) head of the deltoid.** This is accomplished by performing movements that employ horizontal extension of the shoulder joint (bringing your arm across and toward the back of your body). These maneuvers also work the infraspinatus and teres minor—two of the four "rotator cuff" muscles. Since the rotator cuff muscles are extremely important in stabilizing the shoulder joint, significant improvements in functional ability can be achieved.



### Chest

I've yet to meet a woman who doesn't covet a firm, pert chest. However, since breast tissue is predominantly comprised of fat, it succumbs to the effects of gravity and gradually begins to sag over time. Pregnancy can further exacerbate this condition, causing the chest to display a droopy, haggard appearance. Fortunately, a well-designed training routine can help to offset the ravages of time and restore your chest to its previous glory. And although it won't directly increase your cup size, targeted bodysculpting will help to lift and define your chest, giving the area a fuller, shapelier appearance.

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