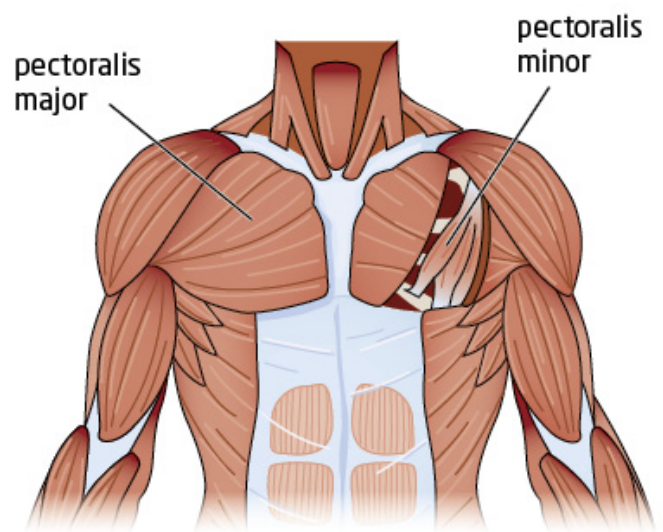


Muscle Focus: Chest

Luke Barden, March 2014

The chest is made up of two main muscles: The Pectoralis Major and Pectoralis Minor.

Although people will try and work different sections to the muscles (such as the upper and lower pec major), the whole chest is worked through each exercise. There is a possibility of focusing more on a certain part, but it is not possible to isolate.



Pectoralis Major

Made up of one large thick muscle, the pectoralis major is the main muscle in the chest. It is responsible for flexion and adduction of the humerus, which is to bring the arm forwards or inwards. It also medially rotates the arm, that is, to turn the arm inwards. To work the chest, use pushing movements such as press-ups, dips or bench press, or use moves where you bring your hands together in front of the body, such as incline, flat or decline flyes.

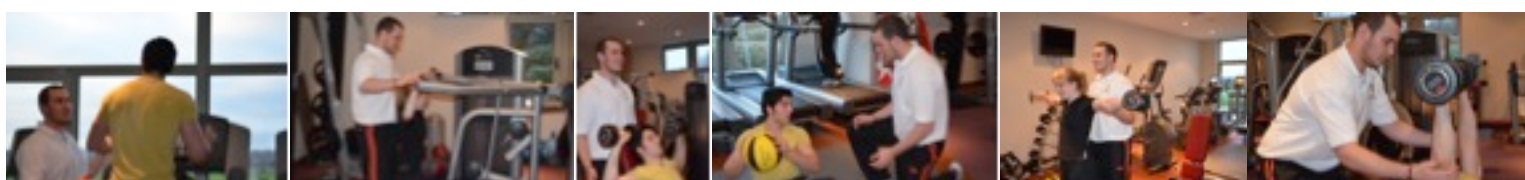
Pectoralis Minor

Pectoralis minor is a small thin muscle in the upper part of the chest underneath pectoralis major. It depresses the shoulder, but would not be a muscle that the majority of people would actively train in the gym.

Training the chest

I have mentioned exercises that train the chest above, and now will explain a bit about them.

Compound movements work best with developing muscles. They allow you to work multiple muscles over multiple joints, i.e. the pecs, deltoids and triceps, worked through the glenohumeral joint (shoulder), and the elbow with the bench press. They also allow you to get stronger quickly, therefore improving the connections between all the muscles and their ability to work together.



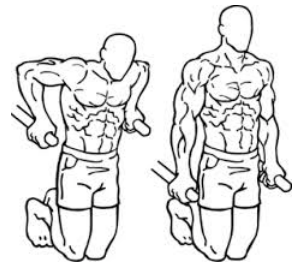


Some quick pointers on key chest exercises:

Dips

Dips are one of the available bodyweight exercises for chest (although more weight can be added if needed):

- Keep the grip wider to hit chest, and lean forwards, to hit triceps use a narrow grip with the body upright.
- Dips have many variations, but gaining the ability to do standard bodyweight dips is key to achieving a good strength:weight ratio.
- Ensure you use the full range of motion to really gain all the benefits that dips have to offer.

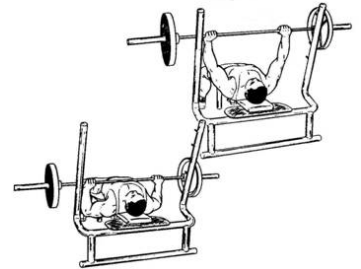


Take your weight onto the bars with your hands and your arms straight, lower yourself until your elbows are at least at a 90 degree angle, then push down, raising your body back up until your arms are straight again.

Bench Press

Bench press is very similar to the movement of a press-up, however it enables you to use much more weight, and progress in much smaller increments.

- Ensure you always keep your spine neutral
- You should try and 'snap the bar in half' as you do the exercise
- Try and squeeze your shoulder blades together throughout, this will keep your shoulders back and make sure your chest takes the majority of the weight.

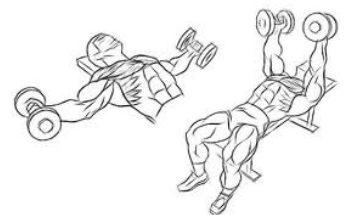


Bench press is a great exercise for both building strength and size in the chest. It can be done with either a bar, or using dumbbells. For size, use the bar, as you will be able to use a heavier weight. Lower the weight to just above your chest (approx. 2 inches) then push it back up.

Flyes

Flyes allow you to isolate on the chest, and to work on defining and shaping the muscle.

- Keep your arms with a very slight bend at the elbow
- Good technique is far better than heavy weight



There are many variables as with all exercises, but these are the basic three exercises and techniques. Once you have grasped them, you can try others, but I would advise keeping these in the regular core of your chest workouts.

