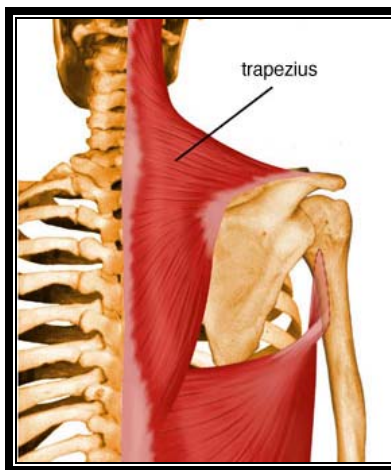


# Traps

By

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Some bodybuilding authorities have actually advocated not training the traps (trapezius) at all. Vince Gironda is one such proponent of not training them and there are others who follow his line of thinking. The logic behind such is that large traps cause the physique to appear narrow and stubby, more of a blocky appearance. I for one don't agree and wouldn't agree with any position that suggests not training every muscle in the body. Vince and others who are against trap work focus more on the aesthetics and line of a physique. For me total development is when every muscle is developed to its fullest and contains the striations, cuts, size, and definition all at the maximal level of ones genetic potential. I cannot conceive of any bodybuilder intentionally abstaining from working not only their traps but any other muscle group in the body. Would you work your legs but not the calves? How about working the arms but not the shoulders?



It simply makes no sense to encourage the working of only selected muscles while abstaining from working others. Doing so limits the overall development which is critical to bodybuilding success. The trapezius muscle does not only sit at the base of the

head and atop the shoulders, it runs down and along the center of the back. Omitting trap work would definitely keep one from developing a full thick back.

I've seen bodybuilders, who have neglected their traps believing it would allow them to appear wider, most likely you have seen some yourself. What stands out is the weakness of their back which is very evident not only from the back but also the side and even the front. Don't believe me? Find someone who has neglected working their traps and judge for yourself.

Some find their traps respond rather quickly when exercised directly. Others find them as difficult to develop as calves. For the lucky ones, a few sets of shrugs do the trick while the rest of us have to work them from all angles. The following are some of the best trap movements I have found and have proven successful in bringing up the traps and shoulders while thickening the back.

1. Standing Barbell Shrug.
2. Standing Barbell Shrug Bar Behind Back.
3. Standing Dumbbell Shrug.
4. Seated Dumbbell Shrug.
5. Upright Rows.
6. Power Cleans.
7. Hise Shrug.

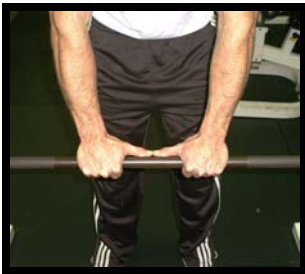


Seated dumbbell shrug – start



Seated dumbbell shrug – finish

For me, rotating trap workouts two times one week and one time the next worked really well. I would perform heavy work when working them one time a week and lighter work when two sessions a week were performed. For heavy movements I would use power cleans, standing barbell shrug (sometime using a Smith Machine and other times free weights). For lighter movements I liked seated dumbbell shrugs and upright rows.



Upright row hand spacing



Upright Row – start



Upright Row – finish

On the heavy days I would normally begin with power cleans pyramiding up in weight for five sets of five to eight reps followed by barbell or dumbbell shrugs for five sets of twelve reps using the same weight. Heavy days were only one workout per week. Light workouts were two sessions per week, Monday and Thursday. On light days I would usually start with seated dumbbell shrugs for four sets of fifteen reps using the same weight for each set and this was followed by four sets of fifteen to twenty reps of upright rows.



Hise Shrug

Due to my genetic limitations in the trap category, this system worked well for me and I was able to see results rather quickly. Before using this system it seemed like nothing I did worked. I also discovered a couple of notable points that seemed to provide the best results.

1. Warm ups consisting of lowering my shoulders as low as possible and then raising them as high as I could. I would use no weight and concentrated on the stretching of the movement. In the lowest and in the highest position I would squeeze the muscles tightly for a couple of seconds.
2. When performing any of the movements I would do the same thing. A full extension and full contraction and squeeze on each rep.

I found my traps responded in a similar manner as my calves. For me they are stretch muscles and require that full stretch at the bottom of a movement and a tight contraction at the top. My calves respond best when I employ the same technique.

I don't believe any movements listed are new or unusual except for possibly the Hise Shrug. It's been around for years but some may never have used the movement. My version is simple. Set yourself up under a power rack or Smith Machine resting the bar along the upper traps. Your position is the same as if you were going to perform back squats. Now lower your shoulders and traps then shrug your shoulders up as high as you can. Lower and repeat for your desired number of reps. You can really load the bar up on this movement but remember to get the full stretch in the bottom position and full contraction in the top position.

Traps Away!!

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