

Q: Every time I raise my arms in the air, it seems like my chest disappears. How do I develop my lower pecs?

A: Understanding that there is no such thing as lower pecs—independent of your regular pectoral muscles—is the first step. Now to address that area, you must focus on decline presses (try decline push-ups) and dips—these movements target a different line of pectoral fibers and force more complete growth. Don't neglect the basics, though: Keep doing bench presses and dumbbell work. The main thing that you need to focus on is adding one or two decline movements to every chest workout and you'll see improvement in no time.

—Jimmy Smith, CSCS

MUST-HAVE: THE GRAVITY BAR

Suspension training has become a hot trend during the last year, and many of its practitioners say it's a great way to get fit in the comfort of your own home. The Gravity Bar is an at-home device that allows you to train assorted bodyparts, and all you need to add is a doorway (let's hope your doorframe has been built well!). Get it at GoFit.net for \$99.99. A DVD is provided with the package to help you get started, but if you don't know how to do a chin-up by now, you may need more help than an instructional DVD.

DECLINE PUSH-UP

Increase your chest strength with this golden oldie



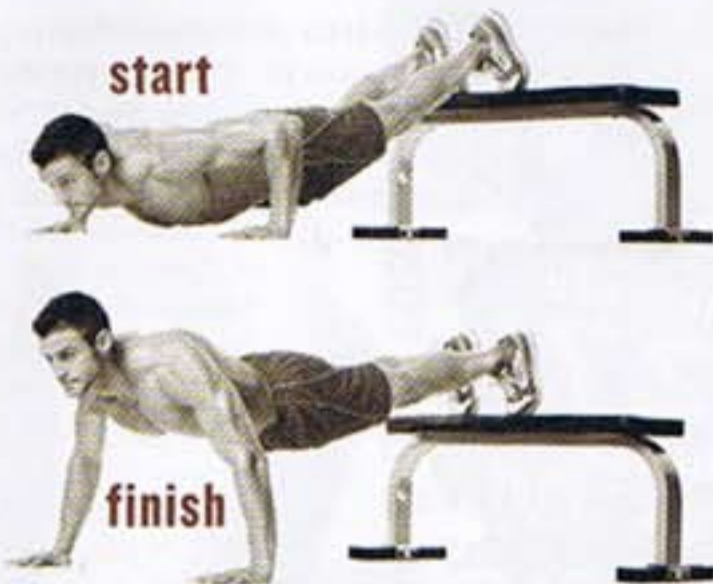
FAST-FORM-FOCUS

TARGET Pectoralis major, triceps and anterior deltoid

SET-UP This exercise uses your standard push-up position, except that your feet are elevated on a bench. Start with your arms bent at a 90° angle, as shown. Do not sag through the core area.

ACTION Keeping your torso perfectly aligned (or keeping your torso tight), straighten your arms. Maintain control as you ascend, pausing for a moment at the top before driving downward until you return to the start position.

BENEFIT Push-ups are one of the oldest and best body-weight exercises for developing upper-body strength. Because of the angle of performance, the decline push-up increases the load to your pecs compared to a



traditional push-up. It's an excellent exercise for burning out your chest after a good bench press. **With regular use, the decline push-up will improve your strength allowing you to increase the number of reps you can perform of regular push-ups.** Increase the level of difficulty by raising one leg and balancing on the other throughout the movement.

THE PAIN GAME WHICH OF THESE HURTS MORE?



PECTORAL RUPTURE OFF THE BONE

WHAT THEY CAN CAUSE Pain when twisting or moving.

THE DOCTOR SAYS "If the pec muscle ruptures off the bone, you'll need surgery," says Dr. Marc Silberman, a physician with the New Jersey Sports Medicine and Performance Center.

LASTING EFFECTS You may lose some range of motion and up to 20 percent of your strength after surgery.

RECOVERY TIME Ten weeks post-surgery for light benching; six to nine months for activities like football.



DROPPING A BAR ON YOUR CHEST WHILE DOING BENCH PRESSES

WHAT IT CAN CAUSE Anything from bruising to severe pain from broken bones and injured tissue.

THE DOCTOR SAYS "You can tear a muscle, bruise your heart and lungs or break your sternum or ribs," says Silberman.

LASTING EFFECTS None (unless you break a rib or damage an internal organ).

RECOVERY TIME Three to 10 days if it's mere bruising, but much longer if you cause serious damage.



A MILD HEART ATTACK

WHAT IT CAN CAUSE Persistent pain below the breastbone, often accompanied by sweating, nausea and breathlessness.

THE DOCTOR SAYS "A little heart attack is like a little cancer—there's no such thing," says cardiologist Stephen Sinatra. "It could be the start of extensive heart disease."

LASTING EFFECTS Varies, depending on the extent of damage.

RECOVERY TIME A mild heart attack can require medical screening and cardiac rehab.

FINAL DIAGNOSIS

Overall, the heart attack hurts most out of the three and can cause the most damage. "Fifty percent of the time, a symptom of heart disease—and indeed the end result of it—is death," says Sinatra. —Linda Melone, ACSM-CP