

Back Exercise

Barbell Deadlift

This is technically more than a back exercise it hits the entire posterior chain from your calves to your upper traps but it's the absolute best for overall backside development. Technique is uber-important with the deadlift, but once you nail it, you can progress to lifting monster weights that will recruit maximum muscle, release muscle-building hormones, and help you get big.

How? If you're going heavy (sets of fewer than about 6 reps), do deadlifts first so you're fresh. If you're doing deads for repetitions, you can do them later in your workout.



Bent-Over Barbell Deadlift

This is probably the second-best back movement in terms of sheer weight you can lift. EMG research has suggested that hitting bent-over barbell rows will work the larger muscle groups of the upper and lower back equally, making this a great overall back builder.

HOW? Do bent-over rows toward the start of your back workout for heavy sets in lower rep ranges, about 6-8 or 8-10. It locks you in the vertical plane, but your body has to be in just the right position relative to the bar.

Standing T-Bar Row

We selected the T-bar row over a chest-supported version because you can pile on much more weight here, even though that typically translates into a bit of cheating through the knees and hips. For some, maintaining a flat back can be challenging, in which case the supported version is a better choice.

Do this toward the front half of your workout. Rather than slinging weight around with this movement, really focus on the stretch and contraction of the back. If you're an experienced lifter, load up with 25s instead of the 45s, and further increase range of motion by allowing a slight protraction of the scapula at the bottom of every rep. If you do this, be sure to "reset" with a flat back before initiating the next pull.

