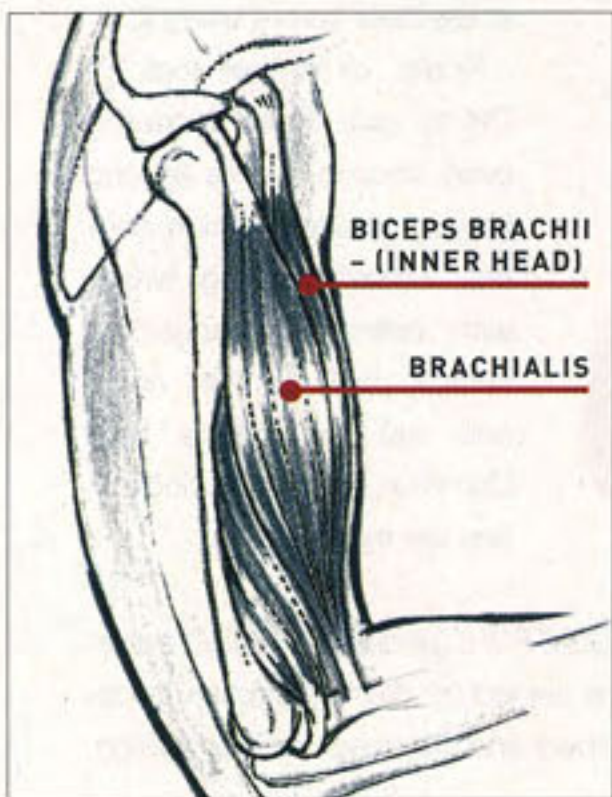


ARMED

AND DANGEROUS

Find yourself running out of options for shaping your biceps? Fitness star Melissa Hall shows you five ways to do curls that will really get you pumped.

BY CHRIS CANDER
PHOTOGRAPHY RALPH DEHAAN



As Ms. Minnesota America 2004, Fitness America contestant and former professional Vikings and Timberwolves cheerleader, Melissa Hall has plenty of reasons to stay in peak physical condition. But the most important motivation came from caring for her termi-

nally ill mother in 2003. "While fitness has always been an important part of my life, I want to be able to reach people to help them live healthier lives," she says. Her goal to extend her influence into the mainstream is what prompted the newlywed to enter the Ms. America competition. "I loved that I was able to promote my platform for health and fitness: being proactive about going to the doctor and being conscious and consistent with your health care starting in childhood to thwart health concerns."

while it's one muscle, it is comprised of two heads. The long head is situated on the outer part of the arm, and for that reason is often referred to as the outer or lateral head. The short head, also called the inner or medial head, is on the inner part of the upper arm. Though it is a single muscle, it can be stimulated differently at various points in the flexion of the elbow. The position of the forearm, the rotation of the elbow and the rotation of the shoulder joint all play a

nally ill mother in 2003. "While fitness has always been an important part of my life, I want to be able to reach people to help them live healthier lives," she says. Her goal to extend her influence into the mainstream is what prompted the newlywed to enter the Ms. America competition. "I loved that I was able to promote my platform for health and fitness: being proactive about going to the doctor and being conscious and consistent with your health care starting in childhood to thwart health concerns."

role in determining which portion of the arm is challenged the most, and can be affected by the grip you use when performing arm exercises."

Studies show that the long head works hardest when the muscle is fully stretched. Therefore, extending the elbow at the beginning of each curl and concentrating on the initial phase of the movement will put the most stress on the long head. With that in mind, use a wide grip during barbell curls so your arm is fully extended and slightly rotated outward to blast the long head. Preacher curls are an excellent way of putting extra emphasis on the muscle at the beginning of the curl and hence the long head of the biceps.

Conversely, the short head works the most at the top phase of the lift when the muscle is contracted, and is largely responsible for the bulk of the biceps. Squeezing the muscle at the end of the movement and using a narrow grip will maximize stimulation of the short head. Grant says, "Because the short head also plays more of a role in rotating the forearm, you can add some extra zing to dumbbell curls by turning your hand at the top of the motion so your pinky meets the shoulder."

the long & short of it

Jay Grant, ACSM- and NASM-certified founder of J. Grant Fitness in San Francisco, says, "The biceps brachii is the strongest of the elbow flexors, and

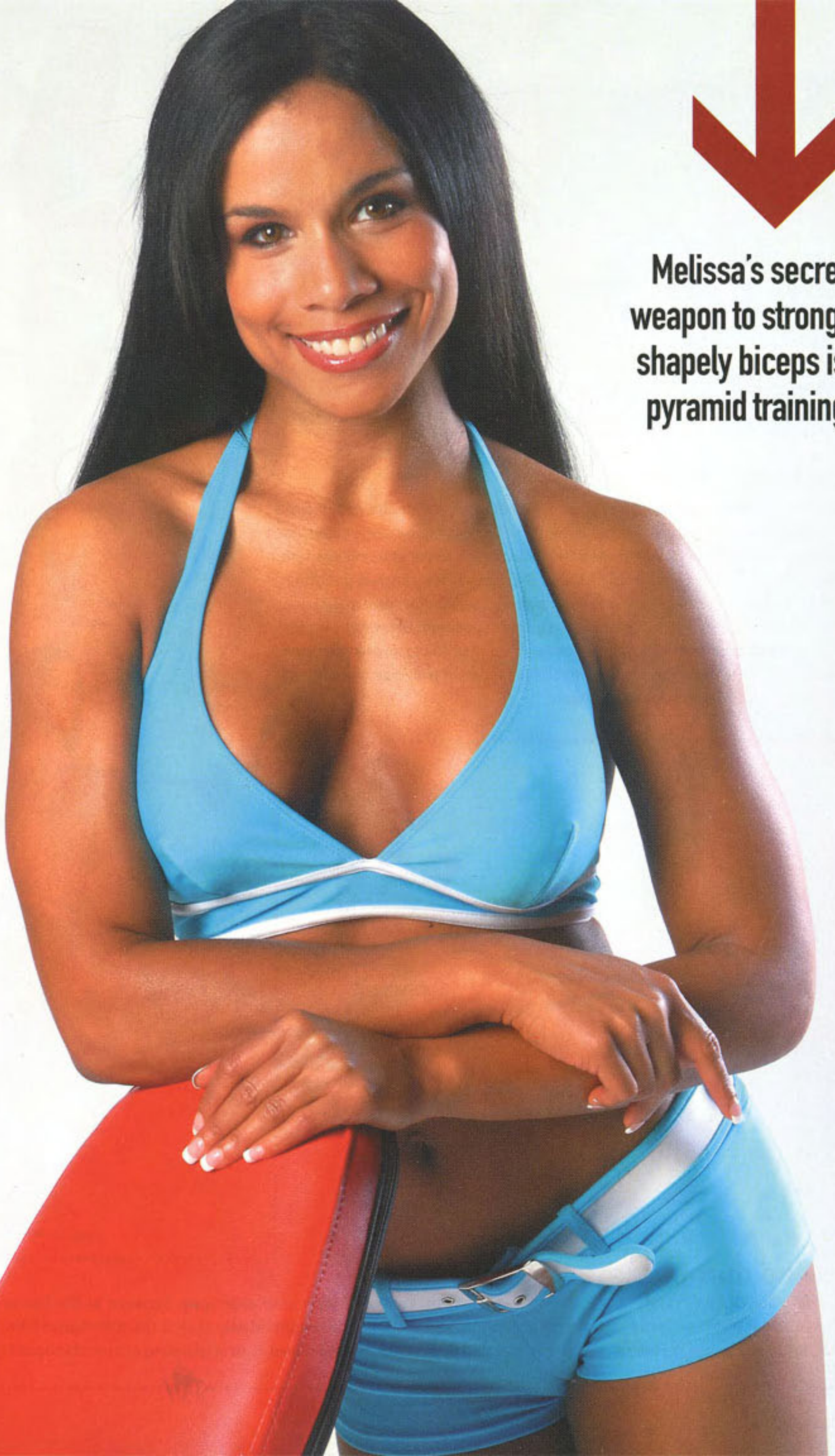
role in determining which portion of the arm is challenged the most, and can be affected by the grip you use when performing arm exercises."

Studies show that the long head works hardest when the muscle is fully stretched. Therefore, extending the elbow at the beginning of each curl and concentrating on the initial phase of the movement will put the most stress on the long head. With that in mind, use a wide grip during barbell curls so your arm is fully extended and slightly rotated outward to blast the long head. Preacher curls are an excellent way of putting extra emphasis on the muscle at the beginning of the curl and hence the long head of the biceps.

Conversely, the short head works the most at the top phase of the lift when the muscle is contracted, and is largely responsible for the bulk of the biceps. Squeezing the muscle at the end of the movement and using a narrow grip will maximize stimulation of the short head. Grant says, "Because the short head also plays more of a role in rotating the forearm, you can add some extra zing to dumbbell curls by turning your hand at the top of the motion so your pinky meets the shoulder."



**Melissa's secret
weapon to strong,
shapely biceps is
pyramid training.**



pyramid scheme

Melissa performs three to four sets per exercise using pyramid training, which involves changing your reps and weight for each set of each exercise. "Changing the weights will push you past your usual limits and really engage all those muscle fibers for lean, strong arms," she says. Try the following five biceps exercises using this pyramid structure:

- Set 1: 20 reps with a light weight for a good warm-up
- Set 2: 15 reps with slightly heavier weight
- Set 3: 10-12 reps using heavy weights for muscle building
- Set 4: 12-15 reps with the same weight used for the second set

barbell curl →

Standing, grasp a barbell and slowly raise the weight with your elbows tight into your body. Once you have brought the weight to the top, squeeze the biceps for two seconds and then slowly lower with control back to the starting position. Melissa says, "This exercise works the entire biceps. You can vary your hand position to work different parts: a narrow grip works the outer head and a wider grip works the inner." You can also vary your feet position. Standing with feet parallel tends to be more advanced because it requires you to involve your core, while staggering them forward and back (as pictured) provides stability and allows you to concentrate on the biceps.



seated dumbbell curl ↑

Start with dumbbells in either hand, sitting on a bench or ball, with your back and head straight, palms facing forward. Raise the weights toward your chest, keeping your

elbows tight in to your body. Squeeze at the top, and then lower the weights slowly back to the starting position. Biceps may be exercised in an alternating or simultaneous fashion.



AMMO FOR YOUR GUNS

Even when she's not competing, Melissa eats healthfully, especially to set a positive example for her twin sister, who recently lost 55 lb. Melissa says it's important to fuel the body with good food, and maintains her lean muscle mass by eating about 25 g of protein at each meal. She says, "I'm a huge fan of supplements and protein bars to help with my healthy lifestyle." Melissa's sample daily menu includes:

- **Breakfast:** Protein shake with oatmeal, $\frac{1}{2}$ banana
- **Snack:** Rice cakes with peanut butter
- **Lunch:** 1 chicken breast, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup green beans, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup rice, vitamin cocktail (multivitamin, vitamins C, D and E)
- **Snack:** Protein bar
- **Dinner:** Grilled salmon, large salad, baked potato

concentration curl

Sit on a bench with your right elbow resting on your right leg. Rest your left hand on your left thigh for balance. Slowly raise the dumbbell while turning your pinky finger inward to your shoulder. Keep your shoulder forward and elbow from rising up on the concentration movement. Your back should be stationary. Lower the weight to the starting position using a full negative motion then repeat with the other arm. "This exercise is great for peaking the development of the outer head," says Melissa. ↓

A



B





BUILD BIGGER, BETTER BICEPS

- Use pyramid training for toning and size
- Stretch between sets to prevent soreness and injury
- Train consistently
- Allow at least 48 hours of rest between arm workouts
- Gradually increase your weights until you've reached your desired size
- Increase your lean muscle mass by eating protein at every meal

incline dumbbell curl ↑

This exercise is a more difficult variation of the seated biceps curl. It concentrates on the lower part of the biceps. Grasp a dumbbell in each hand and sit on an incline bench with your back and head straight, and palms facing forward. Keeping your elbows tight to your body, raise the weights until your forearms are vertical. Squeeze and then lower the weight slowly back to the starting position.

assisted concentration curl →

With your right hand, grasp a dumbbell with an underhand grip with your elbow resting against an incline bench. Begin with your arm extended, then contract your biceps and slowly curl the weight. There should be no jerking motion. Raise the dumbbell until your forearm is vertical. Squeeze at the top, and then lower the dumbbell until your arm is fully extended. Repeat with the other arm. 