

Parallel-Bar Dip

Relatively upright bodyweight basic form

Key positions



1. Top: support your body on the bars



2. Lower point: a comfortable controlled depth

Muscles worked

Main muscles

- Triceps brachii: a major contributor to elbow extension as you press your body upward.
- Pectoralis major: contributes to pressing the body upward through shoulder motion.

Supporting muscles

- Anterior deltoids: assist shoulder motion.
- Serratus anterior, trapezius and other shoulder muscles help stabilize the scapulae and shoulders.
- Trunk muscles help maintain posture and limit swinging.

What makes it useful

A bodyweight multi-joint press on fixed side bars. Bend the elbows to lower, then extend them to rise. Triceps and chest work together; a relatively upright torso still uses the chest and shoulders rather than isolating the triceps.

Movement & technique

Parallel-Bar Dip | Grip the bars securely. Lower slowly, then press back up from a comfortable depth.

Before you start

Use a stable dip station with secure, nonslip handles. Arrange a safe step on and off, with enough clearance to avoid hitting your feet during repetitions.

1 Mount safely and support yourself

Use the step to take secure closed grips with thumbs wrapped. Support your weight on extended arms and clear your feet from the floor. Avoid snapping the elbows or collapsing between the shoulders.

2 Settle the torso and legs

Keep the chest naturally up, head aligned and trunk braced. Bend the knees as needed for clearance and keep the legs quiet. Avoid exaggerated leaning, arching or leg swinging.

3 Lower within a controlled range

Inhale and bend the elbows slowly to lower your body. Keep your grip and let elbows travel back comfortably. Stop before pain or excessive front-shoulder stretch; do not force a fixed elbow angle or depth.

4 Press back to the same top

Exhale and press through the bars to extend the elbows and return to the top. Do not bounce or kick. After your repetitions, regain the stable step and transfer weight to your feet before releasing the handles.

Form reminders

- Support yourself through the palms and retain the same closed grips.
- The bars and frame stay fixed while your body moves between them; avoid swinging the legs.
- Avoid forcing the elbows wide or sinking until the shoulders collapse forward.
- An upright torso does not isolate the triceps. Control the descent within your comfortable range.

Finish safely

- Stop for shoulder, elbow or wrist pain, instability or dizziness. If you cannot support your weight, stop and adjust the difficulty with a qualified coach.
- Avoid forced depth, repetitions to a fall or an uncontrolled last repetition. Use assistance when needed and maintain safe entry, exit and foot clearance.

References

1. ISSA - Dips in Bodyweight Training (www.issaonline.com)
2. McKenzie et al. - Bench, Bar, and Ring Dips (2022) (doi.org)
3. Scott Herman - Chest or Triceps Dip (muscularstrength.com)
4. ScottHermanFitness - Dip (movement reference) (www.youtube.com)