

Dumbbell Lateral Raise

SHOULDERS / SIDE DELTS

An arm-raising exercise emphasizing the side of the shoulders. Light dumbbells can provide a useful challenge when the movement stays controlled.



01 START

02 TOP POSITION

01

Set up

Stand about hip-width apart with soft knees. Hold the weights beside you, elbows slightly bent and wrists aligned with forearms.

02

Raise

Exhale and sweep your arms outward and slightly forward. Keep a similar elbow bend. Raise to around shoulder height within a comfortable range.

03

Return

Inhale and lower slowly along the same arc. Keep your torso steady and control the weights into the next repetition.

Make every rep count

MUSCLES / CONTROL / CONSISTENCY

Muscles and their roles

PRIMARY TARGET

Middle (lateral) deltoid

ASSISTING AND STABILIZING

Supraspinatus and anterior deltoid assist arm elevation. Trapezius and serratus anterior guide and stabilize the shoulder blades; the rotator cuff stabilizes the shoulder joint.

Key technique cues

- Move the whole arm with a soft elbow bend.
- Avoid an exaggerated shrug; let shoulder blades move naturally.
- Do not force the thumbs downward. Use a comfortable hand and shoulder position.

Common errors and fixes

- 01** Heaving with legs or back: use less weight.
- 02** Repeatedly bending the elbows: keep the bend reasonably consistent.
- 03** Dropping the weights: control the return.

Do not pin the shoulder blades forcibly downward. Shoulder height is a guide; use a comfortable range. Stop if you feel sharp joint pain.

REFERENCES / ACCESSED 2026-10-15

Barbell Logic - Lateral Raise: Gym Shorts

ACE - Dynamite Delts

ACE - A Pro's Guide to Muscle Mechanics: The Shoulders

NSCA - NSCA-CPT: Techniques of Exercise

YouTube - ScottHermanFitness / technique reference