

Blood Flow Restriction (BFR)

What is BFR?

A pressurized cuff is placed around your arms or legs that restricts blood flow during exercise.

This can make your muscles feel like they are working hard without lifting heavy weights.

What are the benefits?

BFR has been shown to help:

- Increase strength
- Increase muscle size
- Decrease pain
- Improve function

Can I use BFR?

Your therapist may suggest BFR if you have:

- Recent surgery
- Generalized weakness
- Tendon injuries
- More!

Ask your physical therapist if BFR is right for you.



McVay I. Blood flow restriction (BFR): The ultimate shortcut to building muscle? IPA Physio. Published March 22, 2023. Accessed April 3, 2025. <https://ipa.physio/blood-flow-restriction-bfr-the-ultimate-shortcut-to-building-muscle/>

What are normal side effects?

- Pain
- Soreness
- Tingling
- Bruising
- Discomfort
- Temporary redness

Safety Considerations

If you have any of the following, talk to a doctor or medical professional before using BFR:

- Circulatory issues
- Heart Conditions
- Pregnancy
- Cancer
- Diabetes

References:

1. Patterson SD, Hughes L, Warmington S, et al. Blood Flow Restriction Exercise: Considerations of Methodology, Application, and Safety [published correction appears in Front Physiol. 2019 Oct 22;10:1332. doi: 10.3389/fphys.2019.01332.]. Front Physiol. 2019;10:533. Published 2019 May 15. doi:10.3389/fphys.2019.00533
2. Lorenz DS, Bailey L, Wilk KE, et al. Blood Flow Restriction Training. J Athl Train. 2021;56(9):937-944. doi:10.4085/418-20

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<https://nhssca.us/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Free-BFR-Ebook-Gift.pdf>