

# Barbell Bench Press

Flat bench · overhand grip

A compound horizontal press that builds chest and arm strength. A stable base supports a controlled, balanced bar path.

## MUSCLES AT WORK

|                      |                                                                                     |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>TARGET</b>        | Pectoralis major: brings the upper arm across the chest                             |
| <b>ASSISTANCE</b>    | Triceps extend the elbows; anterior deltoids assist the press                       |
| <b>STABILIZATION</b> | Rotator cuff stabilizes the shoulders; scapular and trunk muscles maintain the base |

### 01 START POSITION



Establish a stable base before moving.

### 02 BOTTOM POSITION



Check the bar position and elbow path.

Illustrations show an Olympic-style bench with a spotter. Turn the page for technique and checkpoints.

Equipment: Barbell, flat bench, rack, collars, and safety supports or a spotter

# Technique & checkpoints

Practice with a light load and check each part of the movement.

## 1 Set your base

Lie with your eyes beneath the racked bar. Plant both feet and keep your head, upper back, and hips supported.

Feet planted; hips stay on the bench.

## 2 Grip and brace

Use a slightly wider-than-shoulder-width, thumb-around grip. Set your shoulder blades, brace, and unrack above the shoulders.

Closed grip; wrists stacked over forearms.

## 3 Lower with control

Inhale and lower toward the lower chest. Keep forearms near vertical at the bottom; never bounce the bar.

A gentle touch only, within a comfortable range.

## 4 Press and reset

Exhale as you press back over the shoulders. Keep your hips down and extend the elbows without snapping them straight.

Keep the bar level; rerack securely after the set.

### COMMON ERRORS

- Thumbless grip or excessively bent wrists
- Bouncing or dropping the bar
- Excessively flared elbows or lifting the hips

### SAFETY CHECK

Warm up light and use correctly positioned safeties or a spotter. Stop for pain or loss of control; signal your spotter if needed.

### REFERENCES (CLICKABLE)

ACE - Bench-press assessment protocol  
NASM - Barbell Bench Press  
Wattanaparakornkul et al. (2011) - Rotator cuff recruitment  
Ostrowski et al. (2017) - Movers and stabilizing muscles  
Jeff Nippard - How To Get A Huge Bench Press with Perfect Technique (YouTube)

Video reviewed: 2026-10-16