

Dumbbell Bench Press

Flat bench, both arms together

Three key positions



A Lowered position



B Mid-press



C Over the chest

Lower from C to A; press from A to C. Use a comfortable depth.

PRIMARY MUSCLES

Pectoralis major (chest)

ASSISTANCE & STABILITY

Triceps and anterior deltoids. Rotator cuff and shoulder-girdle muscles help stabilize the arms and shoulders.

What this exercise trains

A horizontal pressing pattern performed lying on your back. Separate dumbbells require each side to control its own path.

Equipment: Two equal dumbbells and a stable flat bench

FOUR CUES TO REMEMBER

01

Keep five contacts

02

Elbows about 45 degrees

03

Wrists over elbows

04

Control the descent

Technique and form checks

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Before you start

Lie on a flat bench. Maintain five contacts: head, upper back, buttocks and both feet. Gently set the shoulder blades and keep a natural spine. Arrange assistance for the handoff and finish when needed.

How to perform it

01 Set up

Use a full thumb-around grip, palms toward your feet. Support both weights over the chest with straight wrists.

02 Lower

Inhale and lower beside the chest. Aim for elbows about 45 degrees from the torso and wrists above elbows. Stop at a comfortable depth before the shoulders roll forward.

03 Press

Exhale and press both weights back over the chest. Extend the elbows smoothly without clashing the dumbbells or lifting your head, hips or feet.

Common errors and fixes

1. Elbows flaring straight sideways: bring them closer to the torso.
2. Weights drifting outward or wrists folding back: restore wrist-over-elbow alignment.
3. Bouncing or lifting the hips: reduce the load and slow down.

A general starting example

Try 2 light sets of 8-12 controlled reps, resting 1-3 minutes. Finish with a few good reps still available. Stop the set before your form breaks down.

Sources & movement reference | Accessed 2026-10-17

1. ACE: Chest Press
<https://www.acefitness.org/resources/everyone/exercise-library/19/chest-press/>
2. NSCA: Exercise Technique (pp. 8, 19)
<https://www.nscs.com/contentassets/24f7e187e9aa4a588439c9612231c7fd/tsac-module-3.0--3.3.pdf>
3. NASM: Single-Arm Dumbbell Chest Press
<https://www.nasm.org/resource-center/exercise-library/single-arm-dumbbell-chest-press>
4. ACSM (2026): Resistance Training Prescription
<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC12965823/>
5. Davis Diley: dumbbell bench press demonstration
<https://www.youtube.com/shorts/1V3vpcaxRYQ>

Stop for sharp shoulder or chest pain. Do not force the bottom position. Images are AI-generated exercise illustrations.