

Incline Barbell Bench Press

Basic inclined-bench free-barbell press

Key positions



1. Lower: control the bar toward the upper chest



2. Press: extend while maintaining body support

Muscles worked

Main muscles

- Pectoralis major: the incline emphasizes its clavicular region while the rest of the chest also contributes.

Supporting muscles

- Triceps brachii: assist elbow extension.
- Anterior deltoids: assist movement of the upper arms.
- Shoulder, trunk and forearm muscles stabilize posture and grip with bench and foot support.

What makes it useful

A supported incline press for the upper chest, shoulders and arms. Choose a comfortable angle and range, keeping head, back, hips and feet stable.

Movement & technique

Incline Barbell Bench Press | Stay supported. Lower toward the upper chest, then press smoothly.

Before you start

Check bench and rack stability, secure adjustments, and load light plates evenly with collars. Confirm both bar supports and safe clearance. Agree on assistance and rack signals with a spotter.

1 Set your body support

Rest head, upper back and hips on the bench; plant both feet. Brace your trunk and settle the shoulder blades. Keep a natural spinal curve without excessive arching or hip lift.

2 Grip and unrack

Use symmetric closed overhand grips just outside shoulder width, thumbs wrapped and wrists aligned over forearms. With assistance if needed, clear the hooks and steady the bar above your upper chest.

3 Lower toward the upper chest

Inhale and lower slowly toward your upper chest, keeping forearms under the bar. Stop at a comfortable shoulder range; never force chest contact, depth or elbow position, or bounce.

4 Press and re-rack safely

Exhale and press smoothly, retaining support and grip without elbow hyperextension. After the set, coordinate with your spotter; settle the bar securely into both rack supports before releasing your hands.

Form reminders

- Support the bar over the heels of your hands, with aligned wrists and forearms.
- Keep head, back, hips and feet supported; avoid excessive arching or hip lift.
- Use a comfortable upper-chest lower point and elbow path.
- Keep the free bar clear of your face, rack posts and hooks.

Finish safely

- Stop for shoulder, elbow, wrist or back pain or dizziness. Reduce load or range if support or control fails.
- Use a spotter and safeguards. Avoid uncontrolled failure or dropping onto your chest or neck. Verify secure support before exiting.

References

1. NASM - Incline Barbell Bench Press (www.nasm.org)
2. ISSA - Bench Press Variations (www.issaonline.com)
3. Cybex - Free Weight/Olympic Incline Press5372 (kb.cybexintl.com)
4. ScottHermanFitness - Incline Barbell Press (movement reference) (www.youtube.com)