

Incline Dumbbell Bench Press

A low incline of about 30 degrees



Left to right: lowered start, midway, pressed top. See page 2 for the steps.

Muscles worked

Main muscles

- Pectoralis major, including its clavicular region: moves the upper arms forward and inward to press.

Supporting muscles

- Anterior deltoids: assist forward movement of the upper arms.
- Triceps: extend the elbows.

Shoulder-region and trunk muscles support position; forearm muscles maintain the grip.

What makes it useful

A chest press on an inclined bench, requiring control of two separate weights. This demonstration uses about 30 degrees; it is not a universal best angle. Compared with a flat bench, the incline changes pressing position; it does not completely isolate one chest region.

Before you start

Lock the bench about 30 degrees above horizontal. Choose light dumbbells, clear the area, and agree on handoff signals with a spotter. Use weights you can start and finish safely.

Movement & technique

Use a light load. Move with control.

1

Establish support

With assistance, settle onto the bench. Plant both feet and support your head, shoulders, back and buttocks. Gently draw shoulder blades together without shrugging. Keep your natural lower-back curve without exaggerating it.

2

Find the lowered position

Use a closed pronated grip, thumbs wrapped. Hold the dumbbells beside your upper chest, wrists above elbows and forearms approximately vertical. Keep elbows around 45 degrees from your torso; avoid a painful or forced depth.

3

Press over the upper chest

Exhale and press both dumbbells upward together, extending elbows. Steady them over your upper chest without clashing. Avoid snapping elbows straight. Keep your head, back, buttocks and feet supported.

4

Return with control

Inhale and bend elbows, lowering evenly beside your upper chest. Maintain grip and wrist alignment without bouncing. Chest contact is not a target; stop where shoulders and posture remain controlled.

Form reminders

- Keep wrists steady with weights stacked over elbows.
- Avoid flaring elbows straight sideways or shrugging shoulders.
- Do not lift buttocks or feet, or arch excessively to finish.
- Reduce load or depth if either dumbbell becomes difficult to control.

Finish safely

Signal your spotter to receive the weights; keep gripping until they are securely supported. Do not drop them or force yourself upright while holding them. Stop for pain or dizziness.

References

1. Incline Chest Press - Exercise Library
3. NSCA Lifting Proficiencies - Incline Dumbbell Bench Press

2. Two-Arm Incline Dumbbell Chest Press
4. Effect of Five Bench Inclinations on the Electromyographic Activity of the Pectoralis Major, Anterior Deltoid, and Triceps Brachii during the Bench Press Exercise