

Benefits of the Barbell Bench Press

- Upper Body Strength, Size and Power
- Great Basic exercise

Limitations of the Barbell Bench Press

- Athletes with previous shoulder, elbow, or wrist injuries may have difficulties
- Dangerous to perform without a spotter

Teaching Progression

- Learn to keep the shoulders tight
- Grip on the bar
- Bar placement as you touch your chest
- Finding the groove – pressing the bar straight up

Keeping the Shoulders Tight

- Lay on the bench and extend your arms – note how much higher than the bar your hands are
- Next, squeeze your shoulder blades together (like in the back squat) and down towards your butt, this will create a natural arch in your spine – note how much lower your hands are as you extend your arms
- This technique will feel different at first and you may not be able to bench as much initially, but stick with it! The best bench pressers in the world use this technique!



Getting a Grip

- Lower an empty barbell to your chest
- Have a partner watch as you adjust your hand width – try to get your forearms perpendicular to the floor, or slightly wider
- Make sure you have your thumb wrapped around the bar! It may not be as comfortable at first, but it is much safer!
- It is also important to find the place on your palms that the bar will sit so that your wrist doesn't bend backward – more on this later



Finding the Groove

- Where the bar touches your chest is important to a great press
- Your goal is to touch the bar at the bottom of your pec muscles where they meet the top part of your abs

WRONG!



RIGHT!



Finding the Groove

- From here, you want to press straight up – this will feel strange at first, almost like a decline press, but the alternative is that the bar goes backwards towards your face, this takes away the mechanical advantage you are trying to create
- Concentrate on keeping your shoulders tight and pressing yourself into the bench as opposed to pressing the bar away from you – this will keep you tight
- As you press, grip the bar hard and try to pull it apart – this will bring your triceps muscles into the movement
- Also, as you press, punch your knuckles slightly towards the ceiling – this will help to keep your wrists from bending back and the bar traveling towards your face

