

Bench Guide



Setup

- Start sitting up behind the bar or lying on the bench with your head far behind the bar.
- Set your feet shoulder width or slightly farther apart and as far behind your knees as possible.
- Pull yourself toward the bar, so that your body moves down the bench toward your feet.
- Set your upper back down on the bench in a position that puts your lower back in as large an arch as possible. Your butt and lower back should be the only points of contact with the bench

- At this point, you should have an arched lower back, an upper back in contact with the bench, and feet that are placed behind your knees and on floor. It's okay to be up on your toes. Adjust as necessary to get the proper positions for every part.
- Tighten your upper back and lower back as hard as possible. You should NOT be comfortable in the ideal bench position!

Liftoff

- Depending on your body dimensions and ideal setup, you may or may not be in an advantageous position to hand the bar off to yourself. Your best bet is to get a spotter to help you bring the bar out of the hooks.
- Have your spotter count to three slowly, while you fill your belly with air and keep your upper and lower backs tight.
- On three, have your spotter lift the bar off while you also attempt to “pull” the bar out towards your feet. Do NOT press the bar out of the rack, for this will cause you to lose tightness in your lower back.
- With the help of your spotter, bring the bar to a spot over your chest. You will have to experiment where the best starting position is – everyone is different.

Lowering the Bar

- Initiate the lift by lowering the bar in a path from your starting position to a point somewhere on your lower chest or upper abdomen. Generally, this is not a

straight up-and-down path, but you'll have to experiment to find the ideal spot to touch on your chest.

- Make sure your upper and lower backs stay tight this entire time! Doing so will keep your range of motion lower and your body more able to press from a strong position.
- Keep the air in your belly that you started with during the liftoff. This will help you stay stable.
- Keep your elbows tucked at roughly a forty-five degree angle as you lower the bar. This will put you in the most advantageous position to press. You will be able to use your chest and triceps most effectively.

Pressing the Bar

- Once the bar touches your chest, keep your tightness and air in your belly. You must keep this stable position throughout the entire lift!
- Press the bar back up the starting position. If you lowered the bar straight down to your torso, then you will press it back up in a straight line. However, most people will need to press up and somewhat back towards their face to get back to the ideal starting position. Don't confine yourself to an up and down path if that doesn't work for you.
- Keep your elbows tucked as you start the press, but flare them out gradually as you get closer to the top of the lift. Experiment and find out the best point at

which to start flaring your elbows. Some lifters keep them tucked almost the entire time, while others flare them out at the very beginning of the press.

- Once you press the bar to the top, you can release your air. If you are doing multiple reps, it is best to keep your air in your belly for as many reps as possible. It is okay to release it when you reach the top and take another big breath before you start another rep, but doing so repeatedly will cause you to lose the stable position you started with.