

HOW TO BENCH: THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE

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1) Major muscles involved and their functions

a) Pecs

b) Triceps

c) Anterior deltoid

d) Lats?

2) Basic biomechanics

a) Shoulder flexion, horizontal adduction, elbow extension

b) Bar path - straight or curved: same total work done (gravity offering resistance). Back toward the face as you start the press,

then straight up to finish is most efficient.

3) Setup

a) Foot position

b) Arch (several ways to get it)

c) Scapular position

d) Grip width

e) SQUEEZE THE BAR

4) Liftoff

- a) Don't protract scapulae

- b) How to self-liftoff

- c) Wrist position and bar position in hand
 - i) Not cocked back

 - ii) Rotated a bit can help some people with elbow issues

5) Descent

- a) "Bend the bar" or "rip the bar in half"

b) Speed of descent

- i) Since you pause, stretch reflex isn't that big of a deal, so super fast isn't that important
- ii) Bro tip - lowering slowly often gets you a faster press call
- iii) Just make sure you control the bar

c) Where to lower the bar to (too low and too high are both bad)

d) Elbow position (under bar, not over-tucked)

6) Pause

a) Always pause if you're a powerlifter

- i) Anecdotal: Touch and go may help strengthen tendons, especially if you reverse it quickly; Fred Hatfield tip.

7) Concentric

a) EXPLODE

b) Leg drive: What it does and how to get it

c) Bar path: Back and then up;

i) leg drive to minimize shoulder extension torque, then
pecs and tris to finish

d) Cues

8) Diagnosing weaknesses

a) Right off the chest:

i) Shoulders

ii) Simply touching too low

b) Midrange:

i) Pecs

ii) Bar path (not getting it back toward your face)

c) Lockout:

i) Triceps

d) Bro tip: Don't neglect biceps

9) Common issues

a) Back/hamstrings cramping when you arch

i) It just happens. Suck it up.

b) Wrist pain

i) Don't cock your wrists as much

c) Elbow pain

i) Try a bit more flare

ii) See a PT

d) Shoulder pain

- i) Scapular retraction

- ii) Elevation helps some people

- iii) Playing with grip width

- iv) See a PT

- e) Uneven extension
 - i) Possible lateral asymmetry.

- f) Butt coming off bench
 - i) Play with foot position, and make sure you're driving

BACK and not UP

g) All the various bench variations you can/should do

10) Warming up

a) Pushups are magical

b) Internal/external rotation work can be useful if you have beat up shoulders

c) Light curls/triceps extensions can help if you have beat up elbows

d) Take your time, and don't jump straight to 315

11) Equipment

a) Wrist wraps

b) Slingshot useful for overload work; don't over-do it, though

c) Bands/chains

d) Specialty bars

e) Raised heel can help if you bench in a federation that requires
heels down