

Personal Training by Robert J. Bovee

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FLAT BENCH (Straight Bar)

A. Emphasis. The primary muscles stressed in this movement are the chest muscles (pectoralis major and minor). The secondary muscles stressed are the shoulders and triceps.

B. Starting Position. While lying flat on a bench with your forehead underneath the bar, push your chest up toward the ceiling and squeeze your shoulder blades together. This will help to isolate all three sections of muscles in the chest. Using the suggested grip, lift the bar out of the rack with your arms straight up and place it according to its decent.

C. Movement. Take **2** to **3** seconds to lower the bar to the middle of your chest until your elbows are at **90** degrees, keeping your elbows out to the side. Press the bar up to the starting position, contracting your chest muscles hard during the movement.

D. Training Tips.

- 1) When pressing the bar up to the starting position do not overextend and raise your shoulders off the bench. This will help isolate the chest muscles
- 2) Place a pad on your chest (**1 - 4** inches) to ensure that you don't go below **90** degrees (zero leverage point).
- 3) Keep your feet flat on the floor to help balance your body.

E. Options.

There are **3** different grips that can be used for this exercise. Hand positioning on the bar will be determined by how wide your shoulders are and how long your arms are.

- 1) **Medium Grip** - In the down position your forearms are straight up and down. This is your power grip, stressing the entire chest
- 2) **Close Grip** - Your hands are placed **1** to **2** inches closer to the middle than the medium grip. The stress of this grip is placed more toward the middle of the chest.
- 3) **Wide Grip** - Your hands are placed **1** to **2** inches wider than the medium grip. The stress of this grip is placed more on the outer area of the chest.

F. Warning Tips.

- 1) **Do not** overextend your shoulders when pressing the bar up. Failure to do so can result in serious injury to your shoulders.
- 2) **Do not** excessively arch your back or raise your hips off the bench. Failure to do so can result in serious injury to your back.
- 3) **Do not** lower the bar any faster than **2** to **3** seconds. You must stay in control at all times during this movement. The faster you perform this movement, the less control you will have, which in turn will increase your risk of injury.