

# BEGINNER BENCH GUIDE



One of the most effective upper body strengthening exercises for jiu-jitsu

In this guide you will learn to safely and effectively get stronger in the bench press

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABOUT DR. DON

BENCH PRESS SAFETY

BEST BENCH

FACE SAVERS

RACK HEIGHT

SPOTTER AND BENCHING ALONE

BENCH PRESS SETUP

SETTING UP FOR STABILITY

GRIP WIDTH

THE PRESS

EXAMPLE WORKOUT

# Who Am I?



I am Dr. Don Ehasz DC

My mission is to educate strength and combat athletes to build resiliency through strength training.

I am a chiropractor and strength coach. I also compete in powerlifting and Brazilian jiu jitsu.



I have been competing in powerlifting since 2013. My best squat bench and deadlift are 639, 413, and 723 respectively.



I have been training in combat sports on and off since 2008. I recently competed and won my first BJJ tournament in Feb 2023

# BENCH PRESS SAFETY

Safety is by far the most important part of benching.

Guess what?

If you're injured you can't lift.

If you can't lift you can't make gainz.

Always take the time to lift safely!

The best bench for safety are competition benches.

Go to a gym that has those, make your own with a bench and a power rack, buy one, or invest in a good spotter.

Rack Height



Face Savers

Spotter





# Face savers



Set these at a height that will allow the bar to touch your chest but not crush your face should you drop it.



Bar can touch your chest.

Money maker is safe.



Slide out from under the bar unharmed if you fail a lift.



# Rack Height



Set the rack at a height that allows you to bring the bar out without expending too much energy or losing tightness.

Unracking the bar shouldn't be like doing another rep.

About 1-2 inches of clearance is ideal.



# Spotter and Safety when benching alone



Probably the single most important piece of safety equipment when benching heavy without a competition rack is a good spotter. They can literally save your life so find a knowledgeable one!



They can literally save your life so find a knowledgeable one!

When benching alone don't use bar clamps so you can easily dump the weights if you fail and don't have a spotter.





# BENCH PRESS SET UP

Proper set up is key to safely getting the most out of your bench press.

Stability and finding a grip width where you have the most pressing power are the key takeaways.

# Setting up for stability



Shoulder blades together and down to create a flat stable surface. Cue: tuck your shoulder blades in your back pocket



Wedge your upper back into the bench. You might need to slightly arch your lower back to make this happen. Be sure to keep your butt on the bench.



Use your legs to further wedge yourself into the bench and maintain whole body tension.

# Grip Width

Close



Medium



Wide



Each will have different benefits and drawbacks depending on you and your anatomy. Try them all and see which one feels the best and allows you to push the hardest. Make sure to set up evenly. There are rings on the bar so you can make sure your grip is even.



I personally use a medium grip with my ring finger on the ring.

Pro tip: squeeze the bar as hard as you can while benching.

# The Press

Now that you're safely set up and in the most efficient position how about we press the damn bar already and get strong!



Bring the bar down to your chest in a controlled manner.  
Cue: chest up to the bar to maintain whole body tension.



Pause with the bar lightly touching your chest.



Drive the bar off your chest as hard and fast as you can to recruit the most muscle fibers possible.



# Example Bench Workout

Warm up

Bar (45lbs) 2 sets of 10-20 reps

95lbs 1 set of 8 reps

135lbs 1 set of 5 reps

185lbs 1 set 3 reps

205lbs 1 set 1 rep

Working sets

225lbs 3 sets 5 reps

Exercise 2: Incline Dumbbell Bench

3 sets of 10-15 reps.

Choose a weight that you are close to failure  
at 10-15 reps

Exercise 3: Tricep pushdown

3 sets of 10-15 reps

Choose a weight that you are close to failure  
at 10-15 reps

# Rest

If your goal is strength you should be resting 2-5 minutes between working sets. You want to be recovered enough to put maximum effort into bench pressing.

There is no need to rest between warmup sets. These sets are lighter than your working sets to get your body warm and prepared for heavier weights.

After your last warmup set wait 2-5 min then begin your working sets. This ensures that you are properly recovered before your working sets.

# Resources

[Barbell Medicine Bench Guide](#)

[Stronger by Science Bench Guide](#)

[Juggernaut Strength Pillars of the Bench Press](#) Video Series

[Alan Thrall Untamed Strength Bench](#) Video

**DID YOU ENJOY  
THIS GUIDE?**

**WANT MORE?**

**Follow me on Instagram  
@thedonehaszdc**

**Work with me 1 on 1 for personal  
training or pain and injury rehab**

Gym: Old Skool Iron

Apparel: Nightmare Muscle

Photos: Breaking PRs