

Barbell Bench Press Setup Checklist

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Get stronger and lift safer by nailing your bench press setup every single time. Use this checklist before your working sets to ensure a stable and powerful base.

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☐ 1. Equipment & Safety Check

- ☐ **Stable Bench:** Ensure the bench is secure and won't wobble.
- ☐ **Barbell Positioned Correctly:** Barbell is in the rack at a height you can un-rack comfortably with straight arms.
- ☐ **Safety Measures:** Spotter present OR Safety Bars/Pins in the power rack set correctly (just below chest level when lying flat).
- ☐ **Collars/Clips:** Weight plates are secured on the barbell with collars or clips.
- ☐ **Warm-up Complete:** You have performed an adequate warm-up for your shoulders, chest, and back.

☐ 2. Bench Positioning

- ☐ **Lie Down Correctly:** Lie flat on the bench so your eyes are roughly under the racked barbell.

☐ 3. Body Positioning: The 5 Points of Contact

- ☐ **Point 1: Head:** Head is firmly resting on the bench surface.
 - ☐ **Point 2: Upper Back / Shoulder Blades:** Shoulder blades are actively pulled together (retracted) AND pulled down towards hips, pressed firmly into the bench. (Create that stable "shelf").
 - ☐ **Point 3: Glutes:** Glutes are firmly on the bench (will remain on the bench throughout the entire lift).
 - ☐ **Point 4: Left Foot:** Left foot is planted firmly and flat on the floor (or stable elevated surface if needed).
 - ☐ **Point 5: Right Foot:** Right foot is planted firmly and flat on the floor (or stable elevated surface if needed). Find a stance width that feels stable.
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☐ 4. Grip Setup

- ☐ **Correct Width:** Hands are gripping the bar slightly wider than shoulder-width (adjust based on comfort and goals, using rings as guides if available).
- ☐ **Secure Grip:** Full grip used (thumbs wrapped *around* the bar).
- ☐ **Bar Placement:** Bar sits low in the palm, near the heel of the hand.
- ☐ **Straight Wrists:** Wrists are straight and strong, not bent backward.
- ☐ **Squeeze the Bar:** Grip the bar tightly ("try to bend it").

☐ 5. Pre-Lift Brace

- ☐ **Deep Breath:** Take a deep diaphragmatic breath into your belly.
- ☐ **Brace Core:** Tighten your abdominal muscles as if preparing for a punch.
- ☐ **Maintain Tension:** Hold this full-body tightness before unracking.

Setup Complete. You're ready to press.

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