

## **The bench press**

### **Start position**

Always start with the empty bar for the first set. When you lie down and look ahead, your eyes should be on the foot side of the bar. Use a medium wide grip. Place the bar in the heel of hand, away from the fingers. Wrap your thumbs around the bar. The fingers should be perpendicular to the bar when it is gripped. Lift the chest and pinch the shoulder blades.

The entire foot should be in contact with the floor. The width between the feet should be somewhat wide. The shins should be vertical to the floor, with the legs bent close to a 90 degree angle. Push with the feet horizontally along the bench to support your body and to lift your chest.

### **Movement**

To unrack, push the bar up, locking out at the elbows. With the elbows locked, move the bar out to the position above the nipples. The forearms should be vertical to floor.

Keep the chest high by arching the upper back. The lower back should be in the air. Tighten the neck by holding your head half an inch over the bench. Keep the upper body and shoulders tight as you lower the bar to store elastic energy. Touch the bar to your chest barely, don't bounce. Inhale at the beginning of rep, hold your breath during the rep, and exhale at lockout. Finish the last rep to elbow lockout straight up, \*then\* rack the bar.

### **Key points**

Keep a tight grip, don't allow the bar to roll in your hands. Your chest should be tight enough that you can't breathe during the rep. Focus your eyes on the ceiling. Use the ceiling as a fixed reference point for the path of the bar.

During the lift, the shoulders should stay in position on the bench, and the forearms should stay vertical to the floor. The angle between the upper arms and torso should stay the same during the movement. Don't shrug the shoulders on lockout.