

How many times have you walked into a gym to see guys benching who insist on letting that bar come down like a ton of bricks only to bounce it off their chests? I've seen it often and have come to two conclusions. Either these people are performing suicidal acts or they are not aware of how to properly perform a bench press. In this article let's analyze the bench press from the beginning.

Before we even attempt a lift, we must learn to properly position our bodies on the bench. There are many different styles and set ups, but one thing has to be certain with all of them - proper placement. This means always be sure to align your body evenly on the bench. I have seen many missed attempts on the bench due to balance problems. Foot placement and grip placement are two major concerns for developing a big bench press, but often go overlooked. Without proper foot placement, you may be giving away anywhere from 10-25 pounds off your bench. Grip placement is different with everyone. World records have been broken with close grips as well as wide grips. Your grip is something that should be experimental, which should vary during light training days. For instance, if you're extremely strong off the chest,

# STARTIN' OUT

A special section dedicated to the beginning lifter

## BENCH PRESSING From The Start as told by CHRIS CONFESSORE

but have problems locking out (as I do), a wider grip could be the answer. The bench requires more than just a strong chest and triceps. The whole body can be used if the lift is performed efficiently. Let's get back to foot placement. Your feet should be a solid foundation cemented to the floor throughout each repetition. After grabbing the bar and setting your body evenly on the bench, set your feet to the sides of the bench in a spot which you feel the most tightness throughout your whole

body. Foot placement is extremely important for bench pressers with extreme back arches. Not only are the feet a secure foundation for your body and the bench, but without proper foot placement you cannot properly employ the lats in the lift. To use your lats correctly you must lower the bar to the mid to lower chest area then spread them back, like a bodybuilder performs a lat pose, and at the same time tighten the pectoral area; then start the upward explosion of the bar! Throughout the lift push

those feet using the inner soles right into the floor. Be careful not to lift the buttocks when driving the feet which could cause back problems as well as red lights. Finding the right foot placement can take time, but be patient because when you locate it you will add wanted pounds to that bench press. The descent of the bar can be the difference between a good lift and a bad one, not to mention a healthy rib cage as opposed to a broken one. Make sure to always stay in control of the bar when descending. Staying tight is the name of the game when it comes to successful benching. Letting the bar come down fast adds extra resistance to the attempt and can really throw off your groove. Bar placement is another concern for the bench press. Do not let the bar just land anywhere. Landing the bar too high on the chest can often cause leverage problems during the attempt. To fully utilize the chest-lat-deltoid area during the drive, the bar should be lowered to the mid to lower chest. If you happen to use a bench shirt I would suggest bringing the bar even lower than without the shirt. I hope I have touched on a few areas of concern that may be of help to you and your bench press.

Chris Confessore



CHRIS CONFESSORE, already tops at 181, is now locked in a tight battle with Julian Lee for the all time bench supremacy in the 198 pound class.