

StrongLifts Overhead Press Tip Sheet

How to Overhead Press

1. Setup. Stand with the bar on your front shoulders. Narrow grip, straight wrists, vertical forearms. Lock your knees and hips.
2. Lift Your Chest. Raise your chest towards the ceiling by arching your upper-back. Try to touch your chin with your upper-chest.
3. Press. Take a big breath, hold it and press the bar in a vertical line. Don't press it in front or behind your head. Press it over your head.
4. Move Forward. Stay close to the bar while you press the weight up. Shift your torso forward once the bar has passed your forehead.
5. Lockout. Hold the bar over your shoulders and mid-foot for proper balance. Lock your elbows. Shrug your shoulders to the ceiling.

Overhead Press Form 101

- Feet. Heels hip-width apart. Whole foot flat on the floor. Point them slightly out.
- Legs. Keep your knees and hips locked from start to finish. Bending is cheating.
- Grip. Full grip. Bar in the base of your palm, close to your wrists. Squeeze the bar.
- Grip Width. Narrow grip just outside your shoulders. Don't use a wide Bench grip.
- Wrists. Straight line bar to wrist to elbow. Don't let your wrists bend back or they'll hurt.
- Elbows. Almost under the bar from the side view. About 45° in from the front. No flaring.
- Forearms. Vertical to the floor from all angles: perpendicular from the side and front view.
- Upper-arms. Not parallel to the floor. This isn't a Front Squat. Your forearms must be vertical.
- Shoulders. Hold the bar on your front shoulder muscles. Shrug your shoulders to the ceiling.
- Chest. Lift your chest by arching your upper-back. Try to touch your chin with your upper-chest.
- Upper-back. Arch your upper-back to lift your chest up. Do not squeeze your shoulder-blades.
- Traps. Shrug your traps at the top. Lockout the bar by shrugging your shoulders to the ceiling.
- Head. Keep your head neutral. Look forward. Don't look at the ceiling or the bar while you press.
- Lower Back. Keep your lower back neutral. Don't over-arch and hyper-extend your lower spine.
- Torso. Lean slightly back at the bottom. Move forward at the top. Don't over-arch your lower back.
- Way Up. Press the bar in a vertical line. Stay close to the bar by moving your torso forward at the top.
- Lockout. Hold the bar over your shoulders. Shrug your shoulders to the ceiling. Lock your elbows.
- Way Down. Lower the bar to your shoulders. Lower it under control but not slow. No elbow flaring.
- Breathing. Inhale at the bottom before you press. Hold your breath at the top. Exhale at the bottom.
- Bar Path. Press the bar in a vertical line from your shoulders over your head, above your shoulders.
- Between Reps. Exhale, raise your chest, put your forearms vertical, take a big breath, press again.

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