



**John F. Graham**  
Column Editor

# Dumbbell Bench Press

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## TYPE OF EXERCISE:

Upper body and multijoint.

## MUSCLES USED:

Pectoralis major, pectoralis minor, deltoid (anterior), serratus anterior, and triceps brachii.

## ■ Starting Position

- Select 2 dumbbells of equal weight with a closed grip.
- Place the dumbbells on the floor next to the lower end of an adjustable bench.
- Lift the dumbbells up from the floor by using your legs.
- Align the dumbbells such that the end closest to your little finger is against the front of your thighs (hands are facing in and the handles are parallel to each other)
- Sit down on the lower end of the adjustable bench with the dumbbells resting on the top of your thighs.
- Recline to the supine position so that the dumbbells are moved to the lateral aspect of the chest near the armpit, even with the nipple level, while reclining.
- Position your feet flat on the floor and your head, shoulders, and buttocks evenly and firmly on the bench.
- Dumbbells should be rotated to place their thumb sides against the lateral portion of the chest so that both handles are in line with one another; simulate a barbell with its center bar running through both dumbbell handles. Another option is to perform the exercise with the dumbbells kept in the neutral position (parallel to each other).
- Each repetition will begin from this same position.

## ■ Ascent (Upward Movement)

- Press the dumbbells upward and together with control.

- Keep your head, body, and feet in their original position. Do not arch your lower back or lift your buttocks off the bench.
- Your wrists should remain firm and straight, the forearms almost perpendicular to the floor and the hands aligned with each other.
- Do not allow the dumbbells to move out of control as they are being raised.
- Press the dumbbells upward until the elbows are fully extended but not locked.
- Bring the dumbbells together with control at the completion of the movement; do not bang the dumbbells together.
- Exhale as the dumbbells are lifted.

## ■ Descent (Downward Movement)

- Lower and separate the dumbbells with control toward your midchest.
- To maintain a stable position on the bench, lower both dumbbells at the same rate.
- Keep your wrists firm and straight, the forearms almost perpendicular to the floor, and the hands aligned with each other.

- Avoid movements forward and backward or from side to side.
- Lower the dumbbells to a lat-

eral portion of the chest near your armpit, even with nipple level.

- Dumbbells should be lowered to a lateral portion of your chest so that both handles are in line with one another; where a barbell would touch your chest.
- Dumbbells should not be bounced off your chest at the bottom position, and your back should not be arched to lift the chest upward.
- Maintain a stable position with your feet flat on the floor and your head, shoulders, and buttocks evenly and firmly on the bench.
- Inhale as the dumbbells are lowered.

#### ■ Completion of the Set

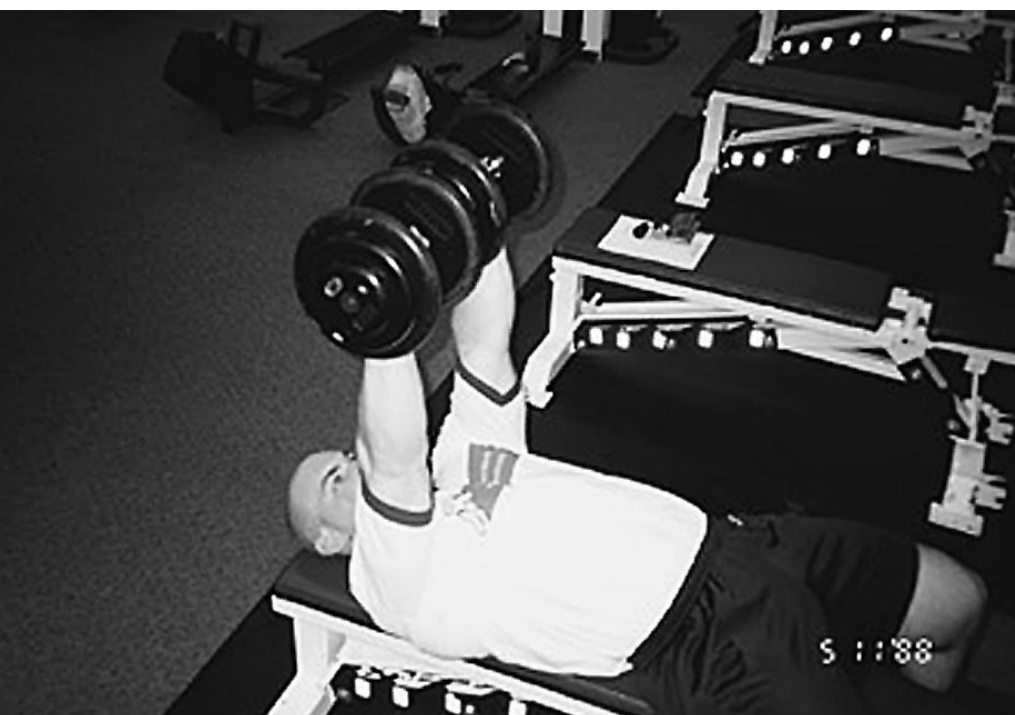
- After lowering the dumbbells to the lateral chest on the last repetition, rotate the dumbbells to the abdominal area.
- Sit up slowly and return the dumbbells to your thighs before standing up and returning the dumbbells to the dumbbell rack or floor.

#### *COLUMN EDITOR'S NOTE:*

Recently, I was pleased to be asked to serve as the editor of this column. In order to serve the needs of the NSCA's 18,000+ members, I would like to make this column a forum for all members to share their expertise and provide ideas and exercise techniques for their fellow professionals. I would like to welcome your suggestions and comments, or have you author an "Exercise Technique Column." Exercises can include not only free weight and resistance training, but also plyometric, speed, agility, quickness, and stability ball exercises as well. Email me at [JGSTRENGTH@aol.com](mailto:JGSTRENGTH@aol.com) with your ideas, comments or suggestions. I look forward to hearing from you.



**Figure 1.** Start: Dumbbell Bench Press.



**Figure 2.** Finish: Dumbbell Bench Press.