

# WOLFE'S TOP TEN BENCH PRESS TIPS



## BENCH PRESS MASTER, MIKE WOLFE, PRESSING HEAVY

### 1 USE GOOD SUPPLEMENTS!

We beat the heck out of our bodies several times per week. Much like injury or illness, the extreme stress we place on our bodies with heavy training increases our need for protein and other nutrients and ergogens. I use AtLarge's Nitrean, Opticen, MAXIMUS, RESULTS, and ETS. If I had to choose just two, I would go with MAXIMUS and RESULTS.

### 2 SEEK THE ADVICE OF KNOWLEDGEABLE PEOPLE!

Some degree of prudence must be demonstrated here. You do not simply want to seek the advice of the biggest guy in the gym as they may be completely ignorant with respect to proper training. Seek the advice of proven coaches and trainers (you can get it in books, DVDs, and online at places like [www.wannabebig.com](http://www.wannabebig.com) and their powerlifting forums). I didn't come into my own until I met Louie Simmons ([www.westside-barbell.com](http://www.westside-barbell.com)) and George Halbert. These men taught me how to become the bencher that I am today. The fact that you are reading my top 10 tips is a great start!

### 3 MAX EFFORT (ME) WORK!

ME work entails pyramiding up to a 1 rep personal record (PR) attempt on a given movement. This builds the brute strength we all desire. Once I hit a PR I move on to the rest of my training. I always perform my ME work 72 hours after my speed day. It is important to use variety in ME work in order to avoid overtraining and stagnation, thus the same movement should never be performed 2 weeks in a row. I rotate 4 exercises over a 4 week period and then start all over again.

### 4 SPEED WORK!

Speed work helps to build your ability to "explode" with the weight. I use 50% of my 1 repetition max plus the purple bands for 8-10 sets of 3 reps. My goal is to get the 3 reps in less than 3 seconds. **Wolfe's Physics: Force + Speed = Explosive Power!!!!**

### 5 TRAIN THE REAR DELTS, LATS, AND TRAPS REGULARLY!

All of these muscles are heavily involved in the bench press and a relative weakness in any of them can really hamper the weights you can handle. I dedicate two heavy training days per week to them.

### 6 SQUEEZE THE BAR!

This is an old trick to increase one's pressing power. Squeezing the bar as hard as possible more forcefully engages the lats, and this helps during the entire movement, especially right off of the chest. There is also a neural component to the squeeze which seems to increase the force production capability of all of the muscles involved in the press. Use this phenomenon to your advantage!

### 7 HOLD YOUR BREATH!

This technique is primarily for maximum attempts. Just prior to your liftoff take a deep, rib cage expanding breath and hold it. The rib cage expansion will limit the ROM and the holding of your breath will solidify your entire upper torso (to provide a more solid base for your press). Holding one's breath during a maximum attempt also seems to allow for a more forceful contraction of the involved muscles.

### 8 ALWAYS USE A HAND-OFF MAN!

The handoff man can provide you safety as a spotter and will help you to conserve valuable energy for your heavy pressing. It is important that you and the handoff man are in sync with respect to the timing of the liftoff and the release of the bar. A miscue can lead to benching disaster! A good 1..2..3 always works well for me.

### 9 USE A WIDE FOOT STANCE WHILE BENCHING!

This technique allows for maximum leg drive during the press. Begin by sitting on the bench with your legs spread very wide. Lay back on the bench to assume your starting position. Your feet should remain flat on the floor and you should literally try to drive your heels into the ground as you lower the bar to your chest. When you are ready to begin the press you should again drive your heels into the ground while simultaneously driving your hips towards the uprights.- You will find this to be of substantial benefit for the first half of the press.

### 10 SQUEEZE YOUR SHOULDER BLADES TOGETHER!

This has the dual purpose of shortening the range of motion (ROM) and creating a solid base to press from. You can get a visual of the ROM shortening by placing your hands on a wall as though you were going to perform a pushup. As you squeeze your shoulder blades together you will see that you get closer to the wall. Begin with just the bar and add weight as you acclimate to the technique.

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