

# SUPINE DUMBBELL PRESS

By Adam Traynor

The supine dumbbell bench press is a great exercise for developing the chest, shoulder and triceps; its execution is similar to the bench press except the range of motion [ROM] is greater, and also it develops joint stability and co-ordination. Making sure you use the greatest ROM possible [within your comfort zone] ensures the muscles are getting a good stretch and contraction. Try to contract the pectoralis major at the top of the movement by squeezing the pectoralis together. Take time to develop good form with light weights and be careful when using heavy weight ensuring that your form is good - it is possible to lose control of one or both dumbbells because of poor execution.

Assume a stable position on a horizontal exercise bench. Your head, shoulders and buttocks should rest on the bench, your feet should be flat on the ground for stability, however, placing your feet on the bench will reduce lumbar stress for trainees with weakened or damaged backs. Pick up the dumbbells off the floor using a pronated grip (palms facing in), position the ends of the dumbbells on your thighs, and sit

down on the bench. To get in position you need to rock back pushing the dumbbells back with your thighs and only slightly bending at the elbows. Keep your elbows out, pointed to the sides, with the dumbbells touching your chest lightly. Once in position [figure 1], inhale and press them upwards until your arms are nearly extended; remember to contract the pectoralis. Do not lock your elbows out completely. Do

not touch the dumbbells together at the top of the movement; keep them 2-3 inches apart [figure 2]. Then exhale as you lower the dumbbells under control at a slow to moderate speed. As you reach the initial position, reverse directions and push the dumbbells up again. Do not stop in the bottom position.

When very heavy weights are used, inhale deeply prior

figure 1

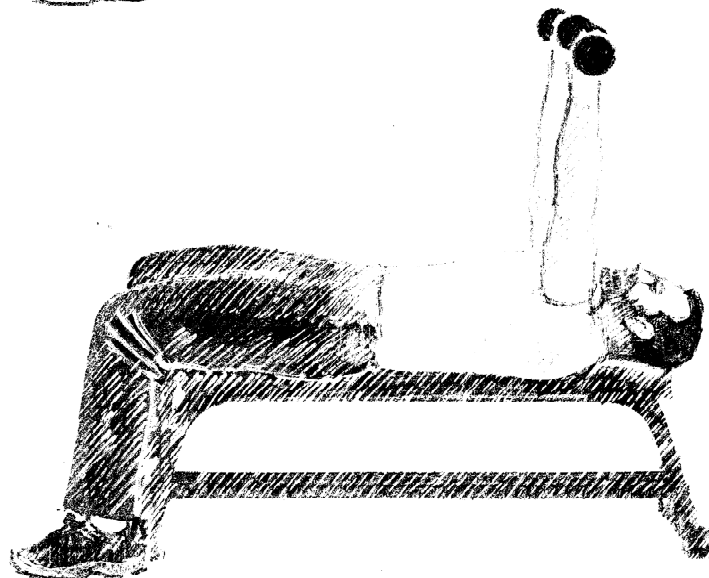
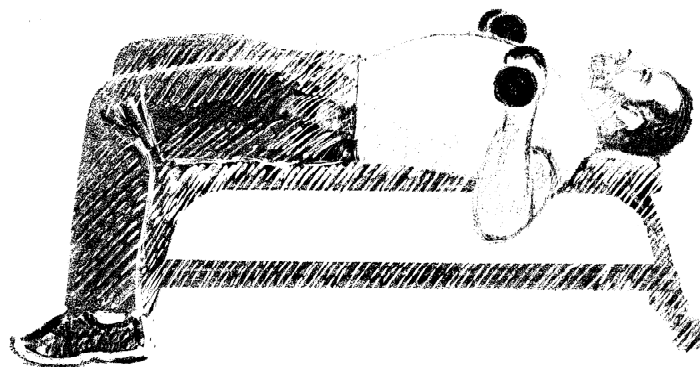


Figure 2

to beginning the lift, then hold your breath as the dumbbells are raised to expand and stabilise your ribcage so that the muscles have a firm base upon which to act. Once you have finished the set, **DO NOT DROP THE DUMBBELLS!** Twist the dumbbells around to a pronated hand position (palms facing each other), bring your knees up so the ends of the dumbbells are touching your thighs, then use the weight of the dumbbells to rock back to a seated position.

The combination of shoulder-joint horizontal flexion, shoulder-girdle abduction and elbow extension is very important in all forward reaching, grabbing and pushing actions, e.g. in boxing, martial arts, wrestling and powerlifting. Strength athletes, especially those involved in throwing, dragging and pulling will benefit from the extra joint stability this exercise produces; lifters with shoulder problems caused by careless execution of the bench press can usually press with dumbbells, providing they use proper technique.

**The deltoid**

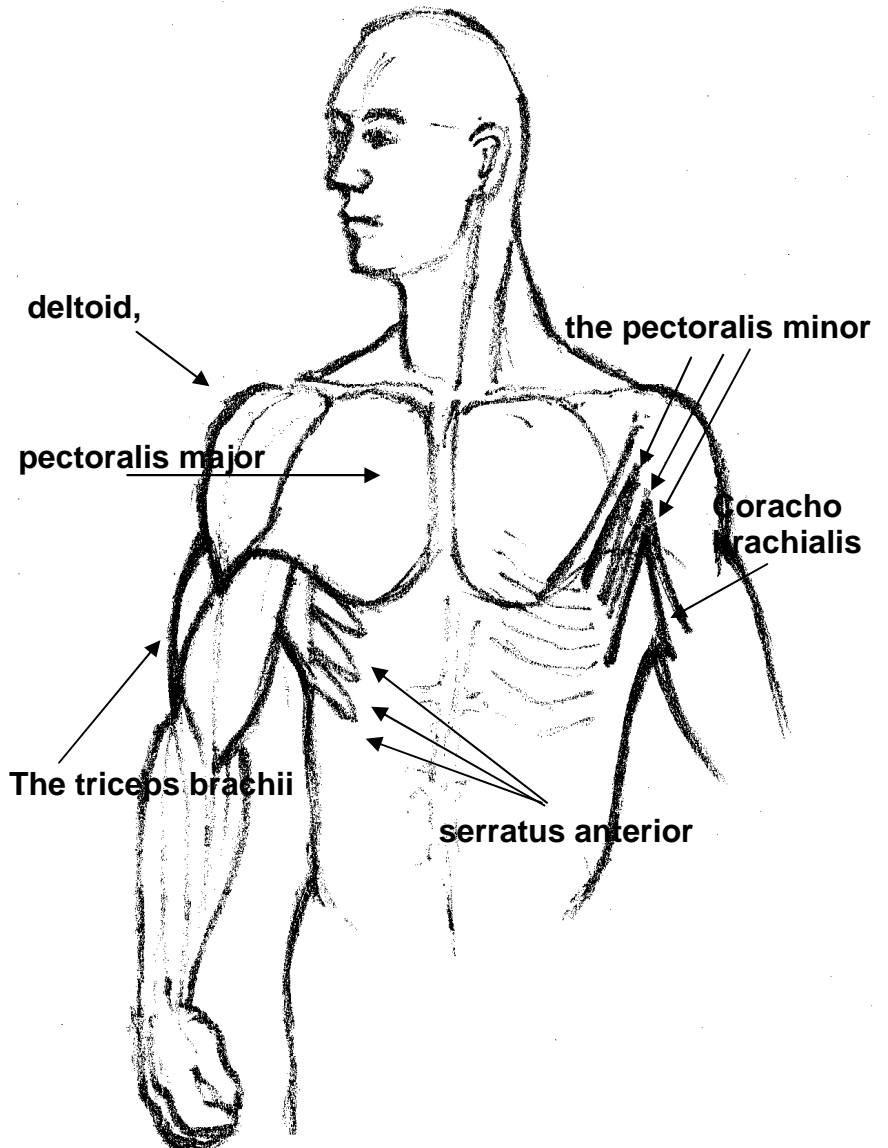
The deltoid abducts, flexes, extends and medially and laterally rotates the arm.

**The corachobrachialis**

The corachobrachialis flexes and adducts the arm.

**The pectoralis major**

The pectoralis major flexes, adducts and rotates the arm medially.



The left side of the illustration shows the anterior superficial view of the musculature, the right side shows the deep view

**The pectoralis minor**

The pectoralis minor moves the scapula anteriorly and elevates the third, fourth and fifth ribs during forced inspiration when the scapula is fixed.

**The serratus anterior**

The serratus anterior rotates

the scapula upwards and laterally and elevates the ribs when the scapula is fixed.

**The triceps brachii**

The triceps brachii extends the forearm, extends the arm.