

Press teaching order

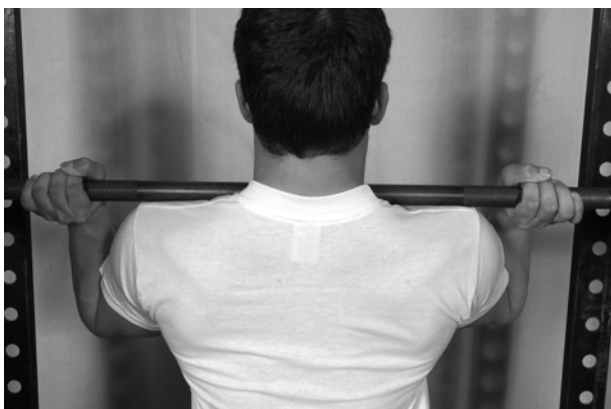


Figure 8. The hands should grip the bar outside the shoulders.



Figure 9. A closer view of the grip position. Note the spacing on the standard bar, and the thumbs-around grip.

1. The press starts at the rack with the empty bar. After a good shoulder warm-up, have the trainee approach the bar. It should be set at the same height as for the squat, at about the middle of the sternum. The grip should be narrower than either the squat or the bench press, not much more than an inch or so wider on each side than the widest part of the shoulder (figure 8). For most people this will put the index finger about an inch and a half into the knurling on a standard Olympic bar (figure 9). The choice of equipment may not be up to the coach here, and most people will need to work with what they have, so make note that a standard Olympic weightlifting bar has a 16 1/2" (42cm) space between the knurls (there is no standard center marking for a powerlifting bar). It might make things easier to mark all your bars to this standard so that everybody can use the same grip width every time. The thumbs should be around the bar with the weight as close to the heel of the hand as wrist, elbow, and shoulder flexibility permits (figure 10). This position may be hard to maintain at first, but flexibility in these joints will improve rapidly.

2. Now have the trainee take the bar out of the rack, the EMPTY BAR. The idea is to have the bar resting on top of the anterior deltoids at the start of the movement (figure 11). Many inflexible trainees will not be able to get the shoulders far enough forward and up to put the bar in this position. Again, flexibility improves quickly, so just point out that this is where it's supposed to be, and that he should try to get it there. The movement can be done from a less than perfect position without any real problem. Now, have him rotate his elbows forward and up so that the elbows are in front of the bar when viewed from the side (figure 12).