

List of Powerlifting Exercises (Major and Accessories Workouts)

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Article Link: <https://thefitnessphantom.com/list-of-powerlifting-exercises/>

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This list will also help you create a [workout program](#) to develop ultimate strength.

1. Barbell Bench Press

The bench press is one of the three lifts performed in the Powerlifting competition.

It is an excellent workout to develop upper body strength and **mass**, especially in chest muscles.

The bench press is one of the famous workouts performed in all forms of the weight training program, such as powerlifting, bodybuilding, or CrossFit.

However, the purpose of doing bench press and technique to perform is slightly different than other forms of training.

The main goal of doing it in powerlifting is to increase the 1RM (one-rep maximum). While beefing up the inner chest mass is the primary goal in bodybuilding.

And for technique, The International Powerlifting Association has set some rules for performing the bench press. And if you break any rules, you'll be disqualified.

Here are some major rules, you'll need to keep in mind while performing it:¹

1. You must lie backward with your shoulders and buttocks rested on the flat bench surface.
2. You must keep your feet firmly on the flat surface or floor.
3. You must maintain 81 cm distance between your hands, measured between the forefingers.

You can learn more practically about it in the gym where powerlifters train.

Alright! Once you did the bench press, it's time to perform some additional exercises to focus more on your balance, form, and functional movement.

1. Pin Press

The pin press reinforces the chest and tricep muscle. It is pretty similar to bench press but performed with lighter weights.

To perform this movement:

1. Set the bar on the pin and lay down under it on a flat bench.
2. Grip the bar firmly with your hands slightly wider than shoulder-width apart.
3. Unrack the bar and hold it just above your chest.
4. Brace your abdominal muscles and maintain a slight arch in your lower back.
5. Press the bar over your chest until your arms are fully straight.

2. Spoto Press

Spoto press is a kind of [isometric movement](#) where you have to hold the bar a couple of inches above your chest for two to ten seconds usually before you press it.

It is an excellent workout for scaling up for a greater one-rep max (1RM). It increases the ability to hold the weight for the maximum time under tension.

3. Dumbbell Floor Press

The dumbbell floor press is a [chest](#) and [triceps](#) workout that you can do [without a bench](#). The dumbbell gives you complete control over the range of motion so you can target your pecs more specifically.

You can do it as a warm-up exercise before the main lift or you can do it as the supportive exercise after bench press.

4. Dumbbell Tate press

The dumbbell Tate press strengthens triceps muscles and helps you improve your bench press.

Having sturdy triceps enables you to press more weight during the bench and increases your 1RM.

You can do it by lying on a flat bench. Just grab a pair of dumbbells and hold them at the initial position of the press, and lower them toward your chest.

5. Close Grip Bench Press

The close grip bench press reinforces your triceps and chest muscles simultaneously and boosts your lifting strength. You can do it to increase your one-rep max.

To perform this movement, sit on a flat bench, grab the bar with your hands slightly shorter than hip-width apart. Unrack the bar and hold it over your chest. Now, press it over your chest until your arms are straight.

2. Barbell Back Squat

The barbell back squat is a lower body strengthening workout that primarily works on quadriceps muscle (quads). It is one of the exercises of “The Big Three lifts” performed in a powerlifting competition.

Squatting is a great way to boost muscle strength and hypertrophy. Moreover, it improves athletic movements such as jumping, running, and lifting. ²

There are some rules you need to follow while doing it in powerlifting training. For examples:

- You need to squat down until the top surface of your legs at the hip joint is lower than the top of your knees”.³Powerlifting Sports⁴
- You shouldn’t touch your knees with your elbows or upper arms when you squat down or return to the starting position.

If you want to perform the squat with heavier weights and increase your one-rep max, you can do the below auxiliary exercises:

1. Glute-Ham Raise

The glute-ham raise is a [compound movement](#) that strengthens posterior chain muscles, especially the [lower back](#), [hamstrings](#), and [glutes](#). Having stronger posterior chain muscles enables you to lift more weights, reduce the risk of injuries and help you increase your one-rep max.

2. Lunge Variations

Lunges are great supportive exercises for scaling up 1RM. They have various types, such as forward lunges, reverse lunges, and in-line lunges.

You can do them with dumbbells, barbells, and kettlebells – depending on what suits you the most.

3. Back Squat with a Pause

If you want to maximize your one-rep squat, you can do rest-pause squats after or before the main lift. Doing back squat with a pause allows for greater volume lifted via increased repetitions compared to a traditional squat in trained women.

Moreover, it also increases muscle mass, time-under tension, and enhances knee extensor strength.

During this movement, you need to hold your body in the squat position for five to ten seconds (depending on your muscle endurance) before you stand back.

4. Dumbbell Step-up

The dumbbell step-up is an effective lower body workout that strengthens quads, hamstring, and glutes at the same time. It can help you improve your balance and may increase your 1RM.

To perform this movement, grab one dumbbell in each hand and stand upright in front of a flat bench or box, keep your arms straight at your sides. And then step up your right foot on the bench followed by the left one.

3. Barbell Conventional Deadlift

The deadlift is one of the big lifts of powerlifting training. It is a compound workout that works on multiple muscles at once, such as quads, hamstrings, back, and core.

It is an excellent workout to build greater overall strength. The [heaviest deadlift](#) (501 kg/1,104.5 lb) was done by [Hafþór Júlíus Björnsson](#) (Iceland) – according to Guinness World Records.

It is next to impossible to lift that much weight, but you can create and break your own one-rep max with consistent training.

If you want to improve your deadlifting performance, you can do the following workouts:

1. Barbell Good Morning

Good-morning exercise works on the hamstring, glutes, and lower back and improves strength and mobility.

Moreover, it reduces the risk of low back injuries and enables you to lift more weight during the [deadlift exercises](#).

You can do this movement with all equipment, such as a kettlebell, [barbell and dumbbell](#).

You can see how to perform good morning with a barbell in the below video.

2. Reverse Hyperextension

The reverse hyperextension eases lower back muscles after intense deadlifting. It strengthens glutes, hamstrings, and especially the lower back.

A study suggests that reverse hyperextension significantly increases in strength of the posterior chain muscles compared to hyperextension.⁶ And having firm posterior chain muscles enables you to pull more weight and reduce the risk of injuries.

Here's the demonstration of reverse hyperextension.

3. Deficit Deadlift

The deficit deadlift is another exercise that will help you enhance your deadlifting and scale up your one-rep max.

You can follow the instructions given in this video to perform it effectively.

4. Romanian Deadlifts

The Romanian deadlift is equally effective as a deficit deadlift and helps you enhance your strength and mobility in your posterior chain muscles.

You can also do it as a supportive lift after the main deadlift workout to improve your overall performance.

List Of Core Exercises For Powerlifting

You can also do weighted abs workouts to fortify your core. A strong core will help you lift more weights and reduce the risk of injuries.

I have made a list of some important abdominal exercises, you can incorporate in your powerlifting training.

- Weighted Crunches
- [Cable Woodchop](#)
- [Weighted Plank](#)
- Barbell/Ab Wheel Rollout
- [Dead Bug Pullover](#)
- [Pallof Press](#)
- Bird Dog

You can also do these [twenty-five abs exercises](#) in the gym to reinforce your core.

If you want to do cardio workouts to pump your heart and increase blood flow before big lifts, you can do these [anaerobic exercises](#).

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