

12 BEST MACHINE CHEST EXERCISES FOR BUILDING MUSCLE

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Gym machines are easy to use, safer than [free weights](#), and effective for building strength and muscle mass.

They offer adjustable inclines, declines, and cable systems, providing a range of exercises to target different areas of the chest muscles.

Machines are also good at controlling unnecessary movement, allowing you to focus on building strength and technique without worrying about balance.

When using the machines, be sure to adjust the settings to fit your body and start with weights that allow for proper form.

1-3. Smith Machine Bench Presses



The Smith machine is a multi-functional exercise piece that allows you to [train various muscle groups](#), including the chest.

The Smith machine bench press is great for training and growing your pectoral muscles.^{1, 2}

This machine allows you to adjust the angle so you can train the upper, lower, and middle chest effectively.³

The flat Smith bench press targets the entire portion of the chest and is good for gaining mass.

The Incline bench press (performed at a 30-45-degree incline) targets the upper chest (clavicular head) and anterior deltoids and improves chest appearance.⁴

The decline chest press (15–30 degrees) focuses on the lower and middle pecs (sternocostal head) and helps build a defined chest.⁵

It is suitable for pressing heavier weights with better control, and that too without a spotter.

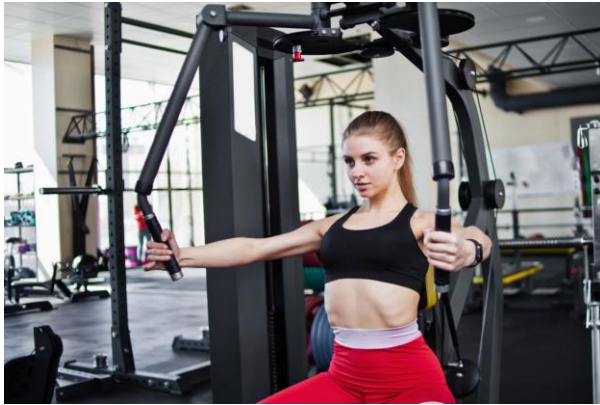
Smith machine bench presses involve the following steps:

1. Set the bench under the bar. Horizontal for flat press, 30–45 degrees inclined for the incline press, and 15–30 degrees declined for the decline press.
2. Grip slightly wider than shoulder-width with your palms facing up.
3. Lower bar slowly to mid-chest for flat, near the clavicle for incline, and above the abs for decline press. You'll feel the stretch in your serratus anterior.
4. Press up without locking elbows until you feel the contraction in your pecs. Keep your elbows softly bent. That's one rep.

Use these exercises at the start for heavy strength, in the middle for controlled muscle building, or at the end for a high-rep pump. Keep performing all three angles for better chest growth.

Perform 3–5 sets. Keep the reps range under 8 for building strength and between 8 and 15 for muscle definition.

4. Seated Pec Deck Fly



The pec deck or butterfly is a safe and effective chest exercise for all age groups.

It involves sitting on the machine with chest up and pulling the handles with straight arms to engage the pectoral muscles deeply.

It's an isolation move that provides the deepest stimulation in all three pectoral heads and builds a strong and symmetrical chest.⁶

This machine also allows you to use one arm at a time, so you can [train your chest unilaterally](#).

[Unilateral exercises](#) Help correct the imbalance between your strength and improve muscular symmetry.

Steps to do it correctly:

1. Adjust the machine and select the desired weight.

2. Sit with your back flat against the pad.
3. Keep elbows slightly bent and ensure your chest is up.
4. Bring handles together in a hugging motion. Make sure your wrists are below your shoulder level.
5. Squeeze your chest hard at the front for a second or two.
6. Return slowly while controlling the stretch. That's one rep.

Perform this exercise after bench presses for a better pump. Aim for 4 sets of 12-15 reps with good form.

You can also try [Drop sets](#) or [pyramid sets](#) to train your muscles from a different technique.

5. Seated Machine Chest Press



This exercise involves sitting on the machine and pressing the weight against the chest.

It's good for building pushing strength and preparing you for the manual bench press.⁷

This machine for chest workout gives better stability and allows you to hit the chest effectively.⁸

Follow the steps to perform a seated machine chest press:

1. Adjust the seat so the handles are at the mid-chest level
2. Sit on the machine with your chest up and back resting on the bench.
3. Grip handles slightly wider than your shoulders. Keep your elbows slightly tucked.
4. Press the weight until your arms are almost straight.
5. Return slowly to the start, feeling the stretch in your pecs. That's one rep.

This is not a better exercise than the Smith Machine Bench Press. So, use it as a warm-up exercise before the bench or at the end to increase the pump.

6-8: Cable Chest Fly



The cable chest fly is one of the best exercises for stimulating the chest muscle by keeping them under constant tension.

It lets you target different parts of your chest by simply changing the angle.

For example, the low-to-high chest fly targets the upper chest and gives your chest a fuller appearance.

High-to-low chest fly trains the lower chest and enhances overall pecs development.

The cable parallel chest fly focuses on the middle chest for overall thickness.

All these cable fly variations create a decent contraction in the chest and help achieve a well-defined look.⁹

The cable chest fly involves the following steps:

Low to High Cable Fly:

1. Set the pulleys at the lowest position.
2. Grab the handles and stand straight. Use a split stance for a better balance.
3. Lift handles upward until they reach upper chest level.
4. Squeeze at the top, then return to the start.

High to Low Cable Fly:

1. Set the pulleys at a higher position.
2. Grab the handles and stand straight. Use a split stance for a better balance.
3. Slightly lean forward and bring the handles toward each other until your chest is entirely engaged.
4. Feel the squeeze and return to the start.

Parallel Cable Fly:

1. Set the pulleys at a shoulder height.
2. Grab the handles and stand straight.
3. Slightly lean forward and bring the handles toward each other until they are close.
4. Feel the contraction for a moment, then return to the start.

9. Incline Hammer Strength Chest Press



The incline hammer strength chest press is a plate-loaded machine that targets the upper chest and builds thickness.¹⁰

It gives more stability than free weights and is good for [progressive overload](#).¹¹

With this exercise, you can enhance pushing strength and [increase your bench press 1RM](#) (one-rep max).

It also trains the front of the shoulder and improves upper body strength.

Steps to perform an inclined chest press on the Hammer Machine:

1. Adjust the handles until they are at the upper chest level.
2. Keep your chest up and back resting on the pad.
3. Grip handles firmly (neutral or slight angle). That's the start.
4. Press forward and slightly upward until your chest is fully engaged.
5. Lower slowly for a deep stretch. That's one rep.

You can start with this exercise or do it after the flat dumbbell or barbell bench press.

10. Machine Low Chest Press



The low chest press is another pressing exercise to strengthen the chest, especially the lower chest.

It provides better control, allowing you to focus on squeezing muscles with [higher rep sets](#).

This is the best alternative to the dumbbell or barbell decline bench press that helps achieve a fuller and more defined chest appearance.

The machine low chest press involves the following steps:

1. Set the seat so that the handles are slightly above the lower chest line.
2. Keep your back flat, chest up, and your feet firmly on the floor.
3. Grip just wider than the shoulders. That's the starting position.
4. Press the weight upward until your chest muscles are engaged.
5. Pause for a moment at the top, then lower it slowly to the start.

You can use it as a substitute for the decline Smith machine bench press. Perform when you want to focus more on the lower chest.

11. Cable Chest Press

The cable chest press is an excellent muscle-building chest exercise for both beginners and advanced.¹²

It involves standing or sitting between the cable pulley machine and pressing the weight forward.

It helps train the entire chest with better control and mobility.

The cable machine also allows you to adjust the angle to target different areas of the pectoral muscles.

It's also easy on the shoulders compared to other chest presses, making it a good option for people with shoulder issues.

Stepwise instructions for performing this exercise:

1. Set cables at chest height.
2. Stand in a split stance (one foot forward) or sit on the bench with a 90-degree angle.
3. Grab the handles firmly with an overhand grip.
4. Keep your chest up, core tight, and hands at the sides of your chest. That's the start.
5. Press the handles forward until your arms extend. Maintain a soft bend in the elbows.
6. Bring back slowly, feeling the stretch in your chest.

Do this exercise when you want to increase your bench or dumbbell press strength.

You can also do high rep sets of cable press (after flat and incline heavy presses) to isolate the chest muscles.

12. Lying Machine Chest Press

The lying machine press is a beginner-level chest exercise. It is the same as the flat bench press but with better control and stability.

It helps [build foundational pushing strength](#) and prepares for free-weight bench presses.

It is easy to perform and can fit into anyone's training plan, from teenagers to old people.

The flat machine press is also a great exercise for progressive overload (you can easily increase weight on the machine) and for developing a strong and defined chest.

It's ideal when you want muscle growth without worrying about balance or a spotter.

The lying machine chest press involves the following steps:

1. Lie flat on the bench with your face up, feet on the ground, abs tight, and chest up.
2. Grip the handles slightly wider than your shoulders and get ready for the press.
3. Press the weight upward until your chest is contracted. Avoid overextending your arms.
4. Return slowly until you feel the stretch in your chest. That's one rep.

Do it as your first lift on chest day and go as heavy as possible while maintaining the form.

Machine Chest Workout Routine Samples

Let's use these exercises to create ultimate chest workout routines for different goals and fitness levels.

For Beginners:

Select exercises that are easy to perform and focus on different areas of the chest. For example, you can start with this routine to bolster your base strength:

- **Seated Machine Chest Press:** 2 sets of 10-12 reps
- **Flat Machine Bench Press:** 2 sets of 10-15 reps
- **Pec Deck Machine Fly:** 3 sets of 10-12 reps
- **Incline Hammer Chest Press:** 3 sets of 10-12 reps
- Rest for 1-2 minutes between sets.

For Experienced Lifters:

If you are training for a while, you need to choose different rep range sets to work on your strength and hypertrophy.

You can also include drop sets to enhance your chest growth and muscle endurance.

You can start with these two routines. One is based on the standard rep-set approach, and the other is on the dropset approach.

Machine Chest Workout for Strength & Hypertrophy:

- **Flat Smith Machine Bench Press:** 1 set of 15-20 reps (warm-up)
- **Flat Smith Machine Bench Press:** 3 sets of 6-8 reps (heavy for strength)
- **Incline Hammer Chest Press:** 3 sets of 6-8 reps (heavy)

- **Decline Smith Machine Chest Press:** 3 sets of 6-8 reps (heavy)
- **Pec Deck Machine Fly:** 3 sets of 12-15 reps
- **High to Low Cable Chest Fly:** 3 sets of 12-15 reps
- Rest for 1-2 minutes between sets.

Dropset Chest Workout Routine:

Start with heavy, then do the first set (such as six reps in the program), then decrease the weight, and perform another six reps; lower the weight again and go until failure. That'll be your one complete set.

- **Seated Machine Bench Press:** 1 set of 15-20 reps (warm-up)
- **Flat Smith Machine Bench Press:** 1 set of 6-6-failure
- **Incline Smith Bench Press:** 1 set of 6-6-failure
- **Decline Smith Bench Press:** 1 set of 6-6-failure
- **High to Low Cable Fly:** 1 set of 6-6-failure
- **Low to High Pec Fly:** 1 set of 6-6-failure
- **Seated Pec Fly:** 1 set of 6-6-failure
- Rest for 1-2 minutes between sets.

The End Notes

The machines are safe, easy to use, and effective for building a strong and proportional chest.

They allow you to train your chest from all angles and use both heavy and medium weights so that you can develop strength, symmetry, and definition.

For real growth, try to base your workouts around big presses like the Smith Machine bench press and hammer chest press, and isolation exercises like cable press and chest fly.

Push a little harder every week by increasing weight or reps.

And the last but important thing is to focus on nutrition and sleep to achieve visible growth.

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