

# CHASING STRENGTH

## Barbell Clean + Press

### The Clean

#### The Set Up

1. Stand with your feet approximately shoulder width apart, either pointed straight ahead or turned out slightly.
2. Looking down, the bar should be across the knuckle of your big toes (this usually, but not always, corresponds with the first row of your shoes' laces).
3. Bend down and grab the bar. Your grip should be just outside shoulder width.
4. Your weight should be in your midfoot - balanced between the balls of your feet and your heels.
5. Look straight ahead and push out your chest, making an arch in your lower back. Your head should be up and your eyes looking straight ahead. None of this looking at the floor nonsense.
6. Keeping your head up, chest out, and back arched, lift your hips until you feel a stretch in your hamstrings.
7. Inhale through your nose into your lower lower back to stabilize your spine. This should be about 80-90% of your max inhalation. You are now ready to lift the bar from the ground.

#### The Pull

For our purposes, the Clean is two (2) pulls: The first pull is from the floor to just above the knee. The second is from above the knee to the hip.

1. Rather than lifting the bar off the floor, think about pushing the floor down and away while keeping your arms straight.

2. Maintain a constant lifting speed as you lift the bar to above the knees. This is the first pull.
3. Once the bar has cleared the knees, explode as fast and as hard as possible, similar to a vertical jump. Your body should form a straight line. This is the second pull.
4. When the bar passes your knees, you want it to be touching your thighs. In fact, the bar should slide up your thighs until you fully stand. At that point it should be off the body and traveling upward.

### The Catch

Catching the barbell is a matter of bending your elbows, driving them up and forward, and placing the barbell across the front of your shoulders in the “Rack” - also called the Rack Position.

1. At the end of the second pull, the bar will be accelerating upward, toward the ceiling.
2. Bend your elbows and spin them forward under the bar.
3. Guide the bar into the rack position, finishing with the elbows pointed forward and up, the bar slightly behind your front deltoids, resting against your throat.
4. Your upper arms will be somewhere between 45 degrees and 90 degrees to the floor, depending on your flexibility and your various arm lever lengths.

### The Rack

The Rack is the position where you catch the Clean, and from which you start and finish the Press. A poor Rack Position produces a weak Press.

1. Inhale about 75% of your maximum breath. This creates stiffness in your torso.
2. Squeeze your gluts
3. Tighten your abs - slightly
4. Then get ready to press

## The Press

1. If your upper arms are parallel to the floor in the rack position, you'll need to drop your elbows so they are just in front of your wrists.
2. Let me make that point again: Your elbows need to be just in front of your wrists, not behind them, which is a common mistake.
3. Inhale about 75% of your maximum breath and hold it.
4. Squeeze the bar hard with your hands.
5. Drive the bar up over head while thinking about pushing the floor down and away from you.
6. Look slightly up during the Press.
7. Keep your gluts pinched tight like your holding a coin between your cheeks to protect your lower back
8. Exhale through the sticking point until the bar is over your head

## The Lockout

1. When the bar is overhead, it is in the Lockout Position.
2. Make sure you keep your gluts pinched in this position to keep your lower back protected
3. You may need to keep some tension in your abs, which also keeps your lower back protected

## The Descent

1. When the bar is overhead, inhale, and lower the bar back into the Rack
2. Exhale when the bar is back in the Rack.
3. Inhale again, and then guide the bar out of the rack using a “controlled fall/drop” to your mid-thighs, then to the floor.

Reset yourself for another Clean.

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# Dumbbell Clean + Press

## The Clean

### The Set Up

1. Stand with your feet approximately shoulder width apart, either pointed straight ahead or turned out slightly
2. Looking down, the dumbbells (DBs) should be on the outsides of your feet, with the handles in line with the tops of your feet
3. Bend down and grab each handle, toward the front of the DB. Your grip will be just outside shoulder width.
4. Your weight should be in your midfoot - balanced between the balls of your feet and your heels.
5. Look straight ahead and push out your chest, making an arch in your lower back. Your head should be up and your eyes looking straight ahead. None of this looking at the floor nonsense.
6. Keeping your head up, chest out, and back arched, lift your hips until you feel a stretch in your hamstrings.
7. Inhale through your nose into your lower lower back to stabilize your spine. This should be about 80-90% of your max inhalation. You are now ready to lift the DBs from the ground.

### The Pull

For our purposes, the Clean is two (2) pulls: The first pull is from the floor to just above the knee. The second is from above the knee to the hip. It will feel different from the barbell, because the DBs shift from in front of the body to being inline with the body.

1. Rather than lifting the DBs off the floor, think about pushing the floor down and away while keeping your arms straight.
2. Maintain a constant lifting speed and lift the DBs to above the knees. This is the first pull.
3. Once the DBs have passed the knees, explode as fast and as hard as possible, similar to a vertical jump. Your body should form a straight line. This is the second pull.

## The Catch

Catching a pair of DBs is very similar to high-speed biceps curls, except you will actually roll your elbows a little more forward, tipping the DBs back, so they land on top of your shoulders. This too is also called the Rack Position.

1. At the end of the second pull, the DBs will be accelerating upward, toward the ceiling.
2. Bend your elbows and spin them forward under the DBs.
3. Guide the DBs into the rack position, finishing with the elbows pointed forward and up, so they don't fall off your shoulders.
4. Your upper arms will be somewhere between 45 degrees and 90 degrees to the floor, depending on your flexibility and your various arm lever lengths.
5. Now the DBs will be in a "Hammer Grip" - parallel to one another.

## The Rack

The Rack is the position where you catch the Clean, and from which you start and finish the Press. A poor Rack Position produces a weak Press.

1. Inhale about 75% of your maximum breath. This creates stiffness in your torso.
2. Squeeze your gluts
3. Tighten your abs - slightly
4. Then get ready to press

## **The Press**

1. If your upper arms are parallel to the floor in the rack position, you'll need to drop your elbows so they are just in front of your wrists.
2. Let me make that point again: Your elbows need to be just in front of your wrists, not behind them, which is a common mistake.
3. Take a breath and squeeze the DBs hard with your hands.

4. Push the floor down and away from you, as you drive the DBs up over head.
5. Look slightly up during the Press.
6. Keep your gluts pinched tight like your holding a coin between your cheeks to protect your lower back
7. Exhale through the sticking point until the DBs are over your head
8. Their finished position will be somewhere between parallel to each other and 45 degrees in your hands, so when they touch overhead, they form a 90 degree angle.

### The Lockout

1. When the DBs are overhead, they are in the Lockout Position.
2. Make sure you keep your gluts pinched in this position to keep your lower back protected
3. You may need to keep some tension in your abs, which also keeps your lower back protected

### The Descent

1. When the DBs are overhead, inhale, and lower the DBs back into the Rack. Remember to keep your gluts pinched and your abs slightly braced.
2. Exhale when the DBs are back in the Rack.
3. Inhale again, and then guide the DBs out of the rack using a “controlled fall/drop” to your sides, like the eccentric portion of a biceps curl, then to the floor.

Reset yourself for another Clean.