

Bar none! Barbells are the way to go!

Dumbbells and kettlebells are great for building total-body strength, but if you want to test how strong you really are, barbells are the way to go. Barbells allow you to lift heavier with more control since you're holding the bar with both hands and recruiting several muscles at once. In fact, according to the American Council on Exercise, barbell movements are one of the best ways to target large muscle groups and help strengthen functional movement patterns.

Hold the barbell with your hands shoulder-width apart, thumbs over the top of it. Dip under the bar and put it on top of your back. Raise your elbows and chest to rest the bar along your shoulders and below the base of your neck. Keep your chest and shoulders tight. Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart and slightly turned out, so your knees track over your feet. Squat down, pushing your butt back, until your thighs are parallel to the ground. With control, stand back up.



Barbell Lunge

Place the barbell just beneath the base of your neck and along your shoulders. Stand with your feet hip-width apart, elbows raised and abs engaged. Take a big lunge forward with your right leg and lower until your left knee is one to two inches off the ground. Explode up and bring your right leg back to the starting position. Repeat the same movement with the left leg. This is one rep.



Stand with your feet hip-distance apart and slightly turned out. Keep the bar directly over your mid-foot. Grip the bar with your hands just outside of your legs with your arms straight. Bend your knees, lowering them until your shins



Barbell Deadlift touch the bar. Keeping your back flat, drag the bar up your shins, slightly shifting your weight towards your heels. Continue to pull the barbell up until you're standing with your shoulders back and chest is raised. Lower the bar back down, bending your hips and knees, while maintaining a flat back and keeping the bar close to your shins.

Barbell Bench Press

Lie on your back on a bench and grasp the bar with your hands shoulder-width apart, feet flat on the ground. Lower the bar to your chest, tucking your elbows in at 45 degrees by your sides. Once the bar touches your chest, drive your feet hard into the floor and, without pausing, press the bar back up.

