



## COMMON WEIGHT ROOM ERRORS

The following common errors are from [www.fitstep.com/Library/Exercises/Exercises.htm](http://www.fitstep.com/Library/Exercises/Exercises.htm). Students should be encouraged to use this Web site to find additional information about their assigned exercise.

### Common Errors: Bench Press

**Bouncing the weight off the chest.** Always lower the weight under complete control. Allow it to touch your chest and then push off. Do not let it rest on your chest and do not bounce the bar off your chest. This action can not only damage your rib cage but also reduces the effectiveness of the exercise.

### Common Errors: Seated Cable Rows

1. **Pulling with the lower back.** This error stems from leaning forward at the waist at the start of the rep. To get into proper position for the exercise from that bent-forward position, you must lean back, tempting you to use that momentum to keep the movement going. Do not do this because it can strain the lower back.
2. **Leaning forward to get more stretch.** Although this does stretch the lower back, it does so in a harmful position to the lower back. It doesn't, however, increase the stretch on the target back muscles. Instead, let your arms stretch forward so that the stretch occurs at the scapulae (shoulder blades).
3. **Rowing with a straight or hunched back.** Contrary to popular belief, arching your back is not necessarily harmful.
  - Arching your back excessively can be harmful, but the arch, besides being one of the strongest architectural structures, is the normal, proper position of your back.
  - The arch is also essential for activating the lats because they cannot be activated without an arch in your back.
  - Rowing with a straight back forces you to rely on your biceps and upper back more, at the expense of the lats, and can lead to back strain.



## **COMMON WEIGHT ROOM ERRORS** *(continued)*

### **Common Errors: Biceps Curls**

**Leaning back.** In an effort to keep going, people often lean back at the end of the set as the weight starts to get heavy.

- This action is potentially dangerous to your lower back.
- If you can't complete the rep in the good form, go as far as you can, hold it there for as long as you can, and then lower the weight.

### **Common Errors: Triceps Push-Downs**

**Not controlling the weight on the way up and using momentum on the way down.** This is a combination of errors. If you don't control the weight as it comes up, you will have to use elastic force from the back muscles to rebound the weight back down.

- This rebound back down reduces triceps activation.
- If you continue to use momentum on the way down and don't squeeze the triceps during the movement, then you will get little out of this exercise except perhaps a backache.
- Do this exercise in a slow, controlled manner.

### **Common Errors: Seated Dumbbell Press**

**Not pressing the dumbbells directly overhead.** People may tend to press the dumbbells in a forward diagonal press so that they end up out in front of the head.

- This action occurs because of relative strength imbalances. Because the front muscles of many people are stronger than their back muscles, the dumbbells get pulled to the front.
- You must consciously press up and back to correct this, keeping your elbows back as you do so.
- Use a mirror to be sure that you are pressing the dumbbells directly overhead.
- Also, get feedback from a spotter, who can gently guide the dumbbells to the proper position.

### **Common Errors: Leg Extensions**

**Not squeezing at the top.** The best part of this exercise occurs at the contraction when your legs are straight. To get the most out of it, hold the contraction at the top for a few seconds and then lower the weight.

### **Common Errors: Leg Curls**

**The glutes come up during the exercise.** This action takes some of the tension off the hamstrings because the glutes are assisting the movement. This can place undue pressure on the lower back and reduces the effectiveness of the exercise. Using too much weight can force you to have to lift your glutes. If this is the case, reduce the weight and concentrate on keeping your hips down.

### **Common Errors: Lunges**

**Leaning forward on the way down.** This action can cause you to lose your balance and can place unnecessary stress on your back. Always strive to keep your upper body vertical. Do these in a mirror so that you can watch your form. Be sure to focus on sitting back during the descent.

### **Common Errors: Standing Calf Raises**

**Bending and straightening the knees during the raise.** This action brings the quads and glutes into the movement, reducing the tension on the calves. Always keep your knees stiff but not locked to isolate the calf muscles and minimize the involvement of other muscles.