

Barbell Push Press

This press allows you to load up the most weight above all other overhead pressing moves. It's considered a bit more of a whole-body movement for developing explosiveness, so you lose some of the isolation effect if you do this same movement seated. With the barbell atop your upper chest, bend your knees slightly and explode upward on the balls of your feet while pressing the bar overhead. This is considered more of a strength movement than a bodybuilding exercise, but building more strength here can help you load up more plates in any number of other lifts. Moreover, doing movements that engage a great deal of muscle mass boost muscle-building hormones better than movements that don't.



Upright Row

There's another family of multijoint movements that also targets the middle delts; upright rows. Don't take a close grip, which can internally rotate your shoulders; instead, take one in which your upper arms go directly out to your sides.

While a closer grip increases range of motion, a wider grip has been demonstrated to have significantly greater delt activation, minimizing the biceps' role in the movement.[3] That means it's great for the middle delts.

How? Even though it's a multijoint movement, don't do this first in your workout. Consider doing it after your overhead press. It can even be done as a burnout move at the end of your routine, if you're looking to bring up the middles.

Seated Overhead Barbell Press

Sitting not only makes it hard to use momentum, it also creates a nice base from which to push the weight. A barbell recruits a greater degree of triceps musculature than dumbbells can. If you've got sore shoulders, stick to keeping the bar in front of you. *When you lower the barbell to the front, notice how your upper arms no longer move directly out to your sides, an indication that the anterior delts are now picking up some of the workload. In fact, this is evident in muscle activation patterns, which demonstrate significantly greater anterior delt activation with a barbell over dumbbells. Some lifters lower the bar behind their head, which more directly stimulates the middle delts. We discourage this approach, which even many longtime lifters find painful.*

