

I'm not a robot































Weightlifting bars come in all shapes and sizes. This is something you don't think much about, but different workouts require different pieces of equipment. Even the straight barbell used for exercises like squats, deadlifts, and bench press can have slight variations weight and dimensions. From Olympic lifters to Crossfitters, powerlifters to bodybuilders, there is a special barbell for everyone. While they may all look similar, there are subtle differences, like thickness, rigidity, knurling, and grip markings. These features are designed for specific purposes and can have a dramatic difference on the performance of a given exercise, especially for more experienced lifters. However, most barbells generally fall in the range of 7 feet in length and weighs 44 pounds. The well-informed lifter will be able to spot these differences and know how and when to use each type of barbell. This knowledge will set you up for success in your workouts, particularly as you become more advanced, and in this you will see why. This article will specifically define the straight barbell and its functions. Then we'll discuss the various types of straight barbells and all their applications (there's a barbell size comparison chart at the end). Again, we'll be discussing straight barbells, as seen here: What Is A Barbell? A barbell is a straight bar designed to support compound movements with heavy weight plates (deadlift, squat, OHP, bench press, snatches, cleans, etc.). The barbell dates back to the mid-1800's, making a relatively recent invention compared to dumbbells and other equipment (note: forms of a "dumbbell" do back as far as 5th century BC!). The barbell, frankly, is arguably the most versatile and valuable piece of exercise equipment, and should be suitable for most exercises and populations. As such, it's important for lifters to know as much as possible about it. Want to get stronger by following a proven workout program? Check out our SFS Strength Program developed by Garrett Reed (NSCA, CSCS, CISSN, M.S.E.S.S.). Prepare to maximize your strength with our exclusive 13-week strength training program. 3, 4, and 5 day per week programming options. Modern Barbells Here are the most commonly encountered straight barbells. We'll discuss these in detail shortly: Standard Olympic Multipurpose Powerlifting Deadlift Bar Squat Bar Women's The modern barbell is generally 7 feet in length and weighs 44 pounds. A barbell consists of a long, thin shaft, about 28mm (~1") thick. The shaft has knurling, or engraved crosshatches, that increase grip, as well as grip markings which are defined to know where your hands should be for certain exercises. On either end of the shaft are two thick sleeves that hold weighted plates. The sleeves are commonly 2" in diameter and spin independently of the shaft. This spinning is intentional and allows excess torque to dissipate through the plate and not transfer to the limbs. Barbells share similar properties, but differ in a few key areas: Weight: The weight of a barbell is a function of the materials from which it's composed. The weight will impact how easily it can move as well as durability and strength. Most bars weigh 20kg (44lbs). Handle dimensions: The shaft is where you grip the bar. This length can differ to afford greater grip or maximize the amount of weight the bar can support. The shaft thickness often also differs across bars, but generally they will range from 28-29mm in diameter. Knurling: The knurling is an engraved pattern on the shaft that provides a rough surface to enhance grip. The pattern and dimensions of the knurling will vary across barbells (i.e. some will have knurling at the center of the handle, some will not). Whip: This can be thought of as up and down flex. This is important for Olympic lifts such as cleans and snatches, but not great for power lifts like squats. The greater whip adds momentum to complete the movement more cleanly. Grip markings: Barbells have smooth rings about 32" -36" apart on the shaft. These are to help guide the lifter for intuitive hand placement. These markings are based on Olympic and powerlifting standards and represent competition grip positions. These attributes are not easy to spot unless you know what to look for, but they are crucial and determine a barbell's application. You should keep in mind that, despite these differences, the sleeves remain consistent across barbells. They are all 2" and support a variety of different weight plates (iron, rubber coated, etc.). Weights are similar to barbells in that they vary in construction and materials, which has to do with the application. Note: For beginners, pretty much any straight barbell will be suitable, but the nuances in design become more important as you lift heavy and/or explosively. Below we will take a closer look at the above barbell types and summarize their features and uses. You can read this for a very in-depth look at different types of barbells, materials, applications, and so on. We also highly recommend reading our article on the 12 Types Of Weightlifting Bars for more information. Standard Barbell Size & Weight A standard barbell is the smallest and least practical barbell on the list. You will not find a standard barbell in any commercial gym. These are mainly used for beginner home gyms. Standard Barbell Dimensions: Length: Between 66" and 72"; always shorter than a traditional bar at your local gym. Shaft dimensions: The entire bar, shaft and sleeves, is 1" thick. The sleeves do not rotate independently from the shaft as they are part of it. Knurling: The knurling on standard bars is similar to true weightlifting bars and is mildly aggressive. Standard barbells cannot accommodate traditional plates (they need 1" plates), and they can only support up to ~250 pounds. They are ideal for low intensity workouts and confined spaces, but should not be used to perform complex, heavy power movements (e.g. deadlift, squat, cleans, snatches). Olympic Barbell: The Olympic barbell is among the most common and versatile barbells. Many smaller gyms will simply be stocked with just Olympic bars, but big commercial gyms will have a variety of barbells, of course, including plenty of Olympic barbells. Olympic bars are designed specifically for Olympic lifting, like the clean & jerk or snatch. They are designed to provide greater-than-average whip and fast-moving sleeves. That said, unless you are lifting quite heavy, an Olympic bar will be perfectly fine for the general population who do exercises like deadlifts, bench press, and squats. Most people won't be able to notice any whip as they simply aren't lifting heavy enough for it to come into play. Olympic barbell specs: Weight: Men's - 20kg (44 pounds); women's - 15kg (33 pounds) Length: 86.6" (~7'4") Shaft length and diameter: 51" (male and female); diameter - 28mm (men's); 25mm (women's) Knurling: 4" (men's); no center knurling on women's bars Grip markings: 910mm (36") Whip: High, to preserve momentum for dynamic lifts Sleeve spin: Olympic bars have sleeves with smooth, fast bearings (often called needle bearings), which allow the bar to spin rather than getting caught by the momentum of the plates Make note that a lot of people just call any straight barbell with 2" sleeves an Olympic barbell, as opposed to the 1" sleeve of standard bars. This isn't technically true as an Olympic bar will have the specific weight, dimensions, knurling and whip mention above. There are other types of barbells with 2" sleeves as you are about to read. If you'd like to see how the Olympic and standard bars compare, check out our article on the Olympic barbell vs standard bar. Powerlifting Barbell: Powerlifting barbells are designed specifically for powerlifting, e.g. deadlift, squat, bench press (the "Big 3 Lifts"). Power bars resemble Olympic bars, but there are a few important differences for powerlifting. Powerlifting bars are manufactured to adhere to guidelines set by the International Powerlifting Federation. The following specs are based on those guidelines: Weight: 20kg, or 44 pounds Length: No more than 2.2 meters, or 7'4" Shaft dimensions: The shaft will be between 1.31 and 1.32 meters (51"-52") Shaft thickness: Between 28.5mm-29mm (usually 29mm though) Knurling: Some powerlifting bars have center knurling for back squats. Deadlifting bars do not. The length of center knurling may vary but is usually 4". The knurling on powerlifting bars is generally aggressive, as lifters must maintain a firm grip throughout a long, slow lift. Ring markings: On the shaft are two small markings that indicate official positions for certain lifts. These will be 910mm apart. This is not important for basic lifting Whip: Power bars have minimal whip. They are designed to be rigid so they can support weight without transferring momentum The key differences between Olympic and powerlifting bars are the whip and sleeve properties. These allow the lifter to generate and use momentum to lift effectively and safely. In reality, beginners and even intermediates will use an Olympic bar or power bar to the same effect. So, it's not going to be a big deal if you pick up an Olympic bar for lifts like squats. That said, pay attention to how the whip feels when doing exercises like squats and if you notice the bar is bouncing too much as you rep, it's time to find that powerlifting bar. Note: Power bars are best used for heavy squats, bench and OHP, where no flex in the bar is best, but deadlifting is actually a little different as some flex in the bar can be good for the lift (if you want to max out your PR). Multi-purpose Barbell: A multi-purpose (MP) barbell is actually the most common and versatile barbell in gyms. It is based on the Olympic barbell dimensions and is the most common barbell stocked by local gyms. The stiffness, knurling, and sleeve rotation are in the middle performance range - meaning, it's sort of like a hybrid of the power bar and Olympic bar. Multi-purpose Barbell Specs: Length: 2200mm (86", or 7'4") Weight: 20kg (44 pounds) Shaft: 28.5mm (1.1") in diameter; 1310mm (51.6") long (sleeve to sleeve) Knurling: Moderate, usually no center knurling; although you will find some with center knurling for use during squat movements Grip markings: 910mm (36") Multipurpose barbells have medium flex, so they are strong and sturdy when needed yet can also accommodate some more dynamic exercises like snatches. They also have bushings for the sleeves that allow them to work well for both fast and slow lifts. On top of that, they usually have double grip markings, meaning they will have the powerlifting grip markings and the Olympic bar grip markings. This is the easiest way to spot a multipurpose barbell - it will have double rings on both sides of the handles. Squat Barbell: Squatting is a movement that requires a longer and more rigid than normal barbell. Olympic bars are suitable for squatting, but new bars have emerged that are more suitable for the sport. On standard barbells, the biggest enhancements that the knurling and shaft diameter in combination, these create a stiffer, more stable bar. Squat barbell specs: Shaft diameter: Between 28"-32". This is to reduce whip. The squat movement is prone to generating excess momentum, which manifests as the up and down movement of whip. The thicker shaft is also more comfortable across the back Knurling: Squat bars have moderately aggressive center knurling between 4"-6" for grip across the shoulders Length: Squat bars will be between 86" and 90" Deadlift Barbell: As with squat bars, deadlift bars come in a few different varieties, of which we'll focus on two common types. A deadlift-specific straight bar is based on a traditional powerlifting bar, with some key differences for deadlifts, primarily the knurling and shaft length and thickness. Deadlift bar specs: Shaft dimensions: Between 27-28mm. This is thinner than a power bar and makes for a better grip. They are also longer than a traditional bar, ~92.5" long. Knurling: Deadlift bars have substantially aggressive knurling to aid in grip. They also lack knurling in the center of the bar. This is to prevent excess rubbing on the lifter's shins and upper legs. Deadlift bars Whip: Deadlift bars flex under a high load, so they are designed to generate high whip. This also creates a higher starting point, which reduces the range of motion. You can learn all about deadlift bars here. Women's Barbell: Any women's barbell is a shorter, lighter version of the men's Olympic multi-purpose bar. The knurling pattern and shaft length generally remain the same. Women's Olympic bars do not have center knurling. Women's bars measure 6.5 feet long and weigh 15kg (33 pounds) and have a 25mm diameter shaft. These are not as common as men's bars even at your local gym, so inquire with staff if you require a smaller bar. Women's bars are not made exclusively for women; they can be used by individuals with smaller stature or mobility issue. Safety Bar: The safety squat bar is a modified barbell designed to support the shoulders and provide a more secure grip. This bar will have handles at shoulder length that protrude perpendicular from the shaft. They are usually thickly padded. This helps the lifter achieve a better grip and more stability across the shoulders. It also reduces sheer forces on the spine and increases range of motion. Another modification is the cambered ends (sleeves). This feature pushes the weight slightly forward. This changes the center of gravity and effectively promotes a better range of motion. Straight Barbell Weight & Size Comparison Chart Let's summarize what we've discussed. There are several types of straight barbells - standard barbell, Olympic, powerlifting, deadlift, squat, and women's sized barbells. Since some of these are specialized, you're not likely to find them all at your local big-box gym. Most gyms will have multipurpose, Olympic and power bars (or just multipurpose barbells exclusively). That said, most will have safety bars and hex bars. Very few, and typically only private or specialty gyms, will have women's, deadlifting and squat bars - the latter are specialized bars that are expensive and require a certain skill to use. That said, here is a breakdown of the bars we discussed: Olympic: This bar is designed for Olympic-style lifting. These typically have no center knurling, a lot of whip, and very fast sleeve bearings. Power: Designed for power lifting movements but suitable for general weightlifting. These have very aggressive knurling to ensure maximum grip. They have whip that varies from low (squat bar) to moderate (deadlift). Multi-purpose: The most common bar you'll encounter. These are based on Olympic barbell dimensions and combine all the features to accommodate general weightlifting. They are ~7'4" with moderate knurling and medium whip. Squat: Similar to power bars. Squat bars often have a longer than normal patch of center knurling for grip across the back and shoulders. They have a thicker shaft, up to 32mm, for increased rigidity and comfort. Deadlift: These bars are similar to power bars, but have thinner shafts, no center knurling, and are slightly longer than normal power bars. The hex bar is another deadlift-specific bar in the shape of a hexagonal cage that aids with range of motion and form. Women's: Modified after Olympic-style bars, these are shorter than men's bars (6.5'), have a thinner shaft (25mm), and are lighter (15kg). Note: Barbells within the same category will also come with different coatings (or no coating at all), but that doesn't change any of the above weight or dimensions. Weight Total Length Sleeve Handle Diameter Whip/Flex Olympic 44lbs (20kg) 7.2 feet 2 inch 28mm High Power 44lbs (20kg) 7.2 feet 2 inch 29mm Low Multipurpose 44lbs (20kg) 7.2 feet 2 inch 28.5mm Medium Squat 53lbs (20kg) 7.2-7.8 feet 2 inch 28-32mm Low Deadlift 44lbs (20kg) 7.5 feet 2 inch 27mm Medium-High Women's 33lbs (15kg) 6.5 feet 2 inch 25mm High Standard 33lbs (15kg) 5.5-6 feet 1 inch 25mm n/a This summarizes the different types of barbells and their uses. The multi-purpose bar is sufficient for most lifters and is the one you'll find in most gyms. Olympic and power lifting require specialized equipment designed to maximize form and economize range of motion. You will find these types of bars at specialty gyms. That said, all of these barbells will work with a squat rack. The Gunner Barbell is a weightlifting, Olympic weightlifting, powerlifting, and multipurpose barbell ideal for moderate and experienced lifters. The 1,500 lb. weight rating gives you confidence... Related: What Barbell Should I Buy? The Ultimate Barbell Buyer's Guide Learn more about the Smith machine barbell in our article: Understanding Smith Machine Bar Weight. The most common barbell at most gyms weighs 45 lbs (20 kg). There are other types of bars, like women's specific barbells weighing 33 lbs (15 kg) and specialty barbells weighing up to 70 lbs.No matter which barbell you use, knowing the starting weight of the bar is essential for any good lift. Using a bar that is heavier than you thought could lead to injury, and using a barbell that is too light might leave you without the gains you worked for. As a seasoned trainer, I have used almost every type of barbell. I primarily use a standard 45 lb barbell for myself and my clients, but I often use specialty bars that vary in weight. My personal favorite is the trap bar because of how versatile it is.In this article, I'll provide the lifting bar weight for any kind of barbell you may find in your gym. You will learn descriptions of each barbell so you know the right one to use for your next workout. Here are some basics to understanding the anatomy of a barbell to help you visualize all the components contributing to the gym bar weight.Shaft: The shaft is the inner portion of the bar that connects the sleeves. While most barbells are slightly curved, hexagonal, or even in the shape of a ladder.Sleeves: The sleeve is the outer portion of a barbell where you load the plates.Collars: The collars prevent the weight plates from sliding onto the shaft of the bar. A rough cross-sectional pattern helps the lifter grip the barbell better. The knurling is located on the shaft of the bar. A rough cross-sectional pattern helps the lifter grip the barbell better. Check out our list for the 14 best barbells for your home gym.Olympic barbells are generally accepted as the standard barbell in most fitness facilities. Generally, these bars are 7' long, have a 28 mm diameter shaft, weigh 45 lbs (20 kg), have sleeves that rotate, and accommodate weight plates with a 2-inch insert.Technically, a standard barbell has a 1-inch diameter shaft and sleeves, spin lock collars, and a substantially limited weight-bearing capacity. These are an overall type of barbell, but there are more specific types.Source: Rogue FitnessA general-purpose bar like the Rogue Fitness OH Bar is ~45 lbs (20 kg) and ~7 ft long (86.6 inches) with a 28 mm diameter shaft. The knurling on a bar is medium. It will help you hold onto the bar when lifting heavy weights but won't rip your hands to shreds if you're doing high-rep barbell workouts.This bar can be used for heavy, low-rep powerlifting and Olympic lifting or lower-weight, high-rep CrossFit-style training. It is meant to be the workhorse of barbells in your local gym and is designed to take a beating.Source: Rep FitnessMen's Olympic weightlifting bars like the REP Fitness Gladiator Olympic Barbell are ~45 lbs (20 kg) and ~7 ft long (86.6 inches) with a 28 mm diameter shaft and medium knurling.A significant difference between a general-purpose bar and an Olympic weightlifting barbell is that an Olympic weightlifting barbell is designed to aid, or bend, with the weight for ease of use when performing the snatch or the clean and jerk.You can order an Olympic weightlifting bar from some manufacturers without the center knurling, making it indistinguishable from a general-purpose bar.Source: Rogue FitnessThe general-purpose bar and Olympic weightlifting bar both have a "women's" alternative.Women's Olympic weightlifting bars like the Rogue Fitness Bella Bar 2.0 are ~6.5 ft long (79.13 inches) with a 25 mm diameter shaft and medium knurling (depending on the bar type you get). These bars generally come without a center knurling.How much does this barbell weigh? Unlike men's Olympic weightlifting bars, women's bars weigh ~35 lbs (15kg).Despite the name, these bars are not just for women. The women's bar has a smaller shaft diameter for young athletes and people with small hands, allowing for better grip while training. A women's bar may be a great alternative if your training partner has smaller hands or you don't have much space to work within your home gym. These barbells do not take up as much space and are just as strong as their 45lb (20kg) counterparts. Check out our Bella Barbell review, where we discuss more of its pros and cons and who it's good for.Source: Rogue FitnessPowerlifting bars like the Rogue Fitness Oh Power Bar are ~45 lbs (20 kg) and ~7 ft long (86.6 inches) with a 28-29 mm diameter shaft and aggressive knurling. These barbells also feature a center knurling to help keep the bar in place during squats. Barbells designed for powerlifting are designed NOT to bend when lifting weights. In other words, they do not have a whip or bend like the Olympic weightlifting barbell.Due to the heavy nature of the powerlifting exercises, powerlifting barbells have a high maximum weight capacity, with most manufacturers boasting 2000+ lbs weight tolerance. Source: Marcy ProA short barbell, also known as a 5' bar, weighs between 15-25 lbs (7-11 kg). The Rogue Fitness C-60B short bar weighs 25 lbs (11 kgs) and is 5 ft long (60 inches) with a 28.5 mm diameter shaft. Short Olympic Weightlifting Barbells are a great option for beginner lifters because it is lighter and easier to balance compared to general purpose and Olympic bars. Exercise like lat rows, bicep curls, and shoulder press can be easily performed with this bar.Pro Coach's Tip: 5' Short Bars have a shorter distance between collars, so it can NOT be racked on a standard power rack. Specialty bars, such as a safety squat bar or deadlift-specific barbell, are used for specific purposes. A specialty barbell's size depends on its structure, specifications, and intended use.Source: Titan FitnessA deadlift bar like the Titan Series Deadlift Bar from Titan Fitness is specific to the deadlift and serves as a great tricep extension bar. Not all EZ curl bars are the same. Learn more about the different types of EZ curl bars in our article: EZ Bar Weights: 4 Types, Sizes, & Capacities.Source: Titan FitnessThe Titan Fitness Hex Weight Bar weighs 44 lbs (20 kg) and is 4.6 ft (56 inches) long, has a 28mm diameter shaft and medium knurling. The whip of the bar before they begin an aggressive drive. The aggressive knurling prevents the hands from slipping while moving heavy weight.Source: Rogue FitnessSquat bars generally have larger features. The Rogue Squat Bar weighs 55 lbs (25 kg) and is about 7.8 ft (94.48 inches) long with a 32 mm diameter shaft and medium knurl. The knurling on a squat bar extends throughout the shaft to allow for a better grip across the upper back. This bar has no whip, which helps create a more stable lift. The large diameter shaft makes for a more comfortable weight distribution across the upper back.Read the ultimate guide about the squat bar in our article How Much Does A Squat Bar Weigh? 7 Types ExplainedSource: Titan FitnessThe bench press bar has a slight bend with larger features, weighing 60 lbs (27.2 kg). The Yukon Bar from Titan Fitness and the Rogue Fitness CB-4 Camber Bar are about 8 ft (96 inches) long with a 32-38 mm diameter shaft, aggressive knurling, and no whip. These bars also have a center knurling.Bench press bars have a bend along the shaft for better upper-body stability during the bench press. The bend in the bar, which ranges from 4-6 inches, allows the weights to sit slightly lower and creates a lower center of gravity for easier lifting.The bend in the shaft also helps alleviate the pressure a regular straight shaft places on the wrist.For a full breakdown of the bench press bar, check out our article How Much Does A Bench Press Bar Weigh?Source: Titan FitnessThe Titan Fitness Triceps Bar weighs 22 lbs (10 kg), is 2.8 ft (34 inches) long, has a 25 mm shaft diameter, and has medium knurling.The tricep barbell has two parallel handles within the square frame. It is designed to ease discomfort on the wrists and forearms when doing tricep extensions.Source: Rogue FitnessAn EZ curl bar like the Rogue Curl Bar weighs 30 lbs (13.6 kg) and is 4.5 ft (54.5 inches) with a 28.5 mm diameter shaft and multiple knurling patterns along the bar.EZ curl bars are designed to minimize wrist and forearm discomfort while performing the bicep curl. It also has a "women's" alternative. The REP Fitness technique bar weighs 15 lbs (6.8kg), is 4.25 ft (51 inches), has a 6 ft (72 inches), has a 22.2 inch to 29 mm diameter shaft, and has light to medium knurling.The second most common barbell is the women's barbell, which weighs ~35 lbs (15 kg), stands ~6.5 ft (79.13 inches), has a 25mm diameter shaft, and has medium knurling. Specialty barbells like safety squat bars and hex bars, and has medium knurling. Trap bars can weigh anywhere between 44-60 lbs (20-27 kg) depending on the manufacturer. This bar is used for various movements ranging from squat jump training, deadlifts, shrugs, and bent-over rows.Wondering about how heavy different brands of trap bars are? Read on. How Much Does a Trap Bar Weigh, to find out!Source: Titan FitnessCamber bars weigh 45 lbs (20 kg), are about 7 ft (84 inches) long, have a 28 mm diameter shaft, and have medium knurling.All camber bars, like the Titan Fitness Cambered Bench Press Bar, are slightly bent along the main shaft to provide an additional range of motion. The slight bend also helps decrease the center of gravity, which makes lifts like the squat easier to balance. They come in different variations for bench, squat, and multi-grip applications.Source: Rogue FitnessBamboo bars like the BandBell Bar offer less rigidity but just as much benefit to your lifts. They weigh 6 lbs (2.7 kgs), are 6.6 ft (80 inches) long, have a 38 mm (1.5 inches) diameter, and have no knurling.While these bars are very light, they can hold up to 300 lbs (136.4 kg). They are designed to wobble and wobble while lifting to build stability around your joints. The bamboo bar is equally amazing and humbling. Check out our full review of the BandBell Bamboo Bar.Source: Rogue FitnessSafety squat bars like the Rogue Fitness SB-1 squat bar are one of the largest specialty barbells on the market. They weigh ~70 lbs (31.8 kg), are about ~7.5 ft (92.5 inches) long, have a 25mm (1 inch) to 38 mm (1.5 inch) diameter shaft, and have no knurling. Safety squat bars are designed to minimize the discomfort of a barbell resting on your back by adding a thick foam pad fixed in the center of the bar. The sleeves are lowered to decrease the weight's center of gravity for better balance. Two handles jut out from the main bar to provide ease of use for those with shoulder mobility issues.Source: Rep FitnessTraining or technique bars are much smaller than all the other bars mentioned, ranging in weight from 5.5 lbs (2.5kg) to 15 lbs (6.8kg). 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