

# Stop bench pressing, dumbass!

**ASK ROCCO**  
WITH  
**ROCCO CASTELLANO**

**When I was** 17 years old I was working for my cousin in a gym that would later become mine. At the North Jersey Health Club, I noticed many of the members, including myself, had sustained shoulder injuries. If it wasn't the right shoulder this week, it was the left shoulder two weeks ago. It seemed like everyone at the gym was working through a bad shoulder. This shoulder shit was beginning to become an epidemic and I didn't even realize it was contagious.

I decided it was going to be my life's work, at all of 17, to figure out what was causing this crazy shoulder problem among the members. I started watching every member that had a shoulder problem or who bitched about having a bad shoulder.

Now, I need to give you a little background. North Jersey Health Club was the second gym in Bergen County where I grew up ... all the "machines" were plate loaded and most were handmade by a member who welded. At any given time of the day it sounded like cars being crushed at a junkyard. Real weight was literally being thrown around.

Everyone dead lifted, squatted and bench pressed. When you talked about "core", you were talking about core exercises: dead lift, squat and bench. When you benched, you benched - and you always had at least two 45s on each side, even if you were 14 years old.

My cousin would let the weight bury me with "negatives." For the bench press challenged, that means he put 225 pounds on a bar and had me lower the weight, because I couldn't raise it on my own; this is known as an eccentric movement.

I was never any good at physics in high school, mostly because I didn't think it would serve me in my pursuits. Well, I soon found out physics was going to be a huge part of my career choice. Remember when I said that it seemed like everyone in the gym had a shoulder problem? In my initial observation

I noticed everyone who had something wrong with their shoulder threw a lot of weight on the bench - and I was one of them.

Being a boxer and martial artist I needed my shoulders and hated having to always work through pain. It sucked and I was going to do something about it.

I asked my favorite science teacher if there could be a connection between shoulder injuries and bench pressing. He didn't think so, at first.

We went down to the weight room after school and he watched me bench press. After about two sets of 15 reps, I started my third set, and he noticed my left elbow seemed lower and more forward than my right elbow. That's when the calculator came out and he started doing a bunch of calculations. He told me that my bench press technique was putting undue stress on my shoulder because my elbow and wrist's natural angle couldn't hold a linear object.

I know, my head spun around like Linda Blair in "The Exorcist" when I heard it, too. I didn't understand one word in that sentence except for bench press technique, and I was hoping I heard that right.

We went back up to his classroom and he drew a model on the chalkboard to illustrate what he was talking about. I began digging into every

science book that had the muscular system in it and paid close attention to how physics played a major role in human balance and leverage. In all this studying and research (which I never got extra credit for) I realized that my wrists were naturally at an almost 45 degree angle, so when I introduced a straight bar, a linear object, into an angled environment, it created a weakened environment - thus, a shoulder injury.

I went back to work with a fire under my ass like there never was before. With the help of my science teacher, I figured out why all

the members were getting hurt. At 17 I felt like Albert Einstein with a new discovery, screw  $E=MC^2$ , I just saved my friends and gym members a future full of pain. Rocco Castellano, boy genius. I couldn't tell everyone in the gym to stop benching because they would have thrown me out on my ass. No, I had to use my newfound boy genius head and come up with some type of test to show them why they couldn't bench press anymore.

For two days I toiled. I racked my brain until it rattled, and then it hit me, literally. When I was putting back some dumbbells I accidentally hit the brush part of a broom leaning against the wall; the handle hit me on the side of the head. I unscrewed the handle of the broom and held it in my right hand. Here was my "portable" linear object. In my hand you could easily see how angled my wrist was. When I pushed down on the top part of the broomstick my wrist became weaker than when it was in the angled position. This is where it was causing undue stress on my shoulder. I tested everyone in my gym.

I told all the members with angled wrists to stop bench pressing and to use only dumbbells in any pressing or pulling movements. Shoulder injuries were reduced by 95 percent. I think they could have been reduced by 100 percent but there were a bunch of idiots who didn't believe me and kept benching. They're still in pain.

*The views and opinions expressed in Ask Rocco are the views and/or opinions of the author and do not reflect the views and/or opinions of the Dayton City Paper or Dayton City Media and are published strictly for entertainment purposes.*



Rocco Castellano is the author of "askROCCO Uncensored v1," a speaker and a controversial fitness personality who has won an Emmy for his fitness training role in MTV's *Made*. For more information, please visit [roccocastellano.com](http://roccocastellano.com).



## HWC WOMEN'S RESEARCH

### Recruiting now!

For the following studies:

- Pap Smear Study
- Vaginal Atrophy
- Low-Sex-Drive
- Uterine Fibroid
- Pap Smear/HPV Assay
- Hot Flash
- Birth Control Patch



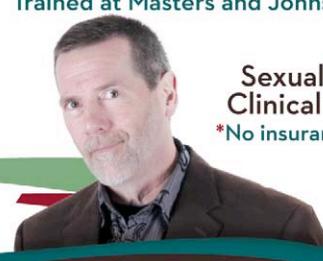
[HWCWomensResearch.com](http://HWCWomensResearch.com)  
937-771-5103



20 W. WENGER ROAD  
ENGLEWOOD, OH 45322

## All Matters Sexual

Relational / Clinical / Legal  
Trained at Masters and Johnson Institute



Sexual Health and  
Clinical Psychology

\*No insurance necessary\*



**Dr. Frederick Peterson**



937.479.0008 (ask for "Doc Pete") [SexualHealthEducators.com](http://SexualHealthEducators.com)





Go for  
Optimal  
Health

## Low T Done Right

Call for FREE consult:  
**937 310 1304**



1940 N. Lakeman Dr., Bellbrook 45305

**[SynergisticHealthCenters.com](http://SynergisticHealthCenters.com)**





- Simply the most effective exercise technique available.
- Lift your seat, tone your thighs and burn fat in record time
- Discover the workout that is transforming bodies nationwide

62 W. Franklin St.  
Centerville, Ohio 45459



937.535.2876 [PureBarre.com](http://PureBarre.com)