

Smith Machine - SAY YES

The Smith machine is a piece of equipment similar to a squat rack but the barbell is set between metal rails so it moves along a fixed track. Opponents of the Smith Machine say that it does not activate the same amount of muscle as traditional free weight version. That maybe the case, but in many cases because of safety the Smith Machine is a viable option. But remember the prime movers are still getting load exposed to them using a Smith machine or free weights. They do not know the difference. IT WOULD BE GREAT TO HAVE THE ABILITY TO USE FREEWEIGHT CAGES WITH BARBELLS BUT WHEN THAT IS NOT ALLOWED A SMITH MACHINE IS A VIABLE OPTION. JUST MAKE SURE YOU DO NOT SACRIFICE GOOD MECHANICS WHEN USING. That means you might not be able to go as deep in the squat, deadlift, or bench press.

[stack.com](#) says No to the Smith Machine, I say Yes !

1. It puts the body in unnatural positions

The Smith machine does nothing to help obtain this goal. By forcing your Squat into a fixed bar path, your body is forced to adapt to the equipment. This often results in poor form, an increased risk of injury and an underwhelming amount of muscle activation. This applies not only to the Smith Machine Squat, but also to Smith Machine Bench Press, Smith Machine Overhead Press, Smith Machine Split Squat, etc. **THEREFORE, TRY TO NOT FORCE UNNATURAL MOTIONS TO MIMIC THE ACTUAL FREE BAR MOTION.**

2. It only trains the prime movers

In every movement that occurs in the human body, there are skeletal muscles performing one of four functions: prime mover, antagonist, synergist and fixator. When training with free weights, muscles must work to fill all four functions. But on a Smith machine, all the stability is already provided for you. There's little preventing the prime mover from performing its job, as the bar is on a track and cannot move anywhere but up or down. This reduces the need for the antagonist, synergist and fixator functions. The Smith Machine takes a Squat, which is an incredibly complex movement requiring the coordinated effort of your entire body in unison, and essentially turns it into a Leg Extension. **STUDIES HAVE SHOWN THAT THE SMITH MACHINE DOES ENGAGE THOSE MUSCLES ([Study](#)).**

3. Little to no transfer to athletics

The Smith machine allows for unrealistic movement patterns, meaning it does not train you to move in every day life. Every exercise you do should have transfer to the way you move in sport, and the Smith machine, with its fixed bar path and total lack of instability, does not. **THIS MIGHT NOT BE TOTALLY THE CASE. A STUDY COMPARING SMITH MACHINE TO FREE WEIGHTS FOUND SIMILAR IMPROVEMENTS. THESE FINDINGS SUGGEST THAT HIGH STABILITY REQUIREMENTS (FW) CAN INCREASE MUSCLE PROPERTIES SIMILAR TO TRAINING WITH LOWER STABILITY REQUIREMENTS (SM). ([STUDY](#))**