

Weight Gain

Weight Gain Keys

Take in more calories than you burn each day

Eat 6 or more times every day

Make sure you're getting enough protein (the building block of muscle)

Make sure you're getting enough carbohydrates (the fuel for muscle)

Practice good recovery nutrition

Remember that dehydration, inadequate sleep, and high stress levels can work against you

WARNING Many athletes who want to gain weight make the mistake of eating lots of high-fat foods (such as fast foods, fried foods, etc.). Keep focused on the fact that you are trying to gain muscle (and not body fat) and stay as healthy as you can, so the quality of what you eat matters! Also, be patient: Gaining muscle takes TIME. Aim for 1–3 pounds per week—more than that is probably not lean muscle tissue.

What you need to know

Most athletes should focus on gaining muscle (lean mass) while maintaining or even reducing body fat. The recipe for success is simple, but takes lots of hard work and consistency. A good weight room regimen goes hand-in-hand with your nutrition plan.

Successful weight gain requires the body to be in positive energy balance, meaning you are taking in more calories than you are burning on a consistent basis. As a start, add 1,000–1,500 calories to the amount you already are eating.

What if I don't like counting calories?

If you don't want to actually count up the calories you eat, just eat 6 or more times a day. If you're taking in fuel this frequently (every 2–3 hours), you'll be boosting your calories as long as you choose high-energy foods. No meal needs to be huge—you don't need to feel stuffed—because you'll be eating again shortly. Try having breakfast, lunch, and dinner, with 3 or more additional snacks.