



YOUR GUIDE TO INCREASING MUSCLE MASS

embody
NUTRITION CONSULTING

WHY INCREASE MUSCLE MASS?

This is one of the most common goals that we see in both men and women!

Setting this goal could be based around increasing strength and athletic performance, it could be based on aesthetics or it could be used as a way to prevent or recover from injuries. In any case, your nutrition will play a key role in helping you to achieve this goal. This will mean some extra planning and preparation will be required to ensure you are supplying your muscles with adequate fuel that they need to grow.

Although many people have the goal to increase their muscle mass, very few want to increase their body fat at the same time. Careful planning with nutrition is so important to minimise increases in body fat, however, you can expect to gain a small amount of body fat during this process.

For this to be achievable, you need to set yourself a reasonable time frame and be realistic in your expectation of how much muscle you are going to be able to put on. Training, nutrition and genetics are the main factors to consider when it comes to increasing muscle mass.

With optimal training and nutrition protocols, you could expect to increase your muscle mass by 0.25-0.5kg per week initially – but it takes a long time and a lot of dedication to put on a significant amount of mass.

You may choose to monitor your progress by analysing your body composition via skinfolds or body scans (such as DEXA or InBody Scans). Progress photos can also be an effective way to objectively track your progress. Finally, you may just be happy to gauge your progress on how you feel, how your clothes fit and your performance in training.



HOW TO INCREASE MUSCLE MASS

ENERGY SURPLUS

The most important nutritional considerations for increasing muscle mass is consuming adequate energy through food. We find that some clients find this concept very hard to initially adopt – particularly if you have been restricting your energy intake for a long time.

It is vital that your muscles are receiving adequate energy to not only recover, but GROW. This energy will need to come from all three macronutrients – protein, carbohydrates and fat. There is absolutely no need to cut out any one of these nutrients as they are all important for both increasing muscle mass and everyday bodily functions.

You will need to take care when estimating your energy intake as consuming too much energy will cause greater increases in body fat, yet too little energy will not facilitate muscle growth.

There are two options that you could use to estimate your energy requirements (any calculation will always be an ESTIMATE and you can use this as a starting point).

1. Use an online calculator such as TDEEcalculator.net where you can put in your details and it will estimate your maintenance calories (the amount you need to maintain your current weight). You will need to eat more than this to be in an energy surplus.
2. Track your normal food intake for a week using an app such as Easy Diet Diary. If your weight is currently stable, then your average intake over the week is a good estimate of your maintenance calories. Again, you will need to eat more than this to be in an energy surplus.

Monitoring your progress is one of the best ways to know for sure if your energy intake is too little, too much or just the right amount.

HOW TO INCREASE MUSCLE MASS

OPTIMAL PROTEIN INTAKE

Alongside an energy surplus, consuming protein in the right amounts, at the right times, is also key to increasing your muscle mass.

To optimise protein intake, it is recommended that you consume high quality protein sources at least four times per day. One of these feedings should automatically come before your workout, and one will also fall after your workout. This concept is called 'sandwiching' and it has been shown to be effective in optimising gains in lean mass.

For example, if you workout in the afternoon, your lunch will be your pre workout meal and your afternoon tea will be your post workout meal. It is important to consider adding a pre workout meal or snack if you are training first thing in the morning.

Current recommendations for protein intake for optimising muscle growth sits between 1.6-2.2g per kg of bodyweight per day or 0.4-0.55g per kg per meal. So for someone who weighs 80kg, this would mean they need to consume 128-176g per day or 32-44g per meal.

Meticulously tracking every gram of protein you consume is not often necessary, but it is important to have an idea of what this would equate to in terms of food, and understanding the portions you will need in each meal to reach your goals.

HYPERTROPHY TRAINING PROGRAM

Of equal importance to nutrition, is following a quality and personalised hypertrophy program. A strength and conditioning coach can help you develop an effective training program to achieve the right balance between resistance and other training.

COMMON ISSUES WITH INCREASING MUSCLE MASS

DIFFICULTY EATING LARGE VOLUME OF FOOD

It can be really difficult for some people to consume the sheer volume of food that they need to create an energy surplus. This can also be difficult if the person has not planned or prepared their food for the day.

Here are some tips if you are struggling to get all of your food in.

- Swap foods that you already eat, to ones that are higher in energy. Some examples include:
 - Lite milk to full cream milk
 - Green veges to starchy veg like potato and sweet potato
 - A muesli bar that contains 120 calories to one that contains 200 calories
 - A 'high protein' yoghurt such as YoPro or ChobaniFIT to a high protein full fat yoghurt such as Chobani or Jalna
- Add extra energy to your food without adding 'bulk'. Some examples include:
 - Add extra olive oil when cooking
 - Add nuts/seeds/avocado to meals
 - Add full fat dairy to meals – eg. cream, sour cream, cheese
 - Plan your food for the day and if you are going to be at work, school or away from home, make sure you have food that you can access.
 - Eat regularly throughout the day

JUST FOCUSING ON PROTEIN

This is a really common mistake that lots of people make when they want to increase their muscle mass – they consume LOTS of protein but fail to consider the other factors mentioned above.

Protein is just one part of the picture and consuming it in excess of what you need will not provide you with any further benefit.

RELYING TO HEAVILY ON SUPPLEMENTS

Supplement companies will have you believe that the ONLY way you can increase your muscle mass is by consuming any number of their high priced supplements. If you haven't nailed the basics when it comes to your nutrition, supplements will not magically grow your muscles for you.

There are a few, well researched supplements that can provide some benefit when working to increase your muscle mass and they are discussed below.

EFFECTIVE SUPPLEMENTS FOR INCREASING MUSCLE MASS

When looking to increase your muscle mass, supplements can play a small role in helping you to achieve this - IF all of your other factors (training and nutrition) are optimised. These are protein, creatine and caffeine.

PROTEIN POWDER

Protein powders can be an effective way to increase your protein and energy intake, however they are no more effective than food. What they are though, is convenient and portable, which can be really handy if you need to eat (or drink) on the run.

A whey protein isolate is a great option as you can consume this with water or add milk to increase the energy of the drink. You can also add this to meals such as oats, smoothies and baking.

CREATINE

Creatine can be taken by both men and women and can help improve your work capacity in the gym. You may be able to train at a higher intensity which in turn will improve your ability to build muscle.

The recommendations for creatine are 3-5g per day – this does not need to be taken at any specific time of day, but should be consumed alongside some form of carbohydrate.

CAFFEINE

Most of the pre-workout supplements on the market 'work' because they have caffeine in them. Caffeine has been shown to lower your perceived rate of exertion or how hard you think you are working.

Caffeine supplements are available but a good old coffee will also do the trick.

WANT MORE?

Unfortunately, knowledge does not equal power. We might know what to do, but it doesn't mean we do it. If you finished this eBook and found you still have lots of questions or concerns... we can help!

Our coaching package is perfect for athletes (of any level) looking to level up their nutrition. You'll get unlimited face-to-face and online support and accountability from your sports dietitian, unlimited meal plans and body composition assessment. If you just need questions answered or a quick check in, we offer stand alone initial and review appointments.

We also regularly post snippets of nutrition information and our favourite recipes across social media - so come and visit us there!

If you're not sure what's right for you, contact us and we can work together to find the best option for you.

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