Muscle Building Handbook

Before you read

The calorie surplus and protein amounts in this handout are general muscle-gain suggestions, not your individual prescription. Follow the calorie and protein goals in your treatment plan. DHEA is a hormone, not a routine workout supplement; review it with our team before use. Supplement examples and doses are not instructions to start them.

Reference: https://www.nccih.nih.gov/health/using-dietary-supplements-wisely

Muscle Building *Handbook*

WORKOUT, NUTRITION, AND RECOVERY TIPS TO INCREASE MUSCLE MASS

INTRO TO MUSCLE BUILDING

Why it Matters

Building muscle isn't just for bodybuilders, it's important for *everyone*. Your muscles control all your body movements - from climbing a flight of stairs to picking up a bag of groceries. That's why muscle mass is a crucial part of your overall health.

Why is Muscle Important?

Muscles don't just make you look good, they help your body work better. Case in point: **Muscle tissue burns more calories than fat**, even when you're at rest. This means that increasing your muscle mass can help rev up your metabolism!

Muscle even helps manage your blood sugar. When your muscles contract, they take up glucose from your bloodstream. Your cells can then use that glucose for energy, whether insulin is around or not.

The problem is that muscle mass declines with age. *The good news*? You can slow this decline and increase muscle mass with the right exercise and nutrition.



Benefits of Building Lean Muscle Mass

- Burn more calories
- Improve muscular endurance
- Protect your body from injury
- Support your joints
- Promote healthy bones
- Improve insulin sensitivity
- Boost mental well-being
- Promote good posture
- Slow age-related muscle loss
- Prevent chronic illness

MUSCLE BUILDING 101
The Basics

The process of gaining muscle mass is known as muscle hypertrophy. And it typically involves resistance training.



Resistance training, (aka strength training), is a type of exercise that uses a form of resistance, whether that be weights, resistance bands, or body weight, to build muscle strength and endurance.

Pushing yourself hard and lifting heavy weights creates small muscle tears, which your body then has to repair. The end result? Bigger muscles.

But your workout routine is just one piece of the puzzle. Nutrition and recovery play a huge role in muscle building too.

In this guide, we'll cover everything you need to know to help you build muscle, including the best workouts, what to eat, and how to recover. On top of that, we'll share the best supplements for muscle building to enhance your results.

But first, let's go over a key muscle-building tool: progressive overload.

What is Progressive Overload?

This strength training technique involves gradually increasing the intensity of your workouts. The goal is to challenge your muscles. That way, you grow stronger with each workout. Progressive overload could involve using heavier weights, or doing more reps, more sets, or reducing the rest time between sets.



WEIGHT LIFTING TIPS

To Build Muscle

1 - **Lift heavier weights.** To build muscle, opt for heavier weights and fewer reps over lighter weights and more reps. The weights should be heavy enough that the last 1-2 reps reach muscle fatigue.

2 - **Pick the right number of reps.** Generally 8-12 reps, reaching muscle fatigue is right for building strength. Fewer reps and heavier weight may be needed for building significant muscle volume. If performing 12 reps is too easy, try lifting heavier weights.

3 - **Incorporate compound exercises.** Compound exercises like squats, lunges, deadlifts, and bench presses use multiple muscle groups. Be sure to mix them into your routines, as well as isolated exercises like bicep curls.

4 - **Go light on cardio.** Overdoing it on cardio can interfere with muscle growth from strength training workouts. Light cardio 2-3 times a week is great, but try not to go overboard.

5 - **Use progressive overload.** To build muscle you need to gradually increase the intensity of your workouts. Some days this could mean heavier weights. Other days, it could mean more reps, more sets, shorter rest times, or better form.

6 - **Stick to a training schedule.** Building muscle takes consistency. Aim for 3-4 workouts a week, and you *will* see results over time!

NUTRITION TIPS
For Muscle Building

Nutrition is the second piece of muscle-building. To grow new muscle tissue, you need to supply your body with the right nutrients. Nutrition-wise, this means:

1 – **Eating more calories than you burn.** To build muscle volume, you need to eat more calories, plain and simple. Adding about *250-500 calories per day* is a good rule of thumb. This will give your body the extra energy it needs to grow muscle from strength training. If upping your intake is challenging, look to high-calorie foods. Think full-fat yogurt, cheeses, nuts, nut butter, beans, sweet potatoes, or avocado. Or simply add in an extra protein shake!

2 – **Consuming more protein than you break down.** Proteins are the building blocks of muscle. So getting enough is crucial if you want to grow muscle. Aim for roughly 1 gram of protein per pound of body weight. Research shows this tends to be the sweet spot for muscle gains. If you're stumped on how to hit that goal, don't worry! We've included a list of high-protein foods below.

High Protein Foods

Animal-based

- 4 oz chicken breast: 35 grams
- 5 oz salmon: 30 grams
- 4 oz ground turkey: 30 grams
- 2 hard-boiled eggs: 12 grams
- 1 can tuna: 25-30 grams
- 1 tin of sardines: 23 grams
- 1 cup cottage cheese: 25 grams
- 1 cup Greek yogurt: 19 grams
- 1 scoop whey protein: 20 grams

Plant-based

- 1 cup cooked lentils: 18 grams
- 1 cup black beans: 15 grams
- 1 cup tofu: 20 grams
- 1 cup edamame: 17 grams
- 2 ounces of almonds: 12 grams
- 2 tbsp peanut butter: 8 grams
- 2 tbsp chia seeds: 5 grams
- 2 tbsp hemp seeds: 6 grams
- 1 scoop pea protein: 15-20 grams

MUSCLE RECOVERY

Why it Matters

Recovery is the final piece of muscle-building. As mentioned, lifting heavy weights creates micro-tears in your muscles. During the post-workout period, your muscle tissue recovers and becomes stronger.

That's why recovery time is crucial. **Overtraining or skimping on rest can interfere with the muscle repair process.** Here are some tips to help you recover:



Get enough sleep. Your body does most of its repair work while you snooze. On top of that, your body releases human growth hormone (HGH) during sleep, which helps your body build muscle. Shoot for 7 to 9 hours of sleep each night.



Check in with your body. Sore muscles are a sign your body needs a day to recover. If you're super sore, give that muscle group a break until the soreness subsides. In the meantime, you can work other muscle groups that aren't sore or take a day off.



Try active recovery. On recovery days, you don't have to skip workouts altogether Just aim for active recovery exercises like walking, light yoga, or gentle stretching. Or try a foam rolling routine to massage sore muscles.



Post-workout protein. Eating protein after workouts helps replenish your glycogen stores and speeds muscle repair. Aim for between 10-30 grams post-workout.

TOP SUPPLEMENTS
For Muscle Building

For muscle building, there's no replacement for resistance training and nutrition. However, certain supplements promote muscle growth and may give you an edge:

Creatine
Creatine is an amino acid that supplies your muscles with energy. It's shown to increase strength and muscle gains from workouts. A typical dosage is 20 grams a day for 5 days, followed by a maintenance dose of 2-5 grams a day. It's best taken shortly before or after your workouts.

BCAAs
Branch chain amino acids (BCAAs) consist of three amino acids: leucine, isoleucine, and valine. They're found in animal foods like meat, eggs, fish, and dairy, but come as supplements too. Studies show BCAAs may improve muscle gains and reduce soreness from workouts.

DHEA
Dehydroepiandrosterone (DHEA) is a steroid hormone that converts into testosterone and estrogen. DHEA is thought to improve athletic performance, but the research isn't rock solid. That said, some studies show it may help reduce fat mass and increase testosterone levels in men. This may help improve athletic performance in men with low testosterone.

HMB
Beta-hydroxy beta-methylbutyrate, or HMB for short, is a byproduct of the amino acid leucine. HMB is said to help prevent the breakdown of muscle protein. Supplementing with HMB is thought to reduce muscle damage from workouts and help improve muscle gains. The recommended dosage is usually 1.5-3 grams per day for between 3-12 weeks.