

Feeding Your Body to Gain Mass

Essential nutrients that will help you gain muscle, not fat!

By Anthony Ellis

The Need for Food

Not a day goes by that I don't receive dozens of emails from underweight men and women, wanting to know how to gain weight. Now that summer is just around the corner, the questions have accelerated. Everyone wants to know how to gain muscle in time for summer. They want to know why their current routine is not working for them. Typically, they go into great detail about their workout, but I never hear a word about their diet.

While weight training plays an important part in muscle building, it's your diet that will ultimately determine your weight gain success or failure. Weight training provides the signal for your body to build more muscle, but your diet provides the raw material necessary to actually construct the muscle.

If you want to gain more weight by summertime, you need to eat. Period. It's that simple. Anytime someone tells me that they cannot gain weight, my first question is what are you eating?

No matter what type of supplements you are using, or what type of workouts you are doing, you will NOT gain muscle without the proper diet. In fact, if your diet is bad, you may end up losing muscle or just getting fat.

The Wrong Way to Eat

Many times I will come across individuals who understand that they need to eat, but they are eating the wrong things. They figure that eating simply means eat anything you want. This is almost as bad as not eating anything at all.

If you want to gain muscle and not fat, do not make the assumption that all calories are equal. This will only lead to gaining large amounts of body fat.

For example, if I said that you need to eat 2,500 calories per day to gain weight, and you eat 4 bags of potato chips and 6 donuts each day, do you think you would gain muscle? Not likely.

The majority of your weight would be fat. Why? Because potato chips and donuts, like most processed junk food, contain empty, totally nutritionless calories. These foods do not provide you with the correct nutrient breakdown essential for gaining muscle. In addition, they accelerate the storage of fat and help to deteriorate your overall health by wreaking havoc with your blood sugar and increasing your bad cholesterol levels.

Here are two sample diets. Both provide the same amount of calories. If all calories were equal, then both diets will build muscle, but one will build a healthy, muscular body, the other will build fat, and promote poor overall health.

2,500 Calories	2,500 Calories
8am -- Meal 1 Myoplex, 1 tsp flaxseed oil. 432 calories, 42g of protein, 25g of carbs, 14g of fat	8am -- Meal 1 3 Donuts and a glass of OJ. 644 calories, 11g of protein, 100g of carbs, 24g of fat
11pm -- Meal 2 4 Whole Eggs w/ 1 cup of hash browns. 440 calories, 28g of protein, 36g of carbs, 20g of fat	11pm -- Meal 2 Grabbed a bag of chips and a soda. 440 calories, 4g of protein, 71g of carbs, 18g of fat
2pm -- Meal 3 6 oz. chicken breast with 1/2 cup of rice. 319 calories, 50g of protein, 23g of carbs, 7g of fat	2pm -- Meal 3 No time to eat. 0 calories, 0g of protein, 0g of carbs, 0g of fat
5pm -- Meal 4 4 whole eggs in a flour tortilla w/salsa. 367 calories, 24g of protein, 17g of carbs, 20g of fat	5pm -- Meal 4 Fast Food Dinner w/fries and a soda. 1180 calories, 30g of protein, 143g of carbs, 56g of fat
8pm -- Meal 5 Myoplex, 1tsp flaxseed oil. 432 calories, 42g of protein, 25g of carbs, 14g of fat	8pm -- Meal 5 Snack of 2 cookies. 140 calories, 1g of protein, 19g of carbs, 7g of fat
11pm -- Meal 6 6 oz grilled tuna with large baked potato, 1 cup of veggies. 450 calories, 48g of protein, 56g of carbs, 6g of fat	11pm -- Meal 6 Pre-bedtime snack of hot chocolate. 103 calories, 3g of protein, 23g of carbs, 1g of fat
Total Calories: 2,440 Protein: 234g Carbs: 182g Fat: 81g	Total Calories: 2,507 Protein: 49g Carbs: 356g Fat: 106g

The diet on the left is a diet that I have eaten in the past. The diet on the right is a diet someone emailed me when I asked them what they were actually eating. I will note that this person had an extremely high body fat, even though he was relatively thin.

Though his diet contains the same amount of calories, it does not have enough good quality protein, or complex carbs. The majority of his carbs come from sugar and the majority of his fat comes from saturated fat. This is an extreme case, but I hope that you get the picture.

Your ideal muscle building diet should provide you with plenty of high quality protein. That should be the focus of each meal. Next, you want to a fair amount of complex carbs, while lowering your overall intake sugar. Finally, you want to reduce your intake of saturated fat and replace it with good fat. You will not be able to totally eliminate saturated fat from your diet, but the majority of your fat should come from good fat sources.

If you focus on these few things, you will be miles ahead of most people and well on your way to building muscle without gaining fat. Below are a few rules to live by when choosing foods for your muscle building diet.

Eat Plenty of High Quality Protein

Protein provides your body with the necessary amino acids to build and repair muscle tissue. A diet that is low in good quality protein will not enable your body to build large amounts of muscle.

Which proteins are best?

The best proteins for muscle building are those that provide the largest amounts of the 8 essential amino acids. Below I have listed a few protein sources. Notice that the best proteins for muscle building almost all come from animal sources.

Best for Muscle Building	Worst for Muscle Building
Whey Protein Isolate	Rice
Eggs/egg whites	Bread
Cottage Cheese (casein)	Oats
Lean Beef	Vegetables
Chicken	Fruit
Fish	
Soy Protein Isolate	

Note that I'm not saying that rice, oats and vegetables are bad, they are just bad sources of protein if you want to build muscle. Rice is an excellent source of carbohydrates as well as oats. In addition, vegetables are excellent sources of fiber and other nutrients – I'm simply reviewing protein sources based solely on their ability to build muscle by providing large amounts of the eight essential amino acids.

All protein sources provide some amounts of these amino acids, but a good muscle building protein like whey protein, or lean meat will provide a large amount of the amino acids, while the same quantity of a less efficient muscle building protein like broccoli will have much fewer of these necessary amino acids.

8 Essential Amino Acid Content of Different Protein Sources

Per 100g of food.

	Whey Protein Isolate	Chicken Breast (cooked)	White Rice	Broccoli
Isoleucine	5.79%	1.64%	0.22%	0.12%
Leucine	15.26%	2.33%	0.06%	0.14%
Lysine	12.24%	2.64%	0.16%	0.15%
Methionine	2.44%	0.86%	0.25%	0.04%
Phenylalanine	5.82%	1.23%	0.52%	0.09%
Threonine	5.49%	1.31%	0.12%	0.10%
Tryptophan	2.80%	0.36%	0.13%	0.03%
Valine	5.90%	1.54%	0.14%	0.14%

This is why some refer to vegetable protein as an incomplete protein. Although “incomplete” is not the correct term as all proteins have all 20 amino acids, vegetable protein sources provide far less of the 8 essential amino acids per quantity than animal protein sources. Based on this fact, vegetable protein sources should not make up the largest part of your protein intake.

The protein sources that I use the most are whey protein, chicken, fish and eggs. No secret foods – just the basics.

Whey

Whey protein is derived during the production of cheese. It is highly concentrated and easy to drink. This allows you to ingest large amounts of very high quality, muscle building protein very quickly. If you are busy and don't have time to eat real food protein, then whey protein is a life saving food. In addition to being very convenient, whey is also has the distinction of being the protein source that delivers more amino acids per quantity than any other.

I highly recommend using a good whey protein supplement. This is essential if you want to increase your protein intake. You can choose a pre-mixed product like Myoplex, which combines whey protein with carbohydrates. These are best used as meal replacements. Or, you can simply use a pure whey protein powder like Precision Protein. I use this type of product to add additional protein to my real food meals.

Chicken

If you don't like chicken, any other form of lean poultry will do. Turkey and Cornish Hens are excellent choices. I do not recommend duck, however, due to the high fat content.

Try to stay away from the reconstituted products that are made by gelling different scraps of the chicken together into a boneless mass. These are usually found in the deli section. Before buying your meat, make sure that it is firm and a light pinkish color. It should also not have a strong odor. If it is yellowish or squishy, don't buy it. It is most likely old.

For convenience, many grocery stores are now offering pre-roasted, whole chickens that have been roasted there in the store. This could be a good choice for those who prefer not to cook. Just remember, to remove the skin before eating. It contains the largest amount of saturated fat.

Beef

Despite the bad press, beef is an excellent muscle building food. There are many forms to choose, but I prefer to buy the lower fat choices. As a whole beef contains more saturated fat than other meats, but you can eliminate a good portion of that fat if you make sure to trim the excess fat from the meat before cooking. Or in the case of ground beef, simply choose the lower fat versions.

When buying beef you should always look for cuts that are bright red in color. As with chicken, the meat should not have a strong odor. If the meat is pale or looks brownish in any way, you should avoid purchasing it.

Cooking Meats

When cooking any meat, try to grill or broil it instead of frying it. This will allow the excess saturated fat to drain off. Yes, I said earlier that fat is good, but saturated fat should be kept to a minimum as it's the fat that can cause health problems in the future if eaten in excess.

Eggs

I like eggs because they are very convenient to eat. I just boil a couple in the morning and can carry them around all day to eat whenever I want. They are also very inexpensive and easy to cook. If you need to get plenty of good quality protein, but must do so on a budget, eggs should be a large part of your diet.

Won't eating eggs raise my cholesterol levels?

In most people, cholesterol levels are regulated internally and not affected by your diet. Others must watch what they eat to prevent increases in bad cholesterol levels. If your cholesterol is already high, you can choose to eat the white part of the egg only, which is pure protein – it contains no fat whatsoever. Or, you can use a new egg product called Omega-3 eggs.

Omega-3 eggs, are just like normal eggs except for the fact that the yolks contain much more of the good fat Omega-3, and less saturated fat. Omega-3 eggs contain as much as 150mg of omega-3 while ordinary eggs contain up to 18mg.

Producers achieve this by feeding the chickens foods that contain high amounts of Omega-3 like flaxseeds and algae. Omega-3 is a “good fat” that has been proven to help increase your good cholesterol levels (HDL), and lower bad cholesterol level (LDL).

Fish

One final protein source that I eat often is fish. Cold water fish like salmon, mackerel, halibut, tuna and cod are not only excellent sources of protein, they are also a great source of Omega-3. So, fish not only provides plenty of protein, it gives you good fat as well!

Should I be worried about all of the hormones in meat and eggs?

Yes it is true that much of the meat and eggs produced today come from animals that are injected with large amounts of drugs. These include large amounts of growth enhancing substances and tons of antibiotics. While there is no current study to suggest any link between this and the growing unhealthy state of this country, I don't need a study to tell me that this cannot be good for our long term health.

Whenever possible, I highly recommend buying and supporting naturally raised meat and egg producers. These are usually smaller beef and chicken producers who choose not to use drugs or antibiotics on their animals. In addition, many allow their animals to roam relatively free and have relatively normal lives as opposed to being cramped up in unnatural living conditions.

What about Vegetarians?

If you are a vegetarian, and cannot eat whey (which comes from dairy), eggs or fish, your only source of good quality protein is soy protein isolate. Soy protein isolate is a concentrated form of the protein that comes from soybeans. In amino acid content, soy protein isolate is comparable to most animal proteins. This is mainly due to the concentrate form of the supplement. This is not the case with other soy products like tofu.

Focus on eating Complex Carbs instead of Sugary Carbs

Carbohydrates are needed by the body for energy. They are also stored in the muscle tissue and liver for future use.

The same way all proteins are not created equal, all carbs are also not created equal. Some can promote faster fat storage than others.

Carbs can be divided into two main forms; Simple, and Complex. The basic division being the time it takes for your body to digest them. Simple carbs digest the fastest, while complex carbs take a bit more time due to their added fiber content.

Simple Carbs

Fructose (fruit sugar)
Glucose
Honey
Lactose (milk sugar)
Sucrose
Dextrose

When eating carbs, here are two rules I always follow:

1. First, I focus on eating complex carbs and avoid simple carbs as much as possible. Simple carbs like sugar, fructose and lactose are some of the reasons people gain fat on muscle gain diets. I diet high in sugar will always cause me to gain more fat than necessary.

If you simply eliminate or reduce your intake of simple carbs and use complex carbohydrates instead, you will still have the necessary energy, but prevent the unnecessary conversion of the carbohydrates into fat.

2. Second, I always eat carbs with protein or fat. Combining carbs with other nutrients will help to slow the digestion and reduce the potential for fat storage even further.

Some recommended complex carbs are:

Complex Carbs

Breads, bagels	Green leafy vegetables
Brown rice	Carrots
Beans, lentils	Cauliflower
Oats	Broccoli
Pasta	
Popcorn	
Potatoes, legumes	
Rice	
Soybeans, tofu	
Squash	

Eat More Good Fat and Reduce Your Intake of Bad Fats

When trying to gain mass, don't forget the fat. Adequate dietary fat is essential for proper hormone production -- Including testosterone. As we all know, testosterone is the main hormone responsible for muscle growth.

Now, the bad way to go about adding fat to your diet is to simply eat any type of food that has fat in it. This is not the best approach simply because most high fat foods contain saturated fat and trans-fat. Saturated fat is the artery clogging fat that raises your cholesterol levels and can give you heart disease later down the road. Trans-fat is a mutant fat that is even worse for you than saturated fat!

Instead of gulping down any high fat food, you want to focus on foods that contain large amounts of good fats. The good fats are called unsaturated fats. Unsaturated fats are divided into two main categories: monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fat.

Monounsaturated fats are easily found in olive oil and avocados. They are known to help lower bad cholesterol levels, and raise good cholesterol levels. Olive oil is an easy to find, inexpensive oil that can be easily added to your diet.

Polyunsaturated fats contain two essential fats called omega-3 and omega-6. These two polyunsaturated fats are known as Essential Fatty Acids or EFAs. They are essential because they must be provided by your diet.

In addition to providing the same health benefits as monounsaturated fat, omega-3 and omega-6 also have the ability to hinder fat storage and reduce cortisol levels.

These fats are found in oils such as sunflower oil, safflower oil, and cod liver oil. I personally like to use flaxseed oil. It is fairly inexpensive and widely available in most health food stores. It contains plenty of omega-3 and omega-6. All I have to do is mix it in with my MRP and voila! I have a high protein meal, with carbs and plenty of good fat.

Unsaturated Fat Sources

- Flaxseed Oil
- Udo's Choice Oil Blend
- Cod Liver Oil
- Sunflower Oil
- Fish Oil
- Fish
- Walnuts

Again, understand that if you eat large amounts of beef or chicken, you will not totally eliminate the saturated fat from your diet. That is unavoidable. Your goal is simply to reduce your intake of saturated fat so that the majority of fat you receive will be from unsaturated sources. Focusing on these fats will not only give you adequate fat for normal hormone production, but it will also keep your heart healthy.

Finally, Drink Plenty of Water!

If your goal is muscle gain, the need to drink more water cannot be stressed enough. Water is grossly underestimated in importance and value with regard to helping you gain muscle and burn fat. Most people are chronically dehydrated. They make the mistake of thinking that a sugary sports drink or soda is actually quenching their thirst, when in fact it's making their condition worse.

If you are dehydrated, your body cannot function efficiently. It slows your metabolism, drains your energy and slows circulation to reduce the flow of oxygen and nutrients to your cells. This in turn stops protein synthesis. In short, you won't be able to repair damaged muscle or build new muscle. Anyone who is training hard cannot afford to allow this to happen.

I carry around a big water bottle so that I can drink from it throughout the day. Chugging the water all at once won't help re-hydrate you. It must be a gradual, consistent process. Drinking water throughout the day will ensure proper and consistent hydration. Proper hydration will also make your muscles look more "pumped" instead of flat.

A good rule is to drink an ounce amount equal to 0.66 times your bodyweight. So, if you weight, 140lbs, you would try to drink 92oz of water each day. I usually make it easy for myself and just try to get about 1 gallon per day. That's 128 oz. It's a lot to drink at first, but your body will gradually become accustomed to that level over time.

Want More Information like This?

If so, I strongly suggest you get my Gaining Mass Program. My Gaining Mass! Program contains the complete diet and training program I used to gain 32lbs of mass. It contains 24 weeks of mass diets that tell you exactly what to eat and when to eat it.

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I hope to hear from you soon!



Anthony Ellis