

Weight Gain for Athletes

Why is weight gain important?

The right diet and training program can help you perform better. If you are under your ideal playing weight, you will not perform as well as you could.

How can I gain weight?

How many calories you need depends on your age, sex, weight, and activity level. Your body weight will change when there is a difference between calories in and calories out. It takes 3,500 calories to gain one pound.

To stay at your current weight, take in the same number of calories you burn. To gain weight, eat more calories than you burn. Adding calories without exercise will increase body fat instead of lean muscle.

How many calories do I burn during exercise?

This table gives the average calories burned for different activities. Multiply the number of calories burned per minute by how many minutes you exercise. This gives you the number of calories you need to replace after exercise.

Calories Burned per Minute of Activity

120-lb person	160-lb person	200-lb person	Activity
2.5	3.4	4.6	Walking 2 miles an hour Bicycling 5 miles an hour
3	4	5	Weight lifting
4	5	7	Situps or crunches
5	6	8	Pushups
5.1	6.8	9.0	Walking 4 miles an hour Bicycling 10 miles an hour Roller skating
6	8	10.6	Tennis (singles) Water skiing Basketball (recreational) Swimming (35 yards/minute)
7.3	9.7	12.9	Jogging 5 miles an hour Bicycling 12 miles an hour
7.8	10.5	14.1	Downhill skiing Basketball (vigorous competition) Mountain climbing
9.2	12.3	16.4	Jogging 7 miles an hour Cross-country skiing Squash and handball

How do I build muscle?

To gain lean muscle mass and not fat, you need to do strength training. To build muscle you can lift free weights, use weight machines, use resistance bands, use your own bodyweight (such as push-ups, pull-ups or sit-ups), or use other equipment.

Every so often change the exercises you do, the number of reps, the rest times, the exercise order, or the number of sets. If you do the same workout week after week without changes, your progress will stall. Ask a certified strength and conditioning coach or personal trainer to design a program that will work for you.

For each pound gained as muscle in a week, you will need to take in about 500 extra calories each day. The extra calories should come from a variety of foods: milk, meat, fruits, vegetables, and grains. It helps to increase your protein intake. Some good snacks if you are trying to gain weight are dried fruits, nuts, cottage cheese, whole grain pasta with sauce, or a peanut butter sandwich.

Eat enough to satisfy your appetite and then try to eat a little more. You can do this if you:

- Eat larger than normal portions
- Eat an extra snack or meal
- Drink protein shakes with regular meals or as snacks

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