

Eat Like A Bodybuilder

Josh Thigpen 3x Worlds Strongest Man competitor

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Nearly everyone in the strength game wants to know how do you build muscle... and stay lean. Can you gain muscle and lose body fat at the same time? The basic mentality out there is to eat as much protein as you can stand. It is a little more than just that. Many people think that the only way to eat like a bodybuilder or build lean mass is to eat chicken and rice all day, and perhaps throw in some broccoli on top of that. Unless you are a competitive bodybuilder getting ready for a competition, this is simply not the case. This particular eating plan is not for a contest meal prep, but more for those who enjoy bodybuilding and want to pack on muscle mass without too much fat. In order to accomplish this one should eat a variety of foods, with good sources of protein, carbs and fats.

One thing that must be kept in mind is that a muscle needs a stimulus to grow. So resistance training is the number one component. Secondly you must have the proper diet to support muscle growth, and third you must rest. As we all know, muscles do not grow when working out, they grow afterwards with rest and nutrition. The muscle cells also need ATP in order to carry out the muscle building process. This comes from carbohydrates and fat. They provide the fuel to get the muscle building process going and continue to go. So just adding protein will only go so far in muscle building. So now the question of how much additional protein and how much carbohydrate do I need? Let's consider protein amounts first. Scientists have found that 2.4 – 2.7 grams per kilogram of bodyweight is the optimum amount. Amounts higher than this tend to be converted and stored as body fat or excreted in the urine. The protein also needs to be of high biological value. Meaning that it has all of the essential amino acids present and in proper ratios, so that none should become the rate

limiting step in protein synthesis. For muscle building you don't have to focus on the leanest sources of protein, again a little carbohydrate and fat are beneficial. Protein levels below 1.4 grams per kilogram haven't been shown to optimize muscle protein synthesis for heavy resistance training.

Carbohydrates provide the energy necessary to carry out the biochemical reactions that are part of the muscle building process. It is recommended that you get between 8-10 grams per kilogram per day to optimize muscle building. We also promote "clean" carbs. This does not mean white rice or potatoes as the only carb source, which is what many bodybuilding nutritionists recommend. We like to provide carb sources that provide a little more variety, yet will accomplish the same job as the white diet. Things like sweet potatoes, black beans, quinoa, black-eyed peas, whole grain rice, and others like these.

Bodybuilders tend to think of fat as something bad, they avoid any kind of fat in the fear that they may get fat or lose their lean look. Fats are absolutely essential to life. They are not only sources of twice the energy of carbohydrates, but they are components of cell membranes and necessary for the transport of the fat soluble vitamins. Decreasing fats in the diet, especially cholesterol has been shown to be related to lowered testosterone levels. An athlete who is interested in gaining size should consume about 30% of their calories from fat. The kind of fat that you eat also has an effect on the body. Mono- and polyunsaturated fats are anti-inflammatory in nature and are also more easily burned for fuel. They also allow the cell membranes to be more pliable and fluid. Saturated fats should be about 10% of your calories, and mono- and polyunsaturated fats should each be 10-15% of your total daily calories.

Lets discuss supplements for the bodybuilder. Often times those who want to live the bodybuilding lifestyle are fooled into thinking that they need more and more supplements, in order to get bigger and put on muscle mass. There are supplements out there that work, and there are many more that don't. The key for the bodybuilder is to sort through all of the garbage out there and get down to

what actually works. In essence one must get back to the basics. Here are the main supplements used in the plan.

Creatine Monohydrate- Creatine is the king of supplements. There is no supplement that has been more studied or more proven to work than creatine monohydrate. Creatine aids in strength gain, muscle gain, increased work capacity, increased recovery ability, decrease in fat, and even has been shown to improve heart and brain health. Not in a kind of, could possibly work way, but in an absolutely has been proven over and over again to work way. Notice that we said Creatine Monohydrate, not Krea-ethyl-methyl-alkalyteapshphotase. Yes I made that up, but there are other imposters out there that are simply not proven to work, and are a way to steal your money. Only Creatine Monohydrate is what you should be after. Some do a loading phase of 20 grams a day for a week, some don't, but either one has been proven to work about the same. Studies show that there is a slight benefit to taking it post training as opposed to any other time. Personally I believe the optimal way is to take it both before and after training. I do 5 grams before and 5 grams after. Early claims of the danger and side effects of creatine were more than overstated, they were down right wrong. Creatine is very safe to use. The benefits of creatine increase when combined with a hi glycemic carbohydrate, and even more benefit is shown when a protein is added to the mix as well. Creatine can be a good tool in the arsenal when trying to burn fat without compromising strength. One of the best things about it is that is cheap. Its no problem to find a good pure creatine monohydrate powder for 10-30 bucks, that will last you a good while.

Fish Oil-Some may consider fish oil more of a food than a supplement, but for the sake of this article I will consider it a supplement. Many diets that are popular today tout the benefits of fish oil, and it seems they are right in doing so. In the PNE diet plan, (also known as the Performance Nutrition Encyclopedia plan) we support this wholeheartedly agree that the benefits of fish oil are numerous. This benefit comes from the fact that fish oil is loaded with Omega 3 fatty acids especially DHA and EPA. Most modern diets, especially American diets) are very

low in Omega 3s and very high in omega 6's. Some of the most important benefits of omega 3's for strength athletes include improved blood flow and reduced inflammation. Clearly decreasing inflammation in any athlete is of the utmost importance. Inflammation decreases health, recovery, causes injury, and hinders overall performance so the benefits of omega 3's are obvious in this regard. The increased blood flow and improvement in cardiac function is a benefit for anybody but especially athletes. Other benefits include, mood enhancement and brain function, (countries who consume the most omega 3's have next to no depression within their society), improved immune system, and preventing cancer. The best choice for fish oil is cod liver oil in non pill form, straight out of the bottle. Try to find the purest form of fish oil you can and see the benefits Omega 3's make!

Pre/Peri/Post Training Shakes- So many people buy protein but they don't actually take it at the most crucial time. The most crucial time is centered around training. Some people have argued against this, by saying that if you had a meal in you already digesting, why is it so urgent to get carbs and protein in before and after your training? The answer is twofold. First, because many studies show that it is significantly more beneficial to protein synthesis than just a meal. Second these shakes should be liquid, and include a hi glycemic carb, and whey protein, allowing for the fastest possible digestion. Protein synthesis is how the body repairs and rebuilds muscle. The optimal way to increase this is to take in a carb/protein shake 10-30 minutes before training, studies show taking this shake pre training further improves protein synthesis, more than the post shake alone. Then sipping on another carb protein shake throughout training this keeps energy levels high, decreases perceived exertion during training, blocks cortisol, and further improves protein synthesis. Finish this all off with another shake immediately post workout. There is about an hour window to optimize the protein synthesis after training and preferentially within the first 30 minutes, making the post training shake the most important. Will it kill you if you don't get these post training liquid carbs and protein centered around this time? No. Can you still

make gains without them? Yes. Can you make optimal progress without them? No. Recovering from training in order to rebuild and get stronger/bigger/perform better, is the point of training itself. Start optimizing that with a pre, mid, and post workout protein/carb shake.

Following are some example dietary plans for someone who is interested in gaining some muscular size. They are not designed to create a shredded look, but to build the muscular foundation for future leaning out programs. Keep in mind if you weigh more than 250 pounds add 10 percent to the calories for every 25 pounds over.

Muscle Gain Plan for a 150# Athlete:

Breakfast:

- 3 Extra Large Whole Eggs
- 8 oz 2% milk
- ½ cup Oatmeal (dry measure)

Snack:

- 1 container Greek Yogurt
- ½ oz Almonds

Lunch:

- 3 oz Turkey or Chicken
- 1 Cup Brown Rice
- 1 Cup Mixed vegetables
- 2 Cups Salad
- 2 Tbs Vinagarette

1 Tbs Cod liver oil

Pre-Workout Shake:

165 calories 30 grams Carbohydrate: 7 grams Whey Protein: 2 grams of Fat

Post-Workout Shake:

315 calories 48 grams Carbohydrates: 21 grams Whey Protein: 4 grams of Fat: 5 grams creatine monohydrate

Dinner:

4 oz Salmon
1 ½ cups of Sweet Potato
1 cup Broccoli
1 Tbs Butter

Snack:

4 oz Cottage Cheese
1 Medium Banana
1 Tbs Almond Butter
¼ cup Granola Cereal

Muscle Gain Plan for a 200# Athlete:

Breakfast:

- 3 Extra Large Whole Eggs
- 16 oz 2% Milk
- 1 cup Oatmeal (dry measure)

Snack:

- 2 small containers of Greek Yogurt
- 1 oz Almonds

Lunch:

- 4 oz Turkey or Chicken
- 1 1/2 cup Brown Rice
- 2 Cup Salad
- 2 Tbs Vinnaigrette
- 1 Large Apple
- 1 Tbs Cod Liver oil

Pre-Workout:

230 calories – 43 grams carbohydrate: 10 grams Protein: 2 grams Fat

Post-Workout:

435 calories – 67 grams carbohydrate: 30 grams Protein: 5 gram of Fat:
5 grams Creatine Monohydrate

Dinner:

5 oz Chicken or Lean Beef
2 cups Sweet Potato
2 Tbs Butter
1 cup Strawberries

Snack:

4 oz Cottage Cheese
2 Tbs Almond Butter
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup Granola Cereal

Muscle Gain Plan for a 250# Athlete:

Breakfast:

5 Extra Large Whole Eggs
16 oz 2% Milk
1 cup Oatmeal (dry measure)
1 medium Banana

Snack:

- 2 small containers of Greek Yogurt
- 1 oz Almonds
- 1 medium Apple

Lunch:

- 5 oz Turkey or Chicken
- 1 cup Quinoa (dry measure)
- 3 oz Green Beans
- 3 oz Carrots
- 1 cup Mixed Berries
- 1 tbs Cod liver oil

Pre-Workout Shake:

295 calories 55 grams carbohydrates: 13 grams Protein: 2 grams Fat

Post-Workout Shake:

561 calories 87 grams carbohydrates: 39 grams Protein: 7 grams of Fat:
5 grams Creatine Monohydrate

Dinner:

- 6 oz medium fat Beef
- 2 cups Sweet Potato
- 2 Tbs Butter
- 1 cup Black Beans

12 oz Cranberry Juice

Snack:

4 oz Cottage Cheese

2 Tbs Almond Butter

1 Large Banana

Weight Gain Supplement: 320 cal – 54 g Carbs, 16 g Protein, 5 g Fat