

MUSCLE BUILDING FOR BEGINNERS

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WHY AM I WRITING THIS EBOOK?

Hey everyone, I decided to write a basic getting started E book. I'm no expert but the amount of times I have been asked questions about anything gym related is fairly high and I found myself repeating conversations over and over again.

Through countless conversations I found that many people didn't understand the importance of food and basic training principles in relevance to gaining muscle and improving themselves in the gym. This sparked the idea to create this E Book in order to get some knowledge out there and to try help some of you with gains.

In this E Book I will be sharing some of my knowledge on how to get started, whether you are new to the gym or have been going for a while, I hope I can share some information with you in regard to optimizing yourself for muscle growth. Over the past couple of years I have spent numerous hours watching YouTube and listening to podcasts on these topics, and I hope to pass on some of this knowledge in this E Book.

I was always skinny growing up so during my own fitness journey I struggled to put on any size to my frame. I saw my body really change and start to grow once I took some of these topics that I wasn't previously doing more seriously and consistently. I still have a long way to go to get to where I want to be, but thus far I am proud of how far I have come and believe my knowledge can be beneficial to others. Enjoy.

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TRACKING AND MANAGING YOUR FOOD AND EATING HABITS

When trying to gain muscle and weight, besides getting into the gym and lifting weights one of the most important things you need to focus on is your eating. When first getting into fitness and building muscle lots of people (myself included) think that just lifting weights will help them reach their goals, when in fact they also need to be concentrating on what they eat.

The reality is, majority of the time you need to eat more than anticipated in order for your muscles to grow. Many people believe they are eating enough, however this is generally exposed when you begin to track your daily food intake as you will find you will need to consume A LOT more food than anticipated. This is done by tracking your food through macros.

MACROS

Macros is short for Macronutrients, which consists of the nutrients found within food. Macros are made up of 3 components, fat, protein and carbohydrates. These fuel our body and gives us energy.

Each individual macro component also translates into a calorie.

One gram of carbohydrates provides 4 calories.

One gram of protein provides 4 calories.

One gram of fat provides 9 calories.

Although macros equal a certain number of calories it is more beneficial to track macros as it tells you the balance of carbs, fats and proteins you eat.

MY FITNESS PAL

I recommend downloading MyFitnessPal, it's a free app that is easy to use and lets you track what you are consuming. When you first download the app, it will prompt you to fill in some basic details and then will proceed to give you a macro goal to hit daily. For the first few days you should track your usual diet to get an understanding of the macros in each of the different foods you are eating. After 2 – 3 days of tracking what you regularly eat you can then go back and check if you hit the goals the app provided you.



I've found this app to be one of the most useful tools in my quest to gain muscle as everything you eat is calculated with its calories and nutrients, therefore showing what you are lacking or abundant of in your diet. This brings me to my next point, how to calculate your important macros.

REMEMBER TO CHANGE THE SETTINGS

You may need to change the settings into Australian units, here's how:

When you open the app, click **more** on the bottom right hand corner, scroll down to **settings**, click **profile**, then at the bottom you will see **units**. Once in units you should change these to suit you. The change that is a must is choosing calories over kilojoules as this is easier to track.

CALCULATING PROTEIN, CARBOHYDRATES & FATS

Once you have your calorie input noted it is best to change the values of these around as I've noticed they can sometimes be a tad off.

Starting with protein, you want to be consuming about 2 grams of protein per kilogram you weigh. For example, if I weighed 90kg I would eat 180g of protein. Therefore, I would change the value in MyFitnessPal to be roughly 180g of protein per day.

When picking proteins to eat you should stick with animal-based proteins as they have a full protein amino acid complex compared to junk foods which does not.

Next is Carbs and Fats. I would keep the fat percentage on the app no lower than 20% and no higher than 35%.

Carb percentage can be whatever you have leftover in the percentages.

It's important that when consuming fats that you don't go over your daily limit as it can be unhealthy, and you'll put on excess, sloppy weight. Similarly, it's important that you aren't getting all your carb sources from cereals or juices as they contain high levels of sugar. There is a sugar tab on MyFitnessPal, so I would keep an eye on that and remain in the set goals it provides.

REMEMBER TO CHANGE YOUR MACRO %'s

Once you have found out your calories to hit remember to go into the app and change the percentages as talked about above, to do this:

In the app click **more**, click **goals**, then under **nutrition goals** select **calorie**, **carbs**, **protein** and **fat goals**.

Keeping on top of the food you eat is important but remember that it takes time to get in a routine where it is easy for you to consistently track your foods so don't be too hard on yourself if you struggle with this at the beginning.

IMPORTANCE OF HYDRATION

Water makes up more than half of our body and is one of the nutrients we cannot live without. Therefore, it is important that we are drinking enough water daily so that our body is healthy and operates like it should.

On average you should be drinking about 2–3 litres of water a day.

Water has many benefits to our body, but in regard to muscle building it helps transport nutrients to the muscles in order to help them recover and grow. Muscles are also 75% water.

If you aren't drinking enough water then you will become dehydrated, which is the last thing you want to be during a workout.

Dehydration can cause muscle cramping and can have a negative effect on the energy you exert into the gym.

With when to drink water I recommend drinking about half a litre as soon as you wake up in the morning. Your body has just gone the night with no water intake which can lead to dehydration later in the day if you don't replenish this first thing in the morning. I would then recommend to just sip water whenever you get thirsty throughout the day or when you feel you have a dry/sticky mouth, this is a sign of being dehydrated. Next, I would make sure before, during and after a workout my water intake is high as our body will be utilising more water during this period.



TRAINING METHODS

The next important thing to track is the way you train. When I first started, I would train whatever body part I wanted when I wanted, however this wasn't very beneficial in reaching my goals. I found that split training was the best way to make sure your training every aspect of your body. Split training is basically just breaking up strength workouts according to muscle groups.

Determining how many days a week you plan to consistently train is the first thing you need to establish when planning which workout is best for you. Split workouts vary depending on how many days you can train.

2-3 Days

If you can only train 2-3 times a week I would suggest a Full-Body workout, as this will allow you to hit every muscle group during each session. This split is good as it allows you to hit every muscle 3 times a week, but it doesn't allow you the volume and feeling of taxing out a particular muscle.

4 Days

Training 4 times a week would be good for an Upper Lower split, which would obviously split the sessions up into, you guessed it, Upper body training days and Lower body training days. This split is good as it allows you to hit every muscle twice a week.

5 Days

5 days a week would be everyone's favourite Bro split. This is when you can train something different every day. Monday chest, Tuesday back, Wednesday legs, Thursday shoulders, and lastly Friday is arm day because then you can go out and party after getting a pump which makes your arms look twice as big. This split is good because you can get crazy pumps with lots of different exercises hitting the one muscle, but a huge drawback is only training the certain muscle once a week.

6 Days

6 days a week is perfect for a Push, Pull, Legs split. Push days you train chest, shoulders, triceps, the pushing movements. Pull days you train back and biceps, the pulling movements. Leg day you train, legs... This split is good as it allows you to have a high frequency in hitting everything twice a week.

I would suggest following an Upper Lower split or a Push Pull Legs split, as these workouts allow you to hit a muscle group twice a week with adequate volume. Essentially you want to be training a muscle group again once it has recovered from the previous session, so training the same muscle group 3-4 days later is extremely beneficial instead of waiting 7 days to train it again. If you need help structuring your training split and want a workout plan feel free to shoot me a message and I can write something up for you.

After selecting the program you wish to follow, I recommend bringing a notebook and pen to the gym and tracking your lifts. I have been doing this for the past year and have found it very beneficial in knowing what weights to use for every exercise I do. Recording my workouts in a notebook doesn't just let me know which weights to use but also allows me to better myself every session because I can go back a few pages and see what I did last work out and beat it. This is how I progressively overload each session.

IMPORTANCE OF PROGRESSIVE OVERLOAD

Progressive overload is the gradual increase of stress placed upon the body during exercise which forces the body to adapt and grow. Progressive overload can be implemented in exercises by trying to increase a variable from the last time you trained an exercise.

For example, if I were doing the bench press and last session I achieved 3 sets of 6 reps at 90kg, this session I would try beat that by either increasing the weight slightly to 92.5kg for the same amount of sets and reps, or I could use the same 90kg but try for 4 sets of 6 reps or 3 sets of 8 reps, or I could do the same 3 sets of 6 reps but lower my rest times. Basically, on whatever exercise you are trying to progressively overload you want to be placing your muscle under more stress then the last time you trained it. This will force your muscles to adapt and grow.



IMPORTANCE OF RECOVERY

Depending on which training split you chose it is important to make sure your muscles recover before you train them again. If you don't wait for them to recover it increases chance of injury and that's the last thing you want when you are trying to build muscle. You also need to make sure you aren't going too hard in the gym. You will know if you are if you wake up the following day feeling absolutely exhausted. I've done this before and it leads to me being sick. So, it's important to start off slowly if it's your first time working with weights and then slowly increase your exercises until your body can handle it.

In order to not be walking around sore and tired all the time, it is in your best interest to take recovery seriously. The most important form of recovery is sleep. You need to be getting enough hours of sleep for your body to not only recover and rest, but also to grow. Everyone is different when it comes to how much sleep they need, some people can get away with 7 hours every night, whereas others will need 9 to wake up feeling fresh. None the less, make sure you get enough sleep to avoid being lethargic all day. Having a proper diet and eating/drinking enough is also critical in repairing damaged muscle after working out. Eating a meal rich in protein and carbs post workout can be beneficial for your recovery. Lastly stretching, if you are tight the following day you should take the time to stretch to help ease tension on your muscles and you will feel way better after it.

SUPPLEMENTATION

Supplements are to be considered once you have your diet in check. They aren't essential but can still assist in helping you reach your goals. The 2 supplements I would recommend are:

Protein Powder

Protein Powder is an easy way to increase your daily protein intake if you are struggling to hit your desired target.

Creatine

Scientifically backed to be beneficial in helping muscle cells produce more energy during high intensity workouts. Creatine should be taken daily at 3-5 grams.

These other supplements listed are beneficial but not essential:

Pre-Workout

I love a good pre-workout but it isn't essential, it helps give you that extra kick of energy in the gym.

Multivitamin

Gives you essential minerals and vitamins but is not needed. Eat a healthy diet full of fruit and veg.

Fish Oil

Good for heart, can help reduce inflammation, but same as a multivitamin, not needed, eat a healthy diet.

EEAs

Said to increase muscle size through amino acids, these are not needed at all. I only take these because they are cheap and gives me a nice drink during my workout other than water.

LEUCINE

Helps protein synthesis, increases muscle growth and repair. Just another amino acid, not needed.

CONCLUSION

After reading this I hope you now have a better understanding of all the things associated with gaining muscle. Remember this is my knowledge and recommendations so your training and experience may vary from what I've included. The most important thing is that you remain consistent and motivated to ensure you get the best possible results. If you have any questions, feel free to shoot me a message.

Good luck and happy training!
Cheers, Patrick.

