



nutrinews

written by Gale Welter, MS, RD, CSCS
Nutrition Counselor, Campus Health Service



Q:

What do I need to do to gain lean, or muscle, weight?

A:

There are four “controllable” conditions that are essential to gain weight (and strength):

1. Get 7 to 8 hours of sleep per night. Regular restful sleep allows for lean mass growth, repair and maintenance.
2. Drink plenty of fluids. Muscle is roughly 70% water. If you want to add more muscle, there can't be a shortage of fluids throughout the day. Good hydration is indicated by urine that is clear, pale (no darker than lemonade), and fairly odorless.
3. Do effective muscle-building exercise.

This usually means more weight, fewer reps, moderate sets. If you need help in this area, it would be worthwhile to hire a trainer until you learn the ropes. Personal trainers are available at the Rec Center and other gyms around town. Choose one who is certified (NSCA, ACSM, ACE, among others) and with whom you “connect”.

4. Eat 500-1000 additional calories a day, day after day. Some ways to do this are:

- Drink lots of juice and milk
- Eat 3 meals a day consistently.
- Eat larger-than-normal portions. Instead of one sandwich, have two; have a bigger bowl of cereal, etc.

- Eat an extra snack like a hefty peanut butter sandwich with a big glass of milk before bed. Other high calorie snacks that have good nutrition for lean mass building include fruit yogurt, granola, hot or cold cereals, bran muffins, bananas, nuts and seeds, oatmeal-raisin cookies, fig bars, banana bread, baked potato topped with cottage cheese, veggie pizza.

Be aware that there are two “uncontrollable” factors for people who have a hard timing gaining weight.

1. Genetics. Acknowledge your genes and be realistic about just how much mass you can put on with even the best of programs. Look at your older family

members for clues to whether you are a “hard gainer”. Many young men and women who struggle with low weight in college years are surprised at how easy it is to gain weight after thirty.

2. Time. It takes a long time to put on a pound of lean mass. For guys, half a pound a week (4-5 pounds a month) would be excellent. Women may only gain 1/4 to 1/2 pound per week.

For more information and strategies for weight gain, go to www.health.arizona.edu, click on “On-Line Library”, next go to “Nutrition”, and then “Sports Nutrition” for “Adding Muscle” and other interesting topics.

Got a question? email: wildcatnutrition@yahoo.com

Visit our website for more info: www.health.arizona.edu (Go to “On-Line Library” and click on “Nutrition”) • For individual nutrition appointments, call 621-9202. \$25 initial, \$15 follow-up