

# Workout Tips for Men to gain muscle quickly

1016 Administrator Tue, May 28, 2019 [Health and Fitness](#) 0 4939



1. Don't be a workoutaholic. Many beginners train feverishly under the assumption that more is better, especially when results first appear. However, you're much better off easing into the process. "At first, your muscles aren't ready to do a lot more than they were doing before--they're ready to do a little more," says Richard Cotton, M.A., chief exercise physiologist with First Fitness Inc. in Salt Lake City and a spokesperson for the American Council on Exercise. "You increase your chances of success by moderating your activity a little bit. The morning after a workout, you want to feel like you trained, but you don't want to have to crawl to the bathroom."
2. The best rep range for gaining size is eight to 20. "The optimum results for muscle growth come from lifting a weight that's between 60 percent and 80 percent of what you could lift for one, and only one, rep," says Tudor Bompa, Ph.D., professor of theories of training at York University in Toronto. "At 80 percent, the average person can do eight to 10 reps; at 60 percent, he can do 15 to 20. Most people say anywhere from six to 12 reps is best for muscle growth, but six would be more than 80 percent."
3. The two most important times to eat are when you wake up and after you train. You need fuel in your tank to train hard, and if you don't fill 'er up at breakfast,

you'll be running on fumes later. "Make sure the majority of your breakfast consists of carbs, with some protein, maybe in the form of egg whites, thrown in for good measure," says Jacqueline R. Berning, Ph.D., R.D., an assistant professor at the University of Colorado in Colorado Springs. "Low-fat yogurt, or milk and cereal, would also fit the bill." It's equally critical to refuel immediately after you train, when your body's cells are most receptive to replenishing the energy they just spent. A premade drink containing both carbs and protein will satisfy immediate post workout needs in the short run. A more substantial meal, however, consisting of complex carbs and complete protein (chicken breast contains a better amino-acid profile than egg whites, for example) should be consumed within 90 minutes of a workout.

4. Difficult exercises are good for you, so resist the temptation to avoid them. Most exercises can be classified as either single-joint or multi-joint movements. The former includes the barbell curl, in which only your elbow joints move. Along with the dead-lift and the bench press, the latter includes the squat, during which your ankles, knees and hips are all being extended and flexed, while your upper body works hard to keep the load stable. Multi-joint movements are the more difficult of the two types to master, but it's well worth the effort to learn their proper execution, since they result in maximum muscle growth of more complex muscle groups like the chest or the legs. "People often get too specific in their exercise selection," says Thomas M. McLaughlin, Ph.D., CEO of Biomechanics Inc. in Marietta, Ga. "At some point, you really need to do big multi-joint exercises that involve large amounts of muscle mass."
5. Unless it is the primary focus of your training, do cardio after, not before, you lift weights. Or do it during another part of the day, or better still, on a separate day. "If you perform aerobic-type exercise first, you'll be fatigued for your weight training," says Cotton. "As a general rule, strength training has less of an impact on cardio than cardio has on strength training."
6. Stretch before you train, and warm up before you stretch. Don't jump right into your weight-training session. First, do about 10 minutes of low-intensity exercise on a stationary bike or a treadmill. "To decrease the chance of injury, you need to elevate your body temperature before you do anything more intense," says Michael J. Alter, M.S., author of *Sports Stretch*. Once your tissues are warm, stretch them for another five to 10 minutes, focusing your effort on those body parts you plan to train. Alter also recommends stretching the body part, or parts, being worked for 15 to 20 seconds after every set. And don't jump right out of your training mode. Follow with a brief cool-down in which you basically just keep moving for five minutes or so, with another five to 10 minutes of stretching.
7. Recovery is just as important as training. When you lift weights, you're actually

tearing down muscle fibers. It's only after you've completed your workout that your muscle tissues begin the rebuilding process. To allow that process to unfold properly, give your body adequate downtime in between workouts. As a beginner, don't lift more than three or four times a week, never work the same muscle group on consecutive days, and never train a muscle group that's still sore from a prior workout. For optimal results, you also need to maintain a proper nutrition program, which calls for five or six nutrient-packed small meals a day (four, at minimum). Finally, you need to get enough shut-eye--at least eight hours of it. Adequate sleep keeps you mentally and physically sharp for your workouts, and the act of slumber itself accommodates the release of growth-inducing hormones.

8. Don't do the same workout over and over. Your body only changes when you force it to, and it's remarkably quick to adapt to new stimuli. If you repeat the same workout every training session even for a month, your body can probably handle it without producing an adaptive response. If you feel like your progress has reached a plateau, that's probably what's happening. The best way to avoid plateaus is by periodizing your training, which simply means arranging it according to discrete phases designed to achieve different, albeit related, goals, including muscle growth, strength and definition. That's also the best way to avoid over training.
9. Most guys need to consume an additional 2,500 to 3,500 calories a week to gain one pound of muscle each week. You can pump iron until you're blue in the face, but if you don't augment your training efforts with enough food and fluid, the laws of human biology and simple mathematics dictate that you won't get any bigger. "When it comes to gaining muscle, the most important thing is eating enough calories to fuel both your exercise and the metabolic processes needed to build muscle," says Susan M. Kleiner, PhD., R.D., author of *Power Eating*. "Most guys who have trouble gaining weight and strength simply aren't eating enough."
10. Women seem to dig men who work out. Sports psychologists could speak on this topic at length, and relevant studies doubtless have been performed, but we know this statement is true because Karen McDougal tells us it is. "Being in shape definitely gives men that extra sex appeal," says Playboy's 1998 Playmate of the Year. "It's the confidence you show that actually leads to the sex appeal, I think. If you're not confident and you don't feel good about yourself, why would someone else be attracted to you? Working out leads to self-confidence, which leads to sex appeal."

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