

8 eating for the gym

Whether you lift weights to get stronger, build muscle or improve your muscle definition, you need a smart eating plan to complement your gym programme. Eating right will produce better results more quickly.

Perhaps you are naturally very lean and struggle endlessly to add more weight ('hard gainer'). Or maybe you find it difficult to build muscle without gaining fat and need to achieve better muscle definition. Either way, the answer lies in devising an eating plan that allows you to put on muscle without unwanted fat.

training for muscle building

To build muscle you need to combine proper weight training with smart eating. The idea is to stress the muscles just hard enough during your workout to break down muscle proteins and cause very small (micro) tears in the fibres. During the rest period between workouts, new protein is added to the fibres, making the muscle stronger and denser. Not only does the resulting muscle burn more calories, but the muscle-building process also requires extra energy, which your body can take from stored body fat. So you burn more calories while building muscle. Here are some training tips:

- 1** Aim for 8–12 sets on large muscle groups (i.e. legs, chest, back, shoulders) and 3–6 sets on small muscle groups (i.e. biceps, triceps).
- 2** Perform between 6–12 repetitions with a weight that allows you to complete the set safely; the last repetition should feel extremely hard and you should be unable to complete another one in proper form.
- 3** The rest period between sets should be 60–90 seconds and 1–2 minutes between different exercises to allow time for the muscle fibres to partially recover.