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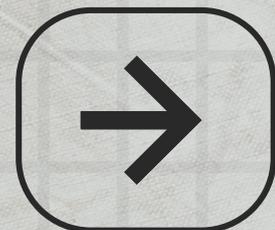
INCREASE MUSCLE BLUEPRINT

NUTRITION GUIDE

Welcome to the Team

This guide is your definitive resource for packing on lean muscle mass while minimising unwanted body fat.

At Optimum Fitness, we don't believe in "dirty bulking" - we believe in progressive overload, strategic nutrition, and recovery.



PART 1: THE EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION

1. The Energy Balance (CICO)

Building muscle requires energy. To grow, you must be in a Caloric Surplus. This means consuming more energy than your body burns, providing the "bricks" needed to build new muscle tissue.

- Calories In: Food and drink.
- Calories Out: Your BMR + daily movement + the high energy cost of intense resistance training.

2. Understanding Macronutrients

While calories dictate your weight gain, your Macronutrients (Macros) dictate the quality of that weight (muscle vs fat).

- Protein (4 kcal/g): The building blocks. Essential for repairing the micro-tears caused by lifting weights.
- Carbohydrates (4 kcal/g): Your primary fuel source. Carbs are "protein-sparing," meaning they provide the energy so your body doesn't burn your muscle for fuel.
- Fats (9 kcal/g): Crucial for testosterone production and hormonal health, both of which are vital for muscle protein synthesis.

3. Progressive Overload

Nutrition provides the materials, but training provides the stimulus. To build muscle, you must consistently challenge your muscles by increasing weight, sets, reps, or decreasing rest time over weeks and months.

4. The Power of Tracking

To gain muscle without gaining excessive body fat, precision is key. Using an app like MyFitnessPal or NutraCheckensures you are hitting your protein targets and staying within a controlled surplus rather than "guessing" and potentially under-eating.

PART 2: SETTING YOUR TARGETS

1. Find Your Maintenance

Your TDEE (Total Daily Energy Expenditure) is the number of calories you burn just being you. To find this baseline, use a calculator that allows for Metric (kg/cm) inputs and accounts for your specific activity level. Most food tracking apps will do this for you but if you would like to do this yourself, then try this link. [ZAVA TDEE Calculator](#)

2. Create the Surplus

Adding too many calories leads to excessive fat gain; adding too few leads to stagnant strength.

- The Lean Bulk: Add 250–500 calories to your TDEE.
- The Goal: Aim to gain roughly 0.25kg – 0.5kg per week. If you are gaining faster than this, you are likely adding more body fat than necessary.

3. Prioritise Protein

Protein is non-negotiable for hypertrophy (muscle growth).

- The Target: Aim for 2.2g of protein per kg of body weight.
- Example: If you weigh 80kg, your daily protein goal is 176g.

4. Free Macro Calculator

For a full breakdown of how many grams of Carbs and Fats you should eat alongside that protein, use this tool which is highly rated for its "Muscle Building" specific algorithm: [Macros Inc. Free Macro Calculator](#)
Pro Tip: When using the calculator, select "Muscle Building" as your goal and choose the "High Protein" setting to align with the 2.2g/kg recommendation.

PART 3: GUIDELINES FOR SUCCESS

- 1. The 80/20 Rule:** 80% whole foods (chicken, steak, rice, oats, eggs), 20% "performance calories" (higher-calorie snacks or a meal out) to help you hit your high-calorie targets.
- 2. Post-Workout Nutrition:** Aim for a mix of fast-acting carbs and protein within 60–90 minutes of training to kickstart recovery.
- 3. Sleep for Growth:** Muscle doesn't grow in the gym; it grows while you sleep. Aim for 7–9 hours of quality rest.
- 4. Consistency over Intensity:** One "beast mode" session won't build a physique; 4–5 consistent sessions a week for six months will.
- 5. Progressive Overload:** Your muscles will only grow if they are forced to adapt to a stress they haven't handled before. Aim to perform slightly better every week—whether that's adding 1kg to the bar, performing one extra repetition, or improving your lifting form. If your workouts look exactly the same in three months as they do today, your physique will likely look the same too.

PART 4: PLANNING YOUR WEEKLY MEALS

The Power of the Plan:

Weekly Mapping is Essential. In the world of muscle building, consistency is the only currency that matters. While many people fail because they lack "willpower," the reality is they usually just lack a plan. Planning your weekly meals is the bridge between wanting to grow and actually providing your body with the fuel to do so.

Here is why a weekly meal plan is your most valuable training tool:

- **Guarantees the Surplus:** To build muscle, you need to stay in a consistent caloric surplus. If you wing it, you will almost certainly under-eat on busy days, stalling your progress. Planning ensures you hit your protein and calorie targets every single day.
- **Cost and Waste Efficiency:** Buying in bulk for a specific plan is significantly cheaper than daily "top-up" shops. It ensures every gram of steak or chicken you buy is used, not forgotten in the back of the fridge.
- **Quality Control:** When you plan, you control the ingredients. You can ensure you're getting the high-quality micronutrients (vitamins and minerals) that support testosterone levels and recovery, rather than relying on processed "on-the-go" options.

If you don't plan your nutrition, you are essentially leaving your muscle growth to chance. A Sunday spent prepping is a week spent growing.

BASIC WEEK MEAL PLAN

Day	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
Mon	Large Bowl of Porridge w/ Whey, Banana & Peanut Butter	Chicken Breast, Large Portion of Pasta & Marinara	Lean Beef Mince, White Rice & Mixed Peppers
Tue	3 Scrambled Eggs & Smoked Salmon on 2 Slices of Granary Toast	Leftover Beef & Rice Bowl	Peri-Peri Chicken, Corn on the Cob & Spiced Rice
Wed	"Mass Gainer" Smoothie (Oats, Whey, Milk, Nut Butter, Berries)	Tuna & Sweetcorn Pasta Bake	Baked Salmon, Roasted New Potatoes & Broccoli
Thu	Overnight Oats with Greek Yogurt & Honey	Leftover Pasta Bake	Turkey Mince Chili Con Carne w/ Large Portion of Rice
Fri	Omelette (3 Eggs) with Ham, Cheese & Spinach	Turkey Chili (Leftovers) w/ Jacket Potato	Sirloin Steak, Chunky Chips (Air Fried) & Peas
Sat	Protein Pancakes w/ Maple Syrup & Greek Yogurt	Bagel with Chicken, Avocado & Mayo	Homemade Beef Burgers (5% Fat) with Wedges
Sun	Full "Clean" English (Poached Eggs, Back Bacon, Beans, Mushrooms)	Roast Beef/Chicken, Roast Potatoes, Veg & Gravy	Chicken & Cashew Nut Stir-fry w/ Egg Noodles

Muscle-Building Snacks: Full-fat Greek yogurt, Trail mix (nuts/dried fruit), Protein bars, Beef jerky, or Cottage cheese on crackers.

PART 5: SUPPLEMENTS

The Supplement Edge: When integrated with a structured training programme and a high-protein diet, supplements act as force multipliers that optimise your physiological environment for growth. They bridge the "convenience gap," making it easier to hit demanding daily macros through quick sources like whey protein, while providing performance-enhancing doses of nutrients—like creatine—that are difficult to obtain from whole foods alone. Furthermore, they support the recovery cycle by reducing systemic inflammation and correcting regional nutrient deficiencies (such as Vitamin D), ensuring your hormonal health is primed to turn your hard work in the gym into actual muscle tissue..

- **Creatine Monohydrate (5g daily):** The gold standard. Increases ATP production for more power and "fuller" looking muscles. While found in red meat, you would need to eat roughly 1kg of raw steak a day to get the 5g required to saturate your muscles. Supplementing allows your muscles to store more phosphocreatine, giving you the energy to squeeze out that 10th or 11th rep. Those "extra" reps are exactly what triggers hypertrophy (muscle growth).
- **Whey Protein:** An easy way to hit high protein targets, especially post-workout. Hitting a high protein target (e.g., 180g+ per day) can be physically difficult and time-consuming. A high-quality Whey protein shake provides 20–25g of rapidly absorbing protein in seconds. This makes it far easier to stay consistent with your macros when life gets busy, ensuring you never "miss" a growth window. **Casein Protein:** A slow-digesting protein perfect for a shake before bed to prevent muscle breakdown overnight.
- **Vitamin D & Omega-3:** Essential for bone health, joint recovery, and hormonal support in the UK climate. Vitamin D3 is a pro-hormone. Low levels (common in the British winter) are linked to lower testosterone and muscle weakness. Supplementing ensures your hormonal profile is actually capable of supporting the muscle-building process. Training for muscle growth requires high-intensity lifting that causes micro-tears in muscle fibres and systemic inflammation. Supplements like Omega-3 Fish Oils and Magnesium help manage inflammation and improve sleep quality. The faster you recover, the sooner you can train that muscle group again with high intensity.

Hope You Found This Helpful.

If you need help with your workouts, then we offer FREE training plan for Optimum Members.

If you're looking for something more bespoke, like online coaching or personal training, then email us at info@optimum-fitness.co.uk

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