

# **49 Muscle-building FAQs**

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### **How many reps do I need?**

How many reps you need to do depends on your goals. As a guideline try and stay within 2 to 6 reps for strength and power, 8 to 12 reps for muscle size and 15 to 20 reps for endurance. If your goal is to build muscle then your reps range should be around 8 to 12 reps i.e. the weight should be heavy enough to allow only 8 reps, actually you should only be able to get 6 reps with great difficulty on the 6th, but you need to continue on to fight for those last 2 reps, it should be an absolute struggle to get those last two reps. That's where the muscle growth is. You always need someone there to watch over you when you are performing reps like these. On your next visit you should aim for 9 reps, then 10, 11 and 12, these reps should also be a struggle. When the time comes that you can force out 12 reps with great difficulty, it's time to up the weight.

### **How many sets for muscle growth?**

Not counting warm ups, 1 good heavy set is enough to induce muscle growth, if done correctly to total muscular failure, however, very few people can or know how to use the 1 set principle correctly so 2 to 3 heavy sets is usually better to ensure muscle growth stimulation. Anything above 3 sets per exercise is usually a waste of time and recovery energy.

### **How many days a week should I workout?**

You should workout 2 to 4 days a week and no more. You simply cannot fully recover and grow when you are working out 5 and six days a week. It usually takes 48 to 72 hours for a muscle group to recover from an intense weight training session. Only until after full body recovery will muscle growth happen. An every other day routine is good.

### **What exercises should I be doing for muscle mass?**

You should be doing the heavy basic exercises like squats, dead lifts, and basic presses. These are the exercises when done correctly and safely will produce the best results for muscle mass. The "simple" isolation exercises can be added on later when you have gained a respectable amount of muscle from the basics. Don't waste your energy doing isolations if your goal is muscle mass fast.

### **How much rest between sets?**

As much as you need. You should allow your body to recover between sets and let your breathing return too normal. Usually 1 to 2 minutes sometimes you'll need 3 or more minutes to recover, it depends on the exercise and how hard you pushed yourself.

### **Should I warm up?**

Yes you should warm up, it is very important that you do, but just don't spend half the day doing so. A few light muscle stretches followed by a couple of light sets of the first exercise you are going to do that day. Then stretch again in between those light sets.

### **Should I stretch between sets?**

You should stretch between sets on your first exercise only. Don't over do the stretching, the idea is to loosen up muscle for heavy lifts, not burn out muscle before you execute heavy lifts.

### **Should I workout at home or join a gym?**

It's a matter of personal preference really. Do you like the gym atmosphere or would you rather the privacy of your own home. 3 questions to consider: Can you really concentrate at home to lift really heavy? have you someone there to help? Have you got enough weights and equipment? If you've answered yes then maybe you could train at home for a while and see how you get on, otherwise I think the gym would be a better option for you.

### **Do I need a fitness trainer?**

You could consider a fitness trainer if you find that no matter what you try to do, you are not getting the results you desire. If you find that you cannot concentrate on your workouts then you could consider hiring a personal trainer for a time.

## **What supplements do I need for muscle building?**

If your diet is perfect then you don't really need supplements to support muscle building, but whose diet is absolutely perfect? When it comes to supplements I find that the basics are great like Whey and casein protein powders, creatine, multivitamin/minerals, vitamin c, Vitamin e and zinc. There are "super supplements" available that you could try out for 8 to 12 weeks but I like to stick to the basics. How far you want to take supplementation depends on the individual's goals.

## **There's a lot of talk about creatine, is it any good?**

Yes it is good, it's very good. Creatine increases energy production in the muscle cells so you can lift heavier and for longer. Creatine helps you to quickly gain weight making you stronger, and the more you can lift means the more muscle fibres you can stimulate for muscle growth. It pulls fluid into the muscle cells making you look bigger.

## **What type of protein powder is the best?**

There is no real best when it comes to protein powders but Whey protein isolate (WPI) is a fast acting protein and is better than whey protein concentrate because it is purer and has a higher BV (biological value) around 170 compared to 104 for the concentrate which means that the WPI can be used more efficiently by the body. The higher the BV the better. Egg Protein has a BV of 100. Milk protein i.e. whey and casein has a BV of 85 and Beef Proteins about 75.

## **When should I take protein shakes?**

You should take protein shakes (whey protein) before and after a training session i.e. about 30 minutes before and within 1 hour after. You can take a casein protein last thing at night for a steady flow of amino acids for growth and repair while you sleep. On non-training days you can take the whey protein anytime.

### **Should I eat anything before bed?**

You should not eat anything before bed because it could keep you awake all night, especially if you eat a carbohydrate food. Having said that, you can take a casein protein supplement without your sleep being affected.

### **How can I speed up recovery?**

You can speed up recovery by taking a creatine supplement immediately after a workout and about 40 minutes later take a whey protein supplement, then within an hour after that have a highly nutritious real meal supplemented with vitamins and minerals. Vitamin c and e is great for fast recovery.

### **Should I wear a lifting belt?**

Some people find lifting belts great while others can't stand them. I would recommend you wear a lifting belt on your heavy sets and on your heavy sets only, like squats, dead lifts, shoulder presses and bent rows.

### **Should I wear gloves?**

You don't really need gloves. It's a matter of personal preference. Some people will tell you that gloves help them lift more weight, while others will tell you that it detracts from their lifting strength. I like to wear gloves because they give me a better grip on the bar.

### **How many reps for building strength?**

To build strength you need to concentrate on low reps with very very heavy weights. Reps should be in the 2 to 6 range and the weight should be heavy enough to only allow you perform 2 to 6 reps. You should always have help on standby when you are lifting like this.

### **How do I bring out my abs?**

To bring out your abs you need to watch your diet closer and cut out all the junk with the empty high calories like cakes and sodas. You could do 3 exercises in tri set style eg: Crunches 1 x 15 then hanging leg raises 1 x 15 then onto lying leg raises 1 x 15 repeat 4 times dropping the reps i.e. 12,10,8s. Rest between sets is as long as it takes you to walk over to the abs exercise area or about 20 seconds rest.

### **Should women lift weights?**

Yes women should definitely lift weights. Lifting weights will be a great help in their weight loss, health or fitness goals. Some women believe they will get huge muscles if they lift weights, this is not true, women don't have enough of the male hormone muscle builder testosterone. Weight lifting is a truly excellent form of exercise not just for men.

### **How fast or slow should I perform reps?**

You need to ensure that your muscle fibres actually do the work. The reps should not be performed too fast using momentum. Use a Slow and controlled pace that should take you about 2 seconds to raise the weight and 4 seconds to lower the weight, it's also a good idea to pause for 1 second in the extended position. It looks like this 2 1 4. Try various lifting speeds to see which one works best for your goals, you could also try a 3 2 5: 3 seconds to lift, 2 seconds hold and flex on extension and 5 seconds to lower it.

### **How do I build massive legs?**

You need to get off that leg extension machine and learn how to squat correctly. The squat is the king for building massive legs, along with the dead lift and the leg press. If you want massive legs you need to master heavy squats, and heavy standing calf raises. You could try adding super sets to your leg routines with a pre-exhaust technique if you have the weight training experience, if not then straight sets with the squat involved should be enough.

### **Do I need cardio while building muscle?**

Some cardio while on a muscle building course would be beneficial but don't over do it. 20 minutes on the bike or rowing machine before or after a session should be enough.

### **How many body parts a session?**

2 body parts per session is ideal, that way you can fully concentrate on the body parts and put in 100% effort. It drags on a bit if you have to do 3 and 4 body parts a session, the required intensity just won't be there. Keep it at 2 per session.

### **Should I change my routine?**

Yes you should change things around every 8 to 12 weeks for renewed motivation and goal setting, and for a boost in results.

### **How often should I increase the weight?**

The ideal rep range for muscle growth is 8 to 12, so if you find yourself getting 12 reps or more no problem then it's time to up the weight to bring you back down to the almost impossible 8 rep sets.

### **What does intensity mean?**

It means how hard you need to work to complete the required action i.e. if your lifting a certain weight and you absolutely struggled to get 8 reps and you wanted so much to quit at 6 but somehow managed 8, that's high intensity. Muscles require a high intensity effort to warrant muscle growth stimulation.

### **How can I build my stubborn calves?**

You need to concentrate more on every rep of every set and get a complete stretch. Don't rush your calf training by just throwing in a few sets at the end of your leg training. Try training them first in the session and use a full range of motion with heavy weight.

### **How much time does a muscle need to recover?**

Muscles usually require from 48 to 72 hours to fully recover from a hard training session. Your nervous system also requires full recovery. It depends on the person's level of training experience and best recovery practices.

### **What's the best time to train?**

About 2 to 3 hours after you get up out of bed is the best time because hormone levels are high and your back has re-adjusted itself by then, but anytime is a great time to train. It all depends on your daily schedule.

### **How much protein do I need?**

Not as much as you think but certainly more than the average Joe or Jane. 1.14 grams of protein per pound of body weight is a good guide, though lean body weight should be taken into consideration for a more accurate figure and not total body weight.

### **How should I take my creatine?**

Some people say that creating loading is unnecessary but I like to load creatine 20grams 4 x 5gs daily for 5 days then 5g after training for about 8 weeks.

### **How can I get motivated to get to the gym?**

You're the only person that can make you go to the gym, but bear in mind that the thought of going to gym is much worst than the actual application of going to the gym, once your at the gym you're fine and once you finish a great workout you're glad that you went. Just go ahead and go to the gym regardless of what you think at the time.

### **How do I stay motivated?**

You can stay motivated by writing down everything you do at the gym. Write down your sets reps and weight used so you can see how much progress you are making. You can also change your routine every so often to avoid staleness and keep motivation high. It's also a very good idea yo have training goals and strive towards those goals, and when you reach them you need to set more goals.

### **Will smoking affect my muscle gains?**

Yes it will. Smoking will slow down your progress and keep you from reaching your goals. It's also bad for your health, but you knew that already. I suggest that you try some quit smoking techniques until you find one that works for you.

### **Can I workout with a hangover?**

You certainly can but don't expect to perform at 100% level and don't mark it as a great workout. You should stay away from the gym if you're not feeling 100% from a hangover or from a cold or flu. Imagined laziness is different, you should ignore that and get to the gym.

### **Should I bring a notepad to the gym?**

Yes. You need to track your progress so that you know what is working and what's not. Tracking everything is also a great motivator.

### **How can I shock my muscles into new growth?**

By changing your routine or by trying a different training principal like super sets or the pre-exhaust method. You can also shock your muscles by changing the sets or reps and by adjusting the weight accordingly.

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