

I'm not a bot



Raises 3 sets x 10-20 reps Side Planks 3 sets x 30-60 seconds each side Notes for hypertrophy days: Try to keep your rest time to 90-120 seconds between sets. Hypertrophy days are a little more customizable. If you feel you can do another exercise or need to remove one, that's up to you. You can also add another set to certain exercises or take one away. Feel free to switch certain exercises for ones more effective for you. However, these exercise are pretty well rounded, so use something similar for the targeted muscles. You can also implement dropsets, supersets, etc as you wish. Progression: This is a linear progression program. So, you should try to add a little weight or maximize the reps in the recommended range on a weekly basis. Your strength days are where the major focus of progression happens, but it will translate to heavier lifting for hypertrophy days as well. Deload: Every 6-12 weeks (depends on you) take a rest week or a deload week where you do the same workouts with nearly half or two thirds of the load. You will need this rest or deload week every so often to allow your body to fully recover. You can't continually progress for months on end without ending up overtraining. FAQs ABOUT BULKING WORKOUTS & EATING: Here are some of the most common questions we get about bulking... Is bulking even necessary? It depends on what you want to achieve. If your goal is to pack on muscle mass, then yes, bulking is necessary, but you don't have to call it that. You are just eating at a calorie surplus and lifting heavy. A bulk is necessary for gaining muscle because it ensures you are feeding your body with the nutrients and proteins needed to grow. As for beginners, if you are unhappy in terms of both being skinny and fat, then you can try a recomp plan that focuses on building a little muscle while losing fat. But you won't have the same muscle growth that you would on a bulk. How often should I workout when bulking? We recommend at least 4 weightlifting sessions per week for most people. However, beginners could get away with 3 days per week. Our plan is 5 days of weight training a week, with optional cardio 1 or 2 days, which can be done in mornings or on rest day. 5 days will allow you to really maximize your effort on those days as it provides plenty of recovery (3 days) each week. Note: While our plan can be good for beginners, it's better for those between beginner and intermediate or true intermediate lifters. Your workouts should take around 45-60 minutes. Should I do cardio? Cardio is optional. If you are a true hard gainer, it's probably best to not do cardio at all, as you will already have trouble getting enough calories and will likely be lean as is. For those who put on fat easily, then you will want to add 1 or 2 cardio sessions per week. Not only will hit help you restrict fat gain, but it is also good for your endurance (which can help your weightlifting too) supplying your muscles with nutrients. There are two types of cardio you can do, HIIT and Low Intensity Long Duration. Both should be done in moderation. With HIIT, you will do 10 minutes. With low intensity long duration, aim to do 30-45 minutes at a pace that makes you comfortably tired. Low intensity will be untaxing, so you should have no issues with it when on a 5 day weight lifting routine. It can even help with recovery from your weight lifting sessions. You will not have to worry about any muscle loss with one or two cardio sessions per week if you do HIIT or cardio at low intensity for only 30-45 minutes per session. Don't let anyone tell you otherwise. The low intensity long duration will specifically target fat for energy. Here is an example of a good HIIT workout: Warm Up: 5 Minute Jog Workout: 1 Min Run (60-70% max heart rate) followed by 20 second sprint (90-95% max heart rate) x 10 (which makes for a total of 15 minutes) Cool down: 5 minutes light jog for 2 minutes then walk for last 3 minutes Related: HIT For Beginners HIIT Workout for Women As for Low Intensity Long Duration Cardio, you can jog on a treadmill or walk on a steep incline, cycle, row or get on the elliptical machine. Aim to be at 70% max heart rate for 30-45 minutes and that's enough. If you end up deciding against cardio and you notice you are putting on a lot of fat, definitely add it into your weekly routine! You really won't be sacrificing muscle gain if you do it in moderation. It will only help you to minimize fat gain on your bulking journey. Can I keep the same routine for my entire bulking phase? You absolutely can, just be sure to do a deload week when you start to feel you are overtraining or just before. If you are feeling sluggish, it's time for a deload week. If you are sick of your plan and want to change things up, then you can do so every few months. It's up to you. However, there is nothing wrong with sticking with the above plan for a long time if it is continually working for you. The only thing you really may want to do is change up some of the exercises and the order of the exercises. Should you bulk or cut first? It depends on where you are at in your fitness journey. As a true beginner, you really don't need to worry about bulking or cutting. All you need to do is eat good and train hard and you will see amazing results. If you are "skinny-fat", we recommend bulking first, but you could really go either way or just go for a recomp style program. Related: The Ultimate Workout Plan for Skinny Fat People If you are really overweight, you should start by losing fat, which means you will eat at a calorie deficit. The good news is, you probably have a lot of muscle under that fat from years of carrying all that weight around! You are going to look great after some months of cutting. Give our Cutting Workout and Diet Plan a go if this is you. For intermediate and advanced lifters/bodybuilders, we don't have to tell you what to do. Generally speaking, you will bulk when you want to build muscle and your body fat percentage is in the healthy or lean range and cut when your body fat percentage starts to get too high. Should you dirty bulk or clean bulk? While both a dirty bulk and a clean bulk will allow you to pack on muscle mass, a clean bulk is obviously the best choice as it comes with significantly less fat gains. Clean Bulk (aka Lean Bulk): Controlled calorie surplus with healthy foods, 250-500 calories over maintenance per day. Dirty Bulk: Uncontrolled calorie surplus without any concern of what foods you eat, 500+ calorie surplus per day. Essentially, a clean bulk will involve closely monitoring what you eat and sticking to an exact calorie surplus range, whereas a dirty bulk you just eat whatever it is you want (sometimes healthy, sometimes junk, it doesn't matter!) as long as you are in a surplus (which often times means you will be eating way over your maintenance level). It almost goes without saying that a dirty bulk is easier to do, and for most, it's a lot more enjoyable (who doesn't like to eat tubs of ice cream and fast foods when they want?). A clean bulk requires much more dedication and determination. But the good news is, it comes with way less fat gain, and for some genetically lucky people, quite possibly none at all. In regards to muscle growth, some may claim a dirty bulk has better results on this front. The only way this is true is if the clean bulker is not actually eating enough due. It can be hard to really pinpoint your total daily energy expenditure (TDEE) and if you end up not getting enough calories and protein, you'll be reducing muscle protein synthesis, and thus gains. Dirty bulkers really don't have this issue because they are guaranteed to be in a calorie surplus. Again, this is true, depending on the individual and diets. But even so, a little fat gain is ok when bulking and it's not something to worry about so long as it is minimal. We are here to promote a clean bulk, but not a bulk completely free of fat bulk, as that is something we can't promise. We can only promise if you follow this plan, you should build muscle with negligible fat increase. Can you gain muscle without bulking? If you've been lifting for a while, you will need to "bulk" to gain muscle. You can't expect to be on a fat loss diet and gain muscle. However, if you are a beginner, you can build muscle without worrying about bulking. Be that as it may, you still will need to eat over your energy maintenance level. As you can't gain muscle without that. So, technically, you'd be on a bulk. But you just don't really need to think too much about it. You just need to eat plenty of food and get enough protein. Note: According to this study - where a group of young men were able to lose 7 pounds of fat while gaining 3 pounds of muscle within 4 weeks by following a strength training program and increasing protein intake while at a caloric deficit - you can build muscle without bulking. So, as a beginner, the need to bulk is debatable. But, if you want certain muscle gain, then do a clean bulk. When should you bulk? The most common for seasoned bodybuilding enthusiasts is to bulk during fall, winter, and early spring, cut a few months before summer, and then maintain their body fat percentage during summer. This is simply because it's always nice to be shredded in the summer when you wear shirts in public or no shirt at all! Also, its nice to eat more food in the cold months (for those who live in the north). As a man, if you are sub 12%, you can absolutely start bulking. Ideally, you'd pack on muscle and by the end of your bulk you'd be no more than ~15%. Once you are on the high end of the healthy range (approx 17%) it would be time to cut. For women, the acceptable body fat percentage range is from 24-31%, but most women who have been training seriously for a while will be sub 24%. All that said, a lot of people these days don't bother with this kind of thinking and they just try to keep it clean all year round so they can build muscle and keep fat gain to a minimum or not at all. If you use a very slow and clean bulking approach, this works. If you are training to be a pro bodybuilder, then you will bulk in the off-season and cut before the competitions, whether that is a month or two months out from comp. Can bodyweight training help you bulk up? You can bulk with just bodyweight training, but it will be more difficult to progressive overload. With bodyweight training, you can progressively make your workouts harder by increasing reps, decreasing rest times, doing harder variations, training to failure, increasing time under tensions, etc. With weights, you have all those same options, PLUS you can increase the weight load, which is arguably the most effective way to overload. Moreover, more strength allows for more hypertrophy potential. All in all, you can bulk up (build muscle) with bodyweight training, it'll just be harder and you'll have to really get creative as you become more advanced. You'll have a much easier ride (although still not easy) reaching your genetic muscle mass potential with weight lifting. Our program is a weight training bulking program, so if you only want to do bodyweight training, you'll have to look elsewhere in terms of the workouts but diet info will still apply. SUMMARIZING YOUR BULK (TLDR): ~500 calorie surplus 40% Protein, 40% Carbs, 20% fat macros Upper Lower Push Pull Leg Routine (strength & hypertrophy) Main focus is on compound lifts Lift heavy, progressive overload Deload week every 6-12 weeks (periodization to avoid overtraining) Sleep and hydrate If you have any questions about our bulking program, please reach out to us! We'd love to hear from you. And, for when it's time to cut: The Ultimate Cutting Workout & Diet Plan Want a guided workout program? Check out our Hypertrophy Program below. Guaranteed to pack on muscle. Prepare to maximize your gains with our exclusive 12-week hypertrophy training program. Choose between a 4 or 5 day training split and gain 2-12 pounds of muscle over 90 days... Inside we cover everything you'll need to know about lean bulking. Here's what we'll cover: What is a lean bulk? A lean bulk is a little bit of a vague term, but generally, the goal is to add lean mass with as little body fat as possible. For example, if you want to gain five pounds and all five pounds of it were lean mass, that would be a perfect lean bulk. Most guys who are interested in a lean bulk are curious about it because, in the past, they had a bad bulk where most of the weight that they gained was fat. How do I get a lean bulk? There are a number of strategies to help make your bulk as lean as possible. It is easier to see if your lean bulk is working if you're already lean. If you are already a little bit overweight, it will be harder to tell if your lean bulk is working. So if you want to do a lean bulk, it's usually best to do a cut or a body recomp down to at least 15% body fat where you can make better decisions about how things are going. Eat at least one gram of protein per body weight pound. You will need lots of protein to build muscle, and muscle is what you want to be making up your weight gain—not fat. Second, when you eat more protein, it will naturally limit your ability to eat fats and carbs, limiting your total calorie intake, leading to a leaner bulk. Eat at least 30 g of protein every three to five hours. One study looking at the muscle protein synthesis found that when you spread out your protein across your meals, you could get 25% better lean muscle gains. Make sure that your workout program is top-notch. If you are pushing yourself in the gym and putting in the effort in each set, your body will need to adapt and build muscle. But if you eat a lot of calories and don't push your body to adapt, then you will not build muscle, and your body will use those extra calories for fat gain. It is critical that you learn how to push yourself and take yourself to the edge of failure when lifting weights—experiment with going to failure to see if you've been holding back. Sleep at least 7.25 hours a night and likely more. When you don't sleep enough, stress begins to build up, and it will negatively affect your hormones and will make you gain more fat and limit your muscle gain ability. We recommend aiming for at least 8 to 9 hours o sleep each night. Leading sleep institutions found that you should sleep at a "minimum" of 7.25 hours each night. Focus on improving food quality. When you eat foods like white flour and white sugar, it won't be absorbed by the body in the best way, which can lead to fat gain. There are many important things that are removed that help your body digest that food. In the wheat germ, there are B-vitamins that metabolize the carbs that make you feel energetic and reduces fat gain. So a simple way to improve your lean bulk is to eat foods that are wholesome, unprocessed and cooked by you at your own house, like whole wheat/brown rice/etc. Avoid foods that are cooked with industrial vegetable oils. Vegetable oils are preferentially stored as fat tissue, and it lowers your testosterone leading to more fat gain and less muscle gain. Vegetable oils include things like corn oil, soybean oil and canola oil. Unfortunately, most restaurants cook with this oil because it is the cheapest type of oil, and it fries well. A simple solution to this is to cook all your food by yourself at home and use extra virgin olive oil or butter or tallow for cooking. Don't eat a lot of food when you're sitting and eat more food after you lift weights. If you work a desk job and you're about to sit from 9-5, don't eat a ton of food that food as it will mainly be stored as fat. But after you lift weights, your body will be begging to recover and build muscle, and that's when you should eat a lot of food. This principle is called nutrient timing, and it's one of the reasons that 16/8 intermittent fasting is so popular right now because it makes you eat less food while you're inactive, and then you eat more food after you've lifted weights. This helps you burn fat during times of inactivity and build muscle post-workout, leading to lean bulk. Don't gain weight too fast. In a 2019 study on bodybuilders, researchers found that those who gained weight at a slower pace had a better ratio of muscle-to-fat than they gained. In one group, they ate a higher calorie surplus and gained 2.4 kg of lean mass and 1.8 kg of fat. The lower-calorie surplus group gained 1.2 kg of lean mass in 0.3 kg of fat. The other group that gained weight fast had a much worse ratio—4 to 3 of muscle-to-fat ratio. So if you're in a hurry to get big and strong, it would be far better to do a high-calorie surplus and build muscle and then do a cut to remove the fat. But if that hasn't worked well for you in the past, slowing down the rate of gain two around 1.0-1.5% of your total bodyweight per month is a good goal. For example, if you are a hundred and sixty pounds and you want to do a lean bulk, you can try gaining between 1.6 and 2.2 pounds per month while pushing yourself hard in the gym. Eat more meat. Eating more meat will give your body the nutrients it needs to grow. Yes, it's full of protein, but it's also full of other bodybuilding nutrients such as laurine, carnitine, creatine, glutamine and more. Secondly, it's very hard for excess protein to get converted into fat, so if you eat lots of meat, you will help your body recover from the lifting workouts you are doing while also limiting fat gain. Eating meat also tends to fill you up and make you feel satisfied, limiting your ability to eat more fats and carbs that might spill over into the fat game. Don't neglect cardio/conditioning. Having poor cardiovascular health seems to make people have a worse muscle-to-fat ratio when gaining. I suspect this is because doing cardio like sprints can increase your metabolism, making a calorie surplus smaller while still getting enough protein to build muscle, making fat gain less likely. How many calories should I eat on a lean bulk? Every person has their own daily calorie needs. For example, some people have a higher metabolism, or they live an active lifestyle where they're more on their feet. So there isn't a total set calorie amount to do a lean bulk. You must estimate what your maintenance calories are and then adding 200-300 calories daily. Eat that amount of calories every day and measure your weight gain at the end of the week. If you're aiming to gain 2 lbs per month, then you should try and gain 0.5 lbs per week. If you don't gain that amount of weight, add 200-300 calories and try again next week. So there isn't a total set number of calories that you should eat. You will need to ask to measure, experiment, and keep trying until you're hitting the weight gain per week that you want. How much weight should you gain on a lean bulk? Your goal is to get stronger at the main lifts like bench press, overhead press, chin-ups, squats, and deadlifts. Once you reach a remarkable level of strength, you'll have enough muscle mass that you could burn off your fat and look strong and lean. So the amount of weight that you should gain will be different for everyone depending on how far away they are from the strength benchmarks that they want to hit. For the guys that we coach, we usually try and have them able to bench press at least over two plates (225+ pounds) for five reps and deadlift three plates (315+ pounds) for five reps. The exact numbers differ depending on how tall you are, but those are generally good benchmarks to aim for to look strong. If you can't hit those numbers, you should probably keep lean bulking until you hit those numbers unless you're too fat for your liking, at which point you should try a body recomp. Should I lean bulk or dirty bulk? Many young teenagers attempt the lean bulk, and they might be able to get away with it because they have low levels of inflammation and superior mitochondrial health compared to older guys. If you aren't eighteen years old, I would highly recommend that you do not do a dirty bulk. A dirty bulk will only make you feel more sluggish and worsen your overall health and make it more likely that you gain stubborn belly fat during the bulk. A dirty bulk includes low-quality foods, which makes fat gain more likely, and certain types of food can make your body perform worse, such as vegetable oils or iron-fortified white flour, which can contribute to heart disease, diabetes and men's health issues like erectile dysfunction. We would recommend trying to eat as many whole, unprocessed foods as possible that you cook yourself at home. What should I eat on a lean bulk? We'd recommend eating whole, unprocessed foods that you cook yourself at home. That would include things like meat and veggies and fruit and whole grains like whole wheat or oats. The more meat that you eat, the easier it will be to build muscle, and eating other things like organ meats like liver or bone broth will also help you get the vitamins and nutrients you need to grow. It certainly helps to eat carbohydrates, especially before and after lifting weights, but they ought to be high-quality carbs. For example, eating honey or dried fruit like dates or raisins or having oats or whole grains that have all the vitamins and nutrients in them still help you grow without getting overly fat. If you are having a hard time eating enough food to see weight gain, then instead of lowering the food quality with processed foods, we would first recommend trying to eat foods with the water removed like dried fruits or nuts and trying to remove as much chewing as possible. For example, it will be easier to eat more burger patties with ground meat compared to a steak, and it will be easier to drink a smoothie you made at home than to eat a bunch of fruit and veggies. Can you bulk and get leaner at the same time? Yes, you can, but that is technically not called a lean bulk but a body recomposition. A body recomposition is when you are in a calorie deficit, but you are eating a high-protein diet and lifting weights. You would be building muscle while burning fat. If you can't see your abs faintly in the mirror, you may want to try doing a body recomposition first before doing a lean bulk. How do skinny guys lean bulk? If you can see your abs clearly and you're ripped, you may want to consider doing a traditional bulk and focus mainly on building strength as rapidly as you can. This is what I did when I gained over 27 pounds of lean mass in only four months. Skinny guys are very, very far away from their muscular potential, and they have a lot of lost ground to make up for. So they may do better on a higher-calorie surplus and may not want to focus on doing a lean bulk. They should instead focus on optimizing strength, even if that means gaining a bit of fat for now. We have a complete system developed to solve this problem called **Bony to Beastly**, where we teach you how to gain one pound per week so that after five months, you are 20 pounds heavier, with most of it being lean mass. If you are skinny-fat, you should use our True Gains program.) Is it okay to gain fat while bulking? Yes, it is okay to gain fat while bulking, and it should be expected when optimizing muscle gain. With that said, if you are already overweight, you might do best with a body recomp to get down to 15% body fat and then lean bulk from there. The goal is to get your strength up to a certain level, and a bulk is a great way to do that. That said, if you are overweight now, it can come with some health effects such as a vitamin D deficiency, more stress on your joints like your knees, which can cause pain, snoring and other signs of sleep apnea from a fat tongue and pressure on the body from fat. So it's not a good idea to be overweight. So we would recommend trying to stay in the 15-20% body fat range until you reach your goal strength. So, for example, you can do a lean bulk and focus on getting stronger, and then once you hit around 20% body fat, you could switch into a body recomp or cut down to 15% body fat, at which point you could switch back into a lean bulk and repeat the process over again. When you've reached your ideal strength, that's when you can cut down to 10% body fat, and you look athletic and lean and feel great, and you can just hang out there. With all that said, if you have some fat aversion, you can always take things slower and do a slower weight gain and switch into periods of a cut or body recomp anytime that you feel too fat. Don't forget that focusing on your cardio/conditioning can help prevent fat gain—especially the stubborn type. So if you wanted to do a lean bulk without the fat gain doing some lifting such as three times a week and then doing some cardio a couple of times a week would be ideal when trying to balance gaining muscle while reducing fat. If you want help learning how to do a lean bulk, we've made our principles into a simple step-by-step system with our True Gains program.