

MUSCLE BUILDING:

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO
KNOW TO START YOUR JOURNEY

BY @COACHINGSOCIETY

MUSCLE GAIN

CONTENTS

YOUR GUIDE TO GAINING:

1-4

NUTRITION

- General Nutrition
- Calories & Energy Balance
- Macronutrients
- Supplements
- Managing Appetite/Digestion
- Increasing Calories

5-6

TRAINING

- Introduction to Training
- Structuring Training
- Progressive Overload
- NEAT & Cardio
- Training Tips

7-10

LIFESTYLE

- Lifestyle Overview
- Sleep
- Stress
- Rest & Recovery

GET STARTED



INTRODUCTION

HEY!

Welcome to your Gaining Guide - the ultimate eBook on how to build back up from your fat-loss phase.

Throughout this guide, I'll be offering my knowledge on three key aspects of building muscle - **Nutrition, Training** and **Lifestyle Factors**. These all go hand-in-hand to determining if and how you'll progress.

This guide is based on the knowledge I've accrued through working with clients just like you. It nails the basic principles of muscle building, and elaborates on those aspects of your journey which will be vitally important over the coming weeks, months and years.

GET STARTED





NUTRITION

Nutrition is obviously vitally important in any sense of fitness.

The general aim is to find something that not only brings about progress, but something you can sustain long-term to harness progress and compliment your lifestyle. The days of the 'dirty-bulk' are over - so read on for how to structure your setup nutritionally.

CONTINUE



CALORIES AND ENERGY BALANCE

We all know the term 'calorie deficit' - but not many people talk about how to structure your nutrition in order to build muscle, and in turn increase strength and ultimately grow.

There is no 'one-size-fits-all' when it comes to how much of a calorie surplus you should be in. It's definitely not a case of 'eating as you as you want' - more a weekly/monthly test of finding what you can consume and digest efficiently.

A general rule-of-thumb is to start off consuming 15-25 calories per lb of bodyweight. Where you land on that scale will initially depend upon how active you generally are each day, and how well digestion and appetite cope with said amount.

It's crucial to stick to these calories, as doing so will allow you to gauge whether the calorie goal you've set is helping you to achieve your goal. If your target is 3000cals, and you're consuming that one day, then 1800cals the next, then up to 4000cals - your lack of inconsistency will not only show in your progress, but also leave you questioning whether that 3000 calorie target is suitable or not.

MACRONUTRIENTS



MACRONUTRIENTS

Macronutrients constitute the general make-up of the calories you're consuming. The calories within a food/drink will be dictated by the presence of each macronutrient within said item. The four macronutrients, and their energy make-up, are as follows;

Each macronutrient plays its own role within the body, and obviously within building muscle. Let's look into each macronutrient individually, and how you'd generally structure these within your diet.

PROTEIN - 4KCAL/G

FATS - 9KCAL/G

CARBS - 4KCAL/G

ALCOHOL - 7KCAL/G

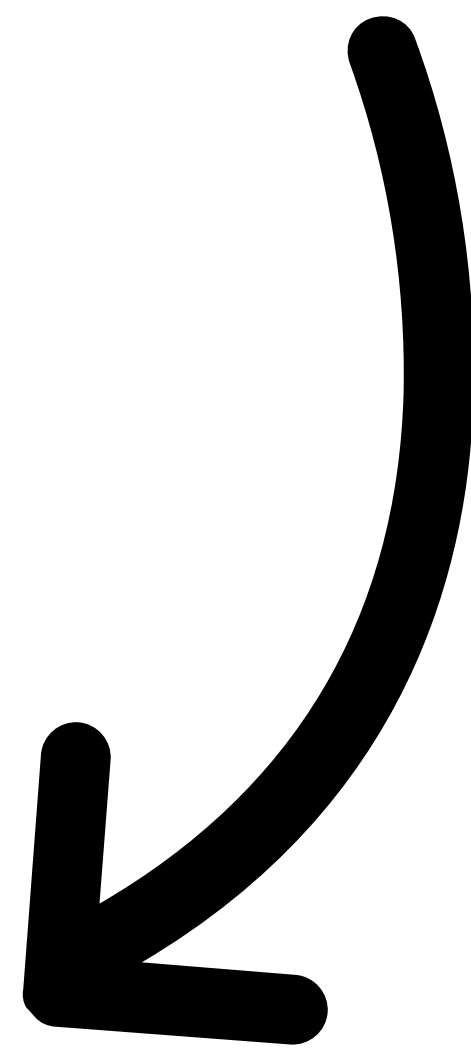
PROTEIN



PROTEIN

Protein is essential for growth, repair, and retention of muscle. It's arguably the most important macronutrient where body composition improvements are concerned. General sources of protein are:

- 1 FISH
- 2 EGGS
- 3 DAIRY
- 4 TOFU
- 5 MEAT (RED & WHITE)



As a general rule of thumb, anywhere between 1.0-1.5g per lb of bodyweight is recommended, with the magic number of 1g/lb often utilised.

You'll notice that the guidelines for protein intake differ slightly from a fat-loss phase. Arguably, you should be entering your gaining phase relatively lean, so a lower protein threshold to accommodate for higher levels of body fat isn't necessary.

The foods that make up your protein intake should be mainly whole protein sources such as

those listed above. You could also supplement where appropriate to top up towards your intake. You'll notice that some of your carbohydrate and fat sources do contribute towards your protein intake. These are of course contributory, but you should aim to consume >70% of your daily protein hit through actual protein sources where possible.



FATS

Dietary fats are essential for regulating hormonal function, as well as providing the body with energy to operate day-to-day. They are the most energy dense macronutrient, weighing in at 9 calories per gram.

Dietary fats can be sourced through...

1 DAIRY

4 SEEDS

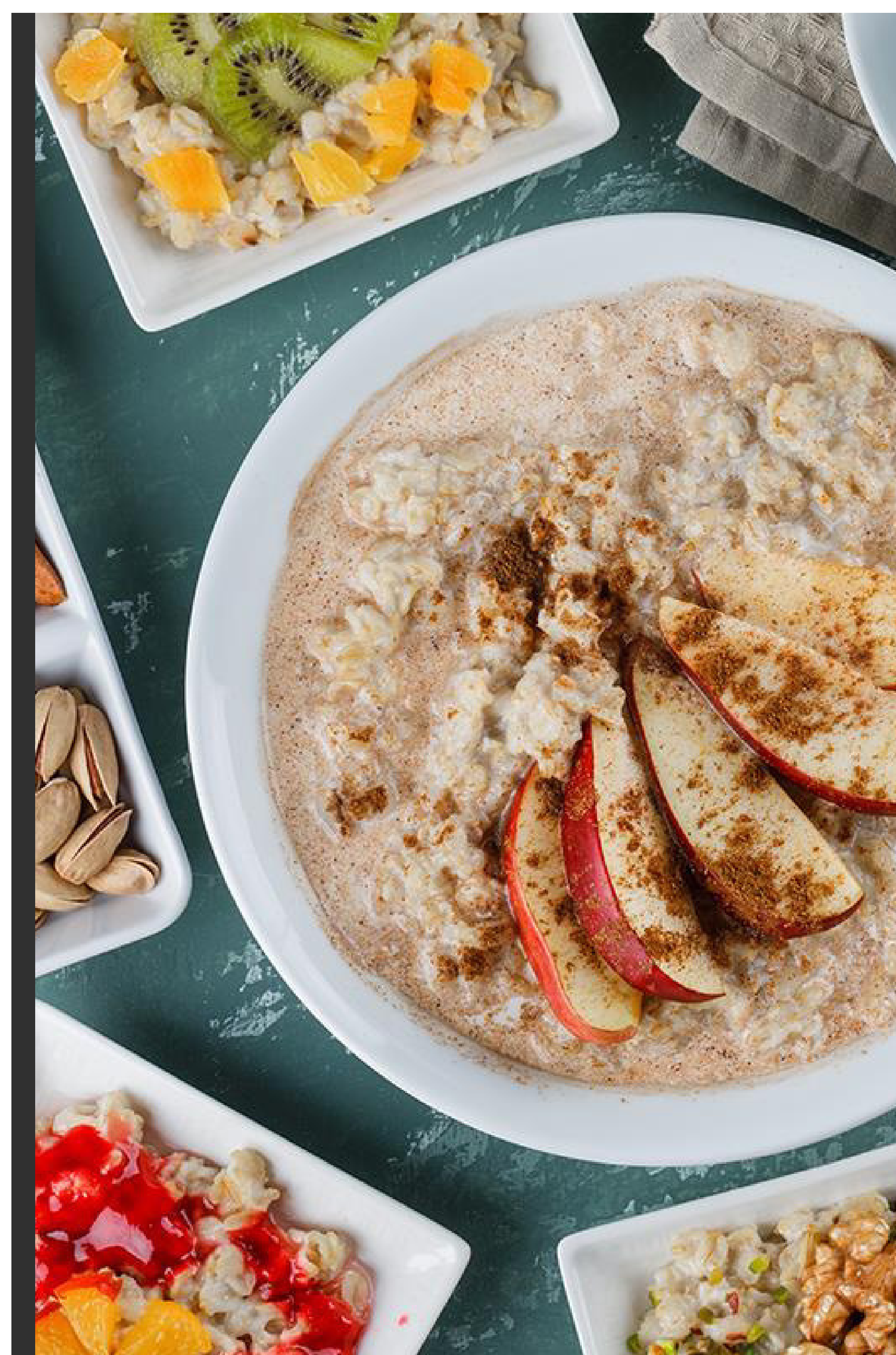
2 EGGS

5 OILS

3 NUTS

6 MEATS (MOSTLY RED)

Requirements for fat intake is generally person dependent, but to maintain regular hormonal and cognitive function, I'd recommend a minimum of 0.2-0.3g of fat per lb of bodyweight. For example, if you weigh 150lbs, a minimum daily fat intake of 30- 45g is recommended. Having more calories to utilise in a gaining phase means you may opt for more fat-dense foods in order to hit your targets.



CARBS

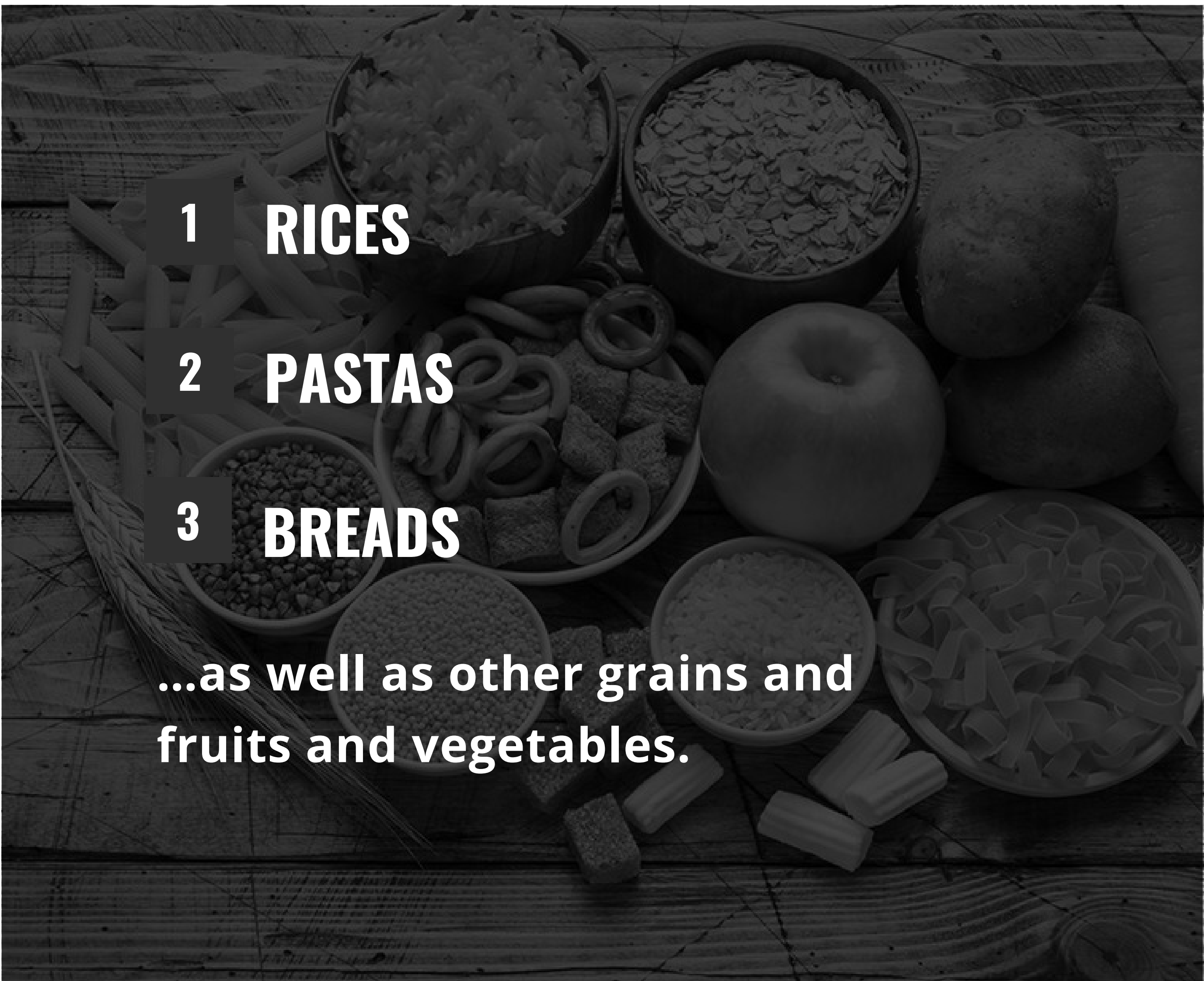
CARBOHYDRATES

Carbohydrates are probably your most useful tool when it comes to building muscle and accruing mass. They're your most inter-changeable macronutrient, and arguably the most enjoyable. Manipulating your carbohydrate intake over the weeks, months (possibly even years) of your gaining phase will be key.

Carbohydrates are your body's main source of fuel and will also aid in your body's ability to recover after exercise. They can be found within...



With carbohydrates being the most interchangeable of the three dietary macronutrients, there's no real set amount that's right to consume. The general rule-of-thumb is that carbohydrates will account for



the calories left over once you've set out your protein and fat goals.

That being said, you may opt for a more carbohydrate-dense diet at the expense of some dietary fats, provided calories are kept the same, and you don't drop below the minimum threshold of dietary fats mentioned earlier in the guide.



ALCOHOL

Alcohol is classed as a macronutrient. Unlike the other three macronutrients, it doesn't provide any real nutritional benefit. Alcohol isn't particularly 'off-limits' when it comes to building muscle, as arguably you do have more calories to play with.

However, consuming alcohol frequently and/or in large amounts will no doubt have an impact on your ability to accrue new muscle tissue, recover from sessions, and manage appetite and digestion effectively.



SUPPLEMENTS



SUPPLEMENTS

Supplements are just that - something to contribute towards something else. You shouldn't rely fully on supplements to hit your nutritional targets, but they can be a handy tool when used correctly.

Below are some supplements you may find useful during your gaining phase;

They can generally be split into numerous categories;

- Nutritional
- Performance
- Health
- Lifestyle

01

WHEY PROTEIN

Useful for increasing protein intake where whole food doesn't suffice.

02

CREATINE MONOHYDRATE

Can improve strength and endurance when resistance training.

03

MULTIVITAMIN

Handy tool for helping to satisfy micronutrient requirements.

04

VITAMIN D3

Useful where sunlight exposure is limited and can help increase energy levels.

05

OMEGA 3 FISH OILS

Can improve cognitive function and reduce inflammation on joints.

06

VITAMIN B12

Can ensure the body's blood and nerve cells remain healthy.

07

HBCD (HIGHLY BRANCHED CYCLIC DEXTRIN

Intra-workout supplement providing carbohydrates during sessions.

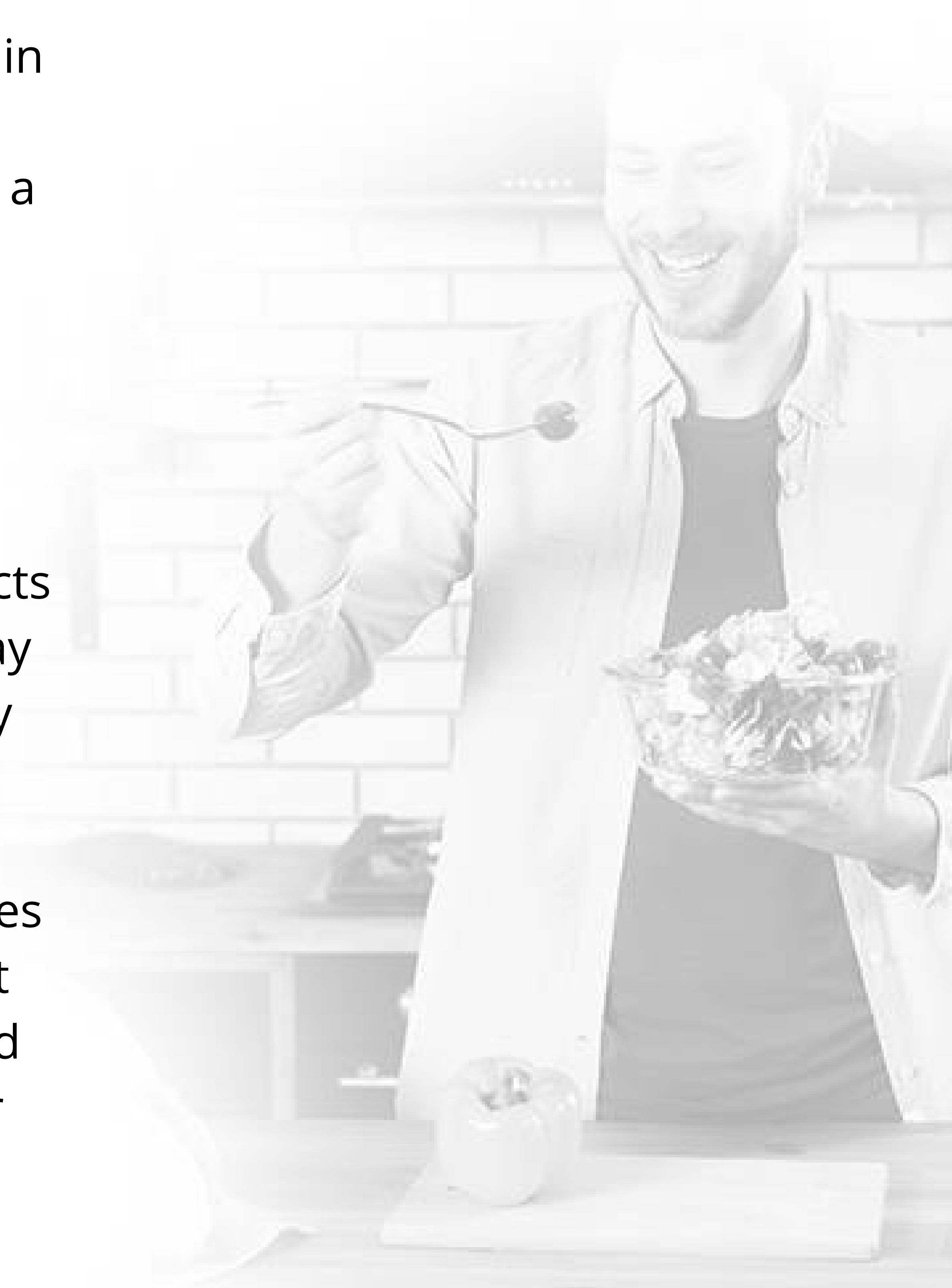
This isn't me telling you to go out and spend \$\$\$ on supplements, but these can definitely be useful additions to your dietary approach and performance/recovery.

MANAGING APPETITE & DIGESTION

As discussed earlier in the guide, being in control of your appetite and digestion during a gaining phase will leave you in a much better spot for growth and nutritional adjustments.

For this reason, it's essential to opt for food sources that you enjoy and can digest well. For example, if dairy products don't particularly sit well with you, it may be best to limit these in your day-to-day diet.

Similarly, if you find bread-based sources of carbohydrates difficult to dissipate, it may be wiser to opt for more rice-based products which are more renowned for more efficient break-down within the body



FOOD VOLUME

INCREASING CALORIES & ADJUSTING MACROS

As with any nutritional approach, the beauty generally lies within consistency of execution each week, and the ability to adjust calories incrementally based on amount of progress. If calories are consistently being hit, appetite is still in a good place, and you're digesting your food well - it's probably a good time to increase your food.

Similarly to your fat-loss phase, it's important to do this in manageable amounts. If you were to aimlessly add 500cals to your target in one single jump, your body would probably find this difficult to accommodate.

For that reason, your nutritional adjustments should generally be limited to 100-200cals per increase. These would generally be in the form of increased carbohydrates (25-50g). You may eventually increase protein intake for two reasons.

Firstly, to match an increase in bodyweight and keep within your protein threshold. Secondly, increasing your carbohydrate intake will bring about an increase in trace-protein from your carbohydrate sources. For example, one bagel contains 8.5g of protein, 75g uncooked rice contains 8g, and so on.

Increasing your protein intake occasionally in line with mass carbohydrate increases means that you can still ensure quality protein from whole sources whilst still factoring in trace protein from your carbohydrates.

A person is lying on a bench, performing a bench press. They are holding a barbell with green weight plates. The gym background is visible with various equipment and racks.

TRAINING

Just as nutrition is important when it comes to contributing towards growth, a solid resistance training program is essential to improve body composition. As with your nutritional approach, your workouts should be suited to you, your capabilities, and your goals.

CONTINUE



STRUCTURING TRAINING

The nature of your resistance training will be dictated by a few variables;

1 TRAINING EXPERIENCE

2 GOAL

3 LIFESTYLE

4 RECOVERY

If you're brand new to resistance training, it would be very short-sighted to program 6 sessions per week to complete. On the flip-side, an advanced trainer will probably have the capabilities to train more than 2/3 times per week. Similarly, your goal may dictate training frequency. If you're a female looking to grow some glutes, tickling them once per week isn't going to cut it.

The volume of training you complete within a given week will be dictated by your **MRV (Maximal Recoverable Volume)**. To define this - the maximum amount of training you can successfully complete and recover from in order to replicate next time out.

Let's say you're new to the gym and have a busy lifestyle. You may want to condense your sessions into 3 Full Body sessions. That way, you're frequently training each muscle group an adequate amount, without having to train more times than you have to, or can recover from.

If you were to train 4 times per week, you may look into an Upper-Lower-Upper-Lower split. You could also look into biasing certain muscle groups dependent upon goal;

- Upper-Lower-Push-Pull - upper-body bias
- Upper-Lower-Delts/Glutes-Lower - lower body bias

These are just a few examples of how structuring training around your capabilities is important. It's more than just throwing some exercises together and hoping for the best.

PROGRESSIVE OVERLOAD

A bit of a 'buzz-term' when it comes to resistance training. Progressive Overload is the method of advancing your training in order to replicate intensity on a frequent enough basis to warrant progress.

Progressive Overload can be defined in a number of ways, both numerical and otherwise. Forms of overload can be any individual, or combination of the variables below;

- 1 INCREASE IN LOAD**
- 2 INCREASE IN REPS**
- 3 INCREASE IN SETS**
- 4 IMPROVED EXECUTION**
- 5 INCREASED TIME-UNDER-TENSION**

It is important to aim to progressively overload as frequently as possible. That doesn't mean piling an extra 2.5kg onto the bar each week. It could simply be an extra rep from the week before, or simply improved form.

**NEAT &
CARDIO**

NEAT & CARDIO

NEAT (Non-Exercise Activity Thermogenesis) are the calories you burn from general day-to-day activity, like walking, fidgeting, movement in your job etc. As the aim when gaining isn't necessarily to burn as many calories as possible, NEAT isn't as crucial as it is during a fat-loss phase.

That being said, keeping a nominal number of steps each day and implementing walks occasionally can aid digestion and keep a general level of fitness.

The same can be said for a cardio protocol. Although non-essential, this can be handy for keeping RHR (Resting Heart Rate) at an acceptable level, so implementing some low impact, steady-state cardio once per week could be a useful tool to keep general fitness levels up.

A person is performing a deadlift in a gym. They are lifting a barbell with green and yellow weights. The person is wearing a dark t-shirt and has their back to the camera. The gym environment is visible in the background.

**TRAINING
TIPS**

TRAINING TIPS

Here are my tips and tricks for making the most of your training;

TIP 1

Stick to the plan - program hopping because you're 'bored' or getting 'shiny object syndrome' because your favourite influencer has launched a new workout plan is a sure-fire way to stall progress. It's impossible to know whether you're progressing if you're chopping and changing exercises every other week. Execute your program week-by-week, and gauge progress from there.

TIP 2

Form > weight - leave your ego at the door and prioritise execution ahead of weight. You should aim to standardise your reps at each weight. If you're sacrificing range of movement, or general form just to eke out a few extra kilos, you're missing the point of training. Earn your right to progress.

TIP 3

Log your weights - whether it's your phone, or good old pen and paper, keep track of the weight, sets and reps you're doing. Don't play the guessing game each week in the gym as to whether you're improving or not. Be accountable to your logbook and aim to beat it as frequently as you can.

TIP 4

Put your weights away - this doesn't have anything to do with progress, just don't be a d*ck!



LIFESTYLE

A smiling woman in a white tank top is holding a glass bowl filled with a salad of green leafy vegetables, tomatoes, and other ingredients. She is holding a fork in her right hand, poised to eat. The background is slightly blurred, showing an indoor setting with some greenery.

LIFESTYLE

As important as training and nutrition are for growth, your ability to succeed with these is entirely dependent on your lifestyle surrounding it.

If you're stressed to the eyeballs with work, the kids are driving you up the wall, and you're running on 4 hours sleep each night, your ability to train, recover and diet will be impaired. We're only human, and life will take its toll on you.

CONTINUE

A grey, three-dimensional looking arrow pointing downwards, centered below the 'CONTINUE' text.

SLEEP

Sleep plays a huge role in your ability to adhere to the plan. If you're fatigued, you're much more likely to rely upon caffeine, which could impact food choices, or force you to skip sessions or meals for an early night. These will all have a negative impact on your progress, so get your house in order when it comes to your sleep.

You should be aiming for a minimum of 7 hours of quality sleep each night. That's not 7 hours in bed - it's 7 hours of sleep. Ensuring this is a priority makes everything else associated with your journey much easier.

First off, have a set bedtime each night - a non-negotiable that you adhere to each day. From here set a pre-bed routine. This could be 'phone down at...', 'no TV after...' - anything. Just something that gets you into the mindset of heading to bed.

We all know the role caffeine can play in keeping you alert and awake, so aim to have a caffeine cut-off at some point in the day. Caffeine has a half-life of 6 hours, meaning consuming a 200mg energy drink at 6pm would still leave 100mg of caffeine in your system at midnight. This isn't ideal when you're trying to rest and will impair sleep quality. Cutting caffeine off around 2pm is advised.

Over-exposure to blue light can also impact sleep negatively. Using your phone in bed, browsing through your laptop, or watching television are all methods of exposing yourself to blue light. Aim to limit this where possible, and like caffeine, set a cut-off point an hour or two before bed where you limit this. You can also purchase blue-light blockers, which can take some of the brunt from your eyes.



STRESS

External stressors aren't generally something we can control. Whether it's work, relationships, parenting, or just life in general, stressors are all around us. What you can control is how you respond to said stressors, and how you can mitigate it.

Allocate time for yourself each day where you can de-stress and enjoy some downtime. This could come in the form of strength training, a walk with your headphones in, a relaxing bath - anything. The benefit of these tools mentioned prior, is that they'll all positively contribute towards your efforts, both directly and indirectly.

FOCUS ON WHAT YOU CAN CONTROL



REST & RECOVERY

The ability to rest and recover allows you to replicate intensity and execution week-on-week. Knowing when to pull-back and listening to your body is essential to long-term results. You wouldn't run your car on fumes, so don't treat your body in the same vein.

Ensuring your nutrition is complimenting your recovery is important. Opting for nutrient-dense foods as readily and often as possible will ensure that your body has the nutrients it needs to repair and recover. Prioritise protein intake and ensure you're consuming enough calories to warrant recovery. The surplus of calories you'll be consuming should be able to positively contribute towards your body's ability to recover and repair, provided adequate nutrition is considered when selecting foods.

As mentioned above, sleep is essential for allowing you to frequently execute your approach. This paired with frequent enough 'rest days' will allow your body to recover to a point where it can not only replicate the intensity of your last session, but essentially build upon it. Your recovery is essentially the foundation for which your progress will be built on. Progress will be short-lived if you can only manage a couple of weeks before your body gives up. Treat it with respect!

The three areas mentioned within this guide are hugely important to whether you'll progress or not. They're the cornerstones of your gaining journey, and hopefully this guide can educate you to be able to manage your nutrition, training and lifestyle factors adequately enough to not only make progress, but to improve your overall lifestyle and help you to adopt healthier habits throughout all aspects.



**FIND BALANCE
IN LIFE...**

