

A PUBLICATION OF

FraserCoast
CrossFit

FAQS ANSWERED: HOW TO
BUILD MUSCLE
AND GAIN STRENGTH WITH CROSSFIT



INTRO

At Fraser Coast CrossFit, we help people get stronger every day. It's kind of our thing. And from our experience, it's pretty rare to come across someone who is gaining muscle at their maximum potential.

In response to this observation, we've taken some FAQs from our friends at Barbell Shrugged, and put them together for you in this handy dandy guide.

In this guide, we'll cover the following strength FAQs:

- Is it possible to gain muscle and lose fat at the same time?
- How long will it take to put on a significant amount of muscle?
- How much muscle can I expect to gain?
- What kinds of food should I be eating?
- What foods should I avoid?
- Can I still put on muscle on a meatless diet?
- How much do I really need to eat to put on more muscle?
- How often should I eat?
- Can I have cheat meals?
- What else can I do outside of training and nutrition to optimize my strength program?

Enjoy!

- *Team Fraser Coast*

QUESTION 1:

IS IT POSSIBLE TO GAIN MUSCLE AND LOSE FAT AT THE SAME TIME?

Yes and no.

Yes - IF you are fairly new to CrossFit and strength training, your initial responses to training stimuli are very high. You will most likely put on muscle and lose body fat at the same time, but not for long. . .

So, most likely no. It's very unlikely that you can gain muscle and lose fat at the same time if you have been training for more than a year. Your response will plateau and you will start to see diminishing returns from your training. At that point, you need to focus your training specifically on either the task of gaining muscle or losing body fat.

When you're gaining muscle, you will most likely add a small amount of body fat – even if your nutrition is on point. This is because your body needs more calories to help its state of growth. If you don't change your diet when you're trying to gain, you'll likely feel the effects of hunger and weakness. It's almost as if your hardworking muscles each have their own appetite, and they need to be fed! Eating more to fuel your muscles and event putting on a few more pounds of fat in the process will

actually work to improve your performance and results in the long term.

The solution? Train in cycles. The very best athletes plan for periods of muscle gain then fat loss. Try taking the next 6 months to a year to put on as much mass as possible, then gradually change your food intake and adjust your training focus so that you can preferentially cut the fat. If your fat loss period of training is well executed, you'll be able to showcase a lot more of that hard earned muscle. In other words, you'll look totally shredded.



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QUESTION 2:

HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE TO PUT ON MORE MUSCLE?

The first question you need to ask yourself is, “what type of body am I trying to build?” If you want to look like a CrossFit Games athlete or a fitness celebrity, then we’d suggest reading up on their bios to see how long they’ve been working on that body.

It takes years and years to put on the type of mass that you see in Carson or on the cover of Muscle and Fitness – but that’s not to say that you won’t look damn good trying to get there. The key is to set realistic expectations for yourself. It doesn’t matter what some bodybuilding article says, you will not look like that guy on a 16 week program. Real results take time and effort – several months’ worth at least.

So, find a fitness routine that you absolutely LOVE doing every single day (with the exception of a few rest days). Working out needs to be fun or chances are, you’ll fall off the wagon before your fitness goals have been reached.

Want to learn more about our style of fitness? Come in for a free one-on-one training session and meet men and women like yourself who have come to find that CrossFit is now one of the most exciting parts of their day.



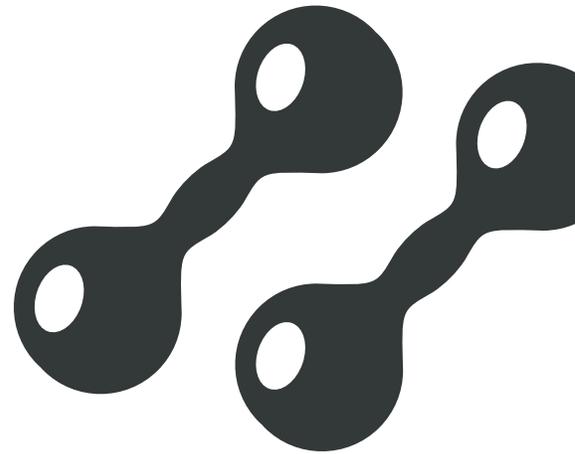
QUESTION 3: **HOW MUCH MUSCLE CAN I EXPECT TO GAIN?**

This depends on several factors: training intensity, experience, age, diet and even genetics.

Someone who is fairly new to CrossFit can expect to add about 1-2 lbs. of muscle per month for a year. The more experienced you are, the more difficult it becomes to pack on the muscle. Intermediate athletes should expect less.

Our best advice is to not worry so much about the numbers and focus on training hard and eating well consistently. Put daily effort into recovery and rejuvenation. Sleep, stress less, love more, laugh often – do all of this and you'll see progress.

Don't beat yourself up if you fall short, just keep grinding. You'll be surprised how far that takes you!



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QUESTION 4:

WHAT KINDS OF FOOD SHOULD I BE EATING?

This depends on your goals.

As you train to gain muscle mass, your body will need more and more energy to maintain progress. It takes more energy to build muscle, but you have to remember that your new muscle will also start to burn more calories. If you don't eat enough every day to keep up, you will quickly reach a plateau that you cannot bust through with training alone.

In addition to increasing your calories, you have to maintain the quality of your food intake. That means doing what it takes to get enough protein, carbs, and healthy fats without making bad choices. You can't make the mistake of thinking that you can start eating candy bars and drinking sodas in order to get the calories that you need to keep adding muscle. We know that doesn't work.

The best thing you can do is prepare ahead of time. Stock up on protein. Wild fish is an excellent source, as is lean pork, chicken, bacon, tuna, turkey, and beef. Carbs are super important when training hard. Not eating enough will quickly deplete your body of glycogen, which your body burns to provide energy to your muscles and central nervous system during intense training. Without the fuel, you cannot be intense, and you cannot grow strong. Sweet potatoes and even rice are your friends, especially after a heavy squat session.

Fat is a dense caloric source, but it's also very important for hormone regulation. To make the muscle building hormone testosterone, for example, you need a diet rich in high-quality fats. Some good sources include avocado, olive oil, nut butters, coconut oil and animal fat, like bacon drippings.

QUESTION 5: **WHAT FOOD SHOULD I AVOID?**

If you're going to fail, it will probably be because of what you drink.

Check your drinking habits. You just won't be successful if you are swigging back soda, apple juice or multiple glasses of wine every day - it doesn't matter if it has got sugar in it or not. The more often you are exposed to sweet and processed ingredients, the fatter you get.

You also want to avoid processed meats and microwavable meals. Here's a simple rule - If dinner comes in a box with a long list of ingredients, skip it. Your strength and health are far more important. Think whole foods are too expensive? Maybe you should look into why processed food is so cheap.



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QUESTION 6:

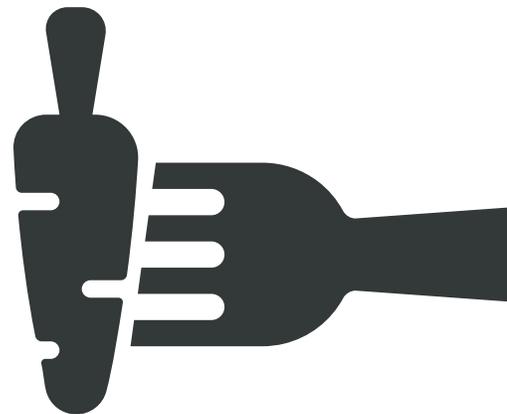
CAN I STILL PUT ON MUSCLE ON A MEATLESS DIET?

If you are a vegetarian or vegan, all of the same training and nutrition rules apply. You can gain plenty of muscle mass, you just need to eat enough calories, including a balanced and well-timed intake of carbs, protein and fats. If you follow a vegetarian or vegan diet, you'll probably have no trouble getting enough carbs and fat. Between sweet potatoes and coconut alone you can find plenty. But your protein intake has to be managed more carefully.

With meat off the menu, you will have to work hard to get enough protein in your diet. For vegetarians, good sources of protein include clean whey protein powders, high-quality dairy products (like Greek yogurt, cottage cheese, or milk), and whole eggs. It's much harder for vegans, as most plant-based sources of protein are incomplete (they lack all 9 essential amino acids) and are little use to the body of a growing athlete. For proper health and performance, you must seek out complete sources of protein.

Here are a few examples:

- Quinoa
- Soy (tofu, tempeh)
- Buckwheat
- Chia Seeds
- Hempseeds
- Rice and Beans



There are endless complimentary sources of amino acids. Listing them all is not the scope of this resource. So, if you are a vegetarian/vegan athlete, our best advice is to do your homework. Do your research, and never leave any doubt over your protein intake. With that, you'll be big and strong in no time.

QUESTION 7:

HOW MUCH MORE DO I NEED TO EAT TO PUT ON MUSCLE?

If you struggle with gaining weight, you're going to have to eat more food than you ever have before. Like to the point of feeling stuffed, bloated, and uncomfortable at times. If eating starts feeling like work, that's because it is! If you want to get bigger, you're going to have to put in the effort. It will be very uncomfortable at times, but don't whine and complain. Just shovel another spoonful of sweet potatoes in your mouth and ask for seconds, maybe even thirds.



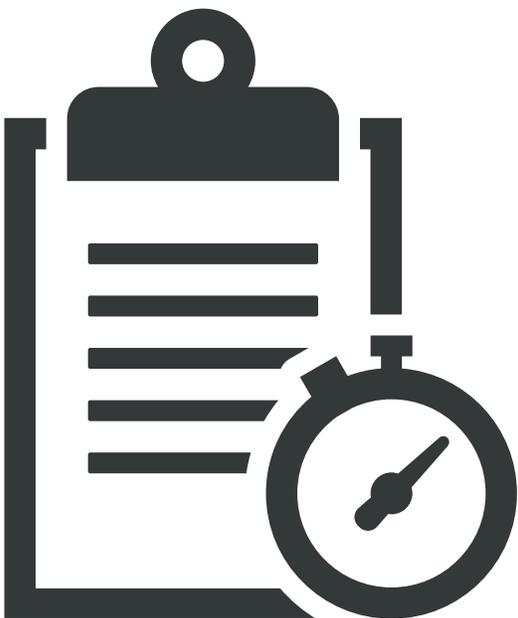
Once you get used to eating more, you will start to see growth. The exact amount of food required depends on the individual, but you will want to adjust your food intake so that you can keep pace with your weekly goal of gaining 0.5-1 pound. Weigh yourself every day. If your weight is going up week after week, you're on the right path. If not, you need to eat more. If you exceed 1 pound, likewise, just back your intake down slightly. You don't need to be perfect. The week to week outcome doesn't matter nearly as much as the cumulative effects of the repeated effort.

QUESTION 8:

HOW OFTEN SHOULD I EAT?

You should be eating every 2.5-3 hours from the minute that you wake up. Here's a quick guide:

- Don't skip breakfast
- Try to eat a meal or snack rich in carbohydrates and lean protein, but low in fiber and fat, a couple of hours before training
- About 30 to 45 minutes before exercise, eat a snack high in carbohydrates and protein, and low in fat and fiber
- After training, eat a meal high in starchy carbs and protein to give your body the raw materials it needs to build muscle.
- The rest of your meals throughout the day should consist mostly of high quality proteins and vegetables. If you need some extra calories for the day, eat another meal rich in protein and fat right before bed.



QUESTION 9:

WHAT SUPPLEMENTS SHOULD I BE TAKING?

The first thing to know is that supplements are exactly that, supplemental. They offer little benefit on their own if you fail to eat enough high-quality, nutrient dense food.

Once proper diet, training, and recovery are in place, you should consider taking the following supplements. As with anything you might consume, do your homework first. The more you can educate yourself first, the better:

- Caffeine: Don't go overboard. A few cups of coffee or a scoop of preworkout before training are more than enough boost. If your energy level just isn't there for the day and you're feeling unmotivated, some caffeine can quickly get you in the training mood.
- Omega-3 Fatty Acids: We take the good high-potency stuff, it's worth the 26 dough for sure. Aim for about 0.5 gram of Omega 3s (DHA/EPA) per 10 pounds of body weight.
- Vitamin D: As a healthy and athletic adult, you should for about 4,000 IU per day.
- Creatine: 5 grams per day. There's no need to load or cycle off.
- ZMA: Guys, take 3 capsules right before bedtime. Ladies, 2 is enough.
- Beta Alanine: Split 4 grams into 4 equal doses and spread it out through the day. Don't take it all at once! If you do, prepare to get the itis.

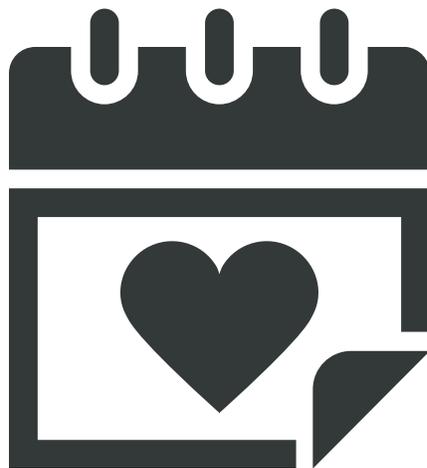


QUESTION 10: **CAN I HAVE CHEAT MEALS?**

Stop using words like “diet” and “cheat meal.”

Diets do not lead to sustainable progress. You start, lose the weight, the diet ends, then weight comes back. That cycle will repeat over and over. Diets also socially isolate you. Who wants to go to a birthday party and not eat the cake? Not me. You shouldn't have to make that kind of sacrifice to reach your goals. When you use terms like “cheat meal” you are setting yourself up for failure. There is shame involved. The name suggests that you're breaking those diet rules again.

Instead, give yourself permission to schedule in a “treat meal.” This should be a guilt free reward. When you train hard you earn it, and you should enjoy it.



QUESTION 11:

WHAT ELSE CAN I DO OUTSIDE OF TRAINING AND DIET?

Two major things: Sleep more and stress less.

Bad sleep is probably the most difficult habit to shake and can easily have the biggest negative effect on muscle gain and fat loss. The more you sleep, the more likely you are to produce the hormones you need to help lose fat. Not sleeping enough will alter glucose sensitivity, elevate your cortisol, screw up your metabolism, and throw your hormones all out of whack. Regardless of how well you're eating and hard you're exercising, you could be working against yourself. By quality sleep, we mean 7-9 hours of uninterrupted sleep in a dark, cool room with ZERO distractions. Ditch the phone, block the windows, and kick out the dog. Go to your cave and watch your performance take off.

Similar things happen to your body when you don't manage your stress. If you run around strung out with your cortisol levels through the roof you might also be carrying around excess body fat, especially around your waistline. High levels of cortisol decrease your body's insulin sensitivity.

You have to find ways to calm yourself. Smart training, meditation, self-reflection, going for a walk, those are just a few ideas. When was the last time you went for a walk, completely unplugged from the world? No cell phone, no distractions, just you and your thoughts. The answer is likely not often enough.



So...

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MAYBE IT'S TIME TO GIVE US A TRY.**

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**LEARN MORE ABOUT HOW FRASER COAST CROSSFIT CAN HELP
YOU GAINSTRENGTH AND INCREASE MUSCLE MASS.**

**GRAB YOUR FREE SESSION NOW!
BY CLICKING THE LINK ABOVE AND WE CAN DISCUSS HOW WE
CAN HELP GET YOU THERE.**