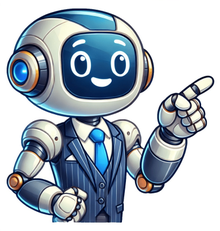
Continue



Skinny, beanpole, rawboned, scrawny, bony, lanky, skeletal, twiggy, gaunt, fragile, delicate, hollow-cheeked, as thin as a rake, skin-and-bones, sticklike, size-zero, emaciated, pinched, undernourished, underfed, rangy, spindly, gangly, gangling, gawky, spindle-shanked, starveling, and macilent. It would be safe to say that the world tends to be unkind when labeling underweight individuals.Do you want to know the synonyms for jacked? Shredded, rugged, sturdy, muscly, stout, well-built, hefty, powerful, and lusty. If given a choice, most people would want to be a part of the latter group.Ask a bro at your gym about putting on size, and theyll tell you it is the easiest thing in the world. However, this is not always the case. Bulking up is simple in theory but difficult in execution. Although most of us know that we need to eat more to build muscle mass and size, it is only a piece of the puzzle.You must stay in a calorie surplus to build muscle, meaning you must eat more calories daily than you expend. At the same time, these calories must come from nutrient-dense sources. Eating junk food and chugging sugar-laden aerated drinks can get you to your daily caloric goal, but in the long run, it will lead you toward obesity and other health issues.A basic understanding of nutrition and how it plays a role in achieving your fitness goals is vital to be successful in your fitness journey. It will help you avoid fad diets and ensure you get the best bang for your buck.In this article, we discuss the basics of bulking for skinny guys, including the nutrition breakdown, and lay down 15 nutrient-dense high-calorie foods to help you hit your daily caloric goals. What is Bulking Up?Contrary to what most people believe, bulking and weight gain are not the same thing. In a weight gain program, your only objective is to get from your current weight to your goal weight. However, in a bulking program, you must also gain muscle mass and improve your physique aesthetics.Bulking up requires a combination of increased caloric intake and weight training exercises. During a bulking-up program, you want to add muscle mass to the body while minimizing fat gain.Bulking is the name of the game for skinny guys wanting to add muscle mass. It requires consuming a high-calorie and protein diet and engaging in strength training exercises to stimulate muscle growth.Besides helping you develop muscle size and strength, bulking up has several other benefits, including boosting metabolism and immune system, better nutrient absorption and energy levels, and improving overall health. Unlike the dirty bulking diet, the nutrient-dense foods listed in this article will also avoid health issues, such as high cholesterol and high blood pressure. [1][2]Although most people know they need to enter a calorie surplus to add size and strength, they are clueless about the foods they should add to their diet plan. If you are one of these people and are looking for answers, youve come to the right place. This article contains 15 high-calorie foods to help skinny guys build size and strength.Overview of the 15 Best Foods For Bulking UpWe have put the nutritional information of the 15 foods into a convenient table with their serving sizes, calories, protein, carb, and fat content, to help you make the right dietary choices:FoodServing SizeCaloriesProtein (in grams)Carbohydrates (in grams)Fats (in grams)Whole Milk1 cup1508128Cheese1 oz110719Nuts1 oz170-2004-63-514-18Avocado1 medium30031725Peanut Butter2 tbsp2008616Brown Rice1 cup2205452Sweet Potato1 medium1002240.2Whole-Grain Bread2 slices200-2508-1236-482-5Dried Fruit1 oz100-1200-125-300-1Salmon3 oz1501709Chicken Breast100 gram1653103.6Beef3 oz18022010Granola1 cup400-5007-966-8012-16Quinoa1 cup2208393.5Weight Gainer Shakes1 serving1,000-1,30045-60200-3002-615 High-Calorie Foods For Skinny Guys To Bulk UpGiven below is a list of lean protein, fruit, nuts, and vegetables that will help underweight lifters bulk up:Whole MilkWhole milk is an excellent source of calories, protein, carbs, and fats. It is versatile and convenient; you could include milk in any of our meals throughout the day. It is also easily digestible.Furthermore, skinny guys trying to bulk up can also include yogurt and curd in their grocery list. You can pair them with your three big meals or eat them as a snack anytime throughout the day. CheeseCheese is another dairy product that should be a part of a skinny individuals dietary routine. This nutrient-dense food comes in different shapes and sizes, making it perfect to add to a wide variety of dishes.Mozzarella, ricotta, cheddar, Swiss, feta, goat cheese, and cottage cheese are a few different types of cheese whose protein, carbs, fat, and calorie content can change depending on their making process. NutsNuts are packed with fats and are a convenient source of the macronutrient. Besides fats, nuts contain a healthy amount of protein and carbs. You can also add seeds to your daily serving of nuts to make things more interesting.Almonds, cashews, walnuts, hazelnuts, pistachios, Macadamia nuts, pumpkin seeds, and sunflower seeds are some of the most popular nuts and seeds. You can add nuts and seeds to your meals or grab them as a snack. AvocadoAvocado is popular among fitness enthusiasts as a high-quality fat source. This fruit primarily contains monounsaturated fats, fiber, and vitamins, which can help reduce the risk of blood pressure, regulate glucose levels, promote healthy blood lipid profiles, and improves insulin sensitivity.Avocado is mostly added to salads or consumed by itself. You could also add avocados to smoothies for a quick high-calorie meal. Also, a guacamole dip is an excellent option for folks looking for a healthy spread. Peanut ButterPeanut butter is a staple in most fitness enthusiasts cupboards. Although peanut butter is mainly eaten for its fat content, it also contains a healthy dose of protein and carbs. You could also add peanut butter to shakes and smoothies for a delicious snack.Some alternatives to peanut butter include almond butter, cashew butter, and hazelnut butter. You could switch between these alternatives to keep your meals interesting. However, ensure that these butter are not laden with artificial sweeteners and sugar. Prefer organic peanut butter over the others. Brown RiceBrown rice is a complex carbohydrate that is an excellent energy source for the body. Carbs are the most crucial macronutrient during the bulking phase. Brown rices versatility makes them an excellent food to add to any meal and fill a calorie void. Sweet Potato This food is packed with complex carbohydrates, vitamins, and minerals. It is one of the few inherently delicious foods in a healthy diet. You could consume sweet potato as a side in your main meals or as a snack. Whole-Grain BreadWhole-grain breads are delectable and highly versatile. They contain a high-calorie content in a small serving size. Most people eat bread in their breakfast. However, you could add it to any of your meals.Unlike refined white bread, whole grain bread contains the entire grain, providing a wealth of vitamins and minerals. Whole-grain bread also digests slower than white bread, providing a constant energy supply throughout the day. Dried FruitDried fruit is a nutrient-dense snack that is easy to transport, has more shelf life than fresh fruit, and is easy to carry. It contains a good amount of carbs, fiber, vitamins, and minerals.Almonds, cashews, raisins, apricots, dates, and prunes are a few types of dried fruit. Dried fruit is also great for satisfying your sweet cravings. However, dried fruit contains more concentrated sugar than fresh fruit. You must consume dried fruit in moderation, as excessive intake can lead to high sugar intake and digestive issues. SalmonSalmon is the go-to seafood for most lifters. This high-quality protein is rich in omega-3 fatty acids and is an excellent food choice for folks looking to build muscle and improve overall health. Since salmon is a quick-absorbing source of protein, consume it right after your workout for the best results. Chicken BreastThe good old chicken breast is one of the best foods for building muscle mass without adding body fat. You could consume chicken breast during your lunch or dinner and ideally after your training session. BeefBeef is rich in protein and essential amino acids, which can help build muscle mass. It is also a good source of iron, zinc, and vitamin B12, improving overall health and vitality. Choose lean cuts of beef, such as sirloin, flank, or round steak, to limit your fat intake. GranolaGranola is an often overlooked complex carbohydrate in a bulking regimen. It is an excellent breakfast food and snack that is made from a combination of oats, nuts, seeds, and dried fruits. Granola also contains a healthy dose of fat and protein, making it a well-rounded food source. QuinoaQuinoa is one of the few plant-based foods with a complete protein source, meaning it contains all of the essential amino acids the body needs to build muscle. It is a must-have in every vegan diet. You can add quinoa to salads, stir-fries, or as a side dish. Weight Gainer ShakesWeight gainer shakes are a godsend for folks who have difficulty meeting their nutrition goals through whole foods. A serving of a weight gainer can contain between 200-300 grams of carbs and a decent amount of protein. You could also use a whey protein supplement instead of a mass gainer, as per your macros. Tip: Calculate your recommend daily protein, carbs and fat intake.Nutrition Planning For Bulking Up For Skinny GuysNow that you know about the 15 high-calorie foods to help skinny guys bulk up and build muscle, it is time to put the knowledge to work. Here are some nutrition planning tips to help you in the process:CaloriesSkinny folks must use a calculated approach to enter a calorie surplus to add size and strength. Your goal should be to eat 300-500 additional calories daily. Bumping up your calories by 500 kcal will help you gain a pound of weight each week, which is a sustainable and healthy approach to bulking up. [3]MacronutrientAfter arriving at a daily calorie goal, you must break it down into a suitable carbs, protein, and fats ratio to achieve your goal physique. A 40-30-30 split (40% carbs, 30% protein, and 30% fats) is one of the most reliable macronutrient ratios for building muscle mass and strength while limiting fat buildup.Here is an oversimplified step-by-step process for setting a calorie and macronutrient goal to bulk up for skinny guys:Use a calorie-tracking tracking app, such as MyFitnessPal, to calculate your daily average calorie intake for the last five days.Bump up your calorie intake by 300-500 calories.Break down the calorie goal into a suitable macronutrient split.Alternatively, you could use our online calorie and macronutrient calculators for this process.Design a diet using the 15 high-calorie, nutrient-dense foods mentioned in this article.Remember, you might need to tweak your diet plan for the first few weeks until you find something that works for you. Seek expert help if you have trouble designing a diet plan; it will save you a lot of time, effort, and money.Wrapping UpSkinny folks must enter a caloric surplus to build muscle and strength. However, you must remember that all calories are not created equal. Although dirty bulking is more convenient (and delicious), it can lead to excess body fat and chronic health conditions.Skinny guys must add the 15 high-calorie, nutrient-dense foods mentioned in this article to their grocery list and follow a customized training program to bulk up sustainably, improve their overall health and physical performance, and achieve the physiques of their dreams.ReferencesFitness Volt is committed to providing our readers with science-based information. We use only credible and peer-reviewed sources to support the information we share in our articles.Troesch B, Biesalski HK, Bos R, Buskens E, Calder PC, Saris WH, Spieldenner J, Verkade HJ, Weber P, Eggersdorfer M. Increased Intake of Foods with High Nutrient Density Can Help to Break the Intergenerational Cycle of Malnutrition and Obesity. Nutrients. 2015 Jul 21;7(7):6016-37. doi: 10.3390/nu7075266. PMID: 26197337; PMCID: PMC4517043.Drewnowski A. Impact of nutrition interventions and dietary nutrient density on productivity in the workplace. Nutr Rev. 2020 Mar 1;78(3):215-224. doi: 10.1093/nutrit/nuz088. PMID: 31889196.Cleveland Clinic. High-Calorie Foods and Snack Ideas to Gain Weight. Cleveland Clinic, 2020, . Accessed May 8, 2023 Facebook Twitter Reddit Flipboard LinkedIn Pinterest If youre a guy and your goal is to gain weight, you need to know two important terms.Calorie surplusMuscle gain vs fat gainA calorie surplus is when you eat more calories than your body needs on a given day. Lets take a look at a simple example. As you can see, Brad needs 2500 calories each day to maintain his weight. Since he wants to gain weight, he decides to eat 500 calories more than the 2500 he needs. That 500 extra calories puts him in a calorie surplus and he will gain weight.Anytime you say you are in a bulk, that means you are in a calorie deficit. If you say you are "bulking" but the scale isn't moving, you aren't eating enough and are either at your maintenance calories or in a calorie deficit.The next important distinction is gaining muscle or fat, which is what is going to happen with that extra 500 calories.If youre lifting weights and eating enough protein, your body will prioritize muscle growth. If you eat in a surplus and dont track your protein or lift weights, those excess calories will most likely be stored as fat.Male bulking calorie target: Multiply weight (in pounds) by 17 - 20Male bulking protein target: Multiply weight (in pounds) by 0.7 and eat at least that many grams of protein each day. Here are additional references:The Best Ectomorph Diet (Overcoming Your Skinny Genetics)How To Workout To Build Muscle And Gain Weight (Full Workout Included)A Skinny Fat Guide For Those That Want To Build Muscle And Lose Fat The great thing about meal frequency when it comes to bulking up as a male (or female for that matter) is that it doesnt matter!You can eat how ever many meals feels right to you and fits your schedule, as long as you hit your calories and protein.Lets say you are eating 3000 calories. You could do either of these plans and get similar results:Meal Frequency For Skinny Guy Bulking Option 1Breakfast - 600Snack - 400Lunch - 500Snack - 200Dinner - 800Dessert - 500Meal Frequency For Skinny Guy Bulking Option 2Breakfast - 0Snack - 0Lunch - 1000Weight gainer shake - 1000Dinner - 1000 Both of those examples will get you similar results even though one person is spreading out their food over multiple meals while the other likes to fast and eat later in the day.There's no wrong answer. Lets get to building your plan. This is going to require work on your end so I want you to grab a piece of paper or open up your notes app.For each category below I want you to write down:2 bulking breakfast options that sound good2 bulking lunch options that sound good3 bulking dinner options that sound good3 - 4 snacks that you'll be able to plug in for extra caloriesAt the end of this section youll have up to 11 meals and snacks that you can mix and match day in and day out. I personally think breakfast is important when trying to gain bulk because you want to start eating early to make a dent on your calorie goal. Eating more calories may be new to you so providing yourself with more hours in the day to eat your calories may be a good option.Also, loading up on protein and calories early in the day makes it easier to cruise through the remainder of the day without having to stuff yourself at dinner. When making your lunch, you need to take into consideration what youve had prior that day.Have you already had breakfast and/or a snack? Or are you fasted and this meal is the first of the day?Those questions are important because they are going to dictate how big of meal you make for lunch. Now youve arrived to dinner! Depending on your style of eating, this is usually the biggest meal for most of my skinny guy bulking clients.They are going to have a lot of calories and protein, while also making sure they get their micronutrients with vegetables. This is the most common meal that you DON'T skip so that's why I like for you to have 3 options available to yourself. The great thing about gaining weight is the flexibility you get with snacking! This is where you get to plug the holes in your diet and ramp up your calories and protein.If you prefer smaller meals, have more snacks to help you hit your targets. On the contrary, if you prefer big meals, you might keep your snacking to a minimum and save those calories. Some experts out there will tell you to eat whatever you want to bulk up since the only thing that matters is calories. This is often called a "dirty bulk".I believe there is a balance you need to find with eating enough to gain weight AND feeling good.If you loaded up on junk food youll gain weight but youll probably feel pretty lousy.Instead focus on whole foods like the ones listed below and then sprinkle in those cheat foods to help you hit your calorie and protein goal.Protein: Meats, fish, and poultry - lean ground beef, lean steak, beef jerky, ground turkey, turkey breast, chicken breast, pork chop, salmon, white fish, shrimpProtein: Dairy - milk, cottage cheese, greek yogurtProtein: Other - tofu, eggs, egg whites, edamame, protein powder, protein barsCarbs: whole grain wraps, whole grain bread, oatmeal, beans, lentils, whole wheat pasta, sweet potatoes, ret potatoes, russet potatoes, white rice, brown rice, quinoaVeggies: zucchini, tomatoes, all colored peppers, asparagus, onions, broccoli, lettuce, spinach, kale, celery, carrots, green beens, peas, mushroomsFruits: bananas, grapes, apples, blueberries, strawberries, blackberries, oranges, peaches, pears, cantaloupe, watermelon, bananasGood Fats: extra virgin olive oil, avocado oil, flaxseed oil, coconut oil, peanut butter, almond butter, avocados, almonds, walnuts, peanuts, cashews, sunflower seeds, ghee Now that you have a list of available meals and know what types of food to focus on, lets see it in action.Here is a hypothetical bulking diet for skinny guys.Gainer Oats: 732 calories 33g protein3 servings oatmeal1/2 scoop protein powder3 tbsp peanut butter1 banana Lunch: Burrito Bowl: 650 calories 41g protein6 oz ground turkey1 cup black beans1 avocadoLettuceSautd peppers and onionsSalsa and 2 tbsp sour cream Dinner: The classic chicken and rice: 883 calories 64g protein6 oz chicken breast2 servings rice1 cup broccoli2 servings almonds Snacks:Carrots, celery, and pretzels with hummus: 200 calories1 protein shake with 2 cups whole milk: 450 calories 40g protein1 banana + 2 tbsp almond butter: 310 calories 7g proteinTotal: 3225 calories 185g proteinRemember you only need to eat at least 0.7 grams of protein per pound of bodyweight. Therefore, if you like protein and want to ramp that number up, go for it! Why Am I So Skinny But Eat A lot? If you feel like you eat a lot but can't gain any weight, it means you are not in a calorie surplus and need to eat more. Skinny guys often have fast metabolisms that require them to eat more.Drink more liquid calories such as milkAdd a blended protein shake each day with protein, milk, banana, and peanut butterEat more fats like nuts, seeds, healthy oils, and nut buttersLimit water during meals so you can eat moreStart eating earlier in the day so you can space out mealsAdd more unprocessed foods for easy calories How Many Eggs Should A Skinny Guy Eat? Eggs are an excellent source of protein to eat for breakfast or for a snack and should be a staple for most bulking meal plans for skinny guys.There have been studies shown that eggs don't affect cholesterol like we used to think so they are safe to consume.I personally will eat between 3 - 4 eggs with breakfast and have sen many people at 5. If you want to learn about the health benefits of eggs check out this article. Peanut butter is a great option for weight gain because it is a fat. Fat has more calories per gram (9) than carbs (4) and proteins (4) do. Since its more than double the calories per gram, its easy add extra calories to your bulking diet with peanut butter. When building your bulking weight gain meal plan, its important that you are consistent with following a well structured strength training routine. You want to make sure that the majority of your weight gain is muscle and the best way to do that is by lifting weights. Following the 4 week workout program in this guide will lead you in the right direction.The Best Ectomorph Body Type Workout Program When you want to gain muscle but also lose stubborn belly fat you have whats known as a skinny fat body. Your best option it to decide what your main priority is, build muscle or lose fat. From there, focus on that specific goal for 8 -12 weeks and then reevaluate your goals.From my experience working with skinny fat clients, I've found that most are usually pretty weak when they first start lifting weights. Can you relate?Because of that our approach is to build muscle and get stronger from the start, and then go into a cutting phase later to shed fat.At the end of the day, it's totally up to you!I discuss this in depth in my Skinny Fat Essential Guide To wrap up, remember that the best bulking meal plan for skinny guys is one that fits your lifestyle and doesnt overly restrict you and is not too complicated.Youll need to be in a calorie surplus to gain weight so find how many calories you need to be eating and then pick a few meals from each category above to build the perfect meal plan for you.And don't forget to lift weights so you'll gain muscle and not fat while you bulk! Reddit and its partners use cookies and similar technologies to provide you with a better experience. By accepting all cookies, you agree to our use of cookies to deliver and maintain our services and site, improve the quality of Reddit, personalize Reddit content and advertising, and measure the effectiveness of advertising. By rejecting non-essential cookies, Reddit may still use certain cookies to ensure the proper functionality of our platform. For more information, please see our Cookie Notice and our Privacy Policy. Want to go from a skinny guy to building muscle quickly? I got you.Ive spent my entire life trying to pack on muscle, and after years and years of trial and error, I finally cracked the code.Today, I share that code with you! Up, up, down down, left, rightWait, wrong code.This is a topic that is near and dear to me because Ive spent my life devoted to this stuff:These are the exact tactics Ive used and the same strategies we use with our Online Coaching Clients. Our coaching program helps people bulk up quickly. Learn how: This free guide is gonna get you started off on the right foot!Here are the 4 parts well cover in this ultimate guide:#1) INTRO:How I bulked up after years of struggling as a skinny guy.#2) NUTRITION: #3) STRENGTH TRAINING: #4) RECOVERY, TIPS AND TRICKS, NEXT STEP: We also have nutrition guides, shopping lists, and workouts you can download for FREE when you sign up for our newsletter. Alright, lets get to it! How I Bulked up After Years of Struggling as a Skinny GuyGrowing up, I was always the scrawny, skinny weak kid.There was a reason I dressed up like Superman every other day for the first six years of my life:Superman was strong, big, and powerfuland I wasnt.To this day, its still a big challenge for me to gain weight or build muscle.When I was cut from the high school basketball team (for being bad at basketball, mostly), I decided I needed to get bigger and stronger, so I signed up for a gym membership to get big and strong.Within five minutes, I had almost killed myself when loading up way too much weight for a set of bench presses.Fortunately, I survived and thus began my love affair with strength training.I spent the next six years training in a gym, reading every muscle and fitness magazine I could find, drinking protein shakes religiouslyand had about 3 pounds of muscle gain to show for it.I just assumed Im one of those people who cant gain weight.It turns out, I was doing it all wrong.After graduating college, I moved to California, signed up for a gym membership, and received a few free personal trainer sessions.Although I thought I had known it all (I had been training for 6 years in a gym! I read the muscle mags! I was in good shape already!), I still took the free sessions for the hell of it.Im so glad I did!The trainer drastically simplified my workout and DOUBLED the amount of food I was eating.I thought he was crazy at first, but I stuck with it.In 30 days, I had put on 18 pounds (pictured below), increased the strength for ALL of my lifts, and felt more confident than I ever had before in my life.Thats when the lightbulb went off in my head: turns out I had been telling myself a lie.Thus began a radical redefinition of how I thought the human body worked, how muscle was built, and where I needed to put my priorities.Since then, Ive spent over 15 years learning everything I can about how muscle is built.A few years back, I took an epic 35,000-mile trip around the world, and despite not having access to a gym for 6 months, I managed to pack on even more muscle and get myself in great shape without once picking up a weight (pictured below):Again, my world was turned upside down.I learned that gyms are not a requirement for building muscle and getting stronger, though a great gym workout can certainly speed up the process.And after a few more years of up and down challenges, I had finally jokingly changed from Steve Rogers to Captain America (theres a story behind this):Im still not the biggest guy in the world, nor will I ever be. Im okay with that!Ive learned that anyone can pack on muscle, even skinny nerds like me.If youre skinny and want to get bigger, youll be fighting genetics the whole way, but do not let that deter you.Todays article outlines everything Ive learned over the past 15+ years of mistakes, successes, failures, and adventures.The Most Important Thing for Putting on Muscle: Eat More Food.As they say, muscle isnt made in the gym, but in the kitchen:If you want to bulk up, youd be better off working out twice a week for 30 minutes and eating enough calories/protein, than working out 6 days a week and not eating enough.I learned this the hard way.I spent four years of college working out five days a week for 90 minutes a day trying to get bigger.I drank protein shakes like I thought I was supposed to. I got a little stronger but never bigger.Why?BECAUSE I DIDNT EAT ENOUGH CALORIES.When I get emails from people who lament the fact that they cant gain weight, I always first ask about the persons diet.More often than not, that person thinks they are eating enough, but are definitely not.Heres the truth:If you are not getting bigger, you are not eating enough.Your body can burn 2000+ calories every day just existing (and then factor in exercise and, gulp, cardio Ill get to that in a minute), and you need to overload your system with calories in order for it to have enough fuel for the muscle-building process.Want to know how many calories you burn every day just existing?Plug your stats into our TDEE (Total daily energy expenditure) calculator: Basal Metabolic Rate (BMR) 0 Your BMR is an estimate of the total calories burned a day, while in a state of rest. TDEE 0 Your TDEE is an estimate of the total calories burned during a single day, when exercise is factored in. Note: we have used The Mifflin-St Jeor Equation to create this calculator! [1]For every person, the number of required calories for bulking up daily is different. You need to factor in your age, your height, your current weight, how much you move and fidget throughout the day, and how much weight you want to gain:For some people, it might be 2,000 calories a day.For others, it might be 3,000 calories a day.For others, it might be 4,000 calories a day.While calorie counting isnt required to put on mass, I think for a newbie starting out tracking calories for a few days is a great place to begin. It gives you a snapshot of your current eating patterns and helps you avoid a lot of heartache later on. No one wants to spend months trying to gain muscle only to realize they vastly overestimated how much they were eating!(Of course, this doesnt mean you need to track calories forever. In our coaching program, we use a combination of calorie tracking and a Balanced Plate approach to find what works best for each client.)So, track your calories using something like MyFitnessPal over a few days and get an average.I bet youll discover youre eating significantly less than you thought you were.Once youve learned how many calories your body burns dailyEat MORE than that!How much more, you may ask? Time to do a little math.Step 1: Calculate your TDEE (total daily energy expenditure.)Step 2: Calculate how many additional calories you need to eat to gain weight.We recommend you aim to gain 0.25-0.5% of your body weight per week.If you weigh 150lbs, that would be 0/3-0.75 lbs per weekMultiply that increase in weight by 3500 calories (3500 calories = 1 pound)In the above example, you would need to eat an extra 200-400 calories per day.Step 3: Track your progress for 2-3 weeks and reassess.Spend the next two weeks eating those additional calories and see how your weight adjusts and how you look in progress photos!If you are not getting bigger, add 250 additional calories per day and repeat the process.Some people will bulk up much faster by overeating more calories than this, but we dont recommend it. Your body has a limit to how much muscle it can naturally build each week.Everybodys results will vary (thanks, genetics!):Under optimal conditions, some say you can expect to gain 1 pound (.5 kg) of muscle per week.My results have shown that 2 lbs (1kg) per month is more realistic.A 2016 study[2]revealed that strength training produced a 2.2 lb increase (1kg) increase in lean mass in 8 weeks.When you exceed your muscle-building capacity, those extra calories are stored as body fat, not as muscle which isnt necessarily a bad thing. There will likely always be SOME fat put on while you bulk it wont be 100% muscle even for people like professional bodybuilders with great genetics.Here are things to consider if you overeat WHILE strength training: extra glycogen, some fat, and water stored in your body can be a good thing for your confidence and get you headed down the right path.So, dont listen to the sites or programs that say gain 40 pounds of muscle in two months!Its going to be a slow, long process.Yes, it is possible to have incredible transformations in a short amount of time, like when I gained 18 pounds (8.1kg) in 30 daysThis was due to strength training, overeating, protein, and extra water weight (from supplementing with creatine):My advice: Rather than massive weight gain over a month, youd be much better off gaining .5-1.5 lbs. (.25-.75 kg) a week, every week, for several months at a timeand keeping the weight on!Now, I know this isnt easy.Theres nothing worse than spending 6+ months in a gym and doing what you think you SHOULD be doing, only to step on the scale and realize that you havent made any progress!If youre somebody whos worried about wasting time, or you want to have an expert guide your nutrition based on your current situation, consider checking out our Online Training Program! Learn to bulk up correctly with our Coaching Program! What Food Should I Eat to Bulk Up?Lets go through how you should be prioritizing your nutrition, nutrient by nutrient:Protein: rebuilds muscle after you break it down.Carbohydrates: provide your muscles with fuel and your body with energyFat: helps your bodily functions and can also be burned as fuel in the absence of carbs.Lets look at each of these individually:PRIORITY #1: PROTEINProtein can come from any number of sources, including:Meat (steak, bison, pork).Fowl (chicken, turkey, duck).Eggs![3]Cheese and dairy.Fish and shellfish (salmon, tuna, shrimp).Legumes (black beans, chickpeas).Other vegetarian protein sources here.As we cover in our How much Protein do I need?, claims for the amount of protein needed vary wildly from source to source (and athlete to athlete).Here is our recommendation for protein consumption:If youre of healthy weight, active, and wish to build muscle, aim for 0.8g/lb (1.6g/kg). [16]If you get all of your protein from plant-based sources, you may want to aim slightly higher at around 1.0g/lb (2.2g/kg). This covers for plant-based sources that dont have as complete an amino acid profile as meat and dairy.If you want to keep it simple, target ~1 gram of protein per pound of body weight (2.2 grams per kg).If youre curious, this is what a portion of protein looks like from our healthy eating article:Also, heres how much protein is in a serving of food:4 oz (113 g) of chicken has around 30 g of protein.4 oz (113 g) of salmon has 23 g of protein4 oz (113 g) of steak has 28 g of protein.Want to get more protein? Consider protein shakes, like so:PRIORITY #2: CARBSAfter protein, to get bigger, you need to eat enough calories, and those calories should come from sources composed of carbs and/or fats.Making sure your muscles glycogen stores (which primarily comes from consuming carbohydrates) is full also helps prevent the breakdown of protein into energy (i.e. breaking down muscle tissue for energy!) Thats a pretty big deal when we are trying to bulk up!Here are foods full of carbohydrates you can prioritize for bulking up:RiceQuinoaOatsLegumes and lentilsSweet potatoesYamsRegular potatoesWhole grain pastaWhole grain breadTo help you get better at eyeballing serving sizes:1 serving of a starchy carbohydrate is 1 cupped hand (uncooked), or your two hands forming a cup (cooked).Here are some images to help you learn proper portion sizes (thanks to SafeFood):In addition to consuming carbohydrates from these sources, there are tons of other great options like fruit, starchy tubers like potatoes or yams, and more.PRIORITY #3: FAT!Fat is a macronutrient that can help you reach your goals in the right quantity. Its higher in calories, so a little bit can go a long way. Especially if you struggle to eat enough calories, adding more fat to your diet can help you increase your calories without feeling too full.Healthy fat can be found in foods like:AvocadoAlmondsWalnutsMacadamia nutsOlive oilAlmond butterPeanut butterWhat about saturated fat? Is that OK to eat when Im bulking up? In moderation, saturated fats can absolutely be a part of your diet! [4]. We recommend keeping saturated fats to 10-20% of your total fat intake.Saturated fats can come from things like:Whole milkFull-fat dairyCoconut oilGrass-fed butterFatty cuts of meatLardTo help you gauge: a serving size of fat is roughly the size of your thumb!For reference, this is a single serving of almonds (162 calories):THIS is a serving of olive oil (119 calories):As you can see, you can eat an extra 500 calories of healthy fats by eating lots of heart-healthy fats like nuts or adding more olive oil to your meals.PRIORITY #4: VEGETABLES!Last but not least, fruit and vegetables.If you start to eat a lot more food, your indoor plumbing is going to really benefit from eating some high-fiber veggies with each meal:A serving of veggies is about the size of your fist.Heres a quick, non-complete list of veggies that can fill your plate:BroccoliBroccoliniCauliflowerSpinachKaleSpaghetti squashBrussels sproutsZucchiniCucumberCarrotsOnionAsparagusBRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER:This plate and serving size stuff above is just to help you get started thinking about healthy food differently and in proper portion sizes.To recap:HERES HOW TO EAT TO BULK UP:Calculate your (Total daily energy expenditure) and add enough calories to increase 0.25-0.5% of your body weight per week.Consume 0.8-1g per pound (1.6-2.2g per kg) of body weight in protein every day.Consume the rest of your calories from foods composed of carbs and fats.Eat vegetables to keep up your fiber and micronutrient content for your general health.If you are not gaining weight, add more carbs and/or fats to your meal.It really does come down to the following:If you are not gaining weight fast enough, you are not eating enough. Increase your portions of carbohydrates and fats!Whenever we work with coaching clients who struggle to bulk up, this is the area we target: adding more carbs and fats to each meal. Need an expert to help you bulk up quickly and safely? Learn more: What Supplements Should I take to Bulk up? How to eat more calories.If you are struggling to consume enough food every day, then here are some tips to help you reach your caloric goals to bulk up:WHAT SUPPLEMENTS SHOULD I TAKE TO BULK UP FAST?Most supplements are garbage.HOWEVER, if you are interested in bulking quickly, there are two I would recommend:Protein Powder. A great solution for getting extra protein and calories in your diet and building muscle.[5] As we point out in our article on protein and protein shakes, mix and match your own ingredients and see how many calories you can get into a smoothie without breaking your blender.Creatine supplement. It helps your muscles retain more water, and have more energy and power to push your workouts hard (which will be another key component of bulking up, adding muscle!) [6], and has been shown to increase the hormone IGF-1, which is needed for muscle growth[7].Outside of these two supplements, you really dont need to prioritize supplementation, despite what the muscle magazines tell you! Ill leave you with a couple more suggestions on how to bulk up in this section:#1) Liquid calories are your friend. Liquid calories can give us lots of calories without filling us up, which is an easier way to consume enough calories every day without feeling overly full.I personally get a huge chunk of my calories every day from making my own Powerbomb Shake from our Protein Guide:Water: 16 oz.Quaker Oats: 3 servings (120g)Frozen spinach: 1.5 servings (120g)Frozen mixed berries: 1.5 servings (120g)Protein powder: 2 scoops of Optimum Nutrition Vanilla WheyAnd here is the macronutrient breakdown:Calories: 815 calProtein: 70gCarbs: 107gFats: 12gIf you need even more calories consider adding whole milk, coconut milk, or almond milk instead of water.I like to buy Frozen berries and Frozen Spinach from Trader Joes, but you can buy in any grocery store!You can also add a shot of olive oil to add calories/fats to a shake in the quest for MOAR MUSCLE!#2) Keep your protein intake to the lower end of the 0.8-1g/lb range.Wait, Steve, are you actually telling me to eat LESS protein? In this case, yes! If youre struggling to get enough calories in, I recommend you keep protein at the optimal range of 0.8g/lb of body weight, and not any higher.Youve already maximized muscle synthesis, so any additional protein is just going to fill you up more (since protein is the most satiating macronutrient.)#3) Use food palatability to your advantage.Highly palatable foods (like those containing lots of flavor, carbs, and fats) are less filling and tend to make you want to eat more of them. This is essentially the opposite advice of someone on a fat loss diet, but can be helpful if you struggle to get enough calories to bulk!#4) Continue to slowly increase your portion sizes or add more meals throughout the dayIf youre someone whos struggled to put on weight your whole life, a lot of that could be because you just dont feel all that good when you try to eat more food!Theres really no way around the fact that were going to have to increase the amount of food you eat, even if its not always the most comfortable.If you are cooking rice, each week try adding in an extra quarter cup when you cook it.You may have to eat at times when you dont feel all that hungry.This is not enjoyable. You can try to increase the number of times you eat throughout the day to help combat this a bit.However, just like its necessary to force your muscles outside of your comfort zone to get bigger, you need to force your stomach outside of its comfort zone until it adapts to accepting more calories.How to Grow Bigger Muscles: Get StrongerWhen you strength train, your muscles are broken down and then get rebuilt stronger to adapt to the stress you have applied to it.So every time you pick up a slightly heavier weight, you are increasing the challenge and forcing your muscles to adapt and get more resilient.Specifically, what Im trying to say is:If you want to get bigger, focus on getting stronger.As long as you are continually increasing the weights or increasing the sets and reps you are lifting, your muscles will continually adapt to get stronger.This is called progressive overload and it. is. everything.NF Coach Jim walks you through the ins and outs of progressive overload in this video:If you want to dive in more, check out our guide What is Progressive Overload?Follow a progressive overload strategy and eat enough calories, and you will get bigger.Lets dive into more specifics with programming and exercises so you can maximize your muscle growth potential:VOLUMEVolume refers to the total number of sets and reps you challenge your muscles with each week.For most people, we recommend starting with 10-20 working sets per muscle group per week. Getting more volume (more sets of exercises) per week resulted in more mass compared to less volume (fewer sets of exercises), in this study[9]That might look like:6 sets for your quads on Tuesday, and then another 6 sets on Friday4 sets for your chest on Monday, Wednesday, and FridayOr 3 sets for your back on Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday, and SundayHow you break it up will really depend on your schedule (which well get to in a minute.)What about repetitions per set? While recent studies show that any rep range from 5-30 reps per set stimulates an equal amount of muscle growth as long as the set was brought close to failure, practically, weve found that most of our clients do really well in the 6-15 rep range, with 2-3 working sets per exercise. [17]INTENSITYRemember when we talked about progressive overload? That comes into play right here.You want to come within 1-3 reps of failure for your working sets. That means you pick a weight and do enough reps that you can only do 1 to 3 more before you can no longer perform the exercise with proper technique. [10][11]Dont risk an injury by trying to lift too much weight too soon, but make sure you regularly test whether you can lift a few more pounds in your lifts.TEMPOMaintaining tension in the muscle for longer helps stimulate muscle growth. Controlling an exercises eccentric phase (the lengthening portion) also helps reduce injury risk. (Though strength training is one of the safest sports in the world.)Our recommended tempo for your lifts is this:2-4 seconds slow and controlled as you lower the weightA brief pause in the bottom positionAthletically move the weight back up (no need to go slower than normal here)RepeatSCHEDULEYou want to train each major muscle group at least 2x/week. You can divide this up in several ways:2-4 full body workouts per week hitting major muscle groups in each session2-3 upper body days, combined with 2-3 lower body days each week2 days each of a push focus, a pull focus, and a lower body focus each weekFor most people, we recommend starting with a full-body program. Its more efficient (only 2-4 days per week instead of 5-6), and your body doesnt NEED more workouts at this point to grow plenty of muscle.As you progress, you can experiment with upper/lower and push/pull/lower splits if they work for your schedule and you hit a plateau in your training though before adding more days, we recommend you double-check that your volume, intensity, and tempo are all dialed in first.You can use movements like these in your full-body workouts: If you can focus on getting stronger with the above exercises and eat enough calories, you will also get bigger in all the right places.Just. Keep. Eating. And. Lifting.Skinny Guy Workout Plans for Bulking UpAs we cover in our How to build muscle article, heres a sample routine you can follow NOW to start bulking up.After you do your dynamic warm-up, do the following workout:MONDAY BULK-UP WORKOUT: WEDNESDAY BULK-UP WORKOUT:Deadlift: 3 sets of 6 to 8 repsDumbbell Incline Bench Press: 3 sets of 12 to 15 repsInverted Bodyweight Rows: 3 sets of 10 to 12 repsCable Tricep Pushdowns: 3 sets of 12 to 15 repsFRIDAY BULK-UP WORKOUT:Front Squats: 3 sets of 6 to 8 repsDips: 3 sets of 8 to 10 repsPull-Ups: 3 sets of 6 to 8 repsDumbbell Bicep Curls: 3 sets of 12 to 15 repsGet stronger, and the rest will take care of itself.NERD FITNESS RECOMMENDATION: Feel free to pick WHATEVER workout program you want from wherever. If you dont want to follow the workout above, consider these sources: If youre curious, here are some commonly accepted strategies based on your goals for how many sets and reps you should do:Strength and power: 1-5 repsStrength and some size: 5-8 reps[8]Size and some strength: 8-12 repsMuscular endurance: 12+ repsAs we pointed out above, as long as you get close to failure, recent research shows that anything between 5-30 reps is about equal for muscle growth. So dont worry too much about which path is best.Nutrition plays the most important role in bulking up