

Fitness tips for muscle gaining

Through-out my 16 years of working out, I've had a lot of "what the **** is he/she doing?" moments, both in and out of the gym. Below is a compilation of tips that will assist you in your quest to become fit and healthy.

- Set Goals**- This is probably the most important tip of all. It's imperative that you set yourself some sort of goal. Goals give us direction and keep us motivated. How do you stay motivated to achieve your goals? One thing that works for me is to set smaller goals within my ultimate goal. E.g if I want to lose 12kg in a year, I would aim to lose 1kg each month. Another method is to tell everyone about it. Broadcast your goals on social media. By doing this, you're holding yourself accountable. Remember the S.M.A.R.T principle
Specific- The more specific your goal, the easier it is to achieve it. For example, a lot of people say things like "I just want to lose weight," or "I wanna be ripped." This isn't a good enough goal. Be more specific so that you have something to aim towards. E.g "I want to lose 12kg by the end of the year," or "I would like to run 400m in under 1 minute."
Measurable Your goals must be measurable in order to see if you're making progress. For example, a goal of "I want to lose 5 pounds" has a measurable component compared to "I want lose weight," which is more ambiguous.
Attainable- You need to be realistic with your goals. For example, a goal of "losing 15kgs in 1 month" is not an attainable goal. However, "losing 0.5kg to 1kg a week for a total of 2 to 3 kg in a month," is attainable. I know you want to look as good as your favorite Instagram celebrity, but there's no point trying to sprint before you can even crawl. Besides, what works for your favorite celebrity may not work for you. We all have different body-types and genetics
Relevant- Ensure that your goals are relevant to your particular needs. For example, heavy resistance training wouldn't be ideal for someone training for Soccer. The goal must be generated by you, and not your personal trainer, so that it has enough personal meaning.
Time-bound- To help stay focused, goals should have a deadline for completion. These deadlines can be both short and long term. For example, a client who has a 7-month goal, can be given weekly tasks to accomplish this long-term goal.
- Plan, Plan, Plan!!**: Would you go on vacation without planning your trip (what to do, where to stay)? Probably not. Linked to goals is planning. Plan your workouts at least a week or two in

advance so that you don't waste time walking around, wondering what exercises you're going to do. There have been times when I've gone to the gym with no real idea what I wanted to do and always ended up walking around aimlessly, feeling unfulfilled. Create a 4-6 week workout plan

3. **Realistic expectations-** One of the main reasons people quit the gym is because they set themselves high expectations and then realize they can't achieve their goals. Part of the problem is that the media brainwashes us into thinking we need to look a certain way and that it's easy to get there. It's good to dream big and go for gold, but you've got to be realistic with yourself. There's no point aiming to gain 60kgs of muscles mass in one year. The key is to set small goals that lead to your main goal. It needs to be attainable.
4. **Consistency-** This is the key to success, in fact, it's the difference between those who have reached their goals and those that haven't. You can have the best training program, but without consistency, you won't reach your goals. Did you just say you don't have enough time to exercise? My answer to that is, where there's a will, there's a way. If you really want it that badly you'll make the time
5. **Be Patient** Rome certainly wasn't built in a day. You've been living an unhealthy lifestyle for years and you expect to be the perfect you in only a few weeks or months? Don't expect things to happen overnight. Patience is key
6. **Are you eating enough?-** A lot of guys complain that they can't seem to gain any muscle, despite training consistently. Upon analyzing their diets, I realize that they're just not eating enough. Under-eating is a common reason why guys aren't making any gains. If you want to look solid, then you need to eat food. The food you eat is the fuel that will make your muscles grow. SIMPLE!
7. **Eat the right type of foods.** I was so skinny when I first started training, that I'd eat and drink almost anything, from McDonalds to Cola, thinking I was fueling my body. After a while I started to notice that although I was gaining size, my body composition was getting worse. I was gaining more fat than muscle. You need an adequate amount of Carbs, Protein and Fat, but most importantly, you need to find out what foods work for you.
8. **Don't rely on supplements.** "Yes! I've finally bought my protein shake...time to get shredded." Can you guess how many times I've heard this or something similar? A lot of people think that supplements are the magic bullet. Just take them and everything changes. Well, let me just remind you that they're meant to supplement, exactly what their name says. Your main nutrition should come from the food you eat. Supplements are just there to fill the gaps in your diet. They are not, nor will they ever be, a replacement for a proper diet or hard work.
9. **Keep your nutrition simple** Paleo this, Ketogenic that, blah blah blah... While the most important thing is adherence to a specific diet, just Keep it simple!! The best muscle-building

results come when you adopt a simple and sustainable approach to nutrition. You can still enjoy the foods that you like.

10. **Change your routine**- When you stick to the same exercises and routine, over time, your body gets used to what you're doing, and progress diminishes. By changing your routine every 6-8 weeks, you're providing your body with a new stimulus and it's this stimulus that triggers change
11. **Progressive overload**- If you want your muscles to grow, you need to give them a reason to. If you always stick to the same weight, eventually, your body adapts and your training becomes stagnant. By increasing muscle stress, either by increasing weight periodically/ increasing reps, your muscles have to grow to adapt.
12. **Only training the muscles you can see**- Yeah I get it, you want a huge chest and bulging biceps. Legs? Shoulders? Back? Nah, forget about those body parts. Don't be like me when I first started training. All I cared about was having a huge chest and arms. I ended up looking extremely unbalanced, kinda like popeye..big arms, skinny legs, and no back. One major muscle group most guys tend to neglect is legs. Don't skip leg day!!
13. **Overtraining**- Ok, we understand, you want to make those gains tomorrow, so you're spending 2-3 hours at the gym every day. SLOW DOWN! More exercise is not necessarily better. You need to focus on quality not quantity. Your body needs sufficient recovery time. Allow at least 48 hours before training the same muscle group again. Also, listen to your body. If you're feeling exhausted and your body is in pain, why not a rest? You probably think that by training longer and harder everyday there will be a linear correlation in muscle growth. Well, at some point the law of diminishing returns sets in...Focus on quality not quantity
14. **Not enough rest/sleep** Research shows that sleep is crucial for strength training recovery and helps with muscle repair rest and sleep. While you're asleep, muscular recovery is enhanced through protein synthesis and human growth hormone release. We all have varying sleep requirements, however, the recommended amount is 7-9 hours.
15. **Do You!!**- My favorite fitness personality does this workout, so I have to do exactly what he/she does, right? The fitness industry tends to put us all into a pigeon hole, but we are all different (genetics, hormones, body type). There is no one-size-fits-all type of workout. What works perfectly for one person might be a disaster for the next person. It is important to find out what works for YOU through trial and error. There is a danger in copying the workouts of the bodybuilders and fitness models we see on magazine covers and instagram. What you have to realize is that these athletes have been training for a very long time. Their bodies are more acclimated to perform heavier workloads than the average person. Plus, they may be using performance enhancing drugs. Follow their training tips or exercise recommendations, not their overall workout volume and duration.