

— NUTRITION SYSTEM · EAT TO BUILD

EATING TO GROW

Build muscle, not just weight. A small, clean surplus — enough to grow on, little enough to stay lean — built for the beginner ready to add their first real size.

LEVEL

Beginner

APPROACH

Lean surplus

BEST FOR

Building muscle

FORMAT

Free PDF



01 — BEGIN HERE

FEED THE WORK.

You can train perfectly and still not grow — because muscle needs material, and material is food. Eating to Grow is the other half of building your first muscle: a small, deliberate calorie surplus with the protein and carbs to back it, so the scale moves with muscle and not just fat. Eat to build, not to bloat.

FOR YOU, IF

You're training to build muscle and want the eating side done right. You'd rather gain slowly and stay relatively lean than "dirty bulk" and spend months dieting it off.

PAIR IT WITH

First Build — the beginner muscle program this plate is made for. Ready for the precise, tracked surplus later? Muscle-Gain System.

WHY "LEAN" SURPLUS MATTERS

As a beginner you can only build muscle so fast — a big surplus just adds the extra as fat. A small surplus supplies enough to grow while keeping you lean enough to see it. You gain slower, but almost all of it is the muscle you actually wanted.

WHAT'S INSIDE

The principles	P. 03
The method, at a glance	P. 04
The grow plate	P. 05
Calorie-dense add-ons	P. 06
A day that builds	P. 07
The hardgainer playbook	P. 08
The weekly tracker	P. 09
Questions, answered	P. 10



02

THE FIVE PRINCIPLES

Everything here follows from these. Read them once; they explain every choice that follows.

01 A SMALL SURPLUS, ON PURPOSE

Eat a little above maintenance — enough to gain ~0.25–0.5% of bodyweight a week. More than that, and the extra is mostly fat. Grow deliberately, not by stuffing.

02 PROTEIN STILL LEADS

A surplus builds muscle only if protein is high enough to use it. Keep it at 1.6–2.0 g/kg, every day. The bricks before the extra bricklayers. → [Pair: Protein First](#)

03 CARBS FUEL THE GROWTH

Carbs power hard sets and help recovery — they're a builder's friend, not an enemy. Most of the surplus should come from quality carbs around training.

04 GAIN SLOWLY, ADJUST BY THE SCALE

Track the weekly trend. Flat for two weeks? Add a little food. Gaining too fast or getting soft? Trim it back. The scale is your dial. → [Studies](#) · [How to actually follow a diet](#)

05 WHOLE FOOD, THEN ADD-ONS

Build the base from real meals; use calorie-dense add-ons (nuts, oats, dairy, oils) to top up when appetite is the limit. Quality first, calories second.



03

THE METHOD, AT A GLANCE

Eat at maintenance plus a little, keep protein high, and let the weekly scale tell you to add or hold. No need to count if you watch the trend.

THE THREE HABITS

EVERY MEAL

PROTEIN + CARBS

A palm of protein, a generous hand of carbs. Build around both.

TOP UP

ADD-ONS

Milk, nuts, oats, oils to reach the surplus when full.

CHECK

WEEKLY SCALE

Gaining ~0.25–0.5%/wk? Hold. Flat? Add food.

READ THE WEEK, THEN ACT

IF THE WEEKLY AVERAGE...	IT MEANS	DO THIS
Up 0.25–0.5%	Ideal lean-gain pace	Hold — it's working
Flat for 2 weeks	Not in a surplus yet	Add an add-on (~300 kcal)
Up >0.75% / week	Gaining too fast — adding fat	Trim the add-ons back

THE ONE RULE

Add food until the scale rises slowly and steadily — then hold there. If you're not gaining, you're not in a surplus, no matter how much it feels like you ate. The trend, not the feeling, is the truth.



04

THE GROW PLATE

The same four parts as any VYSN plate — dialled for building. Protein stays high, carbs grow to fuel the work, and you add a little extra of everything to reach a gentle surplus.

BUILD IT TO GROW

PROTEIN

A palm+, every meal

High and frequent — the material muscle is made of. Never trade it away for more carbs.

CARBS

A full hand+

Turn these up — rice, roti, oats, potato, fruit. They fuel the sets and feed the growth.

VEGETABLES

A fist or two

Still there for health and fibre — just don't let them crowd out the calories you need.

FATS

A thumb+

Useful, dense calories. An easy lever to add to the surplus — a little more ghee, nuts, oil.

LEAN ON

Rice, roti, oats, potatoes, bananas, milk, curd, paneer, eggs, chicken, dal, nuts. Calorie-friendly, protein-rich staples that make a surplus easy.

DON'T RELY ON

Sweets, fried food and junk to "bulk." They add fat fast and do little for muscle. A clean surplus builds better and looks better.



05

CALORIE-DENSE ADD-ONS

When appetite is the limit, these top up the surplus without a huge volume of food. Add one or two a day to push the scale up.

EASY 250-350 KCAL TOP-UPS

ADD-ON	~KCAL
Glass of full-fat milk + whey	~300
Handful of nuts (40 g)	~260
2 tbsp peanut butter	~190
Bowl of oats + milk + banana	~350
Extra katori rice + dal	~250
2 boiled eggs + a fruit	~220

WHEN & HOW TO USE THEM

MOMENT	BEST ADD-ON
Around training	Carbs — rice, oats, banana, shake
Low appetite	Liquids — milk + whey, smoothie
On the go	Nuts, peanut butter, a banana
Before bed	Curd or milk + a little nut butter

TIP

Drink some of your calories. A milk-and-whey shake or a fruit smoothie adds 300+ kcal you'll barely notice — the hardgainer's best friend.

Calories approximate, for planning. Adjust to your own foods and portions.



06

A DAY THAT BUILDS

The shape of a lean-gain day — protein at every meal, carbs around training, an add-on or two to reach the surplus.

VEGETARIAN DAY

MEAL	BUILD
Breakfast OATS + MILK + WHEY + BANANA + NUTS	P + C + add-on
Lunch PANEER/SOYA + DAL + RICE + ROTI + SABZI	Big, balanced
Pre/post CURD + FRUIT + A SHAKE	Carbs + protein
Dinner RAJMA + PANEER + RICE + SABZI	P + C
Before bed MILK + PEANUT BUTTER	Add-on

NON-VEGETARIAN DAY

MEAL	BUILD
Breakfast EGGS + OATS + MILK + BANANA	P + C
Lunch CHICKEN + DAL + RICE + ROTI + SALAD	Big, balanced
Pre/post SHAKE + FRUIT; RICE AROUND TRAINING	Carbs + protein
Dinner FISH/EGG CURRY + RICE + SABZI	P + C
Before bed CURD / MILK + NUTS	Add-on

NOT GAINING?

Add the easiest 300 kcal you'll actually swallow — **a milk-and-whey shake or a bowl of oats**. No gain on the scale means no surplus, full stop. Add, don't hope.



07

THE HARDGAINER PLAYBOOK

"I eat so much and never gain" almost always means eating less than it feels like — or not often enough. If gaining is hard, lean on these five.

01 EAT MORE OFTEN

Add a meal or two. Four to five smaller meals are easier to get down than three giant ones — and they quietly add the calories you're missing.

02 DRINK YOUR CALORIES

Shakes and smoothies don't fill you like solid food, so they're the easiest way to add a surplus when appetite is low. Milk, oats, banana, whey — blend and sip.

03 CHOOSE CALORIE-DENSE FOODS

Swap watery, bulky foods for denser ones: rice over salad volume, whole milk over skim, add oils and nuts. Same fullness, more fuel.

04 ANCHOR TO TRAINING

Appetite is best around workouts. Put your biggest carb meals there — easiest to eat, and exactly when the body wants them.

05 BE HONEST WITH THE SCALE

If the weekly average isn't rising, you aren't eating enough — period. Add 300 kcal and recheck in two weeks. The scale doesn't lie; the memory of meals does.



08

THE WEEKLY TRACKER

Print this. Log your average morning weight each week; the goal is a slow, steady climb. Tick the habits, and add an add-on whenever the scale goes flat.

WEEK	AVG WEIGHT	PROTEIN HIT	CARBS/TRAINING	ADD-ONS	NOTES
01					
02					
03					
04					
05					
06					
07					
08					

STARTING WEIGHT & GOAL PACE

MY TWO GO-TO 300 KCAL ADD-ONS



09

QUESTIONS, ANSWERED

WON'T A SURPLUS JUST MAKE ME FAT?

Not if it's small and you train. A slow gain of 0.25–0.5% bodyweight a week is mostly muscle for a beginner. It's the big, fast bulks that add fat.

HOW MUCH SHOULD I ACTUALLY EAT?

Enough to make the scale rise slowly. Start by adding ~300 kcal above your current intake; adjust by the weekly trend. The scale sets the amount, not a formula.

CAN I BUILD MUSCLE AND LOSE FAT AT ONCE?

As a true beginner, somewhat — "newbie gains." But if your main goal is size, a small surplus builds faster. To do both deliberately, see Recomposition.

DO I NEED MASS GAINERS?

No. They're just expensive sugar and whey — a homemade shake of milk, oats, banana and whey does the same for less. Save your money.

I'M GAINING ONLY FAT, NOT MUSCLE.

Either you're gaining too fast (trim the surplus) or not training hard enough (see First Build). A small surplus plus progressive lifting is the combination.

WHEN DO I STOP BULKING?

When you're happy with the size, or you've added enough fat that you'd rather lean out. Then ease into maintenance or a short cut, and keep what you built.

General nutrition guidance, not medical advice. For specific conditions, consult a qualified professional.



GROW ON PURPOSE.

Muscle is the reward for training hard and feeding the work — slowly, cleanly, with enough protein and a little extra fuel. Build it on purpose now, and you won't have to undo it later.

TRAIN ALONGSIDE IT

FIRST BUILD

The beginner program this plate feeds.

GO PRECISE LATER

MUSCLE-GAIN SYSTEM

The tracked, structured lean bulk.

EVERY MORNING

THE EDGE

One letter before noon. One principle, one practice.

vysnfitness.com