

FREE FOOD FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE! PAGE 14

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ISSUE!**

Men's Health

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Onwards and outwards

How to maximise your muscles by “carbo-loading” your protein



Be precise with protein
and your muscles won't
know what's hit them

We're pretty sure that if you've ever even dreamed of muscle, you're savvy to the fact that protein is its building blocks. Eat protein, get big muscles – simple. But what if your raging appetite for steaks is the reason you're failing to beef up? Keep reading to find out how to harness the power of protein by giving it up.

Too much of a good thing

“Most blokes trying to add muscle exceed their daily requirement of protein because it lurks in surprising foods, like a bagel, which you'd never expect to find any protein in,” says clinical nutritional therapist Emma Wells of Smart Nutrition (www.smartnutrition.co.uk). “Eating too much protein will fill you up but if

you're trying to muscle up it's not simply a case of more is better,” says sports nutritionist Neil Foster of Glanbia Nutritionals. Your body will always have a control measure to stop you being a glutton.

“When you demolish that KFC bucket your body gets so much protein that it has to work twice as hard to break down all the excess protein and amino acids,” says

Wells. A study published in the *Journal of Nutrition* found that a diet overly high in protein has a very acidic effect on the body, especially if you have a diet lacking in alkaline foods. The long term effects can be a loss of bone mass as calcium is leached from your bones to buffer the acidity. “To prevent this happening your body releases extra protein-destroying

Lead by egg-ample – a carb-heavy meal from Phase 1 of your plan



enzymes so you don't get poisoned," says Foster. "Your body doesn't stop to absorb the good stuff, much the same way that insulin works when we eat too much sugar and carbs. "You should aim to eat 2g of protein per kg of body weight per day. It should be spread evenly through the day with a max of 50g of protein per serving. By staggering your intake you'll have a constant supply of amino acids for muscle growth," explains Foster.

Protein protection

Your body is highly adaptable and capable of storing nutrients, which athletes, like runners, have used to their advantage. "Before a race they'll deplete their levels of muscle and liver glycogen by eating less carbs and training heavily for 5 days, then have a "carbo-loading" phase where they eat heaps of carbs like potatoes and pasta then

How to do it

Phase 1 Pacify your protein

"Reduce the protein you eat to 1.5g per kg of body weight," says Aceto. A study in *The Strength Journal* found you can maintain muscle mass while eating 1-1.5g of protein per kg of bodyweight per day. "You'll need to replace the protein with extra calories. Add an extra 18 calories and 3g of carbs per pound of body weight per day. If you don't eat enough calories in Phase 1 your body will cannibalise your muscles for energy," says Aceto.

Phase 2 Pump your protein

A 2004 study in the *Journal of Sports Sciences* found that a high protein diet, not exceeding 3.5g of protein per kg of body weight, is recommended if you want your muscles to grow. "Eating 3g of protein per kg of body weight doubles the intake of phase one,"

"It's during this phase that you can use protein like a drug rather than just a food. You have tricked your body into thinking it's starving"



The carbo-loading plan

Try this plan (for an 80kg man)

Phase 1 Protein pacifying

Meal 1

- 2 scrambled eggs on thick sliced wholemeal toast with butter
- 2 bananas

Meal 2

- 1 apple, 1 pear

Meal 3

- 1 chicken breast
- 300g wholemeal rice
- 250g chopped tomato
- Or
- 1 protein bar

Meal 4

- 1 wholemeal bagel with butter

Meal 5

- 85g salmon steak
- 2 baked potatoes
- Large salad with dressing

Meal 6

- 80g pasta with pesto

Approximate totals

3200 calories, 120g protein, 550g carbs

Phase 2 Protein pumping

Meal 1

- Four eggs
- 4 slices of wholemeal toast
- 1 banana

Meal 2

- Protein shake
- 40g whey protein
- Two handfuls of berries
- 150g oats + 1 banana

Meal 3

- 250g sirloin steak
- 2 baked potatoes or chips

Meal 4

- 2 wholemeal bagels with peanut butter

Meal 5

- 170g salmon steak
- 1 baked potato

Meal 6

- Protein shake
- 30g whey protein powder
- 60g oats + 1 banana

Approximate totals

3200 calories, 280g protein, 390g carbs

they don't train," says Rob Spedding, deputy editor of *Runner's World*.

The carbs get stored in their muscles giving them more energy for a long event. "When you deprive your body of a nutrient for a while it thinks it's starving and goes into storage mode," says Wells. "Then when you return that nutrient to your body, it gets absorbed rapidly." The trick is to lure your body into thinking the drought is near by limiting protein intake but keeping your calories the same. "The foundation behind protein cycling is eating more protein for several days then eating much less for several more days," says Chris Aceto, author of *Championship Bodybuilding* (www.nutra-media.com). "This coaxes the body into retaining more of this muscle-building nutrient than it would by consuming the same amount day in and day out."

says Aceto. "It's during this phase that you can use protein like a drug rather than just a food. You have tricked your body into thinking it's starving so the protein-destroying enzymes are limited and your body is better absorbing and storing the protein," states Aceto. And the storage depots, your muscles, will swell with size.

Plan your protein

Bodybuilders have been known to do the protein restriction phase for as long as a month but there's no tangible research, aside from their other-worldly-sized arms, to back up their claims. But follow the 8-day strategy for as long as you keep getting results. When your improvements start to taper off, usually after about 8 weeks, switch back to your old grazing habits of 1g of protein per pound of body weight for 2 months. After a month, jump back on your bike and get stuck into the cycle again. **ME**

Not the protein we're after, thanks Colonel

