



CAPITAL DISTRICT
SPORT & FITNESS

TOP 10 MASS GAINING TIPS

Samantha Alessi BS, RDN, ATC

Capital District Sport and Fitness
21 Wood Rd. #100 Round Lake, NY
capitaldistrictsportandfitness.com

WELCOME

Many of you reading this most likely consider yourself hard gainers. Putting on weight probably doesn't come easy to you. You may often blame your parents, or genetics, or throw out some other variation of an excuse. Below is a guide that has been proven to work, and once you read it you will no longer have excuses for your struggles with weight gain. Read this, develop good habits, and along with a good strength and conditioning program you'll have all the tools you need to not only put on mass, but be able to keep it on too.

1. YOU MUST EAT MORE

The truth is if you think you eat a lot and you're not gaining weight, you need to eat more! Gaining mass can be difficult, but you can't beat science and you must consume more calories than you expend. In order to gain 1 lb./week, you need to be in a caloric surplus of at least 500 calories a day. If you're active during the day and/or performing an exercise program, you need to take this into account and eat even more! To get big, you must eat big, and eat more!

2. DRINK SHAKES

One easy way to get additional calories in each day is to make shakes. Drinking your calories is always easier because it doesn't fill you up as quickly as whole foods do. Chances are you're also busy each day with classes, training, and practices, so a shake packed with items from the list below is a great way to ensure you're getting extra calories while always on the run. Adding in a 500+ calorie shake post-workout will ensure extra calories each day. It's also important to know that these are not meal replacements. Go back to Tip 1—you must eat more.

What can you put in a shake?

- Whey Protein
- Milk/Coconut Milk/Almond Milk
- Fruits
- Vegetables
- A high calorie fat like walnuts, nut butters, flax seed, avocado, or coconut oil. (See attached recipes for 500+ calorie shakes)

3. BREAKFAST IS THE MOST IMPORTANT MEAL FOR WEIGHT GAIN

If you don't already eat breakfast, it's time to start! If you're awake for 15 hours per day and you don't have your first meal until lunch, that's about 4 hours of wasted time with no calorie consumption. Cook up some eggs, add in some veggies, add a bowl of oatmeal with fruit, and you'll have a strong start to your day.

4. EAT OFTEN

When trying to eat more it's as simple as eating as often as possible, preferably every 2-3 hours. Always have snacks on hand. Great snack options include beef jerky, fruit with nut butter, PB&J on whole wheat bread, or whole fat dairy like yogurt or milk and protein shakes. If you find this challenging after eating your breakfast, set a timer on your phone for every 2-3 hours that reminds you to eat. When snacking while trying to gain weight, it doesn't matter if you're not hungry. When you're trying to get big you need to eat.

5. PREPARATION IS KEY

Prepare your meals, shakes, and snacks ahead of time. Whether this is shopping and cooking in bulk on Sunday, having snacks with you at school, or making sure you have your shake ready to go after training your food, prep is a key variable that will set you up for weight gain success.

6. EAT FASTER

It's been proven numerous times that those who eat faster weigh more than their slow eating counterparts. By intentionally eating faster you'll eat more, and therefore gain more weight. It takes time for your body to tell your brain that you're full (specifically, around 20 minutes from the start of a meal for your brain to signal satiety). Eating fast will allow you to get more calories in before your body recognizes that it's full.

7. SLEEP

Aim for 8 hours of sleep a night in a dark, cold, and quiet environment. Sleep is essential to recovery and muscle growth. Testosterone, growth hormone, and IGF-1 are all being produced the most in your body during sleep. Sleep of high quality and adequate quantity allow your body to better respond to nutrients, training, and stress.

8. FIND A TEAMMATE

Find a friend or a teammate that also wants to gain weight, and keep each other accountable! You're in it together. Hit the weights together, practice together, eat together, and have each other's back. Accomplishing your goals is always easier when you have a good support system. There's no better support system than your teammates.

9. QUALITY IS STILL IMPORTANT

It's easy to load up on processed junk food for your extra calories. Even though this is more convenient, who do you think is stronger and performs better? The player you puts Skittles, Starburst, Mountain Dew, and marshmallows in a blender and consumes all 3,000 calories of its goodness, or the athlete who eats 3,000 calories of real WHOLE FOODS—meats, fish, eggs, vegetables, fruits, nuts, seeds, and whole grains? Make sure to get in plenty of protein, healthy fats, and carbs.

10. CONSIDER THE BIG PICTURE, BUT TAKE ONE STEP AT A TIME

Trying to change too much at once can often backfire. So here's a breakdown of weekly goals that will greatly increase your chances of nutritional adherence and weight gain success.

- a. Week 1: EAT MORE. Add one high-calorie shake in per day on top of what you already eat
- b. Week 2: EAT A HEARTY BREAKFAST within an hour of waking up and don't skimp. Scramble up some eggs and vegetables, have a bowl of oatmeal or whole fat Greek yogurt with some fruit.
- c. Week 3: PREPARE and PLAN your meals and snacks for the week on Sunday.
- d. Week 4: EAT OFTEN. Set a timer on your phone and eat every 2-3 hours.
- e. After week 4, begin implementing all of the strategies from above for helping you reach your weight gain goal.

ABOUT SAM

Samantha Sirani is a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist. She works with clients to help simplify nutrition and create nutritional plans that fit their lifestyles and build lasting habits that lead to real results. Sam is a Precision Nutrition Level 1 Certified Coach and is currently working towards her Level 2 Certification. She earned her Bachelor of Science Degree in Athletic Training from Merrimack College and went on to graduate school at Simmons College to study nutrition. She also holds a Sports Nutrition Certificate from Simmons College and a Plant Based Nutrition Certificate from Cornell University. Sam's worked with the University of Notre Dame Athletic Program, Merrimack College Athletics, and has used nutrition to alter her own body, winning several powerlifting competitions and competing in a fitness competition.

