

# HOW TO GAIN WEIGHT

## Why Gain Weight?

Many sports, such as football and hockey, require athletes with a few extra pounds. In others, underweight athletes simply may not have the required energy to perform well. Some sports are so strenuous that these athletes have trouble maintaining their normal weight.

## What Should You Eat to Gain Weight?

Gaining weight requires taking in more calories than you burn off. It takes 2,500 extra calories to gain a pound. A weight gain of 1 to 2 pounds per week is a realistic goal, and it requires eating an extra 350 to 700 calories every day.

Plan on eating at least these recommended servings every day:

<b>Milk Group</b>	4 or more servings
(milk, cheese, yogurt, cottage cheese, ice cream)	
<b>Meat Group</b>	3 or more servings
(meat, fish, poultry, eggs, dried beans and peas, nuts)	
<b>Fruit–Vegetable Group</b>	10 or more servings
(fresh, frozen, canned, dried, or juiced fruits and vegetables)	
<b>Grain Group</b>	16 or more servings
(cereals, breads, rolls, pasta, muffins, pancakes, grits, rice)	

Choose foods that are “calorie-dense.” The trick is in emphasizing foods that also are high in other nutrients. The following foods are rich in both calories and nutrients:

Nuts

Dried fruits

Shakes and malts

Cheese

Sandwiches

Pizza

“Junk” foods that are high in calories but low in nutrients can play a role in a weight-gain diet, but you should eat these foods in addition to, not instead of, a balanced, healthy diet.

## **Muscle Versus Fat**

Exercise is also necessary to put on muscle. Just eating more calories will only add fat. Strength training will put those extra calories to work building muscles.

## **Measuring Muscle Gain**

Gaining pounds won't tell you whether you're gaining muscle or fat. In order to truly measure your increased muscle, you must compare **body fat measurements** before you begin your weight gain program, and compare it with measurements made as you gain weight.