

Q & A WITH PETER HENEIN FROM TEAM TRAINWITHMIKE

Question #1: Hi, I realize that protein supplements and meal replacements are not miracle solutions, nor adequate substitutes for a good diet. Given this, what would you recommend to a professional dancer (21-year old man), who has trouble keeping/putting on weight and lives on a fairly restricted diet? (I'm talking Cuba here, not Canada). Is a "weight gainer" a good idea?

A micro-topic, but thanks in advance for your help.

Regards,

Nicholas Roquet

Answer #1: If you are looking to gain some weight, the best way to do this is to increase your calorie intake. By this I mean, you have to eat more whole foods that contain a good balance of all the essential nutrients.

Granted, a "weight gainer" is a dietary supplement that contains a high amount of calories. These calories come from fats, proteins, and carbohydrates, which are all essential nutrients. But another important aspect of a healthy lifestyle that is often neglected and not found in most "weight gainers" is the essential vitamins and minerals that the body needs for proper function. These elements play a large role in the proper absorption, release, and productivity of the nutrients that you intake on a daily basis. Whole foods such as fruits and vegetables are the best source of these minerals and vitamins. If you need to gain weight, start by increasing your overall 'good' calories intake. Eat more fruit and veggies, grains (i.e. whole grain bread, oatmeal, rice, pasta, etc..), and lean protein from dairy, meats, and eggs. Finally, increase your fat intake. Yes, believe it or not, fat is as important as all the other nutrients, and it has a higher caloric value than carbohydrates and protein. But beware; there are bad fats and good fats. The good fats come from oils (olive, canola, flaxseed oil, sunflower), nuts, fatty fishes (salmon, mackerel, sardines, anchovies, etc..), and avocado to name a few. This will automatically increase your daily calorie intake. Don't worry too much about gaining unhealthy weight, because if you live an active lifestyle, the calories you intake will be expended. This just means that your calorie expenditure (or calories burnt) should be slightly less than your calorie intake. So eat a little more of these essential nutrients and you will gain weight while still maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

Question #2: I just read over one of your answers to a woman's questions about whether or not women can get bulky from weight training. And I may be wrong, I'm actually majoring in Exercise Science but I have yet to take my upper level classes so forgive me if I sound a bit naive about this topic, but I believe there's a small percentage of women who can't help but bulk up from weight lifting, and I think I'm part of it. Even as a two year old I have muscular legs, and for a number of years while I was young I did gymnastics and constantly received comments (not exactly compliments) on how muscular my legs were, then I moved on to soccer, and track, and all that vigorous training did cause me to lose some body fat, but my thighs in particular were still relatively massive to the rest of my body. I'm

only 5'1", and I have a pretty flat stomach and small waist, so my legs have always looked pretty disproportionate to the rest of my body, even my arms and shoulders get cuts pretty easily. It wasn't until I became extremely ill and lost 30 lbs from being on bed-rest and the inability to eat anything, plus my body was using a lot of energy to fight off infection and heal from surgery, so I lose all of my muscle mass. For a few months all I could do was walk, and I barely ate because I barely had an appetite. So it wasn't until I became barely active, and almost anorexic that my muscles didn't regain mass. But overtime, as I used my legs to get me around, they eventually did go back to being more shapely and more muscular. So I guess my question to you is that since I'm short, and any gain in muscle makes my limbs look shorter and bigger, what sort of weight routine would work for someone like me?

Answer #2: Weight training does definitely build mass equally in men and in women, but there are other factors that affect the actual development of thicker muscle fibers and volume. The style of training is important to properly building lean muscle tissue without producing too much "bulk" and volume in the muscle fibers. If you perform your weight training exercise until momentary muscle failure, this produces more micro tears in the muscle fibers. That being said, performing 8-12 repetition with a higher weight will produce more volume and bulk. Performing 12-15 repetitions of 50-60% of your 1 repetition maximum will still maintain lean muscle tissue without building too much bulk or volume. The leg muscles, as you probably know, are the largest muscles in the body, so it easy to build bulk there. In order to maintain lean muscle, do more compound exercises such as lunges or squats with a lighter weight, as compared to isolated exercises such as leg extensions and leg curls. These exercises will still hit all the major legs muscles without adding too much volume and bulk, if performed with a lighter weight. As for the upper body, perform the same types of compound exercises. You can even use your body weight to do some of these exercises. Calisthenics are a good way to maintain lean muscle without adding too much volume as well. Try performing these exercises on a Swiss ball to trigger your core at the same time. In conclusion, your workout should look like this: a full-body workout twice or three times a week, consisting of mostly compound exercises, with 50-60% of your 1RM, performing 3 sets of 12-15 repetitions of each exercise.

Question #3: My daughter in law is a vegetarian. What kind of protein should she consume to get her body healthy to carry a baby? Sandy?

Answer #3: The best source of 'vegetarian' protein comes from soy. Soy contains all the essential amino acids and complete proteins that the body needs. Foods containing soy include tofu, milk, and soy

yogurt, to name a few. Other good sources of protein are beans, nuts, and grains. Red kidney beans, chickpeas, white beans, and flava beans are examples of protein dense foods.

That being said, bean spreads are a good way to add some protein into your daughter-in-law's diet (i.e. hummus). Whole grain products also contain some protein, such as bread, oatmeal, and cereals. And finally, nuts are a good source, including peanuts, almonds, cashews, Brazil nuts, and walnuts. They also contain a high amount of essential fats that the body needs.

Question #4: Dr. is making noises about borderline blood sugar levels. Want to keep on cooking Thai food. How bad are rice noodles? Thanks for answer. Grandma Joan

Answer #4: In order to improve your blood sugar levels, you should eat more whole foods in general. Starchy carbohydrates, such as rice noodles tend to impact your blood sugar levels negatively. This being said, if you do choose to eat rice noodles every now and again, make sure to also include a protein with your meal. This will reduce the "high impact carb" effect on your blood sugar level. Try to include more whole-grain products throughout the rest of the day because these products are higher in fiber, which will fill you up for a longer time, therefore aiding to maintain a steady blood sugar level. These include whole-grain pastas, rice, and bread to name a few. And remember to always include a lean protein at every meal!

Question #5: I have been going to the gym for about a month now, and do cardio exercises such as treadmill, bike, cross-trainer, and I seem to be building muscle up on my legs, but losing not much weight on my top half- i.e. my beer gut!
I'd like your advice on what you think is the best way to lose a gut.
Thanks.

Answer #5: Cardio is a good way to burn calories, but it's not the only way. Weight training will also help your weight loss process. When you lift weights, you build lean muscle tissue. Building lean muscle increases your metabolism, which helps you burn more fat. Muscles have a very high caloric demand, so more calories are burnt to sustain them. It is also very important to eat well. (80% of the battle!) Your eating habits are very crucial to maintaining a healthy body weight. This means eating 5-6 smaller meals a day with a good balance of nutrients in each meal (i.e. carbs, protein, and fats).

So continue with the cardio workouts and incorporate more weight training into your routines. Focus on working the larger muscles groups, because these burn the most calories. Do more compound exercises that work more than one muscle at a time (i.e. Squats, leg press, chest press, etc.), which in turn produces a higher fat burn effect? Perform a full body workout 3 times a week, with one-day rest in between for recuperation. This will help accelerate your weight loss process. And for the final tip, perform your cardio workouts AFTER your weight training. This is due to the fact that you're burning more calories in total by depleting your carbs as a main source of energy during your strength training. Once you start the cardio, you will be burning FAT!!!