



TOTAL SHAPE

THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO BULKING

WITHOUT GETTING FAT!



Hey, and thanks very much for signing up for our Newsletter.

My name is Tyler Sellers, and I'm the senior fitness coach here at **Total Shape**.

From my early teenage years, I knew that the regular 9 to 5 desk job was not going to be for me and that I wanted to do something that involved sports, health, and fitness.

In college, I was big into rowing, which involved a lot of gym work, and that's when I decided to become a fitness coach.

What I specialize in now is helping overweight people drop the flabby stuff fast and guide bodybuilders through the various stages of bulking up.

Everything I teach my clients is based on trial and error through testing on myself.

So, when I say that I understand what it takes to achieve your goals, it's from actual experience, not some textbook.



BEFORE



AFTER

What Will You Get From The E-Book?

One of the biggest frustrations we often hear from clients that go through bulking phases is that their body fat suddenly spikes up.

It's something that I personally struggled with during my college rowing career, but my coaches were able to help out.

And here's the problem.

Either you're not taking in enough calories meaning that you could end up losing muscle mass.

Or, you're taking in too many calories, and you gain some muscle, but it starts to disappear under new fat reserves.

Sound like a familiar problem?

The good news is that, for the most part, this can be solved with your diet, as one of the biggest issues is that many people think that in a bulking phase, a calorie is a calorie.

So, let's see if we can fix that mindset, and also make sure you've got the right training plan.

First up is not your exercises, but...



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Part 1: Fix Your Diet

In the fitness and diet world, there's a saying that "70% of weight loss is diet, and only 30% is exercise."

I firmly believe that the same is true when it comes to bulking, but let's not argue about percentages.

What I'm saying is that if you don't get your diet right, then you could end up just whipsawing between bulking and cutting. And the result is a huge amount of effort with nothing much to show for it.

As a teen, I learned it the hard way that you can't out-exercise poor diet decisions.

Let me first set something straight.





Be Realistic About Your BMI

Once you're in a bulking phase and eating 3,000 to 6,000 calories per day, then your BMI will increase. It's simply impossible to avoid this as it's a natural reaction by the body.

However, there are ways in which you may be able to control the amount of fat that your body stores.

I would also say that if you're serious about bulking, then you don't want to rely on a basic height-weight calculation for BMI.

Instead, you should invest in a body fat caliper and get some very accurate measurements from different parts of your body. This has happened before where clients have hit the panic button only to realize that their body fat was well within an acceptable range.





It's All About The Right Approach To Calories

Most people just think that a calorie is a calorie, and when you need an extra 2,000 of them, just get them from anywhere. You'll be exercising enough to burn away all the excess anyway, right?

Yup, that was teenage Tyler, when I struggled to find enough food at home.

However, that's one of the biggest contributing factors to fat gain in a bulking phase. And, stuffing some unhealthy junk food, our treats in your face could cause all sorts of other health issues as well.

But before I get to the actual types of calories, let's make sure you're getting the volume right.

Work Out Your Baseline Calories

You'll often hear that the average person would need about 2,000 calories per day. For women, it's maybe slightly less, while tall men could probably push it to 2,200.

What you have to keep in mind, though, is that the amounts are for relatively little physical activity.

If you're in a bulking phase and hitting the gym 5 or 6 days a week, maybe even a couple of times per day, then you need more.

A LOT more!!!

First, you need to find out what your basal metabolic rate (BMR) is. To do this, look up some online Mifflin St. Jeor calculators.

All you need to do is plug in your age, gender, height, weight, and activity levels, and it will tell you how many calories you need per day to maintain your weight.

Now, this isn't the most accurate and could be off by a few hundred calories. But it's something to work with.

I would then suggest adding 300 calories and adjusting your meal plan. Then, after a week, see if you've put on muscle mass or lost some.

It's the most effective way to figure out how much you should be eating.

Monitor The Types Of Calories

One mistake many newbies make is they try to get as many extra calories as possible from easy sources like carbs.

They might start with a 40/35/25 ratio of carbs/fat/protein.

All of a sudden, that changes to 50/30/20 because they piled on a load of highly processed carbs like grains and sugar.

That's a bad idea as it could fuel glucose spikes that are quickly transformed into glycogen and fat reserves.

Some dietitians will tell you to keep the same 40/35/25. Personally, I recommend 40/30/30, as you'll need the extra protein.

One way to monitor this ratio is to use one of the popular fitness and food journaling apps like [Noom](#) or [MyFitnessPal](#).

And make sure you monitor your calories and macros on a daily AND weekly basis to ensure they remain consistent.

Learn To Diversify Your Meals

If you've ever gone through a serious bulking phase, then you probably understand the phrase, "I'm sick of eating chicken!"

2 chicken fillets for breakfast, 3 for lunch, and 4 for dinner, along with a huge pile of eggs and other food, does take its toll.

I'll be honest, unless I'm in a bulking phase, I tend to avoid chicken.

But there are ways to still get the right macro profile with products that didn't once have feathers.

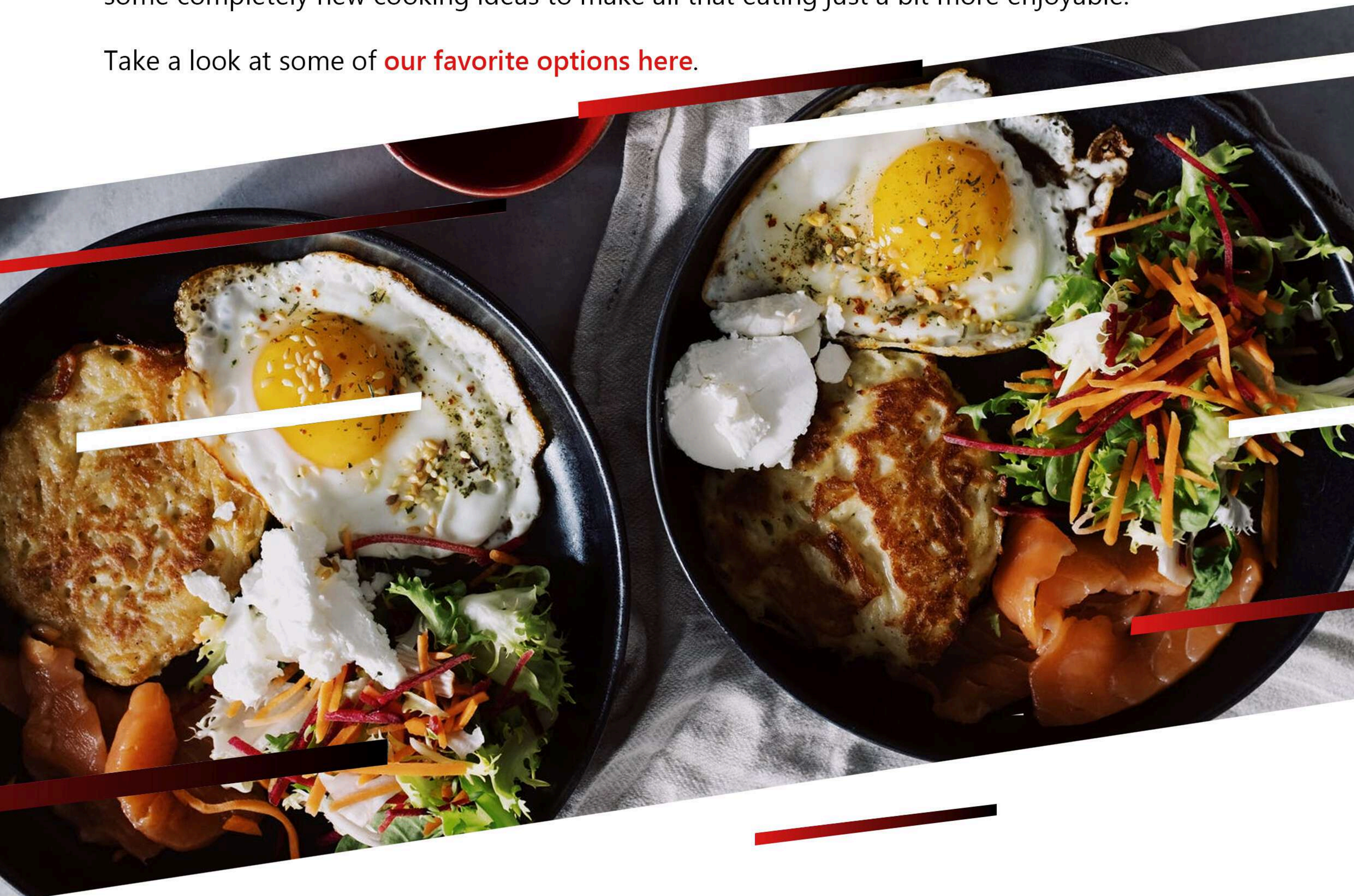
First of all, I would recommend looking into eating more fish and other seafood. It's very low in carbs, contains only healthy fats, and is loaded with protein.

What I also like is that you can get a lot of variety in flavors. Let's face it, that's not something that chicken can provide.

The other thing to consider is some lean cuts of grass-fed beef. It's also low in carbs and a great way to boost your other macro needs with slower releasing energy.

Finally, what I often do is use a meal delivery service while I'm bulking. It's a great way to get some completely new cooking ideas to make all that eating just a bit more enjoyable.

Take a look at some of [our favorite options here](#).





Getting Some Help From Supplements

Here's another thing to consider when it comes to your meal plans.

If your jaw muscles are rebelling against all that chewing effort that takes up most of your time outside the gym, then maybe let some quality supplements help you out a bit.

I spend a lot of time with dietitians and nutritionists to create training and diet plans for clients, and here are the two supplements we always focus on first.



Pre-Workout Supplements

During a bulking phase, you'll need to be doing some pretty heavy lifting. And one of the best ways to get the most out of your limited time at the gym is to get some energy boosts.

Pre-workout supplements are a completely natural way to get that boost, and I request that all my bodybuilding clients take them on their highest intensity days.

But there's one thing that might help even more. Some pre-workout supplements have fat burning ingredients in them as well, which should help you better control your body fat while bulking.

For some tips on which products would be most suitable, I would recommend [checking out this guide](#).

Mass Gainers

When you're gradually increasing your calories from your baseline, it's still manageable to eat the larger portion sizes.

However, once you start heading above 4,000 calories for some serious bulking, then all that food can become quite a struggle.

Believe me when I say that eating becomes a chore.

However, there are some great mass gainer shakes that could deliver more than 500 calories in one small shake.

And the best thing is that they are formulated with just the right macro profile.

If you've been struggling with the volume of food, then check out our [mass gainer guide](#) for some tips.

OK, so we've fixed some of your diet problems, now let me give you some exercise tips.

Part 2:

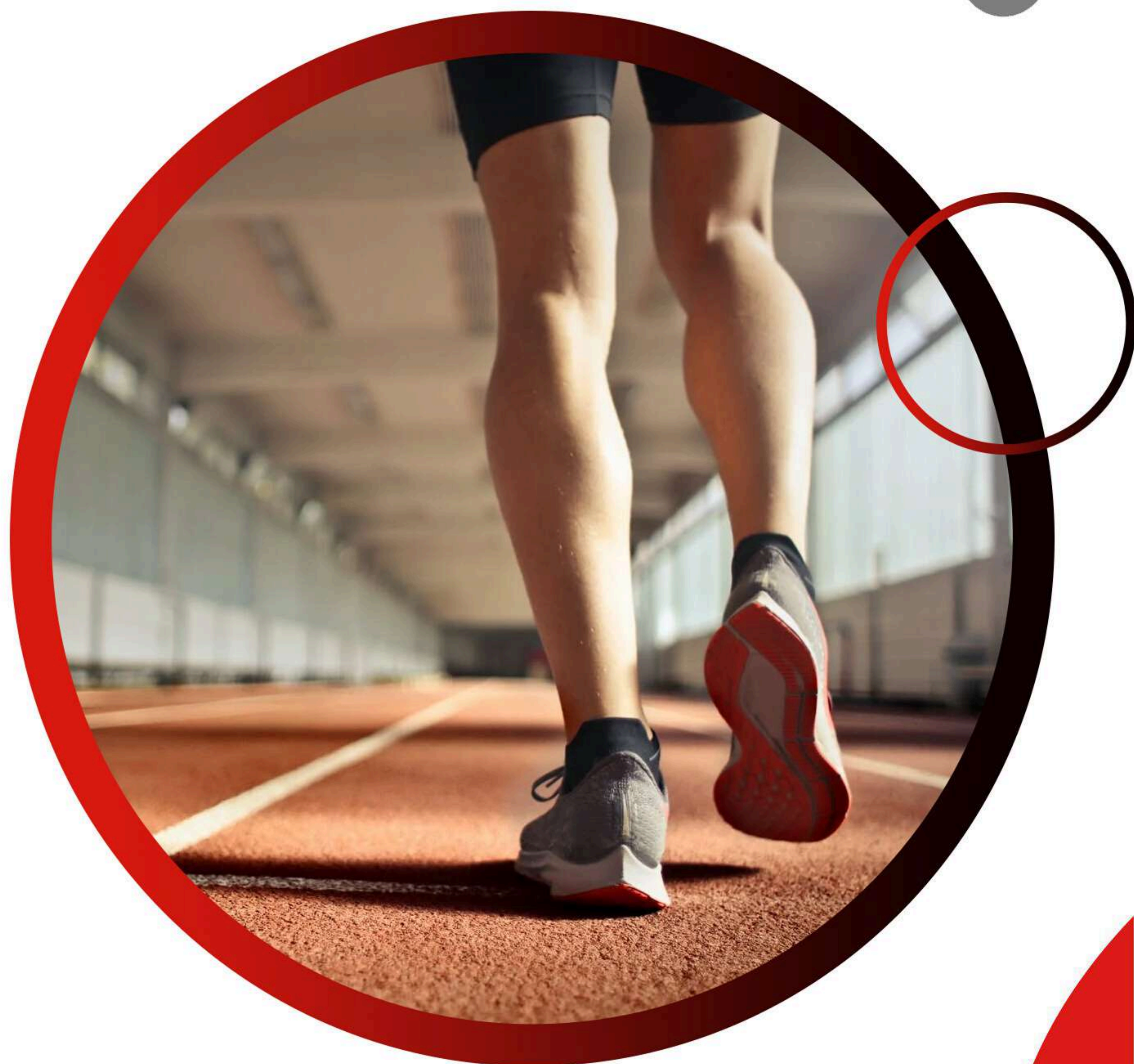
Adjust Your Exercise Routine

When you're in a bulking phase, then you really shouldn't waste much time on cardio. You can still do some light running, cycling, or rowing to warm up and cool down.

But your actual weight training has to be intense. And here's how to approach it.

Choosing The Right Exercises

I'll get to sets and reps in just a moment, but first, let's take a more high-level look.



Compound Exercises

There's a lot of evidence that compound exercises lead to faster overall muscle growth. The reason for this is that when you do movements like squats or shoulder presses, then a lot of different muscle groups are engaged at the same time.

This triggers more strain in more muscles, and it also results in a larger release of growth hormone and testosterone.

However, you'll want to mix in some more targeted exercises as well.

Isolation Exercises

These would be your typical biceps curl or triceps extension. They target one or two muscles at most, and they are aimed at shaping very specific areas of your body.

Bodybuilders use these once they achieve a certain amount of muscle mass to avoid certain parts looking out of proportion.

Just make sure that you don't focus on isolation exercises too much. I've seen too many newbies end up looking like a lollipop because they only focus on their arms and chest and don't work enough on their legs.

If you've struggled with finding the right balance of exercises for your bulking phase, then [check out the coaching program](#) that we can tailor to your exact goals.

I've worked with many amateurs and pros. And while it does take a bit of trial and error with your training plan, one you have to get right is your reps.



Getting Your Sets And Reps Right

So, once you've identified what exercises you'll do in your different routines, then it's time to plan out your sets.

And here is the biggest mistake you could be making.

If you want to bulk up, then you have to be struggling after 5 or 6 reps. If you're doing 12 to 15 reps, then you're going to get leaner without the bulk.

What does that mean?

Basically, if you're doing 15 reps, then your weights are way too low.

Instead, you need to pick your weights so that you're doing at most 10 reps. This will shorten your sets, which should give you the opportunity to add more sets to each routine.



Progressive Overload

This is another problem many people get wrong. They start with maximum weights and maintain them for the whole bulking phase. Yes, you need to start heavy to limit your reps but to maintain muscle building momentum, you have to gradually increase the weights.

That's why it's called progressive overload.

Start your bulking phase with a weight that will make the 9th and 10th rep a huge struggle. Then, every time you do the same exercise again on another day, increase the weight.

After a few weeks, you should end up doing only 5 or 6 reps in each set with a massive struggle on the last ones.

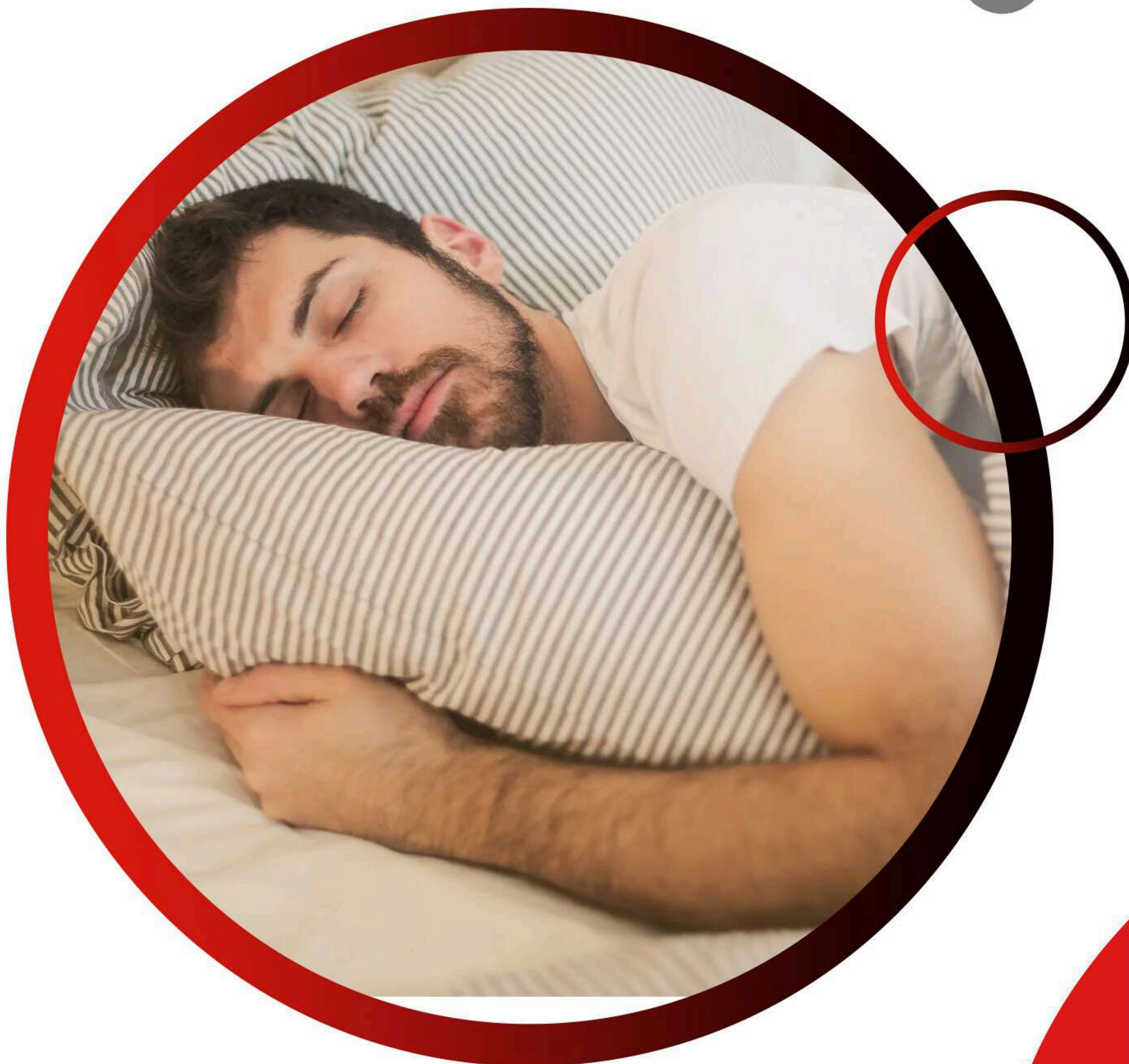
Part 3: Recovery

Recovery is as important as the training, especially when you're training on a daily basis.

I learned this the hard way during college when I had classes every morning until after lunch—then training until early evening, followed by course work often until midnight.

My alarm would go off at 6 am to get my morning run out of the way, and after just a few weeks, my performance dropped.

Ultimately, the solution came down to two things.



Choose The Right Recovery Drinks

Your diet will already be loaded up with protein, but you'll still need a boost just after you finish exercising. This is when muscle protein synthesis kicks in to build new muscle fibers.

And the number one ingredient for this is protein.

But you have to be careful with protein as there are many products out there that contain a lot of added crap that could end up increasing your body fat as well.

Make sure you consider one of **our recommended products** and then religiously take it within 20 minutes of your cooldown phase.





Plan For Healthy Sleep

If you think you can bulk and survive on 5 or 6 hours of sleep, then think again.

This is a time when you should aim for 8 hours on a consistent basis, as this is when a lot of muscle growth and recovery will happen.

If that means going to bed at 10 pm because you have to get up at 6, then so be it. But don't underestimate the effects of sleep.

Some people might end up struggling with getting to sleep or waking up several times. This might be down to a lack of certain minerals like magnesium.

If this is your experience, then check out some of the [vitamin and mineral supplements](#) we have tested out.

Final Thoughts

If you follow the above advice, then you should be able to better control the amount of fat gained during a bulking phase.

Always start with fixing your diet. No matter how hard you train, your diet could mess it all up. Once your diet is on track, then pay close attention to your reps.

With some progressive overload in your sets, you'll be able to keep that momentum running for longer.

And finally, don't underestimate the need for recovery. If you don't get this right, then it could be the most obvious reason for a drop in performance.

If you're still unsure about the right combination of diet and exercise, then definitely check out our **coaching program**. We won't just give you an exercise program, but also the exact advice on your diet and meal plan.