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Miami Fitness Examiner

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Essentials to building muscle mass

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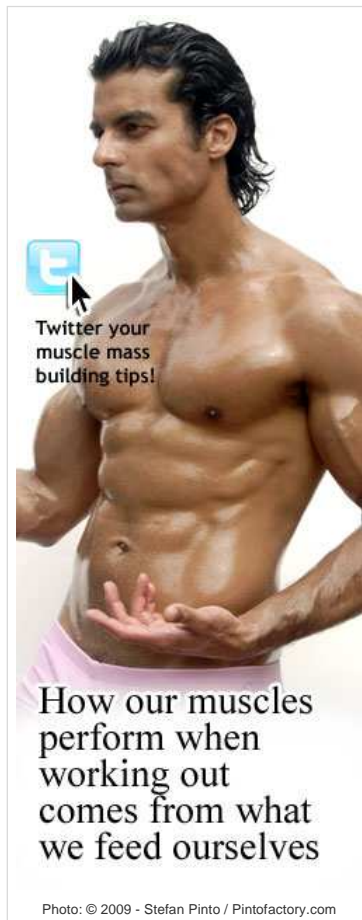
Most men who are unconcerned with losing weight, work out to get bigger. Men want bigger biceps, a bigger chest, bigger calves and -- big or small -- men will settle for abs that are simply visible. Let's be honest, all men want bigger muscles.

"At some point in nearly every man's life, this thought crosses their mind," said Jason Horsley, CEO and founder of [eFitness for Life](#), an online fitness and nutrition coaching website. Christopher Daniels, a professional wrestler and personal trainer agrees: **"One of the first things most people (well, most guys, anyway) are looking to do when they come to a gym is to put on size,** whether it's in one part of their body (usually chest and/or arms) or their overall physique," he said.

"The reasons behind it vary, as do the approaches used to achieve the end result!" Horsley added. He suggests that nutrition is paramount, "it is pretty well a non-argument, **adding size requires additional caloric intake.** This is the key in both weight gain and weight loss; the right amount of calories for the goal and the individual. **Fitness, in my opinion, is 80% nutrition.**"

How our muscles perform when working out comes from what we feed ourselves. However, in a world obsessed with being thin, casually using our favorite four letter "f-word" in a sentence about being fit is almost as bad as confessing one's love for carbohydrates. **Nutritious F-O-O-D, contains the building blocks for muscle growth** and when it comes to gaining mass, we need to realize that eating is not only essential, but critical. According to Corey Beasley, director of Innovative Results, a personal training facility in Los Angeles, **"people looking to gain muscle need to increase the amount of good foods that they are ingesting.** The building blocks for muscles are amino acids and amino acids come from meats, eggs, nuts and seeds."

[Proteins provide the essence of amino acids,](#) which can only be released following digestion. The resulting amino acids can then be used by the body for chemical processes, specifically metabolism.



How our muscles perform when working out comes from what we feed ourselves

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"By eating proper foods, you supply your body with the nutrients it needs for energy replenishment, cell growth and repair, as well as the basic metabolic functions your body undergoes on a daily basis," said Sean Barker a contributing writer for *Inside Fitness* and *Fit Parent* magazine. Barker suggests that "the key components to good nutrition and living a healthy lifestyle are balance, variety and moderation."

Moderation, although not always applicable when it relates to "bigger," should not be casually dismissed when it comes to changing our bodies. The desire for "instant results" can be tempting, but instant is hardly ever built on a solid foundation and ultimately it, like all get rich quick schemes, are doomed to either failure or life-changing side effects. **Anything done to excess will either become a habit, often bad which leads to little or no gain or an addiction, the state of being controlled.** How many of us constantly do the same, unchallenging workouts -- for months? "When we challenge our bodies, they adapt to the new stress and grow," said Beasley. "Most people make two major mistakes: one, they don't workout hard enough and two, they get stuck in the same program for months...never changing it." Beasley, like most of the fitness professional I queried, agrees that **gaining muscle mass is an effective combination of basic practices: a proper diet, getting adequate rest (which includes sleep) and proper muscle training.** "Bicep curls and chest flies are not the answer to gaining major amounts of muscle," she added.

Jon Kawamoto a strength coach, runs FirefighterConditioning.com, a website that provides information and advice on fitness training for fire fighter hopefuls. Naturally, his concepts focus on challenges that push the limits, but Mr. Kawamoto also stresses **the importance of variety and form.** "Get strong at compound lifts first before worrying about isolation exercises e.g. bicep curls." Compound lifts utilizes several muscles (multi-joint) in one movement. He suggests chin-ups, (chin-ups use only your body weight). As you progress, try adding additional weight. "As you get stronger doing chin ups, watch your arms grow!" Kawamoto said. It works. **A proper chin up will not only build your biceps (they tend to bulge afterwards), but will define your back and shoulders as well.** I do three sets of twelve with a two-minute rest as part of my "back" routine.

"Exercises like these should be a staple in your program," said Tyron Piteau, owner of [The Maker's Body Personal Training](http://TheMaker'sBodyPersonalTraining) and Resurrect Your Body Boot Camp. "Increase your performance by lifting more weight, doing more reps, jumping higher, running faster or getting it done in less time." Piteau recommends a variety of full body exercises such as squats, deadlifts, chin-ups, push-ups and rows.

As we are all unique individuals, everyone's routine is quite different and the frequency of work outs do play an important role. [John Paul Catanzaro](http://JohnPaulCatanzaro), one of Canada's leading health and fitness authorities and a certified kinesiologist recommends multi-joint, compound movements for those that train once or twice a week, however for someone that wants optimal gains, Catanzaro suggests "a healthy mix of both compound and isolation type movements."

Come back next time when **celebrity trainers and fitness professionals** give us *quick* tips on some of the most effective ways building muscle mass.

More info: Fitness model, **Stefan Pinto** was once over 50lbs overweight. Learn about his diet and weight loss adventures in his blog post, "[Whole Foods Changed My Life](http://WholeFoodsChangedMyLife)"

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