

# LEGION®

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## HOW TO GET STRONGER THAN EVER IN 3 SIMPLE STEPS



Getting really strong also inevitably builds you a great physique. In fact, as a natural weightlifter, your number one goal should be increasing whole-body strength, not getting big pumps or “feeling the burn.”

That’s the big “secret” to gaining muscle quickly and effectively, because it’s the best way to “progressively overload” your muscles.

**You see, by working to slowly and steadily add weight to your exercises over time, you progressively increase tension levels in your muscles.**

Mechanically speaking, this is the primary driver of muscle growth. Another advantage to this approach to weightlifting is it’s very simple and straightforward. There are just three steps:

#### 01. Choose the right strength program for you.

There are quite a few strength programs out there, but most share a few things in common.

- ✓ They focus on compound exercises. Compound exercises are those that involve multiple joints and major muscle groups, as opposed to ones that are single joint movements that focus on just one muscle (called “isolation exercises”).
- ✓ They involve heavy weights. “Heavy” weightlifting begins in the range of 75% of your one-rep max, or the 10-to-12 rep range. As you can guess, the reason why strength programs focus on lifting heavy weights is it’s the best way to get strong.
- ✓ Their workouts are shorter than most “bodybuilding” programs. Strength workouts tend to be shorter than most bodybuilding workouts, because you simply can’t do as much without eventually running into issues related to overtraining.

- ✓ Most call for 3 to 4 workouts per week. The reason for this is the same as above: The workouts are very hard on your body, so you have to make sure that you give it plenty of time to recover and rebuild. If you don't, you'll eventually wind up burned out and overtrained.

### **So, Which Strength Program Is Right for You?**

If you poke around the Internet for strength training programs, it's easy to get overwhelmed...and, in some cases, they require a fair amount of study and technical know-how to follow, which also means there are a fair number of ways to screw them up.

Well, the point of this article is to simplify everything and help you get the rubber on the road, so here's my recommendation: If you're new to strength training, start with Starting Strength or Wendler's 5/3/1 program.

They're easy to understand, program, and do, and they'll teach you proper form on the most important exercises—the 20% that are going to deliver the 80% of your results.

### **02. Get your calories and macros right.**

If you don't know how to eat right, you'll always struggle to gain muscle and strength.

And in this case, that means making sure that you're eating slightly more calories than you're burning. To be specific, I recommend that you eat just 10 to 15% more calories you burn every day when you want to maximize muscle and strength gains.

This is known as "lean bulking," and it's the key to gaining muscle without just getting fat.

So, that's your calories, which is half of the dietary equation. The other half is your macronutrients, or "macros," which refers to how much protein, carbohydrate, and fat that you're eating every day.

Out of these three, protein is the most important one for gaining strength. Simply put, if you don't eat enough protein, you'll always struggle to get really strong.

That's why I recommend that you eat around 1 gram of protein per pound of body weight per day. Slightly more or slightly less is fine, but that's the "sweet spot."

Let's look at your fat intake next.

Low-carb, high-fat diets are all the rage right now, but research shows that around 0.3 grams per pound of fat-free mass per day is adequate for maintaining health. (And "fat-free mass" is everything in your body that isn't fat, i.e., muscle, water, and bone.)

This comprises 15 to 20% of daily calories for most people, or about 0.2 to 0.3 grams per pound of body weight per day.

Last but not least is your carbs, which should comprise the calories remaining after calculating your protein and fat intake.

This comes out to around 2 to 2.5 grams per pound of body weight per day, or about 40 to 50% of your total daily calories.

### 03. Make sure you're recovering from your workouts.

You've probably heard that your muscles don't grow in the gym. That they get bigger and stronger in the time between workouts, when you're resting and recovering.

This is true. Training hard isn't enough. You also have to make sure that you're fully recovering from your workouts, or your performance, results, and health can suffer.

There are several factors involved in recovery, and the first is making sure that your diet is right. If you don't eat enough calories or protein, your body will struggle to recover from your workouts.

You also need to ensure you're getting enough sleep. Much of what your body does to recuperate and rebuild happens when you sleep, which is why studies show that sleep deprivation directly inhibits muscle growth and can even cause muscle loss.

The bottom line is if you're going to get the most out of your training, then you need to get a minimum of 7 hours of sleep every night, and 8 to 9 hours is better.

Here are a few proven strategies for getting better sleep:

- ✓ Don't consume alcohol, nicotine, or caffeine four to six hours before bed.
- ✓ Avoid computer screens and artificial light at least an hour before bed.
- ✓ Exercise regularly.
- ✓ Maintain a healthy body weight.

- ✓ Create a relaxing pre-sleep routine.
- ✓ Keep your bedroom dark, quiet, and cool.

Certain supplements can help you recover faster and better, too.

**Creatine:** Creatine is a natural supplement that increases strength and muscle growth and reduces muscle damage and soreness.

**Carnitine:** Carnitine is a nutrient that's comprised of the amino acids lysine and methionine, and plays a vital role in the production of cellular energy.

**Protein Powder:** As you now know, you have to eat quite a bit of protein every day to give your body what it needs to recover from your workouts. That's why protein powders are so popular in the fitness space—they make it really easy to hit your daily protein targets.

**Fish Oil:** Fish oil provides your body with two essential fatty acids (EPA and DHA) that most people don't get enough of through their diets alone. These fatty acids play vital roles in many physiological processes in the body, which is why studies show that supplementing with fish oil can benefit your health and performance in many ways.

**Fortify:** Everything we've talked about thus far will help your joints rebound faster and better, but if you want to give them even more help, then you need to check out my joint supplement FORTIFY. It contains several compounds proven to increase joint health and performance, including type-2 collagen and curcumin, which work together to reduce joint inflammation and speed up healing.

## THE BOTTOM LINE ON GETTING STRONGER

I used to think strength training was just for powerlifters. I was wrong. It's for everyone (and yes, even women!).

In fact, strength training is a far more effective (and time efficient) way to build a strong, muscular, and lean physique than most of the "bodybuilding" routines that people slog through every day.

There's definitely a place for that kind of training, but if you want to get the most out of your time in the gym, the bulk of it should be spent with your hands on heavy barbells and dumbbells.

I hope this article helps get you going in that direction.

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