

# Weight Gain in Sports

## Athlete Scenario

*I'm a redshirt freshman on the football team, and my coach wants me to gain weight before next season. My teammates say to just eat more fast food and protein shakes, but I don't want to gain extra body fat. How can I make sure that I gain mostly muscle?*

## Goals to Gain Weight

- Consume 500 additional more calories than you burn with a quality carbohydrate and a lean protein with every meal and snack
- Choose nutrient-dense, high-quality food (e.g. nuts, avocado, and salmon)
- Stimulate muscle growth with resistance training and adequate protein consumption

## When and How to Stimulate Muscle Growth

- Weight gain should occur during the off-season and in the early preseason.
- Increased muscle growth occurs with resistance training and when more calories are consumed than expended.
- Start your day off right by consuming breakfast as soon as you wake up and then eat every 2-3 hours throughout the day.
- Consume pre- and post-workout snacks to help repair and build muscle from resistance training. Aim for 15 – 25 grams of protein post-exercise and for most of your meals and snacks.
- Monitor your progress by tracking your weight weekly and getting your body fat percentage reassessed.

## Easy Food Additions

- Cheese (as part of a snack or on salads / sandwiches)
- Avocado (on salads or sandwiches)
- Hummus (on vegetables or sandwiches)
- Whole milk instead of low-fat or skim
- Granola and muesli (mix in yogurt)
- Almond butter (on apple or whole-wheat bagel)
- Nuts, seeds, and dried fruit (in salads or as an easy snack)
- Smoothies (add nutrient-dense ingredients like nut butter, whole milk, avocado, banana, cottage cheese or Greek yogurt)

Written by SCAN registered dietitian nutritionists (RDN) to provide nutrition guidance. The key to optimal meal planning is individualization. For personalized nutrition plans contact a SCAN sports dietitian or Board Certified Specialist in Sports Dietetics (CSSD) by accessing "Find a SCAN Dietitian" at [www.scandpg.org](http://www.scandpg.org)



## Tips to Take With You

1. Resistance training + increased calorie intake + adequate protein = muscle growth
2. Plan ahead and keep fuel on hand. Add 1-2 snacks each day while increasing meal portion sizes.
3. While protein is important, don't ignore carbohydrates and fats which are your primary energy sources.
4. Consult a sports registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN) to address individual goals and meal planning tips to meet increased needs.

## Contact SCAN

[www.scandpg.org](http://www.scandpg.org)  
800.249.2875