

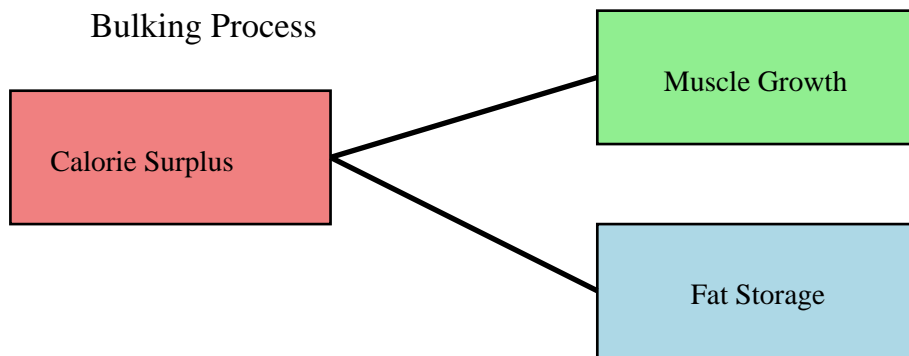
Bulking (Muscle Gain Phase)

How it works:

- You eat more calories than your body burns (calorie surplus).
- The extra energy and nutrients fuel muscle repair and growth after training.
- Your body will store some extra energy as fat, but most of the surplus (if done carefully) supports muscle gain.

What to do:

- Aim for a **small surplus** of about 200–500 calories per day above your maintenance level.
- Focus on **protein** (1.6–2.2g per kg bodyweight) to give your muscles building blocks.
- Keep lifting with **progressive overload** — gradually increasing weight, reps, or sets.
- Expect some fat gain, but keep it moderate by avoiding an excessive surplus.



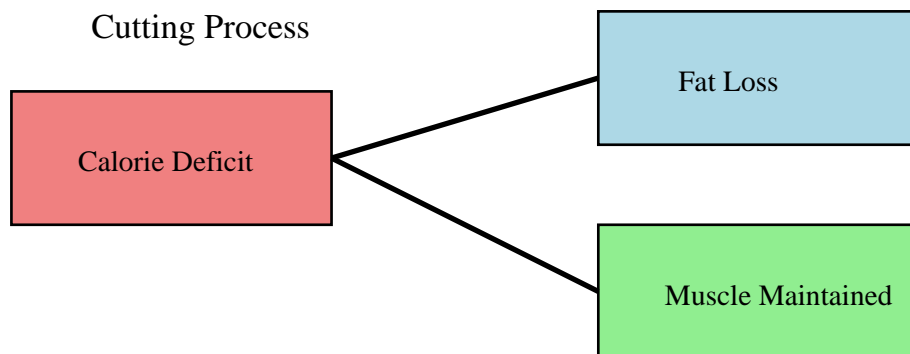
Cutting (Fat Loss Phase)

How it works:

- You eat fewer calories than your body burns (calorie deficit).
- Your body uses stored fat for energy.
- If you keep protein high and lift weights, your body is more likely to burn fat instead of muscle.

What to do:

- Aim for a **modest deficit** of 300–600 calories per day. Bigger deficits = faster fat loss but harder to stick with.
- Keep protein high (1.6–2.2g/kg) to protect muscle.
- Keep training, but you may reduce intensity slightly if energy is low.
- Include cardio or daily movement (walking, cycling) to support the deficit.
- Expect some muscle loss, but strength training and protein help minimise it.



Maintenance (Holding Steady)

How it works:

- You eat about the same calories as your body burns (calorie balance).
- Your weight stays stable.
- With strength training, you can still build strength and sometimes muscle (“recomp”), especially if you’re new to lifting.

What to do:

- Aim for your **maintenance calories** (your TDEE).
- Keep training consistently — strength gains can still happen.
- Eat a balanced diet that supports your energy and health.
- Use this phase after a bulk or cut to stabilise, or simply to live without chasing fat loss or muscle gain.

Maintenance Balance

