

# 5 STEPS TO MUSCLE BUILDING

**SC-PT**  
Train smart, always.

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# INTRODUCTION

The most common mistake I see when it comes to muscle building is a lack of patience and compliance.

In my experience the number one reason for this is due to getting the approach all wrong, gaining unwanted fat and wanting to diet down.

Most approaches to muscle building is to smash calories needlessly high, disregarding structure and food quality, dropping all cardio and reducing rep ranges to really low.

## ***Sound familiar?***

Granted, gaining muscle requires being in a calorie surplus, which of course means you won't stay shredded, you'll likely lose tightness, but under no circumstances do you need to get out of shape or unhappy with how you look.

There's a blurred line between giving the body the calories it needs to grow quality muscle and, well, to be honest being a bit of a dick with food and labelling it a bulk.

The purpose of this E-book is to help you get clarity on how to gain muscle and avoid the mistakes I've made and seen over the last decade and a half.

There are several areas I have identified that are key to gaining muscle. I will go through the most important parts of each to give you undeniable clarity going forward with your muscle building efforts.

# 1 - NUTRITIONAL QUALITY MATTERS

Food is fuel - we convert food into energy.

This doesn't mean we shouldn't enjoy the food we eat; it means we should always make sure the majority of what we eat is rich in quality and will fuel our body to be at it's best.

**Fuel it poorly, it will run poorly, and you'll feel like sh\*t  
Give it quality, you'll feel great and perform at your best.**

By this I mean you will have energy when you need it, you will perform well, recovery quicker, have better digestion, high quality sleep, consistent mood and strong desire to train all of which make muscle building a much easier process.

If you trash it with fast food, high sugars, low micronutrient quality foods the complete opposite will occur. As well as increasing the risk of things like heart disease, high blood pressure, hormones dysfunction, poor mental health issues etc.

This doesn't mean you have to be a boring bast\*rd, just as much as you don't need to be gluttonous c\*nt.

Make it so that 80% of your daily intake of food is from quality, wholesome, natural sources, basically things that were produced from the earth, then simply allocate the rest of your calories to the finer things.

This means all bases are covered. Macro and micronutrients, vitamins and minerals and all the things you enjoy are in the equation whilst reaping the benefits of performing and recovering to the best of your ability.

## 2 - GET STRONGER THAN STRONG

A huge misconception when it comes to gaining muscle is 'low reps for bulking, high reps for cutting' **WRONG**

The key to getting lean or getting bigger is how you manipulate foods, how you train should rarely change.

Ok, so obviously in a cut you will do more cardio, but training needs to be constant.

I can understand where it's come from, if your trying to get a big bench or squat, you don't need to be doing high reps BUT this doesn't mean everything should be mega low reps.

Training programmes should be designed to enable you to get the most out of exercise and sessions and NO MATTER WHAT you lift, you're always looking for some form of progression and get stronger.

I've done a full PDF on training intensity, so if you haven't already, head over to my website ([www.sc-pt.co.uk](http://www.sc-pt.co.uk)) and download it.

Typically, there are big lifts, mainly in the form of compound lifts (bench, squat, deadlift etc.), that we can push harder than others.

For example, you're always going to get stronger on a dumbbell press than you would a fly, so we should lift heavier, for lower reps on this, whereas with a fly, we might do more reps but using a weight that's challenging.

*Example, dumbbell press for 2 sets of 4-6/6-8, then a fly would be 3 sets of 10-12/12-15*



Be smart with how you choose the rep ranges, but whatever it is, always go as hard as you can.

As they say, you gain the strength In a muscle building phase, then you aim to keep it during the diet phase.

A muscle than can tolerate a bigger load will always be bigger, so if you're getting stronger (assuming you're eating enough) you'll be growing.

### 3 - EGO LIFTERS VS FORM POLICE

One of my favourite ways to look at form when training is **'muscles, not movements'**

There's a huge difference between moving a weight from A to B and actually contracting a muscle hard enough to grow a muscle. This is the ultimate ego, which by the way, it's fucking hard not to do.

Being able to swing a load of weight about in a testosterone filled environment more than others is a class feeling. I can see why people do it.

Be able to hip thrust more than any big booty bitch. Why wouldn't you.

But when we break it down, are you actually stimulating the muscle enough to grow.

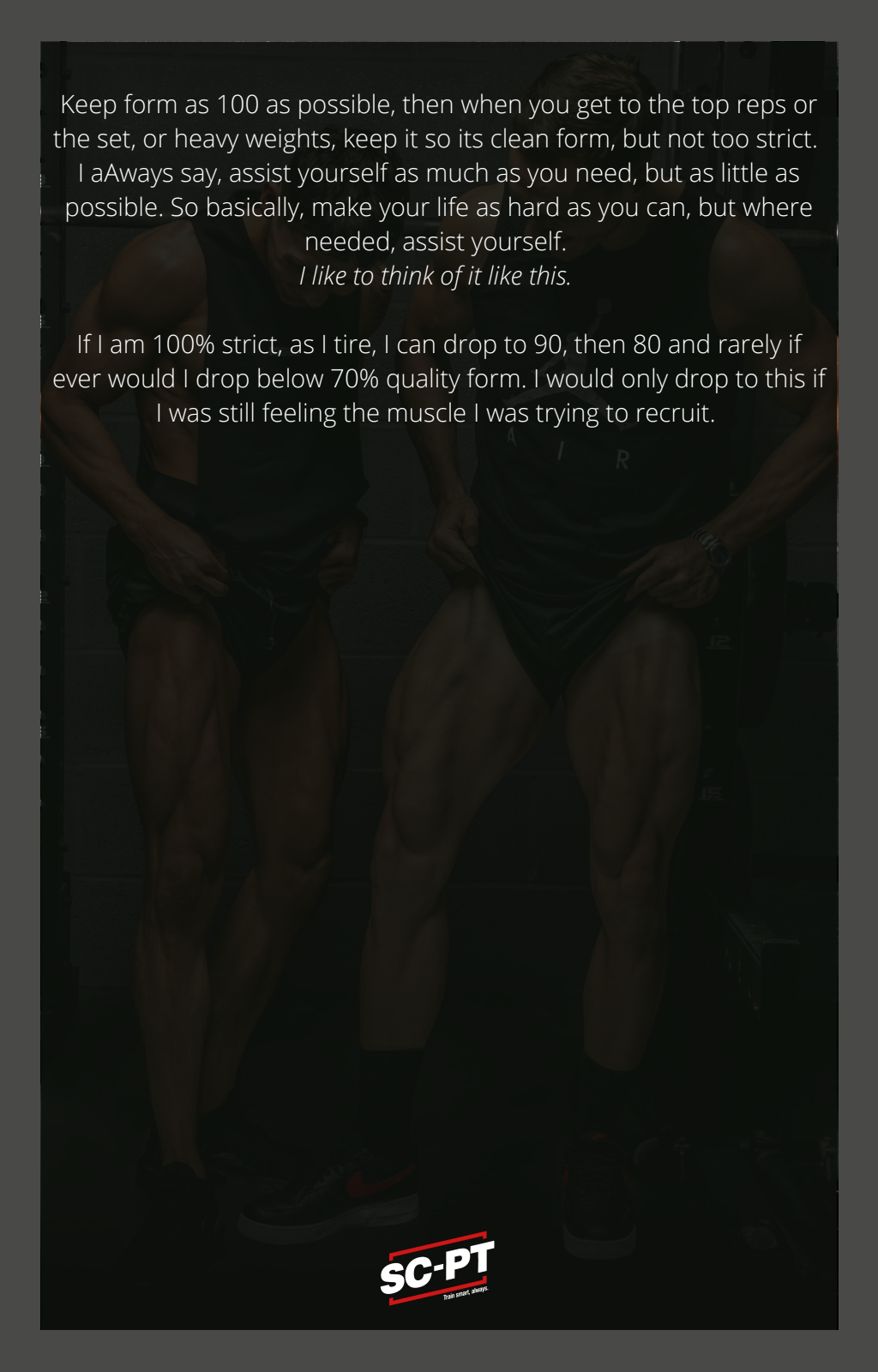
No one looks at you on the beach and things 'damn, I bet he can bench loads' or 'damn, I bet she can hip thrust a lot', it's more 'man that guys JACKED' or 'sheeeshhhh she's got booty'

So, getting strong is important, so long as your actually using the intended muscle, feeling them and getting a good response.

Now, there's another side to the coin.

Don't be so form orientated you won't increase the weight because you won't keep the form perfect. We will never get strong enough to grow being too strict.

**The key is to find a balance.**



Keep form as 100 as possible, then when you get to the top reps or the set, or heavy weights, keep it so its clean form, but not too strict.

I aAlways say, assist yourself as much as you need, but as little as possible. So basically, make your life as hard as you can, but where needed, assist yourself.

*I like to think of it like this.*

If I am 100% strict, as I tire, I can drop to 90, then 80 and rarely if ever would I drop below 70% quality form. I would only drop to this if I was still feeling the muscle I was trying to recruit.

# 3 - EGO LIFTERS VS FORM POLICE

**You've heard the saying less is more.**

This is something that definitely rings true when it comes to training to gain muscle.

Mentally this feels counter intuitive, which I understand fully. The more you stimulate a muscle, the more chance it will grow, right?

I've found the totally opposite. I have trialled training 3/4/5/6 x per week both myself and with clients.

As a rule of thumb, the more experienced the person, the less frequently they need to train to work a muscle hard enough to grow (mainly because they're stronger).

The longer a person has trained, the more experience they have with bigger, more impactful lifts and typically the stronger they are when performing them.

When lifting heavy, this places a huge demand on your body (joint, muscle and nervous system).

Training heavy 4+ x a week has massive impact on your ability to push more weight and continue to get stronger.

Allowing your body sufficient time to recovery between sessions will not only bring short term benefits, but allow you to push harder for longer, before needed to take deloads or time off.

Don't get me wrong, I love being in the gym, as do you, so sometimes, it's easy to think 'I feel fine, I can definitely train' and skip a rest day. But. The thing I always come back too. How hard would you train the day after, if you took that rest.



Getting through a session and smashing the sh\*t out of it are two different things and is usually a result of the body feeling rested or not.

Also, one question I pose to my clients is, 'if you can train 6 days a week, week in week out, are you really training hard enough?'

***I would say probably not.***

Easy to do if all your doing is turning up and chasing a booty of chest pump.

The real muscle will come from prioritising rest days and the 3-4 x week you're in the gym, absolutely annihilating yourself.

## 4 - TO CARDIO OR NOT TO CARDIO

**Ask any bro or broette in the gym and they will tell you that cardio is the killer of gains**

Cardio will reduce the surplus you're in.

That's not up for debate, but we aren't talking about doing copious amounts of it.

Keeping cardio in off season is highly advisable and I will tell you why.

I have just mentioned the importance of recovery, in the name of rest days.

Well, recovery between sets and also between workouts is also going to play a HUGE factor in gaining strength. I say strength because by now we know that Strength + Calorie Surplus = Muscle growth

Having better cardiovascular fitness means your body will be able to cope with higher stress as it will use oxygen more efficiently.

Better recovery between sets, means better quality sets that can be sustained all workout, which ultimately means, better workouts.

This also means the fitter you are the quicker you will recovery after a workout too.

As well as this, it's important to look after than thing we call 'health'. Not that this matters as it doesn't look good in a pair of leggings or a t-shirt, hence why most people don't care.

Having cardio in can also mean that you stay that little bit tighter when food goes up, as well as helping keep your appetite strong.

So which cardio should we do, how much and how often?

I'm a big advocate of making it as less tedious as possible. Usually encouraging clients to do something they enjoy examples from current clients would be MMA, Boxing, Running, Hockey, Football etc.

This way its less arduous and you don't hate life doing it.

Few times a week is ideal to keep things ticking over nicely and get all of those benefits mentioned

IF you don't play or partake in any sport type activity, simply have a good mix of conditioning, steady state and HITT and you'll be grand.

## 5 - TRACKING PROGRESS

This is another big reason people give up on trying to gain muscle tissue.  
Not knowing what to track and having nothing tangible to focus on.

When we diet, it's easy right, did weight drop? Have measures come down?  
Do I feel sexier in the mirror? Can I see any new lines in the mirror?

Easy peasy to see results and become inspired to want and do more.

Not so much with muscle gain.

As humans we work on a work, reward basis.

We go work knowing we will get paid; we diet knowing we will drop weight.

How do you measure muscle building?

How do we know if the scale weight is quality, if measures going up is  
muscle or fat etc.

It can be very difficult, and I can see 100% why people are driven back to  
diet. Especially when it's done wrong and we can visibly see that the gain  
isn't quality.

As a result of this, I also recommend making performance in the gym the  
biggest indicator of progress.

Think about it, if you have added 40kg to your hip thrust, or 100kg to your  
leg press, why is this?

Small muscles don't lift big weights, they can't tolerate it, so the increase  
must be because your muscle is adapting, getting stronger and in turn,  
bigger.



Become obsessed with small progressions in strength (again see my training intensity guide) and the gains will come.

With this as the main variable of progress, we can then look to track weight weekly, mainly to ensure it's not piling on. Following this, measures each month, again to see those marginal improvements. Finally, pictures, probably every 4-6 weeks.

Pictures is mostly to ensure you are happy visually, not gaining too much unwanted body fat (some is going to happen) so you can stall or pull back a little if needed. The pictures will not show you copious amounts of muscle, this will be when you strip back. R

If you know what to expect when looking at those variables it's much easier to stay in a good place when working to gain tissue, rather than being disappointed each time something goes up or you see pictures and they don't reveal 20lbs of lean muscle.

It takes time, but the process can be full of freedom, flexibility, socialising and massive improvements in strength, mood, recovery and when done properly, muscle.

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