



6 Skinny-Guy Mistakes

by Dr. John M. Berardi

You're reading this article because you wanna get big, right? Well, contrary to popular opinion (and the agonizing opinions of those women who are afraid to lift weights because they'll get "too big"), it ain't easy packing on pounds of lean mass.

And, just so you realize how difficult it is, today I'm going to take a novel approach. Rather than soothe your inner child by telling you it's easy to pack on the brawn, I'm going to discuss the challenges you'll face and the mistakes most others like you make. So hopefully, at the end of this article, you'll see the error of your ways and you'll learn how to fix that error, taking you from scrawny to brawny in no time.

But first, if you're really hoping to get the brawn, I want you to get comfortable with two ideas right from the start.

Idea #1 — To gain muscle mass, you're going to have to spend more money on groceries than you're currently spending. If you endeavor to get bigger and don't start increasing your weekly grocery bill, all your muscle building prayers will go unanswered.

Idea #2 — To gain muscle mass, you're going to have to shop, cook, eat, and clean the kitchen more often than you're currently doing. That's right, if you don't increase your grocery store frequency as well as the amount of food you prepare, the amount of daily fork lifts you do, and the amount of dishwashing you do, your reign as the world's weakest man will continue to go uncontested.



Sure these are challenges. And you're not supposed to hear about them, right? Most of the articles and books out there nowadays seem to want to spin lovely fairy tales about how easy it is to get into great shape, how easy it is to lift heavy weights, and how easy it is to eat better.

But the reality is this: **it's not easy**. However, it does get *easier* if you've prepared yourself mentally for the challenges that lie ahead and realize that it'll take some time to accomplish your goals.

You see, people typically overestimate how difficult things will be and underestimate how long they'll take. Expect to be able to gain weight without seriously altering your current habits and taking the time to allow the new habits to sink in, and of course you'll fail. Truly, the old cliché, "Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result" has become a cliché for a reason—there's some truth to it.

Understanding that some of your habits have led to legs that only Colonel Sanders could love, you may be wondering what habits are in need of a change and what habits will direct you toward the path of muscle building success?

Well, I'll again be honest. I can't know exactly what your personal ineffective patterns are without sitting down with you in my clinic and assessing your current habits. However, in general, after working with thousands of clients, I do know that most people make some of the same mistakes with respect to muscle building nutrition. And here are the most prevalent ones:

Mistake #1: Eating Too Few Calories.

Most people who want to get big simply eat too few calories. I know what you're thinking — DUH! I already know this. But do you? If you're skinny, then you don't!

The body obeys the laws of thermodynamics (just a fancy physics word for describing how the body can't build muscle without extra energy around to build it with) and therefore if you're losing weight—you're not taking enough energy in; if you're weight is stable—you're balancing intake with output; if you're gaining weight—you're taking more energy in than you're burning.

So if you're reading this article and want to get bigger, the solution should be relatively simple, right? Pick up some food and start eating it right now. By eating a greater number of calories than you're currently eating, you'll finally be able to put those high school physics lessons to good use. So, first and foremost, start eating. Before you worry about macro percentages, about which program is the best for you, what supplements you should take, etc. Just start eating.

And if you're looking for more, simply pick up my [Gourmet Nutrition E-book](#). This is an optimal eating manual covering everything from shopping tips; stocking your fridge and cupboards; 100 great tasting, health promoting, muscle building recipes; and over 25 food facts.

But remember; don't wait till you know everything to get moving. As an old proverb states: "The man needs to know everything before moving forward will spend his entire life on one leg."

Start eating now and keep reading so you can make the changes as you go along.

Mistake #2: Cupboards Are Bare.

Most people live like Old Mother Hubbard. Ever have the experience of heading to the fridge to get something to eat and getting there to find nothing left that didn't have mold in it or on it? I'm sure you have. And in situations like this, not even Harry Houdini could summon calories from thin air.

Old Mother Hubbard, went to the cupboard, to get her poor daughter a dress. When she got there, the cupboard was bare, and so was her daughter, I guess!

In order to ensure you're getting enough food, you don't need a magic act, you need to ensure your fridge and your cupboards are always stocked properly.

You'll need to chuck out all the crap that's in your kitchen, replace it with good stuff, and keep replacing it. If you don't have a system for shopping (for example, I shop every Sunday), the cupboards will always be bare.

Mistake #3: Failing To Plan Meals.

Not eating enough is one thing. But why don't most people eat enough? Because they fail to plan their meals! As you might imagine, another cliché works in nicely here. In nutrition, failing to plan is planning to fail.

Trying to simply "eat on the go", "grab something on the way to work", or "catch a quick lunch with the guys from the mailroom", will only serve to accomplish one goal—to keep you looking like everyone else in the mailroom.

To transcend the typical physique, you should be eating about 5-6 meals per day (7-8 meals counting your workout and post-workout drinks). So, upon waking in the morning, if you aren't already sure what or where you'll be having breakfast, second breakfast, lunch, second lunch, dinner, and/or second dinner, chances are you'll make poor selections and/or skip meals altogether.

Mistake #4: Limited Food Choices.

Because of convenience, social conditioning, food associations, etc. many people only eat a few foods each day, limiting the number of calories they're eating dramatically and limiting their vitamin and mineral intake. Think about it—list the different types of fruits and vegetables you ate yesterday.

Seriously, take out a piece of paper and write down the fruits and veggies you ate yesterday.

So, did you eat the daily recommendation of 6-8 servings of fruits and vegetables? Heck, did you meet that recommendation all of last week?

If not, don't feel bad; very few of my clients do before they start working with me, and many of them are elite and professional athletes.

The bottom line is this, if you're only eating a handful of different foods each day, you're limiting your muscle building potential tremendously.

Mistake #5: Eating Infrequently.

Most people eat only 3 "squares" a day. As you probably know, our societal feeding structure is centered on the 3-meal day; breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

What is this, prison? People, we're allowed to (and should) eat all day.

Interestingly, when our society adopted this 3 meal a day structure, no one thought to ask our physiology if this structure was best. As you might imagine, I'm about to suggest that it's not best, especially if muscle gain is your goal. If you want to send those medium sized gym T-shirts to the Goodwill once and for all, you'll have to eat when required, which means more often than most other "normal people".

Mistake #6: Mood Eating.

Most people eat based on their mood and/or some subjective feelings of hunger. They don't eat based on what their bodies need. I'm sure you've seen these people in action.

Do you know someone who overeats when "stressed out"? You probably do.

But I'm willing to bet you also know someone who doesn't eat at all when "stressed".

So what's the difference between these two types of people? Only the fact that they've associated food with certain moods rather than treating food as sustenance, fuel for their engine.

Think of it this way, you're about to take a long drive on a stretch of highway with no gas station. Do you fail to stop for gas before you hit the highway because you're "not in the mood"? Of course not. Think of eating in the same way. Eating fuels your metabolic engine. So it's time to *start* feeling like eating so that you can *stop* feeling like you're scrawny.

So there you have it, the 6 biggest muscle building mistakes that scrawny guys make. Do any of these habits characterize your eating? If so, it's time to make the decision to get your habits working for you rather than against you.

But this article is just a start — it's just a mirror in which you can examine yourself. The next step is to come up with an action plan. To do so, get www.scrawnytobrawny.com and pick up a copy of my new book—"Scrawny to Brawny, the Ultimate Guide to Building Muscle the Natural Way". Strength coach extraordinaire Mike Mejia and I teamed up on this book to create an unbeatable, fully integrated training, nutrition, and supplement program designed to give you everything you need to pack on the brawn.