**Tips for gaining lean muscle mass**

* **Lift weights and condition with a sense of urgency**- do not just go through the motions, do your best – lift hard, run hard, work hard. Attend every workout – don’t skip workouts.
* **Never skip meals.**
* **Eat at least five times per day** –Three meals and two snacks
* **Drink caloric beverages.** Choose milk, 100% fruit juice, or sports drinks when available.
* **Choose calorie-dense foods.** That means eating potatoes, corn or peas instead of celery and carrot sticks.
* **Eat more when you can.** Take seconds and thirds when possible if you are trying to gain weight.
* **Eat protein throughout the day.**
* **Players should not count more than 30 grams of protein in one sitting of whole food.** For example a huge steak that has 100 grams of protein cannot be counted as 100 grams toward their total number for the day; only 30 of it may be counted. Players should never go more than 2-3 hours without having some source of protein.
* **Protein shakes are OK.** If drinking a 100 gram protein shake only 50 grams can be counted during one sitting because its predigested protein that can be utilized immediately. A player may not eat the food and shake in one sitting and count it all.
* **Eat as many carbs as you want.** Players can eat as many carbs as they wish in one sitting because carbs are much easier to digest and can be stored, whereas whole food protein cannot be stored and is more difficult to digest.

**The struggle**

Partly for physiological reasons, it’s tough for on-the-go student athletes to put on extra pounds of quality weight. “High school athletes need to realize that a lot of men don’t fill out until they are in their early 20s,” Skolnik explains. “The 16- or 17-year-old athlete might be getting testosterone, but only low levels of it. Physiologically, it is a struggle to develop size.” The actual growing process also inhibits high-schoolers from developing size. “Growing uses energy and burns a lot of calories. Athletes need a tremendous caloric intake just to maintain weight.”

**The calorie game**

It’s a scientific fact that consuming an extra 500 calories a day produces a one-pound weight gain every week, depending on metabolism, fitness level, and frequency and timing of meals. So, theoretically, you could gain 12 pounds in three months. However, for a growing athlete who is trying to increase size, a well-designed strategy is necessary.

You can get the additional calories from any food, but proper distribution of macronutrients helps achieve the ultimate goal—improved athletic performance. To increase size, Skolnik recommends the following caloric breakdown:

• 55-70 percent carbohydrates • 20 to 30 percent fat (increase to 40 percent with healthy fats for additional calories)  
• 15 percent protein

**Example 3500 Calorie Meal Plan, tailored to typical school day and practice**

**6:30 AM - Breakfast**

2 cup oatmeal with 1 cup of low fat yogurt, or 1 Tbsp brown sugar,

Banana

1 cup milk

**9:00 AM – Snack:** 1 protein bar, 1 PB&J sandwich, and/or fresh fruit

**11:30 AM - Lunch**

1 Turkey/Ham sandwich with mayo

1 piece of fresh fruit (banana)

1 cup of sports drink, juice, or milk

1 cookie or sports bar

**2:30 PM - Snack prior to Practice**

1 protein bar or ½ PB&J sandwich

1 piece of fruit (orange, apple, banana)

1 cup sports drink or milk

**2:30-5:30 PM - Practice/Workout**

6-7 cups of water or sports drink

**5:30 PM - Post practice snack**

Protein bar, PB & J sandwich, and/or banana, orange

**7:00 PM - Dinner**

4-5oz (lg deck of cards) of grilled chicken, steak, or extra lean hamburger

1 cup rice or pasta or 1 medium sized tortilla or 2 small tortillas

1 cup of broccoli, corn, carrots, or beans

Salad with dressing

1 wheat roll w/butter

1 cup of milk or sports drink

**9:00 PM - Snack**

6 to 8 Triscuits or 2 graham crackers with 1 tablespoon of peanut butter

Fresh fruit & 1 cup milk

**Example 4500 Calorie Meal Plan, tailored to a typical school day and practice schedule**

**6:30 AM - Breakfast**

2 frzen waffles (Nutrigrain) or 1 PB & banana sandwich or 2 bowls cereal

2 Tablespoons Peanut Butter (if eating frozen waffles)

1 Banana

2 cups milk and/or 1 cup yogurt

**9:00 AM – Snack:** Peanut butter and jelly sandwich or protein bar + water

**11:30 AM Lunch**

1Footlong Sub Turkey and Cheese or Two Chicken Sandwiches

1 piece of fresh fruit

2 cups of juice or milk &/or 1 protein bar

**2:30 PM - Snack** prior to Practice

1 protein bar or ½ PB & banana sandwich

1 piece of fruit (orange, apple, banana)

At least 2 cups water, sports drink or milk

**2:30-5:30 PM - Practice/Workout**

6-7 cups of water or sports drink

**5:30 PM - Post practice snack**

Protein bar or PB & J sandwich and/or banana, orange

**7:00 PM - Dinner**

6-7oz of grilled steak/chicken / fish / ground beef (extra lean) spaghetti

1 baked potato w 1t. butter or 1 large tortilla

1 cup of broccoli, carrots, corn, or beans

Salad with dressing

1 wheat roll

2 cups of milk or sports drink

**9:00 PM - Snack**

1 peanut butter and jelly sandwich or ½ PB & banana sandwich

1 cup low-fat yogurt &/or 1 cup of milk

**Example 4790 Calorie Meal Plan (Pro-196g 16%, Carbs-810g 65%, Fat-104g 19%)**

**6:30 AM - Breakfast**

1C Grape Nuts with 1C low fat milk (C=Cup)  
1C low fat chocolate milk  
1 English muffin with 1 pat butter and 1T jam (T=Tablespoon)  
1C orange juice

**9:00 AM – Snack:** 1C trail mix

**11:30 AM - Lunch**

2C spaghetti w/ 1C tomato sauce  
2T parmesan cheese  
2 slices Italian bread  
1 pat butter  
1 tossed salad with ½C kidney beans  
2T low-fat dressing  
1C cranberry juice  
1 apple with 2T peanut butter

**2:30 PM - Snack prior to Practice**

4 fig bars  
1C chocolate pudding

**2:30-5:30 PM - Practice/Workout**

6-7 cups of water or sports drink

**5:30 PM - Post practice snack**

Protein bar, PB & J sandwich, and/or banana, orange

**7:00 PM - Dinner**

1C minestrone soup  
1 chicken breast, breaded, baked  
1 hard roll with 1 pat butter  
1C peas and carrots  
2 baked potatoes with 1 pat butter

**9:00 PM - Snack**

1 low fat yogurt  
1 banana

\* http://www.thefootballacademy-llc.com/uploads/Sports\_Nutrition\_for\_the\_Youth\_and\_High\_School\_Athlete.pdf

\*http://www.stack.com/2006/01/01/gaining-weight/ \* Heidi Skolnik, M.S., C.D.N., FACSM, president of Nutrition Conditioning Inc.