16 Ways to Boost Your Testosterone

Boost your testosterone levels naturally by following these 16 tips that emphasize nutrition, training, supplementation, and lifestyle changes.

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Like many bodybuilders and other guys, I'm obsessed with increasing my muscle mass, controlling my body fat, and improving my health. Lots of guys choose a path that supports one or two of these three goals, but if you want to maximize your physique and long-term health, then it's crucial that you make choices that support all three.

One way to achieve all three of these goals is to increase your body's natural production of testosterone—or at least, to improve the effectiveness of the testosterone you're already producing. Here's the difference between those two things: Much of the testosterone you're producing may be going to waste because it's "bound," which means it is not able to connect with the receptors that will enable it to stimulate muscle growth and all of the other healthy functions that testosterone supports. That's particularly true among older guys, a group I'm inching ever closer to joining.

Here are my training, nutrition, supplementation, and lifestyle suggestions for supporting production and effectiveness of your natural testosterone levels. Put them to good use!

Exercise Tips For Boosting Testosterone

1. Don't Neglect Heavy Compound Movements

No, you don't just have to do squats, deadlifts, bench presses, pull-ups, and other multijoint movements. But yes, you should do them, and build your workouts around them. At least some of the time, you should also use fairly heavy weights with fewer reps to spur greater testosterone production.

Multijoint compound movements tax the body heavily, signaling increased testosterone production.

The reason why is simple: These multijoint movements tax your body more, and that challenge sends the message to stimulate greater production of testosterone, especially when you combine them with my other exercise recommendations.

2. Keep Your Weight Training Short And Intense

You can say a lot of things about my style of strength training, but what you can't say is that it lasts for hours. I'm militant about keeping my sessions as lean as they are mean.

While you can perform more reps with greater weight when you rest longer between sets, you want to push through the weight portion of your workout in 60 minutes or less. That's because longer sessions increase

cortisol, a catabolic (muscle breakdown) hormone that decreases testosterone levels and undermines long-term muscle growth when you consistently overproduce it.

Keep rest periods to no more than 60-90 seconds between sets, reducing weights or reps to achieve this. Trust me, you can achieve a lot in an hour!

3. Don't Over-Rely On Cardio

I'm a believer in the power of daily cardio. So how do I keep from burning away my muscular mass or chronically overproducing cortisol with all that work? By keeping my sessions limited, like, under an hour (unless it's a day where I'm doing a long run or bike ride). I also never neglect my strength training, even while I'm training for endurance events.

Balance your endurance work with heavy strength training to avoid catabolic hormone spikes.

If your only goal is to have beasty biceps and train like an animal in the gym, you can also rely on high-intensity interval training (HIIT), which emphasizes burning body fat over muscle mass, helping to support T levels while reducing body fat.

And if you're someone who, like me, has to perform lengthy cardio training when preparing for an Ironman or ultramarathon, make sure you have the rest of your life primed to combat the toll this takes. That means heavy and intense weights workouts, precise nutrition, clean supplementation, rest, and additional T-boosting hacks.

4. Weight Train Four Days A Week

When your goal is to add muscle mass, you're driven to go to the gym. In fact, you may want to go every day. But training every day can depress your levels of testosterone because you're driving up cortisol at the expense of recovery, growth, and ideal testosterone levels.

To maximize testosterone levels and its muscle growth benefits, you should limit your hard strength training sessions to four per week. You can add in another day of ab training and small groups such as calves if they are a weakness you're trying to bring up, but keep this session short—about 30-40 minutes, max.

Nutrition Tips For Boosting Testosterone

5. Get Plenty Of Protein

It shouldn't come as a shock that a diet high in protein also supports testosterone production. Protein feeds your muscles, helping them recover and grow. But it also helps boost your natural levels of testosterone. The science isn't yet definitive on what drives this: Is it the protein that boosts your muscle mass, increasing testosterone? Or does the protein increase testosterone, increasing muscle mass?

Consume at least a gram of protein per pound of body weight daily to support anabolism and hormonal health.

This is a classic chicken-or-egg debate (both good sources of protein), but what you should do is clear: Consume at least a gram of protein per pound of body weight every day. You can also get in considerably more to support muscle growth and testosterone production. If you're falling short, try one of my muscle-building protein recipes for hardgainers.

6. Emphasize Quality Dietary Fats

Dietary fats support health, muscle building, and yes, testosterone production. You know by now that you should emphasize omega-3s for their benefits in supporting heart health, and get plenty of them from fatty fish (salmon, sardines, etc.), avocadoes, and healthy oils such as olive and nut oils.

But you shouldn't overlook the importance of consuming saturated fats. These fats come from meats, cheese, and egg yolks, and they provide the building blocks of crucial hormones such as testosterone. Don't buy into the myth that saturated fats are harmful, so long as you're training with intensity with the goal of boosting testosterone to increase muscle mass.

7. Keep Carbs In Check

You no doubt know you need to limit your intake of fast-digesting carbs, especially processed ones such as refined sugar and bleached flour. These fast fuels boost insulin, encourage fat storage, and undermine health —all of which reduce testosterone production.

Rely on slow-digesting complex carbohydrates like yams, brown rice, and cruciferous vegetables.

Rely on slow-digesting carbs such as yams, brown rice, and oatmeal for better growth. Also emphasize vegetables, especially cruciferous ones (cabbage, broccoli, kale). Studies have shown consuming a diet rich in these vegetables is associated with higher testosterone levels, along with all the other health benefits they bring.

8. Reduce Alcohol Consumption

Don't be shocked that I'm recommending you cut down or eliminate alcohol consumption when you're trying to boost your testosterone levels.

Sure, consuming small amounts of red wine is associated with heart health. We've all heard it. But that doesn't mean alcohol is healthy for all your purposes or needs. Consuming large quantities of alcohol causes an inflammatory response that undermines testosterone production and muscle growth.

If you're going to drink, keep it very limited. End of story.

Supplement Tips For Boosting Testosterone

9. Supplement Tongkat Ali To Boost Effectiveness Of Your Natural Testosterone

This supplement, also known as *Eurycoma longifolia*, promotes the benefits of the testosterone you're already producing. Especially as men age, much of the testosterone they produce is bound to sex hormone-binding globulin (SHBG), and testosterone can't carry out its important functions until it's unbound.

Tongkat ali helps to increase what is known as free testosterone, so that it's available to support muscle building, libido, and all the other benefits testosterone provides.[1] Look for products that contain LJ100, a patented form of this ingredient, ensuring its purity, safety, and effectiveness.

Targeted supplementation with Tongkat Ali and Ashwagandha helps optimize free testosterone and combat stress.

10. Take Ashwagandha To Cope With Stress

One of the great killers of testosterone is stress—both mental and physical. Ashwagandha is an adaptogen, a class of ingredients which helps your body to cope with stress, and it has been shown to have positive effects on stress markers such as fatigue, and cortisol levels.[2]

Ashwagandha is a nightshade also known as Indian ginseng and *Withania somnifera*. It works synergistically with Tongkat ali to further boost testosterone and athletic performance.[3] Research shows that ashwagandha not only supports improved muscle mass and reduced body fat, but it also increases strength.

KSM-66 is the patented form of this ingredient. It is extracted from the root, and it has more supporting studies than any other form.

11. Get Enough Zinc, With Absorbability In Mind

Zinc is a nutritionally essential trace element that has been shown to support production of testosterone and other beneficial hormones.[4] It's also fairly hard to come by through diet, making it a good choice to supplement.

One thing to keep in mind is that zinc can be a challenge for your body to absorb. For enhanced absorbability, seek out products where zinc is bound to methionine, an amino acid that promotes the ability of this crucial mineral to enter your body and support testosterone production.[5]

12. Consider Supplementing With DIM

This phytochemical has a truly unsexy name for a T booster. It's derived from cruciferous vegetables, a group that includes broccoli, cabbage, kale, and cauliflower. While we have a lot of research to support the benefits of vitamins and minerals contained in our healthy foods, we're only now beginning to learn more about the full benefits of phytonutrients.

While DIM (Diindolylmethane) doesn't directly support testosterone production, it provides another benefit for the effectiveness of your natural testosterone production: It prevents testosterone from converting to estrogen through its anti-aromatase inhibiting effects.[6]

Environment And Lifestyle Tips For Boosting Testosterone

13. Get Plenty Of Sleep

When I had my dopamine and testosterone levels checked in 2015, I was dismayed to find that both were below average—but I shouldn't have been surprised. My sleeping pattern was irregular, and I was averaging only 3-5 hours per night. Once I started getting more than six hours of sleep a night, my test levels rose closer toward the normal range.

There's plenty of research to back this up. Sleep is not only crucial for health and sanity, but it also supports recovery and healthy hormone production. It should be one of the fundamental priorities of your life, right up there with fitness and nutrition.

14. Shut Down Your Computer And Phone In The Evening

Blue light exposure disrupts your body's circadian rhythm by alerting the brain's "fight" mode to wake up and be on the alert. This raises cortisol levels, and overexposure can lead to systemic increases in cortisol, which contribute to heart disease, muscle atrophy, and fat gain.[7] In the short term, blue light also simply disrupts sleep.

Avoid blue light exposure from screens late at night to protect circadian rhythms and lower nocturnal cortisol.

The answer: I switch off my phone, computer, TV, iPad, etc., a couple of hours before bed. When I have to work during this time—hey, it happens—I will use blue-light-blocking glasses. Consider getting a pair of these if you're addicted to your devices, especially late at night.

15. Have Sex Regularly

This is yet another chicken-and-egg scenario. High levels of testosterone make you randy, which promotes the desire for sex. Having sex more regularly supports elevated testosterone levels, which then encourages you to want to have sex more often.[8]

Of course, for our purposes, it also supports muscle growth—which makes you more attractive and thus more likely to have a partner for this endeavor. If you don't have one, well, you can achieve the benefits on your own. No matter the form, regular sexual activity primes your endocrine system for greater testosterone production.

16. Limit Exposure To Harmful Chemicals

I drink all of my water through a home filtration system, and I travel with a bottle that also filters 99.9 percent of all contaminants. I try to leave my windows open year-round to ensure I limit the growth of any hidden molds in my house.

I drink organic coffee to limit my exposure to micro-toxins. I ensure all of my supplements adhere to the Prop 65 act to limit my exposure to heavy-metal contaminants. I eat organic, grass-fed, locally produced, and humanely raised whenever possible to limit exposure to pesticides and antibiotics. Most importantly, I avoid exposure to plastics, which leach into the beverages and foods we consume, especially if they are heated.

Yes, it complicates my life a little. But all of these factors are suspected to contribute to elevated estrogen levels and a decrease in testosterone. Never mind their negative impact on your long-term health. For me, it's worth it.

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