

10 Steps To Getting Shredded

Tear it up 10 Steps to getting shredded Cris Aceto Want to get lean? Then follow this 10-step plan to get shredded.

1. DOUBLING CARBS

Fix your daily carbs at 2 grams (g) per pound of bodyweight and your protein at 1 g per pound of bodyweight, split over six small meals per day. Count only the protein from egg whites, protein powders, chicken and meats. Disregard the inconsequential protein found in veggies and other predominantly carbohydrate foods. The best choices for carbs include potatoes, rice, pasta, bread, Cream of Wheat and fruit. Don't budget additional calories for dietary fat -- the only fat in your meals should come as a byproduct of your protein sources. A 200-pound bodybuilder should eat 200 g of protein and 400 g of carbs per day.

2. PERFORMING CARDIO AT 4 x 40

Doing 40 minutes of cardio at high levels of intensity four times per week will burn 1,600 calories -- the equivalent of working off 1/2 pound of fat weekly. Define high-intensity cardio as any aerobic activity performed at 70% of your maximum heart rate.

3. EVALUATING PROGRESS

The goal is to shed a total of 1/2 to 1 1/2 pounds per week through diet and cardio while on this plan. Here's how to proceed after the first few weeks.

Stay on course if you've reached your goal. If you're losing too much weight, increase carbs to 3 g per pound of bodyweight every third day. This will help you retain muscle mass while getting shredded. A 200-pound bodybuilder eating 400 g of carbs on Monday and Tuesday, for example, should increase the amount to 600 g on Wednesday, then return to 400 g. If you're not losing enough weight, decrease daily carbs to 1.5 g per pound of bodyweight and increase cardio to five times weekly at 70% of max.

4. TROUBLESHOOTING

All diets, no matter how brilliant, reach a dreaded hitting-the-wall phase, when fat loss comes to a grinding halt. The solution is to eat low glycemic-index carbs to initiate fat loss. The exception to this edict is at the post-training meal: Eat high glycemic-index carbs to replenish glycogen while maintaining muscle mass. Low glycemic carbs, such as oatmeal, beans, yams, buckwheat noodles, buckwheat pancakes, cherries and peaches, release less insulin than other carbs. Lower insulin levels coupled with reduced caloric intake should stimulate fat loss.

5. CUTTING CARBS AT NIGHT

Experience teaches us that carbs eaten at night tend to preclude optimal fat loss. If you're not losing at the expected rate, eliminate all carbs from your last meal of the day. Allocate half of the carbs cut from that nighttime munch to meals earlier in the day. Add the other half to your post-training meal; there's less risk that your body will store them as fat.

6. HITTING DIRE STRAITS

No, not the rock band from the '80s; I'm talking about what you need to do if you are still struggling to lose weight after the first five steps. You've already cut carbs from your last meal of the day. Now slice the intake of heavier complex carbs, such as yams and potatoes, in half at two or three other meals during the day (excluding the post-training meal) and substitute fibrous carbs, such as broccoli, green beans, asparagus, cucumbers and salad greens. For example, if you typically eat 60 g of yams at a meal, cut the amount to 30 g and add two cups of a fibrous vegetable.

7. INCREASING PROTEIN

Along with cutting back on starch-laden carbs (step 6), you must now increase protein by 15% to 1.15 g per pound of bodyweight to prevent a loss of muscle mass from reduced carb intake. A 200-pound bodybuilder would eat 230 g of protein.

8. TAKING A BREAK

Dieting for too long can boomerang on you by slowing down your metabolism. Take a break from this shredding plan every 16-20 days, increasing carbs to off-season levels for three to five days.

9. MAKING A CASE FOR CASEIN

A study in the *Annals of Nutrition & Metabolism* (44[1]:21-29, 2000) revealed that casein is superior to whey in helping a person retain muscle while on a diet. Using casein-based protein at two of the day's meals should help to prevent muscle loss, and using low-fat protein powders should help keep caloric intake down.

10. SUPPLEMENTING SCIENCE

Branched-chain amino acids (BCAAs) are a great supplement to use during a cutting-up program, as the body needs more of them to offset the burning of muscle at that time. Try 4-8 g of BCAAs before and after training. Other cogent combos include Ephedra/caffeine (270-334 milligrams [mg] of herbal extract is equivalent to 18-25 mg of ephedrine alkaloids/200 mg of caffeine per day) to boost the metabolism. I also suggest 15 g of glutamine per day: When carbs are reduced, the amount of fluid in muscles falls, which adversely impacts the body's ability to build muscle. Taking a hefty dose of glutamine each day pulls water into muscle cells, which can help prevent muscle loss and keep metabolism elevated. As a fat-burning coup de grâce, add either a tablespoon of flaxseed oil or seven or eight capsules of omega-3 fatty acids to your daily supplement regimen.