

The GLP-1 Muscle Protection Checklist

On a GLP-1, up to 25 to 40% of the weight lost can be lean mass, and a large part of that is muscle. The good news: much of it is preventable.

☐ Put protein first at every meal.

Eat your protein before filling up on everything else, and aim for roughly 1.2 to 2.0 g of protein per kg of body weight per day (the higher end while actively losing weight). Protein is both the raw material and the signal that tips your muscle toward rebuilding instead of breakdown.

☐ Strength-train 2 to 3 times a week.

Bodyweight or weights, covering the major muscle groups. Resistance training is the “keep this muscle” signal that replaces the daily load your now-lighter body no longer provides. In studies, adding strength training and enough protein sharply reduces how much lean mass you lose while you slim down.

☐ Use a protein shake when your appetite is low.

When food is hard to get down, a shake is often the easiest way to reach your target. On a GLP-1, low appetite quietly becomes low protein, and low protein quietly becomes muscle loss.

☐ Do not crash your calories.

Aim for a moderate, steady deficit rather than the fastest possible loss. The faster you lose weight, the larger the share that tends to come from lean mass. Slow and steady protects your muscle.

☐ Eat enough total energy, spread across the day.

Aim for a solid serving of quality protein at each meal (roughly 25 to 40 g, toward the higher end with age). If you undereat overall, your body burns protein for fuel instead of using it to build.

☐ Track your strength, not just the scale.

Re-test monthly with simple moves: a dead hang, a 30-second sit-to-stand, or push-ups to form failure. The scale cannot tell fat loss from muscle loss. Your strength can.

☐ Work with your doctor or dietitian.

Personalize your protein target with a professional, and never adjust your medication on your own. Your numbers and health history are individual, and this checklist is education, not a prescription.

GO DEEPER

Want the science behind every step? Listen to the full podcast episode, “Why You Lose Muscle on a GLP-1 (and How to Stop It).”

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