

BONUS RESOURCES FOR

GLP-1 Recovery Quick-Start

*The Protein Timing Cheat Sheet + Your First Week of the
Resistance Protocol*

BY
Marcus Reid

A companion guide to
How to Build Muscle After GLP-1s

Works on its own — no prior reading required.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Important Information

Medical Disclaimer. This guide is for educational and informational purposes only. It is not intended as medical advice and does not replace the guidance of your prescribing physician, registered dietitian, or qualified healthcare provider. The protocols described here are general in nature and may not be appropriate for your specific medical history, current medications, or individual health status. Always consult your healthcare team before making changes to your exercise routine, diet, or nutritional supplementation, especially while taking any GLP-1 receptor agonist or other prescription medication. If you experience adverse symptoms, stop the activity and seek medical guidance immediately.

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HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

How to Use This Guide

You're holding a working protocol, not a theory document. Every section is designed to be used today. Print out the Protein Timing Cheat Sheet and stick it on your fridge. Follow the Week 1 Resistance Protocol exactly as written. Fill in the Day 0 Baseline Card before you go to bed tonight.

If you do those three things this week, you'll be ahead of 90% of people on GLP-1 medications who are losing muscle they can't afford to lose.

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01

The GLP-1 Muscle Loss Reality Card

The Problem in Three Numbers

39% — The average percentage of weight lost on semaglutide that comes from lean mass, not fat, based on DEXA scan data from the STEP 1 trial.

25% — The approximate percentage of weight lost as lean mass in tirzepatide users, per the SURMOUNT-1 body composition substudy.

100% — The percentage of this muscle loss that is modifiable with the right protein and resistance training strategy.

Read those numbers again. If you lose 40 pounds on a GLP-1 medication and do nothing to protect your muscle, roughly 15 of those pounds will be muscle and bone density. That changes your metabolism, your strength, your injury risk, and your long-term ability to keep the fat off.

Three Mechanisms Driving GLP-1 Muscle Loss

1. The Calorie Deficit Itself

GLP-1 medications create a significant energy deficit by suppressing appetite. Your body doesn't only burn fat in a deficit. It also breaks down muscle protein for fuel, especially when protein intake drops alongside total calories.

2. Reduced Protein Intake

When your appetite falls by 30–40%, your protein intake usually falls by the same amount. Most people on GLP-1s are eating 40–60 grams of protein per day when they need 100–140+ grams. The building blocks for muscle maintenance aren't arriving.

3. The Anabolic Resistance of Caloric Deficit

In a calorie deficit, your muscles become harder to stimulate. The normal protein dose that would trigger muscle protein synthesis in a surplus isn't enough anymore. You need a higher leucine threshold per meal to flip the "build" switch.

The Leucine Threshold: Your Key Concept

Leucine is the amino acid that signals your body to start building muscle protein. Think of it as a switch, not a dimmer. You either hit the threshold or you don't.

- **Maintenance (no deficit):** ~2.0g leucine per meal triggers muscle protein synthesis
- **Caloric deficit (your situation):** ~2.5–3.0g leucine per meal needed to overcome anabolic resistance

This means every meal you eat needs to clear that 2.5g leucine bar, or the muscle-building signal doesn't fire. Four meals that each contain 15g of protein won't protect your muscle as well as four meals that each contain 30–35g of high-leucine protein.

The cheat sheet on the next page shows you exactly how to hit that target.

02

The Protein Timing Cheat Sheet

Your Daily Protein Target

Body weight (lb) × 0.7 = minimum daily protein in grams

Your Weight	Daily Protein Target	Per-Meal Target (4 meals)
150 lb	105g	26g
175 lb	123g	31g
200 lb	140g	35g
225 lb	158g	39g
250 lb	175g	44g

If you can only manage three meals, divide your daily target by three. The per-meal amount matters more than meal frequency.

The Four-Meal Template

Meal 1 — Within 1 hour of waking

Target: 30-40g protein | 2.5g+ leucine

Meal 2 — 4-5 hours after Meal 1

Target: 30-40g protein | 2.5g+ leucine

Meal 3 — 4-5 hours after Meal 2 (pre- or post-training on workout days)

Target: 30-40g protein | 2.5g+ leucine

Meal 4 — 1-2 hours before bed

Target: 30-40g protein | Casein-based sources preferred (slow-digesting)

Leucine-Rich Foods Ranked by Leucine per Calorie

This ranking helps you get maximum muscle-protective benefit from the limited calories your appetite allows.

Tier 1 — Highest Leucine per Calorie (prioritize these)

Food	Serving	Protein	Leucine	Calories
Whey protein isolate	1 scoop (30g)	25g	2.7g	110
Chicken breast	4 oz cooked	35g	2.6g	185
Egg whites	1 cup (8 whites)	26g	2.3g	126
Turkey breast	4 oz cooked	34g	2.5g	170
Shrimp	5 oz cooked	30g	2.4g	150
Nonfat Greek yogurt	1 cup	20g	1.7g	100

Tier 2 — Strong Leucine per Calorie

Food	Serving	Protein	Leucine	Calories
Lean beef (93/7)	4 oz cooked	32g	2.5g	210
Tuna (canned in water)	1 can (5 oz)	30g	2.3g	140
Cottage cheese (2%)	1 cup	25g	2.1g	180
Salmon	4 oz cooked	29g	2.1g	230
Whole eggs	3 large	18g	1.5g	210

Tier 3 — Moderate Leucine per Calorie (supplement with Tier 1 to reach threshold)

Food	Serving	Protein	Leucine	Calories
Tofu (extra firm)	6 oz	15g	1.1g	130
Lentils	1 cup cooked	18g	1.3g	230
Edamame	1 cup shelled	17g	1.2g	190
Peanut butter	2 tbsp	7g	0.5g	190

The Emergency Shake (Low-Appetite Days)

On days when solid food feels impossible, this shake delivers your minimum muscle-protective dose in liquid form.

The GLP-1 Recovery Shake

- 1.5 scoops whey protein isolate (37g protein, 4.0g leucine)
- 1 cup unsweetened almond milk (1g protein)
- 1/2 frozen banana (for palatability)

- 5g creatine monohydrate (optional, supports muscle retention)
- Ice to preferred thickness

Totals: ~38g protein | ~4.0g leucine | ~220 calories

Sipping protocol for nausea management: Don't chug this. Pour it into a large water bottle and sip over 45–60 minutes. Cold temperature and slow intake reduce GI distress significantly.

On very low-appetite days, make two of these and sip throughout the day. That alone gives you 76g protein and 8g leucine — enough to maintain a strong muscle-protective signal even when eating feels like a chore.

Quick-Reference: Leucine Boosters

If a meal is falling short of the 2.5g leucine threshold, add one of these:

- **1/2 scoop whey isolate** stirred into yogurt, oatmeal, or coffee: +1.3g leucine, +55 cal
- **2 tbsp powdered egg whites** stirred into anything: +0.9g leucine, +30 cal
- **Leucine powder** (pharmaceutical-grade): 2g straight into any drink — bitter taste, but effective

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Week 1 Resistance Protocol

Before You Start

- **Who this is for:** Anyone on a GLP-1 medication, regardless of training experience. The loads are entry-level by design.
- **Equipment needed:** Access to a gym with dumbbells, a cable machine or resistance bands, and a bench. A home setup with adjustable dumbbells and bands also works.
- **Schedule:** Three sessions — Day 1, Day 3, Day 5 (e.g., Monday, Wednesday, Friday). Two rest days between the first two sessions, two rest days after the third.

How to Pick Your Starting Weight

For each exercise, use this test: **Can you complete all prescribed reps with good form while feeling like you could do 2–3 more reps at the end of each set?** If yes, the weight is right. If you're failing before the prescribed reps, go lighter. If it feels effortless, go heavier.

Understanding RPE (Rate of Perceived Exertion)

RPE is a 1–10 scale for how hard a set feels.

- **RPE 6:** You could do 4 more reps. Feels moderate.
- **RPE 7:** You could do 3 more reps. Challenging but controlled.
- **RPE 8:** You could do 2 more reps. Hard. This is your ceiling for Week 1.

Week 1 stays at RPE 6–7. You're learning movement patterns, not testing your limits.

DAY 1 — Lower Body + Push

#	Exercise	Sets	Reps	RPE	Rest
1	Goblet Squat	3	10	6–7	90 sec
2	Dumbbell Romanian Deadlift	3	10	6–7	90 sec
3	Dumbbell Bench Press	3	10	6–7	90 sec
4	Seated Dumbbell Overhead Press	2	10	6–7	60 sec
5	Pallof Press (cable or band)	2	10/side	6	60 sec

Notes:

- *Goblet Squat:* Hold one dumbbell at your chest. Squat to a depth where your thighs are at least parallel to the floor. If mobility is limited, squat to a bench or chair and touch-and-go.
- *Dumbbell Romanian Deadlift:* Slight knee bend, hinge at hips, lower dumbbells along your shins until you feel a stretch in your hamstrings. Keep your back flat.

- *Pallof Press*: Stand sideways to a cable or anchored band. Press both hands straight out from your chest and hold for 2 seconds. Resist the rotation. This protects your spine and builds core stability.

DAY 3 — Upper Body + Pull

#	Exercise	Sets	Reps	RPE	Rest
1	Lat Pulldown (or Band Pulldown)	3	10	6-7	90 sec
2	Seated Cable Row (or Band Row)	3	10	6-7	90 sec
3	Dumbbell Incline Press	3	10	6-7	90 sec
4	Dumbbell Bicep Curl	2	12	6-7	60 sec
5	Tricep Rope Pushdown (or Band)	2	12	6-7	60 sec

Notes:

- *Lat Pulldown*: If you don't have access to a cable machine, loop a resistance band over a pull-up bar and kneel beneath it. Pull the band to your upper chest.
- *Seated Cable Row*: Sit tall, pull the handle to your lower ribcage, squeeze your shoulder blades together for one second at the top.
- *Dumbbell Incline Press*: Set the bench to a 30-degree incline. This shifts emphasis to your upper chest and front delts.

DAY 5 — Full Body

#	Exercise	Sets	Reps	RPE	Rest
1	Dumbbell Step-Up (to bench)	3	8/leg	6-7	90 sec
2	Dumbbell Single-Arm Row	3	10/arm	6-7	60 sec
3	Push-Ups (knees or toes)	3	AMRAP*	6-7	60 sec
4	Dumbbell Lateral Raise	2	12	6-7	60 sec
5	Dead Bug	2	8/side	6	60 sec

AMRAP = As Many Reps As Possible while maintaining RPE 6-7. Stop when form breaks down or you hit RPE 8.

Notes:

- *Step-Up*: Place your entire foot on the bench. Drive through the heel of the working leg. Don't push off with the back foot.
- *Dead Bug*: Lie on your back, arms reaching toward the ceiling, knees bent at 90 degrees. Extend opposite arm and leg toward the floor while keeping your lower back pressed flat. This is harder than it looks.

Week 1 Training Rules

- 01 Never train to failure this week.** Always leave 2–3 reps in reserve.
- 02 If an exercise causes pain (not discomfort, but pain), skip it.** Substitute a similar movement or do an extra set of another exercise in the same session.
- 03 Time your rest periods.** Use your phone timer. Resting too long reduces the metabolic stimulus; resting too short compromises your form.
- 04 Eat your Meal 3 within 2 hours of training** — before or after, either works. Nutrient timing around training is less important than hitting your daily protein target.
- 05 Log your weights.** Write down what you lifted for every set. You'll need these numbers for Week 2.

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The GI Tolerance Quick Guide

GLP-1 medications slow gastric emptying, which means large protein-rich meals can cause nausea, bloating, and discomfort. This guide helps you ramp protein intake without triggering those side effects.

The 20/5 Ramp Protocol

Starting point: 20g protein per meal across 4 meals = 80g daily

Increase: Add 5g protein to ONE meal every 5 days

Ceiling: Your target from the Protein Timing Cheat Sheet (body weight × 0.7)

Days	Meal 1	Meal 2	Meal 3	Meal 4	Daily Total
1-5	20g	20g	20g	20g	80g
6-10	25g	20g	20g	20g	85g
11-15	25g	25g	20g	20g	90g
16-20	25g	25g	25g	20g	95g
21-25	25g	25g	25g	25g	100g
26-30	30g	25g	25g	25g	105g

Continue this pattern until you reach your target. Most people can reach 120-140g daily within 6-8 weeks without significant GI distress.

GI Distress Management Tactics

If nausea hits after a protein-heavy meal:

- Switch that meal to liquid protein (whey isolate in water or almond milk) for 3 days, then retry solid food at the same dose
- Eat protein first in the meal, before fats and fibers, which slow digestion further
- Keep meals cold or room temperature — hot meals increase nausea for many GLP-1 users

If bloating is the primary issue:

- Reduce fat content in the problem meal (fat slows gastric emptying on top of the GLP-1 effect)
- Try digestive enzymes with meals containing dairy or legume protein
- Split the problem meal into two smaller feedings 90 minutes apart

If you plateau below your protein target:

- Use the Emergency Shake (Section 2) for one or two of your four meals
- Add leucine powder (2-3g) to lower-protein meals to still trigger the muscle protein synthesis signal, even if total protein per meal stays at 20-25g

- Consider casein protein at bedtime — it digests slowly and is often better tolerated when consumed right before sleep

Foods That Are Easiest on the GLP-1 Stomach

Ranked by patient-reported tolerance (best first):

01 Whey protein isolate in cold liquid

02 Nonfat Greek yogurt

03 Egg whites (scrambled or hard-boiled)

04 White fish (cod, tilapia)

05 Chicken breast (shredded, not in large pieces)

06 Cottage cheese

07 Lean ground turkey

Foods to introduce later (higher GI impact):

- Red meat (slower to digest)
- Whole eggs (fat content)
- Protein bars (fiber + sugar alcohols)
- Casein shakes (thicker, slower emptying)

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Day 0 Baseline Card

Complete this card today. These numbers are your starting line. You'll use them to measure real progress — not just scale weight, but the kind of progress that tells you whether you're losing fat while keeping muscle.

Body Measurements

Measurement	How to Take It	Your Number
Body weight	Morning, after bathroom, before food/water	_____ lb
Waist (at navel)	Standing relaxed, end of normal exhale	_____ in
Hips (widest point)	Standing with feet together	_____ in
Right thigh (midpoint)	Midway between hip crease and top of kneecap	_____ in
Right arm (midpoint)	Midway between shoulder and elbow, arm relaxed at side	_____ in
Chest (at nipple line)	End of normal exhale, arms at sides	_____ in

Strength Baseline

Test	How to Do It	Your Number
Grip strength	If you have a hand dynamometer, record your best of 3 attempts per hand. If not, record how long you can hang from a pull-up bar (both hands, dead hang).	R: _____ / L: _____
Push-ups	Maximum reps with good form (knees or toes — note which). Stop when your chest can no longer reach within a fist-width of the floor.	_____ reps (knees / toes)
Bodyweight squat hold	Squat to parallel and hold. Time how long until you have to stand up.	_____ sec

Nutrition Baseline

Item	Your Number
Current daily protein (estimate)	----- g
Number of meals per day	-----
Current protein per meal (average)	----- g
Your target daily protein (weight × 0.7)	----- g
Your per-meal target (daily ÷ 4)	----- g

Today's Date: ____ / ____ / ____

Retake these measurements every 4 weeks.

Here's what you're watching for: **waist measurement going down while thigh and arm measurements hold steady or decrease only slightly.** That pattern means you're losing fat and keeping muscle. If your thigh and arm measurements are dropping at the same rate as your waist, you're losing too much lean mass and need to increase protein intake or training volume.

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