

The GLP-1 Muscle Preservation Plan

Strong on Less

A 12-week strength and protein plan for when you're eating less, with a lighter version of every workout.

12-week strength + protein plan

A4 printable edition

Why this plan exists

GLP-1 medications can change more than the number on the scale. This plan gives you a simple way to protect the strength that supports everyday life.

When you eat far less, your body draws on its own tissue for energy, including muscle. That's true of any large weight loss, whether from medication, surgery, or a strict diet. Muscle keeps you strong, steady on your feet, and able to do the things you love, and it becomes harder to rebuild with age.

The good news is that muscle responds quickly to the right signals. Three short strength sessions a week and enough protein can make a real difference, even while you're eating less than you used to.

Every workout here takes about 25 minutes and uses a pair of dumbbells, a resistance band, and a sturdy chair. Every workout also has a 12-minute version for the days when energy is low, because on GLP-1 medications, those days come.

Lose the weight. Keep the strength.

12	3	25	18
weeks	workouts a week	minutes each	illustrated exercises

Who it's for

Adults on a GLP-1 medication, tapering off, or maintaining afterward, from complete beginners to people returning to exercise.

Start tonight

Read the energy check on page 15. Then choose Workout A or its 12-minute version. One completed session is enough to begin.

Small counts

Inside this plan

1 Why muscle matters now — 5
The research on muscle loss, and the three levers that protect it.

2 Your baseline — 8
Three simple tests and measurements beyond the scale.

3 How the plan works — 12
Twelve weeks, three phases, and the energy check.

4 The workouts — 16
Warm-up, Workouts A, B, and C, and the 12-minute versions.

5 The exercise library — 23
Eighteen illustrated movements with easier and harder options.

6 Protein to match — 33
Protein targets, timing, and a sample training day.

7 Walking and cardio — 36
Building to 150 minutes a week.

8 Recovery and hard days — 38
Sleep, soreness, and what to do on hard days.

9 After the medication — 41
Keeping your strength long term.

Training logs — 45
Twelve weeks of printable logs.

Start here

Read the safety page and Chapter 1, do your baseline tests, then start Workout A.

What's included

- 12-week program
- 18 illustrated exercises
- Energy check
- Protein plan
- Tests and training logs

Safety first

Strength training is safe and beneficial for most adults. A few checks first make sure it's right for you.

Talk to your provider before starting if you

- [ ] Have heart disease, chest pain, or high blood pressure that isn't controlled
- [ ] Have had a recent surgery, fracture, or joint injury
- [ ] Have diabetes and take insulin or medications that can cause low blood sugar
- [ ] Have osteoporosis or a history of falls
- [ ] Are pregnant or recently gave birth
- [ ] Have been told to limit physical activity for any reason

Stop right away and seek care if you feel

- [ ] Chest pain, pressure, or tightness
- [ ] Severe shortness of breath
- [ ] Dizziness, lightheadedness, or feeling faint
- [ ] A racing or irregular heartbeat
- [ ] Sharp or sudden joint pain

Dizziness on GLP-1s

Eating and drinking less can leave you dehydrated or low on energy, which makes dizziness more likely. Drink water through the day, eat a small protein snack an hour or two before training, and stand up slowly between exercises.

About the illustrations

The figures show the general shape of each movement. If you can, book a session or two with a qualified trainer or physical therapist to check your form. Even one form-check session can make the plan feel safer and more personal.

Measurements beyond the scale

When you're losing weight, the scale can't tell muscle from fat. These signals help fill in the picture.

Measure	How	What it tells you
Waist	Measure at the level of your navel, relaxed, same time of day.	A falling waist with stable strength suggests you're losing mostly fat.
Photos	Front and side, same lighting, clothing, and distance.	Shape changes the scale can't show.
Strength tests	The three tests on the previous page.	Stable or rising numbers suggest you're protecting muscle.
Energy	Rate your typical energy from 1 to 10.	Big drops can signal under-eating or poor recovery.
Body composition	Optional: ask your provider about a scan such as DXA or bioimpedance.	The most direct estimate of lean mass, where available.

Strength is your best everyday signal

Body composition scans are useful but not always available. If your strength tests hold steady or improve while you lose weight, that's a strong sign the plan is working.

Reading your results

Weight	Strength tests	What it likely means	What to do
Going down	Steady or up	You're mostly losing fat and protecting muscle.	Keep going.
Going down	Going down	You may be losing muscle, or under-recovered.	Check protein, sleep, and training. Tell your provider.
Steady	Going up	You may be gaining muscle as you lose fat.	Watch your waist and keep going.
Going down fast	Any	Rapid loss raises the risk of muscle loss.	Prioritize protein and training. Mention it to your prescriber.

Equipment and cool-down

You can do everything in this book at home with a small kit.

The home kit

- [ ] Two or three pairs of dumbbells, or one adjustable pair. Many people start with 5 to 15 lb.
- [ ] A resistance band set with handles and a door anchor
- [ ] A sturdy chair without wheels
- [ ] A step or bottom stair
- [ ] A mat or carpeted floor

At a gym

Swap the band pulldown for a lat pulldown machine, the band row for a cable row, and use a bench for rows and presses. The plan works exactly the same way.

Finish with three minutes of gentle stretching. Breathe slowly.

Stretch	Hold
Standing calf stretch against a wall	30 sec each side
Seated hamstring stretch on a chair edge	30 sec each side
Doorway chest stretch	30 sec
Child's pose or a gentle forward fold	30 sec

Choosing weights

Start lighter than you think. If you finish a set with more than three or four reps left, go up next time. It's easier to progress than to recover from an overly ambitious start.

Key takeaways

- Warm up for five minutes before every session.
- The 12-minute versions are complete workouts for amber days.
- Three workouts, A, B, and C, repeated for twelve weeks.
- A small home kit is all you need.