



5 OFFSEASON KEYS TO STAY LEAN WHILE GROWING

MORE THAN TIPS, THESE ARE THE SYSTEMS COMPETITORS
ACTUALLY USE TO KEEP QUALITY HIGH IN A GROWTH PHASE.



1. Structure > Freedom

Problem: Most competitors go from prep-level discipline to “offseason freedom,” and fat gain follows.

Solution: Treat offseason like prep with flexible guardrails.

- Keep fixed wake/sleep times.
- Eat meals at consistent times – don’t let appetite dictate.
- Pre-log your day in MyFitnessPal to lock structure.

J3U Example:

Client on 5,000 kcal/day keeps 80–90% of meals the same every day, but leaves 1–2 meals as “flex slots” for family or eating out.

2. Manage the Surplus – Don’t Drown in Calories

Problem: “More food = more muscle” leads to bloating, insulin resistance, and sloppy weight gain.

Solution: Keep surplus tight and monitor weekly metrics.

- **Surplus target:** 200–400 kcal/day.
- **Weight gain target:** 0.25–0.5%/week.
- **Adjustments:** If performance is flat but weight isn’t moving → increase food. If strength is up but waist jumps >0.5”, pull food back.

J3U Example:

Athlete weighing 200 lbs should aim for 0.5–1 lb/week. If they gain 4 lbs in a week → time to reset.



3. Upgrade Your “Cheat Meals”

Problem: Random free meals set you back 2–3 days in digestion, sodium balance, and appetite.

Solution: Plan “performance meals” that digest clean and fit your goals.

- Pick 3 go-to restaurants that offer lean, lower-fat options (ex: fajitas, Greek, sushi).
- Build macro-matched “fun meals” at home (protein pizza, turkey burgers, macro-balanced tacos).
- Schedule the meal into your plan – don’t wing it.

J3U Example:

Instead of ordering pizza, a client hits Greek food: chicken kabobs, rice, salad, pita → fits macros, digests clean, and doesn’t derail appetite.

4. Keep Cardio & Recovery as Growth Tools

Problem: Athletes drop cardio and let sleep/stress slide → appetite dysregulation and poor partitioning.

Solution: Use cardio + recovery as offseason performance enhancers.

- **Cardio:** 3–4x/week steady state (20–30 min) + daily steps 8–12k.
- **Sleep:** 7–9 hrs, fixed bedtime, 1 hr screen-free wind-down.
- **Stress:** Track resting HR. If it trends >10 bpm over baseline, deload or reset.

J3U Example:

Athlete kept 4 steady-state sessions all offseason → lower resting HR, cleaner appetite, smoother digestion, easier prep transition.



5. Track, Audit, and Adjust Like Prep

Problem: Athletes stop tracking outside of prep → fat gain sneaks up.

Solution: Keep data streams alive.

- Weekly photos (same lighting, poses).
- Training log (load, reps, form notes).
- Waist circumference.
- Digestion notes (meal transit time, bloating).

J3U Example:

One client caught subtle waist growth by tracking weekly tape measure → adjusted surplus early, saved 2-3 months of fat gain.

Offseason Audit Checklist

Use this weekly to stay accountable:

- **Weight gain = 0.25-0.5%/week**
- **Waist hasn't jumped >0.5" in a week**
- **3-5 cardio sessions completed**
- **7-9 hrs consistent sleep/night**
- **Training log = progression without form breakdown**