



Belly Off! 2008: Success Story

## Lose Weight and Add Muscle

This Belly Off! guy did. Here's how you can drop the gut and carve a new body

By: Erin Hicks

**Dave Astles** was a perpetual weight-loss beginner. He used to resolve to lose the extra weight he'd carried for most of his life by hitting the gym hard and cutting out every bad food. Inevitably, he'd fail within a week—never losing a pound.

"[I've] failed about 3 or 4 times because I'd try to do everything at once," he says. "It

never works."

Before he could make the drastic changes he wanted, the 23-year-old needed to change not just his habits, but his thinking about food.

"Every time I'd sit around and see a fast food commercial I'd think I was hungry and go out and get whatever I just saw," he says.

Astles started another weight loss crusade in May, when his weight peaked at 205 pounds. But this time, it worked: Two rounds of **Belly Off!** helped him drop more than 40 pounds and reach his goal weight of 165 pounds.

Water is his secret weapon now. When Astles' midnight fast-food hankerings kick in, he gets a tall glass instead.

"I think it might be a fixation to have something in my mouth, but if I have water then it will all go away," he says.

Even as a fat kid, the Toronto man always played hockey—of course. Now, he's added Belly Off! workouts to his game schedule, hitting the gym five times each week, combining weights with 30 minutes of cardio.

Now that he's reached his weight loss goals, he's using **Fully Loaded** workouts to build his guns: He's trying to gain weight in his legs and upper body—but the right kind of weight. He thinks they're growing, "but it's debatable."

For now, the recent college grad feels more confident in his new body when he goes on job interviews. He's hoping to find a job developing subsidized recreation programs for kids who might not be able to afford it on their own.

Between interviews, he's building a bigger body—in a better way. Here, the experts weigh in on bulking up once you've slimmed down.

### Grow slow

Belly Off! trainer David Jack says Astles is doing the right thing by slowly increasing his weightlifting load: A power body isn't built in one day, and like Astles learned months ago, the key to weight loss is small steps.

"He needed to drop his weight, build his work capacity, prepare his body for load and heavier training," says Jack. "He will ultimately trade body fat for lean tissue."

### Get cut while you get big

Jack says if Astles wants to shift his cardio-intense workout to one that will help him build muscle, he has to lift hard, lift often, and eat more clean foods. To get the "cut" look while building, Jack recommends mixing in intervals and explosive work to stay lean.

### Work your legs: More weights, less cardio

**Jeff Halevy**, certified fitness coach and managing director of Sitaras Fitness in New York city says after you lose the bulk of your weight, you can limit cardio within 15 to 20 minutes and make it intense so you can focus on your lifting. And don't forget your legs.

"Squats should be the cornerstone of anyone who wants to put on size," says Halevy. "Men get upper body intense... without heavy leg work it's hard to get the body to grow and respond."