

Wrestling Nutrition Tips

Wrestling: Making Weight and Staying Strong

Wrestlers often feel they will compete their best at low body weight levels. To lose weight and still acquire championship success requires a sound nutrition plan. Techniques to lose weight such as crash diets, fluid restriction, laxative and diuretic use are dangerous practices that result in dehydration and heat illness. Low energy intake and dehydration hurt muscular endurance and lead to stale performance on the mat. How can wrestlers stay on track with healthy weight loss and maintain peak performance?

Sport Nutrition Tips For Wrestlers

We (Senior and Junior High) assess body fat composition pre-season. Wrestlers with 6 percent or lower body fat cannot afford further weight loss without loss of muscle weight. Healthy fat percentages for wrestlers range between 6-15 percent.

Weigh wrestlers before and after practice for fluid weight loss but assess body fat loss by a weekly change in weight on the scale. If weight loss is achievable wrestlers can safely lose 2-3 pounds of body fat per week. Remember for each pound of body weight lost during a wrestling practice, athletes need to drink 3 cups of fluid per pound to replace muscle fluid levels.

Wrestlers need to drink a minimum of 80-96 oz of fluids per day such as Gatorade, water, juices, decaffeinated beverages, milk, etc. Athletes should drink at least 1 cup of fluid every 15-20 minutes during practice. Wrestlers trying to lose weight need to eat a minimum of 1,500 calories per day with a focus on adequate carbohydrate, protein and lower fat foods. Eating frequent small meals is more desirable for losing weight than skipping meals.

**** Remember to begin losing weight slowly before the season starts. Focus on hydration and healthy eating in season! Good luck! ****

SAMPLE FLUID INTAKE

Time:

8 a.m.
10 a.m.
11 a.m.
2 p.m.
6 p.m.

Fluid Choice:

8 oz skim milk, 12 oz orange juice
bottle water
8 oz skim milk, 20 oz bottle water
20 oz bottle water
Rehydrate based on weight/water loss from practice

SAMPLE HEALTHY WEIGHT LOSS PLAN

Breakfast

8 oz skim milk
1 oz corn flakes
1 slice of wheat toast with 1 tsp. margarine
1 banana

Lunch

8 oz low-fat chocolate milk
3 oz turkey luncheon meat

2 slices of wheat bread
1 tsp. mustard
1 oz pretzels
1 apple

Snack (before wrestling)

20 oz bottle water
2 low-fat granola bars and 1 orange

Dinner

8 oz skim milk
3 oz baked skinless chicken breast
1 cup rice
1 cup steamed broccoli
1 cup fresh fruit with 2 tbsp. low-fat whipped cream topping

What and when should a wrestler eat before a match? Focus on fluids and carbohydrates. Ideally a wrestler should eat at least 3 hours before the competition and choose foods high in carbohydrates (see the sample lunch above). A small snack after weigh-in is also recommended. Drink at least 16 oz of fluid within the hour before the match. A sport drink containing carbohydrate is an ideal choice during this time.

During a tournament, what should wrestlers eat between matches? The wrestler should continue to focus on hydration, specifically choosing beverages that contain energy and electrolytes. Sports drinks between matches would be ideal choices. Wrestlers should also eat high-carbohydrate snacks.

Sample high-carbohydrate snacks to pack for tournaments are: low-fat granola bars, pretzels, bagels, crackers, high-carbohydrate energy bars, fig bars and fruit.

BASIC NUTRITION RULES EVERY WRESTLER SHOULD KNOW

1. Eat every 2-3 hours. These meals should contain complete protein, vegetables and fruit.
2. Have carbohydrates in the morning (oats, whole wheat, etc) and during (simple carbohydrates: dextrose and maldextrin) and after exercise **only** (with complete protein). Ingest a complete protein, vegetable/fruit, complex carbohydrate meal one hour later. These carbohydrates are rich in fiber which will help you feel full longer.
3. Take greens plus/V8 as a vegetable supplement if you can't prepare vegetables during the day.
4. 15-25% of your diet should be good fats. These include extra virgin olive oil, salmon/fish oil, or other monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats. Try supplementing with flax meal or high DHA/EPA fish oil daily.
5. Only drink water, dark teas and coffee (**teas and coffees are good for you only in Moderation and only black if you want to drink it. A cup of coffee or tea after a workout is good for your metabolism, No more than one. Sport energy drinks are not the best for your diet. Although some contain healthy levels of salt and potassium, they are difficult for your body to digest. If you have to drink sport drinks like Gatorade, etc than be sure to dilute it with 50/50 water. STAY AWAY FROM REDBULL AND ALL OF THOSE OTHER GARBAGE ENERGY DRINKS!!!! PERIOD!!**)
6. Plan out your meals every Sunday. It will help keep you on the right track for success. Try and pack meals for the work/school week on this day in containers that are easy to bring with you. This will mean a little of extra time spent preparing, but worth it in the long run. Once you develop a routine, it will be second nature to you and easy
7. Stay away from any food or supplement vitamin that states that they are the best for quick results. The best supplement for your body for energy is in the outside isle of the supermarket. AND THEY ARE NOT BRAGGING ABOUT IT!!!
8. Some vitamins are good for you. Vitamin C and Iron pills are great. A regular One a day Vitamin is also good for you. Expensive protein powders, Creatine powders and all of the others that cost a ton of money are a waste.