

Making Weight Healthfully for Wrestlers

Overall Tips:

1. Your nutrition intake should reflect your training goals. This is called **Nutrition Periodization**.
2. The best time to focus on weight change/body composition change is in the **Offseason** and fine-tuned during **Preseason**.
3. Compete at a weight at which you can maintain within 3-5% above throughout the whole season, train effectively at, resist illness and injury, and have an acceptable quality of life.
4. Weight cycling will result in decreased performance! Do NOT employ starvation/fasting strategies or severe dehydration strategies. Starvation will result in your body using your muscle mass for energy. Severe dehydration can be deadly and will result in a decreased blood flow to your muscles, and an inability to regulate your core body temperature.

Nutrition Periodization Goals

Offseason

- This is the time to make significant changes to your body composition- either focusing on muscle gain or body fat loss. This should begin at least 2-3 months BEFORE you enter preseason.
- If your goal is to gain muscle mass in the off-season, increase caloric intake by 500-1000 calories/day above what is needed for maintaining your weight. This should be paired with a sound weight -training program to stimulate muscle growth.
- If your goal is to lose body fat in the offseason, reduce your caloric intake by 250-500 calories/day below what is needed for maintaining your weight. You should also incorporate wrestling and additional cardio workouts to assist in increasing your caloric expenditure. You should lose no more than 2 lbs per week.
- You should be eating and hydrating every 2-4 hours throughout the day (at least 3 meals with 2-3 snacks)- see attached meal pattern for off-season nutrition.

Preseason – 4 weeks prior to first competition

- Continue to eat a calorie-controlled meal pattern while fine-tuning your body weight to be within 5% of your weight class. For a 150 lb wrestler, that means working towards a maintenance weight of approximately 158 lbs.
- Establish your **sweat rate** during practice by weighing in both before and after your workout and add in any fluids you consumed during practice:
Sweat Rate = Pre-workout weight (lbs) – post-workout weight (lbs) + fluids consumed during practice (1 lb = 16 fl oz)
*Pre-workout weight: 150 lbs; Post-workout weight: 148 lbs; Consumed 8 fl oz during practice
*2 lbs lost during workout = 32 oz + 8 oz consumed = 40 oz lost in 2 hour practice = 20 oz/ hour sweat rate
- Keep hydration HIGH (urine should be light yellow). You should be urinating 4-7 times/day.
- For athletes trying to lose weight, employ the following strategies:
 - Reduce calories by 250-500 calories/day from habitual intake
 - Track your daily weight using the same scale, as well as weighing in at same time of day.
 - Eliminate evening snacking and beverages such as soda, energy drinks, sweetened teas and limit fruit juice to no more than 8 oz per day.
 - Reduce portion sizes at lunch and dinner
 - Consider liquid nutrition shakes to replace 1 meal/day such as Ensure, Muscle Milk Light, Carnation Instant Breakfast, or Myoplex Light. These can be consumed post-workout as well for recovery.

Competition Season:

- Fine-tune your weight to be within **3-5%** of your weight class through training. This means a 150 lbs wrestler should weigh between 154.5-158 lbs throughout the season.
- Keep fluids **HIGH** (urine should be light yellow). You should be urinating 4-7 times/day.
- Eat every 2-4 hours throughout the day, pairing high carbohydrate and protein foods at every meal and snack.
- Do **NOT** skip meals or employ starvation/dehydration methods to make weight. This will result in increased body fat storage and decreased performance.

3-4 days Pre Weigh-In:

- You should be within 2-3% of your competition weight within 1 week prior to competition. This means a 150 lb wrestler should be no more than 154.5 lbs.
- Keep hydration high (urine should be light yellow) until 24 hours before weigh-in.
- Reduce sodium intake to 1500 mg/day (*this strategy may not be appropriate for “salty sweaters”, which is a high proportion of sodium in sweat, so consider trying other strategies listed below).
- Follow the low fiber/low residue diet (see chart below).

Post Weigh-In

- Rehydrate post weigh-in immediately with 16-32 fl oz of sports drink containing electrolytes and carbohydrates (ie. Gatorade, Powerade or Pedialyte followed by Gatorade), and sip on these fluids, rather than gulping to prevent GI distress (diarrhea).
- Fruit juices and other high sugar beverages (ie. Soda, energy drinks) should be **avoided** post weigh-in to minimize risk of diarrhea or abdominal cramping.
- Follow your hydration with carbohydrate, low-fiber snacks such as pretzels, low-fat crackers, or bagels. Other good carbohydrate snacks post weigh-in include: fruit cups, low-fat pudding or yogurt cup, graham crackers, granola bars, dried fruit, bagels, oranges, bananas, Fig Newtons

Post-Competition Nutrition

- **After match or tournament, refuel with high carbohydrate, moderate protein, and low-fat foods**
 - Greek Yogurt with fruit (can blend with low-fat milk and ice to make smoothie)
 - Cereal or oatmeal with low-fat milk and fresh fruit
 - 6 inch or 12 inch Sub sandwich- avoid mayonnaise, sauces, high fat meats
 - PBJ Sandwich with a banana and low-fat chocolate milk
 - Spaghetti with marinara sauce and grilled chicken breast
 - Chicken Teriyaki with rice bowl
 - Soft or hard shell tacos (2) with lean chicken, rice, lettuce, tomatoes
 - Meal replacement shake- ie. Myoplex Light, Muscle Milk light, Ensure, Boost, Carnation Instant Breakfast

Good Tournament Snacks (in between matches): Aim for small snacks instead of big meals:

- Bagels, bread or English muffin with honey/jam
- Fresh fruit- bananas, grapes, oranges, berries, watermelon, fruit cups, or dried fruit such as raisins
- Low-fat chocolate pudding cups
- Cereal – Cheerios, Rice Krispies
- Low-fat yogurt cups or drinkable yogurt
- Granola bars- Chewy granola bars, Nutri-grain bars, or Nature Valley bars
- Sports bars- Z-bars, Clif bars, Power bars
- Sports drinks- Gatorade or Powerade
- Pedialyte- pair with carbohydrate rich foods
- Low-fat trail mix
- Low-fat milk or chocolate milk
- Turkey sandwich
- Peanut butter and jelly sandwich
- Pretzels
- Graham crackers, animal crackers
- Fig Newtons
- Gatorade Performance chews
- Clif shot blocks

Example Meal Pattern on Tournament Competition Day

5:00am wake-up: Check weight. Consume 8-16 oz fluids if possible.

7:00am Weigh-ins

8:00am- Post Weigh-in: Sip on 16-32 fl oz cold sports drink or Pedialyte. Pair fluids with carbohydrate rich foods:

- 1-2 slices toast or bagel with jam/honey + banana + 6 oz low-fat yogurt
- 1 cup cereal (ie. Cheerios, Rice Krispies) or instant oatmeal+ 8 oz low-fat milk + 1 banana
- Meal replacement shake (ie. Carnation Instant Breakfast, Boost) + 1 banana
- 2 granola bars + 1 banana
- NEVER TRY ANY NEW FOOD OR HYDRATION STRATEGY ON COMPETITION DAY!

9:00am-7pm- In between matches- See tournament foods listed above. Sip on 8-16 oz fluids between matches. Eat small snacks rather than large meals. These should be high in carbohydrate, moderate in protein, and low in fat and fiber. AVOID high fat foods (>5 grams fat/serving) such as nachos, burritos, pizza, hamburgers, as well as high fiber foods (>5 grams of fiber/serving) such as a large salad, raw vegetables, beans, and high fiber muffins, breads, cereals.

7:00pm- Post-Competition Nutrition: Consume 16-32 oz fluids with a meal rich in carbohydrates, moderate in protein, and low in fat.

- 4-6 oz Teriyaki chicken breast + 1-1.5 cups white rice + ½ cup cooked green beans or carrots
- 4-6 oz Grilled white fish or chicken breast with a 6-9 oz baked potato or 1-1.5 cup mashed potatoes or peas
- 2-3 low-fat 6 inch corn tortillas (hard or soft) with 4-6 oz shredded chicken + 1 cup rice + salsa
- 1.5-2 cups cooked pasta+ 4-6 oz ground turkey meatballs + ½ -1 cup marinara sauce

9:00pm Before Bed: Sip on 8-16 oz fluids. Consume a high carbohydrate snack such as a granola bar, yogurt cup, bowl of cereal with low-fat milk, or fruit smoothie.

Recommended Foods to Consume 3-4 days Prior to Weigh-ins

Lower Fiber choices:

Eat These!	Avoid these!
Alfalfa sprouts, green/yellow beans, carrots, cauliflower, celery, cucumber, eggplant, lettuce, mushrooms, green peppers, potatoes (peeled), squash, zucchini	Salads with a lot of vegetables
Applesauce, apricots, ½ banana, canned fruit cocktail, grapes, peaches, watermelon	Whole fruits or fruit juice with pulp
Plain cereals- ie. Cheerios, Cornflakes, Cream of Wheat, Rice Krispies, Special K	Bran cereals or other fiber rich breakfast cereals (Kashi brand), oatmeal, whole bran muffins, or whole wheat waffles
Enriched white breads, buns, bagels (plain), and English Muffins	Whole grains- in breads, cereals, buns, bagels, some pastas, rice, barley
Arrowroot cookies, social tea biscuits, soda crackers, plain melba toast, and rice cakes	Popcorn and some nuts
Vegetable juice, fruit juice- except prune juice	Legumes, edible seeds in berries, kiwi, and figs
Meat/dairy/eggs unseasoned	There is no fiber in lean meats, dairy and eggs

Low Sodium Options (*Salty sweaters should NOT utilize this strategy)

Eat These!	Avoid These!
Regular plain breads/bagels/English Muffin, unsalted crackers, breadsticks	Crackers or rolls with salt topping, biscuits, cornbread, stuffing mix
Low fiber, low sodium cereals: Cheerios, Cornflakes, Cream of Wheat, Rice Krispies, Special K	Instant hot cereals
Drained and rinsed canned salmon and tuna, fresh or frozen fish (unseasoned), unseasoned fresh meat such as chicken, beef, pork, eggs	Canned, cured, processed, smoked and other highly salted foods/meats
Yogurt (Greek yogurt has double the protein!), low-fat milk/chocolate milk, G2, Propel	Cheese (other than low sodium cheese or cottage cheese), cottage cheese
Plain rice and pasta, potatoes (unseasoned)	Commercially prepared entrees- "TV" dinners, and seasoned rice or pasta (out of box or bag items)
Fresh/frozen vegetables (unseasoned) (avoid high fiber choices above)	Bouillon, broth, soups and dehydrated soups, pickles
Homemade hummus with fresh products, homemade guacamole with fresh products only (no canned items)	Commercial spreads or dips
Natural peanut butter (no salt added)	Salted Nuts or seeds
Fresh herbs: cilantro, basil, rosemary, thyme	These seasonings: celery salt, garlic salt, onion salt; BBQ sauce, soy, teriyaki sauce, Worcestershire sauce, poultry seasoning

*These methods may not be appropriate for every wrestler and should be practiced prior to competition to establish your personal nutrition plan to assist you in making weight safely and healthfully.