



Nutrition & Performance Guidelines

Wrestling is one of the most physically demanding sports and proper nutrition is paramount for good performance. As coaches, we strongly advocate that wrestlers eat a healthy, balanced diet every day.

The key is to remember to eat for **function** and view food as **fuel** for your body.

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NUTRITION BASICS FOR WRESTLING

Proper Meal Plan

A proper wrestling meal plan can be established by eating the right amount of each of the three main nutrients: Carbohydrates, Protein, and Fats. To maintain the high energy levels needed for their intense workouts, wrestlers need to make food choices that are carbohydrate based and balanced with adequate protein and healthful fat.

Carbohydrates

Your body uses carbohydrates as its main fuel source. When the supply is low, focus and timing begin to suffer. For the best performance, eat high carbohydrate foods 1-2 hours after practice to increase energy stores and prepare for the next workout or practice. Carbohydrates should be approximately 60% of the calories you eat per day.

Good Sources of carbohydrates: Fruits, starchy vegetables (potatoes, corn), low-fat milk, whole grains (cereals, breads, pastas).

Protein

Protein also provides your body with energy and needed to repair and rebuild muscle that is broken down during workouts. Not eating enough protein will hurt performance.

Good Sources of protein: Eggs, chicken, fish, milk, cheese, yogurt (especially Greek yogurt), beans, and nuts (almonds, walnuts).

Fat

Dietary fat is one of the three main nutrients because it supports a number of your body's functions. Some vitamins, for instance, must have fat to dissolve and nourish your body. Your body also uses fat as an energy source. 20-30% of your daily calories should come from fat, but no more than 30%

HYDRATION

When you exercise, you need extra water to maintain your normal body temperature and cool working muscles. Water plays a vital role in how our body functions which is directly related to performance. Dehydrated body cells don't allow you to put forth your maximum effort. To avoid dehydration, water is best.

“For every 2-4% loss of body weight from dehydration, you could have a 20% decrease in strength and a 40% decrease in aerobic capacity. This is a big statement when it comes to performance.”

Staying hydrated is a simple, keeping fluids going through you and following these recommendations for hydration:

Prehydrate - drink 12-20 oz. of water several hours before practice

Hydrate - drink water throughout practice

Rehydrate - drink 16 oz. of water (2 cups) for every pound of weight lost

Make a habit of having a water bottle with you during the day. Remember - “keep fluids going through you.” If you drink from your water bottle on a regular basis during the day, you will be hydrated and your weight should not be affected. This is because your body has all day to absorb and metabolize the fluids you take in.

Good Sources of fluids: water, milk, 100% juices, soups, smoothies, fruits and vegetables. It is best to stay away from milk within an hour of competition. Choose low-calorie fluid replacers and keep you calories for whole foods.

Tips on Hydration

- Avoid caffeinated beverages because they will promote dehydration
- Drink 2 cups of fluid for every pound of body weight lost
- Thirst is a late sign of dehydration
- One easy way to monitor your hydration status is to check the color of your urine - (Light yellow-good hydration) (Dark yellow-dehydration)

Energy Drinks Safety:

Energy drinks are being used for those seeking a competitive edge, a quick energy fix. The “energy blend” contains a combination of stimulants and additives. The energy comes from calories and tends to be rich in calories from sugar. The most common ingredient in energy drinks is caffeine.

Research shows ingestion of energy drinks before an event or during training can have serious adverse effects, most notably restlessness and irritability; can increase blood pressure; and may result in dehydration.

Based on these findings, consumption of energy beverages are not recommended for athletes participating in exercise lasting greater than one hour. Fuel your body with appropriate meals and snacks to prevent the need for a ‘quick energy fix’.

Examples of these popular energy drinks: Red Bull, Rockstar, Monster, 5 Hr Energy Shot, Full Throttle, and SOBE Adrenaline



Additional Information:

<http://www.nfhs.org/sports-resource-content/position-statement-and-recommendations-for-the-use-of-energy-drinks-by-young-athletes/>

PRE-COMPETITION MEALS

The goal of proper pre-competition meals is to maximize your power, concentration and overall potential on the mat. The meal should be **high in carbohydrates**, which breaks down more easily than protein and fats. They are digested at a rate that provides consistent energy to the body and are emptied from the stomach in two to three hours. **Your body's preferred source of energy comes from complex carbohydrates.**

Good sources of complex carbohydrates: whole grain breads, oatmeal, legumes, brown rice, wheat pasta, and vegetables.

Basic guidelines for eating before competition

- Eat foods high in carbohydrates and low in fat and protein
- Eat familiar foods, not a time to try new foods
- Avoid foods high in salt-as they cause water to leave your muscles
- Avoid food that would cause GI distress such as high-fiber foods (raw vegetables) or gas-forming foods (cabbage, beans)

Food ideas for pre-competition meals (3 – 4 hours prior to competition sample meals)

Breakfast Meal

- PB & jelly on whole wheat toast + orange juice+ skim milk
- Fruit & low-fat yogurt smoothie + low-fat granola
- Oatmeal w/ brown sugar & almonds + skim milk + banana
- Cereal w/ skim milk + banana
- Egg + English muffin + skim milk

Lunch/Early Afternoon Meal

- Turkey & Swiss cheese sandwich + applesauce + low-fat yogurt
- Tuna melt sandwich + fruit cup + skim milk
- Pasta + tomato sauce + bread + grapes
- Vegetable soup + bread + berries w/ low-fat Greek yogurt
- Vegetable salad w/ chicken + low-fat salad dressing + roll + skim milk

Meals should NOT be high in fat or protein, as these nutrients slow digestion.

POST-COMPETITION MEALS

(Recovery meals)

The recovery meal is just as important as your overall diet. Eating something including a high amount of carbohydrates and a moderate amount of protein after exercise can help with muscle recovery and re-energize you for your next competition.

Basic guidelines for recovery meals

- Replace carbohydrate and protein in a 4:1 or 3:1 ratio
- Consume meal within 30 minutes of competition
- Consume high carbohydrate meal within 2 hours of competition

Food ideas for recovery meals

- 1 bagel + 2 Tbsp. peanut butter + banana
- 2 cups of cornflakes with raisins + 2 cups of skim milk
- Banana + 2 cups of low-fat yogurt
- 1 cup cottage cheese + 2 cups fruit
- 2 slice whole wheat bread + 3 ounce tuna + 2 Tbsp. raisin

ALL DAY TOURNAMENT NUTRITION

Optimal recovery between competitions is critical to consistently achieve your best performance. It is important to stay energized throughout the entire day. If the intervals between competitions are short and uncertain, “grazing” is the best recovery strategy. Grazing involves consuming smaller portions of food and beverages that are easily and quickly digested.

Ideas for good grazing foods

- Mini-bagels, bread
- Fresh fruit, fruit smoothie
- Low-fat yogurt
- Turkey sandwich, PB&J sandwich
- Energy bars, sport drinks

Nutrition Guidelines for Wrestling Performance

FOCUS ON PERFORMANCE - First and foremost when you are getting ready for competition you should be focusing on performance, not focusing on making weight. You must evaluate your nutrition and discipline throughout the week.

HYDRATION - Make a habit of bringing a water bottle with you to class and competition. If you drink water throughout the day, you will be hydrated and your weight should not be affected because your body has all day to absorb and metabolize the fluids.

FOOD IS FUEL - It is important to eat for function and view food as fuel for your body. Fuel your body for battle!

DON'T DRINK YOUR CALORIES - Eat your calories, don't drink them. Avoid empty calories from sugary drinks.

NEVER SKIP BREAKFAST - Your body needs nutrition not only to function, but to help keep your metabolism burning. Choose foods with protein and good carbohydrate that will burn longer such as yogurt/granola, wheat bagel/PB, or eggs/wheat toast.

OPTIMAL RECOVERY - Nutrition after practice is just as important as before practice. This is because your body has used the glucose in your muscles for energy during your workout. It is recommended that you eat something within an hour after a workout for optimal recovery.

TIMING IS KEY - It's not only what you eat, but when you eat it. When you only have 1-2 hours before competition, be careful with the amount of food and drink that you consume. Your body needs 3-4 hours to digest and turn food into a usable form of energy.

NO SUBSTITUTE FOR HARD WORK AND DISCIPLINE