

Wrestling Nutrition Tips

A wrestler's diet has a profound impact on overall performance. Wrestling is a very physically demanding sport. Proper nutrition helps a wrestler feel strong both physically and mentally. However, the wrong diet can leave a wrestler feeling weak, dehydrated, and unproductive in their training.

Many wrestlers do not receive the proper nutrition that is required to compete in this physically demanding sport. This is generally due to a wrestler's lack of knowledge or unconcerned attitude toward his nutritional needs and/or misinformation.

Successful wrestlers know that good nutrition is an essential component of their daily training ritual. They realize that good eating habits help them compete at a much higher level.

Here are some good nutritional ideas for wrestler's:

Stay Hydrated

WATER is a very important part of your daily diet and is necessary for optimal performance. Try to consume one liter of water for every thousand calories of food consumed per day. Sport drinks are also a great way to replenish nutrients lost from practices and competition. It is not a good idea to totally deprive your body of water when trying to make weight. It is best to consume a few ounces of water every two to three hours while you are in the process of cutting down to make weight.

Eat Frequent Meals in Small Portions

This is recommended especially if you are trying to drop down to a lower weight class. By eating smaller portions, your metabolism speeds up and more calories are burned off. This method will also help to stabilize blood sugar levels and provide a more steady supply of nutrition throughout the day. It is recommended that you eat from several different food groups so that you receive a large variety of nutrients.

Eating frequent meals in smaller portions is a much better way for a wrestler to lose weight as compared to just starving yourself. While the starvation method does work, it will also leave you feeling weak or run down.

Eat Vegetables

It is important for wrestlers to eat a steady supply of vegetables every day. Vegetables contain several important vitamins and minerals that are necessary for good health. They are also generally free of fat and high in fiber. Eating vegetables is a good way for you to fill up, but not feel fat. They also contain antioxidants which help the body fight off disease and illnesses.

Complex Carbohydrates

Complex carbohydrates are a great source of energy. They are found in healthy foods such as fruit, whole grains, and vegetables. It generally takes longer for your body to digest complex carbohydrates than simple carbohydrates such as refined or processed foods. Since it takes longer to digest complex carbohydrates, you feel fuller longer and do not need to eat as much. Complex carbohydrates supply a steady stream of energy with a limited amount of fat. Some other examples of complex carbohydrates are oatmeal, brown rice, baked potatoes, and whole grain cereals.

Protein is a Must

Protein is essential for the formation of healthy muscles, bones, blood, and skin cells. Unfortunately, it is not stored in the body. So it is necessary to get a steady dose of protein every day. Some of the best sources of dietary protein are fish, whole grains, beans, nuts, lean poultry, and red meat. It is important to remember that plant foods such as legumes or soy supply as much protein as meats.

Drink Fruit Juices and Skim Milk - Not Soda!

Let's all face the fact that soda has absolutely no nutritional value! It is much better to stick with fat free, 100% fruit juices. They provide vitamins C, D, and calcium. Fruit juices also contain phytonutrients that are known to help fight off disease.

Drinking skim milk helps to lower your caloric and fat intake considerably. While at the same time you are still receiving the same amount of calcium that you would normally get from drinking a glass of 1% or 2% milk.

Forbidden Foods

It is important to remember that a wrestler's diet should consist of eating healthy foods that provide good nutritional value. Foods such as soda, potato chips, candy, and McDonald's have no place in a wrestler's diet during wrestling season.

*Wrestlers after making weight need to focus on foods that will help recover and won't adversely effect performance. Foods with fat are definitely slower digesting. Carbohydrates can be easier on a wrestler's stomach. Foods like **applesauce**, **crackers**, and **cereal** can be easily digested and aid in recovery. After making weight don't let a lapse in judgement effect your performance, plan ahead and shoot for smaller portions spread throughout the tournament day.*

Ways to speed up your metabolism to burn more calories:

- Always eat-breakfast, Skipping breakfast sends the message to your body that you're starving because you haven't had food in since maybe 8 o'clock the night before; As a protective measure, your metabolism slows down. Food fuels your metabolism and will boost it for the day.
- Eat earlier in the day. Research has demonstrated that you can lose weight and boost your metabolism simply by eating a substantial breakfast and lunch and a light dinner. Dinner should be eaten as early as possible, preferably at least 4 hours before bedtime.
- Never eat less than 1,200 calories a day. Fewer calories are usually not enough to support your base metabolism, so your metabolism slows down.
- Snack frequently. Choose fruits and vegetables for snacks and boost you fat burning capability Also, snacking prevents you from becoming too hungry. The hungrier you are, the less control you have over what-and how much you eat.
- Eat food in its simplest form. The less processed food is; the fewer calories it will have and less of the calories come from fat.
- Do some type of aerobic exercise.
- Drink more water than you have to. Your metabolism needs plenty of water to function properly. Carry a bottle with you and sip frequently throughout the day.