

# **WRESTLING NUTRITION**

# **BLUEPRINT**

## Wrestling Nutrition Blueprint

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## DISCLAIMER:

The information in this manual are the opinions of the author. You must be sure to have your Doctor's permission before beginning any diet or meal plan. Also, please consult your Doctor before beginning an exercise program. The author is in no way responsible for injuries or illness that may occur from following the suggestions contained within.

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Steve Preston is the most sought after Sports Performance Coach for wrestlers in the country. Having spent the last 3 decades in the strength and conditioning world and the past 2 decades as a Physical Education Specialist, Preston knows what it's like to not only get wrestlers strong and conditioned, but more importantly, how to keep them there.



A featured monthly contributor to Wrestling USA Magazine and author of Ultimate Wrestling Strength and Creator of the 6 Minute Conditioning for Wrestlers Training System. Preston has worked with youth, high school and college wrestlers as well as mixed martial artists at all levels.

Steve has spent the last 10 years working exclusively with wrestlers, coaches and parents to improve mat performance. This has been accomplished through training and diet specialization programs that allow wrestlers to improve their weaknesses while enhancing their strengths.

Steve is frequently sought out to provide customized nutrition and training plans. Because of this, he is always a student of the game, seeking knowledge and better ways to improve his athletes. Steve created this manual to empower more wrestlers, coaches and parents with the latest, cutting-edge nutrition to help develop stronger, better-conditioned wrestlers.

The information provided in this manual is a result of 5 years of research, with a little tweaking here and there. It differs a bit from what Steve talked about 5 years ago... and it is a new direction to super-charge your wrestlers in terms of strength, speed and conditioning. But most importantly, it is a sound nutritional approach to keeping wrestlers healthy.

When you apply the nutritional advice contained in this manual with a wrestling-specific strength and conditioning program, the results are magnified.

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## INTRODUCTION: WHY DID I WRITE THIS BOOK?

Listen, if I had a nickel for every email I've received from a wrestler, coach or parent asking me for diet and meal plan advice I'd be retired. Although my Ultimate Wrestling Strength is the #1 ranked strength program for wrestlers in the world, I still get more questions about nutrition than anything else. That's ok, I love it. That means people are conscious of the fact that nutrition is so very important for wrestling. In fact, nutrition is MORE important to get right in wrestlers than just about any other sport. This is largely due to the energy requirements of a wrestler in this anaerobic sport. Plus, the weight cutting element coupled with month after month of yo-yo dieting make "proper" nutrition planning even more important.

I felt compelled to write the Wrestling Nutrition Blue-print to help more wrestlers, coaches and parents world-wide conquer the nutrition mystery once and for all... so they could concentrate on enjoying the "sport" of wrestling.



Let's face it, wrestling nutrition is completely misunderstood. I've seen wrestling nutrition range from total starvation for guys who are desperately trying to make weight to living on dangerous energy drinks (more on that later), to a complete weekly binge and purge of food. I've seen borderline eating disorders brought on by the constant stress of making weight. I've watched young, healthy, strong young athletes diminish in

size (during important years of growth and development) and begin walking around like complete zombies with sunken, dark eyes and pale skin. It's not pretty... and it's flat-out dangerous.

Wrestling is completely different from any other sport in terms of energy requirement. Because athletes are grouped by weight classes a whole new world of nutrition (and training) needs become important.

My overall nutrition philosophy has changed a bit over the last 5 years or so. It isn't radically different, but different enough that I felt compelled to write a brand new manual outlining it.

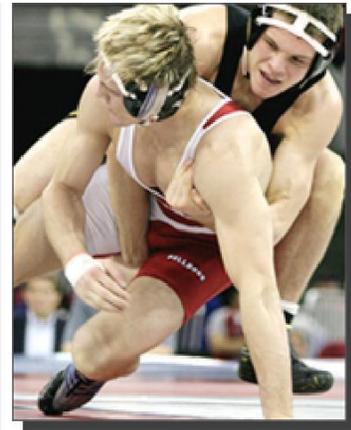
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What you're about to discover is a new approach to wrestling nutrition that will help wrestlers gain the strength, speed, power and conditioning they need for improved mat performance. Some of the foods, macronutrient ratios and

supplements have changed. This is because I've discovered that this new approach works even better than my old methods. I've put everything into this manual that you'll need to make the whole eating thing easier to follow. The best part is that once you've adopted this nutritional philosophy you'll be hooked. Within two weeks you will notice an amazing increase in energy and strength.

In this manual you will learn:

Exactly what to eat for breakfast to give you energy in your afternoon practice.  
The enemy of proper nutrition for wrestlers... and it's not fat or sugar  
What foods and when you should eat them to super-charge your energy and strength levels.  
The truth about supplements and which ones actually work.  
How much water a wrestler really needs.  
A specific action plan to gain weight, lose weight or maintain your body weight  
What to eat before practice  
What to eat after practice  
What to eat after weigh-ins and a ton more!



My goal is to help 5000 more wrestlers, coaches and parents gain the truth about wrestling nutrition THIS season! I know I can do it... and I feel very strongly about the importance of young, growing bodies getting the proper nutrition. I'm proud to give you this material and I know you will be amongst my new wrestlers, coaches and parents who will be enlightened to the truth about proper wrestling nutrition.

Thank you,  
Steve Preston

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## THE TYPICAL WRESTLERS DIET... AND WHAT IT'S REALLY DOING

The typical kid is not usually interested in eating healthy. Eating correctly to them is something old people do. There isn't much regard for "clean" eating with low-sugar, low saturated fats and nutritionally dense foods.

It gets even worse during the teenage years. Teenagers are growing and developing rapidly. But Pop-Tarts, sodas, ho-hos and tons more junk food are staples in their daily diets.

It's even worse with wrestlers...

Wrestlers are not only growing, but they are asking their body to perform in a very physically and mentally intense sport on top of the basic growth and development process. To make it even worse, they are cutting weight for many months and starving. Then they try to make up for it with energy drinks... BIG MISTAKE!

### WARNING!

Energy drinks DO NOT give you energy. They give a "false" sense of energy by overstimulating your nervous system. This is dangerous on the heart. True sustained energy comes from the calories that you eat. Nutrition is primary to keeping strength and energy for wrestlers.

So, we have young wrestlers waking up, skipping breakfast or eating some crappy processed foods such as Pop-Tarts, consuming energy drinks, and then coasting to lunch where they fill up on less than nutritious school lunches. Now for the worst part... SODA!

I'm not sure what it is that makes soda so appealing to growing young people. Soda is absolutely useless.

There is no nutritional value whatsoever in a can of soda. Yet it is the preferred

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beverage for so many wrestlers. While in school, before practice, on the bus to matches and tournaments, and on the bus ride back.

Now the soda that is being consumed by the truckload is being coupled with snacks that come in packages. In other words, quick snacks like power bars which are nothing more than candy bars that are disguised as something nutritious. Listen, if you can walk into a convenience store and buy it off the shelf it's crappy food!

It's not a good idea for a young, growing body to get into bad nutritional habits. But for a wrestler it is twice as bad. There are a lot of wrestlers who have great technique and will win matches despite poor nutrition and training habits, simply because they are good wrestlers. But you can't keep this up... especially if you have aspirations of wrestling beyond high school. The better your wrestling competition is, the more important it is that you are eating and training correctly. Poor nutrition will catch up to every wrestler in time. Eating correctly for wrestling is a discipline. It's a discipline just like learning a new move is, and going to practice every day.

I'm going to give you the nutritional knowledge to unlock your body's potential on the wrestling mat. It's up to you to keep yourself disciplined to follow it. Here are the blueprints to wrestling nutrition, giving you a step by step plan for guaranteed success on the wrestling mat.

## HOW MANY CALORIES SHOULD YOU EAT EACH DAY?

I get asked this question a lot.

The simple answer is that everybody is different and has different calorie requirements. On top of that, every person burns calories at different rates. You even burn calories at different rates one day then you might the next. I'm going to give you a formula for figuring out how many calories you need to eat each day as a wrestler, but for now let's talk about what calories actually are...

A calorie is a unit of heat energy. It is where your body gets its energy. Simple enough, right? But a calorie isn't just a calorie. In other words, the types of calories you eat will ultimately determine your performance on the wrestling mat.

Calories are made up of 3 different macronutrients: Proteins, Carbohydrates and Fats. These macronutrients are best consumed together as opposed to separately. I will outline the best macronutrient profiles to consider when eating for optimal wrestling performance later. For now, let's discuss each macronutrient so you have a better understanding of what you should be eating and why...

### PROTEIN



Protein is the only macronutrient that isn't stored by the body. Protein is unique in that it helps repair tissue and build more lean tissue. It is crucial in the meal plan of a wrestler because it helps prevent muscle breakdown that occurs throughout the season because of long, brutally-hard practices, matches, tournaments, training, running etc.

Protein is commonly neglected by wrestlers due to lazy eating (not planning out a good nutrition plan) and purposely (when cutting weight and abstaining from eating at all).

One of the biggest mistakes wrestlers make is not eating protein frequently enough. Since we want to block the catabolism (muscle breakdown) that occurs to wrestlers throughout the season, it is important to eat protein throughout the day. Also, since protein isn't stored as fats and carbohydrates are, it is even more important to eat smaller amounts of it 5-6 times each day.

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Ok, I've convinced you that you need regular feedings of protein throughout the day to keep (or build) muscle so that you wrestle at your best all season long.

Now let's discuss the best protein choices. There's a guide that used to be big that used to rank proteins in terms of their efficiency: The Protein Efficiency Ratio. Lean red meat, chicken, fish, eggs and whey protein powder are all highly efficient proteins... meaning they are used more efficiently for muscle growth and repair without much wasted. Plant based proteins and legumes are generally considered lower on the efficiency scale.

## CARBOHYDRATES

Show me a wrestler who has no energy, and I'll show you a wrestler who is about to be defeated. Wrestlers NEED energy. The energy a wrestler gets doesn't (and shouldn't) come from an energy drink... it comes from carbohydrates.

As a wrestler you need to be alert. You need to be able to react and initiate a takedown at will. You need to be able to fight off your back (if you are put in that situation). None of this is possible if your muscle cells aren't loaded with glycogen (stored muscle energy that comes from the carbohydrate foods you consume).

Carbohydrates have received a lot of bad press over the past few years. People are convinced that low carbohydrate diets are the way to shed body fat and look and feel great. How wrong they are! Carbohydrate depletion is ONLY meant for morbidly obese adults who are sedentary. This is used to pull a lot of initial weight off of them. This practice is NOT to be used for wrestlers.

### NOTE:

Carbohydrate restriction can be used temporarily for desperate weight-cutting situations as an alternative to flat-out starvation. It is NO LONGER recommended as the best weight-cutting practice. I will outline a great way later.

With that said, there are 3 different types of carbohydrates: Simple, Complex and Fibrous.

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Simple carbohydrates are those you get from white breads, table sugar, cake, soda juices and chips. They all are pretty unhealthy foods in general.

For the most part you should stay clear of all simple carbohydrates. *Later, I will outline the ONLY time during a wrestlers meal plan where they SHOULD have simple carbohydrates.*

Complex carbohydrates are usually higher in fiber, and slower in their molecular breakdown than simple carbohydrates. These are generally the ones that are considered healthy for you. The slower breakdown of complex carbohydrates make them ideal for sustained energy. Some examples are: whole wheat pastas and breads, brown rice, sweet potatoes, yams, squash.

Too many simple carbohydrates lead to more fat storage on the body, while complex carbohydrates are used more efficiently in your body. Also, just by eating complex carbohydrates your body is forced to burn calories to break them down. This is due to the fiber content as well as the more-complex molecular chains of glucose that need to be broken down.

Another reason consuming complex carbohydrates is essential for wrestlers is the prevention of cortisol release. Cortisol is a negatively powerful hormone that causes your body to crave carbohydrates (the bad kind), breaks down quality muscle tissue and leaves you feeling tired and lethargic.

Fibrous carbohydrates are all of your greens and veggies. These are basically green water in terms of calories. But in terms of micronutrients: vitamins, minerals and water... they are loaded. Be sure to consume plenty of green veggies to aid in the digestion of your protein, as well as give you micronutrients for optimal body system functioning.

## FATS



I have to admit, when I started working with wrestlers years ago I neglected the need for quality fats. In fact, most of my recommended meal plans were void of enough good fats. That was a big mistake on my part. I've since re-evaluated my plans and have had much better results by purposely including fats into the meal plans I create.

The 2 types of fats you need to know about are saturated and unsaturated.

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Saturated fats are bad and should be limited in their consumption. Unsaturated fats are good and should be included in your meal plan. You don't want too much of the unsaturated fats but just enough...



Saturated fats are fats that have been altered and aren't recognized by the body. These fats are sticky and tends to build up and get lodged in the intestines and arteries. These fats are the ones that cause heart problems down the road. They have no nutritional value either. These fats are found in the fast foods that young wrestlers are quick to grab. The fatty red meats in the burgers or the fried chicken,

plus mayo and fries are a complete "death meal."

Unsaturated fats are unique. They contain water-soluble vitamins and are easily digested. They are responsible for optimal hormone levels in the body. They are also your body's second energy source if and when carbohydrates become unavailable.

The best sources of unsaturated fats come from nuts, nut butters, olive oil, flax seed oil, avocados, seeds.

I'm now a believer in consuming 25-30% of daily calories from fats, most of which are unsaturated. More specifically, this means poly and mono-unsaturated fat types. Be sure to have at least a tablespoon of flax seed or fish oil daily. These will give you a good amount of B vitamins, Omega-3's, and minerals. You will benefit with noticeably more energy as well.

Ok, now that you know what a calorie is, and you know that calories are made up of macronutrients, let's determine how many calories you need to eat as a wrestler for optimal performance on the mat...

As I said before, your body is constantly burning calories 24 hours a day. It has different rates of calorie burning ie. sleeping burns less calories than wrestling practice.

There are 6 factors for determining how many calories a wrestler needs to maintain weight:

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- Age
- Body Weight
- Gender
- Resting Energy Requirement - The number of calories you need to maintain body systems at rest each day. The minimum number of calories for survival.
- Activity Energy Requirement - The typical amount of calories you burn as a wrestler each day through practice and/or training, plus matches, tournaments.
- Total Energy Requirement - Add the Resting Energy Requirement plus the Activity Energy Requirement to get the Total Energy Requirement.

To either maintain weight, gain weight or lose weight you do the following:

- Weight Maintenance - Your Total Energy Requirement = Your daily calories
- Weight Gain - Your Total Energy Requirement + 500 additional calories daily
- Weight Loss - Your Total Energy Requirement - 500 fewer calories daily

## TIP

Even when cutting weight, you can't lower your resting energy requirement for more than one day or you will lose muscle, strength, energy and will wrestle poorly:(

How To Figure Out How Many Calories to Eat Daily:

1. Determine Your Resting Energy Requirement:
  - Males:  $66.47 + 13.75 (\text{your weight in kg}) + 5 (\text{height in cm}) - 6.76 (\text{age in years})$
  - Females:  $65.51 + 9.65 (\text{weight in kg}) + 1.84 (\text{height in cm}) - 4.68 (\text{age in years})$
2. Take the Resting Energy Requirement Number from above and multiply by 2:  
Ex. Resting Energy Requirement is 1700 calories.  $1700 \times 2 = 3400$  calories

### 3. Plan Your Weight Goal:

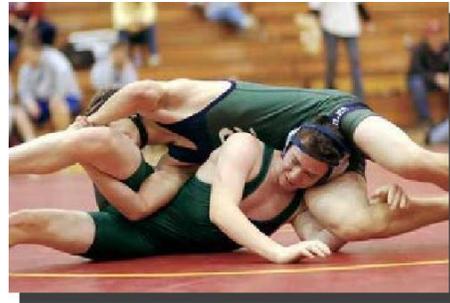
- To maintain your current body weight - Consume your Total Energy Requirement in calories each day.
- To gain muscle weight - Consume your Total Energy Requirement + 500 calories
- To lose weight - Consume your Total Energy Requirement - 500 calories

## HOW TO SET UP YOUR WRESTLING NUTRITION MEAL PLAN

Once you know how many calories you need to maintain, gain or lose body weight as a wrestler, you then need to figure out how many grams of protein, carbohydrates and fats should be consumed.

In the old days, people just assumed a calories was just a calorie. You could eat your daily requirement of calories from any food source you chose and it would suffice. BIG MISTAKE!

A calorie isn't just a calorie. 3000 calories from Doritos would make you feel differently than 3000 calories from lean proteins, quality low sugar carbohydrates and unsaturated fats.



Admittedly, I used to recommend very low fat meal plans for wrestlers. As the years passed, and with more trial and error, I have found that more “healthy” fats are so important to the overall nutritional profile of a wrestler.

The ideal macronutrient profile for wrestling is:

25% Protein  
50% Carbohydrates  
25% Fats

If you want to gain weight, maintain weight or lose weight this profile fits. You simply adjust the calories to your desired body weight but keep the macronutrient profile the same.

*\* You eat for your desired body weight. With the meal plans I've included, you would choose your desired weight class, and follow that meal plan to get the calories required for that particular body weight.*

Once you know how many calories you need daily (from previous section of this manual) you use the appropriate percentages above to give your macronutrient profile for the day.

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Ex. I need 3400 calories per day as a wrestler. I want to stay at my current weight.

$3400 \times .25 = 850$  calories from protein.  $850/4 = 212$  grams of protein

$3400 \times .50 = 1700$  calories from carbohydrates.  $1700/4 = 425$  grams of carbohydrates

$3400 \times .25 = 850$  calories from fats.  $850/9 = 95$  grams of fats

## NOTE:

To find grams of protein or carbohydrates, divide calories by 4 as seen above.

To find grams of fats, divide calories by 9 as seen above.

## STEVE'S GOLD MEDAL FOODS FOR WRESTLERS

Here's my quick and easy grocery list...

If you want to keep or build muscle during the wrestling season while staying lean, energetic, strong and conditioned, be sure to include the following "gold medal" foods to your wrestling nutrition meal plans:

Canned Tuna (albacore if possible)

Eggs (high Omega 3 types)

Chicken Breast

Lean Ground Beef, Turkey or Chicken

Buffalo, Venison or Ostrich Meat

Natural Almond or Peanut Butter (NOT the processed type)

Whole Grain Breads and Pastas

Cottage Cheese

Legumes (Beans, Lentils)

Bananas

Oats

Brown Rice

Potatoes

Whey Protein

Meal Replacement Drinks

\*\* Whey protein and meal replacement drinks are foods.



## HOW MANY TIMES SHOULD A WRESTLER EAT EACH DAY?

If you want to ensure that you eat too much at one time, lose energy, lose muscle and DON'T wrestle at your best, then just eat 3 square meals each day!!

Huh?? Aren't 3 square meals each day the ideal?? Nope...

Eating 3 meals each day in the form of breakfast, lunch and dinner is old school... really old school!

With today's athletes being bigger, faster and stronger than 50 years ago, the nutritional approach must be changed.

In fact, even if a wrestler is cutting weight they should still eat more than 3 times daily.



Due to the wrestlers current growth and development needs, plus the 800 + calories that are burned during a wrestling practice, the total caloric needs of a wrestler are more than most sports. If you try to consume just 3 meals daily (or worse, only 2 meals), too many calories are consumed at one time. The body will try to store as much in the fat cells as possible to compensate for a perceived

starvation mode.

By taking the same amount of food (and therefore calories) and spreading them over 5-6 meals from the 2-3 that are normally consumed, your energy immediately increases. The calories are more readily used by the muscle cells. So simply by spreading out the calories over 5-6 meals you jump-start the metabolism.

It may sound strange but the 5-6 daily meals approach should be used by wrestlers who want to maintain, gain or lose body weight. You just have to adjust the calories that are consumed at each meal.

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Generally, we are talking about 3 meals and daily snacks... not 6 big meals each day.

I'll go over the specifics of each meal in the following sections but first let's look at a typical daily meal plan of a young wrestler:

The Not-So-Good Meal Plan for Wrestlers:

- Breakfast: Donuts or Sugar Cereal with glass of Orange Juice
- Lunch: Pizza, French Fries, Cookies, Greasy Cheeseburgers
- After School: Soda, Cookies, Chips
- Dinner: (Hopefully there is SOMETHING nutritious here)
- Late Night Snack: Dish of Ice Cream

Yeah, it's pretty ugly. Sure, you can eat this way and win wrestling matches if the competition isn't so good. You can sustain energy for part of the season this way due to ingesting calories. But it WILL catch up with you. If you want to be a champion you MUST eat like a champion. Allow me to help clarify what is best consumed at each meal...

## THE PERFECT BREAKFAST FOR WRESTLERS

Of course you always hear that breakfast is the most important meal of the day. For wrestlers, it is tied with one other meal (which I'll get to later) for most important. I've had to re-train many wrestlers over the years to eat breakfast. It is the first meal skipped when cutting weight too... BIG MISTAKE!

By definition the word breakfast means to break the fast... or stop the starvation you've put your body through since your last meal the night before. This is even more important for a young wrestler. The excessive training volume and intensity put the body in a catabolic state - where muscle breakdown is prevalent. You want to get out of this catabolic state and get into an anabolic state as often as possible. By eating breakfast you help negate the muscle breakdown that the demands of the wrestling season place on the body. This is for ANY wrestler... even if cutting weight. The ratio of macronutrients that are consumed may change slightly as with the number of calories when cutting weight. But regardless of weight goal, breakfast should be consumed to slow the muscle breakdown and keep energy/strength throughout the season.

Basically, you have 2 choices for breakfast when eating for wrestling: solid food and shakes. The choice is yours. I like both... and alternate as I see fit. The key is to have a combination of food that will give you sustained energy and will allow you to keep a steady blood sugar level as well as nitrogen balance. Now let's have a look at the best choices for each...

### Breakfast #1: **POWER OATMEAL**

- 1/4 c - 1 c of whole oats
- 1/2 scoop - 1 scoop of whey protein powder
- 1/4 teaspoon - 1/2 teaspoon slivered almonds
- 1/4 teaspoon - 1/2 teaspoon dried cranberries
- 1/4 c almond milk

Heat oats in water on stove or in microwave. Stir in protein powder and almond milk. Top with slivered almonds and dried cranberries.

### Breakfast #2: **HOMEMADE MEAL REPLACEMENT DRINK**

- 1/2 c - 1 c unflavored Greek Yogurt
- 1/2 - 1 banana
- 1/2 c - 1 c frozen berries
- 1/2 tablespoon - 1 tablespoon natural almond or peanut butter

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- 1/2 c water
- 1/2 c grape juice

Put all ingredients in blender. Blend for 30 seconds.

## Breakfast #3: MEAL REPLACEMENT DRINK POWDER

The choice is yours here. Look for a natural product with no artificial sweeteners and preservatives. If you are maintaining or trying to gain weight then mix the meal replacement powder with milk or fruit juice. If you are trying to cut weight than have it in water.



The above breakfast choices all serve the same purpose. They all stunt muscular breakdown, give you sustained energy, and optimize hormone levels. They also keep you in a positive nitrogen balance and stabilize your blood sugar. When you eat like this on a daily basis you will find that strength and energy can be maintained long into the season when wrestlers usually get tired, burnt out and injured.

You can play with the recipes above. I'll give you a food list later that you can substitute with.

## POST PRACTICE RECOVERY MEALS

Besides breakfast the most important meal for a wrestler is the one that is consumed immediately after practice (within 20 minutes). This is also the time when the body is in a catabolic state. A brutal wrestling practice depletes you of muscle glycogen, and the body is now prepared to use your muscle for energy. By preventing this situation with a good post recovery meal/drink, you help keep strength and energy throughout the season.



The difference between the breakfast meals of a wrestler and the post practice recovery meals are the macronutrient ratios. The breakfast macronutrients are primarily slow digesting carbohydrates or fruit, in combination with fats (to optimize hormone levels as well as help slow the breakdown of carbohydrates).

The post-workout recovery meal consists of a small amount of protein with a large serving of simple carbohydrates (sugar). There are no fats in the post-workout recovery meal. This meal is set up to be digested and absorbed quickly into the blood stream and to the muscle cells. This absorption of nutrients delivers glucose to the muscle cells where it is converted to glycogen and stored in the muscle cells. This replenishment is crucial to the prevention of overtraining during the season.

Since quick, easy digestion is the goal with the post-practice recovery meal it is common to “drink” this meal rather than eat it. I’ll give you samples for both. It really depends on your time and mood though. Both are just as good in my eyes.

### Recovery Drink 1: **Chocolate Milk**

The goal of a recovery drink is to give you approximately a 3:1 ratio of simple carbohydrates to whey protein. This is the perfect ratio to jump-start the recovery process. It just so happens that low-fat chocolate milk has this ratio. Since most kids like the taste and it’s easy to grab at any convenience store, it is my recovery meal of choice. A 16 oz serving will suffice.

## Recovery Drink 2: Gatorade + Protein

You can supercharge a regular sports recovery drink by adding a little bit of whey protein. If whey protein isn't available, then the sports drink by itself is fine. Definitely better than nothing.

## Recovery Meal: Frosted Flakes in Low Fat Milk

Yep... good ole' Tony the Tiger is great for that immediate recovery need following wrestling practice. Needless to say, it's a very sugary cereal. With the addition of milk which provides a bit of protein it becomes a quickly digested, efficient recovery meal.

## Recovery Meal: Bagel + Honey

Bagels are high on the glycemic index, which makes them a good post workout meal, especially when you add some honey to them.

## Recovery Meal: Prograde Workout

While I'm generally not a fan of fancy recovery meals, I definitely like this one. It's an all-in-one solution for recovery. It has the same basic macronutrient ratio I like and it also contains Branched Chain Amino Acids. They are another huge guard against muscular breakdown and overtraining. This stuff contains nothing artificial either.

## THE MOST IMPORTANT MEAL FOR YOUR WRESTLING MATCH

We already talked about breakfast. It's the meal that gets you on the right track for the day and tasks at hand.'

But the meal that really gives you that 3rd period energy isn't what you eat the day of a wrestling match. Actually, it's the meal that you eat the evening before an after school match that makes or breaks you when you need just a bit more to win that tough wrestling match.

The old school train of thought was to carbohydrate load you over several days and meals. Well, there were some good things and bad things about this carb loading and they really don't apply to wrestlers in the same way that they apply to cyclists or long distance runners. So, I won't get into carb loading in its traditional sense.

Instead, I want to give you the simple recipe for feeling full, strong and confident in a wrestling match...

Ready?...

Eat pasta. Yep, that's it. A healthy portion of spaghetti (with or without meat) the night before. Drink plenty of water too. You'll feel great when you wrestle the next day.

Now, if you're a wrestler who is a pound or two over the night before then this wouldn't be a good idea. If you are cutting weight then things change a bit. You aren't trying to load up on carbs the night before. Unfortunately, that's why guys who cut massive amounts of weight each season lose muscle, get worn out, injured, sick, and lose their edge. (I will discuss a unique, yet-effective regimen for weight cutting later in the manual)

Here's basically what you would eat the night before:

- Plate of pasta with red sauce and 1 meatball (optional)
- Green salad with low fat dressing
- 2 big glasses of water

If pasta doesn't work for you, consider sweet potatoes. They are one of my favorite "clean" carbohydrates for energizing the body. They are packed with micronutrients making them nutrient dense.

## WHAT TO EAT BEFORE WRESTLING PRACTICE, WRESTLING MATCHES OR WORKING OUT

There always seems to be a lot of confusion about what to eat before wrestling practice, matches or your strength workouts...

Well, I'm about to clear it all up for you.

You see, the truth about what you should eat before a wrestling practice, wrestling match or strength workout is that you really shouldn't need it.



Let me explain...

The typical human body has enough energy stores to get you through an hour or two of intense exercise, practice or your workouts.

The truth is that a big meal just before working out, wrestling practice, or matches will work against you. When you digest food blood is sent to your stomach. When you wrestle or workout, blood is sent to your extremities. Trying to do both at the same time will leave you in an inefficient mode, and probably not as effective as you could be.

The other reason pre-workout nutrition is overrated, is because it will blunt the very-effective, recuperative results from your post-workout/wrestling recovery drink.

With that said, here is a simple plan to know what/when you can eat before practice, matches or workouts for best results:

- Three Hours Before: Big meal with starchy carbohydrates, protein and fibrous carbohydrates.  
Ex. Subway Tuna on Whole Wheat with lettuce, tomato and pepper.
- Two Hours Before: 300 or less calories with minimal fat.  
Ex. Meal Replacement Drink

# WRESTLING NUTRITION BLUEPRINT

- One Hour Before: 200 calories with minimal fat, and mostly carbohydrates.

Ex. 1 cup of oatmeal with water

- Ten Minutes Before: Less than 100 calories. All carbohydrates, no fiber.  
(A banana works great)

## WHAT TO EAT AFTER YOU WEIGH IN

One of the most important times for a wrestler comes immediately after making weight. This is the time when many wrestlers and coaches are confused as to what foods are best to eat. It all comes down to eating food that can be digested slowly, allowing your body to maintain a steady blood-sugar level so that your strength and energy are optimal.

A few years back there was a lot of talk about the Glycemic Index. This was a determinant of how rapidly a food was digested and broken down into sugar (Glucose). Foods that had a higher number rating were the ones that were more rapidly digested. Conversely, foods with a lower number were digested more slowly and converted more slowly into sugars.

The thing that my good friend Al Walke and I realized years ago was that you can eat a high glycemic food combined with a fat and turn it into a low-glycemic food. The simple way we do this is to add peanut butter to a higher glycemic carbohydrate.

Why would you do this? To give you energy throughout the day. That's why I like the idea of a good ole-fashioned Peanut Butter and Jelly Sandwich (preferably on Wheat rather than White Bread) for good tournament food when you're going and going all day long. The simplest way to look at this when you're considering what to eat after you weigh-in for a dual match is to have a list to choose from.

Here are 16 foods that you can eat separately or combine for a post weigh-in meal. Optimally, you will have some time to digest this food. If time is every shortened to where you would wrestle within 45 minutes of the weigh-in you just wouldn't eat at all.

- Carboforce drink
- Honey
- Peanuts
- Cherries
- Milk
- Grapefruit
- Plain Pizza
- Pears

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- Apples
- Apple Juice
- Spaghetti
- Whole Wheat Pasta
- Oranges
- Grapes
- Orange Juice
- Oatmeal

## NOTE:

These are all great choices for those long tournaments where you have to eat something, but don't want to get slowed down with heavy, greasy foods.

## WHAT TO EAT FOR DINNER

Dinner is such a sacred time for so many families. It's a time of sitting down to a big family meal.

Other families are so stretched for time and commitments that dinner is just a fast-food drive through at 8pm each night.

Personally, I love dinner and have always tried to give myself a little bit of leeway in the foods so I wouldn't offend the cook:)

Wrestlers who are cutting weight have to be close attention to foods consumed at dinner, because they are slowed down for the evening. (Check out the next chapter for my weight cutting method). For this reason many guys cutting weight skip dinner. I'm not a fan of skipping meals ever, and suggest that guys either plan accordingly and cut weight slowly and methodically or they get realistic and wrestle at a weight much closer to their natural body weight.

Since dinner is usually the second meal after practice (the first one should be the post-practice recovery drink/meal as discussed earlier), it should contain a protein, complex carbohydrate, fibrous carbohydrate and fat if weight is not a concern.

If body weight is a concern dinner would include a protein, fibrous carbohydrate and fat... with no complex carbohydrate.

The protein is usually a lean meat such as chicken, fish, lean red meat. Starch such as potatoes, sweet potatoes, or rice are great. A salad or side of green vegetables will round out any dinner, whether cutting weight or not.

Try to refrain from saturated fats, sugars and high sodium foods whenever possible. It's healthier of course, not to eat them. But from a performance standard it is extremely important. Remember, your body is a high-performance sports car when you're a wrestler. If you want it to perform to capacity you must give it high quality fuel and treat it well.

## THE WEIGHT GAINER WEIGHT CUTTING METHOD

Sometimes in life we have the most success when we learn how to think outside of the box. Unfortunately, in the sport of wrestling there isn't a whole lot of thinking outside the box. In fact, many times the methods used are passed down from generation to generation. Granted, success deserves to be repeated. But sometimes this passing of methods from generation to generation is ludicrous and makes no sense:)

Take weight cutting for example...

Everybody knows that starving and dehydrating a person, especially a growing individual, is dangerous. Most people would also agree that when you treat your body like that it probably won't be as strong or energetic as it could be if properly nourished and rested. Yet it is a commonly accepted practice to encourage these dangerous practices... for generations and generations. Huh? What did I miss here??

I'd like you to read the following with an open mind. It isn't something that I made up to put in this manual. It's not meant to confuse you. It is simply basic common sense and science wrapped into a simple nutrition system for wrestlers who are cutting weight.

First, consider what a Weight Gainer powder is...

It's a high-calorie protein powder loaded with protein, carbohydrates and fats. It packs a massive amount of calories in one sitting, making it ideal for bodybuilders who want/need to pack on body weight.

So what does this have to do with wrestlers?

If you take a weight gain shake and divide it up into 3 servings, you have a fantastic ratio of protein, carbs and fats, all rolled into a perfect amount of easily digestible calories for sustained energy. There are plenty of vitamins, glutamine and branched chain amino acids in a good weight gain powder as well. This gives you an array of good weight-cutting stuff without weighing you down with high-volume foods that sit in your stomach trying to digest.

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Try to use a weight gain powder that gives you somewhere between 900 and 1100 calories per serving.

Here's how the Weight Gainer Weight Cutting Method works:

Mix the weight gainer in milk (or water if intolerant to lactose or you have any milk allergies). This is done first thing in the morning.

Divide weight gainer into 3 servings.

Immediately drink first serving.

Consume second serving 3 hours later.

Eat a meat sandwich on wheat bread for lunch

Have last serving at dinner time.

It's not a fancy system but it's worked... countless times. However, everybody is different and responds differently to stimulus.

Here's what it looks like:

6:30am - Glutamine powder and Branched Chain Amino Acid capsules with

water 7am - 1/3 of Weight Gainer Shake

10am - 1/3 of Weight Gainer Shake

1pm - Turkey sandwich on whole wheat with lettuce and tomato

5pm - 1/3 of Weight Gainer Shake

8pm - Glutamine powder and Branched Chain Amino Acid capsules with water

## WHAT ABOUT SUPPLEMENTS?

First, you don't need supplements until you've mastered your nutrition plan. Supplements are meant to be consumed in addition to a proper nutrition plan. But if you don't have a proper nutrition plan to support the growth and development, plus the intense regimen that wrestling requires, then supplements are useless.

I'm going to assume that if you are even reading this manual you are serious about performance eating to turbo-charge your mat performance. I'll also assume that you are going to get started right away with your meal plan.

As I said before, wrestling is different from most other sports in terms of the type of energy requirements. Wrestling nutrition and even supplementation are unique as well. Although I'm not a big believer in most supplements effectiveness or the need for them by most athletes, I make exceptions for wrestlers. Since most wrestlers have to fight against muscle breakdown all season long, it may be a good idea to supplement the nutrition plan to help prevent this muscle breakdown. The muscle breakdown occurs from the depleted muscle glycogen cells, leaving the body no choice but to use lean tissue as fuel for long practices each day.

### Multi-Vitamin - Rating for Wrestlers: A

Show me a teenager who eats enough fruits and vegetables daily and I'll show you a one-in-a-million kid. The micronutrients that are provided in fruits and vegetables for heart and circulatory functioning is crucial. Since these foods are so commonly neglected I highly recommend that you consider a daily multi vitamin/mineral supplement.

A good multi-vitamin also aids in the digestion of food for more complete absorption. If you are using more of the food that you ingest, you don't need to eat as much food to give you body it's nutritional requirements. The result? Less food to give you more energy.



## Meal Replacement Powder - Rating for Wrestlers: A

Wrestlers are fanatical about the actual weight of their food... especially at the critical time of the week when they have to cut weight. For this reason many wrestlers will skip meals, especially breakfast.

This is why I love Meal Replacement powders. You can get a super-packed micronutrient profile that helps give just the right amount of protein, carbohydrates and fiber to help a young wrestler keep their body weight steady without starving.

Another benefit of meal replacement powders for wrestlers is the added fiber that a quality one has. This helps give a feeling of fullness, minimizing cravings.

A good meal replacement powder will also contain some branched chain amino acids for its muscle-sparing capabilities.



## Branched Chain Amino Acids - Rating for Wrestlers: B+

Branched Chain Amino Acids are simply one of the best, yet most-underrated supplements for wrestlers. The ONLY reason I gave this supplement a B+ instead of an A+ is because you can find them in a good Meal Replacement powder. This makes the Meal Replacement powder twice as powerful. However, if budget is not an issue, I'd recommend using both... especially if cutting weight.

Branched Chain Amino Acids do a number of things:

They prevent lean tissue breakdown, even in times of lower calorie consumption. They improve your nitrogen retention so you are less likely to get over-trained and burnt out. They also help reduce muscle soreness and fatigue shown to aid in muscular power and endurance in athletes.





## FOOD LISTS

These are all great foods that are healthy and supportive to the training demands of wrestling. Be sure to consider total calories when setting up a meal plan.

You'll notice that in each section there is a number of calories. This is the number of calories for one serving of that particular food.

Once you know how many calories you need each day to maintain, gain or lose weight as a wrestler, you can create your own meal plans. Just use the 25% protein, 50% carbohydrates, 25% fats nutrition profile with your daily calories.

You can then mix and match, swap foods out etc.

The benefit to the foods on the following list is that they are natural, healthy choices. Stick with these foods and you will be stronger, leaner and better conditioned for the rigors of the wrestling season.

### Carbohydrates - Calories: 80

- Whole Wheat Bagel - 1 oz
- Bran Cereals, concentrated - 1/3 cup
- Bran Cereals, flaked - 1/2 cup
- Bread (whole wheat, rye or pumpernickel) - 1 slice
- Cooked cereals ie oatmeal - 1/2 cup
- Corn on the Cob/large - 1/2 cob
- Corn (plain, fresh, frozen, or canned) - 1/2 cup
- Couscous, whole wheat (cooked) - 1/2 cup
- English Muffin, whole wheat - 1/2 muffin
- Granola, lowfat - 1/4 cup
- Grape Nuts - 3 tablespoons
- Pancakes, whole wheat 1/4 inch thick, 6 inch diameter - 1 pancake
- Parsnip - 1/2 cup
- Pasta, whole wheat - 1/2 cup
- Pita, whole wheat, 6 inch diameter - 1/2 pita
- Plantain, ripe - 1/3 cup
- Potato, baked with skin - 1/4 large
- Potato, boiled - 1/2 cup
- Potato, french fries oven baked - 1 cup
- Rice, brown - 1/3 cup



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Rice, wild - 1/2 cup  
Shredded Wheat - 1/2 cup  
Squash - 1 cup  
Tortilla, corn or whole wheat - 1 tortilla  
Waffle, whole wheat - 1 waffle  
Wheat Germ - 3 tbsp  
Yam or Sweet Potato - 1/2 cup  
Applesauce, unsweetened - 1/2 cup  
Apple, small, with peel - 1  
Apples, dried - 4 rings  
Apricots, dried - 8 halves  
Apricots, fresh - 4 whole  
Banana - 1/2 large  
Blackberries - 3/4 cup  
Blueberries - 3/4 cup  
Cantaloupe - 1 cup  
Cherries, fresh - 12  
Dates - 3  
Figs - 2 medium  
Fruit Cocktail, no sugar added - 1/2 cup  
Grapefruit, fresh - 1/2  
Grapes, small - 17  
Honeydew - 1 cup cubed  
Kiwifruit - 1  
Mandarin Oranges - 3/4 cup  
Mango - 1/2 cup  
Nectarine, small - 1  
Orange, small - 1  
Papaya - 1 cup cubed  
Peach, fresh, medium - 1  
Pear, fresh, large - 1/2  
Pineapple, fresh - 3/4 cup  
Plums, fresh - 2  
Raisins - 2 tbsp  
Raspberries - 1 cup  
Strawberries, whole - 1 1/4 cups  
Tangerines, small - 2  
Watermelon - 1 1/4 cups cubed  
Carbohydrate Powder - 1/2 scoop (12.5 grams)  
Apple Juice - 1/2 cup  
Fruit Blend Juice - 2/3 cup  
Grapefruit Juice - 1/2 cup  
Orange Juice - 1/2 cup  
Pineapple Juice - 1/2 cup



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## Vegetables - Calories: 25

Artichoke or Artichoke Hearts - 1/2 cup cooked  
Asparagus - 1/2 cup cooked or 1 cup raw  
Baby Corn - 1/2 cup cooked or 1 cup raw  
Beans, green, wax - 1/2 cup cooked or 1 cup raw  
Bean sprouts - 1/2 cup cooked or 1 cup raw  
Beets - 1/2 cup cooked or 1 cup raw  
Broccoli - 1/2 cup cooked or 1 cup raw  
Brussels sprouts - 1/2 cup cooked  
Cabbage - 1/2 cup cooked or 1 cup raw  
Cauliflower - 1/2 cup cooked or 1 cup raw  
Cucumber - 1 cup raw  
Eggplant - 1/2 cup cooked  
Lettuce, all - 3 cups  
Mushrooms - 1/2 cup cooked or 1 cup raw  
Okra - 1/2 cup cooked or 1 cup raw  
Onions - 1/2 cup cooked or 1 cup raw  
Peppers, all - 1/2 cup cooked or 1 cup raw  
Snow Peas - 1/2 cup cooked or 1 cup raw  
Spinach - 1/2 cup cooked or 1 cup raw  
Summer Squash - 1/2 cup cooked or 1 cup raw  
Tomato - 1/2 cup cooked or 1 cup raw  
Zucchini - 1/2 cup cooked or 1 cup raw



## Liquid Vegetable Substitutes - Calories: 30

Almond Milk, original flavor - 1/2 cup  
Coconut Water - 2/3 cup  
Coconut milk beverage, sweetened (in carton) - 1/2 cup  
Hemp Milk - 1/4 cup  
Rice Milk, plain - 1/4 cup

\* Any of these may substitute for a vegetable

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## Protein - Calories: 45

Beef (select or choice grades,; 85% lean ground, roast (chuck, rib, rump), sirloin, steak (flank, porterhouse, T-bone), tenderloin (cooked) - 1 oz

Cheeses, less than 3 grams of fat per ounce - 1

oz Cottage Cheese, 1% fat - 1/4 cup

Egg Whites - 2

Fish; catfish, cod, flounder, haddock, halibut, salmon, tilapia, tuna, (cooked)- 1 oz

Buffalo, Bison, Ostrich, Venison (cooked) - 1 oz

Pork: ham, tenderloin, Canadian bacon, rib or loin chop (cooked) - 1 oz

Cornish Hen, Chicken, Domestic Duck, Turkey, Lean Ground Chicken or Turkey (cooked) - 1 oz

Ricotta Cheese, part skim - 1/4 cup

Sandwich Meats, turkey, ham, roast beef - 1 oz

Shellfish; shrimp, clams, crab, lobster, scallops (cooked) - 1 1/2 oz

Tuna; canned in water, drained - 1

oz Yogurt, greek, plain - 1/4 cup

Protein Powder - 1/3 scoop

Cow's Milk, reduced fat - 1 cup

Chocolate Milk, low fat - 2/3 cup



## Fats - Calories: 45



### Mono and Polyunsaturated Fats (healthy fats)

Avocado - 2 tbsp (1 oz)

Nut Butters: Almond, Cashew, Peanut (3.5 grams of protein) - 1 1/2 tsp.

Nuts: Almonds, Cashews, Walnuts, Pecans, Hazelnuts - 4-6 nuts

Oils: Olive, Peanut, Safflower, Sunflower, Flaxseed - 1 tsp

Seeds: Flax, Pumpkin, Sunflower, Sesame - 1Tbsp

## Saturated Fats (eat in moderation)

Butter - 1 Tbsp

Coconut Milk, canned - 1 1/2 Tbsp

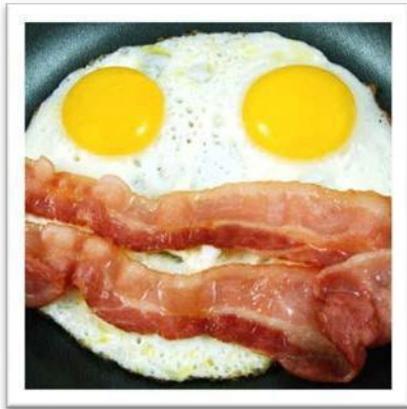
Coconut Oil - 1 tsp.

Coconut, shredded, unsweetened - 2 Tbsp.

Cream (liquid heavy whipping cream) - 1 Tbsp.

Egg Yolk - 1 yolk

Sour Cream - 2 Tbsp



## Legumes - Calories: 125

Beans: Black, Garbanzo, Pinto, Kidney, White, Lima (cooked) - 1/2 cup

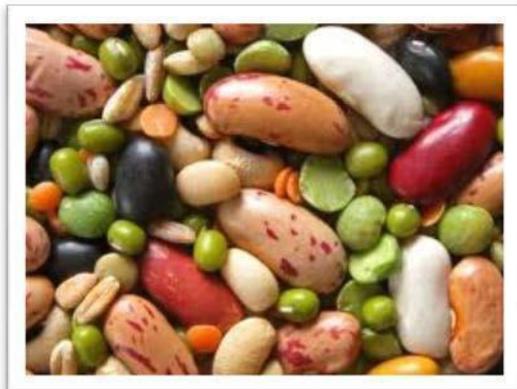
Beans, refried, canned, fat-free - 1/2 cup

Fava (cooked) - 2/3 cup

Lentils: brown, green, yellow (cooked) - 1/2 cup

Peas: black-eyed, split (cooked) - 1/2 cup

Peas: green - 1/2 cup



# WRESTLING NUTRITION BLUEPRINT