

WRESTLING WEIGHT MANAGEMENT

THE 1.5% PER WEEK RULE



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I am a third-year collegiate wrestler and I train hard in the offseason, but don't pay much attention to my diet. It is taking me longer to make my weight than in the past and I feel my workouts are less intense because of low energy.

How can I improve?

Qualifying for a particular competitive class is an important component of wrestling. However, losing weight the wrong way can inhibit, not enhance, your performance. You may be confused on the best approach to "make weight" for your particular competitive class. There are guidelines to assist you in safely doing this.

(To understand the 1.5% per week rule and learn strategies to reach your weight goals, turn the page.)

Information presented by



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THE BASICS

The 1.5% per week rule states that you should lose not more than 1.5% of your body weight a week. So, a 165-pound student-athlete trying to make a 157-pound weight class should lose not more than two pounds (1.2%) per week. This rule is in place to minimize the degree of dehydration that results from losing too much body water. Dehydration of even 1% of your body weight decreases your body's ability to cool itself, endurance and physical performance.

Consuming fewer calories than you need to support your body's daily metabolic process will provide little to no fuel for activity. This practice also increases the chance that you will lose lean body mass, which will decrease your strength, stamina and speed. Therefore, it is important to consume adequate calories based on your individual resting metabolic needs and your level of activity, even when you are trying to lose weight.

Losing weight is best done by creating a calorie deficit of 500 to 1,000 calories per day both by increasing physical activity and decreasing food intake. This approach results in slower weight loss but a greater likelihood that the weight lost will be primarily from fat, not water or muscle.

Written by SCAN/CPSDA Registered Dietitians (RDs). For advice on customizing a weight-loss nutrition plan, consult a RD who specializes in sports, particularly a Board-Certified Specialist in Sports Dietetics (CSSD). Find a qualified RD at www.scandpg.org or www.sportsRD.org.

STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

Some basic strategies to help you reach your weight goal are:

- **Set a reasonable goal** – avoid trying to make a weight class that is not realistic for your body type.
- **Plan ahead** – know where your weight needs to be and consider the time you need to get there safely.
- **Adequately fuel your body all day** – skipping meals during the day and eating a lot at night encourages storage of body fat and use of lean tissue for energy.
- **Adequately fuel your body all season long** – your body needs calories for energy year-round. The number of calories you need depends on your activity level, body composition and your current goal (such as gaining strength/muscle, losing body fat, competing).
- **Pay particular attention to recovery fueling** – hard work breaks down your body, nutrients are needed to repair it; proper recovery nutrition replenishes these nutrients.
- **A balanced diet includes foods and beverages that are good sources of carbohydrate, protein and fat** – how much you need of each is dependent on your overall energy (calorie) needs and the time of year.

