

Are your athletes cutting weight the WRONG way?

Ah, yes...the proverbial elephant in the room - weight cutting. Personally, I am a huge proponent of wrestlers NOT cutting weight, particularly at the high school or youth level, but until we have a major culture change it will remain a part of the sport. Even if an athlete is not cutting a large amount of weight the reality of being stuck between two weights (say, an athlete that walks around at 190lbs) usually leaves us with one option and that is taking off some water weight before weigh ins. However, like most things, there are right ways and even more wrong ways to go about it, with many athletes taking off weight in ways that can be detrimental to performance and their health.

What to avoid:

1. Do NOT limit your water intake early in the week. The easiest mistake to make is to limit water as you are bringing your weight down. A chronically dehydrated body becomes a sponge, retaining any water that comes in and making it hard to actually lose excess water when it comes time to make weight.

**Solution: Stay hydrated drinking 1 gallon of water or more per day all week**

2. Do NOT skip meals. Even when bringing your weight down during the week your body still needs fuel for recovery. Starving yourself will cause your metabolism to grind to a halt and your body will go into a catabolic state, eating away at the muscle you worked so hard to gain.

**Solution: Continue to eat small nutrient dense meals 3-4 times per day the entire week. Limit carbohydrates to fruits, veggies, and low glycemic complex carbs like quinoa and brown rice - preferably after training. High fat foods such as eggs, avocado, and nuts will provide energy and satisfy hunger even in small amounts.**

3. Do NOT work hard to take off the weight. When it comes time to make weight, you should be roughly the same number of pounds over that you can safely lose in one practice. If you normally sweat off 4lbs each practice then your goal should be to walk around no more than 4lbs over by the end of the week - but the key is to lose that last 4lbs by expending the LEAST amount of energy possible.

**Solution: Use low intensity activities such as biking and stance motion to sweat. I would recommend running only at the beginning to get your sweat going then continue with lower intensity activities.**

4. Do NOT gorge after weigh ins. As tempting as it can be, do not pig out after making weight.

**Solution: Rehydrate first - I recommend 32oz of Water with Max Effort Muscle Amino Recovery immediately - then take in some simple carbs such as a banana. 20minutes or so later treat yourself to a peanut butter and jelly sandwich and continue to drink water.**

5. Do NOT get behind the 8-ball. It's natural to have a big cheat meal(s) after competing but remember that your body is going to be a sponge after being dehydrated. Don't let that Saturday night bloat carry over into Monday or Tuesday.

**Solution: The day after competing, get a good sweat with some long, slow, low intensity active recovery. You might not feel like riding the bike for an hour the morning after your tournament title, but it will help work out the soreness and get rid of the bloat from your victory feast - and make the next weight cut that much easier.**

Those are just a few tips to make sure your weight cut is not a disaster. I would much rather see wrestlers eat healthy, lift heavy all season, and enjoy wrestling!

Taken from Wrestling Strength Newsletter - Training tips and techniques from Coach Dustin Myers, CSCS