

## MYTHS ABOUT WRESTLING NUTRITION & WEIGHT LOSS

Myth #1: *Skipping meals helps one lose weight.*

**Skipping meals, and other methods of severe dieting, actually makes it harder to lose weight.** Fasting, and severely restricting food intake lowers the body's metabolic rate. The lower the body's metabolic rate, the slower it burns calories. Also, **eating meals earlier in the day is an advantage over eating late in the day because it's easier for the body to burn calories consumed earlier in the day than those eaten late in the day or in the evening.**

Myth #2: *Sugar, honey, and foods high in sugar, provide quick energy.*

**There is no such thing as quick energy. Eating foods high in sugar provides very poor quality energy and can cause the release of insulin into the bloodstream.** Higher insulin levels cause blood sugar levels to drop which results in the body having less energy available than if no food had been eaten. **The body's primary source of energy is nutritious food eaten 2-3 days before exercising.**

Myth #3: *Caffeine improves performance.*

Caffeine has only been shown to improve performance of ultra-endurance athletes in research studies. **Caffeine is not beneficial in providing wrestlers with more energy. Anyone using caffeine can expect the following negative side effects to occur: nausea, diarrhea, dehydration, restlessness, irregular heart rate, headache and tremors.**

Myth #4: *Fat burning pills will help one lose weight.*

**Claims that some pills burn fat are not supported by current scientific research.** Some weight loss pills contain caffeine, or similar substances, to increase metabolism, but possible **side effects are nausea, diarrhea, dehydration, restlessness, irregular heart rate, headache and tremors.**

Myth #5: *The use of creatine supplements is a good way to lose weight.*

**Creatine supplements are a terrible way to try to lose weight! They cause the body to retain fluid which causes weight gain, not weight loss.** A Penn State University study showed most wrestlers trying to lose or maintain weight while using creatine supplements were not able to do so without a significant loss of power and endurance. The loss of power and endurance is apparently the result of extreme methods needed to lose weight while using creatine.

Myth #6: *During a tough workout it's possible to lose 5-7 pounds of fat.*

**Weight lost during a workout is water, not fat. It's only possible for the body to lose about two-three pounds of fat per week.** Trying to lose more than two-three pounds per week results in dehydration and/or a loss of muscle along with the fat. Both of these decrease strength and power.

Myth #7: *Wrestlers need protein or amino acid supplements to build muscle.*

Most wrestlers, like other athletes, get enough protein and amino acids in the foods they eat without taking supplements. **Research does NOT support claims that protein or amino acid supplements build muscle or increase human growth hormone levels.**

**Sources:** "Taking it to the Mat: The Wrestler's Guide to Optimal Performance," The Center for Nutrition in Sport and Human Performance, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA, 1999; United Dairy Industry of Michigan.