

# Nutritional Strategies for Making Weight

## Athlete Scenario

*I am a 153-lb. college sophomore trying out for the wrestling team. I gained weight over the summer, but my coach would like me to wrestle in the 145-lb. weight class. How can I safely cut weight for competition weigh-ins?*

## Long-term Weight Management for Making Competition Weight

- Work to stay within 3-4% of your competition weight during the off-season. This makes weight cutting prior to competition easier, safer, and less likely to hurt performance.
- Lose excess body weight outside of the competitive season by cutting 300 to 500 calories per day for males, 200 to 300 calories for females. Accomplish this by eating less and/or training more.
- Eat every 3- 4 hours to manage hunger; avoid high-calorie beverages like energy drinks, sodas and sweetened coffee drinks.
- Fill half your plate with vegetables and fruit, one-quarter with whole grains or starches, and one-quarter with lean protein-rich foods (0.8 to 0.9 grams protein per pound of body weight per day).

## Short-term (Days) Weight Cutting prior to Competition:

- Determine time required to meet weight goals. The NCAA limits weight loss to no more than a 1.5% of body weight per week.
- Reduce energy intake but avoid fasting: match lower calorie intake with tapered training.
- Choose low-fiber foods like white bread, cornflakes, sport foods and beverages to decrease water retention.
- Reduce body water with low-sodium foods and sweat loss from exercise. Limit sweat loss to less than 2-3% body weight.

## Strategies to Enhance Recovery between Weigh-in and Competition:

- Restore at least 75% of the weight lost during weight cutting.
- Consume carbohydrate-electrolyte beverages for rehydration and refueling. Eat high-glycemic, salty foods such as pretzels and soda crackers.

Written by SCAN registered dietitian nutritionists (RDNs) to provide nutrition guidance. The key to optimal meal planning is individualization. Contact a SCAN RDN for personalized nutrition plans. Access "Find a SCAN RDN" at [www.scandpg.org](http://www.scandpg.org) or by phone at 1-800-249-2875.



## Tips to Take With You

1. The focus of sports should be the competition, not weight control.
2. Consuming too few calories and fluids, and engaging in extreme dehydration practices (e.g. sauna, hot suit, etc.) while cutting weight will likely compromise health and performance, particularly if done long-term.
3. Consult with a Board Certified Specialist in Sports Dietetics (CSSD) to create a personalized plan for long-term weight management and short-term weight-cutting techniques.

Contact SCAN  
[www.scandpg.org](http://www.scandpg.org)  
800.249.2875