

Strength Training and Nutrition

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It is essential that all wrestlers make specific plans to improve and increase their strength and power throughout the year. A strong and more explosive wrestler is definitely a better wrestler. You may be hard at work on the mats and in the classroom, but are you “paying your dues” in the weight room? Too many teenage wrestlers do NOT devote sufficient time and preparation in the areas of improving strength and power.

Working full-time coaching with Coach Chertow throughout the year, I am very fortunate to be surrounded by many dedicated and talented wrestlers and coaches. We train thousands of wrestlers annually and they all come to us with one common goal, to improve their level of wrestling. We work with novice wrestlers all the way up to the nation’s elite, who have won or are poised to win state and national titles. Regardless of their age, experience, background, and prior success, they all want to achieve more.

They come to us determined to improve and build upon their wrestling skills, knowledge, and ability. Wrestlers show more dedication and a deeper commitment than any other athletes when it comes to taking the necessary steps to reaching their goals and dreams. Endless hours are spent in the pursuit of improving techniques and adding new ones to our arsenals. We attend freestyle and Greco clubs, go to summer camps, and work out consistently with our teammates and coaches. Throughout it all, too many wrestlers do not devote sufficient time and intensity to strength training.

We recognize the need for greater understanding and instruction in all areas of wrestling, yet do not seek the same guidance as it pertains to developing strength and power. This will be the first article in a series designed to give you the information and tools needed to improve your knowledge as well as your strength. The purpose will be to give you an overview of what is required and the necessary steps to begin the process.

We will not address specific programs, philosophies, and exercises in this article. The truth is that there are many good programs out there. If one or two were proven superior to others, you can bet every professional and college team would have their athletes on it, and you would have heard about it by now. The routines you follow and which exercises you choose to do are important but not the key factors in your weight training success. To make the gains you want and become stronger and more powerful you must be consistent and you must lift with intensity.

Many wrestlers will lift weights periodically but not consistently enough to make the gains needed to get stronger. Others lift weights consistently but do not have enough intensity or the proper training schedule to maximize their results. Both of these must occur for you to add the power and strength you are looking for.

Similar to drilling, if a wrestler only drills occasionally and with little intensity, they will not improve their technique. As I said before, we will get into specific principles and training programs in upcoming articles. For now let’s see what we need to get started.

Some things that you must determine before establishing your weight lifting schedule and program are as follows.

1. Where will you be doing the majority of your weight training?

Will you be at a gym that has many machines and free weights or will you be limited to your equipment. Do you have free weights at home? If so, a home plan can be very effective and because you are near the training area everyday there is always time. Even if you do not have any weights, pull-ups, push ups, and other exercises like plyometrics at home can be very beneficial.

2. How many days weekly will you be able to devote to your training and how long daily will you be able to spend in the gym?

Much like wrestling, it is better to train for a shorter period of time with correct form and great intensity rather than spend long periods of time going through the motions. It is essential that you customize your weight training plan to fit the number of days you are able to train as well as the length of time you will have available.

After you determine the amount of time you have weekly, you can design a plan that includes all the major muscle groups evenly and design a daily workout that allows you to incorporate as many different exercises as possible.

3. What are your goals? Do you want to gain or lose weight? Which body parts do you most need to improve your strength?

All wrestlers need to get stronger and increase their power and explosiveness. Certain body parts are more directly related to wrestling and should be trained for power as well as endurance.

We will talk about specific plans and philosophies in a later article, but there are some general rules that will help you maximize your time in the weight room and increase your progress. Remember there is not just one right program for success, so be open-minded and frequently change your routine.

Be consistent. Getting stronger will not happen overnight, it takes consistent effort over a long period of time. Everyone is different, so do not get frustrated or disappointed if you do not get the results you want at first; continue to work hard and you will make the progress you are striving for.

Proper form is essential for safety and for maximum benefits. Just like drilling in a sloppy manner will not help your technique, you must always use strict and proper form while in the weight room. If you need specific guidance ask your coaches, PE teachers, or other athletes who are experienced lifters.

Intensity matters. To fully reach your potential, you must train your muscles with great intensity always. Like I stated above, if you were to drill intensely for 30 minutes, it would be better than drilling half speed and half effort for an hour. Lifting must be viewed in the same manner. Intensity pushes your muscles to break down and to grow back stronger and bigger. Maximum effort for maximum gains is a good way to approach every workout and every set.

The principles above are the foundation of any successful strength training program. By following these principles along with a consistent program, you will be able to realize the gains you wish to make and achieve your goals of increasing strength and power. Be sure to refer to our www.kenchertow.com web page for added guidelines on strength training and other training tips. Also be sure to visit www.wearandgear.com for information on our new training tips book which includes this article along with many of Coach Chertow's most valuable training tips. You can also learn more about the unique strength training products that are available for home and school use and will be a great benefit in achieving your strength training goals.