



# Iowa City West Trojan Wrestling



## Meal Alternatives

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### Overview

Four different calorie level diets are detailed. Diets consisting of 1200 and 1500 calories per day, if you are working out twice per day, are hard cuts. If you start your weight reduction early, the number of days you will have to “Hard Cut” will be less. The 1800 calorie per day diet is a moderate cut and you will still lose body fat at this level. Finally, the 2200 calorie per day diet is what I call a low-end maintenance diet. What I mean by this is that it is a calorie level where you will maintain your level of body fat. Most kids, again assuming you are doing an AM workout and afternoon wrestling, will be able to raise this level of calories in their maintenance diet to close to 3000 calories. You will have to figure out this once you get down to weight.

Taking the weight off in a gradual manner will take less of a toll on your physical and more importantly your mental energy. Wrestling season is an exercise in mental and physical endurance. Your most important matches are late in the season, so proper preparation early in the season will optimize your chance of success. One of the most important parts of your season, **YOU CAN CONTROL**, is your diet. Those who do this successfully feel better, and more importantly, wrestle better, especially late in the season.

One of the primary difficulties in maintaining this diet is food availability and preparation. As funny as that sounds, this is often where this or any diet breaks down. Now is the time to discuss this with your parents, coaches, or trainer and make the correct decisions on how you will be able to get these foods. Once the habits are in place, this becomes easy.

The AM Pre and Post Workout meals are the most important meals of the day. These set the tone for the rest of the day. They give you immediate energy, greatly improving the poor attitude that goes along with waking up and feeling hungry. These meals need to be quick and easy to prepare. Therefore, cereal and milk is a great choice along with fruit. For the hard cut levels, with cereal, you must minimize or eliminate any added sugar. For milk, either use skim milk or 1% if you cannot stomach skim milk. Two percent milk has too much fat for hard cutting but could be brought back in once you are on a maintenance diet. Another good alternative is a bagel. During hard cuts, no added cream cheese, peanut butter, or whatever. The fats come back once you are down to weight.

The Pre Practice meal will likely be eaten at school (and possibly the Post AM Workout meal also). These will need to be taken with you to make them work. Therefore, those are the best meals to have easily packaged foods and fruit. You will have to take on the responsibility of having a cooler daily to keep this food fresh. Once you adopt these habits, this is not difficult.

The last two meals will be eaten at home. You should get your post practice meal in you as soon as possible after practice has ended but it is ok to wait until you get home. That way you don't have to take as much food to school. The final meal is a dinner. This is best eaten 2 hours after your post practice meal. The heavier emphasis on protein at the final meal gives you a better sense of being full when you go to bed. Also, your body is very good at repairing/building muscle while you sleep and having protein at your final meal gives your body necessary nutrients to help this happen.

*Check out the new West High Wrestling Home page at [www.icwestwrestling.com](http://www.icwestwrestling.com).*



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## Strategies

It is very difficult to function below 1200 calories per day. You may have to have a few days like this near weigh-ins etc... However, by proper weight management, you may NEVER need a day like this. If these diets are properly executed, starting 4-6 weeks before certification should be plenty to get you down to your weight.

I suggest no more than two 1200 calorie days in a row and no more than three consecutive hard cut days. One very effective strategy is a five day cycle. It is as follows: 1200 cal for 2 days; 1500 cal for 1 day; 1800 cal for 1 day; then the fifth day eat as "desired within reason" and what I mean by this is you can undo 4 hard days of work by one real stupid day. I have seen certain kids eat over 10000 calories in a single day and this is good for putting back on all of the fat you took off. On the fifth day, work out real hard and eat good meals. Shoot for around 3000 calories.

Three times through this five day cycle (half a month) is going to be good for losing around 6-8 pounds of body fat. Therefore, in a month, you will be down around 14 pounds of body fat. If you have 25 pounds to lose, you are well over half way and probably have only 5-7 more pounds to lose. If at the onset of dieting you have 25 pounds to lose, this translates into approximately 19-20 pounds of body mass. The goal is to get your hydrated body fat to approximately 4-6 pounds above your certification weight. For example, if you are wrestling 135 and start at 160, your goal is to get your completely hydrated weight to 140. The final 5 pounds before weighing will come from terminal dehydration, not chronic dehydration.

Do not dehydrate for even 10 seconds during your hard cuts. The dehydration is left for the 12 hours prior to a weigh-in and should never be used at any other time. We all like to see that low number on the scale at the end of practice, but you have to stay completely hydrated for all of this to work. Fat loss is your friend and chronic dehydration is a bigger enemy than you can imagine. You may not see day to day differences due to hydration levels but the numbers will change over time in the correct direction.