

BOXING AND WRESTLING

EATING FOR YOUR SPORT



Your sport:

Boxing and wrestling are highly physical, contact sports. Both are weight-category sports with athletes aiming for a high muscle mass for protection and strength when competing. This nutrition advice sheet is aimed at those who train and compete at a recreational level. Elite athletes have different nutritional requirements and will require individualised advice.

BOXING

Boxers range from those who enjoy the sport at a recreation level and train a few times a week, to those who may train up to three times a day at the elite fighter level. Training sessions involve running, sparring, technical skill work, conditioning and weight training.

Boxing fights/competitions consist of a predetermined number of 3 minute rounds which allow fist contact only. The overall winner is then selected at the discretion of the judges.

WRESTLING

There are many types of wrestling with each different type having specific rules about what parts of the body can be used and what is considered a 'winning' move. In Olympic wrestling competitions, the main objective is to pin your opponent to the ground which is considered a 'win'.

Matches range from two, 1 minute wrestles with a rest, to one 5 minute wrestle without a rest. Points are awarded in a match for performing techniques or moves that are considered to be 'within the rules'. Any throw, trip or hold is permitted. If a wrestler is not able to pin his/her rival during the match, he/she must score at least three or more technical points in total to win that bout.

Wrestlers will train at different times and frequency depending on their ranking and level. Training is similar to boxing in that it involves a range of aerobic, strength and skill-based work. In both sports there is a large gap between amateur and professional

ranks when it comes to the volume of training and level of competition. At all levels however, participants may go through periods of inactivity or lower training loads before peaking for a certain event where they may also need to be focusing on 'making weight'.



TRAINING DIET:

Boxers and wrestlers at all levels should make it their primary focus to consume a balanced diet. This means eating a variety of foods from all food groups, including:

- Fruits and vegetables – aim for a variety of colours
- Breads and cereals, pasta, rice, low fat noodles, starchy vegetables (kumara, potato), bread, oats, breakfast cereals
- Dairy products – choose low fat varieties including milk, yoghurt and cheese
- Protein rich foods – including lean meat, poultry (e.g chicken), fish seafood, eggs, tofu and pulses
- Healthy fats including vegetable oils, nuts, seeds and avocado

Eating well is essential to get the most out of training, promote recovery and help achieve optimal body composition. Many boxers/wrestlers who work full time and have to juggle training with other commitments may find that eating well consistently can be a challenge. While the easy option may be to rely on supplements or convenience foods, the reality is that there are several performance and health benefits which can be gained by consuming a healthy balanced diet. Ideally, planning and preparing food in advance can help ensure nutrition and hydration needs are met.

CARBOHYDRATE

For boxing and wrestling, a carbohydrate-rich diet is ideal. This means including wholegrain bread and breakfast cereals, pasta, rice, low fat

noodles, potato or kumara at main meals. For high training days, additional carbohydrate rich snacks may be helpful, including muesli/cereal bars, liquid breakfast drinks, smoothies, creamed rice, fresh fruit and fruit bread. Eating carbohydrate in the hours before training and as soon as possible after training can be helpful to optimise energy levels and promote recovery.* Low carbohydrate diets are not suitable for wrestlers or boxers and could impact on performance. The exact amount of carbohydrate you will need will need to be calculated based on your training and weight goals – see a Sports Dietitian or Accredited Sports Nutritionist for further guidance.

PROTEIN

Protein is essential for good health and sporting performance, and should always be included in main meals and post training snacks. Examples include lean meat, chicken, fish/seafood, tofu, pulses (e.g. baked beans, chickpeas and lentils), eggs, nuts and low fat dairy products. It is also important to include some protein after training to promote recovery and muscle repair, this is particularly important in boxing and wrestling given the high volumes of strength training.** Protein-based supplements (powders / bars) may be included in the diet for convenience, if necessary. However, these can be expensive and protein rich foods are perfectly adequate.

FAT

Having some fat each day is essential for good health. Try to include small amounts of good quality healthy fats, such as vegetable oils (e.g. canola and olive),

nuts, seeds, oily fish and avocado should be included in the diet. It is also important to minimise the amount of unhealthy fat by choosing lean cuts of meat and limiting high fat convenience foods and takeaways.

FRUIT AND VEGETABLES

Fruit and vegetables are a key part of a boxers and wrestlers diet. It is ideal to include a variety of vegetables at each main meals and fruit with meals or as a snack. Fresh and frozen fruit and vegetables are excellent choices. Canned or dried options can also be enjoyed to add variety. Having plenty of fruits and vegetables will help to ensure that your body's nutrient and anti-oxidant requirements are fulfilled. These foods are convenient, tasty and, if purchased in season, they are affordable. You can also try to grow your own!

RECOVERY

Where possible it can be helpful to try and have your main meal as soon as possible after you finishing a training session, this is particularly important if you train more than once each day. If having a full meal is impractical, having a snack becomes important to start the recovery process. Dairy based snacks such as creamed rice, low fat yoghurt or MILO added to low fat milk, fruit or other snacks such as sandwiches or muesli/cereal bars are suitable. In some cases, having a sports drink with training can be useful; however, this depends on the duration and intensity of your trainings as well as your individual's training/weight goals.



A SAMPLE ONE DAY MEAL PLAN FOR A BOXER/WRESTLER

BREAKFAST:

- Hot oats with low fat milk and sultanas OR
- Poached eggs on wholegrain toast with tomato and avocado

MORNING TEA:

- Creamed rice or MILO with low fat milk and a handful of dried fruit and nuts OR
- Grainy crackers topped with cottage cheese and a piece of fruit

LUNCH:

- Grainy bread roll or sandwich with lean meat/fish/egg and salad OR
- Baked beans with toast with a piece of fruit

AFTERNOON TEA:

- Suitable snacks prior to training may include sandwiches, muesli bars, cereal and low fat milk or fruit and low fat yoghurt.
- Pre or post training can also include a smoothie or milk-based shake

AFTERNOON TRAINING

DINNER:

- Lean meat and vegetable stir-fry with rice, or noodles OR
- Spaghetti bolognese and a side salad OR
- Fish and oven baked chips and salad

SUPPER:

- Hot MILO with low fat milk

NUTRITIONIST'S NOTE

This meal plan is an example only and not intended for individual purposes. This should be altered to suit individual energy requirements depending on age, gender and training load. For those who train at an elite level and/ or twice or more a day, additional pre training snacks and post training recovery food/ drinks will be required. Contact a Sports Dietitian or Accredited Sports Nutritionist for guidance.

NUTRITION PROFILE Gunnar Jackson

Why do you think nutrition is important for your sport?

Nutrition is important to be able to reach an elite level of strength-endurance. As a boxer my training and boxing workouts are performed at very high intensity. Boxers have the challenge of meeting a high energy demand, while having to stay relatively close to their competitive weights. Sometimes boxers will resort to crash dieting and dehydration leading up to a fight for weigh in. This may result in a poor performance without proper re-hydration and refuelling between the weigh in and fight, so it's not a good idea. Nutrient rich, foods are necessary for optimal performance.

What are some healthy and tasty foods you recommend?

Healthy and tasty foods I enjoy and recommend are porridge with trim milk and chopped up fresh fruit such as, berries or bananas, for breakfast.



A smoothie with milk, berries and oats for a snack, and grilled chicken salad with avocado, tomatoes, and capsicum for dinner.

KEY FOODS FOR A BOXER'S/ WRESTLER'S PANTRY

- ✓ Wholegrain bread, English muffins, crumpets, bread rolls
- ✓ Rolled oats (like UNCLE TOBYS), natural muesli, wholegrain breakfast cereals
- ✓ Rice, pasta, low fat noodles, couscous
- ✓ Lentils, chickpeas, bean mix
- ✓ Low fat pasta sauce
- ✓ Canned spaghetti, baked beans
- ✓ Creamed rice
- ✓ Canned tuna, salmon
- ✓ Crackers and pretzels
- ✓ Dried fruit, nuts
- ✓ Vegetable oil / spray
- ✓ Low fat salad dressing
- ✓ MILO Energy Food Drink
- ✓ Carnation Light & Creamy Evaporated Milk
- ✓ Muesli/cereal bars
- ✓ Herbs and spices
- ✓ Sauces and condiments e.g. sweet chilli, BBQ, mustard, relish
- ✓ Spreads e.g. honey, jam, peanut butter (low salt and sugar)

KEY FOODS FOR A BOXER'S WRESTLER'S FRIDGE/FREEZER

- ✓ Low fat milk, flavoured milk
- ✓ Low fat yoghurt
- ✓ Eggs
- ✓ Edam cheese, cottage cheese
- ✓ Fresh and frozen vegetables
- ✓ Lean meat, fish, chicken
- ✓ Fresh fruit
- ✓ Reduced fat spread

KEY COMPETITION FOODS

- ✓ Rice, pasta or noodles
- ✓ Sandwiches
- ✓ Fruit
- ✓ Muffins/crumpets/fruit bread
- ✓ Rice cakes or low fat crackers
- ✓ Low fat yoghurt and chocolate dairy snacks
- ✓ Muesli bars and cereal bars
- ✓ Flavoured milk and MILO made with low fat milk
- ✓ Cordial
- ✓ Sports drinks
- ✓ Water-based iceblocks
- ✓ Liquid meal supplements

COMPETITION DAY EATING

Food and fluid consumption around the competition time focuses on how close the athlete is to their target weight (if they need to 'make weight'). Severe dehydration or other 'making weight' strategies should be avoided on competition day and the days leading up to competition as there is limited time to recover between the weigh-in and the boxing/ wrestling match.

Note: See "Weight Loss Nutrition Advice Sheet" for more information.

BEFORE A FIGHT:

A healthy, balanced meal with both carbohydrate and protein is ideally consumed 1-4 hours prior to the start of the fight.* The exact time depends on individual needs and comfort levels. Examples include oats with low fat milk and fruit or poached eggs on grainy toast with a fruit smoothie. For those who get nervous before a fight or are close to their target weight before eating, liquid meal replacements, breakfast drinks or smoothies may be more appropriate. After weigh in, the focus is to fuel up and hydrate, so sports drinks and carbohydrate rich snacks are ideal at this time.

DURING THE EVENT:

As fight times are very short, water is a suitable fluid, however sports drinks can also be a good option. Drink fluid at every opportunity.

EATING FOR RECOVERY:

Including carbohydrate and fluid are important to start the recovery process as soon as possible after a fight. Sports drinks are ideal and can be followed by a carbohydrate and protein rich meal or snack. If you are taking part in a competition which involves multiple fights in one day or you are competing over several days, carbohydrate and protein-rich snacks may be required between fights to assist with recovery. Examples include smoothies, muesli/ cereal bars and low fat yoghurt or creamed rice.

Many convenience foods such as chocolates, chips and pies are not suitable. High fat foods are not useful on competition day as they generally do not provide sufficient fuel (carbohydrate) for energy and can cause stomach upsets.

SPECIAL ISSUES AND REQUIREMENTS FOR BOXING AND WRESTLING:

- Hydration is an important issue for both sports and it is really important to focus on keeping well hydrated day to day and rehydrate properly after training too. During the day, drink enough

to make sure that the urine you pass is pale straw coloured and not dark yellow/orange.

- Some boxers and wrestlers may rely heavily on supplement products and ergogenic aids for desired performance benefits. It is important to remember that the biggest contributors to performance improvements will be effective training combined with a balanced diet which is adequate in carbohydrate, protein, vitamins and minerals. The timing of these nutrients is going to be important for performance benefits so focus on foods before and after training.

It is vital to seek individual nutrition advice from a qualified Sports Dietitian or Accredited Sports Nutritionist before using supplements or any meal replacements/sports specific foods bars/gels or ergogenic aids and make sure you are doing the right thing for you. Despite the common belief that more is better, some of these items may have little or no effect and at worst they can negatively affect health and performance, or produce a positive doping outcome.

* Louise Burke et al, 2011. Carbohydrates for training and competition. Journal of Sports Sciences

** Gary Slater et al 2011, Nutrition guidelines for strength sports: Sprinting, weightlifting, throwing events, and bodybuilding. Journal of Sports Sciences.

YOGHURT CURRY CHICKEN WRAPS

Serves 4 generous wraps

- 1 pkt MAGGI Roast Chicken Gravy Mix
- 1 tsp mild curry powder
- 1/2 cup water
- 400g boneless, skinless chicken, cut into strips
- 1/2 cup reduced fat unsweetened yoghurt
- 2 cups preferred salad ingredients
- 4 reduced fat tortillas

- Combine MAGGI Roast Chicken Gravy Mix with curry powder, water and chicken strips in a large saucepan.
- Bring to boil and simmer gently for 10-12 minutes until chicken is cooked through and sauce has thickened. Allow to cool slightly before stirring through yoghurt.
- Pile your preferred salad ingredients onto the centre of tortillas. Top with chicken mixture, roll up and serve.



ANALYSIS	per serve
Energy (kJ)	1130
Carbohydrate (g)	27
Protein (g)	27
Fat (g)	6

This recipe is from the *Fit Food Fast* cookbook. For more recipes visit www.tastyrecipes.co.nz.

By Nutritionist Claire Turnbull - www.claireturnbull.co.nz

For more information and to obtain further copies of any of the Eating for Your Sport Nutrition Advice sheets, visit www.nutrition.nestle.co.nz or www.autmillennium.org.nz/nutrition

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