

How to Strength Train for Wrestling

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"If I could sum up strength training for wrestlers in 5 easy steps, here's what they would be..."

1. Train the Posterior Chain
2. Increase Core Stability
3. Work the 'Leverage Areas'
4. Strength Train Year-Round
5. Always Use Progressive Resistance

Train the Posterior Chain

The posterior chain is a group of muscles that work together. It is comprised of the mid-back, lower-back, gluts, hips, and hamstrings.

The posterior chain muscles work together like a rear-wheel drive 'muscle car.'

When you strengthen the muscles of the posterior chain, you have more power to use against your opponents.

Make sure you don't neglect any of the posterior chain muscles when strength training. You should strive to make each area strong so that there will be a direct carry-over effect on the wrestling mat.

Increase Core Stability

In order to be fast, strong and powerful on the wrestling mat, you must have a strong core.

The core is the area from just below your chest to your hips.

Wrestlers typically don't train the core correctly.

Here are some pointers to make sure you are training the core for optimal wrestling performance.

- o Train the lower abs first
- o Train the obliques next with a twisting exercise
- o Train the full abs last with traditional exercises
- o Always train the abs last in your workout
- o Never allow anyone to hold your feet or ankles
- o Train abs slowly - hold for 2 seconds at the top
- o Keep your lower back strong

Work the 'Leverage Areas'

Wrestling requires increasing leverage against your opponent in order to gain the advantage.

This requires strengthening muscles that will help you increase your leverage.

Wrestling is one of the few sports that needs strong biceps in order to gain an advantage. Since most guys love to train their biceps, this is usually not hard to get wrestlers to do.

The medial deltoid is the muscle on the sides of your shoulders that allow you to raise your arms straight out to the side. This area is very important to gain leverage. Get your medial deltoids stronger to increase your ability to turn your opponents.

We all know that the neck is important for wrestlers as well. The neck is supported by the trapezius muscle. This muscle will help wrestlers by adding strength and leverage ability to the neck area.

Strength Train Year-Round

The problem I find with many wrestlers is that they neglect strength training all year long.

BIG MISTAKE!

The off-season is when wrestlers need to keep up their strengths and work on their weaknesses.

During the off-season, I like to have wrestlers strength train 3 days per week. Wrestlers who do proper strength training during the off season will have a distinct advantage over their opponents.

In-season strength training is even more important!

Many wrestlers drop their strength training once the season begins. They insist that they don't have time or energy.

You must strength train during the season to 'hold on to your muscle.' Between the long practices, tournaments, matches, and weight-cutting, your body will quickly begin to over-train. This is when your body will begin to use its own muscle for energy. The result is a weakened body, that is more likely to get injured, and not wrestle as well.

During the season, I have wrestlers cut down their strength training to 2 days per week.

If you don't listen to anything else I tell you, remember to always keep up your in-season strength training... especially if you're cutting weight.

Always Use Progressive Strength Training

The key to making your strength training effective in order to wrestle better is using progression.

This means that you should always strive to do more in each workout than you did in the last workout. This is because the muscles require you to challenge them so that they can get stronger.

If you always do the same thing in your workouts your muscles have no need to get stronger.

The one exception is In-season strength training. During the wrestling season, you should choose a weight for each exercise and keep up the same number of repetitions throughout the wrestling season. You want to simply maintain your strength during the season.

During the off-season you must keep your workouts progressive. There are a number of ways you can do this:

- o Add weight but keep the reps the same
- o Keep the same weight but add reps
- o Do the same workout in less total time
- o Add intensity techniques ie. forced reps
- o Add an extra set