

# Offseason Training Guidelines

## Weightlifting

- **Push yourself.** You won't see decent strength gains if you don't lift challenging amounts of weight. For any set in any given exercise, the last one or two reps should be tough (maybe impossible) to squeeze out. Also, don't rest too long between sets; 1-3 minutes is enough. And just because you've never done much weightlifting before doesn't mean you should exclude intermediate or even advanced exercises from your workouts.
- **Train according to your goals.** No set or rep numbers are written by the exercises on the workout sheets. Those are left for you to decide, depending on whether you want to train for muscular endurance, strength, or power; wrestlers need all three of these things. For endurance, do 12-20 reps per set; for strength, do 6-12; and for power, do 2-6.
- **Don't overtrain.** Your muscles need to rest in order to grow, so allow at least one off day between weightlifting sessions. Training the same muscle group (aside from abs) more than once a week should only be done by advanced lifters, but it isn't necessary for most people, especially if you're lifting challenging weights. Also, going to failure on a set here and there is great, but don't do it on every set.
- **Vary your workouts.** Strength gains come quicker if you do a variety of exercises and keep your muscles guessing. Aside from the core exercises (deadlift, squat, and power clean), don't do the same thing every week. Completing a workout without getting sore later is a sign to switch things up a bit.
- **Find a partner.** People who train with a partner tend to improve more quickly. Having someone else there to push and spot you is an added bonus.
- **Don't neglect anything.** If the strength of a particular muscle group is lagging behind the others, it's fine to do some extra work on it—an extra set or two or maybe an additional exercise. Along the same lines, if you do the football workouts, make sure you supplement those by working the muscle groups that they don't emphasize as much. Football players don't use their biceps, backs, or forearms nearly as much as wrestlers do, so make sure those muscle groups are getting the attention they need.
- **Be safe.** To avoid injuries, stretch out thoroughly before lifting, use a spotter when appropriate, ALWAYS use a weight belt when doing squats and deadlifts, and NEVER jerk the weight to complete a rep.

## Cardio

- **It's just as important as lifting.** Gorilla strength doesn't do you much good if you run out of gas in the first period. So be sure to do some cardio work 2-3 times a week.
- **Train for endurance.** The best way to improve endurance is to do high-intensity interval training. For example, try a 15-second jog followed by a 15-second all-out sprint and then repeat the cycle. Each cardio session should be 20-30 minutes, 5-8 of which should be a warmup, and 2-3 of which should be a cooldown.
- **Stick to running.** Cardio machines such as stairsteppers, elliptical machines, and rowing machines aren't nearly as effective for building wrestling-caliber endurance as treadmills or running on a track.

## Wrestling

- **Hit some tournaments/clinics.** You'll find it much easier to get back into the swing of things in the regular season if you keep it in the back of your mind. Tournaments (whether Greco, freestyle, or folkstyle), clinics, and camps will help you stay on your toes. There are a lot of them held in the offseason if you know where to look. The Wisconsin Wrestling web site ([www.wiwrestling.org](http://www.wiwrestling.org)) is a great place to get info.

- **Take advantage of open wrestling.** The wrestling room is typically open for workouts once a week during the offseason. Check with a senior, one of the coaches, or the team web site to find out when.
- **Shoot for at least 100 hours of wrestling a year.** This goal will keep your skills sharp and your body in wrestling shape. If you go to all the regular practices, meets, and tournaments, you'll already be most of the way there. An hour a week during the offseason is all you need to meet it.