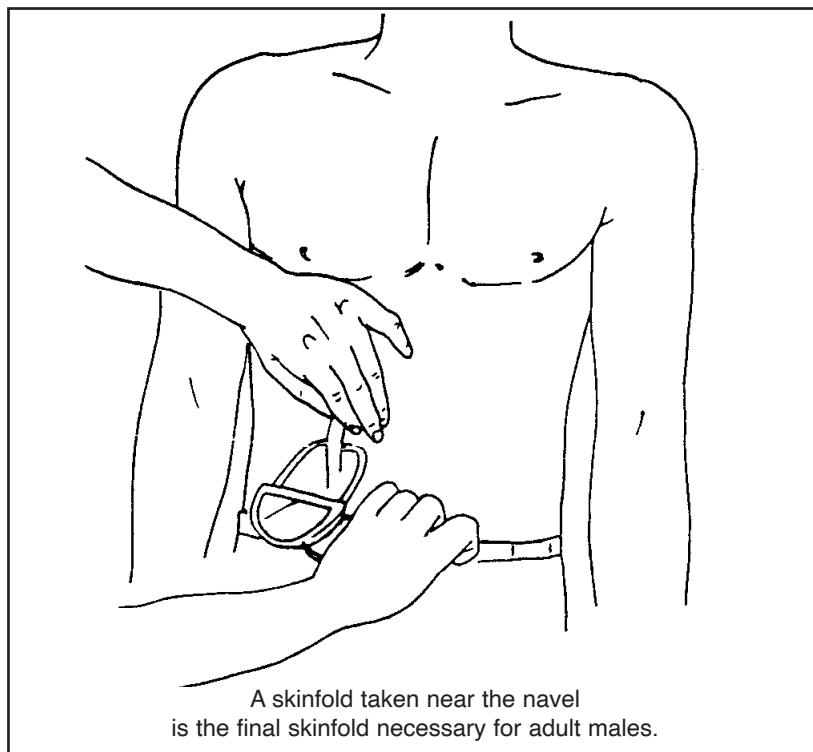


Wisconsin Wrestling Minimum Weight Project

What Is Wrestling Minimal Weight?

Body fat . . . it is a term that all Wisconsin high school wrestlers have become familiar with since the implementation of the Wisconsin Wrestling Minimum Weight Project (WWMWP). Prior to their first match, all high school wrestlers in Wisconsin must have their percent body fat predicted, and from that a wrestling minimum weight calculated. Most wrestlers have their body fat predicted through skinfold measurements. Only measurers who have completed a special skinfold measurement workshop are allowed to serve as skinfold measurers for the WWMWP. All wrestlers throughout the state are measured using the same technique. A wrestler desiring to do so may have his body fat measured through hydrostatic (underwater) weighing. However, the number of sites meeting WIAA's criteria for this type of measurement is few (only two WIAA approved sites in Wisconsin). This procedure is also more expensive and time consuming than skinfold measurements.



The use of skinfold measurements to predict the amount of body fat an individual has is based on scientific research that shows a relationship between the amount of fat stored just under the skin (subcutaneous fat) and the total fat in the body. The equation used to predict percent fat and minimal weight for the WWMWP is based on studies done on high school wrestlers. The skinfold measurement sites used are the triceps (back of the arm), subscapular (just below the shoulder blade), and abdominal.

Percent Body Fat, Fat-Free Mass

What Do The Numbers Mean?

Percent body fat is a term used to describe what percent of a person's weight is fat weight. A wrestler who is 12% body fat has 12% of his body weight as fat. For a 100-pound wrestler this would mean 12 pounds of fat ($100\# \times .12$); a 150-pound wrestler at 10% body fat would have 15 pounds of fat ($150\# \times .10$). If a wrestler desires to lose weight, he should focus on losing fat weight.

Fat-free mass is a person's weight with the fat weight subtracted. Fat-free mass includes muscles, bones, organs, blood, etc. (everything except fat). In the examples discussed above, the 100-pound wrestler with 12 pounds of fat weight has 88 pounds of fat-free mass (100# - 12#). Can you figure out the fat-free mass of the 150-pound wrestler? Find out your own fat-free mass using the body fat percent determined through the skinfold measuring.

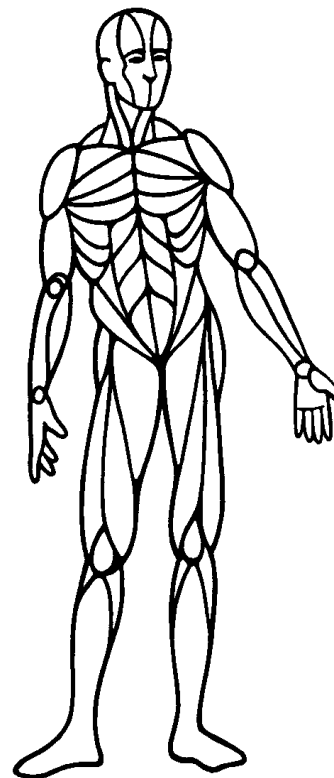
$$\text{Fat-Free Mass} = \text{Total Weight} - \text{Fat Weight}$$

If an athlete loses fat-free mass, he or she is losing muscle and will become weaker. Therefore the focus of any weight loss should be on fat weight.

How Much Body Fat Should I Have?

A certain amount of body fat is essential. Fat is needed to protect and cushion the vital organs of the body and to help control body temperature. The brain, spinal cord, and nerves all contain essential fat. Fat is also needed for the absorption and storage of certain nutrients, and fat is an important source of energy. So, even though the focus of a wrestler's weight loss program should be on fat, it should be clarified that the loss should be EXCESS fat.

As an athlete, finding a weight where you are comfortable, compete well, and can maintain while on a balanced diet is more important than striving to reach a targeted body fat percentage. A recommended healthy minimum body fat percentage for high school age males is 7% (12% for females).



The WWMWP has adopted these guidelines in establishing minimum weights for wrestlers. These minimum weights are not recommendations, but rather set minimums. Many wrestlers may compete more successfully at a weight above the established minimum weight.