

Wrestling

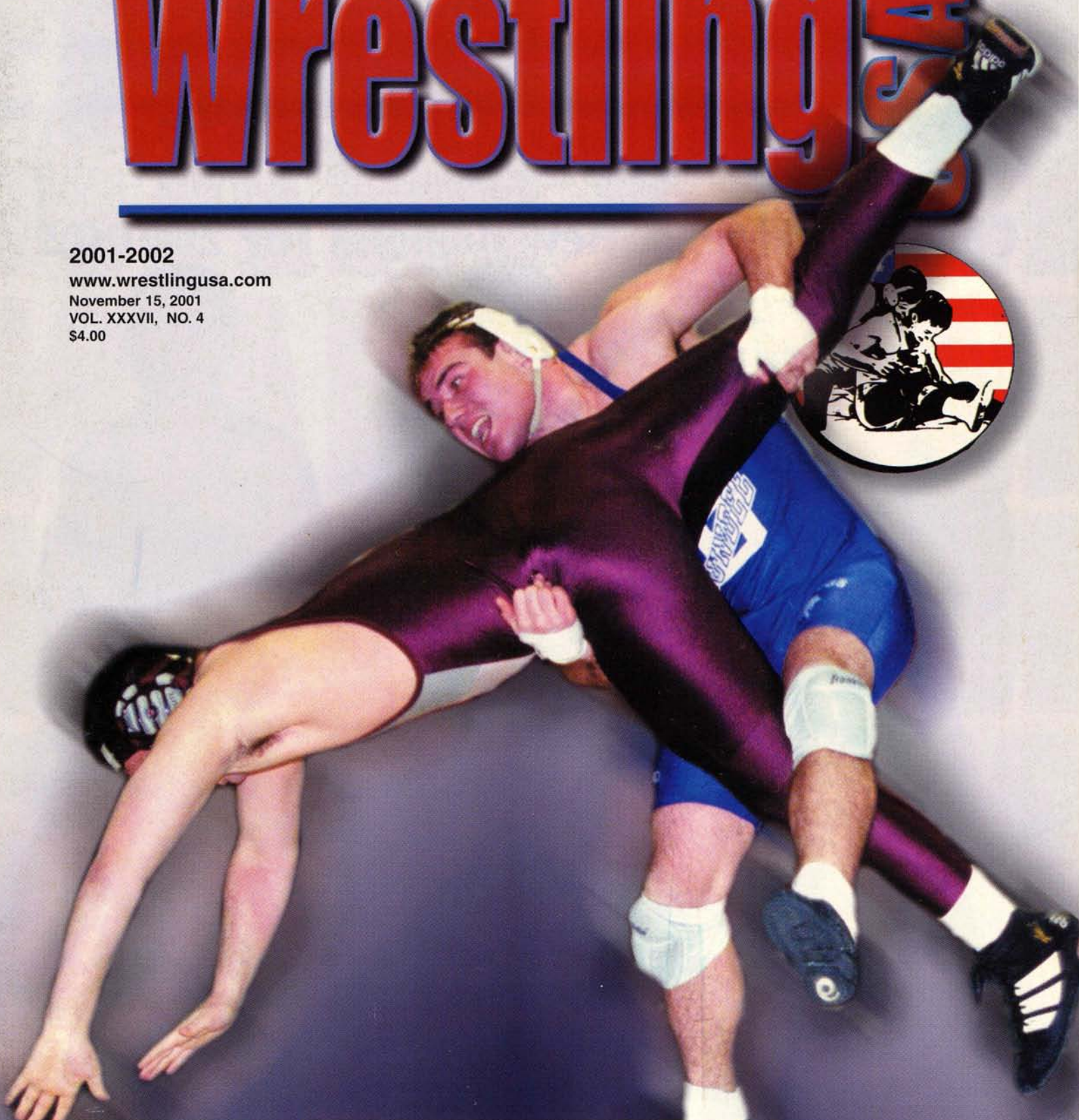
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Basic Training for Wrestling: The Essentials

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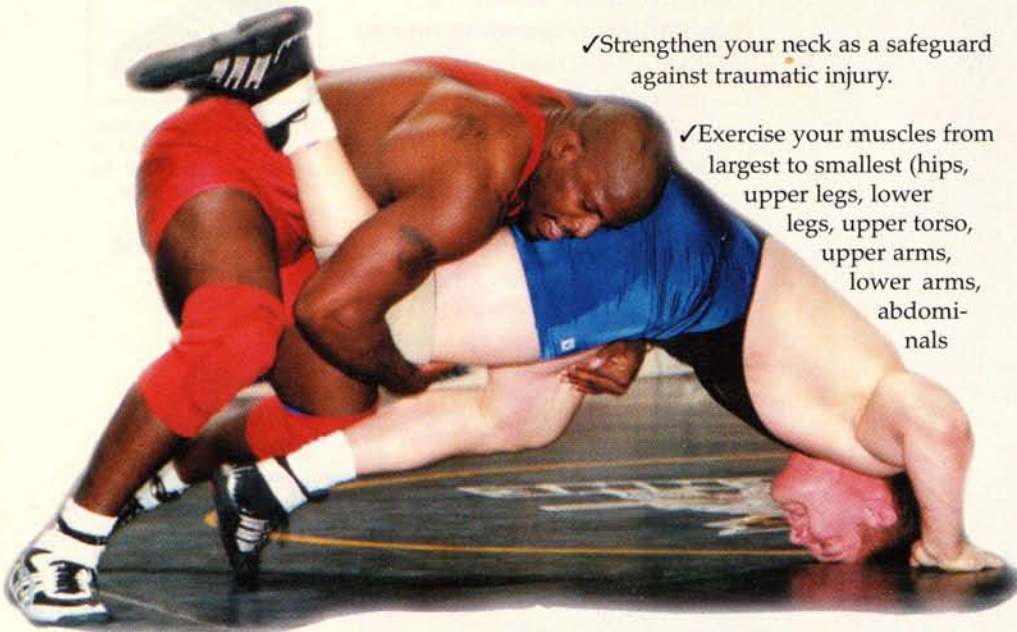
In the military, basic training is meant to provide a basic knowledge of the essentials that are necessary to function effectively in a particular branch of service. For the most part, the foundations that are established in basic training prepare an individual for the future.

In wrestling, a basic knowledge of essentials is also necessary to establish a foundation for the future. In this case, the essentials will prepare you for the rigors of wrestling. The sport of wrestling involves a unique blend of muscular strength, cardiovascular conditioning, flexibility and technical expertise. Preparation for wrestling, then, must include specific activities that develop these essentials.

THE ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS

The following information is meant to provide you with a brief outline of the essential components of basic training that are necessary for your physical preparedness as a wrestler.

2001 US Open Nationals, 286 lb. Freestyle Final. Kerry McCoy, NYAC, decisioned Tolly Thompson, Sunkist, 5-2. Photo by Jack Stanbro.



Strength Training

There is no consensus as to the optimal way of developing muscular strength. Nor is there any shortage of opinions. The fact of the matter is that many programs – despite being, in some cases, polar opposites – can be effective. A strength-training program for wrestling will produce desirable results if it incorporates these basic guidelines:

- ✓Exercise with an appropriate degree of intensity (or effort).
- ✓Try to progress from one workout to the next by either increasing the amount of resistance that you used or improving upon the number of repetitions that you did with the same resistance.
- ✓Avoid doing the repetitions with an excessive amount of momentum.
- ✓Perform each repetition throughout a full range of motion.
- ✓Focus on the larger muscle groups in your body (hips, legs and upper torso).
- ✓Strengthen your neck as a safeguard against traumatic injury.
- ✓Exercise your muscles from largest to smallest (hips, upper legs, lower legs, upper torso, upper arms, lower arms, abdominals)

and lower back).

- ✓Take as little rest as possible between exercises / sets.
- ✓Allow for adequate recovery between workouts.
- ✓Keep track of your performances in the weight room (resistance and repetitions).
- ✓Train with a partner.

Conditioning

Proper conditioning for wrestling should involve aerobic and anaerobic training. You can improve your conditioning for wrestling by following these basics:

- ✓Focus on aerobic conditioning – that is, continuous efforts of long duration such as long-distance running – to establish a solid foundation of aerobic support.
- ✓Concentrate on anaerobic conditioning – that is, a series of all-out efforts of short duration such as sprinting – as your competitive season nears.
- ✓Elevate your heart rate to levels that will stimulate a training response.
- ✓Try to progress from one workout to the next by completing the same distance at a faster pace (in a shorter amount of time), covering a greater distance at the same pace or gradually increasing both the distance and the pace.
- ✓Include some non-weightbearing activities in your training – such as swimming and rowing – to reduce your risk of experiencing or complicating an orthopedic problem.

Flexibility

By becoming more flexible, you will increase the ranges of motion around your joints. Among other things, this gives you the potential to apply your strength over a greater distance. A flexibility program for wrestling will be effective if it implements these basic guidelines:

- ✓Precede your flexibility training with a warm-up that causes you to break a light sweat.
- ✓Do the stretch under control without any bouncing, bobbing or jerking movements.
- ✓Inhale and exhale normally during the stretch without holding your breath.
- ✓Stretch comfortably in a pain-free manner.
- ✓Relax during the stretch.
- ✓Hold the stretched position for about 30-60 seconds.

✓Attempt to stretch a little bit farther than the last time.

✓Stretch all of the major muscle groups in your body.

✓Perform flexibility movements on a regular basis.

Skill Training

The most essential component of your basic training is the learning and perfecting of your wrestling techniques. You will develop your wrestling skills if you adhere to the following basic guidelines:

- ✓Learn how to do your skills correctly.
- ✓Perform your skills over and over again until you can execute them without conscious effort.
- ✓Practice your skills perfectly and exactly as you would use them on the mat.
- ✓Avoid trying to simulate wrestling skills with barbells, dumbbells or other weighted equipment.

BACK TO BASICS

Individuals are often intrigued by training methods that sound exotic or are touted as a "secret." In many instances, they believe that training must be complicated or elaborate in order to be effective. But productive training can actually be quite simple and very basic.

An understanding of the basics is not just for beginning wrestlers. Even seasoned grapplers will be better prepared for competition if they learn and implement the essential components of basic training for wrestling.

*Matt Brzycki has been involved in the strength and conditioning of collegiate wrestlers for more than 20 years. Since 1986, he has authored nearly 60 articles for **Wrestling USA Magazine**. He is also the author of *A Practical Approach to Strength Training* and the editor of *Maximize Your Training*, a 455-page book that features chapters written by more than 30 strength and fitness professionals.*

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