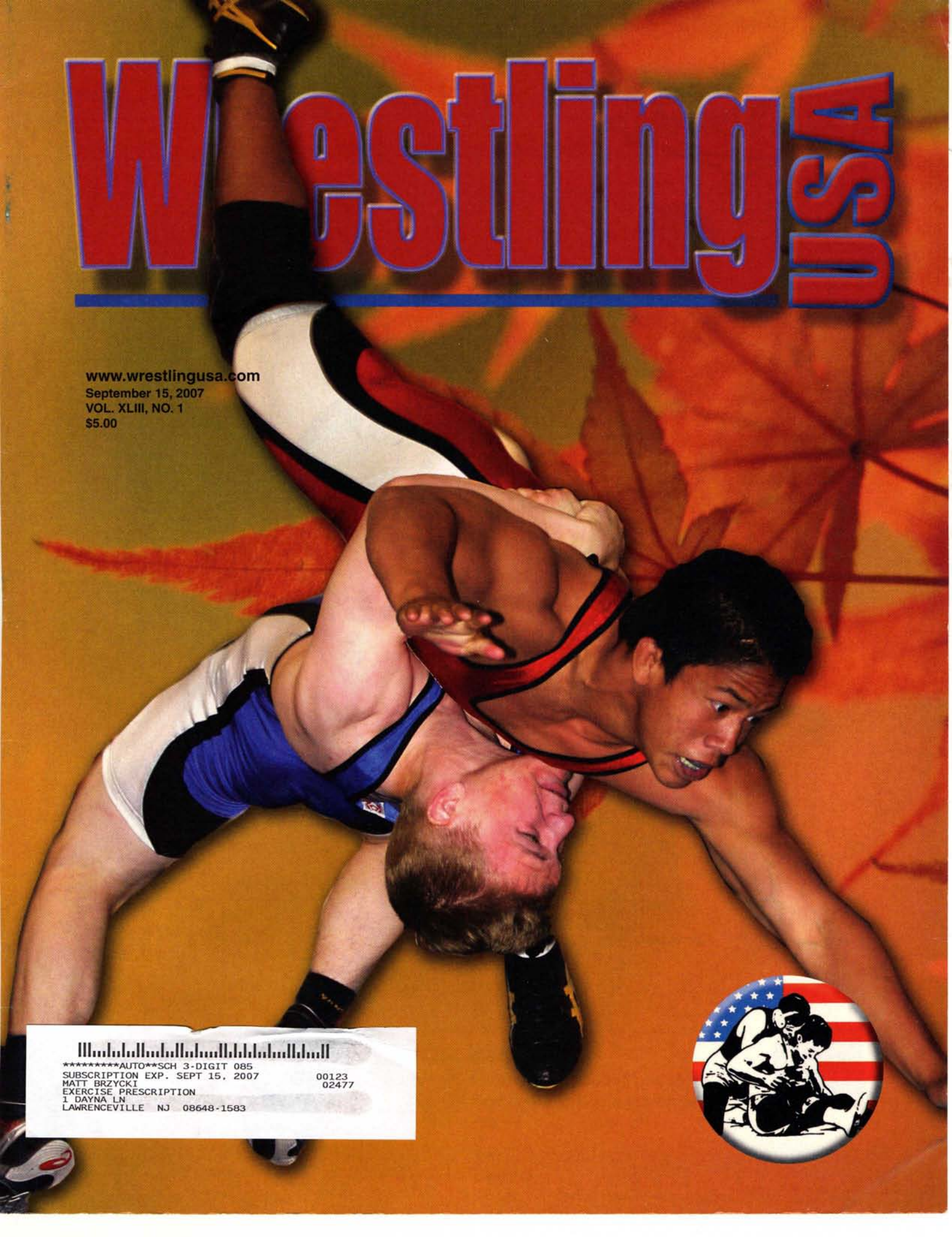


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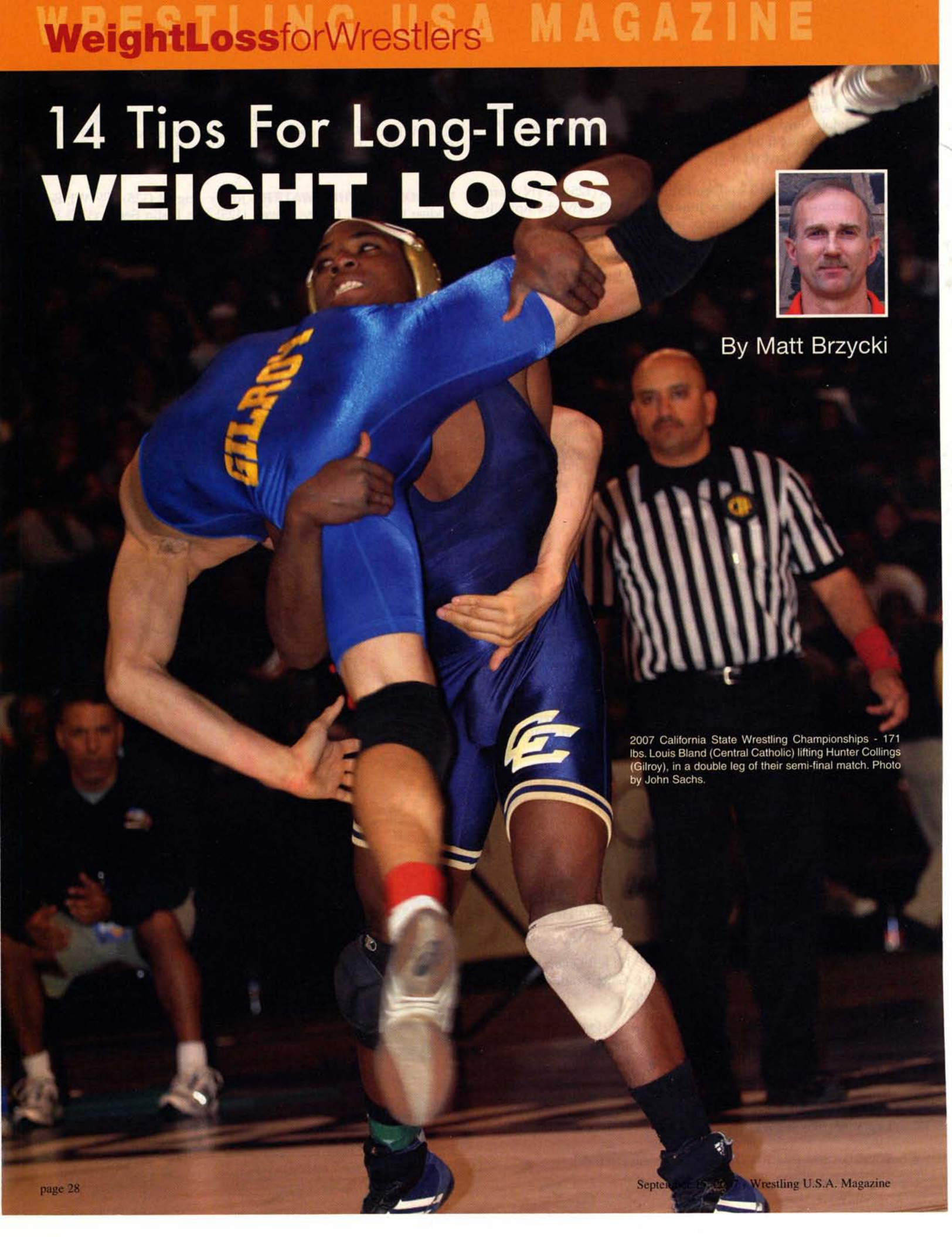


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14 Tips For Long-Term **WEIGHT LOSS**



By Matt Brzycki

A large action shot from a wrestling match. A wrestler in a blue singlet with "GILROY" on the back is lifting another wrestler in a blue singlet. A referee in a black and white striped shirt is visible in the background.

2007 California State Wrestling Championships - 171 lbs. Louis Bland (Central Catholic) lifting Hunter Collings (Gilroy), in a double leg of their semi-final match. Photo by John Sachs.

The mechanics of weight loss are relatively simple: In order to lose weight, your caloric output must be greater than your caloric intake. Stated differently, you must use more calories than you eat. But producing a "caloric deficit" is usually easier said than done, right?

There are many tactics that you can employ in your quest to lose weight. What follows are 14 tips for losing weight in a safe, sensible and effective manner. (Understand that these tactics are meant to foster a gradual loss of weight, not an immediate loss in order to "make weight" for a match.)

1. Set goals that are measurable and attainable.

Many individuals who try to lose weight are not very successful. One of the main reasons why this happens is that they do not set specific goals. The truth is that those who have explicit goals in mind are more likely to achieve them. It is also important for you to have goals that can be quantified. Rather than say that you want to lose weight, it is more effective to have a concrete target at which you can aim.

Although some people do set specific goals that are measurable, their goals are often far too difficult to attain. Most scientific and medical authorities recommend losing no more than about 1 - 2 pounds per week. Attempting to lose any more weight than this is destined to fail. A goal of losing 35 pounds of weight in four months, for example, is unrealistic (and unhealthy). A better tactic is to set a series of short-term goals – say, to lose one pound of weight per week for the next two months. Remember, taking a number of small steps can eventually lead to big changes.

2. Keep a food/activity log or diary.

Although calories count, there is no need for you to literally count calories. You do need to be mindful of calories, however. It is beneficial for you to record the specific foods that you eat as well as a rough idea of the quantity. By documenting this information, you may discover that you actually eat more food than you thought.

Since engaging in an exercise program is also an integral aspect of losing weight, it is a good idea to keep a log/diary of your activities as well. Note the types of activities that you do (such as strength training, aerobic conditioning, practicing and so on) along with the duration of the activities and, if applicable, the distances that you complete.

3. Read nutrition labels.

If you purchase your own food in a supermarket or convenience store, you should examine the food label. Based upon federal law, food labeling is required for most prepared foods. This includes breads, cereals, canned/frozen foods, snacks, desserts and beverages. Food labeling is not required for fruits, vegetables or fish.

An important part of the food label is the nutrition facts panel. With respect to weight loss, pay particular attention to the serving size, number of servings per container, total calories, calories from fat and total fat.

Also be wary of the fine print. For instance, a package of food that has 100 calories per serving means that the package has 100 calories if and only if it has one serving. If a package of food has 100 calories per serving but has four servings per package, eating the entire contents will give you 400 calories.

4. Become more knowledgeable.

The vast majority of restaurants do not readily disclose nutritional information for their foods . . . and for good reason. One well-known restaurant chain offers a burger that has 1,943 calories including 141 grams of fat, meaning that more than 65% of its calories are in the form of fat. Get a side of fries (359 calories; 13 grams of fat) with this colossal burger then finish the meal with a piece of chocolate cake (979 calories; 48 grams of fat) and you just downed a staggering 3,281 calories of which 202 grams (1,818 calories) came from fat. For most

people, that amounts to more than a day's worth of calories and about two or three day's worth of fat – all in one meal.

You won't be given the grim details at too many restaurants. Nevertheless, most family-style restaurants have web-sites that list their nutritional information.

5. Decrease the size of portions.

If you are already eating a balanced array of foods, a highly effective tactic for weight loss is to reduce the size of your portions. Decreasing portion sizes is fairly easy to do: You can simply use smaller plates and bowls for your foods and smaller glasses/cups for your beverages. Essentially, doing this will help you to limit the size of portions and, as a result, lower the number of calories that you consume. And it certainly makes sense that if someone decides to eat an entire bowl of potato chips, for example, a smaller bowl would yield fewer calories than a larger bowl.

But how much can this really help? As part of a recent study, 85 individuals were invited to attend an ice cream social. Unbeknownst to the participants, they were randomly given either a small (17 ounces) or large (34 ounces) bowl as well as either a small (two ounces) or large (three ounces) spoon with which they scooped their serving. Those who used a larger spoon and a larger bowl consumed 56.8% more ice cream than those who used a smaller spoon and a smaller bowl. Perhaps even more fascinating is the fact that the "subjects" in this study were faculty, graduate students and staff members of a nutrition and food science department at a large university.

Along these lines, here is something else that is interesting: People tend to pour more fluids into short, wide glasses than tall, narrow ones. For instance, researchers discovered that 86 experienced bartenders in Philadelphia unknowingly poured 20.5% more alcohol into short tumblers than tall "highball" glasses of the same volume. And I bet you thought that Philly was only known for cheese steaks, Rocky Balboa and the Liberty Bell.

6. Drink more water.

It is a wise move to drink plenty of water before, during and after meals. Remember, water has weight but no calories. Therefore, drinking water creates a feeling of satiety (fullness) without adding anything to your caloric budget.

Here is something of interest: In one study, subjects ate the same food for lunch but drank a different type of beverage (either regular cola, diet cola or water). Regardless of the beverage, the subjects ate the same number of calories. So, the calories from the beverage were added to the calories from the meal. This means that when water was the beverage with the meal, fewer calories were consumed.

7. Start meals with soup and/or salad.

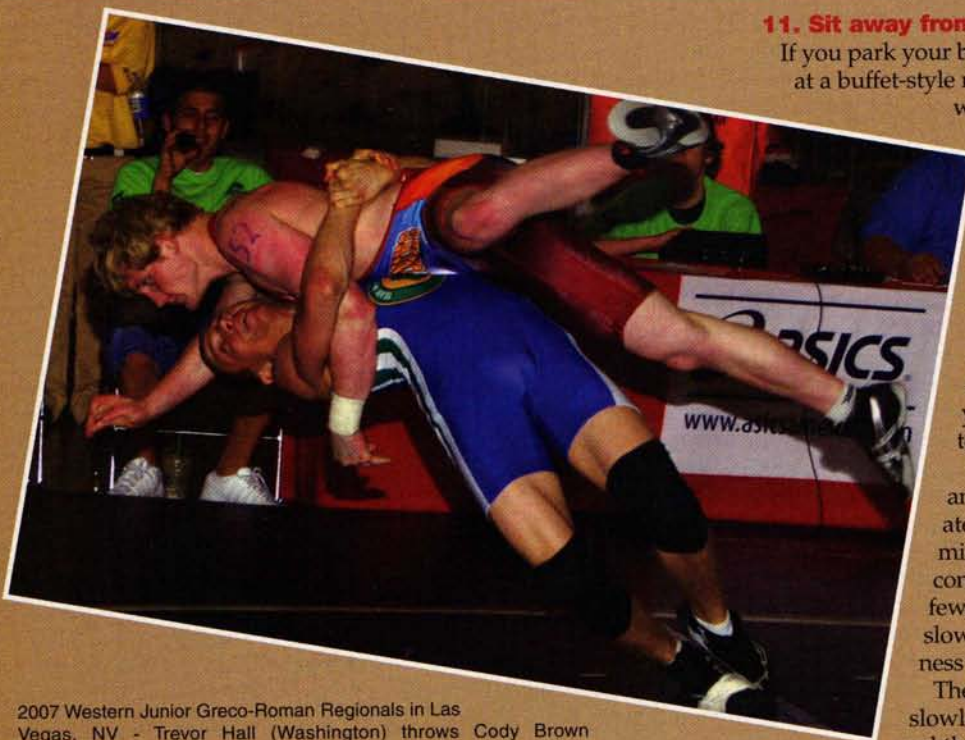
This is a very simple and easy tactic to implement. Because they are comprised of mostly water, soups and salads can provide relatively few calories but give you a feeling of fullness. If you lead off with soup and/or salad, then, you are less likely to consume as many calories during the rest of your meal.

Key point: Generally speaking, broth-based soups have fewer calories (and fat) than cream-based ones. And even though they are both salads, a garden salad usually has fewer calories (and fat) than a Caesar salad.

8. Eat more fruits and vegetables.

As has already been noted, foods that offer very few calories along with a feeling of fullness are great choices for losing weight. Fruits and vegetables meet these criteria because they contain exceptionally high amounts of water.

Moreover, fruits and vegetables have an added benefit: They are jam-packed with vitamins and minerals. Truly, nothing on this planet comes closer to being a magical food than fruits and vegetables.



2007 Western Junior Greco-Roman Regionals in Las Vegas, NV - Trevor Hall (Washington) throws Cody Brown (Wyoming). Hall went on to take 1st place in the tournament. Photo by Dave Jedlicka.

11. Sit away from the serving area.

If you park your butt near a serving area – whether it is at home or at a buffet-style restaurant – the food is readily available and you will be much more tempted to eat more than you should. It is pretty easy to reach across the table or get up and take a few steps to grab second (or third) helpings. And do not forget something else about sitting away from food: Out of sight, out of mind, out of mouth.

12. Chew your food slowly.

At first glance, this tip might sound a wee bit odd. If you chew your food slowly, however, you are less likely to mindlessly inhale your food as if you are the defending champion in an eating contest.

In one study, subjects were given a plate of food and told to eat as much as they wanted. When they ate quickly, they consumed 646 calories in nine minutes; when they chewed their food slowly, they consumed 579 calories in 29 minutes. Besides eating fewer calories when they chewed their food more slowly, the subjects reported greater feelings of fullness and enjoyed the meal more.

The fact of the matter is that chewing your food slowly gives your brain adequate time to receive a signal that you are full. In addition, taking your time will facilitate the digestive process.

To help you slow down, you can place your fork or spoon on the table between bites. So, pay attention to the food that you eat and take the time to really savor the flavor.

13. Avoid doing activities while you eat.

Certain activities are associated with eating. This includes watching television, playing a board game and reading a book. When engaged in such activities, people focus on what they are doing rather than what they are eating. Therefore, it is a good idea not to eat during those activities. A great strategy to keep you from doing this is to only eat in a designated place (and not in front of a television).

If you do get caught in these or other situations, use your non-dominant hand to pick up food. It sounds strange but the added effort makes it less likely that you will overeat.

14. Eat more frequently.

This tip might seem counterintuitive but the idea is to eat more meals that are of smaller size. In doing so, you will be able to keep your hunger at bay.

One of the worst things that you can do is skip a meal. In this case, you will be ravenous and the next time that you have a meal, you will probably be looking to eat anything that does not move.

THE LAST REP

Losing weight is a matter of arithmetic: The number of calories used must be greater than the number of calories consumed. Implementing these 14 tips will help you “do the math” and lose weight.

Matt Brzycki has authored, co-authored or edited 16 books on strength and fitness including four that are devoted to wrestling. The four are available at all major bookstores or through Cardinal Publishers Group (800-296-0481).

Yet, many people struggle with getting enough fruits and vegetables. An effective way to meet this challenge is to keep them on hand. Then, you can incorporate different tactics to increase your intake of fruits and vegetables. For example, you can eat fruits as snacks. You can add vegetables to your soup. Or, you can put sliced tomatoes and/or lettuce on your sandwich. In short, use your imagination.

And while on the subject, it is important to consume a variety of fruits and vegetables. Since fruits and vegetables come in such a wide range of colors, just follow this simple directive to ensure variety: Eat a rainbow.

9. Consume foods that are low in fat.

A food that is high in fat is dense with calories. Packed with nine calories per gram, fats are more than twice as dense as carbohydrates and protein (which have four per gram). Or look at it this way: A food that is high in fat has more calories for the same weight than a food that is low in fat.

In particular, you should reduce your intake of saturated fats (found in red meats and high-fat dairy products) and trans fats (found in many baked goods and fried foods). Limiting your consumption of fats dramatically decreases the number of calories that you consume. Plus, it makes your food intake much healthier.

Studies have shown that people tend to eat about the same weight of food each day. So choosing foods with a low energy density – those that have the smallest number of calories in the largest portions – will mean that fewer calories are consumed without sacrificing satiety.

10. Get more fiber.

Fiber is a type of carbohydrate that cannot be fully digested. Foods that are high in fiber tend to have fewer calories – an obvious advantage for weight loss. Also, fiber slows the rate at which food passes through your digestive system thereby increasing satiety. You can boost your intake of fiber by eating fruits, vegetables and whole-grain products (such as breads and cereals).