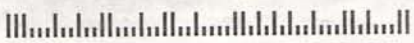
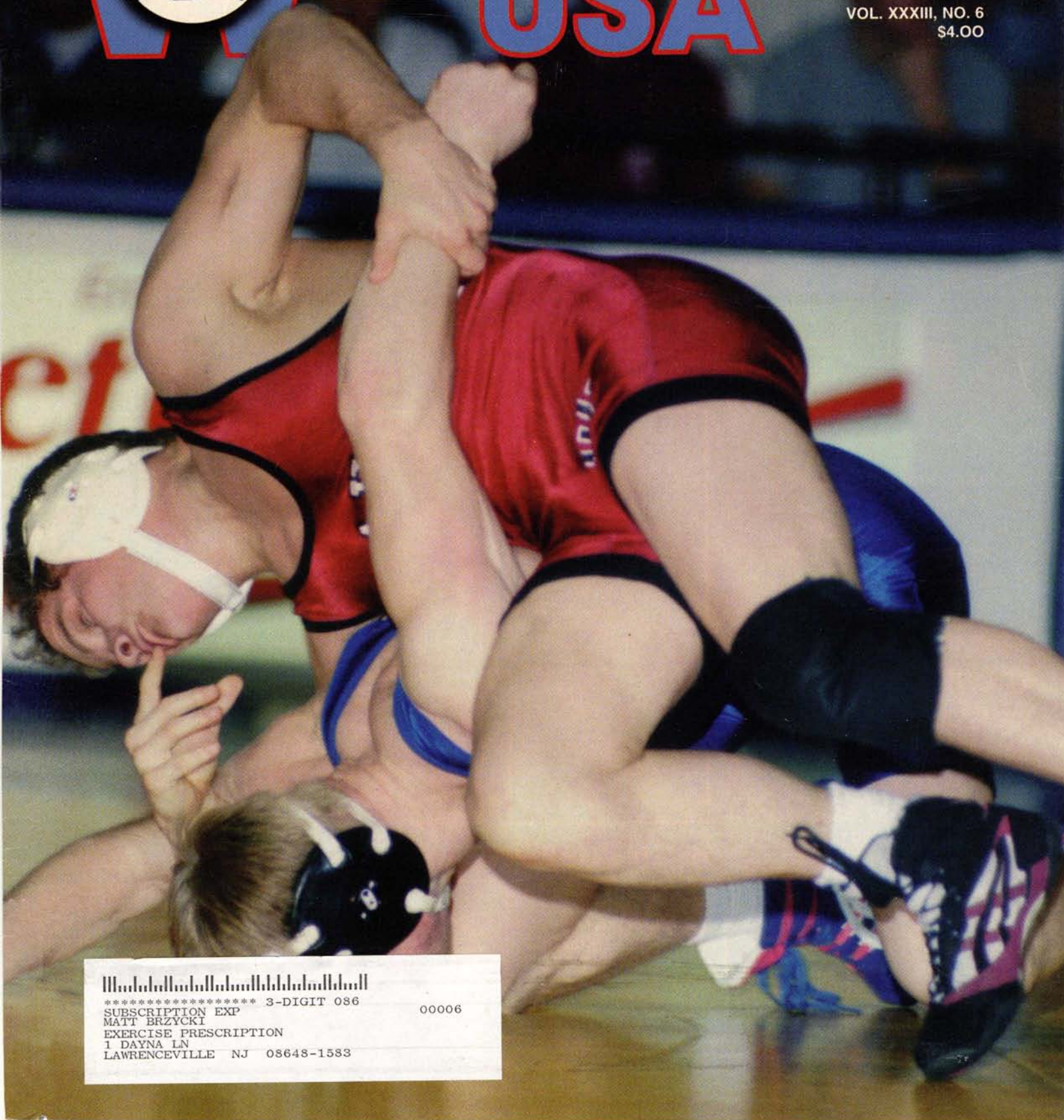


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# 10 Myths In Strength and Fitness

**1. Free weights are better than machines for improving muscular strength.** In order for wrestlers to increase their strength, an adequate load (or resistance) must be applied to their muscles and the workload must be progressively more challenging. Muscles can be "loaded" using a variety of equipment including barbells, dumbbells, machines (selectorized or plate-loading), cinder blocks, other wrestlers (when doing manual resistance exercise) or a wrestler's own bodyweight (when doing dips and chins). A wrestler's response to strength training is primarily a function of individual genetics and their level of intensity or effort — not the equipment that is used.

**2. In order to become more explosive on the mat, wrestlers must lift explosively in the weight room.** There's no scientific evidence to suggest that performing repetitions with rapid speeds of movement will make wrestlers more explosive on the wrestling mat. When repetitions are performed explosively, there's a load on the muscles in the first part of the movement but not on the last part of the movement. More importantly, the faster a weight is lifted the more dangerous it becomes. Therefore, repetitions should be performed with a deliberate, controlled speed of movement to make the exercise more efficient and to reduce the risk of injury.

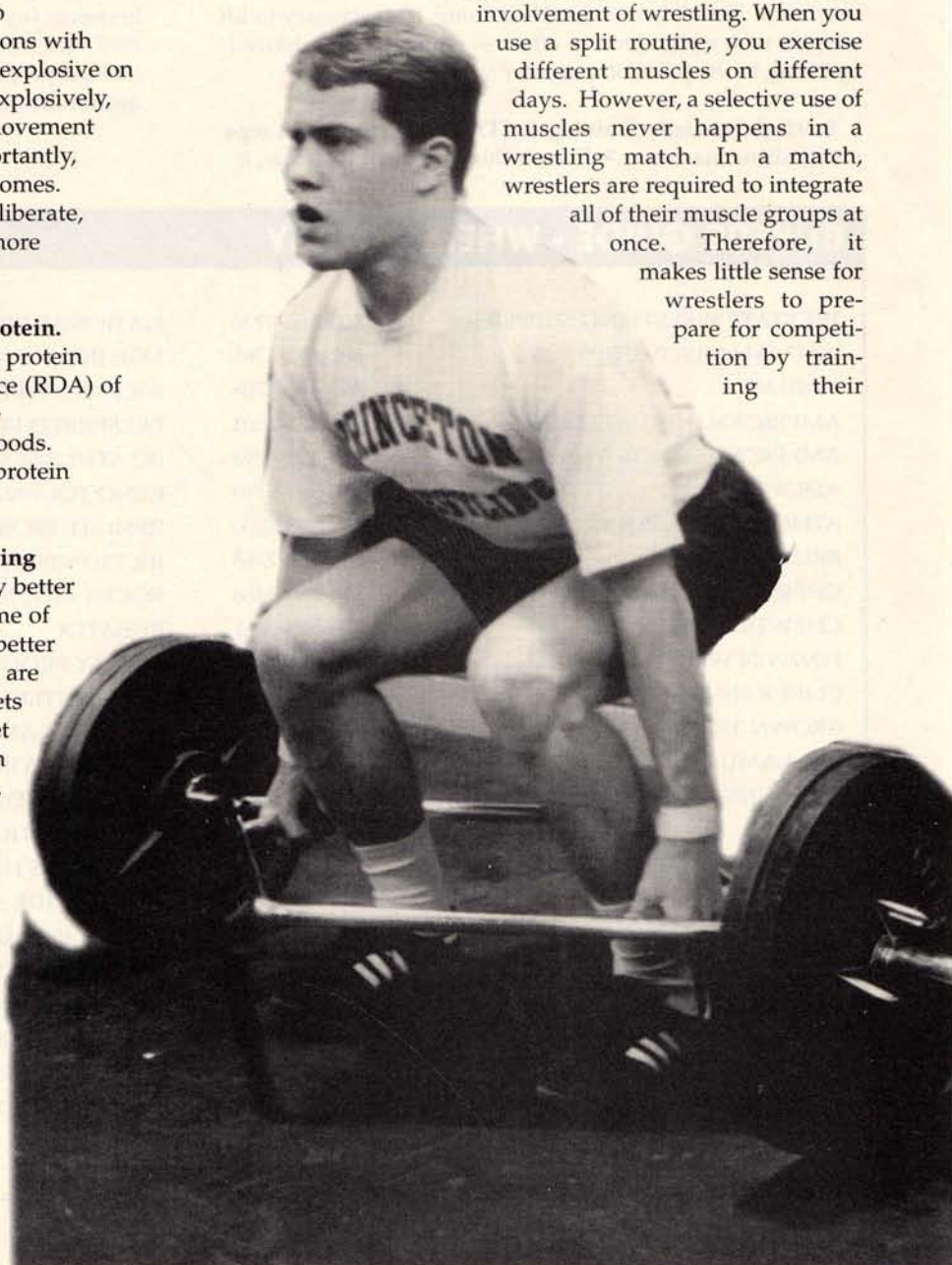
**3. Wrestlers need to consume large amounts of protein.** Some research suggests active individuals need more protein than the established Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA) of 0.8g/kg/day. These greater protein requirements are usually met quite easily through a normal intake of foods. However, wrestlers who are vegetarian may require protein supplementation to meet their daily needs.

**4. A high-volume approach is the key to maximizing strength.** A "More-is-Better" attitude isn't necessarily better when it comes to strength training. If a greater volume of strength training was the key, then 2 sets would be better than 1 set, 3 sets would be better than 2 sets which are better than 1 set, 4 sets would be better than 3 sets which are better than 2 sets which are better than 1 set and so on. If anything, the key to maximizing strength is the level of effort (or intensity) in the weight room. Remember, too, that as the level of effort increases the volume of activity must decrease. Therefore, if strength training workout is to be intense, it simply cannot involve a high volume of activity.

**5. Power cleans are specific to many wrestling skills.** The word "specific" means "exact" or "identical" not "similar" or "just like." The only skill that is identical to a power clean is a power clean. Whenever a wrestling skill is performed, it involves a certain neuromuscular pattern that is unique to the skill. Simulating the skill with a weighted object — such as a barbell — involves a

totally different neuromuscular program. At best, trying to imitate wrestling skills with weighted objects is a waste of time; at worst, it creates neuromuscular confusion such that the previously established skill patterns must be relearned. The best way for athletes to improve a wrestling skill is to practice the exact skill over and over and over again until it is instinctive. Furthermore, the skill must be practiced with perfect technique exactly as it would be done in a match. There is no exercise done in the weight room — with barbells or machines — that is specific to any wrestling skill.

**6. Split routines are better than total-body workouts.** From an athletic perspective, split routines aren't recommended because they aren't specific to the muscular involvement of wrestling. When you use a split routine, you exercise different muscles on different days. However, a selective use of muscles never happens in a wrestling match. In a match, wrestlers are required to integrate all of their muscle groups at once. Therefore, it makes little sense for wrestlers to prepare for competition by training their





muscles separately on different days.

#### 7. Periodization is the best method for increasing strength.

Periodization is the preferred training method of competitive weightlifters who must "peak" for a one-repetition maximum. For the most part, competitive weightlifters must "peak" for only two or three contests a year. On the other hand, wrestlers have to "peak" for dozens of matches a year — sometimes several in one day. In addition, periodization is characterized by pre-planned workouts which can be unnecessarily complicated and don't take into account individual differences in trainability. Besides, there's an abundance of scientific and anecdotal evidence pointing to the fact that many different methods can increase muscular strength.

#### 8. Wrestlers who lift weights to the point of muscular failure are teaching themselves to fail.

Since training to muscular failure is essentially using a high degree of effort and training to exhaustion, this would also mean that anytime wrestlers pushed themselves to exhaustion — whether it be at practice or a match or a conditioning run or anything else — they were teaching themselves to fail. This makes no sense whatsoever. If anything, wrestlers who stop short of muscle failure are teaching themselves to give up. In order to ensure maximum results from strength training, it's necessary to lift weights with a high level of effort — which is characterized by lifting to the point of muscular failure.

#### 9. High Intensity Training (HIT) is "one set of 8-12 reps on Nautilus machines." Even if this statement was true, it

would still be a gross oversimplification of HIT. In fact, one of the great attributes of HIT is its versatility. First of all, HIT does not have to be one set of an exercise — it's not uncommon for HIT practitioners to recommend two or three sets of an exercise. Repetition ranges can also be manipulated to provide variety in training and to reduce the orthopedic stress in younger wrestlers or for the purposes of rehabilitation. Moreover, the resistance used in HIT can come from any type of equipment or "tool." Incidentally, the speed of movement, volume of workouts, sequence of exercises, duration of workouts and frequency of training can all be varied as well.

#### 10. Princeton University doesn't have a wrestling team.

This has absolutely nothing to do with strength and fitness, but it's a myth nonetheless. In recent years, the wrestling program has gone through turbulent times. However, the program remains intact. In fact, Princeton University has competed in the Eastern Intercollegiate Wrestling Association (EIWA) tournament every year since 1906, having won the very first championship. In addition, the National Wrestling Coaches Association named Princeton University the 1996 Academic National Champions. Head coach Michael New is also the current secretary for the Ivy League Wrestling Coaches Association. Finally, Princeton University was the host school for the first-ever Ivy League Wrestling Championships on November 15, 1997. Recruiting efforts and a dedicated base of talent assure that the program will be competitive again in the not too distant future.

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