



## THE DANGERS OF CUTTING WEIGHT AND DEHYDRATING

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Unhealthy and dangerous weight loss practices continue to be a serious problem in combat sports. One recent study found that 39% of MMA fighters were entering competition in a dehydrated state. Heat illness and death in athletes have already happened in the sports of wrestling, boxing and MMA. It's been shown that excessive weight loss, rapid weight loss, and repeated cycling of weight gain/loss causes decreased performance, hormonal imbalance, decreased nutrition, and increased injury risk. Other life-threatening problems associated with improper weight loss and dehydration includes:

- **Decreased Muscle Strength & Endurance:** decreased blood flow to muscles makes them work less well
- **Decreased Heart & Cardiovascular Function:** the heart works harder and *less* efficiently
- **Reduced Energy Utilization, Nutrient Exchange & Acidosis:** with decreased blood flow to tissues, nutrients don't get delivered, and the body's waste products do not get removed as well. A buildup of acid occurs which changes cells' functions in the body
- **Heat Illness:** this takes on 4 forms: heat cramps, heat syncope (loss of consciousness), heat exhaustion, and heat stroke(which may be fatal).
- **Decreased Kidney Functions:** dehydration leads to decreased kidney blood flow & decreased kidney function.
- **Electrolyte Problems:** decreased kidney function results in imbalances of electrolytes such as unhealthy increases in potassium & sodium.
- **Mood Swings & Mental Changes:** dehydration contributes to increased mood swings, poor concentration & focus, disorientation& other mental changes
- **Eye Trouble:** dehydration can cause blurred vision & dry eyes
- **Increased Risk of Brain Injury:** there are likely increased risks of brain bleeding & concussion

### DON'T:

- Don't use extreme methods for making weight such as excessive heat methods (rubberized suits, steam rooms, saunas), excessive intense bouts of exercise, vomiting, laxatives & diuretics.
- Don't use dehydration as a mainstay of making weight. It puts you at risk of improper rehydration techniques-when in reality; proper re-hydration takes several hours to days. (Many cases of IV fluids being used for rehydration after weigh-ins have been reported-this is a doping violation with several organizations)

### DO:

- Commit to year-round proper diet & training for proper weight control & body composition
- Maintain your weight year round near an appropriate competition weight & don't compete in a weight class outside your appropriate weight class
- Maintain a good state of hydration by drinking fluid throughout the day & staying hydrated during workouts