



Making Weight, Safely

A responsible approach for weight-category athletes

Combat and weight-category sports mean hitting a number on the scales. Done carelessly, rapid weight cutting is dangerous and hurts performance. This guide covers the sensible principles. It is not a crash-cutting protocol, and it should always sit alongside your coach and qualified support.

Get ahead of it

The safest strategy is to start early and carry less weight to cut. Reduce body fat gradually in the weeks before, so you arrive close to your category without drastic last-minute measures. The less you have to cut acutely, the safer and stronger you will be.

Small, sensible manipulations

- Lowering fibre for a day or two temporarily reduces gut contents.
- Reducing salt can limit water retention.
- Any acute cut should be small, brief and supervised, ideally within a few percent of body weight.

Aggressive dehydration is dangerous. Saunas, extreme sweating, crash fluid restriction and water pills (diuretics) can harm your heart, kidneys and brain, and diuretics are banned in sport. Never crash-cut alone, always work with your coach and qualified medical or nutrition support.

The recovery window is everything

How you refuel after the weigh-in often matters more than the cut itself. To perform, rehydrate and refuel properly:

- **Rehydrate** with an electrolyte drink to replace the sodium, potassium and calcium lost in sweat, around 1.5 litres per kg lost, spaced out.
- **Refuel** glycogen with high-GI, low-fat, low-fibre carbohydrates such as potatoes, rice, pasta and bread, spread across the hours before competition.
- **Do not overdo it.** Too much too fast leaves you sluggish and needing the toilet.

A note on scope. Rapid weight-making has real health risks and is not right for everyone. I can support sensible, longer-term weight management. Acute weight cutting for competition should be planned with your coach and a qualified sports dietitian or medical professional.

Where to learn more: the British Dietetic Association (BDA) and Sport and Exercise Nutrition register (SENr), your sport's governing body, and UK Anti-Doping (diuretics are banned). Please involve qualified support before cutting weight.

This leaflet is general nutritional guidance for education only. It is not medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. Rapid weight manipulation carries health risks and must be supervised by qualified professionals. Always speak to your GP or a registered sports dietitian.

Ready to take the next step? Book a free call or start your food diary analysis at performancenutritionlondon.co.uk