

GRAPPLESTRONG

COMPETITION PERFORMANCE

COMP DAY

NUTRITION

Your complete guide to crushing comp day and winning more matches — fuel the fight, the right way.

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COACH
GRAPPLESTRONG

WHO WE ARE

ABOUT GRAPPLESTRONG

GRAPPLESTRONG is an online coaching business, providing professional coaching for athletes of all levels.

We help you physically dominate your sport, stay injury-free and make that next step — to train, eat and perform like a professional. We also help people who simply want to look and feel better.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

We could write a load of waffle here — you probably don't care. Just follow us on Instagram: @jaybell1 and @grapplestrong.co.

START HERE

THE PRINCIPLES

We want you to adjust your current routine — not re-invent the wheel. Small tweaks at the right time is what's needed.

01**SMALL CHANGES**

Small tweaks at the right time. Don't overhaul everything.

02**PRACTICE**

Trial your breakfast and snacks.
Trial and error removes decision fatigue.

03**PLAN**

Once you know your comp times, plan warm-ups, meals and snacks.

WHY IT MATTERS

Gassing out or being underfuelled is a big reason people fail at comps. You don't want added stress, or guesswork, on the day.

01

SECTION 01

LEADING INTO THE COMP

- NUTRITION BEFORE COMPETITION
- REPLICATION & THE MOCK COMP
- CARB LOADING & THE WEEK BEFORE

01 / LEADING INTO THE COMP

NUTRITION BEFORE THE COMP

Before the competition, stick to your normal pattern of eating — but be aware of what works for you. Do you feel energised in training? Note what you ate. Feel sluggish? Work out why, and change it.

You don't want any new foods on competition day, so find what works for you in advance. The closer you get to the comp, the more consistent your food choices should be.

AWAY FROM COMP

- More variety
- Trial and error with meals, timings, foods and supplements

1–2 WEEKS OUT

- Less variety, more consistency
- Only foods you know make you feel good

01 / LEADING INTO THE COMP

REPLICATION

The biggest factor that prevents optimal performance at comps is simply that you don't train or eat the way you do during a comp. It's essential you replicate some elements.

Most of us train one session a day. Comps are different — you might warm up, compete, cool down, re-warm and compete again. You don't need to turn your gym into ADCC trials, but some exposure prepares your body.

DRILL	HOW TO DO IT
Two sessions, 90 min apart	Test warming up, cooling down, re-warming and hitting another round. A good timeframe to practise.
Train morning & afternoon	Add a second session — your normal class plus another later in the day.
Train 3 days in a row	Train as normal for 2 days, then push hard on day 3 — replicating competing under accumulated fatigue.

01 / LEADING INTO THE COMP

CARB LOADING & THE WEEK BEFORE

Think drip feed, not load. All too often people load the night before and the morning of, leading to feeling heavy and bloated.

You should have a lower training volume leading into the competition. Rather than eating a tonne more food, eat as you would on a normal training day. If your output is lower but you keep calories and carbs where they'd be on a training day, you replenish glycogen without piling on extra food. That's the simple way to "carb load".

SIMPLE ADDITIONS

- An extra piece of fruit, or a palm-sized serving of carbs, to a meal.
- A small wrap added to a meal, or 2 extra rice cakes to a snack.
- Mix your protein shake with fruit juice; use honey and extra fruit on yoghurt; add extra oats to breakfast.

KEY POINTS

Drip feed calories and carbs across the week. Prep and plan your food. Taper your training. Don't stress about every single round.

SUPPLEMENTS

SUPPLEMENTS ARE SUPPLEMENTARY

They're not needed — but they can help. Certain supplements can be very beneficial to aid performance. The ones we use with athletes and clients:

CORE

Creatine · Beta-alanine · B vitamins · Carb powder & gels (cyclic dextrin / vitargo) · Beet actives (nitrates)

EXTRAS

Fish oils · Zinc & magnesium · Glutamine · Probiotics · Vitamin D · Vitamin C

THE HONEST TRUTH

Supplements are only worth it if the basics of your nutrition are in place. If you're struggling with that, you'd be better off spending the money on a nutrition coach. (Optimum Nutrition: use code JB20 for 20% off.)

COMP WEEK STRUCTURE

SAMPLE COMP WEEKS

How the week shapes up depending on whether you compete across 1, 2 or 3 days.

1-DAY EVENT

Mon–Wed	Training as normal — training-day nutrition.		
Thu–Fri	Training tapers — training-day nutrition + an extra snack.		
Sat	Comp — comp-day plan.	Sun	Movement — training-day nutrition.

2-DAY EVENT

Mon–Wed	Training as normal (+ extra snack from Wed).
Thu–Fri	Rest / light — training-day nutrition + extra snack.
Sat–Sun	Comp — comp-day plan both days.

3-DAY EVENT

Mon–Tue	Training as normal.
Wed–Thu	Rest / light — training-day nutrition + extra snack.
Fri–Sun	Comp — comp-day plan all three days.

02

SECTION 02

PREPPING FOR COMP DAY

- MEAL PREP FOR THE WEEKEND
- BEING PREPARED & ADAPTABLE
- FOODS, MEALS & SNACKS

02 / PREPPING FOR COMP DAY

MEAL PREP FOR THE COMP

Take control of your food on competition weekends — don't rely on food stands or Deliveroo.

Competition food should be simple. Make sure you have:

- Breakfast.
- One mini-meal / large snack (Meal 1).
- One main meal, eaten between workouts (Meal 2).
- One meal, eaten after the workouts are done (Meal 3).
- At least 3 snacks, plus a shake.

A SAMPLE COMP DAY PLAN

SLOT	EXAMPLE
Breakfast	3 eggs, 1 bagel, ½ can beans or 1 avocado, fruit, coffee.
Meal 1	Overnight oats — oats, chia, banana, dates, almond milk, protein.
Meal 2	2 wraps, each with ½ can tuna, mayo, 50g rice, tomatoes.
Meal 3	Chicken pesto pasta, peas, cheese.
Snacks & shake	Clif bar + apple · smoothie · bagel thin or rice cakes & jam · Skyr · muesli. Shake: 40g cyclic dextrin, glutamine, creatine.

02 / PREPPING FOR COMP DAY

BEING PREPARED & ADAPTABLE

Sometimes you won't have a fully stocked fridge. Be adaptable — find the local supermarket, know your restaurant and delivery options, and take a cooler bag to keep food chilled for the next day.

TRAVEL-FRIENDLY FOOD

- Dry mixtures — oats, seeds, protein powder, dried fruit — just add water or milk.
- Packets of pre-cooked rice, beans or pulses; tins of tuna or other fish.
- Rice cakes, nut butter and jam; wraps for a quick rice-and-bean burrito.
- Cereals, nuts, seeds, bars and fruit — no refrigeration needed.

COMP-DAY PREP

Eat the same breakfast you've practised. Get up and get hydrated. Eat your biggest meal in your longest break. Use a mix of liquid and solid nutrition — and use food for fuel, not just caffeine.

02 / PREPPING FOR COMP DAY

FOODS TO FOCUS ON

The food we eat on competition day needs to supercharge us — not bring on a food coma. Before and between bouts, focus on lighter, easy-to-digest options.

PROTEIN	VEG	CARBS	FATS
Lean meat & fish, mince under 5% fat	Beetroot, spinach, tomatoes, peppers, peas, corn, carrots	All fruit, grains (rice, oats, quinoa), wraps, corn & rice cakes, mash, bread	Avocados, coconut products, nuts & seeds, oils
Eggs, protein powder, tofu / low-fat vegan alts	Easy-to-digest veg	Mashed potato is easier to digest	Use sparingly pre-bouts

AFTER ALL ROUNDS ARE DONE

Open it up — all meat including fattier cuts, all veg (add more fibrous), all fruit, all grains, potatoes and root veg, beans and pulses, nuts, seeds and oils.

02 / PREPPING FOR COMP DAY

BREAKFAST & MEAL OPTIONS

BREAKFAST	MEAL 1	MEAL 2
Eggs, avocado, spinach, mushrooms, bread · Oats, chia, banana, dates, almond milk, protein · Bagel, smoked salmon, eggs, cream cheese · Greek yoghurt, granola, berries, kiwi, peanut butter	Yoghurt, granola, banana, honey · Boiled eggs, tortilla, spinach, hot sauce · Smoothie — banana, kiwi, spinach, pineapple juice, protein, avocado · Oats, protein, apple, cinnamon, honey, flaxseed	Tortilla wraps, tuna, yoghurt, rice, pesto · Sushi (not deep-fried) · Pitta, hummus, chicken, peppers · Bagel, peanut butter, jam
MEAL 3		
Turkey mince, rice, peppers, soy & honey · Fish, sweet potato mash, corn · Chicken pasta, peas, pesto · Tuna, quinoa & rice, baby veg, lemon & herbs		

02 / PREPPING FOR COMP DAY

SNACKS & CAFFEINE

SNACK OPTIONS

Rice cake & jam · smoothie · Soreen loaf · grapes & nut butter · bagel thin & nut butter · fruit · yoghurt & pumpkin seeds · cashews & dried fruit · raw balls / oat bar.

CAFFEINE

Caffeine is a proven ergogenic aid — it improves both aerobic and anaerobic performance, making it a great addition to your comp-day plan. The source doesn't matter; coffee or an energy drink are the same.

THE DANGER IS IN THE DOSE

Research suggests 400mg of caffeine a day is fine — some athletes tolerate ~600mg. Beyond that you won't see further benefit, and the negative effects start to creep in. Use caffeine — but don't rely on it. Use food for fuel.

03

SECTION 03

COMP DAY

- KEY AREAS OF FOCUS
- A SAMPLE COMP-DAY PLAN
- MULTI-DAY COMPS & MANAGING FATIGUE

03 / COMP DAY

FUEL THE FIGHT

The day is here. Do not start experimenting on competition day — only eat something you have eaten before.

What you eat leading into a match matters more than what you eat after it. Don't wait until the fight is over. Comp workouts predominantly use the glycolytic energy system — and its primary fuel is carbohydrate. Don't be scared of carbs.

KEY AREAS OF FOCUS

- Breakfast should be the same as always.
- Have a set plan, but stay flexible.
- Hydrate early and stay hydrated.
- Eat your largest meal in your biggest gap — regardless of when that is.
- Carbohydrates are your friend.
- Use a mixture of liquid and solid nutrition.

03 / COMP DAY

A SAMPLE COMP-DAY PLAN

A model 1-day comp — work backwards from each warm-up. Adjust to your own schedule.

Morning	Eggs, bagel, bacon, spinach, fruit — the same breakfast you've practised.
-60 min	Nakd bar and coffee, before morning Gi matches.
After Gi	Granola, yoghurt, mixed fruit — easy to digest.
-45 min	1 banana + coffee, before afternoon No-Gi matches.
Big gap	Biggest meal — 2 wraps with tuna, mayo, pesto & tomatoes.
Warm-up	2 chocolate-covered rice cakes + apple; sip a carb drink.
Post	Protein shake to kick-start recovery, after evening matches.
Evening	An "off-plan" meal — you've earned it.

03 / COMP DAY

MULTI-DAY COMPS & FATIGUE

ACROSS 2–3 DAYS

- You must eat after day 1's events are done — appetite can be suppressed, but get a proper meal in soon after the last match.
- Save the blowout until the comp is finished — eat big, but eat relatively clean to avoid feeling worse the next day.
- Eat a little more at breakfast on day 2. On day 3, lean on energy-dense foods and liquid nutrition — dried fruit, Soreen, nuts, smoothies, juices.
- Don't be afraid to use "less healthy" food late on to hit your calories. Do your research on local supermarkets.

WHY WE FATIGUE

Fatigue is a temporary, reversible reduction in strength — the loss of the ability to voluntarily produce force. It comes in two forms: **peripheral** fatigue (in the working muscles) and **central nervous system** fatigue (a reduced ability to fully activate a muscle). CNS fatigue can occur from sub-maximal work too — even light training fatigues you, which is exactly why you manage your load into the weekend.

04

SECTION 04

AFTER THE COMP

- IMMUNE FUNCTION
- FOODS TO FOCUS ON POST-COMP
- YOUR PRE-COMP SUPPLEMENT PLAN

04 / AFTER THE COMP

RECOVER & REBUILD

We often see a rise in illness after an intense competition. Heavy exercise leaves an "open window" where you're more susceptible to infection — so refuel after your workouts, and take time to repair and relax once the comp is done.

FOCUS ON THESE FOODS POST-COMP

PROTEIN	VEG & FRUIT	CARBS	FATS
Good-quality meat, all fish & seafood, eggs, higher-fat dairy, vegan protein	All veg, all fruit — eat the rainbow	Wholemeal grains & bread, potatoes, root veg, beans, pulses	Avocados, nuts, seeds, fats from meat & eggs, olive oil

KEY RECOVERY NUTRIENTS

Omegas (salmon, mackerel, seeds), Vitamin D, Vitamin C (berries, citrus, broccoli) and antioxidants (dark-coloured fruit & veg) all support repair, lower stress hormones and rebuild connective tissue. Limit deep-fried and heavily processed food.

04 / AFTER THE COMP

PRE-COMP SUPPLEMENT PLAN

NAME	DOSE	REASON
Beta-alanine	3–5g daily, anytime	Reduces and delays fatigue by buffering hydrogen ions from lactic acid.
Nitrates	1 shot, 2–3x a week	Boosts blood flow — more nutrient delivery and waste clearance.
B vitamins	1 capsule with a meal	Crucial for energy production; can't be stored, so need a continual supply.
Creatine	5g per day	Increases strength, power and cognitive function; restores glycogen faster.
Fish oil & Vit D	3 caps fish oil + 2,000 IU D	Supports muscle function, lowers inflammation, improves recovery.
Glutamine	10g, empty stomach	Supports immune function, gut health and muscle repair.
Probiotics	2 caps	Optimal gut health and immune function — good post-comp.
ZMA	2 caps	Zinc & magnesium can be depleted during intense training periods.

FINAL WORD

GO WIN

As you do more competitions, you'll refine your nutrition — until you barely think about it.

PREPARE ADEQUATELY. BE ADAPTABLE ON THE DAY. DON'T PUT TOO MUCH PRESSURE ON YOURSELF.

The most important thing is to enjoy it. Now go wrestle — and go win.

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