



**Policy on Making
Weight for Training
and Competition
2014**

BRITISH TAEKWONDO®

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(1) INTRODUCTION

- (a) The sport of WTF Taekwondo ('Sport Taekwondo') is 'weight-regulated', meaning that athletes compete in specific weight divisions. This, in itself, exacerbates the difficulties of complying with good nutritional practises. However, selecting the weight category for an athlete is of utmost importance, not to only to compete with optimum chance of performing well and winning but also for the athlete's health and well-being.
- (b) Cyclic dieting can be inevitable in Sport Taekwondo and this can have both short and long term detrimental effects such as:
- Eating Disorders/Disordered Eating
 - Lowering metabolism leading to future weight gain
 - 'Female Triad'
 - Disordered eating
 - Amenorrhea (loss of a girl's period)
 - Osteoporosis (a weakening of the bones)

You need to minimise these effects in order to maintain health and performance.

- (c) Following appropriate dietary guidelines will help reduce the risk of negative effects to both health and performance.
- (d) Poor weight-loss procedures can lead to:
- Catabolism (tissue breakdown)
 - Protein degradation
 - Compromised immunity
 - Weight loss of 50% Fat and 50% FFM (Fat Free Mass) instead of optimal 75% fat and 25%FFM
 - Reduced adaptation to training
 - Loss of speed and power
 - Reduced performance
 - Increased risk of injury and illness
- (e) This document outlines the advised 'Making Weight' procedures for all Taekwondo athletes competing in this weight regulated sport.
- (f) The policy is based on 'Best Practice Guidelines' as advised by UK Sport. It is important that all athletes follow best code of practise for meeting their selected weight category requirements so as to ensure that they can make weight whilst maintaining optimal competition performance and minimising health risks.

It is important to note that a severe weight-making programme in the week or days preceding a competition often results in significant distress, underperformance, injury and ill-health.

(2) NUTRITIONAL WEIGHT-LOSS ISSUES

- (a) The duration/timing of a 'Making Weight' plan will consider:
- Amount of weight loss required
 - Individual athlete training programme being undertaken
 - Actual competition weigh-in date
- (b) The plan should be agreed by the athlete, coach, parent and if possible Dietician/Sports Nutritionist.
- (c) Taekwondo athletes who need to 'Make Weight' should aim for a weight loss at the rate of no more than 1 kg/week, as an excessively restrictive diet can be detrimental to performance, health and result in increased loss in muscle mass.
- (d) Taekwondo athletes who need to 'Make Weight' should follow a 'Making Weight' plan with an *'energy deficit'* of 500-1000 kcal/day. This will provide the appropriate weight loss rate and thus maximise fat loss but minimise muscle loss.
- (e) Most Taekwondo athletes training at high intensity and/or long duration will require a minimum of 1,500-2,000 kcal/day. A minimum of 1,200-1,500 kcal might be considered the lowest energy intake level possible to provide all basic nutrition for the body.

It is important to note that reductions of calorie intake to below 1,500 kcal can hinder the ability of the Taekwondo athlete to train.

- (f) Taekwondo athletes who need to 'Make Weight' should follow a healthy diet plan of:
- Low quantity of fat
 - Moderate quantity of 'low GI' carbohydrates
 - Moderate quantity of 'lean/low-fat' protein
 - Consuming foods from *all* food groups: *'Eat Well on a Plate'*
 - Avoiding 'fad' diets
 - Consume portion sizes appropriate for the individual
 - Avoid isotonic sports drinks. (Hypotonic hydration drinks are suitable.)

Energy	Taekwondo athletes who regularly consume restricted energy intake are at greater risk of health problems and reduced performance.
Carbohydrates	A readily available source of energy for sporting performance. Requirements depend on sex, body size, muscle mass, intensity and/or duration of training, and other daily activities.
Protein	For growth, repair and recovery.
Fat	Taekwondo athletes should have a low fat diet, <i>not a zero fat diet</i> , because fat is a vital part of an optimum diet, for fat-soluble vitamins (A, D, E and K) and essential fatty acids such as Omega-3.

- (g) It is advisable for all athletes 'Making Weight' to take an HFL *'Informed Sport'* batch-tested multi-vitamin preparation during 'Weight Making' periods. (See <http://www.informed-sport.com/en/about-informed-sport>.) Taekwondo athletes take any other supplements at their own personal risk, as supplements can be contaminated with other substances.

- (h) Taekwondo athletes are advised to avoid alcohol, junk food, high fat foods, high sugar foods and isotonic drinks during 'Making Weight' periods.
- (i) Taekwondo athletes should never miss meals as this decreases their metabolic rate.
- (j) Taekwondo athletes should not use any banned or inappropriate weight loss aids in order to 'Make Weight' for competition.
- (k) Taekwondo athletes should comply with appropriate post-weight-in recovery nutrition guidelines in order to maximise recovery.

(3) NON-NUTRITIONAL WEIGHT-LOSS ISSUES

- (a) Taekwondo athletes who are 'Making Weight' may be required to undertake additional training sessions (to increase fat-burning and metabolism) in order to achieve the desired weight loss.
- (b) A pre-breakfast run at a moderate intensity for 20 minutes will help maximise 'fat-burning' (but the athlete must always have an appropriate breakfast after the workout)
- (c) Any hypertrophy (muscle-gaining) training may have to be limited or even eliminated from a Taekwondo athlete's training programme if any muscle gain impedes the 'Making Weight' process.
- (d) Taekwondo athletes should be aware that any techniques for 'Making Weight' such as the following should be considered as high-risk methods of weight loss and should be avoided:
 - Starvation
 - Self-induced vomiting
 - Laxative abuse
 - Diuretic use
- (e) Taekwondo athletes should be aware that weight loss by dehydration should be avoided due to both health and performance issues but it may be required, *in some cases*, in order to 'Make Weight'.

If there is a need to dehydrate in order to make weight, then loss of any more than 2% of an athlete's hydrated body weight is not advised, from both a medical point and performance point of view.

If an athlete decides to dehydrate against the medical guidelines, they do so at their own risk.

(4) CADETS & JUNIORS

- (a) The fact that Sport Taekwondo is a weight-regulated sport is of particular importance for cadets and juniors as they are continually growing and maturing.
- (b) The coach therefore needs to be as informed as soon as possible and along with the Taekwondo athletes and parents so as to make an appropriate weight category decision.
- (c) Good nutrition is important for cadets and juniors for:
 - Growth and maturation (Adolescents)
 - Brain development (Adolescents)
 - Strong bones (Adolescents)
 - Maintaining a Healthy Weight

- Optimising body composition
 - Providing fuel for training
 - Optimising performance
 - Muscle adaptation
 - Minimising the risk of injury
 - Recovery from injury
 - Minimising the risk of illness
 - Recovery from illness
 - Avoiding deficiencies of nutrients
- (d) Try to choose the weight category nearest to the Taekwondo athlete's natural weight.
- (e) Avoid dieting, if possible.
- (f) If overweight, allow the Taekwondo athlete to grow into their weight.
- (g) Allow the Taekwondo athlete to progress naturally up the weight categories.
- (h) Encourage a healthy, balanced diet
- (i) If possible, avoid all dehydration practices as these increase the risk of heat injury in children and juniors until their sweating mechanism is fully developed.
- (j) **CADETS**
- Should not be encourage to lose weight
 - Should compete at their natural weight
 - Should not dehydrate to make weight
- (k) **JUNIORS**
- Should, if possible, not lose weight.
- However as a weight-regulated sport, there will be times when weight loss is preferable.*

In such cases, juniors should not be encouraged to lose more than 5% of their body weight.

(See Tables 1 and 2.)
- Juniors should only dehydrate if:
 - It is deemed to be safe.
 - Have parental permission.
 - They have a mature sweating mechanism. (That is, they sweat a lot.)
 - They do not dehydrate more than 2% of their body weight.
 - They do not start dehydration any sooner than 48 hr before the weigh-in.
 - They rehydrate appropriately, *immediately* after the weigh-in.

Table 1: Acceptable Weight-loss Boundaries for the Female Junior Weight Categories

Weight division	Maximum acceptable weight loss							
	Non-competition period		4-8 wks before competition		2 wks before competition		48 hr before competition	
	5%		4%		3%		≤2% of hydrated weight	
	Loss	From	Loss	From	Loss	From	Loss	From
-42 kg	2.1 kg	44.1 kg	1.7 kg	43.7 kg	1.3 kg	43.3 kg	0.8 kg	42.8 kg
-44 kg	2.2 kg	46.2 kg	1.7 kg	45.7 kg	1.3 kg	45.3 kg	0.9 kg	44.9 kg
-46 kg	2.3 kg	48.3 kg	1.8 kg	47.8 kg	1.4 kg	47.4 kg	0.9 kg	46.9 kg
-49 kg	2.5 kg	51.5 kg	2.0 kg	51.0 kg	1.5 kg	50.5 kg	1.0 kg	50.0 kg
-52 kg	2.6 kg	54.6 kg	2.0 kg	54.0 kg	1.6 kg	53.6 kg	1.0 kg	53.0 kg
-55 kg	2.7 kg	57.7 kg	2.2 kg	57.2 kg	1.7 kg	56.7 kg	1.1 kg	56.1 kg
-59 kg	2.9 kg	61.9 kg	2.3 kg	61.3 kg	1.8 kg	60.8 kg	1.2 kg	60.2 kg
-63 kg	3.1 kg	66.1 kg	2.5 kg	65.5 kg	1.9 kg	64.9 kg	1.2 kg	64.2 kg
-68 kg	3.4 kg	71.4 kg	2.7 kg	70.7 kg	2.0 kg	70.0 kg	1.0 kg	69.4 kg
+68 kg	-		-		-		-	

Table 2: Acceptable Weight-loss Boundaries for the Male Junior Weight Categories

Weight division	Maximum acceptable weight loss							
	Non-competition period		4-8 wks before competition		2 wks before competition		48 hr before competition	
	5%		4%		3%		≤2% of hydrated weight	
	Loss	From	Loss	From	Loss	From	Loss	From
-45 kg	2.2 kg	47.2 kg	1.8 kg	46.8 kg	1.3 kg	46.3 kg	0.9 kg	45.9 kg
-48 kg	2.4 kg	50.4 kg	1.9 kg	49.9 kg	1.4 kg	49.4 kg	0.9 kg	48.9 kg
-51 kg	2.5 kg	53.5 kg	2.0 kg	53.0 kg	1.5 kg	52.5 kg	1.0 kg	52.0kg
-55 kg	2.7 kg	57.7 kg	2.2 kg	57.2 kg	1.7 kg	56.7 kg	1.1 kg	56.1 kg
-59 kg	2.9 kg	61.9 kg	2.3 kg	61.3 kg	1.8 kg	60.8 kg	1.2 kg	60.2 kg
-63 kg	3.1 kg	66.1 kg	2.5 kg	65.5 kg	1.9 kg	64.9 kg	1.2 kg	64.2 kg
-68 kg	3.4 kg	71.4 kg	2.7 kg	70.7 kg	2.0 kg	70.0 kg	1.4 kg	69.4 kg
-73 kg	3.6 kg	76.6 kg	2.9 kg	75.9 kg	2.2 kg	75.2 kg	1.5 kg	74.5 kg
-78 kg	3.9 kg	81.9 kg	3.1 kg	81.1 kg	2.3 kg	80.3 kg	1.6 kg	79.6 kg
+78 kg	-		-		-		-	

24 hours before competition, the athlete should be no more than 0.5 kg over their fighting weight. This is to avoid excessive training or dehydration techniques to make the weight.

If in doubt seek professional/medical advice from a doctor or dietician.

(5) WEIGH-IN

- (a) In order to help reduce risks to the health of competing Taekwondo athletes, British Taekwondo has put a weigh-in policy in place. This policy must be followed and adhered to, and will be upheld at all British Taekwondo sanctioned Opens and the British Taekwondo National Championships.
- (b) For British Taekwondo National Championships, all weigh-in scales will be correctly calibrated. For all other British Taekwondo-sanctioned Opens, non-calibrated scales may be used until 31st December 2014.
- (c) There will be an allowance of 0.10 kg (100 g) on calibrated scales and this will apply to all persons (seniors, juniors and cadets).
- (d) Until 31st December 2014, un-calibrated scales may be used and there will be an allowance of 0.20 kg (200 g), to allow for inaccuracies, and this will apply to all persons (seniors, juniors and cadets).
- (e) From 1st January 2015, only calibrated scales may be used at events sanctioned by British Taekwondo. The scales must have a current calibration certificate, issued no more than 3 months before the event. The event organiser will provide the scales and ensure that they have a current calibration certificate.
- (f) **Cadets**
- Cadets should not undertake dehydration practises so there will be no weight allowance. The Taekwondo athlete will be entered at the weight at which they first weigh in (allowing for 0.10 kg calibrated scale or 0.20 kg un-calibrated inaccuracy).
 - There will be no second weigh-in.
 - If they have to be moved up a weight category, there will be an administration charge which will be advertised by the event organiser in advance.
- (g) **Juniors**
- As juniors, dehydration practises should not be encouraged.
However, a small amount of dehydration is acceptable if the Taekwondo athlete is not already dehydrated.
 - Any weight loss due to dehydration is at the Taekwondo athlete's own risk.
 - There will be a 0.30 kg weigh-in allowance as well as the 0.1 kg calibrated scale or 0.20 kg un-calibrated scale inaccuracy.
 - They will therefore be allowed a second weigh-in to make their selected weight category.
 - If they have to be moved up a weight category there will be an administration charge which will be advertised by the event organiser in advance.
- (h) **Seniors**
- As seniors, dehydration practises should only be used if necessary, with caution and only if the athlete is *not* already dehydrated.
 - Any weight loss due to dehydration is at the Taekwondo athlete's own risk.
 - There will be a 0.50 kg weigh-in allowance as well as the 0.1 kg calibrated scale or 0.20 kg un-calibrated scale inaccuracy.
 - They will therefore be allowed a second weigh-in to make their selected weight category.
 - If they have to be moved up a weight category, there will be a small administration charge which will be advertised by the event organiser in advance.