



Building Champions Outside Of The Weight Room



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If you have been in the strength and conditioning game for any length of time then you will quickly realize that these are not groundbreaking points of emphasis.

They are the foundation for all physiological adaptation if optimization is the desired outcome for any trainee (irregardless of age, training experience, or sport).

However, I would be willing to bet that many individuals miss the mark on at least one of these. Focusing on power cleans, depth jumps, and triple extensions are great for your power athletes but does any of that even matter if those athletes are only sleeping 4 hours per night? I would argue “no.”

Fundamentals first and foremost.



Can I jump over two or three guys like I used to? No. Am I as fast as I used to be? No, but I still have the fundamentals and smarts. That's what enables me to still be a dominant player. As a kid growing up, I never skipped steps. I always worked on fundamentals because I know athleticism is fleeting.

- Kobe Bryant



#1.

Nutrition & Supplementation



Most high school athletes are nutrient deficient to some extent. Hell, most adults are not consuming two weekly servings of fatty fish along with 7-10 daily servings of fruit and vegetables. So, are we really going to assume that high school athletes are well-nourished given their incessant diet of Pop-Tarts, Skittles, and Little Debbie Cakes?



It's time to teach athletes how to eat well. One way to do this is to **NOT** put too much focus on losing weight or gaining weight. Since food choices will be something they deal with for the entirety of their lives, athletes should form a healthy relationship with food early on.



As parents and coaches, our job is to educate them on healthy food habits. For instance, athletes shouldn't be putting an emphasis on counting calories but they should understand what food is, what food does and how the wrong foods can be detrimental to performance - on the field and in their lifestyle.

FOOD IS FUEL.



NUTRITION MADE SIMPLE

PROTEIN

Proteins are a food that helps athletes recover and are essential for tissue rebuilding and repair. Most of your athletes protein should come from animal-based sources as its quality is superior to that of plant-based. Eggs, chicken, and beef are going to be the easiest sources!

CARBOHYDRATES

Carbs provide the energy needed to perform at a high level because our body treats them as the "first choice" in fuel consumption for optimal performance. Most of our athletes are non-stop training anywhere from 10-20 hours a week and the best source of energy to fuel these training sessions is carbohydrates.

FATS

To be clear, humans need fats. They serve many important functions and some fats are essential, meaning, they are required for survival. Your athlete needs healthy fats. They serve many important functions. They help with recovery, improve brain function, help with important hormones, and many other cell processes.





WHEN & HOW MUCH

Before: 1-2 hrs prior

- 30-60g of carbs
- 20-30g of protein
- Due to fats long digestion time, limit fat before and during activity to avoid nausea, vomiting, feeling bloated or sluggish

Intra/During:

- 45-60min or less, then carbs aren't necessary
- 60min or more include some type of sports drink like Gatorade or Powerade
- Carbs during long bouts of activity is essential to maintain energy levels

Post: 60-90 min after

- 30-90g of carbs
- 20-40g of protein
- 7-15g of fat
- Refueling with carbs can help restore low or depleted muscle energy stores
- Protein helps to build and repair the muscle that broke down during activity



NUTRITION QUESTIONNAIRE

Describe your meals today

How many calories did you consume today?

— +

Range: 0 - 5000



SAVE



Build Custom Nutrition Questionnaires Or Use Ours

[Download Our Questionnaire
Templates Here](#)



BASIC GUIDELINES

Eat 4-6 Meals a Day

Every meal should have lean protein, fruits or vegetables, quality carbohydrates, and healthy fats.

Eat Mostly Home Cooked Meals

From a nutritional standpoint, this is a powerful tool to (hopefully) provide athletes with a variety of whole foods offering the largest nutritional “bang for their caloric buck” so to speak. When that's not possible, read up on our [Guide To Healthy Fast Food Eating For Athletes](#).

Eat Breakfast

When it comes to missing meals and falling short of calories, breakfast is usually the culprit. Breakfast jumpstarts the metabolism and athletes usually need this time to start fueling for the day.

Overnight Oats Breakfast Recipe

- 1-2 Cups of oats
- 1.5 Scoops of whey
- 2 Tbsp of chia seeds
- 2 Tbsp shredded coconut
- 0.5 Cups of greek yogurt
- 2 Tbsp of cocoa
- 2 Servings of frozen or fresh fruit
- Cinnamon to taste
- Pinch of salt

Dump everything in a bowl, add water/almond/coconut/cow's milk and stir until all the ingredients are well incorporated. Toss them in the fridge the night before and then pull them out for breakfast the next morning.

If you like them thicker, use less water and allow it to sit longer. If want them thinner, sub the chia seeds for another type of nuts (almonds, walnuts, cashews, sunflower seeds, etc.), eliminate the Greek yogurt, and use more liquid.



SUPPLEMENTS MADE SIMPLE

WHEY PROTEIN

Whey is not meant to replace anything, it is simply supplemental to a sound nutritional program designed with the health and performance of the athlete in mind. Most youth athletes are on the go and as such, they resort to simple, processed snacks instead of quality, nutritious options and this is when whey protein comes in handy.

With tons of healthy fats, carbs, fiber, and protein, this is what portable nutrition looks like for athletes always on the go.

- 2 Frozen Bananas
- 2 Cups Chocolate Almond Milk
- 1.5 Scoops oh Whey Isolate
- 2 Tbsp Cocoa Powder
- 2 Tbsp Hemp or Chia Seeds
- 1 Cup Frozen Spinach
- 2 Tbsp Peanut or Almond Butter

CREATINE MONOHYDRATE

Creatine supplementation should be considered complementary to consuming protein, not a replacement for. That's because creatine and protein work in different ways. In short, creatine leads to more strength during your workout while protein leads to more muscle repair after your workout.

Creatine increases the body's ability to produce energy rapidly. It exists naturally in our bodies and helps fuel our muscles. ***5g/day is beneficial!***





BCAA'S

Branch chain amino acids (BCAAs) are 3 of the 9 essential amino acids present within humans while Essential Amino Acids (EAAs) contain all 9 amino acids that cannot be synthesized by the body. Long story short, BCAAs may be able to start the growth and recovery process but you need all 9 essential amino acids in order to reach full potential.

BCAA supplementation has been shown to help decrease muscle soreness after a particularly strenuous workout as well as limiting fatigue during exercise.



Disclaimer: These are just general guidelines. Nobody should put anything into their body without recognizing the benefits and risks first. That goes from soda to ice cream to whey protein to amino acids. If you have questions or concerns, you should consult a doctor or a registered dietitian.



#2.

Recover With Sleep



Getting your athletes bigger, faster, and stronger is definitely a top priority but to be able to do that, you need to dig a little deeper into an athlete's life outside of the gym. A major part of that process includes the recovery from their training, which is the 23 hours of the day they are NOT in the gym.

Things like nutrition, recovery tools and supplements are all a part of the equation for sure, but the number one influencer in an athlete's recovery process is probably going to be sleep.



Unfortunately, sleep is not something most people value in the manner that they should. This is especially true when it comes to teens today.



I know for a fact, when I was 16 you couldn't convince me, I was invincible. I could eat McDonald's breakfast on the way to a basketball tournament, eat a Subway footlong for dinner after 4 games in a day, stay up until 3AM with my teammates and then wake up and do it all again the next day. AND WIN!

- Justin Ochoa, PACE Academy



RISE & GRIND? TRY SLEEP IN & WIN

Sleep is literally the foundation of how we rest, recover, repair and regenerate for every new day we wake up for. Optimize sleep, and your chances of optimizing other aspects of your life go up drastically.

BENEFITS OF SLEEP

- Reduce stress
- Reduce inflammation
- Improve mental alertness
- Aid in weight loss
- Reduce chances of depression
- Regular blood pressure
- Improve skin health
- Boost recovery from training
- Reduce risk of cardiovascular disease
- Boost immune system

What most fail to realize is that we have a nation of high school/college athletes subsisting on 5-6 hours (sometimes less) of sleep per night while the National Sleep Foundation recommends 9-10 hours for those who are experiencing growth and developmental changes.





So now we have high schoolers experiencing slowed neural and cognitive processing rates due to a general lack of sleep; but we want them to come in and learn hang cleans or PR back squats.



"Your ability to function on little to no sleep is more so a testament to your body's resiliency, not its performance capacity"

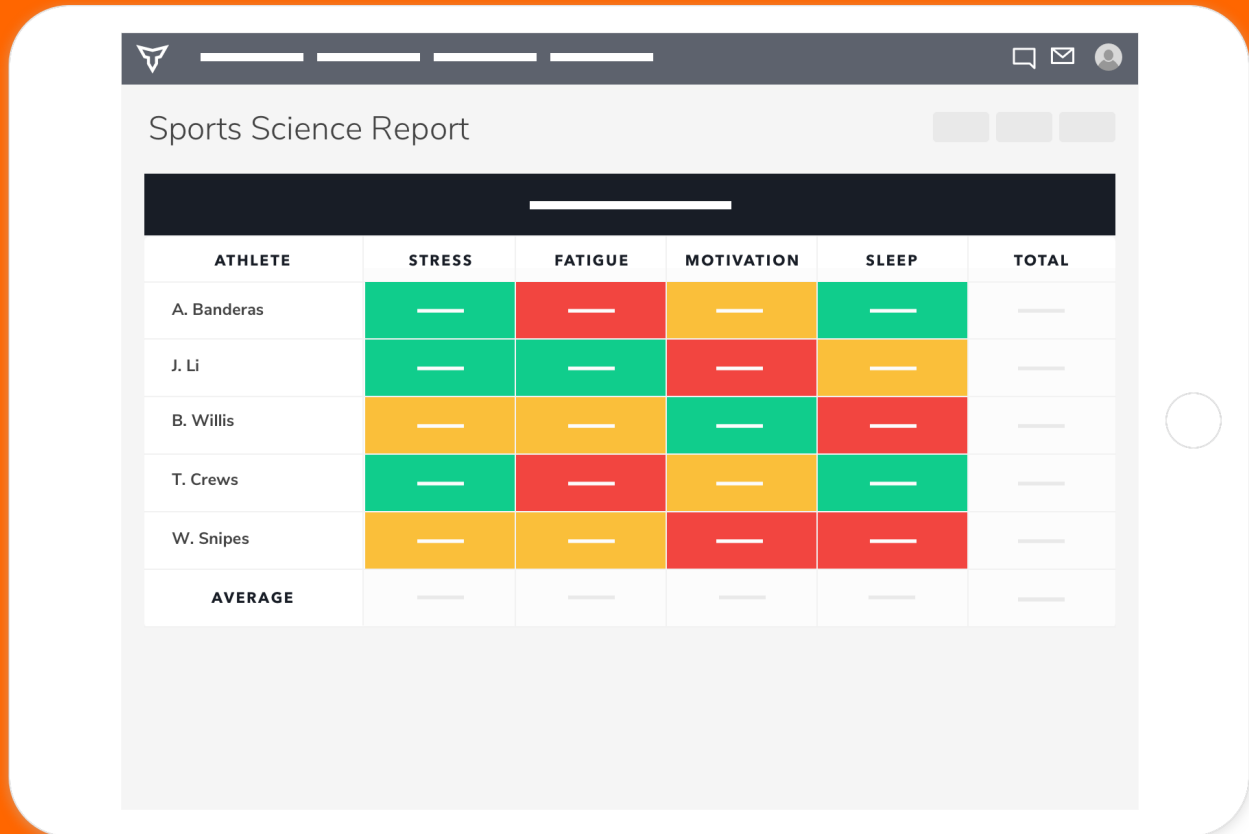
- Jeff Nichols, Former Navy SEAL

How do we change this attitude towards sleep? Two things you can ask your athletes are:

1. How long did you sleep?
2. How restful was your sleep?

Nine hours of sleep sounds ideal, but if you woke up every hour, that's probably not the best night of sleep. But a solid seven hours of sleeping like a rock with no interruptions sounds like a better night of sleep.

Today, teens have an endless amount of distractions that could cause some concerns when it comes to sleep quality.



The image shows a tablet displaying a 'Sports Science Report' interface. The report features a table with columns for Athlete, Stress, Fatigue, Motivation, Sleep, and Total. Each cell in the table contains a horizontal bar chart with a color-coded background (green, red, or yellow) and a white line representing the data level. The athletes listed are A. Banderas, J. Li, B. Willis, T. Crews, and W. Snipes, followed by an AVERAGE row. The interface includes a top navigation bar with a logo and icons for chat, email, and user profile, and a bottom home button on the tablet.

ATHLETE	STRESS	FATIGUE	MOTIVATION	SLEEP	TOTAL
A. Banderas	—	—	—	—	—
J. Li	—	—	—	—	—
B. Willis	—	—	—	—	—
T. Crews	—	—	—	—	—
W. Snipes	—	—	—	—	—
AVERAGE	—	—	—	—	—

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BASIC GUIDELINES

As a coach, you can do a huge service to athletes by educating them on what they may not know about sleep. If they know and believe in what sleep can do for them and their health, they'll be much more likely to listen to further advice.

1

Create A Schedule

This would involve the athlete looking at their week-at-glance. When do they have practices, work, tutoring, training or any other events that may take up space on their schedule after school?

If you can get your athletes going to bed and waking up at the same time daily, you've already won the battle. The body loves to function with routine - doing the same thing at the same time of day with the same intensity, frequency, and duration.

2

Don't Touch The Snooze Button

At its core, it's simply showcasing discipline. Set an alarm for the time you need to wake up. When it goes off, wake up. If you are so undisciplined that you can't handle that, I'm not so sure high-level sports are for you.

Hitting snooze, or even worse - setting multiple alarms to allow you to hit snooze, is literally building procrastination into your day. The first thing you do every day with this method is **procrastinate**. To me, that just isn't setting yourself up for a great day. Set the alarm, use the alarm.





3

Close The Apps

Try to limit screen time in the hour-or-so leading up to bedtime. Or, at the very least, set your devices to “night mode” to limit the amount of blue light you’re exposed to before bed.

Blue light exposure can highly limit melatonin secretion and interrupt your circadian rhythm, ultimately making it a little bit harder than it already is for a teen to get sleep.

4

Turn Off The TV

I know quite a few folks who need white noise to fall asleep - that’s perfectly fine but opt for a fan or a white noise machine rather than the TV. Aside from the blue light exposure, you’re also going to be encountering a variety of sounds in terms of frequencies and decibels.

Opt for ear plugs and a fan if it’s noisy but don’t subject yourself to a TV, that’s just asking for long term insomnia.

Even if an athlete improves one night per week, that will help them start the process of maximizing sleep and wanting to get better. Just like any sport, it may take some practice and work to get “good” at sleeping. These tools and tips will hopefully help our young athletes find simple and effective ways to empower themselves to get better at sleep.



#3.

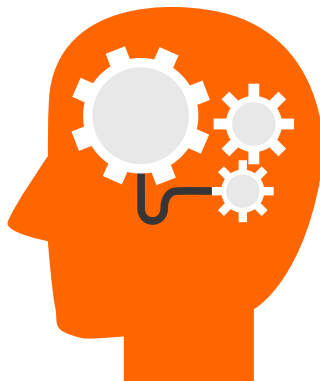
Building Athlete Mindset



Building “monsters” does not begin in the weight room, it begins when you start to influence what’s in-between the athlete’s ears. Physiology may dictate what happens on the field but psychological changes stay with an athlete long after the scores have been written in the record books.

If you want to determine an athlete’s current psychological state, here are a few questions you might want to ask (internally at least):

- Do you approach setbacks as challenges which are designed to make you stronger or are you typically discouraged by trials and hardships?
- Do you use visualization to mentally rehearse challenging situations, behaviors, or personnel?
- Do you find yourself resorting to an internal (“I’ll get through this.”) or external (“How could this happen to me?”) locus of control under stressful situations?
- Do you feel out of control and helpless when things do not go according to plan?





MENTAL TOUGHNESS

My definition of mental toughness is a person's ability to not only overcome a tough situation but to strive toward success.

This is one of the core characteristics that should be taught in the weight room and on the playing field, but it's also one of the hardest skills for a high school athlete to learn. More specifically, for a high school athlete who hasn't had to struggle for much in their lives.

Cultivating mental toughness is critical for a young athlete's development and an important part of preparing high school athletes for college athletics and even life after athletics.

Here are some tips for teaching mental toughness:

Each Athlete Is An Individual

You can't teach mental toughness the same way to all of your athletes. you can get the most success by getting to know each athlete as a person and talking to them about things other than lifting and their sport.

If you want to develop mental toughness in your athletes, the first step is to develop a relationship with them. When they know you care, they care about going the extra distance for you.





Practice What You Preach

As a leader, if you lead from the front, your athletes will follow you anywhere. Let your athletes see you struggle and overcome by pushing through with intensity and confidence. Nothing can replace the bond that is created when you sweat and bleed alongside someone.

Here are some examples of practicing what you preach:

- Training with your athletes
- Calling yourself out for your own mistakes
- Eating healthy in front of them
- Showing a work-life balance

Where The Cheers Are

A characteristic of most athletes, both young and old, is that they tend to gravitate to where the cheers are. As coaches, we should be cheering on all of our athletes for their successes, both large and small. Not only should we be cheering on our athletes, but we should be encouraging the team to encourage their teammates as well. This is even more crucial for weaker, less athletic athletes.

Like the old saying goes, "It's not the size of the dog in the fight, but the size of the fight in the dog." People tend to display mental toughness when they are surrounded by cheers.



SETTING GOALS

SET GOALS THAT MOTIVATE YOU

To make sure that your goal is motivating, write down why it's valuable and important to you. Goal achievement requires commitment, so to maximize the likelihood of success, you need to feel a sense of urgency and have an "I must do this" attitude.

SET 'SMART' GOALS

Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time Bound.

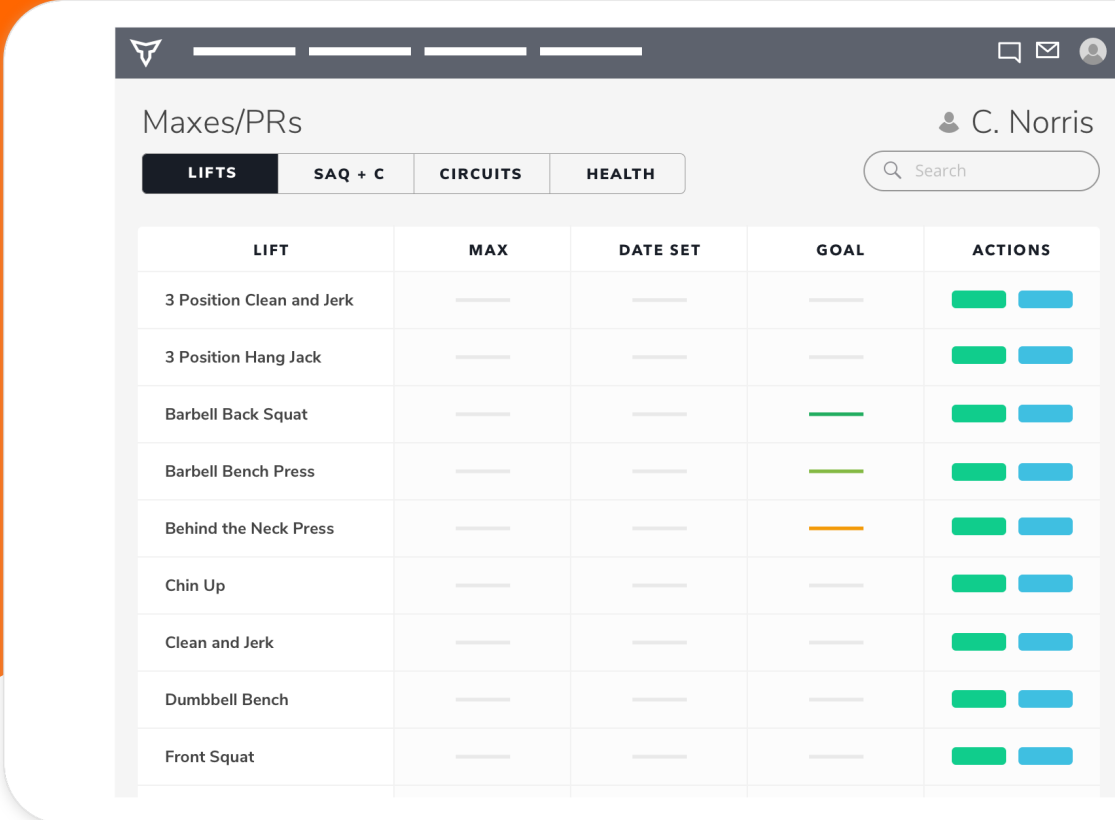
Your goals should be clear and well-defined, include dates or amounts to measure with. You should be able to achieve this goal by also challenging yourself, they should be relevant to your life, and they should have a deadline.

PUT IT IN WRITING

The physical act of writing down a goal makes it real and tangible. You have no excuse for forgetting about it. Post your goals in visible places to remind yourself every day of what it is you intend to do. Put them on your walls, desk, computer monitor, bathroom mirror or refrigerator as a constant reminder.



Keeping Athletes Accountable With Goal Setting



LIFT	MAX	DATE SET	GOAL	ACTIONS
3 Position Clean and Jerk	—	—	—	<div><div></div></div>
3 Position Hang Jack	—	—	—	<div><div></div></div>
Barbell Back Squat	—	—	—	<div><div></div></div>
Barbell Bench Press	—	—	—	<div><div></div></div>
Behind the Neck Press	—	—	—	<div><div></div></div>
Chin Up	—	—	—	<div><div></div></div>
Clean and Jerk	—	—	—	<div><div></div></div>
Dumbbell Bench	—	—	—	<div><div></div></div>
Front Squat	—	—	—	<div><div></div></div>

"Our program relies heavily on making athletes accountable to specific goals. TeamBuildr communicates their progress every day with a smartphone so they always know where they stand. The technology and updating of goals with TeamBuildr is top notch."

LEARN MORE



MAKE AN ACTION PLAN

By writing out the individual steps, and then crossing each one off as you complete it, you'll realize that you are making progress towards your ultimate goal. This is especially important if your goal is big and demanding, or long-term.

STICK WITH IT

Goal setting is an ongoing activity, not just a means to an end. Build in reminders to keep yourself on track, and make regular time-slots available to review your goals.

Goal setting is much more than simply saying you want something to happen. Unless you clearly define exactly what you want and understand why you want it the first place, your odds of success are considerably reduced.



"When the sun comes up, you better be running."



References

TeamBuildr Blogs:

- The 4 Non-Secret Pillars of Athletic Performance
- Affordable, Fundamental Nutrition for The High School Athlete
- Helpful Tips For Getting Teen Athletes to Sleep
- Nutritional Science Made Simple for High School & College Athletes
- How To Develop Mental Toughness in High School Athletes



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