



The Importance of Maintaining Good Hygiene

Coaches, students, and parents all go the extra mile to help our grapplers succeed. They spend countless hours supporting all facets of training so the grappler can get the most out of the sport.

Dedication and attention to detail is an important aspect of grappling. This also applies to maintaining good hygiene.

If good hygiene is not the focal point of every coach, grappler, and parent at all times, effort (and money) is wasted when a grappler can't get on the mat because of a skin infection.

Fungal, Bacterial, and viral infections are spread by skin-to-skin contact and can colonize on equipment. Cleaning the skin immediately after practice and disinfecting equipment daily helps prevent infections, and clear them up more expeditiously should they occur.

Avoiding Infections

Implementing daily hygiene best practices will lessen the likelihood of contracting various skin infections. Fungal, bacterial, and viral infections are prevalent in grappling. Each type of infection has various effects on the athlete and training partners who come into close contact with the impacted individual.

MRSA (Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus) is the most serious infection, and-- if unchecked-- can result in hospitalization and even death. Other bacterial infections such as impetigo, streptococcus, staphylococcus aureus, folliculitis, and cellulitis are highly contagious and can be transmitted by skin to skin contact. Herpes Gladiatorum (HSV-1) is the most common viral infection in wrestling and is highly contagious. Lastly, fungal infections such as ringworm (dermatophytosis or tinea), are common and highly contagious. At 150 Grappling, we take the health of our members and our staff extremely seriously.

****The impact of not being educated regarding hygiene is that others could contract the skin infection and the entire program, extended programs, and an entire region of the state could eventually contract the outbreak, causing a broad ripple effect. ****

Basic Hygiene Tips

Most of these tips are simple, but one grappler or coach who doesn't take them seriously can have a trickle-down effect that negatively impacts others. In order to mitigate risk, we at 150



Grappling support (and reinforce, where possible) the following actions in the strongest possible terms:

- 150 Grappling staff will ensure that the mats are cleaned and disinfected every day
- We recommend that you not shave or shower at least two hours before stepping on the mats as your pores will be open and your skin raw, thus potentially leaving you more susceptible to skin issues.
- Wear clean clothing and bring a clean towel to every practice
- Do not use the same clothes for multiple workouts
- Wash hands with hot water and soap before practice
- Do not step on the mat with street shoes
- Do not walk off the mat without shoes
- Avoid walking on areas (other than the mat) with wrestling shoes
- Wash hands with hot water and soap immediately following practice
- Do not sit in sweaty clothing. After practice, you should change clothing before proceeding home. It is important to recognize that the clothing you wear after training is dirty and needs to be laundered immediately as if you wore it during practice. Wearing hats after practice is often overlooked, but hats should be treated as articles of clothing that carry germs.
- Conduct daily skin checks: grapplers must inspect themselves daily and be proactive in identifying, treating, and *disclosing* issues to 150 Grappling staff so they can help mitigate risk of transmission.
- Shower with hot water and soap after every practice as soon as possible. Grapplers need to shower *immediately* after every workout. This means do not go to the grocery store on the way home, stop for dinner, or even sit on your sofa to rest before getting a shower. Shower immediately and as soon as possible.
- Sweaty/ dirty clothing should be washed immediately. Workout gear should not sit in a pile or bin as it will begin to cultivate germs. Put soiled clothes directly into the wash.
- Keep your skin healthy by keeping it adequately moisturized with lotion. With multiple training sessions come multiple showers. Showers (hot showers especially) are an easy way to dry out your skin, thus leaving your skin vulnerable to infection.
- If you have a longer commute or foresee delays to showering which would result in a longer incubation time, wipe yourself down with antiseptic wipes before changing in order to mitigate germ cultivation. This is not a substitute for showering.



Things happen that are out of your control, but skin infections are generally preventable. It is foolish to let something that can be avoided take you off the mat and negatively impact your training partners.

Coaches' Responsibility and Hygiene Checks

150 Grappling coaches are serious about these protocols. Good hygiene and educated athletes (and parents) are the most important factor in avoiding infections and fallout from infections. Monitor skin at practice, after competition, and at home.

Coaches will periodically perform hygiene checks at the beginning of practice in the same way that athletes are checked prior to competition. Hygiene checks consist of inspecting the following:

- Fingernails and toenails are checked for length and to ensure that there are no jagged edges.
- The uniform is checked to ensure that it fits 150 Grappling's **Uniform Policy**; that it is clean, fits properly, and that there are no holes or tears.
- Jewelry of any kind is prohibited: this includes jewelry in piercings, rings, necklaces, and bracelets. Anything that could potentially rip or tear the skin of the student wearing it or injure their training partner is not acceptable.
- The student's skin is scanned for any suspicious lesions.

If any points of concern are identified, the student will be instructed to exit the mat and held from practice until the issue(s) is/are corrected.

Most importantly, take care of yourself and try to support your immune system in any way that you can. When your body is run down, you are more susceptible to skin conditions (and many other health issues). Feeding your body well and getting adequate sleep are the first lines of defense.

For further information about skin disease, please talk to a 150 Grappling coach, or go to:

<https://www.nata.org/sites/default/files/position-statement-skin-disease.pdf>