



“I hate going without good food, but you have to do it in this sport,” Matt Lindland says. “I have two kitchens in my house and a Mongolian grill so I would consider eating one of my hobbies.”

Cravings are a hazard of being human and they get especially powerful under certain conditions, like pregnancy and combat. Hormones drive pregnant women to eat bowls of Jell-O with a pound of marshmallows on top and soldiers only have access to mess halls and MREs. For them the cravings are involuntary or unauthorized. But for fighters, who desperately want to increase the number in their win column, the need to ignore the aroma of a hot pastrami sandwich when there’s nothing stopping them is downright maddening.

“Man I was miserable before my fight with [Leonard] Garcia,” Jens Pulver says. “Matt Hume made me eat raw broccoli and cauliflower to cut weight, so I got a nasty craving for seasoning. I wanted to taste flavor so bad that I thought about running down to the pet store and buying two salt licks.”

After a fight, when all the restrictions are off, it’s time to satisfy the beast within. But even though the mind is willing, the body might not be ready. Kenny Florian may be able to finish fights, but he’s no match for pizza. “I tried to finish two slices of pizza after my fight with Joe Lauzon,” he says. “But I couldn’t do it. I was so used to cutting the weight that I felt sick after the first one.”

For some, the pre-fight cravings turn into a post-fight reward, as Dr. Erik Fisher, a noted sports psychologist explains. “Food is something that is tied to our sense of worth from almost the beginning of life. We have been given food as a reward for good deeds, and in some cases food was withheld for punishment. We often use food as a type of incentive and reward ourselves whether we deserve it or not.”

Most of us remember chasing the Good Humor truck down our street as kids. For Matt Lindland, the sweet rewards of catching it still linger. “After a fight, I used to run out and get Dreamery peach ice cream, but they don’t make that any more. So now I’m into the butterscotch dilly bars from Dairy Queen.”

I don’t know about you, but I’d lick a Dilly Bar before salt or a TV screen any day. 🍷

“Cut thirty-five pounds in thirty days and see if you don’t crave something,” Thiago Alves says. No thanks. Some people have a sweet tooth, but I have a sushi tooth that can’t be ignored or I chew through a rice paddy like a mole rat.

WEIGHT CUTTING CRAVINGS

Salt never tasted so good.

BY KELLY CRIGGER

Cutting weight is just a step above self-mutilation and can seriously affect an athlete’s health if he doesn’t know what he’s doing. But it’s also a core element of prize fighting that everyone tries to manipulate in his favor. It’s a balancing act of weight, energy and strength that even the most seasoned of veterans have difficulty mastering. The reward a slight advantage during a fight. The risk—a very unpleasant month of licking a TV screen.

“It’s weird, but I crave fast food just before a fight,” Alves says. “I’ll be sitting in the hotel room and see Burger King and McDonald’s commercials and want it, but when I’m not cutting weight I don’t.”

Army Staff Sgt. Tim Kennedy, who’s soon to return to MMA full time, has a hard time avoiding the one thing that’s kryptonite for a fighter—carbs. “I can’t seem to get peanut butter off my mind. It must be the carb thing because I cut them out of my diet completely before a fight.”