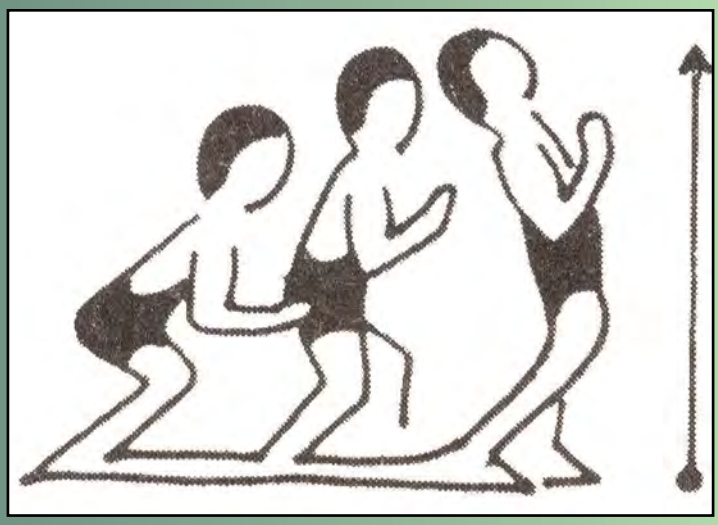

Of all the basic skills, the ability to lift is probably the most important. Certainly, it represents the major difference in attitude of the wrestlers who participate in freestyle and Greco-Roman.

Too often, however, even the thought of lifting makes a wrestler feel tired and fearful that he does not have enough strength.

We should certainly not underestimate the importance of strength, but the ability to lift depends more upon the position of your hips to your opponent than anything else.

The key points in the skill of lifting are:

1 - Squeeze your opponent to your body with your arms. Do not try to pull him up with the strength of your arms, simply "secure" him.
2 - Lower your hips into and under his center of gravity (his hips).
3 - Lift up with the power in your legs and keep your hips driven into and under him.

Regardless of what part of his body you secure, or your position to him (front, side or back), the same basic points for successful lifting apply.

The fifth skill in the sequence of seven is that of lifting. More than any other skill, this is the one that distinguishes the champion from the rest of the field.

Every wrestler understands the basic concept of lifting. But all too many fail to understand the technique involved. Too often the job is attempted by using only the arms, yet the strongest muscles in the body are those found in the hips and thighs.

To properly execute a lift, the arms are used only to secure your opponent...once that is done they are not moved. The hips are now lowered by bending at the knees and brought into and under your opponent's center of mass. Once in this position you simply extend your legs, lifting with the power of your hips and thighs.

One of the most exciting confrontations that can take place during the course of the match is when two good wrestlers are struggling in an upright position. The man behind tries to keep control of his opponent and get into a position to lift, while the man in front struggles to break his opponent's grasp by lowering his level and extending his arms.

Another interesting matchup occurs when one man gets to the side of his opponent after executing a duckunder, but finds himself momentarily stymied. From this position he must get his hips down and into the opponent to finish the lift and score.

The lifting also is an integral part of a high crotch takedown. The same principles apply. The arms are used to secure your opponent. The forward thrust of your hips and the straightening of your back provide the - upward momentum. In most cases, it is the lift that ensures a successful finish.

Having secured a single leg it is often difficult to trip your opponent to the mat until you take most of the weight off his foot. Now it becomes easy to take his support away from him. This is especially true when you try to leg-sweep your opponent from an upper body tie.

Although it may appear as though the lifting is being done with the arms, this is not the case. The real lift is still coming from the legs and the arch in the back.

Lee Kemp on Lifting

Lifting is another important maneuver in wrestling. To be able to take your opponent to the mat from a standing position usually requires some type of lifting maneuver. To lift, as we discussed earlier, involves first changing levels and then moving your hips in to get your opponent off the mat.

There is a phrase that best describes the importance of lifting. This is: "You can't take a good man down until you first have lifted him up."

2007 Indiana State Freestyle Championships - 145 lbs. Kyle Mosier (Yorktown) working for the fall on Tyler Maggard (Seymour). Mosier won by fall; 0:11. Photo by Charles T. Bennett.