

Staying Hydrated

Exercises during the summer – you should drink to that!

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With one of the hottest summers on record throughout the nation, staying hydrated has been on the minds of most. Staying hydrated in these extreme temperatures while being active requires some planning. Even if you are opting to do your workout inside, in air conditioning, your body still needs adequate hydration or else your workout will suffer. If your energy levels are down, you're not able to focus as usual, or your muscles are cramping, your body is showing signs of dehydration.

Many things need to be considered to help you adequately hydrate – your body weight, sweat rate, effort level, temperature, humidity, and elevation. Although each of these things vary per individual and will have different implications for each person, there are a few simple guidelines that you can focus on to help ensure you drink the right amount before, during, and after your workout.

BEFORE YOUR WORKOUT

Yes, it may seem obvious, but to beat dehydration, you should drink to hydrate before your workout. Water is ideal for pre-workout consumption, but coconut water is a good alternative as it hydrates and is loaded with potassium, an essential electrolyte.



A common way to see if you are hydrated is to check the color of your pee. Your pee should be a lemonade color. If it is darker, you need to drink more water. You also should be careful if your pee is clear, because that indicates that you are drinking too much water and are over-hydrated. This is known as hyponatremia and can cause your sodium levels in your blood to be abnormally low. When this

happens, your body's water levels rise, and your cells begin to swell. This will negatively effect your workout performance and, although rare, can cause mild to severe health issues, including death.

To avoid both dehydration and hyponatremia, it is best to drink water at intervals throughout the day, rather than trying to consume a large amount at once. You should try to limit your pre-workout consumption to around 8 ounces. You shouldn't have a full feeling in your stomach from drinking water – if so, that is sign that you drank too much at once.

DURING YOUR WORKOUT

Depending on how long you plan on exercising, you'll have different needs. For instance, if you are training for a marathon and are on a distance run of 15 miles, you will need to take a hydration break during the run. But, if you are heading into a typical 45-60 minute workout, taking the occasional sip during your workout should suffice.

Researchers have made a range of recommendations on how much you should drink during exercise. One of the newest recommendations is very simple – drink to quench your thirst. Your body tells you it needs water by telling you it is thirsty, so if you drink when you're thirsty, researchers say you'll stay adequately hydrated.

Another popular approach recommends drinking enough so you don't lose more than three percent of your weight in sweat. To do this, weigh yourself (naked) pre- and post workout to see your difference in weight (don't consume any fluids during your workout). The difference in your weight shows you how much you lost during the workout. At 125 pounds, I should not want to lose more than 3.75 ounces in a workout. If the scale shows I lost 8 ounces (half a pound), then I should aim to consume at least 4.25 ounces of fluid during a workout to stay hydrated.

AFTER YOUR WORKOUT

This is the time when hydration needs to be considered as a component of your recovery. To make sure you are adequately re-hydrating yourself, experts say to again use thirst as your guide and drink until you are satisfied. Also, check your skin, especially on your face, to see if there are salt streaks. This indicates that your body lost sodium. To replenish, reach for a sports drink instead of water or add an electrolyte tablet into your water bottle. Vegetable juices are also great sources of sodium and help replace electrolytes.

Along with replenishing your electrolytes and hydrating, you need carbohydrates and protein for muscle recovery. Pre-made recovery drinks and even chocolate milk will help as they have a good 3:1 or 4:1 carbs-to-protein ratio. Smoothies with added protein, fruits, and yogurts will also provide you with the carbohydrates and protein that you lost during your workout.

Kimberly is the Head Women's Volleyball Coach at Chestnut Hill College, located in Philadelphia PA. She also coaches high school athletes who compete on travel volleyball teams. She has worked with numerous athletes of various ages and levels to help them achieve their maximum potential. When not helping and teaching others as a coach, she enjoys challenging herself in the gym and looks forward to a Java Jolt smoothie after a good work out!



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