

Fluid Facts

Importance of Fluids

Water is the most important part of any athlete's diet and for good reason. During activity you lose fluid in the form of sweat. The harder you exercise, the more fluid is lost.

It's not uncommon to lose up to 32 ounces (4 cups) of fluid per hour of exercise in hot, humid conditions. That's a loss of two pounds of body weight. The resulting decrease in strength and endurance can be surprisingly dramatic.



How much to drink?

To stay hydrated and perform your best, follow this simple rule...

Take a fluid break every 15 to 20 minutes
– two to three big gulps ought to do it.

Another way to think about it:

Take a peek at your urine.

1. How often are you urinating?
2. What color is your urine?

If it's dark and there's not much of it, you need to drink more. If it's pale yellow (think lemonade), you're probably close to proper hydration.

PEAK POINT

Drink enough fluids daily to prevent thirst; milk, 100% juice and watery foods all contribute to fluid balance. To avoid dehydration due to fluid loss during exercise, take two to three gulps every 15 to 20 minutes.

What to Drink

Individual preference, including taste and energy needs, affects what you choose to drink. For most activities, cool water is the best choice. However, for training camps and long competitions, sports drinks provide a beneficial energy boost. They are designed to replace fluid and provide energy. Many also contain electrolytes such as sodium and potassium, which are lost in sweat.



Exercising in Heat: What to Watch For

Compared with adults, and even teenagers, preteens need to be especially mindful to drink enough fluids. They do not handle temperature extremes well; they sweat less, and in general, have a harder time dissipating heat and regulating body temperature, so fluids are important.

Regardless of age, hot and humid days require even more care. High temperatures cause heavy sweating resulting in dehydration if nothing is done to replenish fluids. Not only will performance suffer, potentially life-threatening symptoms of heat illness can appear if thirst is ignored and fluids limited. Watch for these body signals and be prepared to take appropriate action to correct them.

	symptoms	treatment
heat cramps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thirst • Chills • Clammy skin • Throbbing heart beat • Nausea 	Athlete should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drink ½ cup of water every 10 to 15 minutes • During breaks, move to shade and remove as much clothing as possible
heat exhaustion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced sweating • Dizziness • Headache • Shortness of breath • Weak, rapid pulse • Lack of saliva • Extreme fatigue 	Athlete should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stop exercising and move to a cool environment • Drink 2-3 cups of water for every pound lost • Take off wet clothing and sit on a chair in a cold shower • Place an ice bag on head
heat stroke	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of sweat • Dry, hot skin • Lack of urine • Visual disturbances • Swollen tongue • Deafness • Aggression • Unsteady walking 	You should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call for emergency medical treatment immediately • Move athlete to a cool place indoors or under a shady tree • Place feet higher than head to avoid shock • Remove clothing and sponge athlete with towels that are soaked in cold water or spray athlete with cool water • Until help arrives, place ice bags on back and front of athlete's head



Bottom Line: Drink water FIRST! Water is your best friend. Remember to take frequent breaks to rehydrate and drink plenty of fluids, even if you don't feel thirsty.

