Fluids and Hydration

Here's the Deal

Did you know that your body is mostly water? It's true—60% or more of your body weight comes from fluids! For this reason, it is critical that you stay hydrated by drinking enough liquids so your body can work at its best. Why? When your body is dehydrated (it doesn't have as much fluid as it needs), it can **heat up too quickly**. This results in impaired performance. Dehydration also puts you at greater risk of heat illnesses such as heat cramping, heat exhaustion, and heat stroke.

Even a small amount of dehydration (losing only 2% of your body weight—just 3 pounds for a 150-pound athlete) can negatively affect your performance. In hot and humid environments, fluid loss can occur very quickly.

Consequences of dehydration

- ↓ Decreased endurance
- ↓ Decreased strength and power
- ↓ Decreased ability to cool your body
- ↓ Decreased blood flow to your working muscles
- ↓ Decreased concentration
- ↓ Slowed recovery
- ↑ Increased injury risk
- ↑ Increased risk of heat cramping and heat illnesses

Get in the Know

- **Staying hydrated is key to your athletic success.**
- **Start drinking fluids when you wake up in the morning and carry fluids with you throughout the day for optimal hydration.**
- **Monitor sweat loss during workouts.**
- **Choose sports drinks instead of water during hard workouts and competitions.**
- **Monitor your urine color and volume to keep tabs on your hydration status.**

What to drink before exercise

Athletes often come to practice and competition already dehydrated. Doing so puts you at a disadvantage before you've even started! However, when you follow a hydration plan, you set yourself up for success by not only showing up well-hydrated, but also minimizing the amount of fluid you lose during exercise. Simply being hydrated can boost concentration and overall performance.

A "**Hydration Plan**" can keep you on track. Carry a fluid bottle with you all day long and take sips throughout the day.

Don't wait until you feel thirsty to drink because that may already be too late. Drink on a schedule—some athletes even set their watch timers to remind themselves to hydrate.

An easy way to boost your fluid intake on a daily basis is to "eat" your fluids as well as drink them. Foods that hydrate you because of the amount of water in them include fruits (especially watermelon, cantaloupe, berries, peaches, plums, cherries, mangos, tomatoes, pineapple, and fruit smoothies), yogurt, soups, stews, and salads.

SEE HYDRATION PLAN ON PAGE 2 →

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