



Why do I need to drink water while exercising?

ANSWER:

Water is one of the most essential components of the human body. It regulates the body's temperature, cushions and protects your vital organs, and aids the digestive system. Not only does water compose 75 percent of all muscle tissue and about 10 percent of fatty tissue, it also acts within each cell to transport nutrients and dispel waste. In addition, because water composes more than half of the human body, it is impossible to sustain life for more than a week without it.

When exercising regularly, it is important to maintain a constant supply of water in the body for performance. Dehydration can lead to muscle fatigue and loss of coordination and even small amounts of water loss can hinder your athletic performance.

When you are dehydrated, your body is unable to cool itself efficiently, which can lead to heat related emergencies such as heat exhaustion and heat stroke. Without an adequate supply of water, you will lack energy and your muscle may develop cramps. To prevent dehydration, you should drink **before, during and after your workout**.

Here are a few additional tips to maintain healthy hydration during the hot humid summer weather.

- Drink 17-20 ounces of water two to three hours before the start of exercise
- Drink 8 ounces of fluid 20 to 30 minutes prior to exercise or during warm-up
- Drink 7-10 ounces of fluid every 10 to 20 minutes during exercise
- Drink an additional 8 ounces of fluid within 30 minutes after exercising
- Drink 16-24 ounces of fluid for every pound of body weight lost after exercise
- Hint: Rehydration occurs faster in the presence of sodium, regardless of whether this is provided in a sports drink

If water is not your thing, here are a few things to remember when choosing a different source:

- No added sugars
- No caffeine
- No sugar substitutes
- Lower amounts of naturally occurring sugars

Whatever your choice of drink is, stay cool and hydrated.



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