

NUTRITIONAL SERIES

(Number three!)

WATER

After oxygen, water is your highest priority for attaining optimum health. Why? It is quite simple – your body is over 70% water. Your brain is over 85% water. So it makes sense that you cannot drink too much water. Staying hydrated is absolutely crucial for optimum brain function and optimum health. It is vital for slowing aging.

Adequate hydration:

- Maintains your body temperature
- Aids in digestion
- Metabolizes fat
- Lubricates and cushions your organs
- Transports nutrients throughout your body
- Flashes toxic waste from your body
- Keeps you looking and feeling young

How much water do you need and when?

The general rule of thumb is: drink at least 8 – 10 eight ounce glasses of pure water every day. (8 oz. = 227 g.) A more sophisticated formula is: Your body weight (in pounds) divided by 2. This is the minimum amount of pure water in ounces* you should consume every day.

*1 oz. = 28 g.

Hydration and exercise

You are probably sick of hearing this, but the importance of drinking enough water while exercising, especially during warmer months, cannot be emphasised enough.

When we exercise, we build up heat in working muscles causing our internal temperatures to rise. We cool ourselves by perspiring. It is this evaporation of sweat from our skin that helps us maintain a lower core body temperature. When there is a lot of moisture in the air, evaporation is not an effective cooling, and we keep sweating and losing fluids in order to try and stay comfortable. As a result, we have to drink more water to replenish this lost fluid.

The first drawback to dehydration is diminished performance. The water we lose through sweating comes from blood plasma. Plasma is the vehicle for red blood cells, which contain the oxygen that muscle need in order to perform. As you become dehydrated, your total body volume is reduced, and the oxygen carrying capability of your blood decreases. If you continue to exercise without proper fluid intake, you may experience a drop in blood pressure; feel faint, dizzy or nauseous. These are the symptoms of heat exhaustion. If you going, your body's ability to dissipate heat is further impaired and you may suffer heat stroke.

How do you get enough water?

Drink a glass of water every fifteen minutes during your workout. This may sound like a lot, but it is necessary to keep you hydrated. If you cannot drink that much water at once, take smaller amounts every ten minutes.

What are the symptoms of dehydration?

The main symptom of dehydration is feeling thirsty. In mild to moderate dehydration, other possible symptoms include:

- Dry mouth and dry lips
- Sunken eyes
- Flashed skin
- Cramps
- Headache
- Fatigue