

## Hydration

Staying hydrated is essential for everyone, but athletes have an even greater need to maintain proper hydration. The best substance to use for hydration purposes is water. Water is the most important nutrient for life and has many important functions including regulating temperature, lubricating joints, and transporting nutrients and waste throughout the body. While specific fluid recommendations aren't possible due to individual variability, most athletes can use the following guidelines as a starting point and modify their fluid needs accordingly.

### Hydration before Exercise

- Drink about 15-20 fl. oz., 2-3 hours before exercise.
- Drink 8-10 fl. oz., 10-15 minutes before exercise.

### Hydration during Exercise

- Drink regularly during exercise.
- If exercising longer than 90 minutes, drink 8-10 fl. oz. of a sports drink (with no more than 8 percent carbohydrates) every 15 - 30 minutes.

### Hydration after Exercise

- Weigh yourself before and after exercise and replace fluid losses.
- Drink 20-24 fl. oz. water for every 1 lb. lost.
- Consume a 4:1 ratio of carbohydrates to protein within 2 hours after exercise to replenish glycogen stores.

## Dehydration

The average adult male is made up of 60% water while the average adult female is made up of 55% water. We lose water every day in the form of water vapor in the breath we exhale and in our secreted sweat, urine and stool.

Dehydration is a condition that occurs when someone loses more fluids than he or she takes in. Our bodies are about two thirds water. When someone gets dehydrated, it means the amount of water in his or her body has dropped below the level needed for normal body function. Not drinking enough to keep up with the loss of fluid can sometimes make a person feel very sick. If you don't replace the fluid you lose through sweat as you exercise, you can become dehydrated, especially on a hot day. Even mild dehydration can affect an athlete's physical and mental performance. To counter dehydration, you need to restore the proper balance of water in your body. Thirst is one indicator of dehydration, but it is **not** an early warning sign. By the time you feel thirsty, you might already be dehydrated. Other symptoms of dehydration include:

- feeling dizzy and lightheaded.
- having a dry or sticky mouth.
- producing less urine and darker urine.

Two things that can affect hydration are environmental influences and altitude. Hotter weather and higher altitudes require more water.

