



Beat the Heat!

5 Easy Ways to Stay Hydrated This Summer

Did you know the human body is composed of approximately 60% water? Every system in your body needs water to stay healthy and balanced. Water carries nutrients to your cells, flushes toxins from your vital organs, and regulates your hormones. It's important to stay hydrated all year-round—especially during the hot months of summer.

Every day, your body loses water through perspiration, breathing, and other functions. In warm weather, you lose water more quickly, which can lead to dehydration. Mild dehydration will leave you feeling tired, dizzy, and winded, but severe dehydration can lead to serious heat-related illnesses like heat exhaustion and heat stroke. Fortunately, with a little common sense, it's easy to strike the right balance and keep your tank full.

Acclimatize Yourself

According to the American Medical Athletic Association, it's important to ease yourself into hot-weather activity to avoid overheating. Once the balmy weather kicks in, it takes about 10-14 days of working or exercising in the heat for your body to adjust. Be sure to cut down on the intensity of your exercise or outdoor activity during that initial phase.

Drink Plenty of Water

Experts at the Mayo Clinic say the best time to consume fluids is *before* you are thirsty; by the time you are thirsty, your body is already dehydrated. In general, doctors recommend that adults drink eight eight-ounce glasses of water a day (about 1.9 liters). In warmer weather, especially if you spend a lot of time exercising, you'll need to drink more. An extra 400 - 600 milliliters (about 1.5 - 2.5 cups) of water will suffice for short bouts of exercise, but if you're exercising intensely for more than an hour, drink even more.

Cut Back on Caffeine, Soda, and Alcohol

It's best to reduce or avoid drinks containing caffeine, refined sugar, or alcohol in hot weather. Coffee, black tea, soda, and alcoholic beverages all stimulate the production of urine, thereby promoting dehydration. Try sparkling water instead.

Eat Your Fluids!

Food can provide up to 20 percent of the fluid your body needs each day (about 2 cups for women and 3 cups for men). According to the National Institutes of Health, the following fruits and vegetables contain at least 90% water: watermelon, broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, grapefruit, lettuce, radishes, and spinach.

Replenish Your Electrolytes

American Medical Athletic Association researchers say that lightly flavored beverages with small amounts of sodium (like Gatorade) can help you stay hydrated and keep your electrolytes balanced.

Other Hydration Tips

- Wear light-colored, loose-fitting clothing.
- Remember to bring fluids with you wherever you go, as they may not be available.
- Take a break in the shade whenever possible.
- Be sure to hydrate before, during, and after exercise

Sources: American Medical Athletic Association, Mayo Clinic, N.I.H.

<http://www.letsgojeffco.com/>