

Hydrate for your Health: What to drink for your best workout

The human body depends greatly on water for many functions. Water is used for regulation of body temperature, joint lubrication, protection of organs and tissues, transportation of nutrients and oxygen to cells, and the elimination of waste products from the kidneys and liver. Because water has such important functions in your body, it is vital to stay hydrated when exercising.

Water is lost everyday though breathing, sweating, and urinating. You sweat more during exercise, losing more water. Thirst is not triggered until body fluids are depleted well below levels required for optimal functioning. This means you may be dehydrated and not even feel thirsty. You may feel sluggish and walking and/or running may seem more difficult. Here are a few signs of dehydration:

- Dry throat
- Intense thirst
- Dark yellow/brown urine
- Fatigue

To feel your best while exercising, it is important to drink water before, during, and after exercise. In moderate temperatures, drink about:

- 16 ounces (2 cups) of water in the two hours before exercise
- 8 ounces (1 cup) of water for every 30 minutes you exercise
- 8 to 16 ounces (1 to 2 cups) of water after your work out is complete

When temperatures are warmer, you may need to drink more water to replenish your fluids.

If you are exercising for over 90 minutes, sports drinks like Gatorade and Powerade will help replenish sodium lost through sweating. Simply drinking water is recommended if you are walking and/or running for less than 90 minutes. If you don't like water, try a low-calorie flavored water, like Crystal Light, or add some lemon juice to your water to enhance its taste.

Next time you work out, be sure to drink water before, during, and after exercise. Proper hydration will help enhance your next walk and/or run.

These tips are meant for informational purposes only. The information provided here is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Always seek the advice of your physician or other qualified health provider with any questions you may have regarding a medical condition.

