

## *Fluid Intake / Hydration*

Hit the bottle! The water bottle that is! Your body is about 50-60% water by weight and your muscles are about 75% water. Each body cell, tissue, and organ needs water to function. Therefore it makes sense that without water you aren't going to function very well, much less at 100% of your capability. Dehydration is the single greatest factor that affects athletic performance. As little as a 2% loss in body water (typically 1-2 pounds) can affect performance 10-15%. That means if you come to training dehydrated or become dehydrated during training, there is no way you can give 100% effort!

Sports drinks can become a saving grace during a grueling workout. They can help to fight fatigue and enhance performance by replacing what you lose in sweat (fluid and electrolytes) and get energy (carbohydrate) to your working muscles quicker. That way you can end your performance with as much gusto as you started!

When choosing a sports drink, read the label carefully. You want one that has 4-8% carbohydrate because that percentage ensures that it will move through your stomach and into your working muscles quickest. Don't water down a sports drink because that could slow the passage of it through the gut. Anything above or below the 4-8% range will take longer to reach your muscles.

What about fruit juice? Fruit juice is fine for after workouts, but I wouldn't recommend it during a workout because the sugar in fruit juice (fructose) could lead to GI distress (stomach cramps). Also, the amount of carbohydrate in fruit juice is much higher (~11%) than what is recommended. Soda's are also about 10-12% carbohydrate – not a good choice during workouts!

It's ok to drink a soda every now and then. But be aware of what a soda can do to your body. First of all, there is a lot of sugar in soda (a 12 ounce can of regular Dr. Pepper contains 10 teaspoons of sugar). Sugar elevates your blood sugar levels (your energy) very quickly and then drops it just about as fast. Your blood sugar peaks and drops in about 15 to 30 minutes. Secondly, the caffeine in soda (or tea or coffee) acts as a diuretic which means that it is acting to dehydrate you. You are working hard to maintain hydration so you don't want to put in fluids that act opposite of what you need!

Here are some quick tips to help you stay hydrated:

- Drink at least half your body weight in ounces of water each day
- Drink cool fluids – they move through your stomach and into your working muscles quickest
- Drink 2-3 cups of water 2 hours before workouts
- Drink another 1-2 cups about 10-15 minutes before workouts
- Drink every 15-20 minutes during exercise – drink early and at regular intervals.
- Drink before you get thirsty – thirst is not an adequate indicator of hydration status. If you feel thirsty, you are already dehydrated!
- After training, drink enough to quench your thirst and then drink about 2 cups more.
- Limit caffeine intake because it acts as a diuretic and can dehydrate you.
- Monitor hydration status by the color and quantity of urine. If your urine is scant and dark yellow, you are most likely dehydrated.

