



Live Well, Work Well

In hot or humid weather, it is essential to drink additional water to help lower your body's temperature and to replace what you lose through sweating.

FITNESS FIRST: AVOIDING DEHYDRATION

Dehydration may seem like a minor ailment, but it can be quite dangerous. In fact, millions of people worldwide—many of them infants and older adults—die of dehydration each year.

Get the Facts

In the simplest terms, dehydration occurs when you lose more water than you take in and your body does not have enough water to carry out its normal functions. What's more, even mild dehydration—as little as a 1 to 2 percent loss of body weight—can cause symptoms such as weakness, dizziness and fatigue, and may have a negative effect on long-term health.

Water Loss

On average, adults lose about 2.5 liters (more than 10 cups) of water a day, simply by doing everyday tasks such as sweating, breathing and going to the bathroom. Also lost are electrolytes—minerals such as sodium, potassium and calcium—that maintain the balance of fluids in your body. This is before you may even think about mowing the lawn on a humid afternoon, working out at the gym or rearranging the living room furniture—all of which cause much higher water loss.

Symptoms

Mild to moderate dehydration is likely to cause the following symptoms:

- Excessive thirst
- Sleepiness
- Dry mouth
- Few or no tears when crying

- Muscle weakness
- Headache
- Dizziness or lightheadedness

Prevent Dehydration

Preventing dehydration sounds easy enough: consume plenty of fluids and foods high in water content, like fruits and vegetables. However, how much fluid do we really need? Determining your appropriate water intake is not an exact science, as much depends on age, physical condition, activity level, environment and individual physiology.

The best recommendation is to simply make a conscious effort to stay hydrated. In addition, make water your beverage of choice! Try drinking water with every meal and between meals. Take water breaks instead of coffee or tea breaks, and substitute sparkling water for alcohol.