

# Fill Up on Fluids



Water may be known as a “thirst quencher,” but if you’re thirsty, your body is already dehydrated.

lead to heat injury. Maintaining fluid levels is critical to any exercise routine.

The American College of Sports Medicine not only recommends adequate fluid replenishment, but also advises athletes to increase sodium intake after a strenuous workout. While current medical advice calls for a reduced sodium diet, the temporary uptick in sodium is necessary to counteract the loss of electrolytes during physical exercise.

The next time you gear up for athletic activity, keep the following tips in mind:

**Load up.** Drink 1-2 cups of water 30 minutes before starting exercise.

**Maintain your levels.** Drink 0.5-1 cup of water for every 15 minutes of exercise to replenish your fluids.

**Weigh yourself.** Check your weight before and after exercise, then drink 2.5 cups of water for every pound lost during your workout.

**Don’t rely on thirst.** Water may be known as a “thirst quencher,” but if you’re thirsty, your body is already dehydrated. Drink plenty of water after a workout, even if you’re not thirsty.

When your thirst is quenched, drink some more; you may not feel you need water, but your body does.

**Use other indicators.** Urine can signal whether you’re adequately hydrated; look for a pale color, as opposed to a darker yellow, to know when your body has enough fluids.

**Beware overconsumption.** While dehydration is a danger, drinking too much water can also pose a risk. Athletes who consume excessive amounts of fluid can suffer from water intoxication, which occurs when sodium levels are depleted. Be on the lookout for these symptoms:

- Dizziness
- Nausea
- Apathy
- Confusion

**Eat your fluids.** Consider other forms of liquid refreshment to keep hydrated throughout the day. Fruit, vegetables and tea provide fluids and nutritional benefits. But immediately after exercise, stick to water or electrolyte-enhanced fluids—they pack the best replenishing punch. ■

This handout is based on information from the American College of Sports Medicine ([http://www.acsm.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Home\\_Page&template=/CM/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=4187](http://www.acsm.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Home_Page&template=/CM/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=4187)) and AARP ([http://www.aarp.org/health/fitness/work\\_out/the\\_facts\\_on\\_water\\_and\\_exercise.html](http://www.aarp.org/health/fitness/work_out/the_facts_on_water_and_exercise.html))

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