

# HYDRATION TIPS FOR SUMMER



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**Athletes need to be in their best condition for peak performance, and this includes ensuring they are well hydrated leading into training sessions and competition.**

When exercising your body loses fluids and electrolytes through sweat, which can lead to dehydration. Sweating is your body's mechanism to cool you down and maintain optimal core temperature, and this will increase in hotter weather and humidity, so summer in Australia is particularly tricky when it comes to keeping yourself hydrated!

Studies have shown that a loss of fluid equal to 2% of bodyweight can have significant impact on performance in athletes.

Some of the negative side effects of dehydration include:

- Impaired concentration and coordination
- Tiredness and fatigue
- Headaches
- Cramping and soreness
- Nausea, vomiting or other gastrointestinal issues during exercise



## HYDRATION

### EFFECTS OF DEHYDRATION ON PERFORMANCE:

- 1 Decreased power output
- 2 Decreased sprint time
- 3 Decreased endurance
- 4 Impaired coordination and concentration
- 5 Reduced skill execution
- 6 Increased tiredness, fatigue and perception of effort

### So, what is the best way to prevent dehydration?

The following are just a few of the tips from our Sports Dietitian that can help you to stay on top of your hydration on a day-to-day basis as well as in-competition:

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## 1 - Daily Goals

If you are someone who struggles to drink enough water on a day-to-day basis, consider how you can improve this and develop this into a habit. A helpful strategy to start with is to set yourself goals across the day e.g. aim to finish 600ml of water between the time you wake up through to 10am, then aim to finish another 600ml of water between 10am - 1pm etc. Writing these down can help you to stay on track with this goal so you can tick it off each time you've completed it. After a while, this habit will stick and you won't need a checklist to keep you on track.

## 2 - Your Own Bottle

Similar to above, if you struggle to drink enough water on a daily basis, consider keeping your own drink bottle with you whether that is at work or school. If you have your own drink bottle, you can sip on water whenever you feel like it, and most places have taps or water fountains you can refill your bottle with regularly across the day. If you don't have your own drink bottle with you, access to water can be much more difficult, and not to mention more expensive if you end up buying bottled water regularly.

## 3 - Change The Taste

If you are one of those people that don't drink much water due to the taste, try adding flavour to your water. Avoid adding high sugar or acid ingredients to all of your water, and if you do, consider rinsing your mouth with plain water afterward to prevent enamel erosion. Some tasty options to add to water includes lemon slices, mint leaves, cucumber slices, strawberries, blueberries or apple slices to name a few.

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## **4 - Hydrating Food**

In summer when dehydration is particularly common due to hot weather, consider foods that are also hydrating to include as snacks across the day. Watermelon, cucumber and tomatoes are great options, and are also refreshing straight out of the fridge.

## **5 - Keep It Cool**

Having cold water during the summer can be helpful for two reasons; it is more palatable, so you might be more likely to drink it, and secondly it can help with cooling down your core temperature which in turn can help to reduce the risk of dehydration. This is especially helpful when you are training or competing in hot weather! Consider keeping two drink bottles of water with you, one that has been frozen and one that has been kept cool in the fridge, that way you can sip on cold water during exercise, and by the time you are finished, your frozen water bottle will have defrosted and you'll have more cold water to recover after exercise.

## **6 - Adding Electrolytes**

During the summer is an appropriate time to consider adding electrolytes to your fluids during exercise, to help replace electrolytes lost during exercise and prevent dehydration. There are a range of electrolyte supplements available, including zero sugar, lower sugar and high sugar options. The option you choose is dependent on your individual sweat rate as well as the weather conditions you're exercising in. Speak to a Sports Dietitian to discuss the best options for you.

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## **7 - Pre-Hydrate**

Before competition, make sure you are well hydrated. This will be easier to do if you are in a good habit of staying hydrated on a day-to-day basis by regularly drinking water and following the above tips. Prior to any competition, make sure you have hydrated well to help prevent dehydration while competing, as it will take longer to treat dehydration if it occurs than it does to keep yourself hydrated, and will also have impacts on performance. It is possible, but rare, to over-hydrate, so make sure you speak to a Sports Dietitian to discuss the right competition hydration plan for you.

## **8 - Monitor Your Urine**

Using a urine chart can be a useful and very simple method of roughly monitoring your hydration status. The colour of your urine can provide an indication, with darker yellow urine indicating poor hydration status, while clear-pale yellow coloured urine indicating good hydration status. This can be particularly useful in the lead up to competition so you can monitor whether you have hydrated well beforehand.

## **9 - Mix In Milk**

Water is the best option to stay hydrated on a day-to-day basis, electrolyte drinks can be considered for certain training sessions or competition, but dairy milk is also a great drink for hydration. Dairy milk is a great source of protein so it's a good recovery option after exercise, but due to the sodium content it is also a good source of electrolytes. In summer, consider having a glass of milk or smoothies as a post-exercise recovery snack which will also assist your body with rehydrating.

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## 10 - Sweat Testing

Sweat testing can be considered for athletes to help determine individual sweat rate and a hydration plan. Speak with a Sports Dietitian about the different sweat testing options they may be able to provide.

Working closely with a Sports Dietitian can help you develop a hydration plan suited to your individual sweat rate, weather conditions and logistics of consuming fluids around your sport. If you'd like to develop an individualised plan, contact **Precision Athletica Sports Dietitian - Kelsey Hutton** for more information.