

# HYDRATION FACTS

The importance of a good hydration plan cannot be underestimated, that's why during training sessions and at competitions you are constantly being reminded by coaches to drink.

- The human body is 57-65% water; the brain is 85% water whilst muscles are 75% water.
- Each cell, tissue and organ in your body requires water to perform to its maximum efficiency.
- Water is essential in the transportation of red blood cells throughout the body, as well as the formation of protein & glycogen.
- All these functions are needed for the growth & recovery of muscles.
- Hydration also helps regulate the body's temperature & helps lubricate joints both of which are vital to success while swimming.

Therefore it makes sense that without water we will not function very well at all, and nowhere near our 100% capability.

Poor hydration can also lead to

- Weakness & early onset of fatigue in training sessions
- Fainting or dizziness. Increased weakness, laboured breathing with exercise.
- Cramping both in & out of the pool. Muscle spasms.
- Headaches
- Mood swings
- Heat Exhaustion
- Poor blood circulation, failing kidney functions.

What can you do to ensure you remain hydrated and help yourself be the best you can be?

1-2 hours before training 400-600ml of fluid should be consumed; during a training session another 200ml should be drunk every 15-20 minutes in small sips. The coaches will allow time for this; however the responsibility is the swimmers to ensure they always have a drink on poolside. After training swimmers should then drink a further 400-600ml to help repair muscles & ensure rehydration in preparation for the next training session.

Another recommendation is to weigh a swimmer and drink half your body weight in fluid ounces; if a swimmer weighs 45kg, and then the swimmer should drink a minimum of 50 fluid ounces per day. This way water intake is more individualized however this still doesn't allow for fluid loss during training.

A swimmer has to be more aware of hydration as they are more at risk of dehydration as it is very hard to tell if a swimmer is sweating at all, let alone how much fluid they are losing due to sweating.

Simple checks to ensure that a person is not dehydrated include

- Feeling thirsty-if you're feeling thirsty you are already dehydrated
- White patches around the face especially the mouth during exercise
- Check the colour of your urine-it should be a straw-clear colour.
- The darker the colour of your urine the more dehydrated you are
- Does your urine have a strong smell? Another sign you are dehydrated!
- Decreased urine output

What are the best fluids?

**1% Dehydration can affect your performance by 6%**

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- Water is a good basis for hydration,
- If you do not like water on its own cordial can be added to make it a little more appealing,
- Isotonic sports drinks are available that can help replace salts & minerals lost through exercise but should be used sparingly
- Fizzy drinks & drinks containing caffeine should not be consumed prior or during training or competition.

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