

HYDRATION

In healthy individuals water makes up to approximately 50 - 60% of total body mass and plays a critical role in almost all physiological functions, from ensuring normal cognitive function to helping cool you down during exercise.

We should aim to consume 2 litres of water daily however there is an increased importance whilst undertaking regular training and extra fluids may be required.

During exercise it is important to stay hydrated. Understanding when and what to drink during exercise and putting into practice what you know can help you to get the most out of your workout. Follow our guide below to find out more about how you can optimise your hydration strategy.

WHY STAYING HYDRATED DURING EXERCISE IS IMPORTANT

During exercise our body temperature rises. This causes our body to sweat. Sweating is the most effective way for our body to cool. If sweat losses are not replaced by consuming suitable fluids, dehydration can occur.

Your body works best when it is fully hydrated. A loss of 2% of body weight as a result of dehydration (which in an average female is as little as 1.2 kg) can cause your heart to work harder and your muscle to fatigue. In other words you don't feel at your best and exercise becomes harder.

HOW TO OPTIMISE HYDRATION

Pre-Exercise

Aim to consume 5-10ml of fluids per kilogram of your body weight before training or competition which will allow enough time for fluids to be absorbed. For a 60kg runner that equates to 300 - 600ml of fluids, or 1-2 glasses.

During Exercise

It's important to listen to your body and drink to thirst. Try to avoid taking on large amounts of fluid throughout the race. Drinking little and often is a much smarter way to keep hydrated during training sessions and the race.

Post-Exercise

Your rehydration strategy should be to consume 150% of the sweat loss after exercise to ensure effective post-exercise rehydration. If a 70kg athlete lost 1kg of body mass during exercise, they would need to consume 1.5L fluid after exercise to fully rehydrate. This is equivalent to around six glasses of fluid.

PERSONALISE HYDRATION

Becoming familiar with your sweat rate will help you manage your fluid needs. Weigh yourself before and after a training session to see how much fluid you are losing in sweat during a training session.

MONITORING HYDRATION

An easy and effective way to check how hydrated you are is to do a hydration check. Knowing your level of hydration before you exercise can go a long way to helping you perform at your best.