

Hydration Essentials



The primary goal with hydration for any athlete is to start in an optimal hydration state at the beginning of a practice or competition. This is not always the same and varies by many factors, including but not limited to the environment (temperature, humidity, atmospheric pressure), physical activity, illness, food consumption (some foods contain more water than others), sleep, and medication and supplements. A general rule of thumb is 5-7ml/kg of hydration four hours before training. Swimmers should choose cold water because cold beverage intake supports thermoregulation during an event. This is especially important if the temperature is high (water or air temp). Urine color is the best indicator of hydration status. The darker the urine, the less hydrated the individual is, and on the reverse, if the urine is as clear as water, the individual may be overhydrated.

Staying hydrated is crucial for performance and overall health. Dehydration can lead to decreased physical performance, increased fatigue, reduced strength and endurance, altered coordination, and decreased focus. Even a 2% loss in body weight due to water loss can negatively affect athletic performance. Fluids facilitate the transport of nutrients and oxygen to muscles and assist in removing waste products from metabolism. Proper hydration supports muscle recovery and can help reduce muscle soreness post-exercise. It also aids in the repair of tissues and replenishment of glycogen stores. Swimmers are only sometimes aware that they are losing fluid through sweat; swimmers must regularly monitor urine color and frequency during practice and a swim meet.

Tips for Hydration Maintenance

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Drink water regularly throughout the day, especially before, during, and after exercise.● Swimmers should listen to the body and drink when thirsty.● Consider electrolyte-replacement drinks for prolonged, intense exercise (over an hour), particularly in hot conditions. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● For activities lasting less than one hour, water is generally sufficient.● Electrolyte-rich beverages (sports drinks) can be beneficial for endurance exercises lasting more than an hour or in high heat. They replenish lost electrolytes (sodium, potassium) and provide carbohydrates for energy. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● To contribute to hydration, include water-rich foods in the diet, such as fruits (e.g., watermelon, oranges) and vegetables (e.g., cucumbers, lettuce).● Consider adding cucumbers or making iced herbal tea to enhance the flavor of water |
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Sample Hydration Plan

<i>Pre-Practice Hydration</i>	<i>During Practice Hydration</i>	<i>Post-Practice Hydration</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Hydrate well in the hours leading up to swim practice or a meet● Drink 16-20 oz of water or an electrolyte drink 2-3 hours before event● Consume an additional 8-10 oz about 20-30 mins before entering the pool.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Keep a water bottle close (if allowed) and take regular sips, or use the drinking fountain on breaks.● A general guideline is to drink 7-10 oz every 15-30 minutes during intense training days.● If practice is greater than 90 minutes, consider an electrolyte drink to support the potential loss of minerals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Replenish lost fluids immediately after practice. Drink 16-24 oz of fluids for every pound (about 0.5 kg) lost during training.● If possible, weigh in before and after practice to monitor fluid loss.