

## **Eat to Compete ....Hydration and Performance**

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Are you having trouble making it through a workout or competition? Are you feeling unusually sore after training? The solution may be in your water bottle.

Poor hydration can significantly impair your ability to train and compete. During exercise athletes, even aquatic ones, sweat. If you don't replace the fluid lost from sweating, you become dehydrated and your performance suffers.

### **Hydration Tips**

Daily: Include liquids like water, fruit juices and milk; and foods containing liquid (eg oranges, melons) as a regular part of your meals and snacks

Before exercise: Drink 400-600 ml about 2-3 hours before a training session or competition

During exercise: drink 150-350 ml every 15 to 20 minutes from the time you start exercising. Keep a bottle handy and train yourself to drink during rest breaks and/or between events. Coaches, remember to encourage your athletes to bring a bottle and drink regularly.

After exercise: Drink 450-675 ml for every .5kg (1lb) of weight lost during exercise. Include foods containing liquids and sodium (salt) in your post-exercise meal or snack.

### **Water or sports drink – the battle of the beverages**

If you're exercising for less than an hour, water is your best fluid choice. Keep in mind that while your practice time or competition may last longer than an hour, the amount of time you actually spend with your heart rate elevated may be far less.

If you're exercising at an intense level for more than an hour (eg long swim practices, long distance cycling, skiing or running), a sports drink can help you keep going. In addition to providing fluid, typical sports drinks contain carbohydrate and sodium. The carbohydrate provides a source of energy. The sodium (salt) makes the drinks taste better and improves the desire to drink.

During endurance events (eg marathons, triathlons, Tour de France), over-consumption of water, without taking in sodium, can lead to overhydration and low blood sodium levels. Low blood sodium levels can negatively affect performance. The combination of fluid and sodium in a sports drink may be helpful if you're an endurance athlete.

Homemade sports drinks can be just as effective, and far less costly, than store-bought sports drinks.

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Courtesy of Manitoba Chicken Producers

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