



6. Hydrate for Higher Performance

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Our thirst and common sense tells us that keeping hydrated during workouts is important, but did you know that proper hydration can measurably improve your performance? Recent studies showed that bicyclists that pedaled hard for 50 minutes had a 6% increase in performance when they replaced as much liquids as they sweated out, and their performance improved 12% when the liquids contained carbohydrates, such as in a sports drink.

How much liquid should you consume? If you lose two pounds of sweat in an hour workout then you need to drink 32 oz. of liquid, or roughly 8 oz. every 15 minutes. Don't just rely on your thirst to tell you when you've drunk enough, as studies show that people who relied solely on thirst drank only half of the liquids they needed.

If carbohydrates boost performance does this mean you should drink a sports drink? Not necessarily, you can have the same effectiveness by drinking juice as long as you water it down so that there is no more than 80 calories per 8 ounces. What about replacing minerals and electrolytes which so many sports drinks tout? It's not really necessary, as your body is unlikely to deplete these unless you have an extreme workout of over 6 hours or more.

What's the best regimen for fluid replacement? Start with 8-16 oz. no longer than a half hour before your workout, and then take frequent fluid replacement breaks during the workout. Also, avoid extremely cold drinks as your body more quickly absorbs cool, but not cold liquids.

So drink up for higher performance.