

Hydration in Sports

The human body is approximately 60% water. Your hydration level will influence both mental and physical performance in school as well as on the field of competition. Proper hydration will help you to prepare and to perform at your highest-level during times of physical stress.

The body uses water to perform many different functions including controlling body temperature (sweating), lubricating joints (knees, ankles, hips, etc.) so we can move quickly and smoothly and how fast you process thoughts. We sweat when we are physically active regardless of the air temperature. This results in loss of body fluids which in turn results in a decrease in energy and the ability to move at the desired fast pace during competition. The end result can be muscle cramps, muscle injury or becoming over-heated. A properly hydrated athlete will be able to stay in the game longer and perform at a higher level of competition for longer.

Water is the best overall fluid to drink on a regular basis but many athletes also use sports drinks. If choosing a sports drink, taste isn't always best. The body uses carbohydrates (CHO) for energy and needs electrolytes to replenish those lost through sweat. Be cautious about the sugar types and levels and be sure to look at the electrolytes (sodium, potassium, magnesium, etc). There are many different opinions regarding the ideal levels of each and many factors should be taken into consideration including the age of the athlete, activity and the amount of time spent in that activity.

As already stated, most experts state that water is the best fluid replacement for the body. In general, you should drink $\frac{1}{2}$ - 1 oz. of water per pound of body weight each day. This is for the general public with athletes, especially young athletes, drinking closer to the 1 ounce levels or more. This equates to a 100 pound individual drinking 50-100 oz. / day or 6 – 12 cups / day of fluids with water making up the majority of this fluid. It should also be noted that you should check with a medical professional or nutritionist for further questions.