

Exercise Hydration

Athlete Scenario

For my resistance training and cardio workouts at the gym, I bring a water bottle and drink when I get thirsty. My workout usually lasts about 1–1 ½ hours and I tend to sweat a lot. After I leave the gym, I am physically spent and don't feel completely recovered before the next workout. If I have time, I grab a sports drink for the ride home. When, what, and how much should I drink to improve my energy at the gym?

Goals of Hydration

- Begin exercise well hydrated by drinking fluids during the day and within the hour before the exercise session.
- Replace sweat losses by drinking fluids regularly during exercise.
- Rehydrate after exercise to replace weight lost as fluid during exercise.
- Follow a personalized fluid replacement plan to prevent the consequences of excessive (>2% body weight loss) dehydration such as early fatigue, cardiovascular stress, increased risk of heat illness, and decreased performance.

Fluids Surrounding Exercise

- For short duration (<60 minutes), low to moderate intensity activity, water is a good choice to drink before, during, and after exercise.
- Sport drinks (6-8% carbohydrate) are good options for moderate to high intensity activity lasting longer than 60 minutes, especially when the goal includes replacing carbohydrate and electrolytes.
- For those who experience high sodium losses during exercise, eat salty foods in a pre-exercise meal or add salt to sports drinks consumed during exercise.
- Rehydrate following exercise by drinking enough fluid (water or sports drinks) to replace fluid lost during exercise. Replace fluid and sodium losses with watery foods that contain salt (soup, vegetable juice). Replace fluid and potassium losses by consuming fruits and vegetables.



Tips to Take With You

1. Replace fluids early and often during and after exercise, particularly in hot environments.
2. Good sources of fluid include water, sports drinks, juices, soups, smoothies, fruits and vegetables.
3. A sports dietitian can assist you in designing a personalized hydration plan that considers thirst, urine color, and body weight changes under varying conditions of exercise.

Contact SCAN

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Written by SCAN registered dietitians (RDs). The key to optimal meal planning for athletes is individualization. For personalized nutrition plans contact a SCAN sports dietitian or Board Certified Specialist in Sports Dietetics (CSSD) by accessing "Find a SCAN Dietitian" at www.scandpg.org | 800.249.2875.