

Hydration

Hydration is the process of providing an adequate amount of liquid to bodily tissues

Fact

- Body water balance is represented by the fluid intake and loss
- Humans are more than 70% water
- Daily activity can seriously threaten fluid balance if fluids are not replaced throughout the day
- Reduction of body fluid levels leads to dehydration and possibly heat stroke
- Drinking before, during and after physical activity is essential to staying hydrated

Why is staying hydrated important?

Dehydration, the lack of adequate body fluids for normal functioning at an optimal level, is caused by a loss of, and/or inadequate intake of water and important blood salts (such as potassium). At high temperatures, dehydration occurs more quickly. Excessive water loss from the body can occur through vomiting, excessive sweating, or diarrhea. This in turn can lead to dizziness, fatigue and poor coordination, and eventually a complete loss of consciousness. For more information on dehydration, check out the “Dehydration Fact Sheet” on the AIA Academy website.

Ways to stay hydrated

Drink at least 64 oz (eight 8 oz cups) of fluid daily. Water makes up approximately 70% of our muscles, and 75% of our brains, making it one of the most important nutrients in our body.

- Drink water before meals (when you are hungry) rather than afterwards when you are already feeling full
- Drink water when possible, even if you are not feeling thirsty
- Drink plenty of fluids before, during and after physical activity
- Try to spread out how much water you consume throughout the day instead of drinking it all in one sitting
- Water and fruit juices are good sources of fluid to consume when not participating in physical activity
- Sports drinks can encourage people to drink more fluids because they are flavored and are higher in sodium
- Avoid carbonated drinks (sodas) which can cause bloating or a feeling of fullness, and prevent adequate consumption of fluids for maintaining hydration
- Limit soda and other sugary drinks, such as lemonades, punches, and iced teas because they often contain a lot of sugar that the body does not need
- Limit coffee or other caffeinated drinks, which will dehydrate you faster when consumed

