



David Fairlamb

THE FIT FACTOR

LIFESTYLE CHANGE

Aim to consume around eight glasses (or two litres) of water a day. By drinking an adequate amount of water each day, you can ensure that your body has all it needs to maintain good health, improve digestion, support kidney function, and enhance skin complexion, while also boosting energy levels and overall wellbeing.

FITNESS TIP

Drinking water and keeping hydrated has proven to improve performance and exercise endurance and, of course, keep your body in good health at the same time. Aim to drink more if you are exercising or exposed to hot weather, as we have been over the past week

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WITH the hot weather we have been experiencing it's even more important to keep hydrated by drinking plenty of fluids, especially if exercising.

Around 60% of your body is water and it plays a vital role in every bodily function. While exercising you can lose a lot of fluid - up to a litre an hour - and if you don't replace it dehydration can set in, leading to thirst; dark urine; dizziness; tiredness and loss of strength and stamina while exercising.

Of course, it is important to keep hydrated on a daily basis not just when you exercise and symptoms such as poor concentration; lethargic; headaches; low energy; dry mouth, eyes and skin; hair and nails not in great condition; always seeming to feel hungry, but in most cases you are just thirsty.

Does it matter which drinks you choose?

When you choose your drinks it is important to be aware that, although they all provide water and some also contain essential vitamins and minerals, they may also provide added calories. Consuming

sugary drinks can also potentially harm your teeth. It is also important to be aware that some drinks are acidic (e.g. fruit juice and carbonated drinks) and that this may cause dental erosion. The use of a straw lessens the contact with teeth.

■ Tea and coffee also deliver water, and, even though these drinks can contain caffeine, in moderate amounts caffeine doesn't affect hydration. This is equivalent to about two mugs of instant coffee or about two and a half mugs of tea.

■ Other hot drinks such as herbal teas, hot chocolates and malted drinks can provide water. But if these are sweetened with sugar it increases their calorie content and their potential to damage teeth.

Water is life and clean water means health

Motivational quote of the day

■ Milk contains lots of essential nutrients such as protein, B vitamins and calcium, as well as being a source of water. However, it can also contain saturated fat, so aim to drink semi-skimmed (less than 2% fat), 1% or skimmed milks.

■ Fruit juices and smoothies give you water plus some vitamins, minerals and natural plant substances from the fruit. Smoothies may also contain puréed fruit, which adds fibre. Be aware, though, that they contain sugar (and therefore calories) and can be acidic, potentially harming teeth. Try to add the amount of fruit you normal have raw - it's too easy to fill your mixer with too much fruit therefore too many calories.

■ Soft drinks are a source of water but are often laden with sugar - even the sports drinks can contain up to 20 teaspoons, which can have a huge impact on weight gain when consumed regularly. My advice is to stay away from pop and use diluted juice instead.

■ Alcoholic drinks contain water, but drinking alcohol increases the amount of water you lose as urine,

so drinks with a high alcohol content, such as wines and spirits, are not the best choice to stay hydrated. Normal strength beers, lagers and ciders also cause an increased loss of water as urine.

■ Food. We get on average 20% of our total water intake from food! Some foods have a high water content, especially fruits and vegetables, which are usually more than 80% water. Foods such as soups and stews, which have lots of water added during preparation, are also a source of water. So food can provide extra water, on top of the six to eight glasses of fluid you should drink a day.

Eight glasses, (or two litres) of water a day, is a good minimum. While experts have not agreed on one universal amount, it is accepted that performance declines with dehydration.

By drinking an adequate amount of water each day you can ensure that your body has all it needs to maintain good health.

Clearly, the best way to stay hydrated is by drinking plain old water.



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