

# Hydration Tips For Athletes

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Did you know that thirst is a sign of dehydration? The problem is, by the time you feel thirsty, it may be too late to maintain proper hydration. Optimal hydration is a key ingredient in the recipe for athletic success. That's because water is essential for the body to function properly. Dehydration of just 1 to 2 percent of body weight can negatively impact performance, especially when exercising in hot and humid weather. Yet, many athletes are not drinking enough before, during, and after their workout.

Let's look at how much athletes need to be drinking and what the best beverages are to consume.

Sip!  
Sip! Sip!

## BEFORE A WORKOUT

Be sure to start activity well hydrated. Aim to drink about 16 ounces in the two to three hours before a workout and an additional 8 ounces in the 15 to 30 minutes right before. For most athletes, water is the best pre-workout choice. If you are a salty sweater, switching from water to a sports drink right before exercise is a good choice.

## DURING A WORKOUT

Drinking fluids during activity is key in maintaining performance throughout the training session. While doing so isn't easy, drinking in intervals can help. Athletes should aim to drink about 4 to 8 ounces of fluid every 15 to 20 minutes. This equates to approximately 4 to 8 gulps of fluid, since one gulp is roughly equal to 1 ounce. Total fluid intake depends on the duration and intensity of your activity. An athlete's individual needs, as well as environmental conditions, like heat and humidity, should also be considered.

All athletes need water, but sometimes, water alone is not enough. If working out in very hot and humid weather, or for longer than an hour, a sports drink may be needed. A sports drink should provide about 6 to 7 percent carbohydrate, or about 14 to 17 grams of carbohydrate per 8 ounce serving, and also include electrolytes such as sodium and potassium.

## AFTER A WORKOUT

After exhaustive exercise, it is important to replace the fluids that were lost as sweat. The best way to know how much fluid you need to replace is to know how much fluid you lost. Weigh yourself before and after exercise and try to drink approximately 16 to 20 ounces of fluid for each pound lost during the workout.

In addition to water, recovery nutrition should include carbohydrates, electrolytes and some protein. Athletes have a lot of post-workout recovery options. **Chocolate milk** is one of the best drink options after strenuous training because it contains the carbohydrates, protein, electrolytes and fluid that are recommended. It also provides a source of magnesium, calcium and vitamin D. An ideal recovery beverage should contain all of these nutrients.

Another post-exercise recovery option is to make a fruit and yogurt **smoothie**, which also provides all the nutrients recommended and can feel like a refreshing treat after a tough workout. Smoothie varieties range from mixed berries blended with vanilla Greek yogurt and milk to bananas mixed with peanut butter, yogurt and honey. For more ideas, check out our post, [10 post-workout snacks to fuel sports recovery](#).

A good hydration plan can make a big difference in how you feel during practice and competitions. It's also important to be mindful of fluid intake at other times of the day, too. A great strategy is to carry a reusable water bottle throughout the day to have easy access to water no matter where you are. It is also possible to get water from certain foods, like fresh fruits and vegetables. Following a balanced diet, along with drinking enough fluid, can help athletes maximize their athletic performance.

**QUICK TIP GUIDE:** Proper hydration – before, during and after exercise – is key for fueling athletic performance.



### BEFORE A WORKOUT:

#### Water

**How much?** 16 ounces in the two to three hours before a workout and 8 ounces in the 15 to 30 minutes right before

*Jessica's Tip:* Have a water bottle handy and take frequent sips.

### DURING A WORKOUT:

#### Water or sports drink

containing 6 to 7 percent carbohydrates, or 14 to 17 grams of carbohydrate per 8 ounce serving

**How much?** About 4 to 8 ounces every 15 minutes

*Jessica's Tip:* 1 sip or gulp equals about 1 ounce



### AFTER A WORKOUT:

#### Low-Fat Chocolate Milk, Sports Drink or Water

**How much?** Enough to replace any weight lost during exercise (about 16-20 ounces per pound lost)

*Jessica's Tip:* Low-fat chocolate milk is a great source of high-quality protein and also provides a quick dose of carbohydrates.



### OTHER TIMES OF THE DAY:

#### Low-Fat Milk, 100% Fruit Juice

*Jessica's Tip:* Think your drink! Avoid beverages with excessive caffeine, sugar, or calories.



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