

So Thirsty

- A small boy is sent to bed by his father. Five minutes later: “Da-ad...” “What?” asks the father. “I’m thirsty. Can you bring me a drink of water?”
- “No. You had your chance. Lights out.” Replies the father. Again the boy asks for a glass of water. The frustrated father again says, “WHAT?” “I’m THIRSTY...Can I have a drink of water??”
- “I told you NO! If you ask again I’ll have to spank you!!”
- Five minutes later...
- “Daaa-aad...” “WHAT??!!” “When you come in to spank me, can you bring me a drink of water?”
- Your body is a tightly regulated ship when it comes to water conservation. With exercise or hard work, the body can lose substantial amounts of water. These losses are due to a number of different processes, including sweating and breathing. By the time that most people feel thirsty, they are already considerably dehydrated.
- Thirst is essentially the instinct that drives you to drink. An area of the brain senses that there is not enough water in the body, or that there is too much salt and that more water is needed to dilute it to the correct balance.
- When the body is low on fluid, a number of hormones cause changes all over the body. These hormones cause the sensation of thirst and even saliva in the mouth is reduced to give the feeling of thirst. Another function of the hormones is on the kidneys, which then retain all of the water that they can. The conservation of water is very important to the function of your body as blood is 83 percent water, your muscles are 75 percent water, the fat in your body is 25 percent and bones are 22 percent water.
- What is the best way to rehydrate the body? In addition to water, there are a number of different products available. Sports drinks such as Gatorade and PowerAde combine water with carbohydrates (sugars) for energy and sodium (salt) to help replace the salts that are lost with sweating. Drinks such as Vitamin water are essentially the same thing, with only a few other nutrients added to the mix.
- For most athletes and those exercising, water is almost always the best bet. Sports drinks often add a substantial amount of additional calories without adding any benefits.
- The American College of Sports Medicine suggests that for periods of exercise that are less than one hour, water is all that is recommended. The day before strenuous exercise, it is recommended that a balanced diet of food and fluids is consumed. Two hours before exercise, about 17 ounces of fluid should be drunk to stay hydrated. During exercise, it is recommended that fluids be drunk early and often to replace the fluids that are being lost.
- The American College of Sports Medicine states that for exercise lasting greater than one hour, performance can be increased by adding carbohydrates and sodium to the fluids that are ingested. However, the meal that is eaten before exercising is more important to how the body performs than the sugars and sodium that are consumed during the actual exercising.
- While exercising or working hard, the best recommendation is to drink small amounts of water often to stay ahead of the game. Maintaining hydration at a relatively constant rate helps you to

Health is not a condition of matter, but of mind

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perform at the highest possible level.