

~ **Spontaneous Health** ~
www.SpontaneousHealth.com

The Most Underestimated Nutrient: Water!

If you are not drinking enough water you can impair every aspect of your physiology. Dr. Howard Flaks, a bariatric (obesity) specialist in Beverly Hills, California, says, "By not drinking enough water, many people incur excess body fat, poor muscle tone and size, decreased digestive efficiency and organ function, increased toxicity in the body, joint and muscle soreness and water retention."

Next to air, water is the most necessary element for our survival, yet it is likely the most underestimated of the essential nutrients. We can live without eating food for several weeks, but we can only survive a few days without water. The typical adult body is made up of 60 to 70 percent water. Water provides the body with form and structure, known as *turgor*; it provides the fluid environment for all cell metabolism, and it regulates the temperature of the body. Water is essential for elimination, breathing, digestion, and joint lubrication among other things.

Is there a link between Hydration and Hunger? Studies say yes, thirst can be mistaken for hunger. There is evidence of a correlation between the thirst and the hunger drives in the brain. Even in cases of mild to moderate dehydration sugar and food cravings have been observed. In addition, if you are trying to lose weight drinking adequate amounts of water is essential for efficient fat metabolism.

Not drinking enough water can cause water retention because the body will try to hold onto water to compensate. Often drinking more water will solve the problem and your body will release the excess water.

Other effects of even mild to moderate dehydration are increased back and joint pain, daytime fatigue, headaches, and a decrease in motor skill abilities, concentration, and memory retention. Chronic dehydration can even lead to an increased risk for kidney stones and some forms of cancer.

How much water should you drink?

Surprisingly few people know how much water they need to consume on a daily basis for optimal health. It is estimated that a significant percentage of our population, as much as 40% or more, is chronically dehydrated.

Daily requirements to stay hydrated will vary based on the size of the individual, their activity level, as well as the temperature and humidity of the environment. The higher the relative humidity or the more moisture that is in the air, the more difficult it is for the body to regulate its temperature during exercise. You will actually perspire more when the humidity is high. Consequently, you will need to drink more water to stay hydrated.

A more accurate estimate of daily water requirements would be to drink $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ of an ounce of water for each pound of body weight. The lesser amount would suffice for an inactive person, and the greater amount would be appropriate for someone who is active. So an active 150 pound adult should consume a minimum of 112.5 ounces of water per day. Add 16 additional ounces for strenuous activity and another 16 ounces if it is hot and the relative humidity is high. So this brings the total up to 144.5 ounces per day! Divide this amount by the number of hours you are typically awake to find out how much water you should drink each hour since you should consume your water intake throughout the day. In our example, this individual should drink approximately 9 ounces of water each hour they are awake. Still, this is just a guideline, actual requirements can vary.

The key is to drink water often and throughout your day. Keep a container of water with you wherever you are. Make certain you are well hydrated before exercising and remember to drink water *during* your exercise sessions. Be sure to re-hydrate when you have finished your exercising.

Kay Rice, M.Ed., C.N.

Exercise Physiologist, Certified Nutrition Coach, Chopra Center Certified Instructor & Vedic Master Yoga Alliance E-RYT 200, Licensed Corporate Wellness Coach – Contact: kay@kayric.com

This document was created with Win2PDF available at <http://www.win2pdf.com>.
The unregistered version of Win2PDF is for evaluation or non-commercial use only.
This page will not be added after purchasing Win2PDF.