



KEEPING YOUR COOL



Have you ever spent a hot afternoon playing ball with your friends or running around the park with your dog? Bet you were pretty sweaty and thirsty when you finished playing — maybe even thirsty enough to guzzle an entire gallon of water. That thirst was a sign of dehydration. Dehydration means that your body is losing more fluids than it takes in — and that's not good! Don't depend on your thirst to tell you whether or not your body needs a refill. Make sure you drink water a few hours before gearing up for physical activities, and keep drinking after you're done — be smart and stay hydrated!

Steamy Situation

When your body temperature gets hotter than normal — 98.6 degrees — your brain sends out a distress signal that causes you to sweat, which cools you down. Think of it this way — your body, like an air conditioner, has an internal thermostat that helps control its temperature. Whenever your body heats up from physical activity or the hot weather outside, your internal air conditioner turns on and you begin to sweat. And remember, now that your air conditioner is using its coolant (your sweat), it is important to refill the tank — by drinking lots of H₂O.

All Systems Go

Ever wonder what really happens inside your body to make you sweat? Picture this...when your temperature rises, tiny blood vessels close to your skin open up. This allows your blood to carry the heat in your body away from your hard-working muscles to get closer to the skin. Then, water (sweat) escapes through your sweat glands and onto your skin. When air blows over your wet skin, the sweat

evaporates (dries up) and cools your body down. But, on really hot, humid days, there is so much moisture in the air that it can't absorb the sweat from your body. So, to keep your body cool, drink plenty of water, use a fan, or take a dip in the pool.

H₂O – Guzzle, Gulp, and Chug

Drinking water before, during, and after physical activity is one way to keep your body's air conditioner working. Keep these tips in mind to help your body stay cool:

- Top off your tank a few hours before you hit the court, the field, or your own backyard by drinking about two cups of cold water.
- Keep a water bottle handy to guzzle during water breaks, halftime, or time outs. Try to drink about 10 ounces — that's about 10 large gulps from your water bottle — every 15-20 minutes.



Did you know that sometimes you can't even see sweat — like when you're swimming? Which means you may not realize you are getting dehydrated. Just another reason to keep your water bottle in plain sight so you'll remember to drink up!

- Even after the game ends, the chugging shouldn't — the more you sweat, the more water you need. Drink bottled water, water flavored with lemon or lime juice, or water right from your own sink.
- Eating fruit and other cool snacks is another way to keep your body cool! Pack peaches, oranges, watermelon, and grapes in your cooler — they taste great and re-hydrate!

Don't Sweat It



When the temperature outside begins to soar, your body heats up faster. To stay cool and beat the heat:

- Play outside during cooler parts of the day — early morning or early evening. The day is usually hottest between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., so find a shady bike path to ride or skate on, plan some indoor activities, take a dip in the pool, or play games under the sprinkler.

If you do choose to brave the heat, make sure to let your body gradually adjust. Cut back the length and intensity of your activities just for the first two weeks until you get used to the heat.



- Dress cool. Wear clothing that is loose fitting and lightly colored — preferably made of cotton or a sweat-wicking material (designed to pull sweat away from your skin). Stay away from dark-colored clothing like black and dark blue — they soak up sunlight and heat.



Did you know that almost one-fourth of all of your body's sweat glands are in your feet? What does that tell ya! To keep your feet cool and blister-free, try wearing shoes that allow your feet to breathe and that don't trap sweat and heat.



- Stay away from drinks that have caffeine, lots of sugar, or carbonation in them — like soda or tea.
- If you're playing center field, practicing your backhand, or ruling the playground for more than 60 minutes, get an extra energy boost from sports drinks. They help to replace the water you've lost during strenuous activity.



Sports drinks are great when you're active, but not if you're just chillin' — they have high levels of sugar, salt, and potassium that you don't really need unless you are working your body hard.

- Most importantly, listen to your body. If you feel weak, dizzy, or thirsty, take a break in the shade, grab your water bottle, and tell a grown-up.

Now that you know how to beat the heat — get out there, stay active, and keep cool!

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