



Liquid assets

Switch to decaf tea and coffee in the summer and it will help hydrate you better, experts say.

Sports drinks are good for athletes and heavy exercisers, but others should try low-calorie versions or no-calorie flavor packs that can be added to water. Water, of course, is always the best option.

JOY LEWIS / Tulsa World



Hydration important to combat heat-related illnesses

By Cary Aspinwall
World Scene Writer

When the humidity is above 80 percent and it rains every other day, it's easy to forget about staying hydrated in the summer heat.

Because the human body is 50 to 70 percent water, hydration is important to stay healthy and combat heat-related illnesses.

An easy guideline to follow is if you divide your body weight in half, that's about the number of ounces of water you should drink per day, said exercise physiologist Clint Howard, who works with personal training clients at his Fitness Together studios in Jenks and Bixby.

So a 150-pound person should drink at least 75 ounces of water per day by that equation, which is more than the old guideline of eight 8-ounce glasses per day. And if you exercise regularly, you need to drink even more, Howard said.

Drink 16 ounces of water at least one to two hours before exercise

and 4 to 6 ounces every 15 minutes during exercise to combat fatigue and improve performance, he said.

But what if water won't do? Many people find it hard to chug so much of the flavor-free beverage.

Add lemon juice or fresh lemon slices to get flavor without added calories or chemicals, Howard tells his clients.

Sugar-free drink packets that are designed to be added to water bottles are not a bad option, but they shouldn't be your only water source, Howard said.

Sports drinks with electrolytes are probably best for athletes who exercise in extreme conditions or more than an hour per day, he said. But there are low-calorie versions that are OK for everyone else, he said.

Sugary sodas are definitely a don't, Howard said.

"That's basically liquid candy," he said. "It spikes your blood sugar and makes you store fat."

If you're going to drink caffeinated beverages, you need to drink more water to compensate for the diuretic effects of caffeine, he said.

Some studies show that all beverages

(even caffeinated ones) contribute to a person's daily hydration, said Kim Galeaz, an Indiana-based registered dietitian and consultant for the Coca-Cola Co.'s Beverage Institute for Health and Wellness.

"Whatever you like is what you should drink because all beverages hydrate," Galeaz said.

Low-calorie and no-calorie flavored waters are a great option for people who find plain water boring. Coffee, tea, milk and juices count, too, she said.

"I'm all for people drinking orange juice because it's also a serving of fruit," she said. "Just be sure it's no-sugar-added 100 percent juice."

Adult women need at least 9 cups of total beverages per day, and adult men need 13 cups or more, she said. Smoothies, soups and fresh fruit also work toward hydration.

Her favorite summer option? Blend fresh watermelon cubes with light lemonade and freeze into homemade popsicles.

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fitness guinea pig

by cary aspinwall

This week: FGP's favorite post-workout remedies

No. 1: Apothecary epsom salt lavender soak

Where you can get it:
Walgreen's, \$2.99.

It helps:

Relieve pain in those muscles you didn't know you had.

Degree of relief:

on a scale of 1 to 4 sneakers

Fitness Guinea Pig says:

Trying a new workout usually makes your muscles sore the next day. Trying a new workout every week makes you really appreciate epsom salts' ability to help muscle pain. This has a relaxing lavender scent and is still pretty inexpensive.

No. 2: Exercise-therapy bands for stretching

Where you can get it:

Amazon.com, sporting goods stores, usually \$5-\$20, depending on the set.

It helps:

Stretch those sore, tight muscles and develop flexibility. They can be used to build strength, too.

Degree of relief:

on a scale of 1 to 4 sneakers

Fitness Guinea Pig says:

FGP first tried these in a Pilates class, where she discovered they really are the best way to stretch. If you're prone to charley horses or not that flexible, these are a great investment.



JOY LEWIS / Tulsa World

The Sammy Cool N' Dry sport towel can help mop up your sweat in the summer heat.

No. 3: The Sammy Cool N' Dry sport towel

Where you can get it:

www.coolndry.com, \$9.99.

It helps:

Cool you off after working out in hot, sticky summer weather.

Degree of relief:

on a scale of 1 to 4 sneakers

Fitness Guinea Pig says:

This wet shammy really does make you feel a bit cooler, if that's possible in July and August in Oklahoma. At the very least, it mops up golfers', tennis players' and runners' sweaty faces.

Is there a workout or exercise you want the Fitness Guinea Pig to try first? Send suggestions to cary.aspinwall@tulsaworld.com or call 581-8477.

lunch bunch

PEANUT BUTTER CRACKERS

None of these peanut butter crackers would qualify as lunch, but any would work as a quick snack from the vending machine. On busy days, that's sometimes as good as it gets for lunch. And at less than \$1 per package, it's a cheap snack with fewer calories than most bags of chips or candy bars.

The verdicts:

Ritz Bits: 170 calories, 10 fat grams

Our No. 1 pick was a little bag of oh-so-tiny Ritz crackers bonded by a thin layer of peanut butter. Because they're bite-sized, it's like you're getting more. And the flavor was better than the other crackers — sweet, and easy to pop in your mouth.

Austin: 200 calories, 10 fat grams

This ubiquitous vending machine cracker was good — nice amount of filling, not too salty. The cracker was crispier, perhaps harder, than Ritz, though.

Frito Lay: 200 calories, 10 fat grams

Not bad but too salty for our tastes.

Actually, the salt from the cracker competed too much with the peanut butter. One of us felt a bit stronger: "Watch out for the moose stampede once you purchase these salt licks in a plastic wrapper." But if you're the sort to grab the salt shaker when it comes to salads, choose the Frito Lay. Otherwise, check into the Ritz.

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