



Water: The Stuff of Life

Daily Water Requirements

The rule of thumb that you should drink eight 8-oz. glasses of water each day (a total of 64 ounces of water), actually describes the minimum amount of water that you should drink. Throughout the course of the day, your body loses water through sweating, exhaling, and elimination. Hydration is the replacement of this lost water. Without adequate hydration, your body cannot perform many of its vital functions. Many factors, including your body size, activity level, and alcohol and caffeine consumption, determine exactly how much water you need to drink each day, which may be much more than the recommended minimum.

Body Size and Activity Level

In order to determine your minimum daily water requirements, consult the following chart provided by the International Bottled Water Association:

| Weight (in pounds) | Light Activity | Moderate Activity | Strenuous Activity |
|--------------------|----------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| 115 | 72 oz. | 76 oz. | 80 oz. |
| 125 | 72 oz. | 80 oz. | 88 oz. |
| 150 | 72 oz. | 80 oz. | 92 oz. |
| 175 | 76 oz. | 84 oz. | 100 oz. |
| 200 | 76 oz. | 88 oz. | 106 oz. |

Source: Felicia Busch, M.P.H., R.D.

Or check out the IBWA Hydration Calculator on their website at:
<http://www.bottledwater.org/public/html/input1.html>

Exercise

Exercising can seriously deplete your body's hydration level, even in colder weather, through

perspiration and respiration. You should drink at least two 8-oz. glasses of water two hours before, then another two glasses about twenty minutes before you exercise. During your workout, drink water every fifteen to twenty minutes. When you've finished your exercise, drink another 8-oz. glass of water within thirty minutes. This may be a difficult habit to establish, but persevere and you're sure to feel the benefits.

Alcohol and Caffeine Consumption

Beverages that contain alcohol or caffeine can actually decrease the amount of fluid in your body because they act as diuretics. Therefore, for every eight ounces of alcoholic or caffeinated beverages that you drink each day, you should also drink an additional eight ounces of water.

Other Factors

Additional factors that may each increase your minimum daily water requirement by 8-16 ounces:
Being pregnant or nursing.
Temperatures over 80 degrees.
Very dry air/low humidity.
High altitudes (over 5000 feet).

Proper Hydration

Mild dehydration can lead to fatigue, muscle cramps, headaches, and constipation, while severe dehydration can eventually lead to death. You cannot rely on your level of thirst to determine whether or not you're properly hydrated. Oftentimes a lack of proper hydration is mistaken for hunger pangs. However, checking hydration levels is simple. As the body becomes more dehydrated, it produces darker yellow urine that may also have a strong odor. If your urine is pale yellow or clear, that indicates adequate hydration.