

## **Water the Ultimate Cure**

by Steve Meyerowitz, Sproutman®

We love water. We play in it, spend our leisure time around it, build our most luxurious homes next to it, enjoy some of our favorite sports on it, exercise in it, travel to exotic vacation spots just to be near it. Nearly seventy percent of the earth's surface is covered with water. And, whether it be by coincidence or divine, our human bodies are also nearly seventy percent water and the salinity of our extracellular fluids is also approximately that of ocean water. These three simple atoms, H<sub>2</sub>O, are so vital to our existence, that the discovery of it on another planet is an almost certain indicator of life.

Despite its importance in our lives, we rarely drink enough water. Two thirds of our body weight is water. The average adult carries around 40-50 quarts of it-10-13 gallons of water! By weight, our heart, brain, and muscle are each approximately 75% water. Our blood and kidneys are each 83% water. Even our bones are 22% water!

With so much of us made up of water, it should come as no surprise that we also leak out some of it. Everyday, water escapes from our lungs, our kidneys, our bowels, our underarms, and every pore of our skin. We lose approximately 2-3 quarts of water daily. And don't try to stop it with anti-perspirants. Our skin, which remains moist and supple thanks in part to water, normally releases vapors into the air. In fact, this is largely how the body regulates temperature. Perspiration is our cooling system. It also exudes waste products, which is why it has a certain "eau de toilette." But this is a natural cleansing process. If you play a game of tennis, jog a couple of miles, or take a walk on a hot day, you'll ooze even more water.

After Alberto Salazar won the Boston Marathon in 1982, he had to be carried to the emergency room where he received six liters of intravenous solution to replenish his lost water and salt. Marathoners and other athletes demonstrate that we will suffer if we fail to replace what we lose daily. Their situation is indeed exaggerated, but the same bodily processes apply to all of us, including sedentary desk workers. We must all replenish our lost water.

What happens if we don't? Reductions of 15% below our healthy hydration level could be fatal. Alberto Salazar also collapsed after a 1979 race. Then, his body temperature had risen to 107 degrees. He was so close to death from dehydration, they prematurely administered his last rights! Even a small reduction, 2%-5% of our personal water supply, has its consequences. What's worse, these symptoms are not obviously associated with water-Headaches, dizziness, lethargy, muscle cramps, loss of appetite, depression, and brain fog. When you become dehydrated, your body and brain become sluggish, your blood thickens and your heart works harder. Water lubricates every joint in your

body and keeps soft tissues from sticking together. Water is also essential to the functioning of the digestive tract. Too little water and you've got mild constipation. Even if you are taking lots of good fiber like bran and flaxseed, you need water to keep it moving. If your intestinal transit time (the time it takes for food to enter and leave your body) slows down, then more toxins are retained. Higher levels of toxic waste products in the bowel, lymph, and bloodstream is a proven contributing factor to many of the above mentioned complaints as well as fibromyalgia, arthritis, eczema, psoriasis, and chronic fatigue.

Okay. So you want to drink more. How do we know how much water to drink? One popular rule is to drink half of your body weight in ounces of water. Thus, a 200 pound man should drink 100 ounces of water. But that is just a guideline. Your individual water requirements will vary according to your climate, temperature, lifestyle, exercise level, age, and diet. Even mental activity, stress, and the environment are factors. Another rule is to monitor the water you excrete. If you are drinking an adequate amount, your urine color and odor will be neutral. But to keep this test valid, avoid vitamins and drinks such as beet juice, which affect the color. When you are sick and have a fever, you also need more water. And if you perspire heavily during sports, you should drink three pints of water, one each before, during, and after your game.

Your food is also a source of water and your diet influences how your water needs. A diet rich in fruits and leafy green vegetables has a higher water quotient than a diet full of starches such as breads, crackers, cakes, and pasta. Even a vegetarian may need to increase their water, if their diet includes lots of dried fruits and nuts. Fresh fruit and vegetable juices are superb hydrators, while coffee, soda, and beer are not. Caffeinated drinks, including sodas, coffees, and teas, along with alcoholic beverages have diuretic side effects. This means they stimulate the excretion of water. True, regular users of caffeine may not experience this effect to the same degree. Nevertheless, the quality of your drinks is crucial. Herbal teas are excellent hydrators (as long as they are not diuretic). Teas are 99% water and herbs can improve many health conditions. Sweet drinks, such as sodas, bottle fruit juices, or drinks made with added sweeteners, should be consumed in moderation because sugar delays water absorption. A small amount of salt, on the other hand, is helpful because sodium helps retain water and delivers it to the cells. In a study of 64 athletes at an ironman race lasting between 9 and 15 hours, 27 percent were hyponatremic (salt deficient).<sup>1</sup> The researchers recommended that athletes aim for 80 to 100 mg of sodium per quart of water. Good quality mineral water, or distilled water with a pinch of quality salt is a great way to build hydration levels.

You'll have to create your own program for getting 2-4 quarts of water in you every day. But here are a few tips. Keep a bottle of water, juice, or tea on your desk. Get a mug with a handle for your car. Carry around a belt pack with a water bottle holder or make room for a bottle in your briefcase or shoulder bag. Sip your water like a smoker takes puffs. (Don't smoke. It's dehydrating.) Every sip is

an ounce. Include juicy foods in your diet. A lettuce leaf is 92% water. Salads and fruits are very healthy and hydrating. Get a juicer and use it. Start your day with a big glass of water. Take a bottle on the airplane with you. Good hydration fights jet lag and travel fatigue that comes from the dry, low pressure cabin air. Drink in between meals more and drink less during a meal. Too much water on a full stomach dilutes digestive juices. Reduce your intake of caffeinated drinks like soda, coffee, and alcoholic beverages.

People can survive without food for months, but without water, we can only last a few days.

### Functions of Water in the Human Body

- ! Improves oxygen delivery to the cells
- ! Transports nutrients
- ! Enables cellular hydration
- ! Moistens oxygen for easier breathing
- ! Cushions bones and joints
- ! Absorbs shocks to joints and organs
- ! Regulates body temperature
- ! Removes wastes
- ! Flushes toxins
- ! Prevents tissues from sticking
- ! Lubricates joints
- ! Improves cell to cell communications
- ! Maintains normal electrical properties of cells
- ! Empowers the body's natural healing process

Steve Meyerowitz "Sproutman" is author of several books on health and diet including Water the Ultimate Cure, Power Juices Super Drinks, Juice Fasting and Detoxification, and Sproutman's Kitchen Garden Cookbook. You can ask him questions about water or any of the other topics he writes about by visiting him at [www.Sproutman.com](http://www.Sproutman.com)

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