



▶▶ health & wellness

By **Carlene Murray**

Crush Your Day: HYDRATION AND YOUR PERFORMANCE

Are you feeling sluggish, having trouble concentrating, or staying motivated? The solution may be simpler than you think: WATER! Staying hydrated is essential for our overall health, especially in our humid, subtropical climate. But hydration isn't just about quenching your thirst. From lubricating your joints and improving skin health to your cognitive function of creative problem solving, motivation, energy, attention span, and achieving your goals, the benefits of staying hydrated are endless. So let's dive (pun intended) into the importance of hydration: how it impacts your body and mind to maximize your performance with easy ways to ensure you are hydrated to crush your day!

Water, accounting for about 60 percent of our total body weight, is essential for critical body functions, such as regulating body temperature, transporting nutrients and oxygen to cells, removing waste products, and lubricating joints. It plays a crucial role in brain function, keeping us focused and alert throughout the day. The brain itself is composed of about 73 percent water; even mild dehydration can negatively impact cognitive function, leading to difficulties in concentration, decreased alertness, and impaired short-term memory. Studies have shown that dehydration can even result in a reduction in brain volume, which can have long-term implications for brain health.

Dehydration, by reducing the flow of oxygen and nutrients to the brain, impairs its optimal functioning, particularly in tasks that require sustained attention and working memory.

Dehydration can also impair our cognitive flexibility — our ability to switch between different tasks and respond to changing situations. Meaning, if you're dehydrated, you may find it harder to adapt to new situations and come up with creative solutions to problems. When we are dehydrated, it's just harder to get motivated and stay focused. This is because dehydration causes feelings of fatigue and lethargy, reducing our motivation levels. Often, we may experience headaches, irritability, low energy, and weakness as dehydration reduces blood volume, which means that the heart has to work harder to pump blood around the body. As a result, the brain and muscles may not receive the amount of oxygen and nutrients they need to function properly. Dehydration also produces more of the stress hormone cortisol, making you feel more anxious, irritable, and less motivated.

When we are dehydrated, we may experience a range of symptoms from mild to severe. Many people think that the only sign of dehydration is thirst, but there are other signs, such as fatigue, headaches, joint pain, dry skin, confusion, lethargy, and irritability. Severe dehydration can cause a rapid heartbeat, low blood pressure, and fainting.

To optimize your hydration and, thus, your overall well-being and performance, the easiest way to stay hydrated is to drink water regularly throughout the day while incorporating these tips too!

1. Set a hydration goal. A good rule of thumb is to drink eight 8-ounce glasses of water a day.

2. Take breaks. If you are outside for an extended period, take breaks in a shaded area or an air-conditioned room to cool down and rehydrate. Ensure you drink before, during, and after exercise.

3. Avoid caffeine and alcohol. Caffeine and alcohol can dehydrate your body, so it's best to limit your intake or avoid them altogether.

4. Consider an IV drip. If you find it challenging to stay hydrated through regular water consumption, you may want to consider IV wellness drips that deliver a combination of fluids, electrolytes, vitamins, and minerals directly into your bloodstream, providing rapid hydration and nourishment. (I personally use them and have found them to be a game-changer. A few of my local faves are The Wellness Lab and Naples Mobile IV.)

5. Eat hydrating foods. Many fruits and vegetables are high in water content, making them an excellent choice for staying hydrated. Watermelon, cucumbers, tomatoes, and spinach are just a few.

6. Drink coconut water. Coconut water is a natural source of electrolytes essential for hydration, and contains potassium, sodium, magnesium, and calcium, making it a great alternative to sports drinks.

7. Drink herbal tea. Herbal tea is an excellent alternative to caffeinated beverages, which can dehydrate the body. Chamomile and peppermint teas can also help to calm and soothe.

8. Eat soup. Soup is an excellent source of hydration. Broth-based soups, such as chicken noodle soup, are not only hydrating but also provide essential nutrients to the body.

9. Snack on water-rich foods. Snacking on water-rich foods, such as grapes and berries, can also help to keep you hydrated throughout the day.

10. Carry a reusable water bottle. Carrying a reusable water bottle with you throughout the day can help to remind you to drink regularly.

Staying hydrated is truly vital for optimal health and cognitive performance. As a high performer needing to be at your best, keeping your body hydrated throughout the day is paramount. Pay attention to the subtle signs of dehydration and then take the necessary steps to maintain proper hydration levels to maximize your well-being and your overall performance.



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