

Understanding Sweat Loss

Athlete Scenerio

When training with my rowing team, we spend several hours on the water, often during the warmest part of the day with limited opportunities to drink fluid. I tend to sweat more than my teammates and I notice salt caked on my skin and clothing. Lately, I have been very tired after practice. Could I be eating too much salt or not drinking enough water? Should I do something during practice to have more energy and perform better?

Sweat Loss Considerations

- Sweat rate during exercise is individual and is influenced by genetics, gender, age, environmental temperature, exercise intensity, fitness, and acclimatization.
- Evaporation of sweat during exercise cools the body. Dehydration inhibits the body's ability to cool itself during exercise. Consuming fluid replaces sweat loss and aids cooling.
- Gauge your hydration status by monitoring urine color and volume. Urine that is dark in color and low in volume indicates dehydration; light yellow urine is ideal.
- Sodium helps your body retain fluid and stimulates thirst.

Strategies for Managing Sweat Loss

- To perform at your best, avoid losing more than 2% of your body weight during exercise.
- Determine your individual fluid needs by calculating your body weight loss and sweat rate under different training conditions.
- When opportunities to replace fluid loss are limited, follow an individualized hydration plan surrounding exercise.
- If your sweat is salty and contains a high concentration of sodium consume sodium (endurance-specific sports drinks or other sodium sources) during exercise; eat salty foods before and after prolonged (>2 hours) exercise.

Written by SCAN registered dietitians (RDs) to provide nutrition guidance. The key to optimal meal planning is individualization. Contact a SCAN RD for personalized nutrition plans. Access "Find a SCAN RD" at www.scandpg.org or by phone at **800.249.2875**.



Tips to Take With You

1. Fluid needs are highly individualized; avoid comparing your sweat and hydration patterns with teammates.
2. Replace fluid and electrolytes according to a schedule rather than relying on thirst.
3. A sports dietitian can help you calculate your sweat rate and develop a personalized hydration schedule that meets your needs.

Contact SCAN

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