

Living Fit: Water, Water Everywhere – Drink It!

Although I do get involved in our health and fitness-related research, my wife and business partner, Virginia, is constantly in the books, researching, updating and fine-tuning our unique strength training program and collecting important health information that we make available to our clients and our readers. As is typically the case after one of her research binges, she recently came to me with proof in hand and that “I told you so” look on her face. This time it was about the importance of water. This was not our first encounter about my water consumption. For the seven years of our wonderful married life, she has been preaching to me about drinking more water — *lots* more water.

Please understand, I’ve never doubted the importance of water, but I have never been one of those people to carry around a water bottle. My responsive arguments to Virginia have always been: (1) I drink water when I am thirsty, and (2) most of the other fluids that I drink contain water. Oh, Sweet Virginia, how wrong I have been!

After this last “water research assault,” Virginia now has my full attention with a ton of research to back up her message. So as I sit at my computer working on this article, water bottle by my side, here are the facts that support the reasons why we all need to drink more water — *lots* more water:

– Water is the body’s solvent and delivery mechanism for the nutrients that feed the body’s cells.

– Water lubricates the body’s joints and even acts as shock absorbers inside the spinal cord.

– Water acts as the body’s thermostat, helping it maintain a constant temperature.

– Water, like exercise, slows down and can even prevent some of the debilitating effects of the aging process (which starts as early as our late 20s). Research shows that inadequate water consumption can often lead to clinical dehydration, which is the most common cause of hospitalization for people over 65.

– Water is essential for effective exercise and weight loss. While the traditional water intake rule of thumb is eight to 10, 8-ounce glasses a day, research shows that those who exercise regularly and drink more water tend to lose the most weight. Not only can water reduce the hunger pangs, it carries away the fat-related impurities generated by exercise, literally “washing away the pounds.”

– We cannot rely on just being thirsty. There goes my first argument. While the aging process dulls our “thirst meter,” it is not a reliable warning system at any age. It’s dangerous just to rely on dry mouth, since it can be the *last* sign of dehydration.

– We should only drink pure water. As to the water contained in tea, juice, soft drinks, coffee, beer, or cocktails — it doesn’t count. There goes my second argument! In fact, when water is diluted with any other substance, the proper hydration (absorption into the body cells) is impaired. Whereas pure water is hydrated properly and delivered to those body cells that need water the most.

– While it seems somewhat illogical, drinking too little water causes the body to accumulate water outside of

the cells. This can result in the retaining of excess water and possibly “edema” — the swelling of the hands, legs and feet. When the body gets all the water it needs, it will release the excess.

– As you increase your water intake, don’t worry about the increased “pit stops.” Your body will adjust and your stops will become less frequent.

– The number one trigger of daytime fatigue is the lack of water.

– The other benefits for increased water intake include improved complexion, reduced stress, as well as the reduced risk of a number of other serious health issues such as: asthma, high blood pressure, arthritis, migraines, Alzheimer’s & low back pain.

Bottom line — every function of the body is monitored and regulated by the efficient flow of water. While you can drink too much water, it is a rare medical problem. Those people suffering from kidney problems or who are taking diuretics should talk to their health care provider before changing their water intake habit.

While there are several web sites that discuss the benefits of sufficient water intake, our primary research source for this article was Ellington Darden’s book, “Body Defining,” published by Contemporary Books in 1996.

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