

Homemade Sports Drinks

Pre-packaged sports drinks can get pricey if you drink them frequently. Try this recipe from Dartmouth Health:

Yield: 32 ounces (approximately 1 liter)

Ingredients:

3/8 tsp salt (sodium chloride)

1/4 tsp Morton Salt Substitute® (potassium chloride)

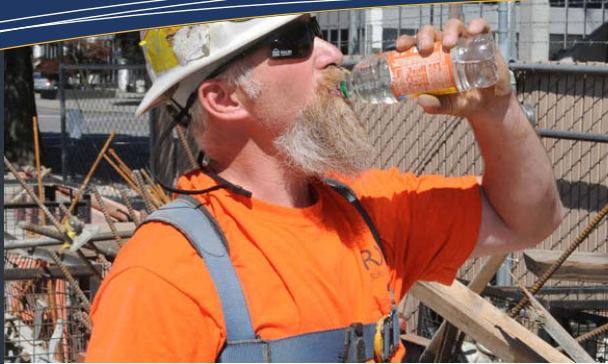
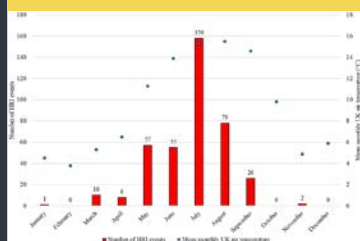
1/2 tsp baking soda (sodium bicarbonate)

2 tbsp + 2 tsp sugar

Add water to make 1 liter

Optional: Sweetener

According to the UK-based group Researchgate, heat-related illnesses more than triple from May to mid-July (July is the highest peak in the graph below), before starting to decrease as the weather cools off.



Heat & Hydration Hydration Happens at Home

It's getting hot in many parts of the country and the number of heat-related incidents will rise correspondingly. It's no surprise that mid-July traditionally sees the highest reported number of heat exhaustion and heat stroke cases. These illnesses are not to be taken lightly; a heat stroke is a life-threatening event. Thankfully, it only takes a few simple steps to prevent heat-related illnesses; work-rest balances, avoiding direct sun exposure, and proper hydration. Today, we're going to dive into hydration.

In order to prevent over-heating, the body has many ways to cool itself off. Chiefly among those is sweat.

Heat of Vaporization – When the body is too hot, the brain starts the sweating process which releases water and salts to the outside of the skin. Here, the water evaporates. This vaporization is fueled by the excess heat in the body. As the energy is transferred to the water and used, it leaves the body, and the body's temperature drops. Cool water or compresses require more energy, and thus more heat is utilized in the evaporative process.

Additionally, convection, the movement of air or water across the body, will speed this process up.

In order for sweat to do its job though, the body must have sufficient stores of water. It is for this exact reason that hydration is so important in the hot, summer months. If you feel thirsty, you should drink. Just as your body knows when to sweat to cool you down, it knows when to tell you to drink something so you stay hydrated.

Unfortunately, we often times ignore our thirst and become dehydrated. When this happens, we aren't able to replenish the water needed for the sweating function to work properly.

Staying properly hydrated is a simple task. Drink plenty of water or "clean" fluids. Clean means that the beverage is based around water, such as tea, coffee, or packaged hydration drinks. Additionally, avoid large amounts of caffeine and alcohol (even the night before) as these are both diuretics.

The following are some best practices for hydrating quickly:

- Use a cool electrolyte drink
- Use a children's hydration drink such as Pedialyte
- Make your own electrolyte drink
- Avoid having to rehydrate quickly, and consume water throughout the day

The last bullet point may be tongue-in-cheek, but it is THE BEST way to avoid dehydration and heat-related illnesses.