

AVOIDING DEHYDRATION

One of the greatest dangers while hiking in any season is dehydration. The amount of water needed when hiking outdoors can vary depending on the season and climate in which one is hiking. However, remember **it's always better to drink a little more over the course of a day and err on the safe side.**

The best way to **prevent dehydration** is to consciously **drink water** slowly over several hours **before intense exercise.**

During periods of heavy exercise you should drink about one quart per hour. If your urine is clear and copious, then you know you are well hydrated. When the weather is brutally hot and your body sweats profusely, water by itself is not enough. Sweating out salts diminishes your body's ability to regulate liquids. Munching on GORP (good old raisins and peanuts, aka trail mix) or another salty snack can help avoid this problem, but sometimes you need a little extra help. Sports drinks containing salts, potassium and electrolytes are effective at staving off this problem, but be wary of drinking too much since they often contain large amounts of sugar. In a quick pinch, a dash of salt and sugar can be added to a water bottle for the same results. Avoid drinking caffeinated beverages – they act as diuretics, causing you to urinate more often.

Despite the fact that sweating isn't as obvious in the winter or in dry climates, **hydration can be more important in the colder months than the warmer months.** Cold, dry air strips the water from our bodies faster than warm humid air, necessitating the consumption of more water during a winter hike and in dry climates.

Dehydration Symptoms:

One of the earliest symptoms of dehydration is one that is the most often overlooked: **a headache**

Other symptoms

Rapid heart rate

Weakness

Excessive fatigue

Dizziness

Low volume dark urine

Remember THIRST= DEHYDRATION

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