

Training Tip:

Other benefits of proper hydration

"Drink lots of water, it's good for your back"

Did you know that cartilage in your body absorbs water? This is similar to a dry sponge swelling up when even a small amount of water is dripped on to it.

You might wonder why that is important, so here's the reason. Between the bones in your spinal column there are intervertebral discs, which have outer rings called the annulus fibrosus and an inner portion called the nucleus pulposus.

Okay, enough technical talk. The inner part swells up when it receives water. This acts like a cushion inside your backbone, which helps protect it when you pick up something heavy.

Here's the important part, it absorbs more water and makes a better cushion if it gets water before the heavy load is picked up. Could you imagine trying fill up a water bed with someone laying on it? Of course not, it makes more sense to fill it first.

That is one reason why it is so important to drink water before you load the spine due to weightlifting or other strenuous activities.

This does not diminish your need for water during your workout either. Many people wait until they are thirsty to drink water. That is a very inaccurate way to estimate how much water your body really needs. The reason for that is the thirst mechanism of your body is repressed during strenuous exercise, you simply will not know when your body needs it most.

People doing hard physical work outside in cold weather or participating in winter sports should especially be aware of this. The cold temperature makes it even more difficult to know when your body needs water.

Many factors affect the amount of water your body needs. A few of those are: body surface area, caloric intake, body size, lean muscle tissue, etc..

In fact, during vigorous exercise in hot climates your body can lose over two liters of water through sweat per hour.

Look at a 2-liter bottle of soda for a visual reference on how much that is and you'll probably be surprised.

When you drink water after hard exercise or work in that type of climate, it is better for you to drink water quickly, not sip it. That is because large amounts of water will move from your stomach, to your small intestines, and on to your bloodstream faster than small amounts.

All foods and fluids will contribute to your re-hydration to some degree, but there are times when it must be done more quickly to prevent a heat-related injury.

Sports drinks are helpful in this, as well as water, to help replenish electrolyte levels.

Studies are being done that suggest high fluid intake may help prevent bladder cancer, kidney stones, gallstones, and colon cancer.

So in addition to these, remember to drink plenty of water before, during, and after exercise. Your back will thank you.

Frank DiMeo

WWW.CROSSFITGULFCOAST.COM

A former U.S. Paratrooper, is a Certified Personal Trainer through the National Strength & Conditioning Association. He has completed Level-1 Kettlebell Training through both KettleBell Concepts and Mike Mahler, Senior RKC. Frank's experience spans several decades in the martial arts.