

Family Chiropractic

*Courtesy of Harbourfront Family Chiropractic
by Dr. Warren Gage*



Water vs. sports drinks

There's a lot of confusion regarding drinking water versus one of the many sports drinks available on the market. And the winner is... it depends. Here's why.

Water makes up about 60-70 per cent of the human body and it is one of the most essential ingredients for health. Because you lose a significant amount of water through sweating, it is important for athletes to re-hydrate by drinking the proper amount, and the right kinds, of fluids. When they don't re-hydrate, performance decreases, muscles become fatigued, dizziness may occur, and depending on the temperature, heat stroke or heat exhaustion may result.

Because of significant differences in sweat rates and fluid losses, recommendations as to the amounts and types of fluids vary. The length and intensity of the workout also come into play.

According to many personal trainers, as well as the Institute of Medicine (an independent, not-for-profit health advisor), good, old fashioned, H₂O is usually the best option, unless you're a marathon runner or you exercise for very long time periods.

Sports drinks in bright colors and matching bottles appeared on shelves in the 1960's with clever marketers making claims that you lose certain amounts of sodium, electrolytes and water during exercise and they need to be replenished. Well, for the record, water was the original "sports drink" of cave dwellers who did far more exercise than we do today! When was the last time you went out hunting for dinner and dragged home a woolly mammoth to eat?

Unfortunately, some of our palettes have become far too sophisticated for the blandness of water, so instead, we opt for high-priced sports drinks that come packed with more calories than most people burn in a typical workout! Not to mention the unnecessary sugar, needless caffeine, and extra plastic bottle to add to the landfill.

So, unless you're a triathlon or Iron Man athlete – it's best to stick with water, nature's own sports drink.

The American College of Sports Medicine recommends that water be chilled when used for exercise because it is absorbed more quickly. Oh, and while you're at it – feel free to add a lemon if you have a more sophisticated palette.