

TIPS FOR USING

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SPORTS DRINKS

1. Always select a sports drink that contains both **sodium and carbohydrates**. Potassium depletion is rarely a concern and not as critical as sodium loss due to sweat.
2. Carbohydrate content should be between **14 and 19 grams of carbohydrate** per eight-ounce serving (6% to 8% carbohydrate). A drink with more than 10% carbohydrate may cause slow absorption, nausea, cramps or diarrhea.
3. Look for a certain mix of **carbohydrates** – a combination of sucrose, glucose and fructose and/or glucose polymers
4. Look for the right amount of **sodium** – at least **100 mg per 8 ounces**. This will stimulate thirst and help regulate electrolyte balance in the body.
5. The drink **should not be carbonated** (it can cause bloating) and should not contain caffeine or amino acids.
6. **There are no drawbacks to using a sports drink**. The worst case scenario is that there is no effect. The best case scenario is that hydration is maintained, fatigue (duration and/or intensity) is delayed due to extra fuel availability and cramps are avoided due to electrolyte intake.
7. For health- or cost-conscious individuals, make a **homemade sports drink**. Combine diluted orange or cranberry juice in a 3:1 juice to water ratio, and add a pinch of salt.
8. For **intense activities**, athletes should aim for 0.5-1 gram of carbohydrate per kilogram of bodyweight per hour; sports drinks are approximately 6g carbohydrates per 100 ml. This translates into 35g to 70g of carbohydrates for a 154 lb. individual which is 600ml to 1200ml per hour. This is the simplest way to address fuel and fluid needs simultaneously. A sport gel may be useful too!
9. **Body fat loss** may benefit from the use of sports drinks by providing the fuel-depleted muscles with energy to delay fatigue and let you train at a greater intensity and/or longer. This lets you expend more energy and therefore burn more calories. This approach should be combined with a calorie-reduced diet.
10. **Children and individuals** looking for weight loss may be more comfortable diluting sports drinks with 1/3 water. However, diluting beverages can alter the taste and decrease the amount consumed.
11. Sports drinks have a purpose during activity and should be considered a **training aid**. Otherwise, children and adults should opt for tea, low fat milk and 100% juices as their beverages of choice.

