

# Beat the Heat & Humidity this Summer!

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Memorial Day weekend is here and that means that school is almost out, hopefully the sun will start to shine soon and summer is just around the corner! A lot of kids spend the last few weeks of school thinking about summer: all the mornings they'll get to sleep in late or the afternoons they'll get to spend lying lazily by the pool or the awesome family vacation planned. And then again, a lot of soccer players are just trading in hours of homework for (more!) hours of training. Here are a few tips for helping your athlete adjust to the heat and humidity characteristic of Southern summers.

Dehydration of just 1% to 2% of body weight begins to affect your level of play. Dehydration of greater than 3% of body weight further disturbs bodily function and increases an athlete's risk of developing a heat illness. Heat illness range in severity from heat cramps to heat syncope to heat exhaustion and finally heat stroke. Follow these tips to prevent heat illness this summer:

- Improving your physical fitness and adjusting your body to the heat over several days lowers your risk of developing a heat illness. Don't spend the days leading up to training or camp hiding away in the air-conditioning!
- Get fit first, and adjust to the heat for a week or so before formal practices begin. Maybe even do so in the same clothing and equipment you will be training in. Be prepared!
- On the field: be mindful of what's going on with your body; NEVER ignore early warning signs of heat illness: nausea, dizziness, headache, muscle or abdominal cramps. Train, don't strain!
- Take advantage of every rest break: sit in the shade, drink plenty of fluids. The cooler you stay, the better you play!
- Off the field: never skip meals & eat healthy, well-balanced meals and snacks; drink plenty of fluids; get plenty of sleep so your body can repair itself both mentally and physically.
- The highest risk for heat stroke occurs in the first few days of training in hot weather so be especially on the lookout for signs of dehydration:
  - watch your urine - it should be plentiful in quantity and pale in color
  - watch your weight - weight loss after training is fluid loss so remember to replenish with fluids immediately after training & throughout the rest of the day

## Hydration Guidelines for Summer Workouts:

### BEFORE:

Begin exercise well hydrated

Know your pre-workout weight

Drink approximately 20 ounces 2-3 hours before workout & another 8 ounces about 15 minutes prior

Consuming carbo-loaded beverages such as Gatorade 2-3 hours before workout may help increase glycogen stores

### DURING:

Take full advantage of any water breaks

Drink water at breaks even if you are not thirsty

### AFTER:

Complete post exercise hydration within 2 hours

Rehydrate with water, carbohydrates and electrolytes (water & a Gatorade are great!)

Weigh yourself afterwards – consume 20-24 ounces of fluid per pound of weight loss