



## Effects of dehydration:

### Why you should drink more water

We all know drinking lots of water is good for us, but do we understand why?

Here we explore the real effects of dehydration and how water helps you live and work at 100%.

Water makes up approximately 60% of our body mass and about 80% of our brain. Even slight dehydration (lack of water) can have a significant impact on our daily lives.

The effects of dehydration include poor concentration, headaches, impaired sleep, dry skin, joint problems, sore eyes and digestive disorders. Not really ideal for living and working at 100%.

#### How do I know if I'm suffering from the effects of dehydration?

- Do you find you start yawning or getting sleepy during a meeting?
- Do you get a headache while working?
- Are you struggling to concentrate?
- Do you lack energy?
- Is your work stressful?
- Do you get sore eyes from staring at a computer all day?
- Do you work in an air-conditioned environment?

Have a think about how much water you are actually consuming each day. If you think that it might not be enough, simply try increasing your daily intake and see if it makes a difference.

Keeping your body well hydrated will actually give you the focus and energy to see you through those tight deadlines, busy schedules and sometimes boring moments.

If you normally drink water only when you feel thirsty, this is a sign that you're not drinking enough.

This is because your brain detects when the amount of fluid in the blood falls and instructs us to drink by the sensation of thirst. Unfortunately this is a slow process

and at this stage you would more than likely be in the early stages of dehydration. Another good indicator of dehydration is if you have dark colored urine. Ideally your urine will be a light clear color.

The best way to remain fully hydrated is to drink water regularly during the day, whether you are thirsty or not. All it takes is a little planning!

### **How much water is enough?**

Aim for at least two liters of water a day on top of all your other sources, and spread this out over the day. Increase this if you are exercising, it's hot or if you are feeling lethargic.

### **What about juice, coffee or soft drinks?**

People often increase their water intake by simply increasing the amount of juice, coffee and soft drinks that they consume. But this just adds additional sugar and other substances that the body doesn't really need. It is far better to make water your main source of fluids.

Keep in mind that caffeine and alcohol actually act as a diuretic (increases water excretion), so back it up with some water to balance this out.

### **A positive toilet break?**

An increase in your water intake will result in extra visits to the toilet. This doesn't have to be a negative thing. Take the chance for a regular break, a quick stretch or a walk. Before long, your body will get used to the increased water intake and you will require a few less trips.

## Tips to increase your water intake

1. Have a big bottle filled with water at your desk. It's a good way to keep track.
2. Have water bottles in convenient spots where you are working, if you are not desk bound.
3. Have a water bottle to carry with you when you're out and about.
4. Remind yourself to drink some water after each visit to the toilet to replenish your system.
5. Try herbal teas or adding fresh lemon or lime juice to your water if you struggle with drinking plain water.
6. At meetings with clients or suppliers, always say yes to a glass of water (and a refill).
7. Drink some water before you have a soft drink, a coffee or a tea. This will increase your water intake and possibly reduce the amount of these drinks you will want or need.
8. Drink some water if you feel hungry. We often mistake hunger for thirst.
9. Drink some water when you wake up in the morning. A great kick start.
10. Drink water when you are consuming alcohol. Try alternating between your alcoholic drink and drinking water.

Note: The information in this article should not replace the advice of a competent health care or nutrition professional, and it is only intended for information purposes only.