- Drinking water



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How hydration can boost energy

Words: Kate Percy

Producing all that energy is thirsty work for our bodies. Here's why it's so important to stay hydrated...

Feeling sluggish, foggy, or fatigued? Maybe you're craving sugar, struggling to focus, or getting cramps in your legs? You might blame poor sleep or low energy, but here's a simple truth: your body could just be crying out for water.

Hydration is one of the simplest, most overlooked ways to boost how we feel, move and think. Think of your body like an engine. It needs the right type of foods (fuel) for it to function well – and it also needs to be well-oiled. Water is that oil. It keeps everything flowing smoothly, from your brain to your muscles.

We're made up of 55-75 per cent water, depending on our age and body size. Every cell, tissue and organ relies on it to function properly. It supports healthy skin, joints and digestion. It can lift your mood, improve mental clarity, and even help curb mindless snacking. It's a small habit with big ripple effects.

Are you drinking enough?

The British Dietetic Association recommends about 1.6 litres of water per day for women and 2 litres for men. However, individual needs vary depending on factors such as weight, activity levels, climate and how much your body sweats.

Even just a 1-2 per cent drop of body weight in fluid can lead to signs of dehydration. Thirst is your body's way of telling you to drink, but don't rely on it completely. Often, you stop feeling thirsty before your body is fully rehydrated. A handy tip? Do the pee test. Pale straw-coloured urine means you're well hydrated. The darker it is, the more dehydrated you are. Although dark yellow urine is often a sign of dehydration, in a few cases this may be due to other causes. If you are concerned, contact your GP.

Why does our level of hydration affect energy?

A groundbreaking study published in the *Aviation, Space, and Environmental Medicine* journal revealed that even mild dehydration can significantly increase blood viscosity; that's the thickness and stickiness of blood. This makes it harder for oxygen and nutrients to circulate efficiently >

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30 DAYS TO Boost Your Energy

around the body and reach your muscles and brain. No wonder you feel tired, slow and sluggish. It can also affect digestion, make it harder to regulate your body temperature, and leave exercise feeling tougher than it should.

How to stay topped up

The good news? A glass of water can perk you up in minutes. If plain water doesn't appeal, try unsweetened tea, or milk (including plant-based alternatives). The trick is to sip regularly throughout the day, not just guzzle when you're parched.

Don't forget your electrolytes

Ever tasted your sweat? It's salty for a reason. When you sweat, you lose key minerals such as sodium, potassium, chloride and magnesium. These help regulate muscle and nerve function, hydration, and blood pressure. On hot days or after intense exercise, hydrate with an electrolyte drink or snack on hydrating, mineral-rich foods such as strawberries, watermelon, cucumber and mangoes.

The takeaway

Hydration isn't a quick fix, it's a daily act of self-care. It's easy, affordable, and effective, yet often forgotten. Sip little and often, and you'll feel more energised, balanced and better equipped to take on the day.

It doesn't have to be perfect; it's about creating consistency. Take it one glass at a time, and you'll build up the habit in no time . Start small, work it into your routine and soon you'll have more zip, more zing and a clearer head to match.

SMALL TWEAKS, BIG DIFFERENCE!

6 simple habits to stay hydrated

Hydration doesn't have to mean chugging litres of water all at once. In fact, the best way to stay topped up is little and often woven into your daily routine, so it feels second nature. Try these six simple habits to boost your energy, focus and feel-good factor... glass by glass.

1 START YOUR DAY WITH A GLASS OF WATER

Before the kettle's even boiled, reach for a pint of water. After 7-8 hours without fluids, your body's running a bit dry. That first glass wakes up your system, kickstarts your metabolism, and gets your brain and muscles back in gear. Feeling groggy when you wake up? Water could be your secret weapon.

2 PAIR WATER WITH MEALS AND SNACKS

Make water your mealtime sidekick. Sip a glass while you cook, have water on the table, and keep a bottle in your bag if you are eating on the go. Add lemon, cucumber, mint or berries for a delicious twist and suddenly, water feels like a treat, not a chore.

3 MAKE IT VISIBLE, MAKE IT EASY

We're more likely to drink water if we see it. Keep a jug on your desk, a bottle in your bag, or a glass by the sink. Treat yourself to a water bottle you love; it's a visual nudge and a mini motivator. Keep refilling throughout the day, and you'll be hydrated without even having to think about it.

4 LINK IT TO YOUR DAILY ROUTINE

Habit-stacking is a game-changer. Simply attach water to things you already do. A glass after brushing your teeth. A few sips before your coffee or tea. A top-up every time you go to the loo. Keep a bottle chilled in the fridge for the dinner table. These tiny tweaks quickly become automatic and your hydration habits stick for the long run.

5 EAT YOUR WATER TOO!

Hydrate the tasty way! Water-rich foods like watermelon, oranges, cucumber, celery, courgette, tomatoes and lettuce all help to top up your fluid levels, add to your five-a-day and boost your electrolytes. Soups, stews, smoothies and herbal teas all count.

6 DON'T WAIT TO FEEL THIRSTY

By the time that you feel parched, your body's already playing catch-up. Look out for more subtle signs such as feeling tired, irritable, or craving sweet stuff. If your energy dips or your focus fizzles, try a glass of water first. If you've been doing intense exercise or have sweated a lot, don't forget to replace your electrolytes too. And remember the pee test: pale straw-coloured means you're well-hydrated.



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