

## **The cause of your constant fatigue – Dehydration**

You know that feeling of being so tired that lifting your feet becomes an impossible feat, you can't make decisions and you've got a headache to top things off?



The symptoms sound complicated but the answer could be simple - dehydration. So many of us do not consume enough fluid, especially water day-to-day. This problem is amplified in the colder months as we don't feel like drinking cool fluids and tend to consume more tea and coffee. Caffeine containing beverages such as tea, coffee and cola drinks do act as diuretics to varying degrees and can promote the loss of fluid, although they still contribute to your overall fluid intake.

Our human bodies are not good at the whole thirst thing. Thirst is not a good indicator of your fluid needs as by the time we actually feel thirsty, we are well on the road to being dehydrated with fatigue setting in. Of course, it can be tough to estimate fluid losses if you are sitting in an air-conditioned office and there is no proof of sweat.

Taking enough fluid on board is one of the most effective ways of enhancing your daily performance and fighting fatigue. Fluids are lost in sweat and how much we sweat will depend on size, temperature on the day, clothing and activity. Sweat rates vary a lot but when sweat loss is not matched by fluid intake, dehydration and fatigue will occur.

### **So how does dehydration affect your daily performance?**

- ✓ A decrease in physical and mental performance

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- ✓ Inability to make a decision
- ✓ Loss of coordination

If we lose more than 2% of our body weight through fluid loss, the health risks become more serious and can result in nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea and other gastrointestinal problems. And no, you can't toughen up or train your body to handle being dehydrated.

So we know that staying hydrated is key to peak performance and managing energy levels, but how can you stay topped up?

- ✓ Kick off each day with a glass of water. You have just spent the last 7-8 hours asleep and this naturally dehydrates your body. Having that first glass of water when you wake up gets the whole routine of drinking water going for the day
- ✓ Enjoy your favourite hot beverage during the day but don't rely on them solely for your daily fluid, as they can promote fluid loss
- ✓ If you find it difficult to drink plain water, try adding fresh lemon or lime, pomegranate seeds, fresh ginger or use plain carbonated water like soda or mineral water for some extra zest
- ✓ Set an alarm or timer on your smart phone or computer to remind you to drink regularly
- ✓ Make it easy for yourself - have a full water bottle or glass handy to where you sit during the day



Begin any exercise session hydrated by drinking 250-500ml before you start and recover your fluid loss post exercise with around one litre in the first hour afterwards. If exercising for less than 60 minutes, water is the most practical and economical fluid. Cool water as opposed to lukewarm, is better absorbed and more refreshing and palatable.