

HYDRATE HYDRATE HYDRATE

Generally speaking, August is usually one of if not the hottest months of the year and for those of us who participate in any form of outdoor activities, it is very important to hydrate properly. I am amazed by how many triathletes have no idea what their sweat rate is, and just guess as to how much fluid they should take in during training or racing. Your hydration goal should be to stay within 2% of your pre-exercise body weight to prevent a decrease in performance. In order to properly hydrate yourself for outdoor activity it is imperative to know what is needed for proper hydration. Therefore, before your next race, you should perform a test to see how much fluid you actually lose during a 1 hour session. I think you will be amazed at the results.

Weigh yourself (nude) to the nearest 10th of a pound (need a digital scale) before your testing session. Now, you can either run or bike for 1 hour at or very near your expected race pace. If you drink any fluids during the test, take note of how much. Immediately following exercise, weigh yourself again (nude). For example:

Pre-weight: 175 lbs
Post-weight: 170 lbs

I did not drink any fluids during the test therefore my net weight loss is 5 lbs. For me to expect to achieve my best performance during exercise, I need to stay within 2% of my pre-exercise body weight which would be 171.5. As you can see, I lost more than 2%, therefore without any doubt, my performance will suffer. Since 5 lbs of weight loss is about 76.5 ounces of fluid (15.3 fluid ounces of water = 1 pound), you're probably thinking there is no way you can drink 76.5 ounces of fluid in 1 hour to maintain your body weight. I would agree with you, that's a lot of fluid, and I would not recommend you even attempt to drink that much fluid each hour during your workout. But remember, the goal is not to maintain our pre-exercise body weight; it is to maintain a weight within 2% (171.5 lbs) of our pre-exercise weight. So the difference between 2% of my pre-exercise body weight (171.5) and my sweat test weight (170) is 1.5lbs or 24 ounces. So if I consume a minimum of 24 ounces each hour, I should be able to stay at or near my 2% loss. Your goal should be to stay well within 2% so you would want to consume more than the minimum amount. Keep in mind weather conditions (heat, wind, humidity) will all have an effect on your sweat rate, so you want to do your sweat test in conditions that will be similar to your race conditions.

For more information on sweat rate and help with calculating your pre, during and post exercise needs, you can go to www.powerbar.com and go to "tools".

Take care and enjoy the heat!

Matt