

Use nutrition to reduce your risk of exertion-related events

Exertional heat illness can happen when your body overheats (**heat exhaustion/heat stroke**) or overexerts (**rhabdomyolysis**) during exercise; both of which can be life-threatening.

Many factors can increase your risk of exertion-related events, but proper nutrition and hydration can help you combat heat stress and even lower your risk.

STAY HYDRATED

Thirst doesn't always indicate your fluid needs, especially during exercise, so drink fluids throughout the day and with meals and snacks.

- Fluid guidelines for Service Members are 12–18 cups per day for men and 8–12 cups per day for women. It's also important to start exercise hydrated and to replace fluids lost as sweat after exercise.
- Drink 14–22 oz of fluid 2–4 hours **before exercise**.
- Drink 16–32 oz of fluid every 60 minutes **during exercise**.
- Drink 20–24 oz of fluid **after exercise** for every pound lost.



INCLUDE ELECTROLYTES

Sodium and chloride are the main electrolytes lost in sweat. Sodium helps you retain fluid and drives thirst, so when exercising in the heat, choose salty foods (pretzels, pickles, tuna, or cheese) at meals and for snacks.

You can also season foods with a little extra salt.

If you're exercising in the heat for more than 60 minutes, try a sports drink with added electrolytes.



For every 8 fluid ounces of sports drink, be sure it contains:

Carbs	12–24 g
Sodium	82–163 mg
Potassium	18–46 mg



Rhabdomyolysis is the breakdown of muscle tissue that occurs when you overexert yourself during intense, prolonged exercise.

If the damage is severe, it can lead to kidney failure.

STAY FUELED

When you exercise in the heat, your body relies more on carbs for fuel. Eating regular meals and snacks that contain carbs throughout the day provides you with the energy and nutrients you need. Food also slows down the absorption of fluid, which helps you stay hydrated. Visit hprc-online.org to learn more about performance nutrition.



Be careful with dietary supplements designed for pre-workout, performance enhancement, weight loss, or muscle building. Some supplements might also contain multiple stimulants. Don't consume energy drinks or energy shots immediately before, during, and after strenuous activity.

Energy drinks aren't sports drinks, which are designed to fuel and hydrate you during workouts longer than an hour.

Visit OPSS.org to be informed and know what you're taking.

