

Hydration

The body's lymphatic system helps to clean out damaged cells, fight infection and reduce inflammation. Unfortunately if we don't drink enough water the lymphatic system struggles to do its job at all.

The lymphatic system is more than 95% water and we need to keep it clean and constantly flowing so it can get rid of the toxins and inflammation that builds up. It is also essential for a pliable fascia. Fascia a sheet or band of fibrous connective tissue enveloping, separating, or binding together muscles, organs, and other tissues of the body, more and more it is being seen as playing a huge part in how we perform day to day, principally because of the huge role it plays in movement. Very simply put the better condition our fascia is in the better we move.

In many people the fascia itself is dry and brittle, simply by drinking more water we can ensure we have a supple, well hydrated fascia that allows us to move better.

In this case not all liquid counts as water. Drinks such as soda, alcohol, caffeinated drinks actually dehydrate us, which doesn't help our cause. If you doing a lot of these drinks you should drink twice that amount extra water every day.

However you may also have heard of the dangers of over hydration.

The danger of over-hydrating became all too clear in the 2002 Boston Marathon, when a 28-year-old runner collapsed during the race and died two days afterwards from hyponatremia, "a condition often resulting from over hydration, which depletes essential minerals from the body, causing disorientation, illness and in rare cases, death."

Now this isn't going to be a problem for most of us as you have to drink a LOT of water, but how does this happen?

Allow me to introduce electrolytes.

Electrolytes are chemicals and nutrients already present in our bodies in the form of potassium, magnesium, and others. They create an electrical charge either positive or negative whenever they dissolve in the blood, urine or the bodily fluids.

They are essential for maintaining proper nerve and muscle function and acid alkaline balance. They help our muscles expand and contract and our lymphatic system circulate water and fluids inside the body.

This is what had happened to the athlete in the Boston marathon, by drinking water without electrolytes he had sweated and then flushed out all his reserves of electrolytes because of the huge amount of water he was drinking combined with the amount of sweat he was producing.

Now even if you're not in danger of suffering from this it does highlight the essential role electrolytes play in the body.

What we want to do is drink plenty of water with added electrolytes.

How much water?

I personally aim to drink a minimum of 3 litres a day with electrolytes added on active days I may well drink close to twice that.

When doing this it is important to realise all water is not created equal. Tap water often has added chlorine and fluorides. Water from plastic bottles is often infused with PCB's and other plastics run off's from the bottle. The gold standard, if you can find it, is spring water in glass bottles. Failing that and remembering that perfect is often the enemy of good, I often use a high quality water filter on tap water and add electrolytes to that.