



HOW TO RECOGNIZE IF YOU HAVE A DRINKING PROBLEM

- Do you spend more time in the bathroom than your friends, family and co-workers combined?
- Do you slosh when you walk or run?
- Do you feel lop-sided without a water bottle in your hand?
- Do you feel off-balance without one or more water bottles around your waist?

If you answered yes to one or more of these questions, you may have a drinking problem.

The temperatures are getting warmer and the humidity is increasing. While it is important to drink plenty of fluids before, during and after exercise to prevent dehydration, you don't want to overdo it.

When you sweat during exercise you lose water and electrolytes, primarily sodium, from the bloodstream. By drinking water you replace the water in the blood, but not the sodium and other electrolytes. For exercise periods lasting less than 3 hours, this is not a big concern. Most people will not lose enough sodium in that amount of time to effect performance. The sodium that is lost is replaced as soon as you eat or drink something after your workout.

Hyponatremia, or low sodium levels in the blood, can occur when you drink **too much water** over an extended period of time while exercising. Essentially you are diluting the sodium level in the bloodstream. This can be very dangerous and even life-threatening.

If you are going to be exercising or competing for more than 3 hours at a time, it is best to drink sports drinks along with water and/or eat sodium-containing foods like pretzels to avoid hyponatremia.