

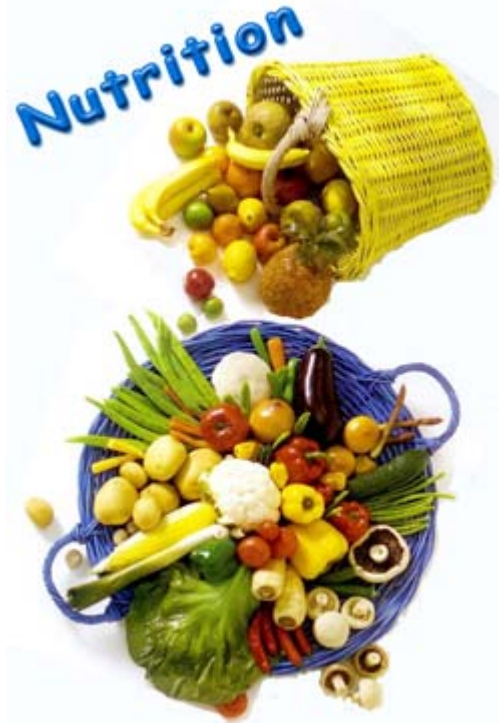


Keeping Your Cool

Jennifer Hutchison has nutrition tips for training and racing in the heat

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In my last article I addressed how training in the heat impacts the body and stressed the importance of heat acclimatization for optimal training and successful racing as the temperature climbs. This month's focus is on hydration/nutrition tips to help you keep your cool in order to have some great training sessions and fast race times.

The most important nutrition-related factor to racing well in the heat is your ability to stay hydrated. Most athletes see a decline in performance when two per cent or more body weight is lost. It is also well known that a hydrated body keeps the gut, muscles and brain happy. Adequate hydration and an effective fueling plan (i.e. right balance of carbohydrates, electrolytes and fluids) will ensure the fluid and nutrients consumed during the event are digested, absorbed and delivered to the organs in the body that will keep you going strong.

Practical Tips:

- Keep a weight log. Aim to be close to your optimal hydrated body weight before your next big session. What is your optimal hydrated body weight? The weight you maintain when you are eating routine meals and consuming sufficient fluids during the day where you are producing pale yellow urine every two to four hours. Starting your next big session a couple pounds down from the day before is like going for a long car trip with the engine fluid light on – you may overheat if you do not stay on top of the fluid levels! Post workout you should aim to consume 20 to 24 oz of

fluid for every pound lost to make certain you start your race or next key session hydrated.

- Know your sweat rate and recheck it regularly. The recommendations you see in various sports nutrition books, handouts and websites give you ballpark figures for fluid intake. If you are serious about your training and racing you need to know what YOUR body needs. The best way to do that is monitoring your sweat rate periodically (for the swim, bike and run), then creating and adjusting your hydration and fueling plan based on those values. Your overall goals are to: 1) minimize fluid deficit created during the swim (note: athletes can lose two or more pounds of fluid during a wetsuit Ironman swim) 2) be optimally hydrated during the bike as evidenced by no significant weight change and 3) attempting to replace at least 75% of the fluid lost as sweat. If you would like a sweat rate determination worksheet please email me at eSportsRD@aol.com

- Use higher sodium/electrolyte containing sports drinks (200+mg sodium per 8 oz or 250ml) if you determine you are a heavy sweater. If you are losing > 2% of your body weight or > than 1-1.5L of fluids per hour, then you most likely fall into the overly-sweaty category. Fluid and electrolyte loss vary greatly from person to person, but heavy sweaters will tend to lose more electrolytes since they lose greater volumes of fluid. Replenishing fluid with sports drinks that have lower electrolyte concentrations may put the athlete at risk for electrolyte imbalances.

- Consume cool liquids. Consumption of cool liquids does not offer any performance advantage or direct cooling effect in the body. Cool beverages do, however, taste better and you will drink more when you like what you drink. So, during training, try to plan stops to ensure you have cold beverages available. Consider using the insulated water bottles during longer rides. Try freezing the bottle the night before so they stay cold longer as they thaw out. In races, change out your water bottle or sports drink bottles at each aid station. If you rely on a drink that is different from the course supplied drink then consider making a sports drink concentrate and reconstitute in your aero drink system using fresh cool water you get at the aid stations.

As stated in May's column, getting acclimated to hot conditions is necessary for a great performance. However, to ensure you are putting forth your best effort, make the commitment to better understanding your hydration and fueling needs and you will most certainly be able to keep your cool when the heat is on.

Train well!

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