

THE SIMPLEST WAY TO GUARANTEE GREAT RIDES **P.72**

Editor's

TASTY FOODS THAT FIX INJURIES

BEST BIKES EVER!

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Inside: 18 bikes that get our highest recommendation—the exclusive Editors' Choice award.

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Leadout

▶ THE BETTER YOU GET, THE MORE FUN IT IS

DRINKING GAMES

Don't fall for the hype—here's the straight talk on why it's never been simpler to stay hydrated on the bike

BY SELENE YEAGER



WHY YOU NEED TO DRINK

The goal of hydration is to maintain enough blood volume to do two things: keep your muscles working and produce sweat to stay cool. If you lose too much water, your blood becomes too thick to do either, and you slow down.

REHYDRATE STAT

If you're just drinking when you're thirsty, you'll probably finish a long, hard ride dehydrated. So rehydrate as soon as possible when you're done to help speed recovery. A recovery drink works, but so does water and hydrating foods like yogurt and fruit.

JUST ADD ICE

Cold fluids absorb heat and help keep your core body temperature cooler, allowing you to ride harder longer (13 percent longer, according to one study) in hot weather. Plus, they feel good going down and lift your spirits, which improves performance, too.

HYPOTONIC

(hī'pō-tōn'ik) adj. A fancy way of saying that a drink has slightly lower sugar and electrolyte content than your body fluid so that your cells absorb it faster than they do plain water. Look for drink mixes that range from 3 to 6 percent carbohydrate content (like Osmo, Skratch, Nuun PLUS, and GU). If you want more calories, you can go up to 8 percent.

THE EVOLUTION OF SIPPING GUIDANCE

BEFORE WEIGH YOUR SWEAT LOSS

The old line of thinking was that athletes should limit sweat loss during exercise to less than 2 percent of body weight—three pounds for a 150-pound cyclist—in order to prevent performance-hampering dehydration.

THEN DRINK TO THIRST

Research published in 2011 led to a newer rule, which was simply to drink when you feel thirsty.

NOW DON'T OVERTHINK IT

A 2014 study reported that ultraendurance cyclists who drank whenever and how much they wanted did just as well as those who were instructed to sip according to thirst. In other words, you don't have to constantly worry about homing in on thirst sensations. As Forrest Gump put it, "That's good. One less thing."



STOP COUNTING CUPS

You're hydrated if:

1. You're peeing regularly
2. Your urine is pale
3. Your skin springs back after being pinched

MYTH

To avoid cramps, drink electrolytes.

BUSTED

A sports drink probably won't ease the pain. Newer research shows that if you're cramping, it's less likely because of dehydration and more likely due to fatigue and overexertion for your fitness level, and you need to back off the intensity.