Tip#6: Beat the Heat Before It Beats You

Adapted from ACE FitFacts and WELCOA

It's summertime and you head out for a run. If your outdoors, before you even finish the first mile, your body feels as though it might ignite from the heat. It's not your imagination. Fifteen minutes into your activity and your body temperature could be as high as 5° F above normal. If you were to continue at this pace, fatigue and heat illness would no doubt take over.

Strategies to Protect Yourself from Health Illness

The above scenario doesn't have to happen. Drinking enough fluid, whether water or a sports drink is imperative for exercising in hot or humid weather.

Maintenance of body fluids is essential to maintaining proper body temperature. Sweat cools your body by evaporating off your skin. Visible beads of sweat that don't evaporate only dehydrate you without the beneficial cooling effect. If you let your body become dehydrated, you'll find it much more difficult to perform even the lightest of workouts.

But don't wait until you're thirsty to start replenishing those fluids. Chances are, by the time you actually feel thirsty, your body is well on its way to becoming severely dehydrated.

The following strategies will help you protect yourself from the onset of heat illness:

Be shady

Avoid direct sun and blacktop. Natural surface paths under the trees are the cooler places to be**.** Wear a hat with a visor or a desert-cap with flaps to shade your neck. Wear sunscreen to prevent sunburn. Wear sunglasses that filter UVA and UVB rays to protect your eyes, and wear light colored clothing.

Five Questions

Here are five questions for you to consider as your progress through this challenge.

1. *Who and/or what makes your workout more enjoyable?*
2. *What physical changes, if any, have you notices since starting?*
3. *Do you have moral support from family, friends, and co-workers?*
4. *What's your favorite aspect of exercise (e.g., burning calories, relieving stress, health benefits, ect)?*
5. *Do you remember the three reasons you chose to become more physically active? Write them down, and keep them with you!*

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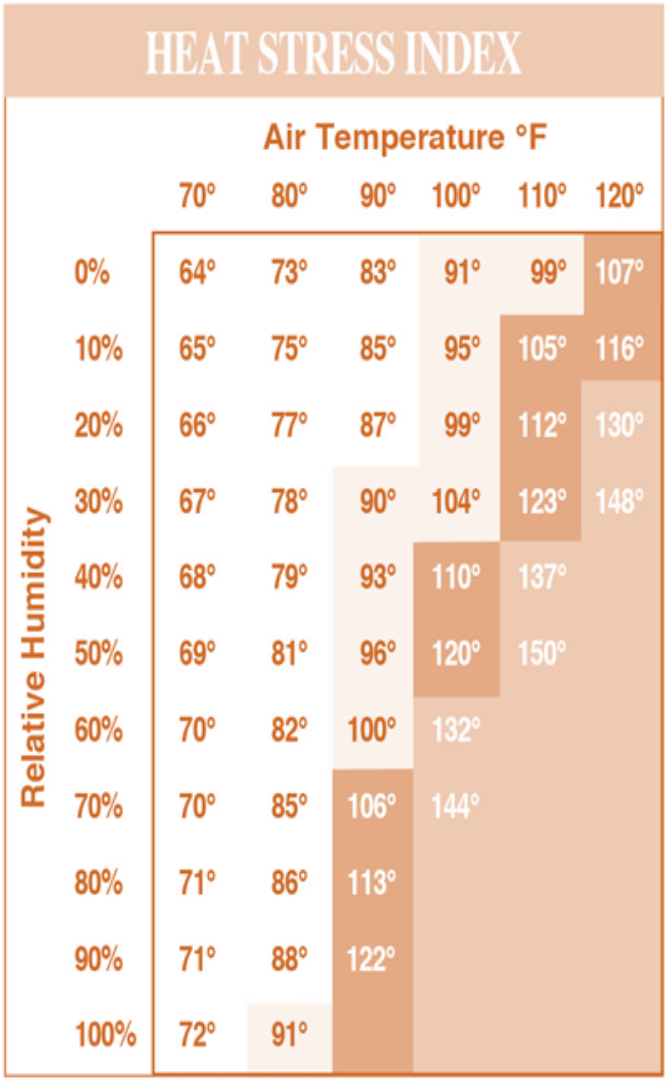

Heat Sensation	Risk of Heat Injury
90° - 105°	Possibility of heat cramps
105° - 130°	Heat cramps or heat exhaustion likely; Heat stroke possible
130°+	Heat stroke a definite risk

Water, water, water

Drink 10 to 16 ounces of water 15 minutes before you begin your workout routine. It's also a good idea to carry a water bottle with you, so you can keep hydrated. Remember, even if you're not thirsty, you should still keep chugging the H20—you don't have to be thirsty for your body to need liquids.

Electrolytes such as sodium, potassium and chloride are equally important to replace with a sports drink when continuous exercise lasts longer than one or two hours.

Be an early bird or a night owl

Generally, the hottest times of the day are between 10 am to 4 pm. You can avoid extreme heat by doing your workout routine either early or later in the day.

High humidity prevents sweat from evaporating. Use the heat stress index to determine the risk of exercising at various combinations of temperature and humidity. While a 90° F outdoor temperature is relatively safe at 10% humidity, the heat stress of 90° F at 50% humidity is the equivalent of 96° F.

Additional Resources:

National Institutes of Health – Heat Illness: www.health.nih.gov/topic/HeatIllness

Employee Wellness
www.pima.gov/hr/health
150 W. Congress, 5th Floor
Tucson, AZ 85701
Phone: (520) 724-8114
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