Your muscles need water to stay stronger longer.

Water is the most important nutrient in an athlete’s diet.

- Depriving your body of water affects your performance.
- When you’re dehydrated, your muscles lose power and run out of steam sooner.
- A dehydrated body is more likely to overheat during exercise.

What happens if I dehydrate myself to “make weight”, but then drink a lot of water before I compete?

Unfortunately, the time between weigh-in and competition is not long enough to totally rehydrate.

Say you lose 4 pounds in water weight (this is equal to 4 pints of fluid). Your body can only absorb 1 to 2 pints (2 to 4 cups) per hour, so you will still compete in dehydrated state.

Are You A Quart Low?

You can become dehydrated quickly during long work-outs, especially in hot weather. If you lose too much body water, you’ll notice these symptoms:

- rapid weight loss
- dark and concentrated urine
- small amounts of urine
- elevated heart rate, headaches or dizziness.

You should be aware of these symptoms because you can become dehydrated without knowing it’s happening. Thirst isn’t always a reliable signal for how much water your body needs.

Water is great for keeping your body hydrated. But you’ll probably drink more fluid when you chose something flavored, like apple juice or sports drinks. So drink whatever tastes good and you’ll probably drink more of it.

You can use sports drinks like Gatorade® anytime, but they are formulated mainly for drinking during exercise. Sports drinks are mostly water, but do provide a small amount of sugar for energy.

Juices are higher in calories than sports drinks. If you want a fluid that can give you energy for a match in a few hours or to provide extra calories when you’re hungry, juice is a good choice.

If you’re training hard and need to replace water losses during your workout, juices are concentrated and may not settle well in your stomach. Sports drinks or water are your best bets just before or during exercise.
Guidelines for staying hydrated:

● “Think to Drink”. Your thirst mechanism isn’t very sensitive, so **drink on a schedule** if you’re exercising for more than 30 minutes.

- If you’re exercising for **less than 30 minutes**, be sure to drink water before and after your workout to replace water lost as sweat.

- If your workout lasts for **30 to 90 minutes**, you’ll need to drink 1/2 to 1 cup water every 15 to 20 minutes to replace fluid as you’re losing it and to keep your body well hydrated for a productive workout.

● Don’t try to “make weight” by dehydrating yourself.

● Drink fluids you **enjoy**. If you like the taste, you’ll probably drink more.

● Drink **caffeine-free fluids** because caffeine causes your body to lose extra fluid. These drinks have caffeine:

  - Coffee
  - Colas
  - Cocoa
  - Dr. Pepper
  - Mt. Dew
  - Tea

Remember, water has no calories so it won’t affect your efforts to lose body fat. However, a pint of water weighs a pound. So, if you have achieved your goal weight, limit beverages just before weigh-in. Every pint you put in your body will tip the scale another pound!