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# Staying hydrated on shift

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# Mission impossible: staying hydrated on shift

This is a classic recommendation by well-meaning health professionals. They're not wrong about the benefits of hydration and the consequences of dehydration, but they're fairly clueless to the logistics of a shift working or first responder job.

## Why is staying hydrated on shift so tough?

Because it's easier to stay dehydrated than it is to find a good bathroom most of the time.

You may have to drive hours just to get to a call, or the only available washroom is the one you just cleared a client out of along with their drug paraphernalia.

However, we can't just ignore our body's physical needs for water either, so before you reach for another cup of coffee, read through these strategies.

# HOW MUCH WATER TO CONSUME DAILY

The body is anywhere from 45-75% water, depending on age, gender, lifestyle factors. Which means when we don't get enough, our systems aren't working properly.



## Calculating fluid requirements:

Most of us require 25-30ml per kg of body weight to stay well hydrated. *Note: tactical athletes (police, fire, military) may actually require more than this.*

Step 1. Find your weight in kilograms: current weight divided by 2.2 = \_\_\_\_\_kg

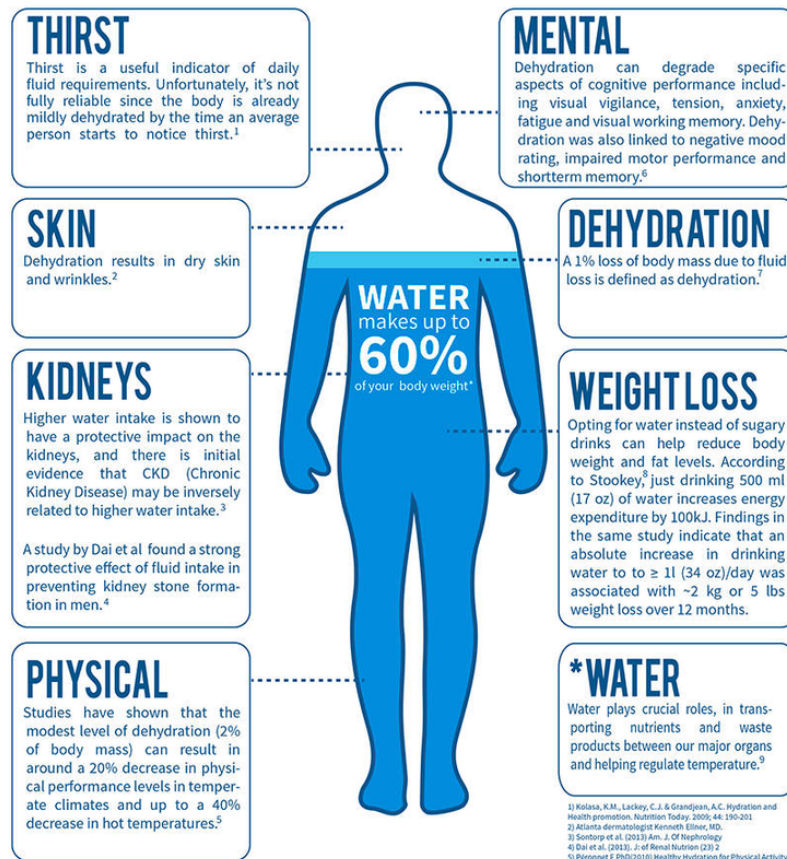
Step 2. Your weight in kg x 25 = \_\_\_\_\_ml  
Your weight in kg x 30 = \_\_\_\_\_ml

Step. 3. Convert ml to Litres (if you want): \_\_\_\_\_ml divided by 1000 = \_\_\_\_\_L/day

\*Add 500-1000ml for every hour of exercise

Step 4. (Optional) Convert L to oz: \_\_\_\_\_L divided by 30ml/oz = \_\_\_\_\_oz

# Consequences of dehydration



This may not be new knowledge for you, but it's important to review.

Constantly taking in less fluid than we are losing can have nasty side effects:

- 1) You can fatigue faster, which is important if your job requires physical exertion. You will burn through the glycogen stores in your muscles more rapidly when dehydrated.
- 2) Increased risk of kidney stone formation. Not only that, but kidney disease down the road. Moral of the story, don't stress out your kidneys as much as possible!
- 3) Headaches and reduced ability to concentrate. If you struggle with daily or weekly headaches, yes it can be from too much coffee and not enough water.
- 4) Our skin condition - many of us would love smooth glowing skin, and your hydration is an important part of wrinkle management and clear skin.

# Hydrating fluids and foods

It's not JUST water that we need to be chugging all day. Many beverages and foods can help us hydrate.

## Hydrating liquids:

- Water
- Electrolytes
- Your first cup of coffee
- Milk
- Juices
- Herbal teas
- Sparkling waters

## Hydrating foods:

- Lettuce
- Soups
- Watermelon
- Smoothies
- Apples
- Celery

# Making it happen

## Strategies for hydrating with shift work

1. Use your commute time! Make it through a water bottle on the way to work and the way home from work. This takes the pressure off of your shift and you'll have access to a good bathroom on either side.
2. Have a cup of water for every cup of caffeine. Your first cup of coffee in the morning is not actually that dehydrating! But if you have more caffeine in the day after that, it can be helpful to purposefully consume water alongside it.
3. Start your day with water. Yes water, not coffee. Fill up your coffee mug with water FIRST before filling it with that beautiful black brew. This actually makes a difference for how your body feels.
4. Make hydration a priority on your days off. If all else fails, your days off can be a time to prioritize your hydration.
5. Pay attention to your urine color! If it's light and clear, great job. If it's dark yellow, get to work! If it's bright neon highlighter yellow, it's likely your supplements (especially B vitamins)
6. Try fruit infused water. Apple slices + cinnamon sticks, oranges + lemon slices, strawberries + mint leaves - the sky's the limit! If you want something fast and shelf-stable, I recommend True Lemon or True Lime flavor packs. They are simply dehydrated and crystallized lemons and limes. You can find them on [Amazon!](#)
7. Other foods/liquids count too! Many vegetables and fruit have a high water content, and foods like soups, smoothies, and shakes will also contribute to your overall fluid content.

# Making it happen

## Strategies for hydrating with shift work

8. Know what temperature you like. You probably have your favorite water bottle/travel mug because it keeps things cold (or hot) for a really long time. If you need your water to be icy cold to be enjoyable, make that investment. If you stop drinking cold water in the winter (like me), you can try more herbal teas.
9. Treat yourself like a toddler in potty-training. Do you have to go to the bathroom before you leave the office/house? No? Try anyways. This is a strange one, but it helps.
10. Pay attention to your sweat levels. This will fluctuate based on the time of year, but your uniform and gear may cause you to sweat more than you do on your days off. If you notice salt crystals on your face or clothing, you may need an electrolyte.
11. Use an electrolyte once/day. A sugar-free option is best if you haven't just done an intense physical workout. Adding electrolytes (especially at the end of a shift) can help manage cravings and prevent annoying issues like restless legs or muscle cramping.

## *Thank you for what you do.*

I know shift work is brutal on the body. I know that you're tired 97% of the time (not lazy). Choosing between planning for, shopping, and making healthy meals AND sleep AND time with your family is hard.

I'm convinced with simple strategies that actually fit your life and schedule, you can feel totally different than you do right now.

Need help? We know the shift work life, and I'd love to take the food load off your plate.



## Interested in more strategies for shift work?

*Check out my packages for more details on portion sizes, meal timings, and meal planning strategies for shift work!*

[www.shiftworknutrition.com](http://www.shiftworknutrition.com)

