

October 2017. The weather has been exceptionally warm lately. In fact, last week, for two days in a row, the temperature at the beach in San Clemente, California was 100°F. That's HOT! But, cyclists still cycle, runners still run and surfers still surf. The most frequently asked question I have been asked has been "**What Electrolyte Drink Should I Be Using?**"

I'm not an expert in this field but, I have a cyclist friend who is. His name is Richard Hiraga and he is president at Unique Nutritional Supplements / GQ-6. I asked Richard to answer this question for us. Thanks Richard for an article that hits so many important points.

When we (GQ-6) attend consumer events there are many times I am asked what could be used to help **stop cramping during exercise**. If at a cycling event, my **immediate response is to ask if this person has had a proper bike fit?** if not, I suggest that before the consumer looks towards nutrition they first visit their local bike shop and or bike fit studio to ensure that their body position is correct, this is important to benefit an efficient and best riding experience possible.



Of everything we can do to insure we have as positive an experience as possible when we are working, training and or just outside enjoying our time exercising proper form and equipment not only allows us to exceed and extend our goals it is essential to our performance.

Identifying other opportunities to better our experience and performance includes training and proper nutrition. Of all the nutrition on the market, **proper hydration** has been shown to **increase performance by 20%**. The best equipment will certainly help, but the outcome depends on the athlete and their level of preparedness, experience and fitness.



Working with Elite, Professional, World Champions and Olympians in multiple sports I always start by telling everyone to **stay properly hydrated**. **Water is the best source of hydration**, when we become dehydrated our plasma begins to thicken which slows the flow of red blood cells and oxygen throughout our bodies and ultimately to our brains. In working with high school football and baseball teams on proper hydration the students and parents noticed that the alertness and ability to focus towards the end of the school day were much higher once the player concentrated on proper hydration additionally, on the field the athletes had a very high reduction of cramping during practice and during the games. Now this did not happen overnight, it took a while for the athletes to understand the importance of hydrating and not



just drinking a beverage to quench their thirst. Moving from a “sports drink” to water and or another option to their hydration needs was key.

Our bodies on average are comprised of approximately 80% water and while we can go many weeks without food we can last only days without hydrating. For every athlete, recreational or professional the amount of training will dictate if water is enough to keep our bodies in a homeostasis state. **Our bodies produce some of the following electrolytes:** calcium, magnesium, potassium, sodium, phosphate and chloride. There are conflicting thoughts or ideas regarding electrolytes however, science has shown that electrolytes are an important part of normal body functions. **It is when the sodium levels are reduced to levels below normal that our performance begins to degrade**, and we place ourselves at risk of hyponatremia. **Symptoms of hyponatremia may include headache, loss of balance, inability to think clearly, nausea and cramping.**



Going out the night before a Saturday or Sunday morning group ride? Many of us like to have a glass of beer, wine or a cocktail in the evenings followed by that wonderful cup of coffee in the morning that helps to wake us up and get us going. Remember that **alcohol and caffeine are diuretics**. That head ache in the morning could very well be the fact that you may be dehydrated and the red blood cells shuttling oxygen to your brain are stuck in a plasma gridlock.

Always start off in a hydrated state, never wait until you are thirsty to drink. Once you become dehydrated nothing you do and all the water or hydration you drink will not be able to

fix the problem immediately. **Drink four ounces every fifteen minutes**, try to use your watch or power meter as a timer to remind you and if possible use a bottle that you can see through to measure the amount of hydration you are using. If you are eating solid food, gels or something high in sugar you will need to up your hydration input as the body will draw hydration out of your system back into your stomach to assist in breaking these solids down.

Finishing a full water bottle after an hour ride is a good thing and you might be surprised at how good you feel after.

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