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## Hydration in training and racing

We know hydration is critical to our endurance endeavours. It's even more so if we have shifted towards a lower carb, higher fat, moderate protein diet. This simply means we need to be taking in more salt and water for proper hydration.

The reason is that the less refined foods we consume, the less salt there is. And we need good salts for fluid balance. Having the right fluid balance of water to electrolytes, principally salt\* is KEY.

So you need to become intuitive to what you need. Basing fueling and hydration/electrolytes on time can put you into trouble.

Outside of training I recommend that you make a natural electrolyte drink. We like using a 750-900ml mason jar that I fill with water, add a very good pinch of Himalayan salt and a wedge of lemon/lime or orange. This lets me know how much water I consume outside of training each day and I know I'm getting in my much-needed electrolytes and minerals.

We have to take the climate into account. Cold climates mean you could be taking in too much salt to water and in hot climates the opposite is true and most athletes are way too short on salt.

In training and racing I recommend using Salt Sticks or S-Caps brands. I have no affiliation with them but I have tried many of them and these are the only two that stops me from cramping. Especially when it's hot and humid. They work.

How much? These guidelines are generalised and you'll need to test in different conditions but overall should be pretty close for you.



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- 1 Salt Stick for each 230-300ml (4-6oz) or 4-5 per two water bottles.

When it's hot and more so if you have been diligently following a lower carbohydrate, higher fat program you should focus on hydration and minimize caloric intake (to a point). I believe a product like Skratch Labs or Tailwind + extra Salt Sticks works well here.

I have used [Skratch Labs/Tailwind](#) hydration mix as part of a fuelling strategy and it's been positive. Both have minimal calories, real fruit flavouring and don't contain any nasty crap. It tastes good and doesn't leave that dry bad taste in your mouth.

\*This makes up part of the fuelling strategy.

When it's hot you have to throttle back the calorie intake and increase hydration ... *when I say hydration I mean water and electrolytes are one in the same*. And I'm not referring to Gatorade, Powerade or any of the many other sports drink crap out there – they're sugar drinks and not electrolyte drinks. Big difference.

If you don't curb the calorie intake you put yourself at a greater risk of shutting your stomach down and when that happens you also shut down fluid uptake for hydration.

When this occurs things start to look pretty bleak. Blood plasma levels diminish as you're not replacing salt and dehydration sets in. All that food sitting in the gut ferments and wants out. Result. You end up throwing up and this leads to further fluid losses.

All this because you have been told more calories is better.

So let me repeat the rule when it's hot. Keep exogenous carbs simple and throttle them WAY back while increasing hydration (water + electrolytes).



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*Tips for queasiness or sloshing stomachs*

If you ever get **stomach queasiness** after taking a Salt Stick then you have simply not had enough water with it. Drink a bit more and wait 10-15mins and see how you feel.

If your **stomach is sloshing** it simply means you are overdue for electrolyte intake. Take a Salt Stick and see how you feel in 10-15mins. Still sloshing, take another.

If you have queasiness and haven't been good on your Salt Stick/S-Caps intake then take another.

The key to any of these is making the correction as soon as possible and giving the body a chance to rectify it. So you will likely have to back off the pace for a little while to rectify the situation. Once that is done, you can get back to race pace. If you keep pushing because you are worried about losing time, you'll likely end up feeling worse and lose much more time than you would have by simply addressing the situation, making the correction and momentarily slowing down. This is just being race smart.