

## Water Is Critical In Bodybuilding - But Are You Drinking The Right Type?

Water is an absolute necessity in any fitness program. This is especially true for bodybuilding or any other high physically demanding activity. The mushrooming multi-billion dollar bottled water industry is evidence of our growing awareness of the need to hydrate during physical activity. Everywhere you look people are walking around with bottled water. Often it is designer water with added electrolytes, carbohydrates or other additives. Do you need the extras or would plain old water be good enough? To answer this question we need to first take look at the role of water in the body. There is no doubt that we need to continually hydrate. Your body is about 80% water and it goes into stress rapidly if you dehydrate. You can live for weeks without food but for only several days without water. Water is required for every process that takes place in the body. No matter how much protein you eat, your system cannot break it down into amino acids without water. Without enough water, your body simply cannot utilize all of the nutrients you consume. In addition to water's role in digestion, it also protects and lubricates your joints. It acts as a cushion to absorb shock. Water is also required for the fluid that lubricates the sheath surrounding and protecting the tendons. Without water, your joints and muscles would "freeze up" just like any precision machine without lubrication. Even without exercise you need water to replace normal perspiration and water passed as waste. If you are working out and engaged in a serious muscle building program, chances are that you are not taking in as much as you need. Most people tend to under estimate their water consumption. We used to think that drinking 8 X 8 ounce glasses of water a day (64 ounces) was enough. Now we know that unless you are a small person, this is way too low. In a fitness program, we recommend you consume .6 ounces of water per day for each pound of body weight. That amounts to 90 ounces if you weigh 150 lbs and 120 ounces if you weigh 200 lbs. This might seem like a lot of water but just think what a piece of jerky looks like. That is lean muscle that has dehydrated. Keep a few water bottles with you all the time so no matter where you are, you can keep hydrated and not end up feeling like the jerky. There is little doubt that we need plenty of water. But, do we need a designer water or a sports drink or is plain old water good enough? There has been plenty written about this and many millions spent on advertising various waters but a lot of it is just marketing. As far as purity goes, government tests have shown that plain tap water from most utility districts is just as pure, if not more so, than many bottled waters. Sports drinks are "enhanced" with electrolytes and other ingredients. Some of the "extras" you may not want or need. Electrolyte balance is important, but do we need to consume electrolytes in a sports drink? Changes in the levels of our electrolytes often occur when body water levels change. Calcium, carbonate, chloride, sodium, magnesium, phosphate, and potassium, are the main electrolytes in the blood. Of these, the three that normally cause problems with changing levels are calcium, potassium and sodium. Calcium Low calcium levels usually result from an infection in the blood or body tissues which develops suddenly. They can also be the result of a vitamin D deficiency or if the parathyroid glands located in the neck have been damaged or removed. Potassium Low potassium levels are usually the result of diarrhea, long term vomiting or using a diuretic. The caffeine found in some energy drinks can actually act as a diuretic and dry you out. This is just the opposite of what we want water to do. Sodium Sodium is depleted in perspiration. Sodium levels may also decrease when you drink a lot of water without consuming enough sodium. With the exception of sodium, electrolyte levels are normally maintained in balance through a healthy diet. Adding a pinch of salt to your bottle of tap water will fix that. In summary, you do need to include good quantities of water in any fitness program. But the water need not be an expensive designer water or sports drink. There is nothing quite as refreshing as a drink of cold, pure water. Add a pinch of salt for balance.

### About the Author

It provides the body with the necessary building blocks to produce amino acids that are used for building muscle tissue. Nearly every bodybuilder.

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