



USSA: FLUIDS

Sports Drinks

What is in a Sports Drink?

Sport drinks are sweet flavored beverages that are to be used before, during, and after physical activity. They promote hydration, voluntary intake of fluids, and glycogen replacement. Sport drinks contain a 4 to 8% carbohydrate concentration and a sodium content of 500 – 700 mg per liter / 32 oz.

What are Energy Drinks and Sports Water?

Energy drinks contain a higher concentration of carbohydrates (10%), which usually results in inefficient absorption and therefore gastro-intestinal distress. Most energy drinks contain caffeine. Some have herbs, amino acids, creatine, or other substances that are usually in small enough quantities to have no impact. They should not be used immediately before or during exercise.

Sport water is purified water, slightly flavored, with added vitamins, minerals, and/or electrolytes. Sport water is a solution containing 2.5 to 3 % carbohydrates, 0 – 12 mg sodium and 105 – 142 kcal per 32 oz / liter. These drinks may be suitable for moderate exercise sessions less than an hour in length and as an alternative to water.

When will Sport Drinks improve performance?

The extent to which a sport drink improves performance depends on the type and duration of the exercise and pre-exercise nutrition. Sports drinks should assist athletes exercising in the following situations:

- Long sessions (>90 minutes) of sub maximal exercise (e.g. cross-country skiing, bike riding)
- Long sessions (>60 minutes) of intermittent high-intensity sporting activities (e.g. skiing, soccer)
- High intensity exercise lasting 60 minutes or more (e.g. race pace)
- Any athlete who has a heavy sweat loss or just arrived to altitude.

When should you use Sport Drinks?

- *Before exercise* – an hour before exercise sport drinks assist in topping up muscle carbohydrate stores and in reducing urine loss before exercise begins.
- *During exercise* – sport drinks are primarily used during exercise for optimal fluid and fuel delivery. They delay the onset of fatigue.
- *Recovery* – sport drinks assist in re-hydration and in the replacement of carbohydrate stores.



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Which Sport Drink should I use?

The best sport drink depends on personal preference and individual tolerance. Individuals should experiment with a variety of flavors and brands to determine their desired sport drink. All sport drinks are similar in composition due to the country's food law system.