



Hydration Strategy and Schedule

By Dr. Ritamarie Loscalzo

What You Need to Know About Hydration

Dehydration can manifest in a myriad of diseases and symptoms. Most of us are dehydrated and we don't even realize it.

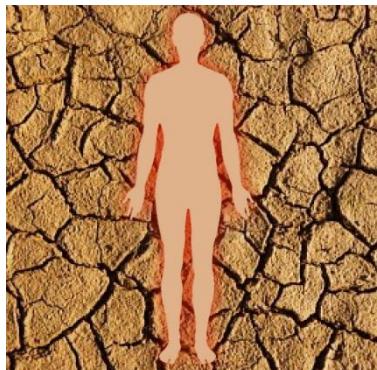
There's a fascinating book called **You're Not Sick, You're Thirsty** by Dr. F. Batmanghelidj, M.D. In it he talks about the mechanisms by which dehydration triggers such things as asthma, allergies, heartburn, fatigue, hypertension and many others illnesses.



To be properly hydrated **you need to drink approximately 1/2 your weight in fluid ounces of water**. If you are exercising heavily, you'll need more.

Water Quality and Quantity

Water is vital to your survival. Without sufficient water intake, your entire body slows down and healing and repair become sluggish.



Chronic dehydration is an underlying cause of many common diseases. Contrary to popular belief, **thirst and dry mouth are not reliable indicators of your need for water**.

In this lesson, you'll learn how to take in the proper quantity of water for your body size and activity level. You'll also learn how the quality of water you drink is as important as the quantity. Be sure to drink filtered water or spring water instead of tap water, which may contain many contaminants including remnants of prescription drugs, pesticides, heavy metals, chemicals and viruses.

Hydration Action Plan

Checklist:

Mark your progress as you complete the steps in your hydration action plan.

- #1: Keep a hydration journal to assess how much you drink now.
- #2: Determine how much water you need.
- #3: Equip yourself with enough easy-to-access water vessels to get you through each day.
- #4: Create and follow a personal hydration schedule.
- #5: Share your goals out loud.



#1: Keep a hydration journal to assess how much you drink now.

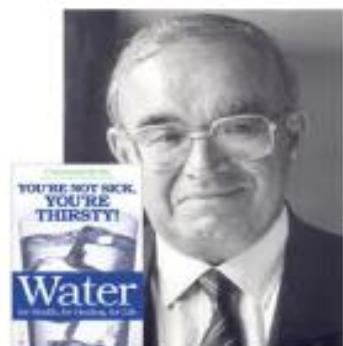
Get a sense of how much water you are currently drinking. For 2 days, **create a journal of your hydration habits. In your journal, record:**

- **How much** water you are currently drinking - record the approximate amount
- Notice what **triggers** you to drink
- Record whether you drink regularly as a **habit** or if you drink only **when thirsty**
- **Record a note section of what thirst feels like**



Dr. Batmanghelidj says that thirst is not a great indicator of when to drink because **by the time you perceive thirst, you are already down about 3 cups of water.**

He also explains that often what you perceive as hunger is actually thirst, and he suggests that you **drink at least 8 ounces of water whenever you feel hungry** and then wait to see if the feeling goes away. This is a great weight management tip.



#2: Determine how much water you need.

To provide your body all the water you need for optimal functioning, you need to:

- Drink **at least 1/2 your body weight in fluid ounces of water** every day.
- Add to that 8 ounces for every 15 minutes of vigorous exercise or perspiration.
- **Note:** Soft drinks, juice, coffee, tea and other beverages do not count towards hydration. In fact, alcohol and caffeinated beverages actually trigger mechanisms that cause you to lose water and thus are dehydrating beverages.



#3: Equip yourself with enough easy-to-access water vessels to get you through each day.

Get yourself some water bottles, pitchers, or glass jars so that **you have enough capacity to hold all of the water that you need in a day**. Go ahead and fill up your containers with an entire day's total so that you can see exactly how much you need each day.

The amount of water you need may seem like a lot. Look at the volume and fully realize your task at hand.



While it's better if you just get started to get this much water in you right away, if this is significantly more than what you're used to, **it may be necessary for you to gradually increase your water intake.**

The sooner you start drinking your full water requirement, the sooner you'll begin to reap the benefits.



#4: Create and follow a personal hydration schedule.

Following the suggested schedule below will ensure that you get adequate water. Feel free to **adjust to your own needs and lifestyle**.



When you add up all the water in the schedule below, you get the following quantities (given that you eat 3 meals a day and exercise once a day):

- **Lower** quantity in range: Total is 72 ounces a day (2.1 L)
- **Higher** quantity in range: Total is 160 ounces a day (4.7 L)

This schedule works for weight ranges from 144 to 320 pounds. If you weigh less than 144 lbs, you can drink less each time you drink. If you weigh more than 320 lbs, drink more each time you drink or add an extra water drinking time to the schedule.

Hydration Schedule:

It's okay to drink a little more than your recommended amount, but not less.

- **Upon awakening:** Drink 16 – 32 (.5 - 1 L) ounces of water. Keep a water bottle or cup at your bedside and begin to drink before you even get up.
- **30 minutes before each meal:** Drink 8 - 16 ounces (approx. 250 mL - .5 L).
- **1 hour after each meal:** Drink 8 - 16 ounces
- **Before exercise:** Drink 8 - 16 ounces



If you're overweight you should also drink 12 - 24 ounces whenever you're hungry. Wait at least 15 minutes, and if you're still hungry then you may eat.

#5: Share your goals out loud.

If you want to help your new plan to stick, share it in public -- call a friend, tell a neighbour, use social media, or whatever would motivate you. If you can find a "water buddy" to help you stay accountable, that's even better.