

## Hydration

When I first started running, I didn't ever carry any water with me. Back then, I ran mostly on the road where it was easy to run into the local Starbucks and ask for a cup of water. Unfortunately, there are no coffee shops located conveniently in the middle of the forest (maybe one day!), leaving us to fend for ourselves.

As coach and a competitive runner, I can't stress enough how important it is to properly hydrate on your runs. It is important to start practicing proper hydration right away so its second nature come race day.

The rule of thumb is that you want to carry 500 ml for every hour that you are out on the trail. If your run is only 1 hour, you can probably get away without water but do carry it if your run is longer than that. For example, if I am planning to run for 2 hours, I will bring 1L of water with me. I may not drink it all, but it's better to carry more than to run out. Remember, carrying that much water may feel heavy to start, but the weight is lessened every time you take a sip, thus it won't feel heavy for long.

There are a few different methods for carrying water. I have used everything to carry water from handheld water bottles, hydration packs to waist belts. It is important to try things out to determine what works for you. I used a waist belt when I was training for a marathon but I find it gets in the way when I run up hills. On shorter runs I'll carry a handheld and on longer runs I'll wear a camelbak. All of these devices can be found at North Shore Athletics.

The amount of water you need is dependent also on the amount you sweat. If you are a heavy sweater you may want to carry more than 500 ml/hour. Also, if it is a hot day, you might want to think about carrying more than usual. Carrying water is also for your safety in case you get lost (not to scare you!) in the trails and are out there for more time than originally anticipated.

What can happen if you don't drink water? When you are dehydrated, so are your muscles. A dehydrated muscle is more likely to cramp which can force you to slow down or stop running.

Lastly, it is also important to re-hydrate after a run. Sometimes you sweat more than you can take in. Here is a trick—weigh yourself on a scale before you run. When you get home from your run, weigh yourself again. For every pound you are down, replenish with 500 ml of water. For example, if I weighed 140 lb before my run, and 138 lb after, I would need to drink 1L of water to re-hydrate.

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