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## **How to Drown your Injury Sorrows**

**By Tyler Dyck**

It's not every day that healthcare practitioners will tell you how to put them out of business, so when they do it's well worth listening. As an aging population puts more pressure on healthcare systems, all of us should be looking for ways to keep healthy and injury free. It's no secret that in today's active and overworked society, people are hurting themselves at an alarmingly high rate, and this is why I feel that it is important to give you the reader one easy piece of information to help slow this trend.

What is this ounce of prevention?

Actually it's more like 80-160 ounces to be precise. In fact drinking 80-160 ounces of water a day (or 2.5 to 5 litres), can significantly decrease your chance of injuring your bodies tissues and will actually help speed up your recovery process for those times when you are injured. For many years, we in the healthcare profession have known that hydration, nutrition, and exercise are the keys to healthy living and healthy tissues. Unfortunately, when it comes down to implementing a healthy lifestyle most of us focus on eating healthier and increasing our exercise output, while simply ignoring hydration. Lets face it, how many of us drink their daily-recommended water intake of at least eight glasses of water a day? And eight glasses a day is the bare minimum of what we should be ingesting for a somewhat sedentary lifestyle. The true baseline amount depends on how much exercise you are getting and what the ambient climate is like. For example, a cross country skier at moderate exertion in temperatures below minus 7-10 degrees centigrade will loose between 2-3 litres of water content from their tissues over a two hour period of exercise. That would mean that you would have to drink at least 8-12 more glasses of water, on top of your already ingested 8 glasses of water for that day, just to maintain your recommended hydration level. At this point you are already up to approximately five litres of water consumption.

The medical reasoning behind the importance of hydration is twofold. First, well-hydrated tissues are more resilient to stresses imposed upon them and thus are less likely to fail or tear, and second, the cellular processes of the cells in hydrated tissues work faster and thus swelling resolution and tissue repair are sped up, leading to a faster recovery time.

Physiotherapists have known for many years that injuries happen more frequently when an athlete or individual is fatigued and dehydrated. In sport or strenuous activity the body burns through a lot of water making the body's tissues, especially muscles and tendons, become vulnerable to strains and tears as they lose water content and thus lose their elasticity. The loss of water also throws the biochemical balances of the body out of sync and thus may also lead to muscle cramping or inappropriate muscle functioning, which may cause further tissue failure. The end result usually means a visit to your physiotherapist to help you in diagnosing and treating that torn tissue.

If you have forgotten to hydrate and the injury has already occurred, it is still not too late to start hydrating, because as I stated earlier, increased hydration levels can actually help in speeding up recovery times. The simple act of drinking water will significantly speed up cellular activity and proper body filtration and drainage processes. This alone will speed up healing times, and decrease injury downtime, which in the end will mean less time in your physiotherapist's office and more time back out doing the things that you love to do.

When you sit back and look at the grim facts of injury recovery, compounded by health care costs and the psychological stress of being sidelined from activity, you really must agree that a few ounces of liquid prevention truly are worth their weight in gold.

For further information on this topic please contact the Fawzia Sultan Rehabilitation Institute (FSRI) in Hawally at 264-2862, or check out our website at [www.rehabinstitutekuwait.com](http://www.rehabinstitutekuwait.com)

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