

SWEATING AND YOU!

Sweating is your body's natural cooling mechanism. Its main function is to control body temperature. As the water in the sweat evaporates, the surface of the skin cools.

As a result, your internal temperature is maintained at a comfortable 98.6 degrees. Yes, sweating is sometimes messy and smelly; it does, however, help release heat when your body temperature rises from exercise. If we didn't sweat, our bodies would literally cook from the inside out.

PERSPIRING 101

Everyone's sweat is slightly different. Sweat is comprised mostly of water, but it also contains sodium, chloride, potassium, calcium, and magnesium. If you don't exercise regularly or are unfit, you will tend to lose more sodium in your sweat than a person who is fit. If your sweat is salty, stings your eyes, or leaves a gritty feeling on your skin, you're losing sodium.

The volume of sweat you produce depends on various factors

Size: The bigger you are, the more heat you generate. Plus, more surface area that comes with a larger body also requires more perspiration to cool it down.

AGE: The body becomes less tolerant to heat with age. Age reduces the body's ability to cool itself efficiently.

MUSCLE MASS: Muscles produces more heat than fat. So even if two people have the same body weight, their sweat rate will differ based on their percentage of muscle mass.

HEALTH STATUS: Several health conditions (Colds, flu, and even mental health conditions such as anxiety, depression, pregnancy, and menopause) can impact how much you sweat.

FITNESS LEVEL: Fit people sweat more than their less-fit counterparts. The fit person's body knows how to cool itself.

EXTERNAL FACTORS: Exercising outside in hot temperatures and humidity, or participating in a hot yoga class, will cause your body to sweat to keep your internal temperature down.

During exercise in temperate conditions, the average person will lose about 1.5 to 2 liters of fluid through sweat. Add high humidity and heat to the mix, and your rate of fluid loss can double. If you're exercising or playing sports for more than one hour, it's important to replace the fluid you lose through sweat during the activity to prevent dehydration. Replenish lost fluids with 16 to 20 ounces of fluid per hour (four to six ounces for every 15 to 20 minutes). Exercising for less than one hour? Choose water over a sports drink, but make sure you hydrate sufficiently.

Food for thought – Caffeine, spicy foods, and hot beverages can increase sweat!

Remember, good things come to those who sweat.

Yours in fitness,
Helen



Helen's love of fitness began at an early age. She practiced dance, gymnastics as well as track and field. She's an Exercise Physiologist with 35 years of experience. She is also a certified personal trainer, corrective exercise specialist, nutrition consultant, and Senior fitness specialist. Helen is the owner of Unique Health & Fitness.

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