

**HEALTH**

## The Importance of Hydration

Are you drinking enough water?

by **Abbey N. Folsom, MS**



### KEY POINTS

- >> Water sustains life. Chronic dehydration can have a lifetime of effects.
- >> Maintenance of proper blood volume and pressure ensures nutrients are delivered and waste is carried away.
- >> Depending on your body weight, adults need to drink between nine and 17 cups of water per day.
- >> Coconut water is a healthy way to replenish electrolytes. Especially since alcohol, juices, sodas and sports drinks are full of sugar.
- >> Hydration tips for kids (and adults): eat your water! Cucumbers, watermelon, citrus, grapes, tomatoes, lettuce.
- >> Learn to love water by adding citrus – lemon, lime or orange – cucumber, or a splash of apple cider vinegar.

It's not surprising that most people do not drink enough water. For Floridians, staying hydrated is even harder because of the Sunshine State's lengthy extreme heat conditions. Chronic dehydration can have a lifetime of effects. Drinking plenty of water helps maintain a person's quality of life, preserves organ function and improves longevity.

### FUNCTION

Our bodies are mostly comprised of water. It's the primary component of blood, urine, sweat, tears and tissues. Water is a universal solvent in our body that lubricates and cushions.

### DEHYDRATION

We lose water when we urinate, defecate, sweat and breathe. Dehydration or loss of water impairs brain function, and causes pain and stress to organs over time. Symptoms include headache, weakness and nausea. Drinking alcohol while playing in the sun can hasten effects. In the elderly, dehydration can lead to heat stroke! We must sweat efficiently so that we don't overheat and even die.

This is why it is so important to stay hydrated. Do not rely on thirst as an indicator – at which point, you are already dehydrated. The goal is to prevent thirst. According to the National Academic Press, total water intake includes drinking-water, water in beverages, and water in foods that we eat.

### BLOOD

Water is essential to maintain blood volume – think blood pressure. Dehydration causes blood volume to decrease and thicken, which means the heart has to pump harder to circulate blood, resulting in an increase of blood

pressure. Persistently high blood pressure is a known indicator for cardiovascular disease.

The function of blood is to transport nutrients, including essential oxygen, and to remove metabolic waste or toxic byproducts. Water is essential for cellular communication within our bodies.

### ELECTROLYTES


Fluid and electrolyte balance is essential to life. Water absorption depends on electrolyte balance, including sodium, chloride, potassium and magnesium. Electrolytes, proteins and the pressure within our veins and capillaries all contribute to osmotic pressure, which ultimately determines absorption and water use.

### KIDNEYS

Flushing your kidneys daily is essential to good health. Increased fluid intake can prevent kidney stones, gout and urinary tract infections. Many people worry about having to urinate frequently with increased water intake. We excrete two to three liters of water per day; therefore, we must replenish this fluid. Thirst and dark-colored urine are indicators of poor water-balance in your body. Your urine should be a light-pale yellow, if any other colors ensue, consult your medical doctor.

### HOW MUCH WATER IS ENOUGH?

Depending on your body size, the Institute of Medicine states the adult Dietary Reference Intake for water is 2.7 liters for women and 3.7 liters for men (1 liter = approximately 4.2 cups) living in a temperate climate performing moderate activity. However, Florida is a subtropical climate, with extremely high temperatures. We sweat and lose water faster in hot weather, especially during increased physical activities, such as playing sports, gardening or working outside. This necessitates drinking more water to stay properly hydrated. You should only quench your thirst with water. Drink a glass of water before any other beverage. Drinking enough water throughout the day is important for your overall health.

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# 10 Ways to Know You're Becoming a Stronger Presenter

by Sam Harrison  
Speaker and Author

How good of a presenter are you? Hard to gauge, isn't it? Other than any direct feedback we receive from audiences, it's difficult to know if our speaking skills are becoming better, staying the same or getting worse. Below are 10 ways to know if your speaking skills are strong. They can also help you to improve your presentation skills.

## 1. You understand your audience

You take time to know the people and organization – and you align your content to meet their wants, need and dreams.

## 2. You practice

You prep like a pro. Sometimes you rehearse alone, other times in front of a friend or a video camera to obtain honest feedback. But you never try winging it.

## 3. You check the room in advance

You familiarize yourself with the space prior to your presentation – and you're aware of (and have possibly dealt with) any problems or distractions in the room.

## 4. Your visuals support your words, rather than duplicating them

You avoid slides or charts packed with bullet points. Instead, your visuals are a few simple words or images that quickly reinforce what you're saying.

## 5. You don't do data dumps

Rather than numbing audience members with nonstop facts and figures, you inject liberal doses of vivid examples and human-interest stories that paint pictures.

## 6. Your presentation flows

You stay focused on the overall theme of your presentation and move seamlessly from one point to the next. You work hard to make it look easy.

## 7. You pace yourself

You don't speak too fast or too slow. You modulate your voice so it doesn't become monotone and listless. And you use occasional pauses to catch your breath – and to give your audience a chance to mentally catch up.

## 8. You offer the best version of yourself

You're comfortable with your own personality and style – but you always bring your top game. You watch posture and body language to be sure you're not overly casual or unprofessional in the process of being yourself.

## 9. You lean into your audience

You talk with your audience and not at them. You project energy, make eye contact, ask questions and in other ways connect on a personal level with audience members.

## 10. You show passion

You know that when you speak, you're attempting to sell yourself and your ideas – and that selling is a transfer of passion and enthusiasm.

Sam Harrison is a professional speaker and best-selling author of three books: *IdeaSelling*, *IdeaSpotting* and *Zing*. Visit [zingzone.com/blog](http://zingzone.com/blog) to read his blogs on creativity and presentation skills.