

Keeping healthy and fit in the heat of the summer

By Kim Siegel, certified personal trainer

With summer finally here families are looking for ways to have fun, stay fit and healthy before, during and after vacations. You should beware of the health risks *before* embarking on those outdoor activities.

Heat exhaustion is a very common problem here in Texas. It will take your body almost three weeks of *consistent* outdoor play to acclimate to the higher temperatures and humidity. This means that you shouldn't just decide one day, when the temperature is over 90 degrees, to take a long jog or bike ride. Begin by taking short runs/rides three to four times a week, gradually increasing your time outdoors. Be sure to intersperse periods of rest in a cooler environment with plenty of fluids available to drink. The obvious symptoms of heat exhaustion are headache, stomachache, dizziness, muscle cramping, and heavy sweating, causing your body to lose its fluids and to over heat. If this happens you need to stop what you are doing, get to a cooler place and drink plenty of fluids. If the symptoms worsen or become more severe seek medical treatment. If you have reached the point where you have stopped sweating, your body has lost the ability to cool itself and you could suffer a heat stroke if immediate action is not taken.

Dehydration can be a problem in the summer as well. Our bodies are two-thirds water. When you get dehydrated it means that the water in your body has dropped below the level necessary for normal body functions. This can cause you to feel very sick and if not corrected can cause more serious problems. One effect the lack of water has on your body is that it can cause your body to age at a faster rate. How you ask? Your body replicates approximately three billion cells each day. These cells replicate themselves exactly as they are whether or not they are healthy. Your cells convert water to what is called *organized* water. They use this water to communicate within the cell. Without the proper amount of water available for this function the cell will become less than perfect. This is the beginning of an accelerated deteriorative process for your body. One of your organs impacted early in this process is your liver. As your liver begins to function at less than optimum it will fail to filter out all of the toxins, further speeding up the deterioration process. Not to worry! You can repair damaged cells by drinking plenty of water, getting the right nutrients, and taking the proper

supplements. Within six months your body will replicate enough healthy cells to actually begin to *reverse* the effects of ageing. You will not only feel younger but look younger too!

We have all been told to drink at least eight 8oz glasses of water a day depending on your activity level. This is what is needed in order prevent heat exhaustion, dehydration, and to slow down the aging process. So be smart this summer and have fun and be safe!

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