

Drink Away the Pounds

You've probably heard the advice a million times: Drink eight glass of water a day. But this is just a guideline. If you eat a lot of fruit, vegetables, and dairy, and are in good shape, you probably don't need that much water. On the other hand, if you're overweight or tend to get most of your calories from salty, processed food, sticking to those 8 daily glasses could actually help to augment your weight loss. Here's how.

1. It could lower your BMI A 2010 study review in *Nutrition Today* linked H₂O intake with lowered body mass index. Turns out most guys tend to drink the same amount of liquid each day. So if you make an effort to drink water, you will end up drinking fewer calorie-laden beverages.

2. You'll burn more fat The review also noted that you can burn up to 40% more fat after drinking water compared with a higher-calorie beverage. Drinking water with a meal also helps to bring insulin levels back to normal two hours with calories.

3. It'll help you eat less Drinking 400 ml of water before a meal can significantly cut the calories you wolf down. A 12-week study found that those who drank two glasses of water before every meal ate less and lost 44% more weight compared with the control group's calorie-laden drinks.

4. It'll fight hangovers Staying hydrated is the best way not to feel lousy the day after a party. Drink at least a couple of glasses of water in the hours leading up to your event, then do a one-to-one match of water to alcohol once you start imbibing.

5. It'll improve your game Even a couple hours of touch football on the beach in summer can put you at risk for dehydration and slow you down. A 2011 study found that sweating away just 2% of your body's water content drastically affects athletic performance.

A Good Night's Sleep Improves Food Choices

To eat wisely tomorrow, get a good night's sleep tonight. Two studies presented at the annual meeting of the Associated Professional Sleep Societies report that sleep-deprived subjects show brain changes that affect their decision-making and predispose them to poor dietary choices. Both were crossover studies, in which 23 and 25 healthy subjects were tested after being shorted on sleep and after sleeping normally; both used functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) to study brain activity. The first study compared sleeping normally with staying up all night, with snacks at 2:30 a.m. and breakfast at 8:30 a.m. Participants were then quizzed about food desires and given fMRI scans. When subjects were well-rested, the scans showed greater frontal-lobe activity in areas indicative of decision making. The second study compared six days of sleep deprivation with normal sleep. When sleep deprived, subjects responded to fatty, sugary foods with brain activity much like that in studies of the obese.

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