

# Understanding Sweat Loss

## Athlete Scenerio

*When training with my rowing team, we spend several hours on the water, often during the warmest part of the day with limited opportunities to drink fluid. I tend to sweat more than my teammates and I notice salt caked on my skin and clothing. Lately, I have been very tired after practice. Could I be eating too much salt or not drinking enough water? Should I do something during practice to have more energy and perform better?*

## Sweat Loss Considerations

- Sweat rate during exercise is individual and is influenced by genetics, gender, age, environmental temperature, exercise intensity, fitness, and acclimatization.
- Evaporation of sweat during exercise cools the body. Dehydration inhibits the body's ability to cool itself during exercise. Consuming fluid replaces sweat loss and aids cooling.
- Gauge your hydration status by monitoring urine color and volume. Urine that is dark in color and low in volume indicates dehydration; light yellow urine is ideal.
- Sodium helps your body retain fluid and stimulates thirst.

## Strategies for Managing Sweat Loss

- To perform at your best, avoid losing more than 2% of your body weight during exercise.
- Determine your individual fluid needs by calculating your body weight loss and sweat rate under different training conditions.
- When opportunities to replace fluid loss are limited, follow an individualized hydration plan surrounding exercise.
- If your sweat is salty and contains a high concentration of sodium, consume sodium (endurance-specific sports drinks or other sodium sources) during exercise; eat salty foods before and after prolonged (>2 hours) exercise.

Written by SCAN registered dietitians (RDs). The key to optimal meal planning for athletes is individualization. For personalized nutrition plans contact a SCAN sports dietitian or Board Certified Specialist in Sports Dietetics (CSSD) by accessing "Find a SCAN Dietitian" at [www.scandpg.org](http://www.scandpg.org) | 800.249.2875.



## Tips to Take With You

1. Fluid needs are highly individualized; avoid comparing your sweat and hydration patterns with teammates.
2. Replace fluid and electrolytes according to a schedule rather than relying on thirst.
3. A sports dietitian can help you calculate your sweat rate and develop a personalized hydration schedule that meets your needs.

## Contact SCAN

Web site: [www.scandpg.org](http://www.scandpg.org)

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