

What You Should Know About Alcohol and Exercise

Drinking alcohol after exercise can cause serious dehydration.

Why? Mild dehydration after exercise is very common, and alcohol acts as a diuretic. Diuretics cause a greater loss of fluid and electrolytes than they contain. The fluid you drink in alcohol will not replace normal fluids and will actually result in greater fluid losses. It can take several hours to fully rehydrate after a workout.

If you choose to drink after exercise, make sure you have first fully rehydrated with water or sports drinks. Wait 4 to 6 hours before drinking alcohol.

Alcohol can affect how your body regulates temperature.

Why? Alcohol dilates blood vessels. In cold weather, alcohol can cause heat loss and lead to hypothermia. In hot weather, alcohol increases sweating and can cause dehydration. It is hard to correctly perceive your temperature as your intoxication increases.

Dress for the weather, especially when it's cold outside.

Alcohol increases exercise-related fatigue.

Why? Alcohol increases lactic acid production. Alcohol slows the body's ability to turn food into energy.

Replenish your body after exercise with calories from nutrient-rich foods such as nuts and dried fruit, rather than the calories from alcohol.