

Hydration Basics for Marching Arts*

Fueling Athletes and the Arts

Athlete Scenario

As a marching arts member, it's difficult to stay hydrated during all day summer practices. I must balance drinking enough with leaving practice for a distant bathroom. I forget to drink when I practice in air conditioning. Weather is unpredictable for performances, and practice gear is different than performing in full uniform. How can I make sure that I am staying properly hydrated?

Nutrition Goal for Optimal Performance

Lower the risk of heat related illness by staying well-hydrated.

Challenges for Hydration

Carrying performance tools, moving from place to place, and performing in varied settings make hydration for the marching arts very difficult. Ask yourself these questions to help you personalize your hydration methods:

- **How active will I be?** As your activity level increases, you generate more heat which increases water needs. Consider your instrument's weight, your speed of movement, and ratio of time spent moving to standing in place.
- **What is the weather?** A combination of sun, heat, and humidity can increase your risk for dehydration. It is easy to forget to drink water while practicing in air-conditioned settings, but you need to stay hydrated for a return to the field. Hydration is important on cold days too, because breathing cold, dry air increases fluid loss.
- **What is my body type?** There is a higher incidence of heat stroke for young adults with larger bodies. Pay attention if you are at a lower weight and prone to heat exhaustion as well. Know your body type and whether you may need more fluids than others.

*Marching Arts: marching band, drum corps, color guard, winter guard, and indoor percussion



Challenges for Hydration (continued)

- **What will I be wearing?** Uniform fabrics can wick away sweat (polypropylene or wool), retain heat (polyester), and provide insulation from the cold (wool). Hats can keep you warm on cold days. Many groups require hats in the summer to reduce sun exposure, however, they can prevent cooling on a hot day.
- **Will water be provided?** Plan ahead for your training and performance environment. Always bring your own water bottle, and before performances begin, keep an eye out for water and break stations.

Hydration Strategies

- Drink at least 8 ounces of fluids every time you eat.
- Start each practice or performance well-hydrated (monitor your urine color and aim for pale yellow). For situations with increased sweating (warmer weather or vigorous activity) drink 16–24 ounces of water and alternate with an electrolyte beverage (sports drink or electrolyte tablets in water) 1–2 hours before performance.
- Try to drink 8–16 ounces of fluids (water/electrolyte beverages) every 30 minutes. You can use your hydration breaks as bathroom breaks too. Take advantage of times when you are less active in practice to drink more fluids.

Personalizing Hydration Needs

Pay attention to how much you sweat in different situations and make adjustments. Use all the data you have about your personal sweat rate to plan for hydrating properly for practice, performances, and competitions.

Matching fluid intake and sweat loss: Weigh yourself before and after practice. If you...	Typical fluid intake during activity: 12-16 ounces of water or electrolyte beverage every 30 minutes
Lose > 1 lb...	drink 16-24 ounces of fluid for every pound lost.
Lose ≤ 1 lb...	continue to drink normally to thirst.
Gain weight...	decrease fluid intake during activity.
Are a heavy sweater or have salty white deposits on your uniform...	use sports drink or electrolyte tablets to replace salt, potassium, and other minerals lost in sweat.



Tips to Take With You

- Make a hydration plan for each practice and performance. Know how much you usually sweat, and where you will get fluids. Consider consulting with a sports registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN) to customize your plan.
- It is a good practice to add more hydrating foods (foods with higher water content) to your daily intake such as watermelons, strawberries, oranges, grapefruit and bell peppers.
- Consume sports drinks or salty snacks for days before an event when you are sweating a lot.
- Alcoholic beverages interfere with hydration and body temperature regulation, hurt performance, and increase injury risk.

Contact SCAN:
www.scandpg.org
800-249-2875

Reviewed by SCAN's Athlete and the Arts Nutrition Team, Drum Corps International, and Athletes and the Arts. The key to optimal meal planning is individualization. For personalized nutrition plans contact a SCAN sports dietitian or Board Certified Specialist in Sports Dietetics (CSSD) by accessing "Find a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist" at findanrd.eatright.org.