**The Dehydration Energy Drain**

Suffering with low energy? Before you take up an intense new training regime or completely overhaul your diet, consider another much simpler solution: dehydration.

Dehydration can have profound impacts on your mood, your energy and your general health. When you consider that the water makes up 85% of our brain, 80% of our blood and 70% of our lean mass, it’s easy to see why this is the case. Tragically though, a whopping 75% of Americans are chronically dehydrated and are running at sub-par performance as a result.

**How Dehydration Impacts Energy**

So how precisely does dehydration affect your energy levels?

There are a great number of ways. Having a lack of water can impact on your electrolyte balance for instance, leading to aching muscles and cramps. At the same time, it can reduce the production and usage of enzymes including digestive enzymes. Headaches are also common and especially in the morning. Inflammation increases leading to joint pain. Your eyes and throat can also feel scratchy and generally you end up lethargic, grumpy and low.

If we look at the effects of acute dehydration these include:

* Dry mouth and swollen tongue
* Weakness of the muscles
* Dizziness
* Heart palpitations
* Fainting
* Confusion
* Lack of sweat
* Sluggishness

When you have ‘low level’ dehydration on a chronic basis, you simply experience all these same symptoms but to a slightly lesser extent.

**How to Combat Dehydration**

So what can you do to combat dehydration?

One obvious tip is to keep water around and to drink regularly. A good aim is to drink about 7 glasses of water a day but really the best guide is to listen to your body.

Another tip is to *avoid* things that dehydrate you. Alcohol dehydrates you for instance, as does caffeine. The reason for this is that both are diuretics, causing you to lose almost as much fluid as you gain.

Something else that can help and that many people don’t at first consider, is that we actually get the *majority* of our hydration from food. Eating more frequently then can help you to stay hydrated too – and especially if you pick things like oranges which are very juicy.

You can also consider using certain supplements and special foods to improve your hydration further. Some runners for instance will use chia seeds which have the ability to absorb and hold water, then release it slowly over time to keep you constantly hydrated.