

The A, B, C, D, and E's of Your Summer Workout

By: Dr. Scott Howitt

Running, walking, cycling, as well as playing soccer and ultimate frisbee are excellent ways to keep up your cardiovascular fitness during the summer. However, it is important to make some alterations to your exercise routine to ensure your well being and safety during these warmer months. In order to enjoy the increased activity and outdoor exposure the summer brings, I recommend ten simple steps for safe and comfortable exercise during the heat of June, July, and August.

- 1 Avoid- Don't train during the hottest times of the day. Take advantage of the extra daylight and go for a run first thing in the morning, or schedule your game for early in the evening.
- 2 Beware – Don't exercise if the apparent temperature is too high. An apparent temperature (a combination of temperature and humidity) above 37 degrees celsius is considered dangerous to attempt any outdoor activity. It's wise to know the differences between the most common illnesses – put a box insert of conditions
- 3 Consume – Cold fluids can have an immediate cooling effect and are more effective than warm liquids at replacing lost fluids. Thirty minutes before exercise: drink eight ounces of water. During exercise: drink three to six ounces every 15 minutes. After exercise: drink eight ounces of water in the 30 minutes following.
- 4 Dress – Wear light-weight, loose fitting clothing, light coloured clothing made with the new generation of fabrics designed to wick away sweat, such as Dri-Fit. Don't forget to have light socks that will also keep sweat away, and feet dry. Consider wearing a hat that you can dunk in cold water.
- 5 Ease into it – Give yourself a couple of weeks to get started. In the first two weeks of working out in the scorching heat, your body acclimatizes, actually boosting your capacity to sweat. Back off intensity levels as you allow the body ten to 14 days to acclimate itself to the hot weather.
- 6 Abstain- Limit your intake of alcohol, coffee, tea, and colas when you exercise. These beverages are very dehydrating. Given you are already losing fluid by sweating, these types of drinks create more stress for the body and can cause an overheating of the system.
- 7 Breath – The fresh air of outside is not always as clean and pure as it should be. On days when the ozone levels are high (greater than 0.08 ppm), children and seniors should limit outdoor activities that require prolonged deep breathing. Tune in to your local weather network for information on ozone levels and other airborne allergens that can compromise breathing.
- 8 Cover yourself - Wear waterproof UVB/UVA sun protection of at least SPF 30 - don't forget the lips, nose, and ears. Apply a generous amount every two hours. Wear sunglasses with UV protection to reduce sun glare and protect your eyes.
- 9 DEET it – If you are venturing into grassy areas, or the woods use a DEET-based bug repellent to protect against mosquitoes. DEET (N,N-diethyl-m-toluamide) based repellents have been shown to last longer and prevent bites better than natural products such as citronella. With the West Nile virus lurking, it's important to protect yourself.
- 10 Exercise smarter – If you suspect you are experiencing any of the symptoms of Hyperthermia, STOP! Find a cool place and replenish fluids. Be especially careful

when training in hot weather if you're obese, unfit, dehydrated or have a previous history of a heat-related illness. If you just can't handle the heat, stick to the air-conditioned gym or the local swimming pool.

Hyperthermia: Put simply this means 'too much heat'. It is a condition that affects the human body on three levels, see below. To avoid a possible heat related injury; the main concern is fluid replenishment and maintaining adequate hydration.

Heat Cramps: Cramps or muscle tightness experienced in dominant muscles such as calves and abdominals.

Heat Exhaustion: Characterized by sweating profusely, but your skin will appear cool and clammy. Body temperatures will still be at normal levels.

Heat Stroke: At this point the skin will turn dry and red. Sweating will stop as the body tries to conserve water. Core body temperatures of 105 degrees are possible, and this can be life threatening if left unchecked. Loss of consciousness is possible.