



7-DAY HYDRATION CHALLENGE

A one-week plan to help you stay hydrated and healthy.

No doubt you've heard that it's important to stay hydrated, but chances are you're not drinking enough. "Fluid is important for every cell and function in the body," says Pittsburgh-based sports dietitian Leslie Bonci, owner of Active Eating Advice. And being dehydrated can cause headaches, fatigue and irritability, plus potentially increase your hunger. So boost your hydration with our simple seven-day challenge.

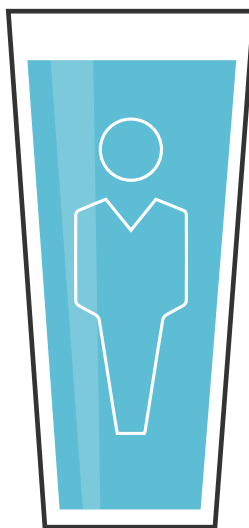


DAY 1

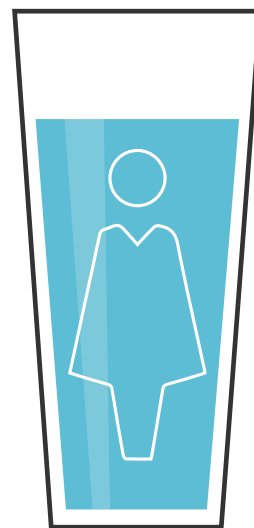
GOAL: Figure out how much you should be drinking every day.

Think that eight glasses of water a day is enough? Think again. “Women need 70 to 90 ounces of liquid a day, while men need 100 to 125 ounces,” says Bonci. That puts eight glasses (64 ounces) at the low end of the hydration spectrum. To get a better idea of your needs, use the **Mindful Hydration Calculator**. If you exercise, you’ll need to increase that total. The general rule is to drink four to eight ounces of liquid for every 20 minutes you exercise.

100–125 oz.



70–90 oz.



GOAL: Start tracking it.

“The most important thing to do is keep score with your pour,” says Bonci. By that she means you should track your fluid intake—otherwise you won’t know if you’ve hit your target. Try any of these methods to see which approach works best for you.



Download our one-week hydration challenge chart

For every eight ounces you drink, check off a glass.

By the end of the week, you’ll see if you’ve met your goal.



Drink from a marked water bottle

Use a refillable bottle with ounce markings and add your own time goals, like drinking eight ounces by 9 a.m., for example.



Get an app

Most apps allow you to log what and how much you drink, as well as set alarms to remind you when to drink. Waterlogged, Fitbit, iHydrate or Hydro Coach can get you started.

GOAL: Reach for water first.

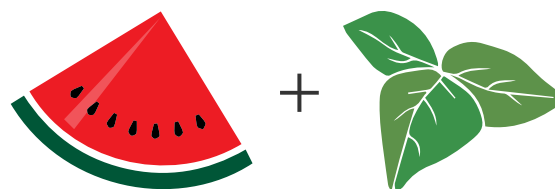
Simple and calorie-free, water quenches your thirst like no other drink. But if plain water isn't your thing, don't worry. Try sparkling water or jazz up your H₂O with sliced ginger, lemon, or mint leaves or other herbs, says Bonci. Test out the flavor combinations below, then experiment with your favorite ingredients.

MAKE YOUR OWN FLAVORED WATER

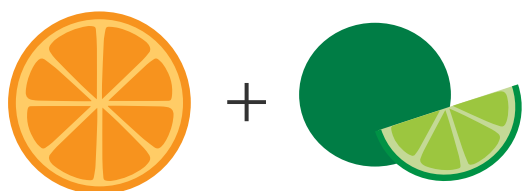
Prepare any of the combinations here or create your own blend. Add the ingredients to a two-quart pitcher and fill with water. Chill in the refrigerator overnight, then strain to remove the solids.



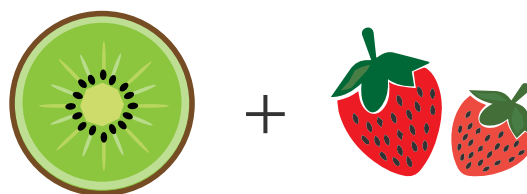
½ English cucumber, sliced
½ cup fresh mint leaves



4 cups cubed watermelon
¼ cup fresh basil leaves



1 cup sliced oranges
1 cup sliced limes



1 cup sliced kiwis
1 cup sliced strawberries

GOAL: Add in the right calorie-containing beverages—and weed out the wrong ones.

Water isn't your only choice, but avoid beverages that pack calories without beneficial nutrients. Here's what to drink—and what to pour down the drain.



DRINK UP

- Fat-free milk or unsweetened soymilk
- Fruit smoothies
- Fruit juice
- Unsweetened coffee or tea



SKIP IT

- Flavored coffee drinks
- Sports drinks
- Sodas and sweetened waters
- Alcohol

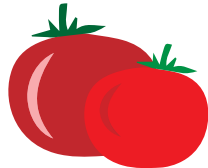
DAY
5

GOAL: Don't just drink your water. Eat it too.

Water-rich fruits and vegetables can play a big role in helping you meet your hydration needs, says Bonci. The following produce consists mostly of water while also providing key vitamins, antioxidants and heart-healthy fiber.



 **96%**
Lettuce



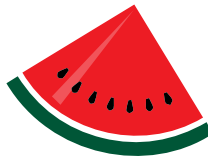
 **95%**
Tomatoes



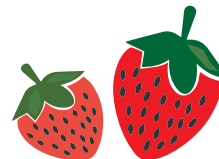
 **94%**
Bell peppers



 **93%**
Asparagus



 **92%**
Watermelon



 **91%**
Strawberries

DAY 6

GOAL: Drink throughout the day—not just at meals.

It's important to be consistent with fluid all day long so you don't have to play catch-up at night," says Bonci. Use these tips to keep the drinks flowing.



Start (and end) your day right.

Have a glass of liquid when you wake up and about an hour before bed.



Drink on a schedule.

Set an alarm on your phone to remind you throughout the day that it's time to drink.



Keep your glass filled.

When you finish a glass or bottle of water, refill it right away.

GOAL: Don't fall back on bad habits.

Congratulations! You've made it through your first week of healthy hydration habits. Now the key is to avoid reverting to your old routine. Keep yourself on track with these helpful tips.



Change up your plate. At mealtime, fill half of your plate with fruits and veggies to help increase your water intake.



Drink before you eat. Sometimes people mistake dehydration for hunger. If you feel hungry, first drink a glass of water and wait 10 to 20 minutes. Still sensing actual hunger pangs? Then go ahead and eat.



Get the gear. Do you need a fancy water bottle to drink more? No, but getting one you really like might give you an extra boost of motivation to drink up.