



# Hydration and Fluids for Gaelic Games



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## Fluids — Hydration is Key

During training and games, players naturally generate heat leading to a rise in body temperature. A rise in body temperature can be both detrimental to performance but also contribute to fatigue. Our bodies attempt to compensate for this by sweating.

When players do not consume enough fluids during training and games to compensate for these sweat losses, dehydration can quickly occur.

As little as 2% of body weight has been shown to affect performance—in a 13.5 stone player, 2% is as little as 3.75lbs. This may not sound much but in a single training session or game a player can easily lose up to 4% of their body weight.

Many players do not deal adequately with dehydration, and in fact never fully rehydrate after training or a game. This leads to players taking part in further training sessions already in a dehydrated state exposing themselves to a greater risk of injury.

In response to dehydration, you will feel thirsty, however, thirst is not a good indication of dehydration. By the time you feel thirsty you are already dehydrated.

### Establishing Hydration Status

Knowing how much fluids have been lost is important in rehydrating the body. There are a couple of easy ways of monitoring hydration levels. Using these in combination will give a simple and accurate method of monitoring hydration status:

Weigh players before and after training and games. Wearing as little clothing as possible — the difference will be weight lost due to sweating.

Use a Urine Colour Chart to monitor the colour of your urine. Generally, the darker the urine, and the less you urinate, the more dehydrated you are.

Thirst — the absence of thirst does not mean that you are not dehydrated. However, if you are already thirsty then you are already dehydrated and need to drink.

Complete a hydration table such as the one below:

### Rehydrating

For each kg of weight lost through sweat replace with 1.5 litres of fluids.

Remember that along with water, electrolytes are also lost through sweat — water alone will not replace these electrolytes.

Sports drinks contain both carbohydrate for energy and electrolytes. Ensure that your sports drink has a carbohydrate level of 6 — 8%.

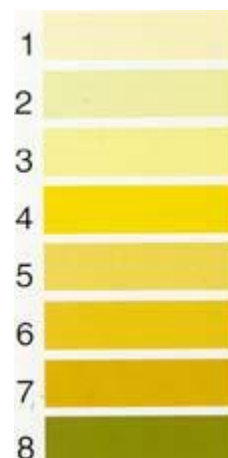
To help reduce the muscular damage caused by training and games it is best if you consume a source of protein along with your sports drink. Some sports drinks contain a source of protein, however if yours does not, try to consume something light prior to your post-training meal such as a chicken or turkey sandwich.

If you do not have access to sports drinks, your post exercise meal can help replace lost electrolytes.

An easy way to make your own sports drink is to combine:

200ml of orange squash (concentrated orange)  
1 litre of water  
A pinch of salt (1g)

Mix all the ingredients together and keep chilled — drinks are absorbed more quickly if they are cool rather than ice cold.



Urine Colour Chart used to estimate hydration status. The target is to achieve colours 1, 2 or 3. Colours 4 and 5 suggest dehydration. Colours 6, 7 and 8 suggest severe dehydration.

### Combating Dehydration

- Monitor hydration status using WTU table
- Aim to drink 2 litres of fluids each day as part of your regular routine
- Drink additional fluids before, during and after training and games
- Aim to drink 200 — 500ml of fluid 2 hours prior to training or games — remember many players begin training already dehydrated
- Try to sip 125 — 250ml every 15 — 20 minutes of exercise to top up fluid levels
- Begin to replace any fluid lost during training or games immediately afterwards by consuming at least 500ml of fluids.
- The presence of electrolytes such as sodium and potassium will aid rehydration
- Where possible also include a source of protein with your drink. If your sports drink does not contain protein, consume a chicken or turkey sandwich.
- To completely rehydrate, consume 150% of the amount of fluids lost—for each 1kg lost, consume 1.5 litres of fluids
- Avoid alcohol and caffeine drinks until you have completely rehydrated as these increase urine output

## Hydration Log

### Record of Body Weight, Urine Colour and Thirst

Loss of >1% of Body Weight or Urine Colour Number 4 — 8 or Persistent Thirst indicates possible dehydration

If any 2 of these occur dehydration is likely

If all 3 occur, dehydration is very likely

Date	Weight Yesterday Morning	Weight This Morning	Weight Change	Thirsty? (Yes or No)	Urine Colour	Comments

Ref: Sports Science Exchange 97. Volume 18 (2005) Number 2 Gatorade Sports Science Institute <http://www.gssiweb.org>

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