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[HOT HOT HOT! Tips for staying cool while playing sports](#)

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Found this article about staying cool in the summer. With temperatures pushing 100 degrees this week, it seems fitting to discuss the dangers of the heat.

Tips for staying cool when exercising in the summer heat



Exercise in the early morning or late evening hours. The temperature is the coolest at this time. Avoid exercising midday because it's the hottest part of the day. © iStockphoto.com/Jim Jurica

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It's time to take your winter treadmill routine outdoors to the parks. The days are long and warm. The trails radiate heat. Summer is here and you're prepared to sweat! But before you lace up your running shoes, read these eight tips to keep your cool.

Safety tips

Heat-related illness is serious. But that doesn't mean you're doomed to a summer spent exercising in the air-conditioned gym. Learn these safety tips before you step out in the sun:

1. **Exercise in the early morning or late evening hours.** The temperature is the coolest at this time. Avoid exercising midday because it's the hottest part of the day.
2. **Drink up!** Do not wait until you are thirsty to start hydrating. Drink two to four glasses of water each hour. If you are exercising for an extended period of time, drink a sports beverage to replace the salt and minerals you lose through sweat. If you are on diuretics or a low-salt or fluid-restricted diet, talk to your doctor first about your specific fluid needs.
3. **Wear lightweight, loose-fitting clothing.** Consider dressing in clothes made with moisture-wicking fabric.
4. **Protect yourself from the sun.** Wear a hat, sunglasses and sunscreen with an SPF 15 or higher. Try to exercise in the shade. Play tennis on a court shaded by the trees or take a walk in a wooded park.
5. **Rest early and often.** Take breaks in shady areas.
6. **Gradually get used to the heat.** It takes seven to 10 days for your body to adapt to the change in temperature. Start by exercising for short time, at a low intensity. Save long, hard workouts until after you're acclimated to the summer air.
7. **Mind the weather.** Do not exercise on the hottest days. Keep an eye on the heat index. The heat index is a calculation of the temperature and humidity. It measures "how hot it really feels" outside:
 - Heat index 80 to 90 degrees: fatigue during exercise is possible. Heat exhaustion is a possibility even at these temperatures.
 - Heat index of 90 to 105 degrees: heat cramps and heat exhaustion or heat stroke are possible.
 - Heat index of 105 or higher: heat exhaustion is likely and heat stroke is possible.

Be cautious when the heat index gets above 80 degrees. Consider working out indoors. Walk around a shopping mall or do a workout DVD in your air-conditioned home.

1. **Stop if you don't feel well.** If you have any of the warning signs of heat-related illness, stop your workout right away.

How the heat hurts you

We each have our own personal air-conditioning system inside our bodies. When we get hot, we sweat. Perspiration is our body's way of cooling off. As sweat evaporates, our body releases heat. But when you get extremely hot, sweat doesn't evaporate. The body then has to work extra hard to keep its temperature down. In time, our body will be unable to rid itself of the excess heat. This leads to a high body temperature and heat-related illness.

Recognize warning signs

The heat can take its toll on your body and make you sick. Heat-related illness can even be life-threatening. Learn how to spot signals of heat-related illness. They range from cramps to muscle spasms due to lost nutrients to more serious signs like dizziness or fainting.

Heat exhaustion is a warning sign that your body cannot keep itself cool. **Stop exercising right away.** Heat exhaustion is dangerous and may lead to heat stroke. Symptoms include:

- Weakness
- Dizziness
- Confusion or disorientation
- Headache
- Cramps
- Nausea or vomiting

- Dehydration

Heat stroke is life-threatening. **Stop exercising right away and call 9-1-1** for any of the following symptoms:

- Unusual behavior, hallucinations or confusion
- Fainting
- Seizures
- Fever of 104 degrees F or greater

Seek immediate medical attention if the person:

- Is vomiting and unable to keep fluids down
- Has dizziness or lightheadedness
- Looks very ill or is not getting better

Heat illness is more likely to occur in people who

- Are 65 or older
- Have chronic illnesses
- Are pregnant

Always check with your doctor before you take your exercise routine to the great outdoors.

View the original [Tips for staying cool when exercising in the summer heat](#) article on myOptumHealth.com

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