

# TURKEY COUNTRY

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# Beat the HEAT

by Sherry Ballou Hanson

**H**ot weather is coming, and you are gung-ho to fish, camp and canoe. Whatever your plan, you will be subject to the effects of heat.

“This is not a time to set records or impress your friends,” warns Michael Bergeron, Ph.D., executive director of Sanford Sports Science Institute, Sanford School of Medicine at the University of South Dakota.

You can be in control of hydration and intensity during your activity, also the timing and your clothing. Other factors like air temperature, humidity level and air pollution are beyond your control.

## DRINK UP

Dehydration is your biggest concern in any weather, but heat worsens the issue. As Bergeron says, even a well-conditioned and hydrated person can get into trouble. The American College of Sports Medicine recommends drinking 16 to 20 ounces of water at least four hours before exercise. They also advise eight to 12 ounces, 10 to 20 minutes before starting. This plan is if you are well hydrated to begin with, drinking at least eight glasses of water daily. Properly formulated sports drinks with one to eight percent or more carbohydrate concentration are absorbed faster by the body than water and contain electrolytes like potas-

sium and sodium that will replace those lost during extended activity.

“Knowing your sweat rate allows you to calculate how much fluid you should be taking in during exercise,” says Rebecca Stearns, Ph.D., certified athletic trainer and vice president of operations and director of education at the Korey Stringer Institute at the University of Connecticut.

Sweat rate varies greatly between individuals and can range between one to four liters of sweat per hour. It is also affected

by temperature, humidity, what you are wearing and how long you are paddling or hiking. If you want to get really specific, contact the Korey Stringer Institute at [ksi.uconn.edu](http://ksi.uconn.edu) for a metric-based formula, and follow the instructions.

That said, this should not be necessary unless you are participating in elite activities that go on for many hours.

Weighing yourself daily before and after exercise is one simple way to check hydration. More than one percent loss in body weight

indicates dehydration. Another quick way to check hydration level is to monitor the color of your urine. It should run almost clear.

## DURING AND AFTER EXERCISE

During activity, consume three to eight ounces of fluids every 15 to 20 minutes, if your activity goes on for an hour. For longer efforts, choose the sports beverage, but not more than one quart of fluids per hour. Don't forget to replenish afterwards. After checking body weight and the color of urine, drink 20 to 24 fluid ounces of water for every pound lost.

## SLATHER ON THE GOO

“People put on only about half the amount of sunscreen the manufacturer recommends,” said Eric L. Hanson, M.D., dermatologist at Knott Street Dermatology in Portland, Oregon.

Even to reach the coverage level promised by a manufacturer, a person would have to put on one coat over another before getting out the door. Ideally you should wear a base level daily and more when going out in the sun. Wear the floppy hat and long pants. Hanson recommends





a vitamin D supplement, if you do use sunscreen daily.



This is the time to stay well hydrated and take extra breaks.

The same holds true if you fly off to a warmer climate. Do not increase exercise intensity during this acclimation period. You still need to adjust, regardless of how fit you are.

## DRESS FOR SUCCESS

Breathability should be foremost. “The outdoor retail industry has responded by offering a wide variety of products that use the latest technologies in fabrics, materials and manufacturing procedures that offer features, such as moisture-wicking capabilities, UV protection, quick-drying and lighter weight materials,” said Mac McKeever, spokesperson for L.L. Bean outfitters of Freeport Maine. The L.L. Bean line of Tropic Wear includes shirts, shorts, pants (including the zip-off model) and hats that feature all of these benefits.

## WHAT TIME IS IT?

If you get up at 5 a.m. to catch fish for breakfast, you don’t have to worry as much about dehydration as you would if you are on a mountain hike and arriving on the bare granite ledges above the timberline at noon. You might want to wear one of the many portable fluid-replacement systems to maintain hydration.

## HOW LONG AND HOW HARD?

“Your body needs 10 to 14 days to adapt to warmer weather conditions,” advises Stearns.



## COMPLICATING FACTORS

As people get older, their ability to handle hot weather declines. It’s the same if you are diabetic or have health issues, like high blood pressure and heart or lung conditions. Bergeron adds that if you have recently had a gastrointestinal illness (vomiting and diarrhea) or fever, you should significantly limit outdoor activity.

Bad air warning? Postpone your adventure until another day. Always check with your doctor if you have concerns. 🦋

## Understanding heat illnesses

These things can happen if you don’t prepare for your big hunt or fishing trip.

- **Heat cramps** — As opposed to muscle cramps, these are caused by electrolyte loss, usually due to excess sweating. Stop your activity. Consume salty foods and fluids. Gently stretch the cramp. You are done for the day.
- **Heat exhaustion** — This is more serious, warns Rebecca Stearns, Ph.D., certified athletic trainer and vice president of operations and director of education at the Korey Stringer Institute at the University of Connecticut. It is usually due to an imbalance of the blood. Get into the shade or a cool environment if possible, and lie down with legs elevated above heart level. Drink fluids. Cold, wet towels or ice will help. Body temperature is usually 101 to 103 degrees.
- **Heat stroke** — This is potentially fatal and occurs when body temperature rises above 104 degrees. Symptoms of central nervous system dysfunction, such as confusion and combativeness, are common. Call 911, immerse the person in cold water and ice, a cold shower, even a garden hose within 30 minutes. Timing is critical.

