

Hampton Roads Precautions for High Heat and High Humidity Levels

Dehydration increases the heart rate, core temperature and lactate levels while decreasing athletic performance.

It takes 2 weeks to acclimatize to these high temperatures. Athletes need 4 to 7 exercise sessions in the heat for 1 - 4 hours each. It's important to have been training regularly through both winter and spring to maintain fitness.

General Guidelines;

1. Wear light colored, preferably white, cotton open weave clothing.
2. Always wear a hat and sunglasses for daylight rowing.
3. Use sunscreen heavily on all exposed parts and renew every 2 hours.
4. Hydration: Start 2 hours and again 15 minutes before going on the water with a minimum of 500mls of 4% solution. When on the water hydrate frequently at least every 10 minutes.
5. Take 2 x 1 litre bottles of 4 % solution out with you in the boat and have another bottle available when you return to the boathouse.
6. Avoid rowing in the heat of the day - from 10am to 6pm
7. Break up time in air conditioning by going out of doors for short periods BUT sleep in cool or air-conditioned areas at night.
8. Have short sessions on the water. Hydrate while moving and avoid sitting in the sun for extended periods of time. Coxes and coaches are very much at risk while stationary.

Risk Factors for heat induced problems;

1. Obesity
2. Lack of fitness
3. Dehydration
4. Lack of acclimatization
5. Prior history of heat illness

6. Sleep deprivation
7. Medication - especially antidepressants, diuretics, blood pressure medications
8. Stimulants - caffeine, decongestants etc.
9. Alcohol consumption
10. Sweat gland dysfunction
11. Sunburn
12. Upper respiratory illnesses - asthma, allergies

Symptoms and solutions:

1. Heat cramps - take more sodium, stretch, ice massage
2. Heat syncope - dizziness, light headedness, loss of consciousness so lie down, elevate legs.
3. Heat exhaustion - fatigue, inability to continue exercise, chills, vomiting - remove the athlete from heat, cool rapidly with cold water and give them fluids orally
4. HEAT STROKE= MEDICAL EMERGENCY- symptoms are marked core temperature rise, often no sweating or a failing sweat mechanism with moderate to severe mental status impairment. **Call 911.** Immerse or surround the person with ice while awaiting emergency help.