



Heat Stress in Older Adults

Older adults (people aged 65 years and older) are more prone to heat stress than younger people.

Some reasons for this include:

- Older adults do not adjust as well as young people to sudden changes in temperature.
- They are more likely to have a chronic medical condition that changes normal body responses to heat.
- They are more likely to take prescription medicines that impair the body's ability to regulate its temperature or that inhibit perspiration.

Heat Stroke

Heat stroke is the most serious heat-related illness. It occurs when the body becomes unable to control its temperature.

Body temperatures rise to 106°F or higher within 10 to 15 minutes. Heat stroke can cause death or permanent disability if emergency treatment is not provided.

Signs and Symptoms of Heat Stroke

Warning signs vary but may include the following:

- An extremely high body temperature (above 103°F)
- Red, hot and dry skin (no sweating)
- Rapid, strong pulse
- Throbbing headache
- Dizziness
- Nausea

Heat Exhaustion

Heat exhaustion is a milder form of heat-related illness that can develop after several days of exposure to high temperatures and inadequate or unbalanced replacement of fluids.

Signs and Symptoms of Heat Exhaustion

Warning signs vary but may include the following:

- Heavy sweating
- Paleness
- Muscle cramps
- Tiredness or weakness
- Headache
- Nausea or vomiting
- Fainting

What You Can Do to Protect Yourself

You can follow these prevention tips to protect yourself from heat-related stress:

- Drink cool, non-alcoholic beverages
- Take a cool shower
- If possible, seek an air-conditioned environment. If you don't have air conditioning, consider visiting an air-conditioned shopping mall or public library to cool off.
- Wear lightweight clothing
- If possible, remain indoors in the heat of the day
- Do not engage in strenuous activities

What You Can Do to Help Protect Older Adult Relatives and Neighbors

If you have older adult relatives or neighbors, some things you can do to help them protect themselves from heat-related stress:

- Visit older adults at risk at least twice a day and watch them for signs of heat exhaustion or heat stroke.
- Encourage them to increase their fluid intake by drinking cool, nonalcoholic beverages regardless of their activity level.
Warning: If their doctor generally limits the amount of fluid they drink or they are on water pills, they will need to ask their doctor how much they should drink while the weather is hot.
- Take them to air-conditioned locations if they have transportation problems.

What You Can Do for Someone with Heat Stress

If you see any signs of severe heat stress, you may be dealing with a life-threatening emergency. Have someone call for immediate medical assistance while you begin cooling the affected person. Do the following:

- Get the person to a shady area.
- Cool the person rapidly, using whatever methods you can. For example, immerse the person in a tub of cool water or place the person in a cool shower.
- Monitor body temperature and continue cooling efforts until the body temperature drops to 101°–102°F.
- Do not give the person alcohol to drink.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, <https://emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/older-adults-heat.asp>

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Using Sports Psychology to Improve Your Fitness

Fitness is both physical and mental. Even if you're in great shape, you can encounter mental obstacles that can decrease your motivation and stifle your performance. When professional athletes start experiencing these obstacles, they usually seek help from sports psychologists to get a mental edge. But such help isn't just for the pros.

"Mental training is for everyone," says Alan Goldberg, Ph.D., a sports psychologist in Amherst, Mass., and author of six books on sports psychology, including *Sports Slump Busting and This Is Your Brain on Sports*.

Dr. Goldberg recommends the following techniques to increase your fitness motivation and enhance your overall athletic performance.

Tolerate Failure

To become a good athlete or improve at your favorite sport, you should learn how to feel uncomfortable. "You have to get comfortable being inept," Dr. Goldberg says.

You also should be able to tolerate failure and accept it as part of the process of succeeding. "Without failure, you don't learn, and without learning, you don't get better," he says.

Dig for Motivation

You must have an emotionally compelling reason to stick with an exercise program. "Motivation is about having a big enough reason to do something," Dr. Goldberg says.

For serious athletes who train for four to eight years at a time, the motivation might be an Olympic gold medal. Daily, they relate their practice sessions to this ultimate prize. But for others, a compelling reason for working out could be to get into top shape, lose weight or feel better.

Here's a trick: On the days you don't feel like working out, sit down and think about how good you'll feel when you're done. "To stay motivated, the 'why' has to come from the inside," Dr. Goldberg says.

Compete Against Yourself

Another important component of motivation is not comparing yourself with others. For example, if you work out regularly at a gym, channel your competitiveness into the progress you're making, not against the highly fit person working out next to you. The same is true when competing.

Tune out the runners around you when running a race. "A lot of people grow up learning how to judge themselves based on comparisons with others. But in competition, you'll end up feeling bad about yourself," Dr. Goldberg says.

Hold Mental Rehearsals

Make your image vivid enough that you can see, feel and hear it. "The images we have in our minds are the templates for performance," Dr. Goldberg says. If you're trying to master a particular physical feat, such as diving off the high board or perfecting your tennis serve, imagine yourself doing it.

Stay in the Present

In the midst of an activity, it's easy to fall into the trap of concentrating on "the uncontrollables," such as the weather, your opponent, your opponent's record or how you've performed in the past. Instead, stay in the present.

While you're running a marathon, for instance, concentrate on the rhythm of your breathing or your arm swing, not on the length of the race or the other runners.

Plunge Through a Plateau

Plateauing, reaching a stagnant level of fitness or performance, "is part of the process of the pursuit of excellence," Dr. Goldberg says. "But it can become demotivating."

To help yourself stay positive, create a daily victory log, which is a record of what you've done right while training or working out. "A victory log can help you get into the habit of focusing on what you're doing right," Dr. Goldberg says. "Go back and read it when you really need it."

