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COMPRS

Dama's Papers

FIREWORKS AT
BOY'S HARBOR
TOMORROW

ART BY TERRY LEWIS
JULY 16, 2004



Terry Lewis

HEALTH, BEAUTY & FITNESS

Skin deep with Samantha Altea

Hydration Nation

H₂O is a formula consisting of just two letters and one small number. That may seem insignificant, and yet, H₂O – WATER, is one the most important and precious substances we have. Without it, we would surely die. We need water to breath. Literally. Without regular hydration, we'd be poisoned by waste and toxins that our own body produces, but which water helps the kidneys to flush out. Water is vital for digestion; it lubricates our joints and bones, carries oxygen through our blood and regulates our temperature. Wet your brain cells with this fact – because H₂O is necessary for just about everything that we do. Every action we take is controlled by electrical signals, which are sent to our nervous system from our brain. And incidentally, our brain is 75% water, but there's more...our nerves are like a system of "waterways," which enable us to send those electrical signals to our whole body so that we can function. If those waterways get dehydrated, however, the signal becomes distorted. Our energy level dips, we have problems functioning. Basically, we're a mess. But more importantly... for those superficial folk among us, come on now, admit it – without water, we'd look like hell! Our skin would crack and dry out, for starters. Our body is actually made up of about 65-70% water and every part of our being, from our skin to our brain, relies on hydration in order to operate properly and look healthy. Our blood contains more than 80% water, our brain 75%, and as for our liver – it's an incredible 96% water! Take that into consideration and it's a wonder we don't slosh when we walk.

Just in case you haven't gotten the gist of this week's column, here's an update. Take a sip o' the facts, and continue reading, because this week, we're getting wet and wild with H₂O.

We lose about one pint of fluid every day just by simply breathing, never mind in hot, steamy, sweat inducing summer weather...Anybody noticed we're having some hot ones lately? Then add any kind of activity on top of those scorching temps, and we're basically losing water left and right. But don't

worry; unless you're stranded in the Sahara, or don't listen to your body, there's nothing to worry about. So don't sweat it. Just drink up.

If you don't want to encounter poor muscle tone, soreness in joints, or digestive problems, you better suck down some W. A. T. E. R. too. With the proper hydration, your skin will glow, your metabolism will work like clockwork and you'll feel like you're floating on air...or rather, water. The proper intake can even help with maintaining a healthy weight, or losing those extra pounds if needed.

But how much should you drink to maintain a healthy balance, and can you drink too much? Can you become drunk on having too much of a good thing?

For quite some time now there's been a train of thought that suggests eight eight-ounce glasses of water a day is the most health conscious intake.

But recently, researchers, believing that you don't need to drink that amount, have challenged this idea. In fact some suggest cutting it in half. Studies even show that some athletes who drink very large amounts of water in order to keep hydrated during sports can be in danger of becoming water-logged. Commonly referred to, as "water intoxication," or *hyponatremia*, it produces symptoms similar to

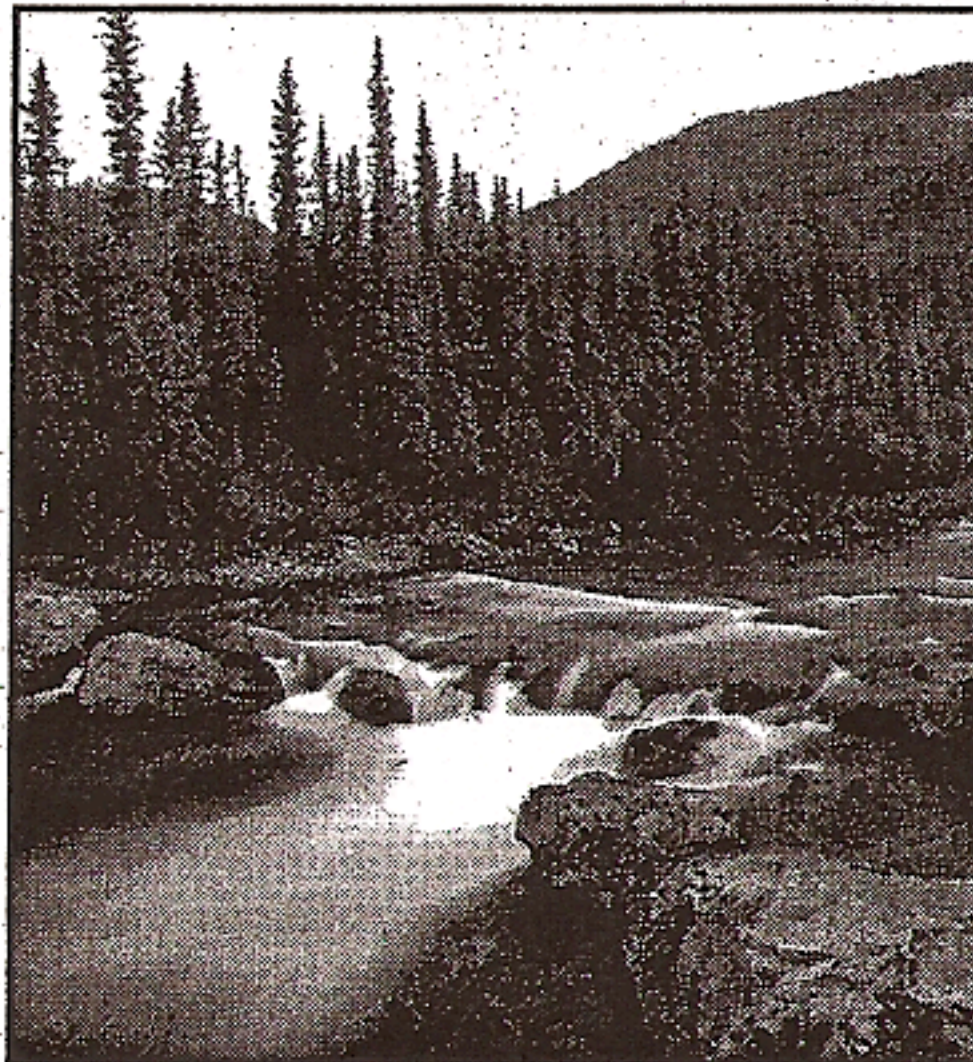
those of dehydration. To be sure you do have a healthy intake of water, listen to your body and drink when you're thirsty. Thirst is the key, and be aware of what you're doing and the environment around you.

It's also worth noting that we ingest water in many forms, not just by sucking down that wet liquid stuff. Water can be found in food, like fruit and vegetables, and many other drinks contain huge amounts of water, like tea. Beware of watered drinks that also contain caffeine, though; they act as a diuretic and so what goes in, pretty quickly comes out.

If you're a big bottled water fan, like so many are these days, you might like to know that while this is a great way to get watered on the go, there are actually no strict regulations to control the quality of bottled water and, while it's clean, it may be just the same as the

H₂O you get from your good old faucet. Naming no names...did anyone say Dasani...many bottled water manufacturers sell plain old simple filtered water for a profit. As for that faucet water...well, the United States boasts one of the cleanest water systems in the world, and this system IS highly regulated.

So drink up. Water works!



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