

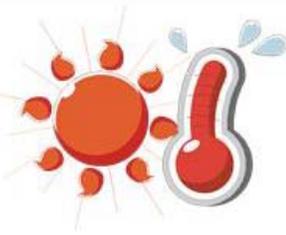
Sports Medicine Monthly

Editor: Darren H. Lunow, M.Ed, ATC, LAT • Athletic Trainer

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HOW TO BEAT THE HEAT

High temperatures and high humidity are nothing new to outdoor athletics in the August heat of Oklahoma. Every fall, thousands of football and softball teams head to the practice field once again, and usually, their athletes have healthy practices and competitions. How? Success in the heat is not an accident or a coincidence. It is a direct result of great planning and preparation on the part of the coaches and medical staff. Therefore, success is not an accident; it is a planned process.



Hydration:

Although beating the heat is so much more than simple fluid intake, it cannot be done without it. To help your athletes, always have them weigh in and weigh out in the same clothing before and after practice. On average, 1lb of weight loss equates to appx 16 - 20oz of fluid that needs to be replenished. Likewise, encourage your athletes to watch their own urine color. As the body moves from hydrated to dehydrated, it excretes less water and the urine color changes from clear and/or slightly yellow to more of an apple juice color.

Build Up:

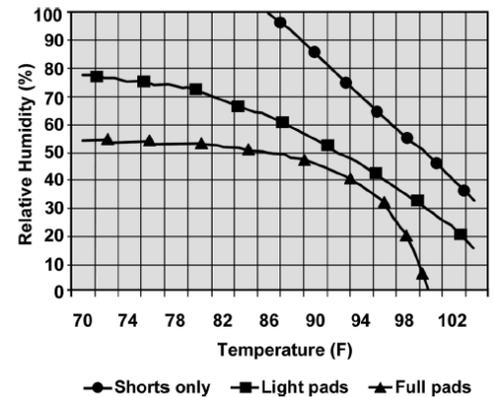
In the instance of football, the athletic association in the State of Oklahoma has 4 limited football practice days this year from August 12th - August 15th before full, unrestricted practices can begin on August 16th. Why? Well, 80% of all severe heat-related illnesses in the nation occur during the first 1-2 weeks of practice in August. If the body is not given a chance to get used to the heat, the dramatic change in environment is statistically a deadly situation. Therefore, it is always best to provide for a 1-2 week heat acclimatization period for your athletes.

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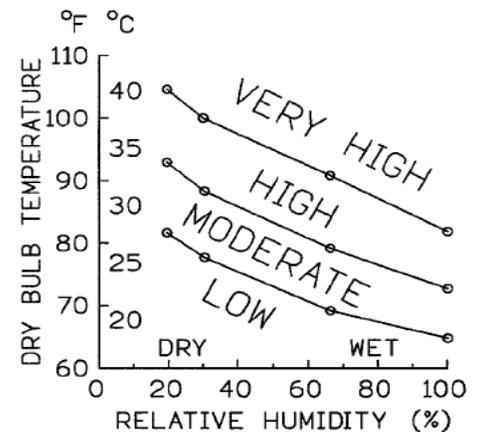
KNOW WHEN IT'S TIME TO LEAVE THE FIELD

If you ask those in sports medicine who deal with the heat the most, both the National Athletic Trainers' Association and the American College of Sports Medicine have published guidelines on necessary activity modifications, equipment modifications, and activity cancellation as a function of the heat and humidity.

So, when should equipment be modified due to air temperature and humidity conditions?

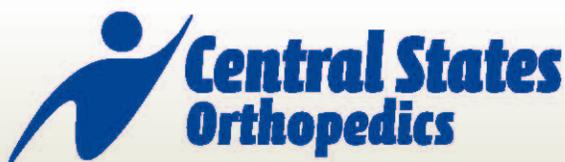


And, when is the risk so high that practices or events should be rescheduled or cancelled?



Planning ahead can prevent a lot of problems.

Know when its time to leave the field.



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Emergency Action Planning: A Lifesaving Step

Consider your average athletic venue:

- *100 Athletes, Coaches, and Support Staff
- *Possibly 500-5,000 spectators, of all ages and of all health conditions present in the stadium
- *Anywhere from 5-20 locked gates or entrances

Now ask yourself these questions:

- *What if an athlete sustains a terrible fracture on the field?
- *What if someone's uncle has a heart attack in the upper sections of your home bleachers?
- *What is the liability to our school/staff if we haven't established a written Emergency Action Plan and an emergency arises?

For many of us, this is where our sports medicine staff steps in and provides direction. However, emergencies also involve campus security/police, local EMS, physical plant staffing (i.e. gates, locks, etc...), coaches, communication tools (i.e. phones, radios, etc...) and administrators. When all these people descend onto a field or an arena in the middle of an emergency, ask yourself the following:

- *Who is to call 911?
- *Who removes fans, family, athletes, and any other unnecessary personal from the scene?
- *How does the ambulance and EMS staff find our facility and how do they get in?
- *What are the criteria for who can and who cannot provide medical care?
- *Where is the nearest AED?
It should be no further than 1 minute away.

In emergency instances where time and appropriate care is critical, there is very little grace for mistakes and delays. Take the opportunity now to get ready. The National Athletic Trainers' Association has a very short read on their website that will help you with such.

<http://www.nata.org/position-statements>

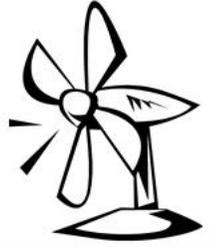
If you have any questions, contact your Athletic Trainer.

Heat cont. from page 1

Cooling:

The Best Prevention & The Best Treatment

At its simplest nature, athletes who are cool don't get a heat illness. Coaches and Athletic Trainers across the state put great thought, planning, and efforts into keeping kids cool during practice. Cooling methods such as mist tents, cold towels, cold sprayers (e.g. new insect sprayer with ice water), cold tubs for full body immersion, and cold drinks are used on a daily basis. Take the research to your favor, if you can keep your athletes colder, you will keep them healthier.



Rest

For the first few weeks of practice when the heat is intense and the athletes are just beginning to adapt, a good ratio of practice time to rest time is 4:1.

Timing

Consider holding practice in the mornings. As you get closer to the start of school, gradually transition the start times to the afternoon.

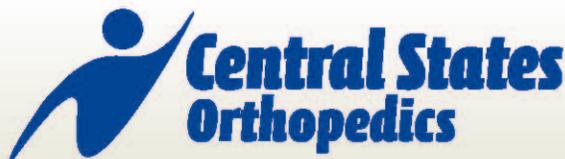
Attention to Detail:

Know the difference between tired/fatigued and an altered neurological status. Athletes who are dizzy, disoriented, clumsy, lightheaded, having tunnel vision, and/or fainting are athletes who need immediate cooling and emergency medical help. Don't wait to call 911.

A Note to the Reader.....

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