

# Hydrate or die

By Jeff Davidson, MBA, CMC

How you manage yourself and your energy level says much about how productive you will be with your time. An energetic you is a more effective you. Unfortunately, all around us messages lure us towards energy-zapping temptations. Energy zappers come in many forms:

■ **Too little sleep.** For proper functioning, you need to get the right amount of sleep on most days. When you are sleep-deprived, you incur changes in brain waves and literally cannot be as effective. Your immune system and mental skills also decline.

■ **Edible energy zappers.** The wrong foods can zap your energy and diminish your productivity. The rise of pizza delivery services, for example, directly contributes to sluggishness. Eating heavy breads, pastas, or meats, especially for lunch, causes a predictable slump as your body diverts its energy to breaking down these heavy foods.

■ **Drinkable energy zappers.** Coffee, to be frank, is a drug. It is highly acidic and too harsh a substance to be pouring into your delicate stomach lining. Coffee may be king of morning beverages and a “pick me up” throughout the day, but it cannot compete with a glass of sparkling, clear water to aid your performance.

My colleague and friend nutritionist David Mainz says that every chemical reaction occurring in your body, including all that goes on during the work day, involves water. The brain itself is 75 percent water. Unfortunately, our thirst mechanisms lag behind our true need for water. Even a two percent reduction in the amount of body water renders a pronounced lack of productivity. A five percent reduction in our body's water supply

results in acute decreased mental functioning. Your productivity at work is directly linked to your degree of hydration.

Eight cups of water a day has been the standard, (see Michael Clark's article, above) but most people wait until their thirst reminds them — a bad strategy to for remaining alert and productive. Drink before you're thirsty. When you work out hard, it takes your body 24 hours to regain the water supply it needs. If you constantly work out, you are constantly in need of more water than you think.

Mainz advises subscribing to the best water delivery service in the area, or buying bottled water. The best choices for bottled water are distilled water or spring water. If you drink tap water, let the faucet run for about thirty seconds to clear out possible sediments.

Air-conditioned rooms usually have some humidity added, but heated rooms are generally dry. You need to drink more when you stay in heated rooms for prolonged periods. Women are at risk for dehydration since they have a lower water content due to a smaller lean muscle mass than men.

Regardless of what you're working on or where, keep water nearby and take several sips when you can. Here's the truth in black and white: it is better to frequent the restroom than to experience even mild dehydration.

Don't wait until you know you're thirsty. Thirst is actually your body's alert that you're dehydrated. So drink up.

*Jeff Davidson is “The Work-Life Balance Expert®,” has written 56 books, and as a professional speaker has made 774 presentations. His websites are [www.BreathingSpace.com](http://www.BreathingSpace.com) and [www.Work-LifeBalance.net](http://www.Work-LifeBalance.net).*