

Nutrition WATER	PHOENIX FIRE DEPARTMENT HEALTH & FITNESS M. P. 1-A03.07 06/2004-R Page 1 of 1
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INTRODUCTION

Water is not only the most important nutrient; it is the most abundant nutrient in the body. The water content of the body is approximately 65 to 75%. Water is essential to a variety of different bodily processes ranging from controlling body temperature to serving as a lubricant in joints.

THIRST MECHANISM

There is a built-in control center in the brain that monitors requirements for water by the body. The signal sent out by this center to indicate need for additional water is known as the thirst mechanism. Unfortunately, by the time the thirst mechanism is activated a significant degree of dehydration has occurred. Therefore, relying on thirst as a reminder to re-hydrate is inadequate and a conscious effort must be made to stay properly hydrated.

RDA

The recommended intake of water per day is 1½ quarts minimum for an individual who is not engaged in exercise or exposed to a warm environment. Because of the nature of emergency scene operations hydration requirements can be much higher. Requirements may increase by a gallon or more per day.

A rule of thumb for appropriate daily water intake is to drink ½ your bodyweight in ounces. For example, a 200 pound person would drink 100 ounces of water daily. For strenuous activity in hot weather, double that water intake.