

Outdoor health tips from the Posse:

# Kick your water up a notch

Last month, we discussed in some detail how much water a person's body requires. Activities, health and geographic location all play a role in how much water you need on a daily basis.

I am a lousy example of water intake. Drinking plain old water for the sake of just drinking it has never been something I can wrap my head around. I rely on my thirst mechanism to kick in when I need to drink. My wife feels differently and is constantly harping on me to hydrate. She has even come up with suggestions to make water more appealing.

Many folks like to add things to their water to make it more enjoyable. Before you ask, I already tried the liquor argument with my wife and she shot the idea down in flames, citing all sorts of health reasons.

As previously discussed, the water you drink is probably 3.8 billion years old. I mention this only for the benefit of those people who pay three bucks for a bottle of water from some ancient spring, located in a secret location known only to members of a near extinct race of people who lived a thousand miles northwest of nowhere. If you think that water actually exists, and has not been through scores of people and animals over time, then by all means, throw a case in your car.

When it comes to buying bottled water, with labels of cold, clear running streams and snow covered mountains, I always get concerned. I would like to envision a person filling those bottles creek side, but it is more likely there is a guy behind the building filling them with a hose.

All of those empty plastic water bottles have become a concern for my environment. Not the environ-



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Tips from the Posse

ment we live in, but the floor of my truck. Those empty bottles accumulate in a hurry.

You can buy flavored water at the grocery store. If money is not a concern, this is a way to add variety to your hydration. Many of these flavored drinks have no calories, carbohydrates or sugars but the price can exceed a buck a bottle. If you are going to drink several of these a day, the price can

add up quickly.

There are also dry packets of flavoring, and even some in a small squirt bottle that you add to your own drinking water. Some of these are also calorie, sugar and carb free so they won't mess up your diet. I use these mostly when I am heading outdoors. A small squirt bottle of flavoring does not take up much space, needs no refrigeration, and lasts quite a few drinks.

An old time favorite is to add several lemon slices to your water. Limes or orange slices work equally well. Other fruits can also add a bit of flavor such as slices of melon, cucumbers or berries. I have even found that sliced pineapple chunks work great. Just let them soak for a few hours before drinking. If possible, let the fruit soak into the water overnight in the refrigerator.

While we are talking about citrus, pick up a bag of clementine oranges at the store. Peel them and break them down into individual slices. Place them on a small cookie sheet and freeze overnight. Next day, use the frozen slices as ice cubes in your water bottle.

While thinking about berries, try smashing a handful of blueberries or raspberries into the bottom of your glass. Top the fruit off with a bit of sparkling water or regular water and chill for an hour before drinking.

Adding a dash of fruit juice like Acai juice blend or unsweetened cranberry juice to your water can



You can get flavored waters to spice things up. (Mark Rackay/Special to the Montrose Daily Press)

add some flavor. You can even try your favorite diet soda in a 50/50 mix with water. The idea is to make the water more palatable and get you to drink it, rather than avoid it.

For those of you with an herb garden, crushed mint leaves or fresh basil leaves taste pretty good in water. You need a handful and water can be added throughout the day to the same leaves.

Many people prefer sparkling water to plain old still water. If plain old water does not work for you, try a naturally effervescent mineral water. There are actually springs that give off naturally carbonated water. Drinking natural carbonated mineral water will also give you a tiny boost of mineral at the same time.

You can buy seltzer water fairly cheap at the grocery store. You can add fresh fruits or juices to your seltzer water in the methods mentioned above, or look for flavored seltzer waters at the store. If you get hooked on the idea of carbonated water, you may consider getting a seltzer maker for your home.

Mix up your drinks throughout

the day. Consider some of the healthier teas available. Herbal, fruit, green, white and red teas are considered healthier than regular or black tea because they do not have all the caffeine. There are hundreds of varieties and flavors around to choose from.

While not my choice, some people like bouillons, broth and consommés as their drink of choice. Look for low-sodium and low fat for the best health benefits. These are best enjoyed hot. Even a cup of clear soup can count toward your daily fluid needs.

If your activity will last more than an hour, you are going to need to bring some carbohydrates into your body. Most of the sport drinks such as Gatorade and Powerade have a pretty good balance of carbohydrates and electrolytes. They do contain a fair amount of sugar, but that can also help fuel your body.

You can make your own sports drinks quite easily at home if you are so inclined. Blend cold water-melon juice, water, ice and a dash of salt. You can dilute just about any juice to a one-to-one ratio

(one part water and one part juice) and it will get you to an average of 7% carbohydrate blend, which is perfect for your activities.

As we discussed previously, fruits and vegetables can count toward your water intake. Spinach and many of the melons are mostly water. A couple days a week, I eat a fruit salad, with lots of melon, for lunch.

My wife tries hard to get me to drink enough water throughout the day, but I still fight it. One thing that helps is to have a water bottle close by as a reminder. I forget it in the truck and can go a whole day without taking a pull on it. Then I am really in the doghouse when I get home and forget my water bottle somewhere.

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