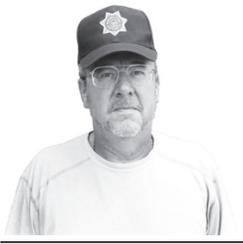


# Too much water



## Tips from the Posse

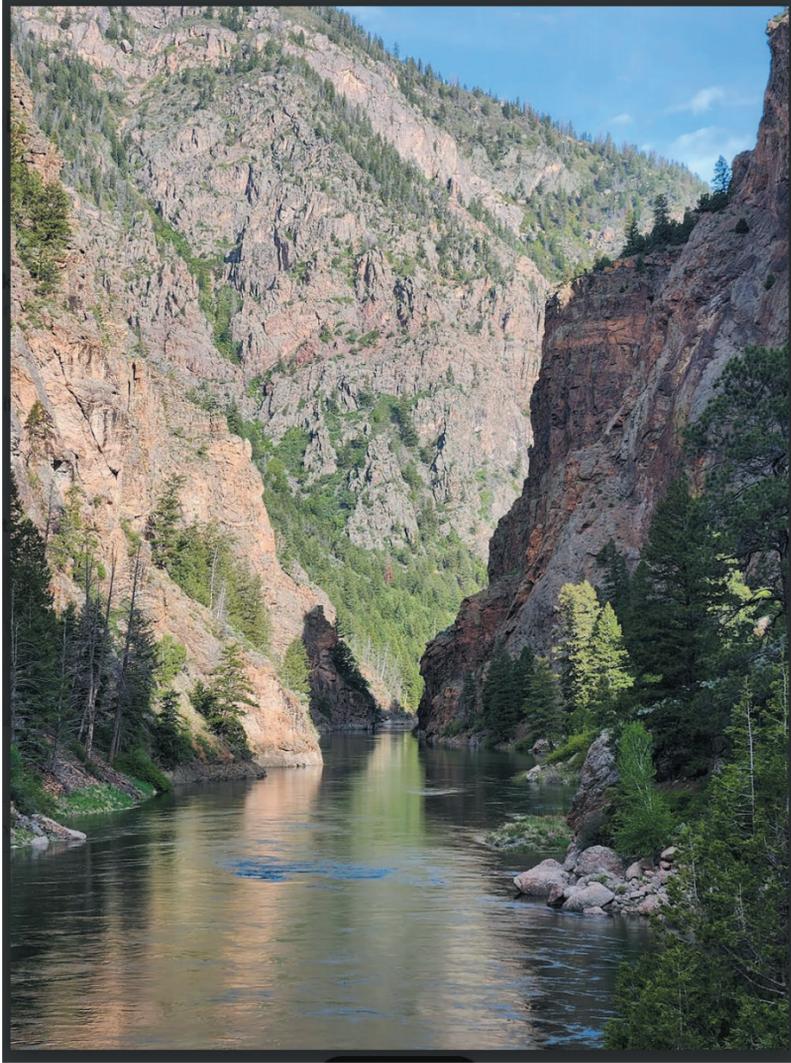
By Mark Rackay

I am not a believer of the old eight glasses of water a day theory. I don't drink soda or energy drinks. I drink coffee, water, and the occasional adult beverage, man's best friend. Basically, I drink water when I am thirsty, not because I need extra trips to the sandbox.

My wife of many years follows the "drink 'til you float" school of thought. She places a mug of water on the counter so that every time I pass, I am to drink some. I will walk by, stop, and pour half the mug out, and continue walking. She is happy that the mug is going down, and I am happy I don't have to run to the outhouse every 30 minutes. Marital bliss established.

As strange as it may seem, there is such a thing as having too much water in your body. It doesn't happen very often. It is much more common to have too little water, or dehydration. Overhydration is sometimes called water intoxication or water poisoning, and it happens when you have too much water in your body.

Healthy people, without any serious underlying medical conditions usually have nothing to worry about. The kidneys are a remarkable organ, adjusting automatically to the increase in water and emptying it out as urine. The kidneys regulate how much water the body must retain to remain healthy and get



It is difficult to think there is such a thing as too much water, but there is when it comes to drinking it. (Courtesy photo)

rid of the excess.

Some people can become water intoxicated easier than others. Over watering can cause a serious imbalance of the electrolytes in your body, such as sodium, calcium, and potassium. These electrolytes are what keep the old heart and brain functioning properly. You dilute the proper electrolyte level and body function suffers.

If you have a medical condition that causes you to retain fluids, like a heart or liver condition, you are at risk of overhydration. There are medications that affect how your kidneys handle fluids, and if you are on one of them, you

may have an increased risk.

Over drinking can be dangerous in some cases and can even send you to paradise a bit ahead of schedule. The greatest risk is a condition called hyponatremia, where the sodium in your blood falls too low. Drinking too much water dilutes the sodium level in the body.

A healthy and athletic person that takes part in an extended and vigorous workout, can be at a greater risk. Intense and prolonged activity, such as a marathon run causes you to lose sodium levels in your body very quickly through sweating. When

the person drinks straight water, without electrolytes, the sodium levels drop, resulting in a state called exercise related hyponatremia.

People who try to lose weight through diet and exercise are often afraid to drink a sports drink after or during a workout, because of the calories and additional carbohydrates. These folks opt for just plain water and can be at risk for symptoms of overhydration.

Common symptoms of hyponatremia can be confused with heat exhaustion. These include dizziness, nausea, vomiting, and a headache. Most

often, the milder symptoms appear, like a loss of energy and muscle cramps.

If the hyponatremia onset happens quickly, severe symptoms can appear that require an immediate trip to the emergency room. These symptoms can include mental confusion, seizures, and coma. If left untreated, a walk on death's doorstep may be the next stop.

Some examples of possible situations where a person with healthy kidneys that may encounter overhydration might be they are trying to treat another medical condition. If you had a stomach or intestinal bug, don't overdrink water to prevent dehydration. Same goes for someone trying to flush a kidney stone or suffering from a UTI. Athletes often overdrink before a competition. Keep your hydrating at a safe level.

The old drink 8 full glasses of water a day does not stand so much anymore. Most people who eat healthy get enough water from the foods they eat and the normal amount of liquids they consume during the day. For the record, liquids that contain water, like coffee and tea, help contribute towards your daily water needs.

For example, I eat fruit and yogurt every morning for breakfast (along with good old coffee). Yogurt, grapes, oranges, berries, and pears all contain up to 89% water. Avocados, bananas, cottage cheese, baked potato, corn and shrimp can contain 79% water, while fish, chicken and pasta are right at 69% water. Even pizza is about 50% water. The only thing without water would be oils and sugars. For the record, a glass of wine has 85% water in it, but it does carry other health risks.

For most people, drinking water when you are

thirsty might be enough. In outdoor situations, or physical activity, waiting until you are thirsty might be too late to combat dehydration, and it is wise to up your water consumption at those times, again, using common sense.

The color of your urine is a great sign of how well your hydration level is. Clear or light-yellow usually means you are doing fine with your water level. Dark yellow means you might want to up your consumption, and brown urine means there is a more serious medical condition going on and a trip to the doc is in order.

Overhydration can usually be treated. If you are otherwise healthy and have mild symptoms, simply cut back on your water intake. In a few hours, you should see some relief from the symptoms. More serious symptoms, such as confusion or seizures require immediate medical attention. Caught early enough, you can fully recover.

In the interest of marital harmony and bliss, I wait until my wife isn't looking, and dump out the mug of water. She is happy and I don't spend so much time in the outhouse. Maybe she will read this column. ....

Mark Rackay is a columnist for the Montrose Daily Press, Delta County Independent, and several other newspapers, as well as a feature writer for several saltwater fishing magazines. He is an avid hunter and world class saltwater angler, who travels around the world in search of adventure and serves as a Director and Public Information Officer for the Montrose County Sheriff's Posse. Personal email is [elkhunter77@icloud.com](mailto:elkhunter77@icloud.com) For information about the Posse call 970-765-7033 (leave a message) or email [info@mcspi.org](mailto:info@mcspi.org)

## Wildlife officers urge public to remove tangle hazards from yards, decorate responsibly

SPECIAL TO THE MDP

ACROSS the state, District Wildlife Managers from Colorado Parks and Wildlife have been responding to incidents of wildlife, particularly antlered ungulates, caught in various hazards.

From bull elk with hammocks in their antlers to mule deer with tomato cages wrapped around their bodies, CPW officers see a wide range of human garden equipment and recreational items that wildlife get entangled in. Holiday decorations, including Halloween, add an extra

element on the landscape that elk, deer and moose can unknowingly become attached to.

"We see it every year, and it always gets worse this time of year," said CPW Assistant Area Wildlife Manager Steve McClung of Durango. "Right now is a great opportunity to clean up your yard of items a curious animal might stick its nose in or get wrapped up in. And when you're putting up holiday decorations, keep our wildlife in mind. These impairments can really affect their mobility, vision and ability to eat and drink."

CPW officers in Evergreen have responded to multiple incidents this month, including a cow elk with a metal patio chair stuck around its neck and a bull elk with a hammock wrapped in its antlers.

In Pagosa Springs, wildlife officer Nate Martinez recently responded when a mule deer with wire from a tomato cage wrapped around her torso that had begun to cut through her back.

"After eluding officers for several days, thanks to the help of many concerned neighbors, we were able to

track her down, sedate her and cut off the wire ring from the tomato cage," Martinez said.

People can do their part to be a good neighbor to wildlife by putting away summer recreational and landscaping equipment that is not in use and by making sure holiday lights and decorations are secured tightly wherever they are hung.

Bucks can be especially prone to these situations this time of year. During the rut – or breeding season – bucks will rub their antlers on objects to mark territory and

signal their presence to other bucks. The rut has started for deer and will hit its peak in mid-November through December.

When animals such as deer and elk become entangled, stress and physical exhaustion caused by trying to break free can lead to death.

Wildlife officers can often get deer untangled if they are nearby and notified in a timely manner. In some cases, they will cut off the animal's antlers to free it. In other instances,

See WILDLIFE page B5

**GREAT OUTDOORS Company**

**MERRELL**

10 SOUTH SELIG AVE MONTROSE, COLORADO 81401 970-249-4226