



A Guide to Heat Acclimatization and Heat Illness Prevention

Course Objectives:

- Recognize that Exertional Heatstroke (EHS) is the leading preventable cause of death among athletes.
- Know the importance of a formal pre-season heat acclimatization plan.
- Know the importance of having and implementing a specific hydration plan, keeping your athletes well-hydrated, and providing ample opportunities for, and encouraging, regular fluid replacement.
- Know the importance of appropriately modifying activities in relation to the environmental heat stress and contributing risk factors (e.g., illness, overweight) to keep your athletes safe and performing well.
- Know the importance for all staff to closely monitor all athletes during practice and training in the heat, and recognize the signs and symptoms of developing heat illness.
- Know the importance of, and resources for, establishing an Emergency Action Plan and promptly implementing it in case of suspected EHS or other medical emergency.

Unit 1: Go slow and progressive

- Acclimatization can take up to 10-14 days
- Build a period of acclimation into the first 2 weeks of practice.

Unit 2: Allow for individual conditioning and medical status

- Factors contributing to higher risk for heat illness
 - Equipment
 - Body composition
- Athletes with Sickle Cell trait

Unit 3: Adjust intensity and rest

- Be aware of weather and humidity levels

Unit 4: Start sessions adequately hydrated

- Dehydration can impair athletic performance
- There isn't a "one-size-fits-all" hydration approach
- Dehydration occurs when a person loses more fluid than he or she consumes
- Know the warning signs of dehydration
- Monitor urine color
- Weigh in/weigh out
- Know what your athletes drink
 - Water
 - Sports drinks

Unit 5: Recognize signs early

Unit 6: Recognize more serious signs

Unit 7: Have an Emergency Action Plan