

## Drink Smart: Expert Tips on How to Stay Hydrated While Working to Meet Your Fitness Resolution

**T**his year you're determined to stick with your New Year's resolution. But on your rush to get to the gym, don't forget your most important workout partner: water.

Whether you're starting a regular exercise program for the first time or you're a regular gym rat, the big question most of us have is: "When should I be drinking water and how much of it should I be drinking?" The answer is that you should drink water in moderation before, during and after you exercise.

### Hydrate Early and Often

To avoid being dehydrated or drinking too much water right before you exercise, both of which can cause cramping, make sure you start hydrating early. The American College of Sports Medicine recommends that you drink two to



three cups of water during the two to three hours before you're scheduled to hit the gym.

As you exercise, continue drinking between four and eight ounces of water every 15 to 20 minutes. Though you don't want to



drink too much, make sure you give yourself some breaks at the water cooler. Your body loses about a quart of water for every hour of vigorous exercise, so it's important that you are replenishing your body's water supply.

### Cool Down With a Post-Workout Water

Sports experts recommend that you drink another two to three cups of water in the two to three hours following a workout. Avoid diuretics like caffeine and alcohol, which will actually dehydrate you more. With so much water to replenish, it makes sense to use the safe, refreshing and economical water that flows from your tap rather than expensive bottled water.

It's hard enough to get yourself motivated to go to the gym during a wind-chill-filled Iowa winter. If you go when you're dehydrated, your muscles will not perform up to par, and your body will feel like giving in before you start. Water—the other workout partner.

## Maintenance Can Extend Your Water Heater's Life

**M**any people buy a water heater and forget about it, or worse, they buy a house and don't pay any attention to the water heater. It's not until problems arise that they realize their water heater has transformed from a loving provider of hot showers into a rattling, leaking and inefficient monster. But, with a little bit of maintenance you can help keep your water heater operating at top efficiency.

For example, partial draining and annual flushing of the tank will help prevent the buildup of scale and help extend the life of the tank. Draining the tank is a fairly simple procedure that a competent do-it-yourselfer should be able to handle. However, if you are at all unsure about doing it yourself, you may want to consider having an experienced plumber assist you with this project.

*Water Heater (continued on page 2)*

# DID YOU KNOW



Hot water dissolves lead more quickly than cold water, so the Environmental Protection Agency advises people to use cold water for drinking and cooking. Never use hot water from the tap to cook or mix infant formula.

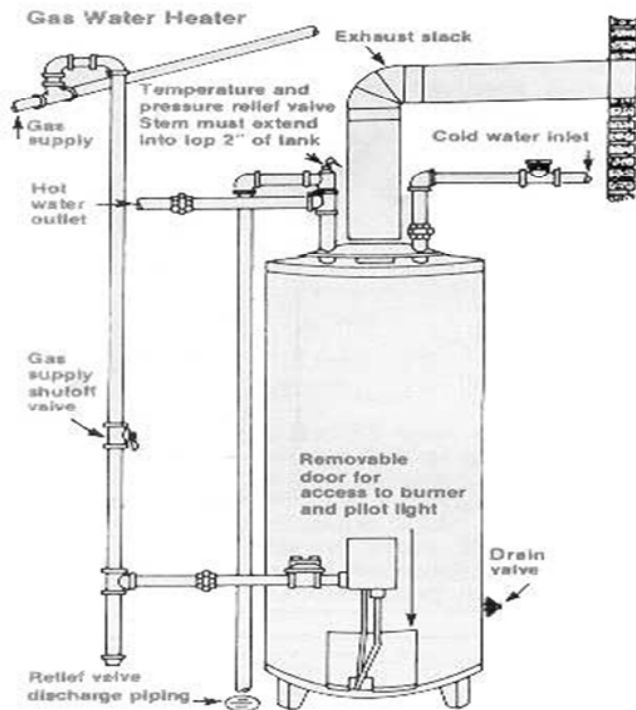
Visit [www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov) for more information.

## WATER HEATER

*Water Heater (continued from page 1)*

### Hot Water Heater Tips

- Check the temperature and pressure relief valve on your hot water heater annually to be sure that the valve is functioning. Consult the operating manual for this procedure. If the valve does not work, have it replaced.



*Important Safety Note: Hot water will drain from the line connected to the relief valve when you open it. Have a bucket handy to catch the water. According to the Uniform Plumbing Code, a pipe should be connected to the pressure relief valve, extending down along the side of the tank to within six inches of the floor. This extension pipe prevents the spraying of hot water when the valve is released or if a malfunction were to occur.*

- Inspect the exhaust stack on gas-fired hot water heaters annually to ensure that all of the pipe connections are secure and free of rust, corrosion and obstructions.

*Note: It is essential that fuel-fired hot water heaters vent their gasses to the outside; escape of gasses inside the home could be lethal and pose a fire hazard.*

- If you have wrapped an insulation blanket around the tank of your hot water heater, about every three months you should check to ensure that the insulation is in the proper position, and not blocking the combustion air inlet or the exhaust vent of gas-fired units.
- Check the temperature setting on the hot water heater. If it is above 120 degrees Fahrenheit, or 140 if your dishwasher does not have its own heating element, you are wasting energy and increasing the risk of being scalded by hot water.
- Check the temperature gauge on the boiler of your tankless water heater system every six months. Consult the operating instructions in order to determine the correct temperature setting.
- Every six months, open the drain valve near the water heater tank bottom and drain one or two gallons of water from the hot water heater into a bucket or through a garden hose to remove any sediment that may have accumulated in the bottom of the tank.

*Note: If this procedure is not done regularly, residual sediment particles may prevent the drain valve from reseating properly upon closing and the valve washer may have to be replaced.*

### Flushing Your Water Heater

Water heater manufacturers recommend flushing your water heater's tank periodically. Like much of the ground water in Iowa, West Des Moines water has a high mineral content, so it's important that you follow your water heater's manufacturer's maintenance instructions.

Without proper maintenance, over time your heater can accumulate sediment consisting of a collection of mineral deposits. The resulting buildup of sediment can harden, causing a variety of interesting noises to come from your tank, reduction of the efficiency of your unit and sometimes even clogging of the drain valve.

For detailed instructions on how to flush your water heater, visit FAQ at [www.wdmww.com](http://www.wdmww.com).

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