The Life-Changing Effects of Drinking More Water

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A massage therapist once told me that they are able to identify if a person is well-hydrated based solely on how their muscles feel during a massage. But, more often than not, we don’t need a professional to know that most of us are sorely lacking in hydration. A survey conducted by New York Hospital-Cornell Medical Center found that 75% of adults are chronically dehydrated.

In order to succeed in our professional and personal lives, we have to take care of our health — and drinking water is an *essential* component to doing this. Humans can survive up to 21 days without food but only three to four without water. So, before we join a new gym, start a new diet or go on a meditation retreat, we should first utilize one of the most powerful and easily forgotten tools we have: water.

Understand your balance

We hear a lot about how to achieve the ever-elusive work-life balance, but how each individual achieves that balance might look a little different. What is important is understanding that we cannot reach the highest levels of success if we are constantly stalled from being too tired and too stressed.

When I was first starting out my business, all I could think about was how to squeeze more hours into the day. I slept and ate poorly, and the only liquid I recognized was a caffeinated one. In time, I realized I was burning myself out, and my work

was suffering for it.

I had to change my mindset. I came to understand that investing in my health *is* investing in my work. The time I spend drinking water, exercising and resting is inherently productive, because I am setting myself up to work with efficiency and ease the next day.

And even though it is a seemingly small act, pausing for a sip of water reminds me to take care of myself when I am trying to go too fast – it allows me to slow down, re-calibrate and then get back to work.

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Four ways water can transform your life

Water makes up 60% of the human body, and yet when we are feeling lethargic, distracted and moody, we don't often consider that dehydration could be the culprit. Water is a vital nutrient, as important as eating our greens and getting vitamin D in the winter, and without it, both our physical and mental health may suffer.

But dehydration is not permanent. Once we start properly hydrating, the benefits begin to snowball.

Cognition

We've all experienced the mid-afternoon slump – we think another coffee might help, but we end up feeling jittery, our heart beating uncomfortably fast. We didn't need more coffee; we needed more water. Studies have shown that dehydration negatively impacts our cognitive abilities across the board – from retaining short-term memories to maintaining long-term focus. Proper hydration enables you to spend more time

focusing and less time fighting through brain fog.

Mood

Dehydration also directly affects our mood. When dehydrated, our mood dips, our head hurts, and we feel tense. We might even perceive certain tasks as more difficult than normal. With these signals, our body is attempting to alert us that something is wrong. And while water is no magic cure to solve *all* of our problems, it has been shown to have an immediately calming effect. In a study from Cambridge University Press, individuals who received water reported feeling more “calm” and “alert” after the fact. The next time you start to feel overwhelmed at work, ask yourself when the last time you had a sip of water was – hydration won’t make your work go away, but it might change your approach to it.

Sleep quality

Improved sleep quality and hydration go hand in hand. Have you ever woken up in the middle of the night desperately searching for a glass of water? Or been jolted awake by a splitting headache or cramp in your leg? These are all the effects of dehydration from the previous day. Proper hydration helps you sleep more deeply and with fewer interruptions.

Building healthy habits

Drinking water is the foundation of a healthy lifestyle. When I started drinking more water, my energy improved, and my motivation to pursue other healthy habits came with it. I drank water instead of soda, so I did not experience an afternoon sugar crash. I had a glass of water before and after my meals, so I felt more satiated and did not need to eat as much. I hydrated before my workouts, so my body was able to recover at a much higher speed, sending me back to the gym

with more frequency. My energy skyrocketed, I was more productive at work, and I lost more than 40 pounds – all of these changes began when I started filling up my water bottle each morning.

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How to create the habit

In order to build a habit, it has to be convenient. Set yourself up for success by making water consistently and conveniently available throughout the day. If you're not sure where to start, here are a few tricks that help me ensure I stay hydrated.

- Invest in a large water bottle so you don't have to constantly re-fill your glass. I, of course, use Hydrojug.
- Set up notifications throughout the day to remind yourself to drink water.
- Opt for water when eating out.
- Flavor your water with fruits and/or supplements.
- Reward yourself for reaching your water intake goal.

We know that a healthy lifestyle is not built overnight; it is through the accumulation of small changes and daily habits that our lives transform. Try out these tricks, and start drinking more water each day. In time, you just might see more and more healthy habits beginning to accrue.

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The first step

In a world filled with shiny wellness products and programs, we sometimes forget about one of the easiest (and most affordable) pathways to health: hydration. Drinking water is an investment in your health, your life and your business. It is the first step towards a healthier life, and though it might not feel like a life-changing event, the positive benefits you will reap are.

But if I haven’t convinced you by now, try it out for yourself for a week. Buy a new water bottle, and commit to drinking the entire thing before lunch. If you find yourself smiling and your productivity through the roof, I think you’ll know why.

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