

Drinking more water may be the lifestyle change your body needs

By Mandy Kendall

So, it's another New Year. A lot of us will make resolutions, and a lot of us will break them. Maybe it's because we make such high demands on ourselves when there is already so much going on that we get overwhelmed.

During my time as a chiropractor in England I learned that if I wanted to help my patients make lasting changes to their lifestyle, they were far more successful when we made changes in do-able chunks. I liked to call them *Qwik-es*. They were "quick" and "easy" things to do, and were usually practiced for a week, as that's pretty do-able in most peoples busy lives.



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The idea being that after a week, if you noticed a positive change from doing something that really hadn't taken up much of your time, then there was a good chance you might carry on doing it. Then it becomes a habit and, you never know, you might even be inclined to try another one.

I used to start new patients on something as simple as drinking water. Yes, I know everyone is always droning on

about drinking water, but there really are good reasons for all that nagging. Honest! Our bodies are roughly 65 percent water and we use a lot everyday just being alive so we need "topping up".

For instance a 5 percent decrease in our optimal hydration can result in up to 20 percent lower brain function. Our kidneys are important filters in our bodies, and like any filter, if they are not rinsed through with good clean water, they can get "clogged" and will be much less efficient.

Soft tissues need water to protect our joints and organs, especially the springy shock absorbing discs in between the bones in our spine. Our body's solid waste material requires moisture to be eliminated from our bodies. If there's not enough to flush it through, it just sits in our intestines (enough said I think). Water is also a great weight loss kick-starter and when skin is properly hydrated wrinkles get plumped out from the inside too.

So, how much do we need per day? Well you could do very well going with the generally accepted 8 x 8 fluid ounces a day (and this really should be plain water, not coffee or sodas). However, if you want to get serious, you should take into account your size, activity and where you live. Someone weighing 200 pounds needs more water than someone at 100 pounds.

A good way to estimate this is to drink half your body weight in ounces of water per day. So, if you're 150 pounds, this means you need the equivalent of 75 ounces of water, or about 8 cups. An active body needs more water than an inactive body and being up at altitude also requires more hydration.

If you find it hard to keep track, a very basic guide to your hydration level is the color of your urine. If it is pretty much clear, then you are probably hydrated enough. If it looks more like iced tea, you need to drink less iced tea and more

water.

So, maybe you're thinking, "OK, I guess I should be drinking a bit more water, but I just get so busy I forget." Here are a few *Qwik-e* tips to help you out.

Start the day with a big glass of water – Your body will need topping up after a good few hours without, and it will help move things along if you find you're a bit constipated too.

If your day centers on a desk, fill up a large bottle first thing to keep track of how much you are drinking. If you are moving around all day you could set an hourly reminder to pop up on your phone or watch to prompt a drink.

Use hunger pangs as a signal to drink – quite often we think we're hungry when we are actually dehydrated. If you are still hungry five minutes after a glass of water, then at least you know it really is hunger.

Feeling tired? Can't concentrate? Chances are you are dehydrated, so grab a glass of water and have a quick walk or stretch before you decide to get another coffee or soda.

Not quite sure how much water different sized containers hold? Measure 8 fluid ounces at home and see how many mouthfuls it takes to drink it. You can then use that as your measuring guide no matter what size container it is.

So give it a try, you might surprise yourself how much better you feel.

Until next time!

Mandy Kendall operates Health Connective in South Lake Tahoe. If you have any questions, feel free to drop me an email at healthconnective@gmail.com, visit us on Facebook, or keep an eye out on Lake Tahoe News for regular Qwik-e tips on how to make healthy changes one Quick and Easy step at a time.

