

# Balancing Electrolytes

You may have heard that if you're feeling tired, dizzy or nauseous from exertion (like exercising) you should drink beverages high in electrolytes [ie: Gatorade]. Why is that? These drinks help *replenish* the electrolytes you have lost. Electrolytes are positively or negatively charged ions (Sodium, Potassium, Magnesium, Calcium when dissociated from larger molecules) that aid in muscle contractions and transmission of nerve impulses. You need to replenish electrolytes to maintain bodily functions and to prevent cramping and muscle damage. There are also healthier homemade alternatives that will do the same job!!

## Function of Electrolytes

- ✓ Nerve function
- ✓ Muscle contraction
- ✓ Control temperature
- ✓ Control fluid levels
- ✓ pH balance
- ✓ Control respiratory rate
- ✓ Control bladder
- ✓ Kidney function
- ✓ Maintain normal blood pressure
- ✓ Helps communicate messages between the senses, muscles, and brain



## Electrolytes and Exercising

Your body loses electrolytes through sweat. The more intense the workout is, the more electrolytes you lose. An imbalance of electrolytes could cause the following symptoms: muscle cramps, muscle weakness, fatigue, and nausea. Remember to never exercise when you're dehydrated. You also sweat when it's hot outside, so make sure you're keeping yourself hydrated with electrolyte-replenishing drinks.

## Best Ways and Options to Replenish Electrolytes

- Electrolyte drink (optimal drink should provide 3-10% carbohydrates and 120-170 mg of sodium per 250 mL)
- Coconut water
- Leafy greens
- Bananas
- Yogurt
- Tomatoes
- Nuts



## Replenish Electrolytes When You're Sick

You lose a considerable amount of electrolytes when you're sick, particularly when you have the stomach flu, or if you experience diarrhea and vomiting.

Dolan, S.H. (2013). Electrolytes: Understanding replacement options. Retrieved from [www.acefitness.org/certifiednewsarticle/715/electrolytes-understanding-replacement-options/](http://www.acefitness.org/certifiednewsarticle/715/electrolytes-understanding-replacement-options/)

Food and Fitness. (2012). What are electrolytes and do we need to replace them after exercise? Retrieved from [www.foodandfitness.co.uk/electrolytes-replenish-post-exercise/](http://www.foodandfitness.co.uk/electrolytes-replenish-post-exercise/)

# Make Your Own Electrolyte-Replenisher

**It's easy to make your own!**

## The Lip Twister – Tart and Sweet

- 1/4 cup of lemon juice
- 1/4 cup of lime juice
- 1 teaspoon of salt (NOT TABLE SALT!! Either sea salt or Himalayan salt)
- 1 whole squeezed orange (or one cup of 100% pure, not-from-concentrate orange juice)
- 1 liter of water



## Fast and Dirty – Bare Bones Approach

- 2 lemon halves squeezed into a glass
- 2 orange halves added
- Squirt of honey
- Four shakes of salt (Do not use table salt! Either sea salt or Himalayan salt)
- Fill the glass with water and enjoy!



## Coconut and Lime Sports Drink

- 3 cups of coconut water
- 1 cup of water
- 1/2 cup of lime or lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons of maple syrup
- 1/4 teaspoon of sea salt
- Combine all the ingredients and sip during workout and after as needed

