

Sports Hydration – how best to go about avoiding cramp

Hydration is one of the key areas where nutrition can have a direct impact on performance.

There is good evidence that players who become dehydrated are more susceptible to the negative effects of fatigue, including loss of performance and increased risk of injury. There is also growing evidence that excessive sweat losses, especially high salt losses, can be a factor in some of the muscle cramps that affect players in training and competition.

Recently, however, a number of clubs have recognized that hydration is important and that no single strategy suits all players in all environments. This has led to an assessment of individual needs so that a personal drinking strategy can be put in place.

In Football Performance: how to raise your game we share details of a simple fluid loss monitoring strategy any club coach or player can put into practice for themselves – no fancy or expensive equipment is needed. And we help you identify which are the players who excrete high levels of salt – so you can put a programme in place to allow for adequate sodium supplementation.

These simple steps can make a difference between being able to score that vital goal in the last minute, and being a virtual spectator.