

## Training in High Humidity by Coach Daren

Training in hot and humid conditions is part of life in many areas of the U.S., particularly in the Southeast. There are ways to minimize the humidity's affects on your workouts...if you understand how humidity affects you.

Our brain wants to keep core temps (our internal and vital organs) at a comfortable level. When core temps are rising, the brain sends more blood to the skin surface where it is exposed to supposedly cooler temps than in the core. The cooled blood is then pumped back to cool our core and muscles. To aid in skin surface cooling the brain sends more sweat to the skin surface to promote evaporative cooling of the skin, and thus to cool the blood even more. In effect your body is a nicely packaged air conditioning system!

Try this experiment sometime: place a wet towel outside in a dry climate, such as in Las Vegas, and see how long before the towel is dry from evaporative cooling. My guess is ...maybe 20 minutes. Then try it in North Carolina in August. After a full day it may be dry! Maybe that's an exaggeration, but you get the idea. The same thing happens with your skin: in hot temps with high humidity the body sends sweat to the skin, and uh, oh...there is no evaporative cooling, so even more sweat is sent, and so on. Pretty soon you are drenched in sweat, and you have done little to cool down.

"Hey Coach – it was only 76 degrees this morning when I ran, but when I finished my shoes were squishing with sweat, and now it is late afternoon, and I am still dehydrated – why is this happening?" As we just discussed above, the body's attempts to cool itself in high humidity are pretty much useless, and the resultant sweat (and thus water plus electrolytes) loss is huge, and must be replaced.

OK, so this is part one of a two part article on high humidity. Stay tuned for the next issue of Coach's Corner to learn when and where to train, especially for running, to minimize humidity's affect on you.

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