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How Long Can You Survive Without Water?

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Importance of Adequate Water

When faced with a [survival](#) situation, clean [drinkable water](#) is often the most important consideration. People have [survived without food](#) for weeks or even months, but go without water for even just one day and the survivor will be in desperate straights indeed.

Knowing that water is by far the most important nutrient for the human body (besides oxygen) and, in particular, during a survival situation when finding potable water may not be easy, the question becomes - just how long can the human body survive without adequate water?

To maintain a [high level of health](#) and efficiency even in ideal environments, a minimum of two quarts of clean water per day per person is the generally accepted rule of thumb. In very hot or cold or very dry environments, or if you are physically active, two quarts of water a day may not be enough to sustain life over a period of days or weeks.



Fresh Clean Water

Water lost through sweating and normal respiration must be replaced in order to stay healthy and function at top efficiency. Water is also needed to process the food you eat, especially if it is salty or you eat heavy foods like meat.

Environment and Water Needs

In general the higher the temperature the greater your water consumption needs to be. If you are active or exposed to the hot rays of the sun you may need upwards of a gallon of water per day to stay to healthy.

Perhaps surprisingly, very [cold environments](#) can be as dry as the driest desert. This is because cold air cannot hold much moisture. This cold dry air serves to dehydrate your body with every breath you take. Cold dry air can also rob your body of moisture via loss from exposed skin. This is one reason why your lips may be prone to chapping. So during cold weather even though you may not be sweating nearly as much as when you are in a hot environment you may still easily become severely dehydrated without even realizing the danger you are in.

[Wind](#) can also play a role in the amount of water you need to take in. A dry wind on exposed flesh can suck the water right out of a person. Indeed, the remains of mummified animals and even people are often found in desert regions, their bodies totally dried out.



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Water as Ice

Effects of Going Without Water

Although two thirds of the human body by weight is composed of water, this water is needed for circulation and other bodily processes including respiration and converting food to energy. If you are losing more water than you are taking in, dehydration will occur.

It has been shown that if you lose just 2.5% of your body weight from water loss, you will loose 25% of your efficiency. For a 175 pound man that is only about two quarts of water. As the survivor dehydrates, his blood becomes thicker and loses volume. This causes the heart to work harder and circulation of blood to be less efficient. In a survival situation, loosing a full one quarter of your physical and mental abilities due to dehydration could mean the end of your life. Bottom line: drink plenty of fluids whether you feel thirsty or not so that you stay a peak efficiency.

Survival Times without Water

Ill health, exposure to the elements, shock, and panic can reduce your survival time in any situation. An important additional consideration is whether or not to eat food when there may be an inadequate supply of water. Certainly foods that contain a high proportion of water, such many kinds of fruits and berries may actually aid the survivor in providing water. Meat, dry and salty foods should be avoided as they require water from your body for processing and will serve to dehydrate you further.

The survivor who is in good health, who uses his head, and [rationes whatever water is at hand](#) may expect to be able to survive according to the following chart. Of course, there are many factors to be considered so your mileage may vary:

How Long Can You Live Without Water?

Max Daily Temperature	Number of Days in the Shade					
	No Water	1 Quart .95 Liter	2 Quarts 1.90 Liters	4 Quarts 3.79 Liters	10 Quarts 9.46 Liters	20 Quarts 18.93 Liters
120 F / 48.9 C	2 days	2	2	2.5	3	4.5
110 F / 43.3 C	3	3	3.5	4	5	7
100 F / 37.8 C	5	5.5	6	7	9.5	13.5
90 F / 32.2 C	7	8	9	10.5	15	23
80 F / 26.7 C	9	10	11	13	19	29
70 F / 21.1 C	10	11	12	14	20.5	32
60 F / 15.6 C	10	11	12	14	21	32
50 F / 10.0 C	10	11	12	14.5	21	32

Recovering From Dehydration

The good news is you can lose as much as 10% of your body weight through dehydration and suffer no long term ill effects. Simply by drinking several quarts of water you will be restored in a very short time. However, a survivor who has lost this much water from his body will probably not be in a position to find water.

In cool temperatures, a loss of 25% of your body weight in water will probably be the end. If the temperature is over 90 degrees farhanheight then you may not make it even at the 15% dehydration level.

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Waterboy

How long can you survive without water depends upon alot of factors. The best method to survive without water is not be placed in that situation in the first place!

Water and food

You can survive longer without food than surviving with out water. I know this as a fact after spending time without anything to drink in the waterless desert.

How long can you go with out water depends on if you start out hydrated or dehydrated. Always drink plenty of water before engaging in physical activity. Another rule of thumb when lack of water is a problem is make sure you drink water when you can. People have been known to succumb with water still in their canteens!

Aqua Man**Boston**

Some people ask how long can you go without food and water. But the reality is you can go with out food for a long time, a month or more. But you cannot live without water for very long.

subcorpus**Water Loo**

i would have thought you would give some tips on how to get water on different situations as well ... but good to know that i'll be dead in 2 days if i have no water ... hehe :P

Ron**NH USA**

SubCorpus - actually the information in this article IS good. Alot of websites give you info on where to find water or how to find water but this article gives you an idea of how much water you need under different conditions. This is good for planning purposes. For example, if you know you only have enough water for two days, as you say, then you can decide if you should stay put or venture out to find help before you run out of water. Every survival scenario is different, so what you do is c ombine your knowledge and experience to figure out the best course of action. The water survival data in this article is another useful piece of info that can help you survive.

Waterless

There is another article on how long you can live without water or how you lose water. Do a search on Survival Topics.

How long you can live with no water? When you become thirsty is too late to start drinking. You need to stay hydrated at all times and so you should drink H2O at regular intervals. Going without water for a long time is no fun, as anyone knows who has been hiking on a hot day.

This is why you should be able to supplement your water supply with local water sources. On a long trip or when it is very hot and you are dripping wet with sweat, you cannot carry enough water. This means you need a method of making water safe to drink. Water Filter. Purification tablets. Boil it. But NEVER drink water without making sure it is made safe to drink first!

Alice G**Gatorsville**

How long you can live with no water is a good thing to know about during a disaster. If you have to ration your water the chart shows you a rough estimate of how much water you need. Thank you survivor topics!

Deathgoddess**florida**

i think that about 70% of the human body is made of water. last time i checked anyway.

water is important

ummmmm u don't need to know

We cannot last not long without water but longer without food. Personally i think this is because our bodies store fat better than we store water. If you ever find yourself in a situation with no water remember to stay out of the sun. The sun can be very dehydrating.

Desert Springs

Just the thought of going without water makes me thirsty!

**Aliyah
camp creek**

Now I know the answer to how many days can you live without water - nothing hard and fast, and there are a number of variables. Thank you for the chart.

River Girl

I am referencing this survival article. The chart puts survival times without water into perspective!!!!

**Nina
Pascagoula**

Thank you for this information! This was helpful!

**Kevin
Vancouver**

All great survival information. Wonder how long I can go without any fluids. It is it possibly up to 10 days as per the chart.

This answered my question very well. Thank you!

**shajetandra
India**

I like the information my friend. It will help me in the future.

**Pat Frank
Sun City AZ**

This is the Sonoran Desert, and we are new here, but am finding I prefer the humidity levels a bit higher! I am from the Midwest, and the need to address hydration is opposite to the wetter areas we lived in. Swamp coolers I see were the best solution to desert living. Waking up with a cotton-mouth is indeed a warning sign of dehydration. I am glad this information is out there to help people learning to adapt to a dryer climate.

**Hannah
PA**

It is hard to find the information because you call it how long can I survive without water but you have alot of other information about stuff not in the title.

Survival Topics - Survival times without water are dependant on many factors and there can be no hard and fast rule or formula. The information provided is important for wilderness survival when limited water supplies are a consideration. Therefore it would be wise for you to read and understand the entire article rather than seek a quick answer that would mean little in a real world survival situation.

Water Question

-

Don't we get alot of water from food like meat as well? Meat comes from animals with bodies which are made up of 70-80% water. Does food provide much water?

Survival Topics - Yes some foods, especially fruits and vegetables, can have significant amounts of water. However, food also requires water for the body to process. Meats require more water to process than the water they contain so the net gain would be water loss.

As a general rule, if you have little or no water you are usually better off not eating until you can obtain at least a quart or two.

Chris
Massachusetts

I found this info to be scary. Knowing the info given in this page, how can there be records of people surviving without food or water for several MONTHS?!

Survival Topics - while it is possible to survive without food for months, few people in even in ideal conditions can survive much more than ten days without any water at all.

Lady of the Lake
North Carolina

Excellent. I would note that these times might be cut in half, given that once we are thirsty our efficiency decreases dramatically. That is, for the 2 days we have to survive in 120 degrees, we really only have 1 day to obtain water before quality of life becomes so bad that we are not capable of obtaining water. Similarly, we really have only 4.5 useful days in 80 degrees to get a water system in place before we are too 'burned out.'

Survival Topics - good point Lady of the Lake, and very important to understand. As your efficiency drops off due to dehydration your ability to function eventually reaches the point where you cannot help yourself even though you are still alive. In adverse conditions where obtaining water is problematic, one of your first efforts must be to secure adequate drinking water supplies.

Hari Kara
London

It is possible to easily survive without food and water for 5 days, i religiously do this every year without fail. This is based upon two factors for me.

1. A controlled reduction to start with
2. Mental strength

With both of these the simple task of 5 days is easy enough.

bloem
water

This is a very good information about "how long can we live without water". If this was in a survival competition I would give ten out of ten.

Simmerjet
Fort Reilly

Rationing water when water is in possession is pointless, you will die of dehydration. By the time you are thirsty you are already in dire need of hydration. If you are Thirsty and you have water DRINK IT!. Rationing will only kill you abd you can die with water in your canteen.

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