

## Heat in Practice

According to the book **Athletic Training and Sports Medicine**, by the American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons, there are several things a coach needs to consider in acclimatizing athletes to hot, humid weather.

The training standards for hot, humid weather are as follows:

Temperature	Humidity	Procedure
<b>80-90 degrees</b>	<b>under 70 %</b>	Watch those athletes who tend toward obesity
<b>80-90 degrees</b> ---- <b>90-100 degrees</b>	<b>over 70 %</b> ---- <b>under 70%</b>	Athletes should take a 10-minute rest every half hour, and t-shirts should be changed when wet. All athletes should be under careful and constant supervision.
<b>90-100 degrees</b> ---- <b>Over 100 degrees</b>	<b>over 70 %</b> ---- <b>any time</b>	A shortened practice in shorts and tee shirts could be conducted. It is NOT PRUDENT to exercise intensely.

**In addition, the coach needs to consider that acclimatization takes time. Prepare and plan for the process, do not expect athletes to perform at their peak at the onset of season.**

I would like to share some ideas I have used to combat the ill effects of heat.

1. Establish a "**Buddy System**". Have one athlete keep track of another. Very important, especially when they are not always right next to the coach to evaluate. (i.e. football, or on a cross country training run...)
2. **Practice early in the morning, or later in the afternoon.**
3. **Have water available to your athletes at all times. Encourage them to drink, even if they are "not thirsty". If they are thirsty, they have waited too long to get a drink.**
4. **Heat stroke** does not happen spontaneously. It builds up over a period of time. Be aware of the symptoms of heat exhaustion (bright red face, glistening hot skin, light-headed, headache), and treat athletes at that level. Do not let it escalate into heat stroke. Remove and cool the athlete immediately. They are not to return to practice until 24 hours have passed.
5. Some athletes are more susceptible to heat related problems. **You need to really keep an eye on those who have had heat exhaustion previously.** Check in with them throughout practice.

6. **PLEASE ENSURE THAT YOUR ATHLETES ARE EATING PROPERLY !!!!!**

Most of the heat problems I have dealt with have been due to an athlete not eating prior to practice, and then trying to give it their all during practice. STRESS with your athletes that eating is as important as drinking in preventing heat illness.

7. **Have a large container with ice water and some rags in it available to your athletes.**

They can cool themselves off during practice, and they will love you for it. :)

8. Be aware that athletes taking **antihistamines pose a special risk** for heat- related problems.

Submitted by Jackie Samani

Titusville High School / Athletic Trainer