

University of Delaware
Sport Club Programs
Heat Illness Prevention

The risks associated with exercise in the heat are well documented.¹ Most cases of heat illness are preventable. The following policy is intended to provide guidelines that the University of Delaware Division of Athletics and Recreation will follow.

- ***Any temperature above 72° F, with a relative humidity of 95% or higher, produces a high risk of heat-related illness.***
- ***Any temperature above 95° F, regardless of % humidity level, produces high risk of heat-related illness.***

On practice days when the ambient temperature exceeds 72° F, it will be the responsibility of the leader of that day's practice session(s) to check the temperature and relative humidity. If weather conditions are anticipated that will trigger limitations in practice, it may be beneficial to schedule practice/conditioning times in the early morning or evening, to avoid the heat of the day.

It is the philosophy of the University of Delaware Sports Medicine Clinic that **prevention is paramount**. It is the responsibility of each individual club's leadership to pursue appropriate preventative elements in their practices* :

- Pre-participation physicals to screen for at-risk individuals (prior history, family history, review effect of prescription of OTC pharmaceuticals on thermoregulation, and review of diet/nutrition/hydration techniques).
- Acclimatization – gradual increase in exposure to extreme weather.
- Hydration: Make sure that adequate hydration materials are provided and that time is allotted for fluid consumption during practices and events.
- Monitor for excessive weight loss during athletic participation – no more than 2-3% of body weight should be lost per practice session. Appropriate rehydration should occur prior to the start of the next scheduled athletic activity.
- Assure that temperature appropriate athletic apparel is being used.
- Incorporate the heat-related practice modification plan (p. 2) into club's regular practices and philosophy.

** During competitions, it is the responsibility of the officials (if present), in conjunction with the club leadership, to monitor the weather and pursue appropriate preventative practices. However, most heat-related illnesses occur during practices.*

¹ Inter Association Task Force on exertional heat illnesses consensus statement. June 2003. National Athletic Trainers' Association.

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Heat-Related Practice Modification Plan

1. Go to www.weather.com.
2. Enter the zip code for event location.
3. Add the numbers of temperature and relative humidity.

150 - 159

If the sum of the two numbers is between 150 and 159, consider limiting practice:

1. Limit outdoor practice to 2 hours.
2. Limit use of helmets, protective gear as able.

160-169

If the sum of the two numbers is between 160 and 169:

1. Limit outdoor practice to 90 minutes.
2. Fluid replacement breaks (5 minutes) at least every 20 minutes.
3. Avoid use of helmets and protective padding.

170 and above

If the sum of the two numbers is 170 or greater:

- A. No outdoor practice.
- B. Outdoor conditioning limited to 10 minutes.