

## Caffeine and Physical Activity

### Does caffeine consumption impact physical activity?

Some research suggests that caffeinated products increase urination, causing the body to void needed fluids and become dehydrated. On the flip side, the literature also suggests that no immediate diuretic effect on the body follows the ingestion of caffeine, as the total amount of fluid from the caffeinated beverage usually compensates for the expelled liquid.

Caffeine has been considered an ergogenic aid — a drug that increases performance as a result of the physiological effects it has on the body. While the exact mechanism isn't known for sure, some researchers believe that caffeine stimulates earlier and greater fat burning during exercise. This would help preserve the body's store of glycogen (the fuel muscles use) so that a person could exercise longer before feeling exhausted. This theory supports findings that caffeine improves performance in endurance events, such as long distance running and/or cycling. It hasn't been proven to aid athletes in shorter or more sporadic activities. Others believe that the stimulant effect of caffeine may help with alertness, mental clarity, and overall mood, all of which could help during a workout.

However, caffeine can affect people in different ways. While some people might notice a performance boost, others might suffer from dizziness, headaches, loss of coordination, abdominal cramps, or nausea — definitely not desirable on game day. Caffeine does irritate the lining for the stomach so this can be an issue for some. Caffeine can also interfere with sleep patterns; overuse might mean that you're not well-rested enough when it comes time to play.

Caffeinated products probably aren't the best source of liquid to hydrate your body prior to an athletic endeavor. You'd probably do better to follow general advice for proper physical activity: focus your efforts on proper training, rest, and nutrition for optimal performance and benefit.

Online & Off-Campus Resources	On-Campus Resources
<p>Go Ask Alice! – <a href="http://www.goaskalice.columbia.edu">www.goaskalice.columbia.edu</a></p> <p>Addiction Services Helpline – 877-8 HOPE NY</p>	<p>After Hours Clinician On Call – 212-854-9797</p> <p>Columbia Health – <a href="http://www.health.columbia.edu">www.health.columbia.edu</a></p> <p>CU-EMS – 212-854-5555</p> <p>Public Safety – 212-854-5555 (or x99 from a campus phone)</p>

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