

Dr. Roget's Advice on Preparing for an Endurance Event (Especially the Whitney Classic) In Extreme Heat

Prior to Event:

1. Training Specifics:

Heat Acclimate by training in heat (weather) or at least in simulated hot weather (i.e. lots of clothes). The body needs to get used to sweating, and thus becomes better at retaining salt by gradually producing more dilute sweat with less salt loss. Other heat adaptations also occur, such as the skin's ability to vasodilate (flush) and radiate off heat.

2. Nutritional Supplements:

Glycerin can be started 1-2 days before and the morning of event (e.g. ~1 tbsp. 3x/day; wash it down with lots of water). Several minerals that are necessary for muscle metabolism and are lost faster in sweat should also be taken regularly and then increased before and during the sweaty event. These include sodium, potassium, calcium, and magnesium. Increase sodium only starting 1-2 days before event --- most people get enough sodium for baseline daily activity, and too much routinely is bad for cardiovascular health.

During Event:

1. Take in only liquids starting 2-3 hours before and then during the entire event (of course I'll make an exception for noodle soup at night when it's much cooler). Solids are too slow and require too much energy (and blood flow to stomach and intestines) to digest, cause bloating, inhibit liquid absorption, etc., especially when so much liquids need to be processed so fast. Start the event with your stomach full of cold liquid, and keep it full and cold as long as necessary and possible. I use a variety of liquids: water, carbohydrate powder mix (various brands of complex carbo. powder are available), Gatorade, and V-8 (actually better than Gatorade for sodium and potassium replacement, then you can add some sugar to it if you want).

2. You must periodically and aggressively cool down your core body temperature. Icy wet towels while lying on my back with legs up or sitting work best for me.

® Also dressing cool seems to be underrated: the best are thin white CoolMax tank top (which I dunk in the ice water bucket also), CoolMax shorts and socks, and light colored helmet (with good airholes) or helmet cover.

® Even attention to sunburn lotion is probably helpful. Oil-based lotions plug up sweat pores and retain heat. I use an aloe & alcohol-based sunburn gel, which is not greasy at all, dries quickly, and works great, and doesn't even get in my eyes when I sweat (e.g. Shade Sunblock Oil-Free Gel, by Coppertone, SPF 30).

3. Obviously it helps to get extra sleep before an overnight event like the Whitney Classic, but it also can help if you detox. Your caffeine intake for a few days before the event, and thereby have less need for caffeine and less associated dehydration during the ride (because of the diuretic effect of caffeine).

4. Pacing yourself is always important, but especially necessary with the added stress of hot weather. If you're overheating, obviously you are losing too much body fluids, but you will also be using up important electrolytes/minerals, too much muscle glycogen (stored sugar + energy), and as you overheat your gastrointestinal (GI) tract gets less efficient also, which, of course, is your source of continued fluids and energy. Recovery is a lot slower at each rest stop as these effects accumulate.

Good luck; have fun,

Vance Roget, M.D.
(Finisher of 5 for 5 Whitney Classics)