

Heat Exhaustion usually develops after several days of exposure to high temperatures and inadequate intake of fluids. The elderly and people with high blood pressure are prone to heat exhaustion as well as people working or exercising in the heat. Heat exhaustion symptoms include heavy sweating, paleness, muscle cramps, tiredness, weakness, dizziness, headache, nausea, vomiting, and/or fainting. With heat exhaustion, a person's skin may feel cool and moist.

Cooling off is the main treatment for heat exhaustion. Drinking cool, non-alcoholic liquids may help as well as taking a cool shower, bath, or sponge bath. Getting into an air-conditioned environment will also help. If the conditions worsen or have not subsided within an hour, seek medical attention. If heat exhaustion is not treated, it may lead to heatstroke which needs immediate emergency medical attention. Call 9-1-1.

Heatstroke is the most severe of the heat-related problems. Like heat exhaustion, it often results from exercise or heavy work in hot environments combined with inadequate fluid intake. Children, older adults, obese people, and people who do not sweat properly are at high risk of heatstroke. Other factors that increase the risk of heat stroke include dehydration, alcohol use, cardiovascular disease and certain medications. Heatstroke is life threatening because the body loses its ability to deal with heat stress. It can't sweat or control the body's temperature. Symptoms of heatstroke include rapid heartbeat, rapid and shallow breathing, elevated or lowered blood pressure, lack of sweating, irritability, confusion or unconsciousness, feeling dizzy or lightheaded, headache, nausea, and/or fainting.

If you suspect heatstroke, call 9-1-1 immediately. Then try to move the person out of the sun and into a shady or air-conditioned space. Cool the person down by spraying them with cool water or wrapping them in cool damp sheets. Fan the person, and if possible, get the person to drink cool water.

5. Buddy Up

In the severe heat, be sure to run with a buddy. That way you can keep tabs on each other. Sometimes it's hard to tell if you're starting to suffer the effects of the heat, but a buddy may be able to spot the signs before it's too late.

6. Run Early

If at all possible, run in the early morning. The hottest part of the day is typically around 5 p.m. So, if you can't run until after work, wait until later in the evening.

7. Go Technical

Wearing light-colored running tops and shorts made of technical fabrics will keep you cool and allow moisture to evaporate more quickly. Staying dry will also help prevent chafing. Clothing made of polyester, Lycra, Nylon, CoolMax, and Dry-Fit are some examples of technical fabrics. Mother Nature has a few good fabrics too. Clothing made from bamboo fibers as well as Smartwool are very effective in moisture management. Be sure to hang dry your technical fabric running clothes. The fabric softener in [dryer sheets](#) can actually block up the fabric decreasing its moisture-wicking abilities.

8. Change Your Route

If your normal running route is treeless, find one that provides more shade. If this isn't possible and you have access to a treadmill, run indoors on really hot days.

9. Lather it on

Be sure to wear [sunscreen](#). Research has shown that runners have a higher rate of skin cancer. This is probably due to the fact that we're outside more than the average person and during the summer months we're outside and wearing less clothing than the average person. So, be sure to use a sports sunscreen that's waterproof with an SPF of 15 or higher. There are some brands of sunscreen available that are made to go on over wet skin. This is great for sweatier runners like. Also, be sure to wear sunglasses and a hat or visor. This will help to keep the sun out of your eyes as well as the sweat. Be sure the glasses provide 100 percent UV protection and that the hat is made of light technical fabric that promotes evaporation.

10. Have a Plan

Let your family and friends know your running route. If you're gone too long, they'll know where to look for you. If you run on rural greenways or trails, you may even want to pack your cell phone. Don't change your running route plans at the last minute without letting someone know. It's better to be safe than sorry.

Certified running and fitness coach Thad McLaurin hosts and writes the popular [RunnerDude's Blog](#) and is the owner of [RunnerDude's Fitness](#) in Greensboro, North Carolina. He has a BA in Education from UNC-Chapel Hill, and his credentials include personal trainer certifications from NPTI and ACSM, as well as running coach certifications from RRCA and USA-Track & Field. Thad's greatest reward is helping others live healthy, active lifestyles. From general fitness to marathon training, Thad [can help you](#) reach your fitness and running goals.