

# Heat Exhaustion

High temperature and high humidity may lead to heat illness, which can be serious or even life threatening. For people working outdoors in hot weather, temperature & humidity affect how hot they feel. Temperature and humidity are factors in determining the heat index, or the "feels like" temperature. The higher the heat index, the hotter the weather feels. In addition, working in direct sunlight or wearing protective clothing can make conditions "feel" up to 15° F hotter than the heat index temperature!

**Heat Exhaustion.** The body's response to excessive loss of the water and salt, usually through excessive sweating. Workers most prone to heat exhaustion are those that are elderly, have blood pressure, and those working in a hot environment

## Heat Exhaustion Symptoms

Symptoms of heat exhaustion include:

- Heavy sweating
- Extreme weakness or fatigue
- Dizziness, confusion
- Nausea
- Clammy, moist skin
- Pale or flushed complexion
- Muscle cramps
- Slightly elevated body temperature
- Fast and shallow breathing

## How to Treat Heat Exhaustion

Treat a worker suffering from heat exhaustion with the following:

- Have them rest in a cool, shaded or air-conditioned area.
- Have them drink plenty of water or other cool, nonalcoholic beverages.
- Have them take a cool shower, bath, or sponge bath.

## Heat Illnesses are preventable!

Workers should avoid exposure to extreme heat, sun exposure, and high humidity when possible. When these exposures cannot be avoided, workers should take the following steps to prevent heat stress:

- Wear light-colored, loose-fitting, breathable clothing such as cotton.
  - Avoid non-breathing synthetic clothing.
- Gradually build up to heavy work.
- Schedule heavy work during the coolest parts of day.
- Take more breaks in extreme heat and humidity.
  - Take breaks in the shade or a cool area when possible.
- Drink water frequently. Drink enough water that you never become thirsty. Approximately 1 cup every 15-20 minutes.
- Avoid alcohol, and drinks with large amounts of caffeine or sugar.
- Be aware that protective clothing or personal protective equipment may increase the risk of heat stress.
- Monitor your physical condition and that of your coworkers.

Source: [www.cdc.gov/niosh](http://www.cdc.gov/niosh)

## Remember... Water – Rest – Shade