



12 Tips to Drink 8 Cups a Day

Water Tactics that Make Every Day an 8-cup Success

-- By Cindy Dyson, SparkPeople member

Eight glasses of water every day? No matter how you pour them, that's a lot of liquid. We're talking cups and cups...and cups. Even knowing about the many benefits of meeting your daily quota—increased fat burning, healthier skin, more energy, better digestion, fewer cravings—doesn't make drinking it (or dealing with increased bathroom visits) any less of a struggle for many of us.

If you feel like you're barely treading water when it comes to drinking your water, don't despair. There are lots of little secrets—time-honored tricks that those elusive "water drinkers" use—that even you can try to transform yourself into an H₂O-guzzling machine.

For best results, try the two that Spark your interest immediately, then add one each week until you're getting all the water you need. And remember, there is no magic number. The recommended eight cups a day is not a one-size fits all. You'll need more if you're [through workouts](#); less if you eat a lot of water-rich fruits and vegetables.

1. Try comfort water

This is a great tactic for coffee and tea drinkers. While you're waiting for the coffee to brew, nuke a glass of water (or herbal tea), squeeze in a bit of lemon and sip while you wait. Try another cup of warm water after you've had a mug or two of coffee. Hot water is also a great treat on a cold afternoon or evening. Invest in a new kind of herbal tea every time you grocery shop until you've found a couple that are just right.

2. Tag your water bottle

Splurge on the perfect reusable water bottle. Whether it's your favorite color or a unique design, the more you bond with your bottle, the less likely you'll be to lose it. Slap an inspirational sticker or image onto it, or even write on it with a permanent marker. Now you're ready to drink from it throughout the day—don't forget to refill it as soon as it's empty.

3. Sip up

Gulping all that water can seem daunting. So get a package of straws to slowly sip it instead. You can even pick up a water bottle with built-in straw.

4. Become a connoisseur

Think of water drinking like wine tasting. Taste the various brands and types of bottled waters available (sparkling, spring, mineral, vitamin-enhanced, reverse osmosis, filtered, fruit-flavored, etc). Be sure to read the labels as some "waters" have significantly added calories. Many bottles of water contain two to three cups of water.

5. Drink water and drive

Keep your water bottle next to you every time you hop into the car, or buy a package of bottled water to keep in the car. Whenever you're driving about, your water will be within easy reach from your car's cup holder. Think about other places you can stash some water bottles (under your desk, next to the couch, in your purse, and more).

6. Drink your vitamins

Create your own vitamin drink. Consider combining your water with your vitamin supplements, if you take any. There are several powdered vitamin supplements that are designed to be mixed with water. Some contain little to no calories too. If you prefer to take vitamins in tablet form, then promise yourself to drink at least one whole cup of water every time you take them.

7. Fill your dinner glass

Set a glass of water at each place setting at the dinner table just like restaurants do. Don't fret about drinking it all—just place it there. By sipping water between every few bites, you'll slow you down and enjoy your meal more, while also meeting your water needs.

8. Filter out

Sometimes tap water just isn't very good. If your well or city water leaves a bad taste in your mouth, change it. Get a faucet or pitcher filter to keep out the bad and leave in the good.

9. Pace yourself

Holding (and drinking from) a cup of water will help you pace yourself at social events, parties and dinners that offer tempting food and drink. Try drinking a cup of water between bites of the calorie abomination you're faced with. It is hard to eat an entire piece of cake if you have to drink a glass of water between every single bite! To keep the wine, beer, or liquor from ruining your calorie count, drink a cup of water for every glass of alcohol you consume. (I'm a wine drinker, so I fill up my wine glass with water every time I empty it of wine.) Not only does this help to limit your consumption, but it helps counteract alcohol's dehydrating effects. And when you have a glass in hand—no matter what's in it—you won't be bombarded with more drink offers in the meantime.

10. Find watering holes

When out and about, make it a point to stop by drinking fountains, drink your water when out to lunch while reading the menu, and by all means if someone offers you a cup of herbal tea, say yes.

11. Combine habits

Get in the habit of drinking a cup of water when you do other things in your daily routine. Love long baths? Fill your water bottle when filling the tub. Working out? Keep your bottle beside you. Heading for bed? Set a glass on the nightstand. Reading by the fire? Always bring a cup of tea along. Develop water habits that go with your routines.

12. Reward your hard workf

Make a habit of having special water after each workout, for example. This can be water you gussy up yourself with a slice of lemon or lime, a fruit-flavored water, or (what I enjoy) a tall sparking mineral water.

Just a couple of these tricks can push you across the eight-cup finish line fairly painlessly. So raise a glass and tell your metabolism who's the boss. Sometimes, simply conquering your water goal is enough to set you on the right path in even more areas. Cheers!