



# Mike Wiegele Helicopter Skiing

## POWDER TECHNIQUES AND TIPS

DECEMBER 2011 - DRINK, SKI, PEE - REPEAT

It's amazing how many people ignore the simple basic necessity of hydration when they are heli skiing. Lots of reason abound, "I'll drink when I get back to the lodge", "it's too much of a hassle when I have to pee" and "I just don't get that thirsty when I'm skiing".

Dehydration occurs for a lot of reasons. If we take in less fluids than we expel (either from sweating, peeing, or even through exhalation), we become dehydrated. Unfortunately, we often only respond to being thirsty and usually only after activities are completed. By this point it is too late.

Winter hydration is incredibly important and in colder climates we may not notice that we are getting dehydrated. To start, you might not notice that you are sweating at all. Also, when we are exercising in normal conditions and our hydration levels decrease, we get the urge to drink and our kidneys stop extracting fluid. In cold climates our bodies retain body heat by decreasing blood flow to the extremities and keeping blood in our core. The problem is that our bodies and brain don't register a change in hydration level with increased blood being shunted to our vital organs. When this occurs, dehydration is often rapid and more severe than in more comfortable climates.

A common and easy way to determine hydration rate is to track frequency, amount and colour of your urine. Peeing a lot of clear liquid may not mean that you are optimally hydrated. A more accurate method is to consider your sweat rate. By weighing yourself before and after activity and comparing the difference, you can get an idea of your sweat rate as any loss in weight corresponds with loss in hydration. Consider that a change in your weight and corresponding hydration levels of only a couple of percent will lead to a significant decrease in physical performance, concentration and make you more likely to get injured.

The easy answer to avoid dehydration is to drink before, after and during activity. Don't wait until you are thirsty and keep drinking after you feel you have had enough. Water bottles are great (try a couple 500ml bottles in your ski jacket, they are small, easy to carry and super convenient) . You might also try a camel back for really easy access.

Avoid sugar laden energy style drinks, they aren't great for hydration. Water is best and, in Blue River, is incredible tasting, readily available and perfect for hydration. I will give a little plug for a product that I have been using all summer called Nuun. A simple tablet without sugar or any calories, just drop it in your water source and rehydrate. I find the they work really well, are convenient and have increased my fluid consumption. Check them out at [www.nuun.com](http://www.nuun.com).

See you in the mountains!

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