

Stay Hydrated

By Mark Caldwell

It's July now and we are getting into the consistent heat of summer here in the Pacific Northwest. Many of us have recently earned or renewed our First Aid certification, and one of the most important topics, in my opinion, is the subject of Heat Exhaustion. The reason this is so important is that if you take care of this problem, you can prevent many others. While many of us know that Heat Exhaustion is a precursor to more severe heat related health issues, we sometimes forget the effect that it has on our ability to ride safely. Heat Exhaustion can (will) affect your responsiveness in emergency situations like a car turning in front of you, or it's easier to misjudge a turn.

For your own safety, you want to stay fresh and at the peak of your abilities. So be smart about when you travel, avoiding the hottest time of the day (typically Noon – 2:00 PM) if you can, take plenty of breaks, and stay hydrated (drink lots of water). Caffeinated drinks will dehydrate you not refresh you. Drink water. And take it with you. Personally, I like my water ice cold and detest lukewarm water. While lukewarm is better than being dehydrated, let me share a trick with you that I use. Take a water bottle and fill it partially with water and put it in the freezer. When you're ready to ride, fill it the rest of the way with cold water. As you ride, the frozen part will keep the rest of the water cold. If you're going to be traveling for a while, you might want to have one bottle that is 1/3 ice which you can drink for the first part of your trip, and another which is 2/3 or all ice which will melt and be ready for drinking later in the day. You also might want to wrap the bottles in a towel or cloth napkin to absorb the outside condensation. This also makes a nice cool cloth for wiping your face to cool down.

Enjoy the sun, drink plenty of water and Ride Safe!