

To Your Health

As the beverage market expands, how do you steer your students toward healthy hydration?

Gone are the days when dance students had barely a sip of water at the barre. Today's dancers are toting every type of beverage into the studio—from vitamin-fortified waters to high-priced sports drinks. But before you and your students reach for your next drink, consider the advice of San Francisco Ballet's physician Dr. Richard Gibbs and Pacific Northwest Ballet's company nutritionist, Peggy Otto Swistak. We've listed six drink options from worst to best for hydration, so that you can sip smarter.



Photography by Colin Fowler



1. Energy Drinks

Examples: Red Bull, Rockstar
Calories per serving: 110
Serving size: 8.5 ounces
Servings per bottle: 1
These ultra-sweet pick-me-ups are popular with high-school and college students for pulling all-

nighters, but as a source of hydration, these pricey drinks in tiny packages don't offer a lot of bang for the buck. Though caffeine is a mild diuretic, meaning that it encourages the body to expel water, people who drink caffeinated beverages regularly will not experience dehydration. **Swistak says:** "These drinks contain a lot of caffeine and you could get an upset stomach and the jitters."



2. Soda

Example: Coca-Cola, Pepsi
Calories per serving: 0 (diet)–100 (regular)
Serving size: 11.5 ounces
Servings per bottle: 1
While your students may love these sweet and fizzy beverages, The American Academy of Pediatrics says that

as increased consumption has led to increasing rates of childhood obesity, youngsters should avoid sodas.

Where experts disagree: The caffeine in soda may inhibit calcium absorption, but Swistak says not to worry unless students drink more than three sodas a day. Gibbs, on the other hand, says that soda is a bad habit that should be avoided.



3. Vitamin-enhanced water

Examples: VitaminWater
Calories per serving: 50
Serving size: 8 ounces
Servings per bottle: 2.5
Powerful marketing and pretty packaging have made these beverages popular with teens and adults alike. Though these drinks do have satisfactory hydration benefits, doctors

recommend that athletes take a daily multivitamin; these drinks don't provide all of the nutrients dancers need.

Swistak says: "I would not recommend these [as a vitamin supplement,] because dancers should be getting vitamins and minerals from their food. These drinks send the message that kids don't have to eat properly."



4. Juice

Calories per serving: 90–140
Serving size: 8 ounces

Servings per bottle: varies
Sweet and tasty, 100% juices fortified with calcium can be an especially good choice for thirsty dancers. Still, because of high sugar content in juice, dancers should not rely on juice as a primary source of hydration. Calorie-conscious dancers can mix one part juice with three parts water.

Swistak says: "If you're thirsty and a little bit hungry, juice can give you both calories and fluid."

Gibbs says: "The particulate matter in juice makes it more easily absorbed by the body than straight water."



5. Sports drinks

Examples: Gatorade, Powerade
Calories per serving: 50
Serving size: 8 ounces
Servings per bottle: 4

Designed for the serious athlete, sports drinks promise to replace lost electrolytes while hydrating the body.

Swistak says: "These are a good source of liquid, but most dance classes do not contain the constant aerobic activity required to necessitate these."

Gibbs says: "While these beverages are good ways to get hydrated, they are too expensive for the amount that you need to drink [in a day]." He recommends watering down the beverages to get more nutrients without the cost.



6. Water

Swistak reminds us that although "You always hear you need eight glasses a day, all of this doesn't have to be water." Still, no calories, no price tag and all the benefits of hydration make water the obvious best choice for the studio.

When to Drink

Peggy Otto Swistak says that dancers should drink a cup of water before class and then sip water throughout class, consuming approximately ¼–½ cup. Follow class with another cup of liquid.

To avoid dehydration, always drink before you feel thirsty, and if you do feel thirsty, rehydrate slowly, consuming about a cup of water every hour.

Signs of Dehydration

- deep yellow urine
- leg cramps
- fatigue
- stomach cramps
- headache
- thirst