

The Search for Water

Water is a basic human need. There is no adequate substitute and without it you cannot live more than a few days. Within the human body water acts as a stabilizer. It helps to maintain warmth in cold environments, and is vital to staying cool in hot environments. It is also part of the body's mechanism for distributing food and removing waste. As soon as you are cut off from a source of fresh water, you begin to dehydrate.

The rate at which you dehydrate depends on a number of factors: the amount of water your body already

contains, the clothing you are wearing, the local temperature, how hard you are working, whether you are in shade or sunlight, whether you are smoking and whether you are calm or nervous.

If you allow dehydration to continue, there will come a point when

you can no longer search for water. Your first priority is to minimize further dehydration and, having done this, you must find water. (If you are stranded in a desert with little chance of finding water, stay still to prevent further dehydration, and make efforts to signal for rescue.)

You can fight and survive for days without food, but water is a different proposition: lose 4-5 per cent of your body weight and your combat effectiveness goes out of the window. If you do not replace lost water, you are on your way to becoming a casualty.

