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I was interested to read about the involvement of the Institute of Sport with our Shooting Team at the Athens Olympics last year. Can the average club shooter benefit from some of the techniques I have been reading about?

Michael Ianello, St Albans Vic

I am unsure exactly what you have read about Michael, but the team in Athens mainly focused on keeping hydrated in the hot weather through the use of ice vests and of course increasing fluid intake. These are simply common sense things to do and it hardly needs a qualified Sports Scientist to tell you how and when to do it. However it is amazing how the message tends to get lost even on elite athletes. Most shooters generally don't have the luxury of a Sports Scientist when we shoot at club level, but dehydration has proven to be one of the major components of failing mental fatigue when shooting and there is really no excuse these days from anyone who suffers from it on the range. As a simple rule you should always observe the color of your urine in the morning before you compete. If it is colored then there is the distinct possibility you are dehydrated and will face a long day on the range. The trick is to consume as much water the night before as possible and continue to drink fluids during the day of competition. Ideally your urine should always be clear when training and competing. If the weather is exceptionally hot there is some benefit to be had by adding substances like "Gastrolite" to your water to quickly hydrate yourself. Be wary of drinking too much caffeine, as this will quickly dehydrate your body again if you are not careful.

Questions: russell@russellmark.com.au