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Physical Culture



GEAR TEST WITH Lisa Dorfman, Sports Nutritionist

I'll Have What She's Having

COMPARED with an array of beverages, sports drinks are “wildly skewed to men,” said David Lockwood, a director of research at Mintel International, a market research group. Part of the reason, he said, is that women tend to avoid the high calories and salty taste. Manufacturers are coming out now with lower-calorie, lighter-flavored drinks aimed at fit women.

Those drinks, mostly portable single-serving powders or tablets that are mixed with water, contain electrolytes that can replace those lost through sweat, and vitamins and minerals that are often lacking in ac-

CRYSTAL LIGHT ON THE GO HYDRATION \$16.15 for 50 0.97-ounce packets, www.amazon.com. This 10-calorie drink mix provides only “moderate electrolyte replacement” and “lacks any sugar,” yet Ms. Dorfman thought it “felt good” to drink it after a sweaty Spinning class. “It felt like whatever vitamins, minerals and electrolytes there were got to my cells,” she said. The Lightly Lemon flavor was “very tangy, but it had some artificial aftertaste.”

PROPEL FIT WATER WITH CALCIUM \$27.16 for 24 16.9-ounce bottles, www.buythecase.net. The only ready-to-drink option, Propel is “an excellent source of calcium” and various B vitamins, Ms. Dorfman said. But because it lacks electrolytes, she recommends the 30-calorie bottle for “mild exercise or leisure activities like golf or sailing.” Her favorite flavor was the “pleasantly sweet” mandarin orange.



tive women's diets. Substantially lower in carbohydrates than traditional sports drinks, these would not be the drinks of choice for endurance athletes. But how about after a Pilates class or 45 minutes on an elliptical machine?

“Getting some of the benefits of a sports drink without all the calories is something a lot of women at the gym are looking for,” said Erin Hobday, the diet and nutrition editor at *Self*, a magazine for women. She added that the lighter taste might encourage gymgoers to hydrate better. Lisa Dorfman, left, a sports nutritionist at the University of Miami and a triathlete, tested four drinks while working out at the gym, running and biking. She found them suitable for a range of activities, but mostly for moderate-intensity exercise.

SARAH BOWEN SHEA

LUNA SPORT ELECTROLYTE SPLASH \$14.99 for 12 0.8-ounce packets, www.lunabar.com. Ms. Dorfman found this 80-calorie powdered drink mix the “best for hydration” because “it felt like the balance of sugar and electrolytes drove fluid into cells under high-intensity, very sweaty conditions.” The quantity of vitamins and minerals was “adequate without being excessive,” although she needed “to shake a little extra to dissolve the crystals.” Both flavors — Lime-Ade and Pink Grapefruit — were “tangy and crisp.”

NUUN U \$8.50 for 16 tablets, available at www.nuun.com at the end of March. Nuun U “worked best for moderate-intensity exercise without excessive sweating,” said Ms. Dorfman, who appreciated that a seven-calorie tablet replaced folic acid, vitamin B2 and magnesium, which are “often deficient in active women's diets.” She loved the “mellow, delicious, natural flavors,” especially tangerine ginger.

ABOVE, CHARITY DEMEER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES; RIGHT, TONY CENICOLA/THE NEW YORK TIMES

MIDDLE OCTANE Lisa Dorfman recommends Propel for calcium and B vitamins, but not electrolytes.