

# F O C U S

VISTA PSYCHOLOGICAL & COUNSELING CENTRE, LLC

## Misconceptions about Caffeine & What The Research Says

In recent years, the wellness industry has popularized delayed caffeine intake, a habit championed by neurobiologist Andrew Huberman, Ph.D., to mitigate the afternoon energy slump. While some have reported benefits, recent research challenges this and other caffeine myths. A study published in the Journal of the International Society of Sports Nutrition found that, "There is no evidence that caffeine ingestion upon waking is somehow responsible for an afternoon 'crash' or that delaying consumption would somehow prevent this if it did occur." In addition to this finding, the study consolidates and summarizes decades of scientific literature—providing rather black-and-white answers to a host of our most pressing caffeine FAQs. And we've condensed the key findings of the remaining 13 questions below. Get ready to take notes:

## NINE POINTERS TO PEACE

*By Lama Surya Das*

My own practice for not sweating the small stuff entails utilizing a few homemade quotes and potent slogans that speak to me. I keep yellow sticky notes and index cards on my desk, bathroom mirror, dashboard computer, and in my wallet. I practice what I call *remindfulness* by remembering to look at these handwritten adages; they help me recall what is imprint in the bigger picture and the long run— my values, principles, votes, practices, and goals. I let the wisdom of these maxims sink in, inevitably defusing the situation before it gets anywhere near out of hand. Among these potent pointers, here's my favorite: THIS TOO SHALL PASS. This slogan reminds me to practice patience, acceptance and forbearance in the face of irritation and disappointment. I also remember to stay in touch with the long view, because things are cyclic and nothing happens without daises, even if not immediately apparent to me. Here's another one I like: HOW MUCH WILL THIS MATTER TO ME A YEAR OR TWO FROM NOW? I also like to echo the *Diamond Sutra*, the world's oldest printed book which quotes Buddha saying: SEE THINGS AS LIKE A DREAM, A FANTASY, A MIRAGE. I usually add the work sitcom or movies just for fun. This traditional dharma teaching helps me remember to regard everything as like rainbows or the divine dance of illusion. It helps me take things a lot less seriously and leave room for my inner child and little Buddha to stand up, play, dance, and sing. Probably the most effective, practical yoga and meditation related maxim is this: BREATHE, RELAX, CENTER, AND SMILE. NOTHING IS AS IMPORTANT AS IT SEEMS AT THIS MOMENT. That really cools my jets, and allows for more intelligent decision-making and clearheaded thinking to proceed. I've gotten my Amelia into the habit of singing (often in her head) the great nursery rhyme mantra guaranteed to defuse any difficult situation: ROW, ROW, ROW YOUR BOAT, GENTLY

**(Caffeine continued) Does caffeine dehydrate you at rest?**

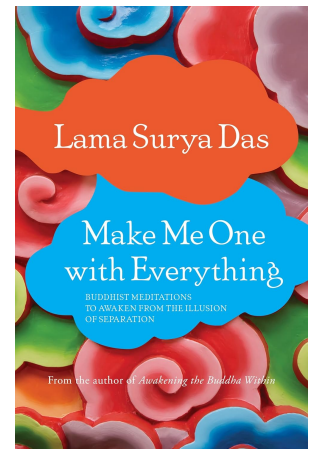
Researchers suggest that moderate daily caffeine does not appear to cause dehydration. However, much higher doses (more than 5 cups of coffee in one day) may induce a slight elevation of urine output and could lead to dehydration.

Nevertheless, the typical consumption of caffeine (i.e., usually in a beverage) has little to no effect on fluid balance, they add. In short, be sure to drink water in addition to your caffeinated beverage, especially when consuming more than a few cups in one day.” **Does caffeine dehydrate you during exercise?**

“Factors such as sweat rate, fluid replacement, and genetic factors have a greater impact on one's hydration level compared to moderate caffeine consumption alone,” the study states. So, any dehydration that occurs during exercise is more likely to be related to fluid replacement (i.e., how much water you drink during your workout or after) rather than the caffeine itself. **Does caffeine decrease body weight and fat mass?** The current body of evidence doesn't support the use of coffee as a fat-loss aid, researchers note. While some studies show promise, there's often a lack of consistency with factors like dietary intake, dose, and pretrial caffeine consumption deeming the findings less valid. To say the least, more research is needed to confirm that coffee can help you lose fat on its own. **Does habitual caffeine consumption influence the performance response to it?** The majority of evidence says no, regularly consuming coffee will not hinder your response to it in an

DOWN THE STREAM. MERRILY, MERRILY, MERRILY, LIFE IS BUT A DREAM. If I have a good amount of time and feel inspired to co-meditate with the Masters for further spiritual relief and sustenance I recite Buddha's Metta Sutta (Maitri or Lovingkindness Sermon), which includes the line: MAY ALL BEINGS BE HAPPY AND AT EASE! Or, I might take St. Francis of Assisi's Peace Prayer out of my wallet and read: MAKE ME AN INSTRUMENT OF YOUR PEACE... I invite you to try small-stuff slogans out, one at a time, and see how they work for you. Or, find other one-liners and make up your own.

**Adapted from Make Me One with Everything by Lama Surya Das who is one of the most learned and highly trained American-born lamas in the Tibetan Dzogchen tradition.**



## Why Are Brain Teasers Good For You?

Brain teasers boost cognitive skills like memory, problem-solving, and concentration, enhance creativity, sharpen logical thinking, provide stress relief through mental distraction, and improve overall mental agility, helping keep the brain active and agile for all ages. They work by engaging both brain hemispheres, strengthening neural pathways, and offering fun, engaging ways to develop critical thinking and learning strategies. Here are a few to try:

- **What gets wet while drying?** A towel.
- **What has keys but opens no locks?** A piano or keyboard.
- **What is at the center of gravity?** The letter V (in "gravity").
- **David's father has three sons: Snap, Crackle, and...?** David.
- **A man is in a dark room with a candle, a wood stove, and a gas lamp. What does he light first?** The match.
- **How can 8 + 8 = 4?** In time: 8 AM + 8 hours = 4 PM.
- **A cowboy rides into town on Friday, stays three days, and leaves on Friday. How?** His horse's name is Friday.
- **A man dies of old age on his 25th birthday. How?** He was born on February 29th (a leap year).
- **What can travel around the world while staying in a corner?** A stamp
- **Before Mount Everest was discovered, what was the highest mountain in the world?** Mount Everest (it was always there).

**(Caffeine continued)** athletic performance setting over time—eliminating the idea of "caffeine tolerance," at least in a research setting. Further, data suggests you may need 6-9 milligrams of caffeine per kilogram of body weight to reach a performance-enhancing effect. For a 150-pound individual, this looks like 408-612 milligrams of caffeine, which equates to 4-6 cups of coffee (yes, that's a lot and is not recommended for everyone). **Does caffeine affect upper vs. lower body performance/strength differently?** This depends on the dose of caffeine and individual muscle differences, but researchers generally suggest that caffeine impacts upper and low body performance and strength equally. **Is there a relationship between caffeine and depression?** Caffeine intake can offer temporary relief from certain depressive symptoms and, for some, even improve overall mood. However, experts warn against excessive consumption as it can worsen anxiety, disturb sleep, and result in adverse mental health consequences. **Can too much caffeine kill you?** Technically yes, but this is rare and is sparked by an overdose. For people consuming coffee and tea (read: not caffeine pills or other spiked beverages), it's not something to worry about. **Are there sex differences regarding caffeine's effects?** Now, the research on this topic is pretty mixed, researchers say. However, they do add that caffeine can improve sports performance regardless of sex, but some studies report greater performance

advantages in men. We know there's a significant gender gap in medical research, so it's fair to assume more studies should be completed on women and men to reach a solid conclusion. **Does caffeine work for everyone?** There is "substantial variability" among people's responses to caffeine's performance enhancing effects. It is possible that some people don't respond to caffeine at all—but researchers note that it's quite rare. **Does caffeine cause heart problems?** There's a handful of factors that impact one's cardiovascular risk in relation to caffeine including dose, frequency, how it is consumed (i.e., through coffee or tea), and individual differences in metabolic and genetic factors. Finally, researchers conclude that, "There is no evidence that low to moderate intake of caffeine has adverse effects on cardiac muscle." **Does caffeine promote the loss of bone mineral?** The evidence on this topic is split. Some research suggests that less than four cups of coffee is the threshold for bone mineral density and fracture risk, primarily impacting women. However, they say, additional clinical research is needed to explore the potential dose response relationship between caffeine consumption and bone health, also investigating confounding variables like diet, population, caffeine form, etc., before drawing conclusions. **Should pregnant women avoid caffeine?** The majority of observational studies and meta-

analyses show that maternal caffeine consumption is associated with major negative pregnancy outcomes. The current recommendation from the National Institutes of Health is to keep caffeine intake below 200 milligrams daily during pregnancy. **Is caffeine addictive?** There is evidence to suggest the potential for caffeine to be abused and spark withdrawal symptoms, but caffeine is not fully established as addictive right now. Still, this is very individual and should be taken into consideration on a case-by-case basis. **Remember: Personal preference matters most.** Now, while these findings are interesting and much-needed in the well-being industry (yes, these caffeine myths have gained traction as of late), ideal coffee intake is inevitably personal. In addition to knowing what amount of caffeine works best for you (and what is too much), you may also consider where you're getting your caffeine from. Some unwelcome side effects could be more related to coffee quality and type, what you add to your beverage (sugar, cream, etc.), and so on. At the end of the day, you should do what's best for your mental and physical health, and consult a physician if you have more serious concerns about caffeine intake. **The takeaway** - A research study busted a handful of caffeine-related myths, luckily shedding some light on common rumors. Still, personal preferences should be at the forefront of decision-making when it comes to caffeine.

**Source: Hannah Frye, Beauty and Health Editor, Integrative Health, [mindbodygreen.com](http://mindbodygreen.com)**

## The Skinny on GLP-1 Medications

*Why a toolbox approach to weight loss works better than a magic pill*

If you've followed the news lately, you've likely heard of GLP-1 medications like Ozempic®, Wegovy®, and Zepbound®. Experts have hailed these drugs as game changers in the fight against obesity—offering dramatic weight loss in clinical trials and newfound hope for millions.

But now that they've moved from trial labs to real life, the outcomes aren't quite as headline-worthy. Recent research from Cleveland Clinic reveals that real-world patients often lose significantly less weight than those in clinical trials.

Why? Because many patients stop the medication early due to side effects, cost, or a lack of long-term support. Side effects of GLP-1 medications include significant muscle loss, fatigue, low energy, digestion issues, constipation, and diarrhea. And once the medication stops, the weight often comes back along with a wave of discouragement.

That's not a knock on GLP-1s. It's a reflection of something deeper: Research increasingly shows that lasting weight loss is never about one thing. It often requires a system that supports the body, mind, and environment we live in.

### **Moving from Clinical Trials to Real Life**

In clinical trials, participants benefit from consistent oversight, meal tracking, and regular coaching—conditions that may not be available in everyday life. While some real-world patients also receive meaningful support, others face barriers like work stress, caregiving demands, or limited follow-up, which can affect results.

The different outcomes reflect this wide range of variables—it's not just one factor but a whole system of influences that either support or undercut successful weight loss. And that's where even GLP-1s alone can falter. Without daily accountability to reinforce progress, tools that support better decisions, and a wellness mindset that addresses the whole person, results can fade. Medication may start the process, but long-term

depends on the systems built around it.

### **The Science Behind What Works**

Behavioral researchers find that people who succeed at long-term weight management typically have more than motivation working for them—they have infrastructure. That might include a morning routine that encourages better choices, a friend who provides accountability, or access to trusted nutritional supplements that reinforce their progress and align with broader wellness goals.

A recent review in *Obesity Reviews* confirmed that multicomponent strategies—those combining behavioral support, small nutritional shifts, and physical activity—consistently outperform any one-size-fits-all solution. The more coordinated the system, the better the outcomes over time.

Further, behavior-based weight management programs (with or without weight loss medications) were associated with a lower risk of developing diabetes.

### **A Better Question: What Kind of System Enables Long-Term Success?**

Instead of asking, "What's the fastest way to lose weight?" a more effective question—one aligned with sustainable outcomes—might be, "What kind of system enables long-term success?"

Emerging research points to multifactorial approaches involving both diet and lifestyle: steady glycemic control, reducing simple carbohydrates, increasing protein consumption, adequate sleep, consistent physical activity, and everyday encouragement from supportive relationships—all of which contribute to lasting results.

### **Beyond the Magic Pill**

What's consistently proving effective isn't a single magic pill—even when it currently comes in the form of a weekly GLP-1 shot. Rather, it's a well-constructed system: a toolbox built on sustainable routines, thoughtful supplementation, real-world reinforcement, and daily choices that support lasting progress.

**Source: 2025 Wellness Insider, Melaleuca, Inc., 4609 West 65th South, Idaho Falls, Idaho 83402**

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