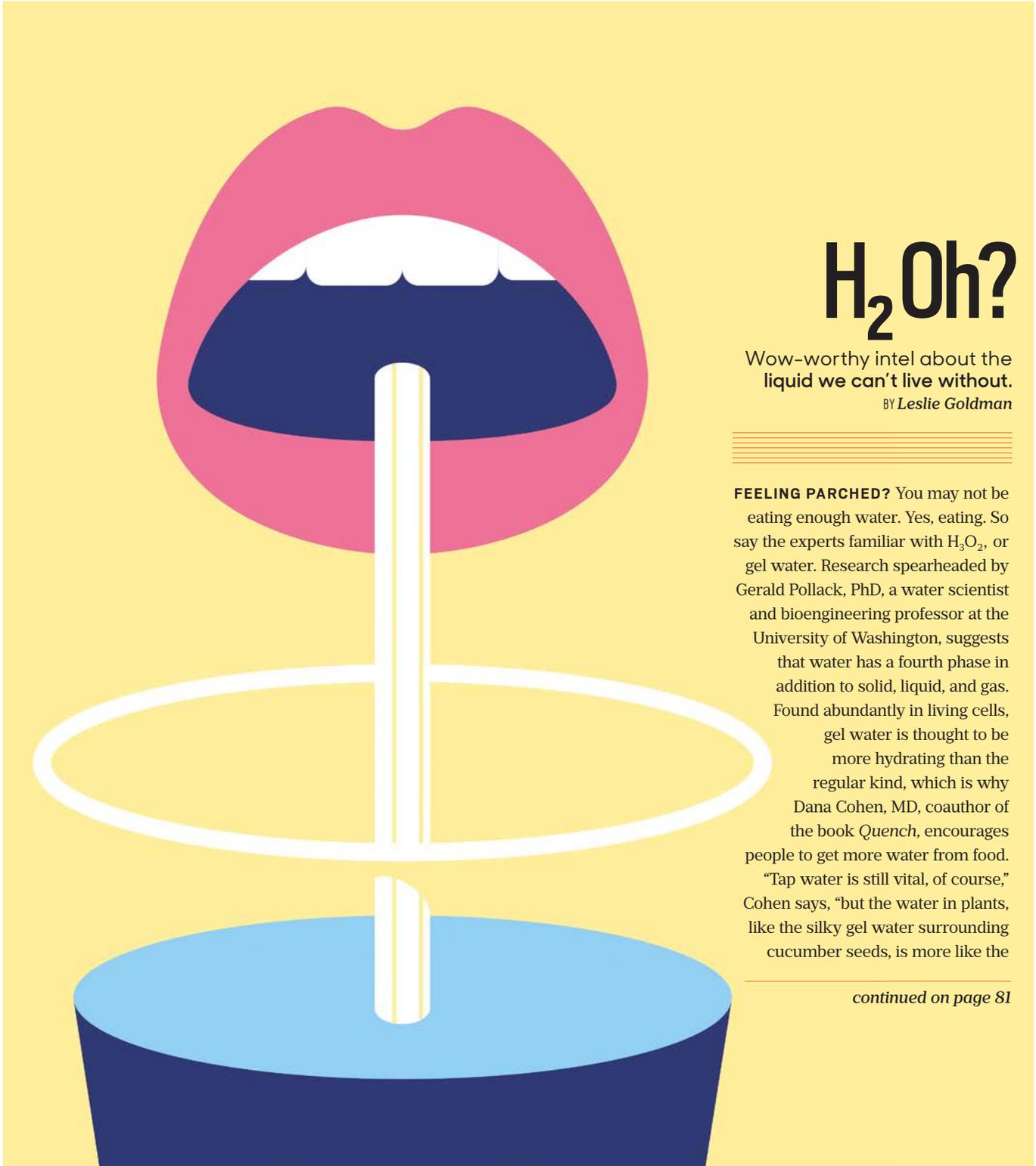


Feeling Good

STEP LIVELIER ♦ SMILE AT WORK ♦ EMBRACE YOUR FLAWS



H₂O_h?

Wow-worthy intel about the liquid we can't live without.

BY Leslie Goldman

FEELING PARCHED? You may not be eating enough water. Yes, eating. So say the experts familiar with H₃O₂, or gel water. Research spearheaded by Gerald Pollack, PhD, a water scientist and bioengineering professor at the University of Washington, suggests that water has a fourth phase in addition to solid, liquid, and gas. Found abundantly in living cells, gel water is thought to be more hydrating than the regular kind, which is why Dana Cohen, MD, coauthor of the book *Quench*, encourages people to get more water from food. “Tap water is still vital, of course,” Cohen says, “but the water in plants, like the silky gel water surrounding cucumber seeds, is more like the

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ILLUSTRATIONS BY Ben Wiseman

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water in our cells, so it hydrates more efficiently.” The fiber found in produce, she adds, “has a sponging effect, creating a long-lasting, slow release that allows us to absorb liquid.” For this reason, says *Quench* coauthor Gina Bria, who researches the best ways to hydrate, “consuming an apple and a glass of water is more hydrating than two glasses of water.” Now that you know H₃O₂ is the new H₂O, drink in a few other notable water facts:

All-natural water isn't safer than the treated kind.

Many fans of “raw,” or untreated, water believe they're getting probiotics and minerals that could otherwise be strained out during processing. But they could be consuming any number of less desirable things, too. Public drinking water must meet Environmental Protection Agency standards, so most of it is treated and filtered to remove at least 88 contaminants, according to the EPA. “The filtering process removes parasites like giardia and cryptosporidium, both of which come from the stool of infected animals and humans,” says Kathy Benedict, PhD, an epidemiologist with the CDC's Waterborne Disease Prevention Branch. There's no guarantee that water you collect from a spring is 100 percent safe. As for the brands of raw water available online or in stores, to be approved for sale they must meet FDA quality guidelines. But some of these beverages come from the same source as tap water—just with a significantly higher price tag (for example, \$16 for two and a half gallons).

Adding lemon to your water improves more than the taste.

Lemon juice contains potassium, an electrolyte known to be an important

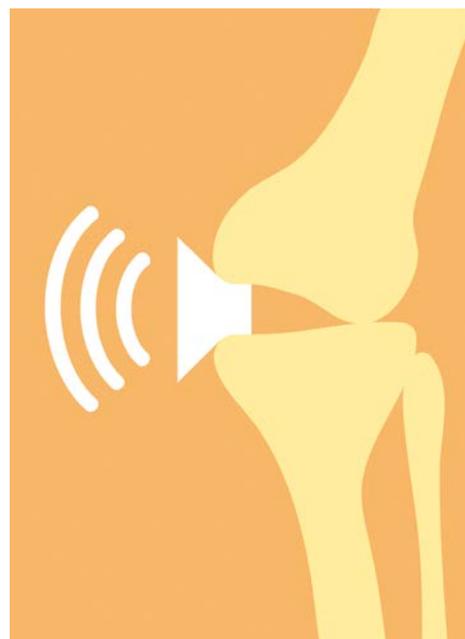
player in hydration. When you're parched, Cohen and Bria recommend hydrating with water that's been amped up with a squeeze of lemon plus a pinch of sea salt (sodium helps your body hold on to the right amount of water). This also makes a great preworkout drink, says Cohen, though if it's hot outside or you plan to exercise for more than an hour, you may want the extra electrolytes found in sports beverages.

There may be some actual bottle in that bottled water.

If you think you're doing a good thing by reusing those clear, crinkly plastic bottles, think again, says Cheryl Watson, PhD, professor emeritus of biochemistry and molecular biology at the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston. These bottles can leach their chemicals into the water, which may then have unwanted hormonal effects on the body. Even though BPA is no longer used in most plastic water bottles, Watson says that “it will likely take a long time before we can accumulate the evidence needed to deem plastics of many sorts ‘safe.’” Leaving bottles in the heat can contribute to the leaching process. If your bottle doesn't say REUSABLE, then recycle it. You can also try a glass or stainless steel bottle—or boxes of water. These use less plastic, and, as a bonus, the square shape prevents them from rolling around in your car.

Sparkling water is just as hydrating as still.

A 2016 *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* study that compared still water with 12 other beverages (including seltzer, cola, OJ, hot and iced teas, coffee, lager beer, and a sports drink) found that bubbles don't inhibit your body's ability to quickly get the hydration it needs. So your eight daily glasses can include a few cans of *pamplemousse* fizz.



SNAP, CRACKLE, POP

▶ We asked the experts how to interpret our noisy joints. BY Stacey Colino

SOMETIMES YOU MOVE like a well-oiled machine, and other times your body creaks like a rusty ten-speed. Those sounds and sensations are referred to as crepitus (KREHP-ih-dihs), says Joel Press, MD, physiatrist in chief at the Hospital for Special Surgery in New York City. And while they may seem like cause for worry, they're typically just harmless, idle chatter. A cracking or popping sound in your ankles or hips when you move after sitting for a long time could be a tight tendon snapping against the bone, says Stacey Pierce-Talsma, an associate professor and chair of the osteopathic manipulative medicine department at Touro University California in Vallejo. A popping or grinding sound in your neck may occur when your vertebrae shift and release; a clunking, clicking, or snapping in your shoulder is due to normal movement of ligaments and tendons as they glide over bony surfaces. After hearing the latter, you may notice an increased range of motion

in that part of your body, prompting you to add another sound to the mix: “Ahhh.”

The cracking or crunching in your neck or grinding in your knees could signal age-related joint degeneration. “Cartilage wears down over time, exposing joint areas that may rub against one another,” says Press. This is as common as gray hair and wrinkles, he adds, and isn't serious on its own.

And the sound when you crack your knuckles? That's just air or gas bubbles being released in the synovial fluid around the joint. “There's no risk in doing this,” Press says, “aside from potentially annoying people around you.”

However, the soundtrack of your joints should spur you to action when it's accompanied by pain, swelling, redness, bruising, or severe stiffness. In this case, your noisy body could be sounding an alarm—about arthritis (especially in the knee or hip) or torn cartilage (in the knee or shoulder)—so do yourself a favor and pass along the message to a doctor.