

# I Must Have My Water Bottle!

*Shôn Ellerton, November 26, 2022*

*Why do we need to be permanently attached to a water bottle?*



Let's talk about water bottles, because I've been meaning to talk about it but just hadn't got around in doing so. There's not a lot to talk about them except that they seem to be a near-mandatory accessory, and these days, if you're one of those walking around or sitting in an office without a water bottle, you're most likely be considered the dinosaur from yesteryear.

Here are some of the likely phrases that one may encounter when talking to somebody nurturing a water bottle.

“You've got to drink water all the time!”

“You must keep yourself well and truly hydrated!”

“You must drink at least twenty thousand gallons of water every day!”

OK. That last one is a bit of an exaggeration, but you get the gist.

Business executives trundling down the street pavements gurgling their way through trendy brand-laden bottles or overpriced designer water in disposable plastic bottles. Fellow gym members hogging the one and only water fountain whilst filling their capacious bottles with that little tap thing next to it which runs at a trickle. Seriously, what's wrong with the drinking fountain? Do you need **THAT** much water?

And then you have the office workers who feel decidedly uncomfortable if they don't have their little 'security water bottle' with them, even when going in for a

short meeting. Kind of reminds me of that Peanuts character, Linus, and his security blanket. And worse, during the meeting, they start picking up their big bottles of water and gurgling it down noisily like they've been out wandering the Sahara Desert for days on end with little or no water. It's no wonder that the one item you can be assured that will be in a welcome pack for new starters in a company will be a water bottle.

As for drinking fluids. Is it *really* necessary to drink *all* the time? Surely, the human body can sustain itself without water for a couple of hours. Why this need to be in possession of seemingly permanently affixed bottles of water to our person is beyond me.

Of course, there are many situations in which *not* having a water bottle is irresponsible. For example, when hiking, doing exercise in a location without water facilities, or travelling when no water is available. But we seem to like clutching on our water bottles much like a baby will clutch on his milk bottle. From cradle to grave, man will have one hand firmly attached to a bottle containing some liquid. Personally, I'd prefer whiskey, but that's another story!

Call me old-school, but I'm one of those guys who prefers to get a glass from the office kitchen and help myself to some cold filtered water. If there's a jug available, I'll fill that up and take it to my desk. When I'm thirsty, I'll decant it into my glass and drink it with a little civility and with some well-mannered deportment. Whereas, next to me, likely would be someone else swilling away noisily in an uncouth way through his grody-looking sports flask, much like drinking a yard of ale. All down his shirt are little spots of water coming through the sides because he just can't get enough water down him. It's strange that most office environments come kitted out with great glassware and filtered water, yet so many prefer slurping away from their smelly slimy bottles.

Same thing happens on trains home from work. Predictably so, there'll be those who've just *got* to have their bottle or flask of water glued to their hand slurping it away in that almost signalling way to suggest that *everyone* needs to have a bottle of water to survive the day. Can't they wait until they get home? Are they going to die of thirst mid-transit from office to home? I think not.

Then there's the kids bottles for schools and extracurricular activities. Why do kids need to have water bottles whilst in the classroom? Wasn't this the whole point of the water fountain? You ask the teacher to be excused for a drink of water? And, of course, you got to ensure they remember to bring them back home

because I am certain I am not the only parent who had to cough up money for more water bottles on a frequent basis because they either got lost or damaged.

Surely, a water fountain would suffice, but no, in our age of paranoia of germs and, of course, viruses, we don't like the idea of using drinking fountains do we? But saying that, you know what it's like to wash an awkwardly shaped plastic drinking bottle. There's no way you can wash the inner lining properly unless you've got something that looks like a giant test tube cleaner. Also, we know that plastic isn't as easy to clean as glass and seldom do we put them in the dishwasher because they either melt or don't stand up properly leaving pools of water inside the bottle. Metal is better but, then again, knowing that many metals corrode in time and without knowing the condition of the inner lining, this does not bode much better than plastic. As for the connecting pieces that go to your mouth, how many people diligently clean these to a high standard? Not many. Perhaps this is the biggest reason I do not like drinking bottles. They're often quite unhygienic and a paradise for germs.

All in all, how *did* we survive before all this water bottle nonsense?