



TIPS TO INCREASE YOUR ENERGY LEVEL

1. Increase your magnesium intake:

Eating a balanced diet can help ensure your vitamin and mineral needs are met. But if you still find yourself too pooped to pop, you could have a slight magnesium deficiency, Heller says.

"This mineral is needed for more than 300 biochemical reactions in the body, including breaking down glucose into energy," Heller says. "So when levels are even a little low, energy can drop."

In a study done at the Department of Agriculture's Human Nutrition Research Center in Grand Forks, ND., women with magnesium deficiencies had higher heart rates and required more oxygen to do physical tasks than they did after their magnesium levels were restored. In essence, their bodies were working harder which, over time, says Heller, can leave you feeling depleted.

The recommended daily intake of magnesium is around 300 milligrams for women and 350 milligrams for men. To make sure you're getting enough, Heller suggests:

- Add a handful of almonds, hazelnuts, or cashews to your daily diet.
- Eat more whole grains, particularly bran cereal.
- Eat more fish, especially halibut.

2. Walk around the block:

While it may seem as if moving about when you feel exhausted is the quickest route to feeling more exhausted, the opposite is true. Experts say that increasing physical activity -- particularly walking -- increases energy.

"I like walking because it's accessible, easy to do, doesn't need training or equipment, and you can do it anywhere," says Rita Redberg, MD, science adviser to the American Heart Association's "Choose To Move" program.

In experiments done by Robert Thayer, PhD, at California State University, a brisk 10-minute walk not only increased energy, but the effects lasted up to 2 hours. And when the daily 10-minute walks continued for 3 weeks, overall energy levels and mood were lifted.

3. Take a power nap:

Research has shown that both information overload and pushing our brains too hard can zap energy. But studies by the National Institutes of Mental Health found that a 60-minute "power nap" can not only reverse the mind-numbing effects of information overload, but it may also help us to better retain what we have learned.

4. Don't skip breakfast -- or any other meal:

"Studies show that folks who eat breakfast report being in a better mood, and have more energy throughout the day," says Heller.

Her personal theory, she says, is that breaking the fast soon after rising supplies your body with a jolt of fuel that sets the tone for the whole day.

And studies published in the journal *Nutritional Health* found that missing any meal during the day led to an overall greater feeling of fatigue by day's end.

5. Reduce stress and deal with anger:

One of the biggest energy zappers is stress, says psychologist Paul Baard, PhD.

"Stress is the result of anxiety, and anxiety uses up a whole lot of our energy," says Baard, a sports psychologist at Fordham University in the Bronx, NY.

Like worry or fear, Baard says, stress can leave you mentally and physically exhausted -- even if you've spent the day in bed. More commonly, he says, low but chronic levels of stress erode energy levels, so over time, you find yourself doing less and feeling it more.

In much the same way, unexpressed anger can give a one-two punch to your energy level.

6. Drink more water and less alcohol:

You may already know that it's easy to confuse signals of hunger with thirst (we think we need food when we really need water). But did you know that thirst can also masquerade as fatigue?



MOVE & BE WELL

"Sometimes, even slight dehydration can leave you feeling tired and lethargic," says nutritionist Keith Ayooob, EdD, RD, an associate professor at the Albert Einstein School of Medicine in New York and author of The Uncle Sam Diet.

The solution is simple: a tall, cool glass of water. This is particularly important to boost energy after exercise when your body is likely to be craving fluids, Ayooob says. Conversely, Heller says, if you find yourself frequently fatigued even after a good night's sleep, try cutting down on alcohol during the evening hours.

'While alcohol initially helps you fall asleep, it also interferes with deep sleep, so you're not getting the rest you think you are -- even if you sleep a full 8 hours," she says.

By cutting down on alcohol before bedtime, you'll get a better night's rest, which is bound to result in more energy the next day.

7. Eat more whole grains and less sugar:

The key here is keeping blood sugar balanced so energy is constant.

"When you're eating a sweet food, you get a spike in blood sugar, which gives you an initial burst of energy," Heller says. "But that's followed by a rapid drop in blood sugar, which in turn can leave you feeling very wiped out."

Do that enough times a day, she says, and by evening you're feeling exhausted.

"But, if you eat a lot of whole grains, which provide a slow and steady release of fuel, your energy will be consistent and balanced, so by day's end you'll feel less tired," says Heller.

Indeed, a study published recently in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition found that eating more whole grains helped increase the body's sensitivity to insulin, allowing for that slow and steady release.

8. Have a power snack:

Power snacking is more than just eating between meals, Ayooob says. He suggests a treat that combines protein, a little fat, and some fiber -- like peanut butter on a whole-wheat cracker, or some yogurt with a handful of nuts.

"The carbs offer a quick pick-me-up, the protein keeps your energy up, and the fat makes the energy last," he tells WebMD.

9. Make it a latte:

Pair a quick caffeine hit with the sustaining power of protein by having a low-fat latte instead of just a cup of coffee, advises Ayooob.

"All that milk turns your java into a protein drink, which provides not only extra energy but extra calcium, which is good for your bones," he tells WebMD. Combine it with an ounce of almonds, he says, and the healthy fat will really tide you over -- while making you feel you're spoiling yourself silly!

Source: webmd.com/women/features/10-energy-boosters