

Energy Boosting Techniques: How to Increase Your Energy Levels and Keep Them There

By: Saurin Gandhi August 1, 2011

[This is in response to **Siddhi Khara's** Question: Tips to Keep Energy Levels Up. Thank You.]

Have you found that your attention span is getting shorter, that it is much harder to concentrate on tasks at hand, that your ability to be patient is diminishing, and as a result you become cranky or unhappy? Maintaining your energy throughout the day is much harder than it sounds and the lack of energy can cause all of these issues in your day-to-day life when performing even simple tasks. As a product of the past generations and the environment, technology has forced us to move out of the blue-collar labor force into more idle white-collar careers. As a result of this shift, our bodies struggle to find the energy we once had. In order to maximize our energy so that we don't feel like we need coffee or naps to keep us going throughout the day, there are plenty of useful tips that can jumpstart your path to gaining energy. In this article I will lay out a few tips you can do at home or around your community in order to gain more energy, I will suggest some energy-packed foods that you can eat to-go, and I will push you to make more difficult decisions when it comes to performing activities that will allow you to work productively at the envy of your co-workers.

Energy Boost: Exercise

Stretching

Stretching is an activity that not only should be emphasized, but rather is a necessary addition to your morning before any physical activity. As we get older, the range of motion of our joints decreases and it can be more and more difficult to climb stairs or bend down to pick something up. The benefits of stretching I cannot emphasize enough as it increases flexibility and decreases the risk of injury. It can increase blood flow, reduce muscle tension, and provide you with a boost of energy. When holding a stretch, don't go back and forth; rather hold a stretch for 8 counts. In addition, an activity I found works for me is standing on your toes. By standing on your toes you also increase circulation, giving you energy.



Morning Walk and Gym



It doesn't seem true, but repeated studies show increasing morning physical activity will keep your energy levels high via the release of endorphins and the increased flow of blood. Walking does not require the gym and even as little as 20 minutes a day has been shown benefit your heart and joint health over time. When finding a location to walk, I would suggest a park or somewhere where there are a lot of bright colors. Saturating your eyes with bright colors can stimulate your eyes and brain and give you the mood and start you were looking for. If you can't make it to the gym, do sets of push-ups and crunches. Push-ups are a universal toner for your body and is the most underrated body workout. If you can make it to the gym, I would suggest taking a look at my previous article, "Focus on Women's Health: The Perfect 1-Hour Workout" and gain energy while toning up and losing weight!

Meditation, Yoga, and Deep Breathing

These three techniques are shown to reduce your stress, ease your mind, and allow you to concentrate better on day-to-day tasks. The controlled movements and attentive focus given to your body reduces tension and can sharpen your mental state. By investing time in your body to keep it at a low level of stress can allow you to live a fuller, healthier, and happier life.



Energy Boost: Nutrition

Water and Tea: Energy Boosting Drinks

- **Water**
 - Water is essential for your body and enough of it can reduce your levels of fatigue. Drink 64 ounces a day and keep your body clearance of uric acid high!
- **Green Tea¹**
 - Green Tea's resume of healthy benefits to your daily life is nothing short of impressive. Green tea has been shown to have the potential to prevent cancer, heart disease, dementia, diabetes, stroke, as well as the ability to lower cholesterol and burn fat. Green Tea contains antioxidants that find and remove free radicals that cause DNA damage and promote mutation. Other food that contains good amounts of antioxidants include **blueberries, red wine, dark chocolate, grapes, beans, spices, potatoes, cranberries, dried prunes, strawberries, raspberries, and cooked artichoke.**
- **Black Tea²**
 - Often explained as the lesser of the teas due to its increased processing, Black Tea has also been shown to fight a variety of cancers ranging from breast, prostate, and stomach cancer. It can also prevent diarrhea, skin infections, heart disease, and tooth decay. Lastly it can reduce inflammation, cholesterol, and help to burn fat. Black Tea however does contain more caffeine than Green Tea and in order to maximize your energy and prevent odd sleeping habits, coffee or tea should not be taken after 3:00 PM. Although these benefits have been shown in recent research, they should not be taken as fact as more research is required to solidify the claims.
- **Oolong Tea³**
 - This tea helps to reduce weight by making the body burn its own fat for energy. Oolong Tea is essentially calorie free and speeds up your metabolism while reducing your cholesterol and risk of Type II Diabetes. It contains a rich source of antioxidants which boosts the health of your skin, immune system, and cleanses your body.
- **Herbal Tea**
 - Consumed daily, Herbal Tea can give you a more relaxed state of mind, can improve the health of your heart, can aid with digestion, and can promote energy. It usually contains Sarsaparilla which is what promotes the boost of energy you feel after having Herbal Tea.
- **Ginseng Tea**
 - Ginseng builds resistance to stress while improving energy levels. It has been shown to improve your focus, reaction time, boost your immune system, and improve circulation. On top of providing you with energy it has also been suggested as a cancer-prevention tea as it can reduce the risk of several different cancers.

Hidden Energy: Fiber, Magnesium, Potassium, B Vitamins, Coenzyme Q10, Vitamin C, and Protein:

- **Fiber:**
 - A diet high in fiber is one that can make your digestive process much smoother. The body needs fiber to soften your stool, easing constipation. Watery stools are also benefited by dietary fiber because the stool absorbs water and adds bulk. A diet high in fiber can also fight off hemorrhoids and can reduce blood pressure/inflammation. According to the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* it is also an effective weight loss agent, something you may not have known due to its ability to create a sense of fullness in your body, decreasing your hunger. Other facts about fiber you may not know include the fact that it can lower blood sugar levels. Soluble fiber is very important because it slows the absorption of sugars which can provide you with more energy over a longer period of time. High fiber foods include **nuts, grains, vegetables, beans, oats, and fruits.**
- **Magnesium and Potassium:**
 - Magnesium is necessary for a multitude of bodily activities that include maintenance of blood pressure and blood sugar, muscle function, bone strength, immune function, metabolism, and nerve activity. Adding magnesium to your diet may prove to be an effective way to gain energy that you may have not known before. Potassium is also essential for good kidney function, maintaining your electrolyte balance, and combating muscle weakness, irritability, fatigue, and heart issues. By eating more nuts and beans, such as: **almonds, hazelnuts,**

cashews, soybeans, (Inca) peanuts, kidney beans, pinto beans, and lima beans, baked beans along with fruits and vegetables including: **bananas, raisins, cantaloupe, prunes, papaya, apricot, spinach, artichokes, avocados, and potatoes**, you can increase your levels of magnesium and potassium which can give you the energy boost you look for daily⁴. Breakfast items high in these two minerals include **wheat bran, shredded wheat cereals, yogurt, and whole milk**. Other items high in magnesium and potassium include **fish**, such as **halibut**.

- **B Vitamins⁵**

- There are 11 B vitamins and each have their own beneficial function. Some of them include burning fats and glucose (B1), the creation of neurotransmitters (B6), and the repair of damaged DNA and donation of energy (B3). They work to ease stress, reduce the chance of heart disease (B9), lower cholesterol levels (Pantothenic Acid), increase the retention span of your memory (Choline and B12), relieve PMS, and treat depression or anxiety (Inositol). Getting a good amount of B vitamins will keep your focus and energy levels high.

- **Coenzyme Q10**

- Coenzyme Q10 functions as an antioxidant and finds and removes free radicals that can damage DNA. It helps recycle Vitamin E and can help support heart function, maintain energy levels, and increase oxygen utilization (more oxygen to the brain heightening our mental state and focus). In order to get the full effect of this beneficial supplement, it is necessary to have foods high in B6, including: **potato, bananas, garbanzo beans, pork loin, chicken breast, roast beef, fish, seeds, avocado, and tomatoes**.

- **Vitamin C**

- The benefits of vitamin C are vast, but when it comes to keeping energy levels high it is important because it helps you absorb the good nutrients from your food. In addition, chronic fatigue has always had an association with vitamin C deficiency and so if you get your daily vitamin C, you can fight the urge to nap or sit idle!

- **Protein**

- Snacking on protein will keep your energy levels high. Unlike carbohydrates, protein gives you energy slowly compared to the sugar rush or quick high of carbohydrates. Some food items that are packed with protein and make good snacks include: **nuts, seeds, eggs, chicken, beef, and tofu**.

Energy Boost: Miscellaneous Activities⁶

Switch Up the Wardrobe

Wearing bright colors and giving yourself a little more time to get ready in the morning may actually provide the boost you are looking for. In most cases, our energy levels are actually a result of our mental state of mind and if you are feeling active and happy, it may be because of a subtle change that increased your self-confidence or energy level. Hearing positive comments from your coworkers provide fuel and can give you that boost you need!

Splash Water on Your Face

Sometimes, it is as easy as a splash of water. Although it won't keep you awake, it will heighten your senses and focus while energizing you enough to get that snack or power through that task. Often people associate splashing their face with cold water as removing the stresses from that day. Make these types of associations and you will find you can be very optimistic in life!

Pump Up Some Music

Music always gets the brain going. Listening to a pumped-up tunes can get the blood flowing and often you will realize that time will fly by while listening to the songs you love!



Socialize and Laugh!

Often underrated, getting off of the online social networks and actually enjoying yourself with friends and family outside can give you the emotional and mental energy that can get you out of your funk! Laughing has always shown to be important in keeping yourself healthy and mentally fit so take advantage of keeping yourself healthy and energized while having fun!

It's Not Your Fault

Sometimes, our energy levels are just low because of bodily dysfunctions. Having thyroid problems or anemia can give you a constant feel for sluggishness so talk to your doctor if you have been having low levels of energy for an extended period of time.

Closing Remarks:

We all look for the easy fix to gain energy but it is not a matter of attaining the right foods and doing the exercise for one day. It is the development of habits that we carry throughout the next few months and eventually even longer periods. By creating the good habits now we can always go back to them later. After getting the proper amount of exercise, vitamins, minerals, protein, and other miscellaneous activities, you will be able to see an increase in energy and even an increased optimism that will be the envy of your family, friends, and co-workers.

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