

Daily habits that can 'suck' your energy

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We all have days when we feel completely exhausted. It's easy to blame a busy schedule or not getting enough sleep when feeling exhausted becomes a daily routine.

While stress and a busy schedule can certainly cause fatigue, there's a difference between being busy and being mentally exhausted from routine. " *Unlike situational stress, which often passes with a break or a change of pace, routine-related fatigue tends to linger,*" explains Sanam Hafeez, a NYC-based psychologist and director of *Comprehend the Mind*. You may notice that even on slower days, you still feel tired. This suggests that the problem isn't just with your schedule, but also with how you handle it. "Recognizing the problem is the first step to making healthier choices ," says Dr. Hafeez.

Here are **surprisingly common habits that may be silently draining your mental energy** .

Multitasking

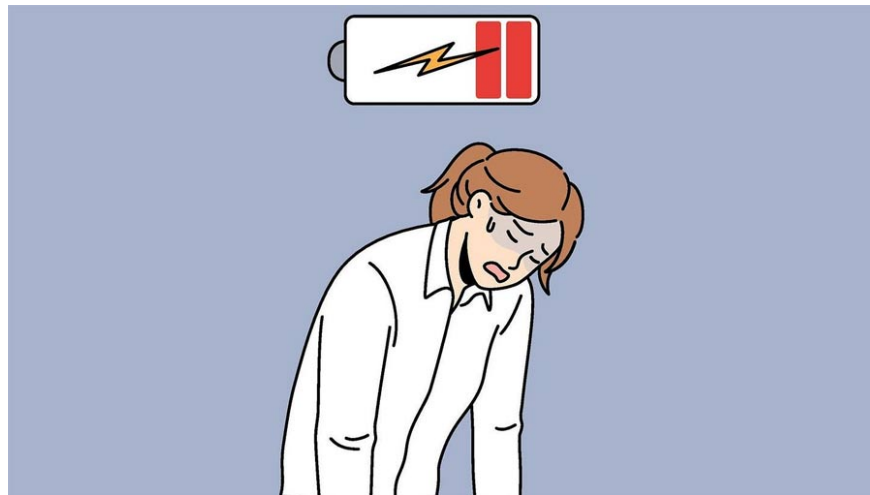
Constantly switching between tasks requires your brain to focus, which uses up extra energy. ' *Rather than saving time, it often leads to more mistakes and frustration* ,' says Dr. Hafeez. Multitasking adds to the clutter in your mind, slowing down productivity and, over time, increasing stress and making it harder to concentrate. You

may even find your memory lapses or you have trouble remembering information. Instead, focus on one task at a time, which allows your brain to work more efficiently. Taking regular breaks can also help you recharge and stay focused. By slowing down and being more mindful, you'll feel less stressed and more in control.

Delay

Procrastination can be mentally exhausting because your brain is constantly reminding you of unfinished tasks, causing constant stress and anxiety. The more you procrastinate, the bigger the task seems, which adds to your anxiety. All this mental pressure makes it difficult to focus on anything else.

One way to ease the burden is to break down all your tasks into smaller, more manageable steps so you don't get overwhelmed. Focus on getting started, not on finishing perfectly, as starting is the hardest part. Use reminders or timers to keep yourself on track and limit distractions.



please everyone

Constantly trying to please others, especially when it means putting your own needs last, can drain your mental energy.

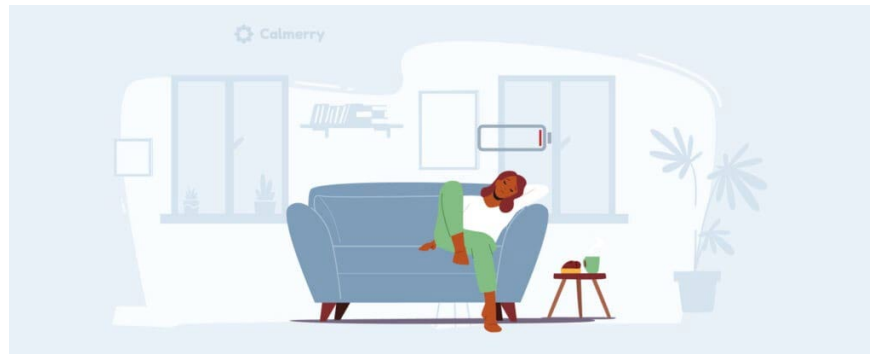
People-pleasing can lead to low self-esteem, as your worth begins to depend on how others perceive you. You may also feel resentment, even if you don't express it, because your needs are often overlooked. Start by setting small boundaries and examining how you feel. Be mindful of your motives and help others because you genuinely want to, not because you fear rejection.

Let clutter pile up

Visual clutter not only clutters your living space, it clutters your mind. Whether you're stressing about work, avoiding it, or strategizing how to deal with it, it all adds to your mental load.

Often, clutter starts small and builds up over time to the point where it becomes extremely distressing, leading to avoidance and the cycle repeats itself. Break the cycle by starting small. Try combining a daunting task, such as 30 minutes of cleaning, with a small pleasure.

For example, reward yourself with a favorite snack, drink, or episode of a movie while you're doing it or after you complete a 30-minute task. That way, your brain gets the reward and you're more likely to stick with it.



Reflection

Ruminating about fears, worries or troubles keeps your mind stuck in a worry loop. This is also mentally draining because people often feel as though their rumination is helping them in some way, when in fact it is leading to more anxiety. It is important for people to develop an understanding of the signs that they are ruminating, such as going over the same thing over and over again in their head, imagining the worst-case scenario and feeling stuck on a topic or thought.

Try cognitive distancing strategies, such as labeling thoughts and singing aloud, to help distance yourself from them rather than getting caught up in them. It doesn't help to try to stop rumination, but redirect it and realize that thoughts aren't facts, they're just thoughts.

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