

Simple tips to help you maintain energy all day long

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With the stress of everyday life and increasingly busy schedules, it can be nearly impossible to end your day on a healthy note without a cup of coffee in the afternoon - but that's not the only solution! You can follow these expert health tips to keep your body full of energy.

Balanced diet

While eating a balanced diet is a smart move for disease prevention and overall health, eating a nutrient-dense diet is also key to feeling alert and productive throughout the day, says Rhyann Geiger, RDN, a registered dietitian and founder of Phoenix Vegan Dietitian. 'Choosing healthy *foods like fruits, vegetables, beans, whole grains, nuts, and seeds, while avoiding too many fried foods high in saturated fat and foods high in added sugar, can help keep energy levels at optimal levels,* ' she says. For those who don't follow a plant-based diet, adding lean protein options like fish, lean meats, eggs, and low-fat dairy can also be part of a balanced eating routine.

Don't skip breakfast

Most of us have heard that breakfast is the most important meal of the day, because it can help maintain healthy energy levels throughout the day—even if you hit a mid-afternoon slump. ' *Your body has been fasting while you*

slept, and the fuel tank needs to be refilled,' says Annette Snyder, MS, RD, CSOWM, LD, nutritionist at Top Nutrition Coaching. 'Your body needs that fuel to move your muscles and fuel your brain. Breakfast not only gives you energy, but it also helps you focus, pay attention, and control hunger throughout the day.'



Protein-rich snacks

Protein should always be a priority when snacking for better energy levels, says Anar Allidina, MPH, RD, a registered dietitian in Toronto. 'It's tempting to reach for caffeine or sugar for an energy boost, but protein makes more sense for boosting energy by providing sustained fuel because it's broken down more slowly,' she says. 'This steady supply of energy prevents spikes and dips in blood sugar, helping us feel more energized.'

Protein-rich snacks like hard-boiled eggs, nuts, seeds, yogurt, or cheese are all great options. " *Try pairing a protein-rich snack with complex carbohydrates (i.e. fiber) to keep your energy levels more steady, such as nuts and fruit, cheese, and whole-grain crackers,* " adds Allidina.

Eat on time

In a busy day, we often find ourselves eating whenever we have a spare moment. However, timing our meals wisely can pay big dividends when it comes to sustained energy levels. 'About *three hours after a meal, our body's blood sugar levels naturally begin to drop, causing hunger,* ' says Rachel Gargano, MS, RD, CSSD, CBS, chief dietitian at Live it Up . ' *So are you feeling sluggish in the afternoon? You don't want to ignore it .* '

This means you should eat a snack about three hours after your main meal or eat another meal at that time. " *Prepare a combination snack (protein plus fiber) to eat between lunch and dinner to help you regain energy and give you the boost you need to get through the rest of the day,* " Gargano says.



Drink enough water

From improved digestion to enhanced skin health, there's no shortage of reasons why we're constantly encouraged to drink more water. Well, add better energy levels to the list, as water plays a huge role in staying alert. " *Even mild dehydration can lead to increased feelings of fatigue* ," says Kathleen Garcia-Benson, RDN, CSSD, LD, NASM-CPT, NBC-HWC, nutritionist at Top Nutrition Coaching.

If you find yourself needing to go to the bathroom too often, consider balancing your water intake with electrolytes found in fruits and vegetables to help you stay hydrated more effectively. But you don't have to rely on water alone to meet your hydration goals—herbal teas and non-caffeinated, sugar-free beverages count, too!

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