

55 Ways to Get More Energy

If you're tired all the time, a change in what you eat (diet) or what you do all day (activity pattern) may be all you need to turn things around 180°.

You won't be able to do everything on this list all the time. Add a few of these tips to your regular routine. Or mix them up to keep things interesting.

1. Change your socks for refreshment.

Bring a change of socks to work, and change your socks midway through the day. You'll be amazed at how much fresher you'll feel. This trick is especially handy on days with lots of walking — like during a hike or family outing to the amusement park.

2. Rock out loud.

Whether you work alone or in a room with coworkers, a quick one-song rock out loud session is an effective way to beat back exhaustion.

3. Get rid of the stuffy nose.

If allergies have your sinuses blocked, you may be feeling more tired and cranky. An over-the-counter allergy medication should clear up your sinuses (and your mind).

4. Work with your body's clock.

There is a natural ebb and flow of energy throughout the day. We start off sluggish after waking up, even after a solid 8 hours of sleep. Our energy peaks mid-morning, and it's natural to want a siesta in the afternoon. We get a second spike of energy in the early evening, followed by our lowest energy point just before bedtime. Once you understand this natural rhythm of energy throughout the day, you can work on the important tasks during your peak hours and avoid early afternoon snoozefests (meetings).

5. Have a piece of chocolate.

Not too much, but if you're going to have some candy, it might as well be chocolate. We get an endorphin buzz from chocolate (not to mention the energy

boost from the slight bit of caffeine chocolate contains). Dark chocolate has more caffeine than milk chocolate.

An afternoon snack of yogurt, berries, and nuts will provide the boost of energy to carry you through the day.

6. Have an afternoon power snack.

A small healthy snack that is low in sugar and has protein and/or fiber a couple hours after lunch helps you finish off the day strong. Some suggestions:

- mixed nuts
- nonfat yogurt
- apple and peanut butter
- frozen berry smoothie
- trail mix
- granola bar

7. Hit up the water cooler for inconsequential banter.

A little midday chat is a great pick-me-up for your tired mind. It works because it gets your mind on zero-stress thoughts for a while. The mental break for just a few minutes will revitalize you.

8. Eat lots of berries.

Especially berries that are blue, red, or purple. The color comes from anthocyanins, a powerful antioxidant, that boosts energy. Any kind of berry will contain tons. All types of berries help fight fatigue and are delicious to boot!

9. Wear brighter colors.

This trick is related to the mood you project to people, and the reciprocating mood they project towards you. If you wear dark, somber colors, you project a dark, somber attitude, and people will respond to you with a somber attitude. If you wear bright, happy colors, you'll get that attitude projected towards you, which will boost your own mood and energy levels.

10. Take a power nap.

But do it in your chair. Don't lie down on the sofa or you won't get back up. Keep it short: 5-10 minutes max. Any longer and it will have the opposite effect of knocking you out for the rest of the day.

11. Flirt.

It's fun, it's harmless (keep it innocent), and it's effective. Nothing quite gets the heart pumping like a little flirting. Amore gets the blood flowing.

12. Aromatherapy with lavender.

Research has shown that the lavender scent increases alertness. Test subjects were given math tests before and after 3 minutes of lavender aromatherapy. The group completed the tests faster and more accurately after aromatherapy.

13. Wake up at the same time everyday.

Including weekends. This sets your body clock. Otherwise, you'll be wide awake when you should be asleep. Or worse, asleep when you should be awake (dozing off in a meeting is embarrassing). The key is to go to bed at the same time every night. If you need to reset your sleep cycle in one day, stop eating for the 16 hours before the time you want to wake up.

14. Drink lots of water.

Dehydration is a sinister cause of fatigue because it slowly creeps up on you. If you consistently drink less than 8 cups of water a day, you may be sluggish all the time. Get a 32 oz (1 quart, 4 cups) water bottle. Your goal is to polish off 2 of those a day. Try it for a week and see if your general energy level increases.

15. Use caffeine wisely.

Coffee and caffeinated sodas can boost your alertness, but be careful about letting it be a habitual crutch. The temptation to drink more caffeine to get even more energy will be strong. Eventually you'll be downing 5 double-shot espressos a day just to function. Drink coffee earlier in the day to avoid insomnia, which will make the next day worse. Use caffeine in moderation. Coffee provides a shot of energy, but can also become a counterproductive dependence. Photo by visualpanic / Flickr

16. Avoid energy drinks.

Energy drinks provide a near-instant hyperactivity boost, but they always result in a crash. Energy drinks are like energy credit cards — you're spending future energy to get short-term energy. The resulting energy deficit gets worse until you hit energy bankruptcy.

17. Eat low glycemic (low or complex carb) foods.

Trade in good, complex carbohydrates (low glycemic index) for the bad, simple carbs (sugar). Carbohydrates with a high glycemic index means the sugar is more easily digested by your body. That results in a spike in energy followed by a low-sugar crash.

High glycemic index foods to avoid include white bread, potato, and high sugar foods (like sodas). Low glycemic foods (the good carb foods) include fruits and vegetables, grains (eg., whole wheat bread), low-carb foods (eg., meats), and pasta. Check this [chart of foods and their glycemic index](#) before your next trip to the grocery store.

18. Eat more soluble fiber.

Soluble fiber is the kind that slows down the rate of absorption of sugars. It evens out your energy levels by preventing a sugar high and crash. (By the way, insoluble fiber is the kind that prevents constipation.) Don't worry too much about which kind of fiber you're getting — they're both good for you. Rotate more high soluble fiber foods like nuts, grains, fruits, plant matter (vegetables), beans, and oats into your diet.

19. Get your Vitamin C.

Get a daily dose of citrus fruits (eg., orange juice in the morning) or a vitamin C tablet. Study after study shows the correlation between citric acid deficiency and chronic fatigue. Vitamin C also helps you [absorb more nutrients from food](#).

20. Sniff some citrus.

In addition to the Vitamin C, citrus scents (like orange, lemon and lime) stimulate alertness. So lather on some of that lemon scented lotion.

21. Cover the B Vitamins.

B vitamins cover a range of bodily functions, but most B vitamins are involved in the process of converting blood sugar into usable energy. To ensure you get the proper amount of B vitamins, eat a balanced diet.

22. Quit smoking.

Ex-smokers frequently report an energy boost of 2-3x when they quit smoking. Nicotine affects your sleep, so you don't get as good a night's sleep. That makes you cranky, frustrated and tired the next day. Which leads to more smoking. It's a vicious energy sapping cycle.

23. Play to relax.

Playing a game keeps your mind working (versus, say, watching TV), but doesn't have any of the energy-sapping stresses of work. Go ahead and play that quick game of Scrabble on Facebook, but have a strict time limit if you don't want your boss to say something.

24. Eat smaller, more frequent meals.

Snack throughout the day. By eating smaller but more frequent "meals", you will maintain a steady dose of energy instead of experiencing food comas. Don't snack on fatty and sugar laden junk food though. You may get a short 30 minute burst of hyperalertness, but it'll be quickly followed by a debilitating crash.

25. Enjoy a cup of tea.

In a recent study, University College London researchers noted that drinking a cup of tea 4-6 times a day reduces stress hormone levels in your body. The study's results suggest "drinking black tea may speed up our recovery from the daily stresses in life."

26. Splash some water on your face.

Just letting the cool water hit your face washes off the grime and stresses of the day. You could also jump in the pool or take a shower for the same effect. Showers stimulate the circulatory system and metabolism. Get wet to feel more energetic.

27. Stand up, stretch and take a couple of deep breaths.

Stretch your arms, back, legs, and neck. Take a deep breath through your nose, hold it, and let it out slowly and forcefully. Repeat several times. This will take 30 seconds and will be an instant fix. When you sit back down, you'll have the clear head and fresh feeling needed to power through the tough/boring task in front of you.

28. Get your world organized.

When your world is organized, you don't have to expend mental energy keeping track of a million things. Here's how to take back control of your time and productivity:

29. Look on the bright side.

A generally upbeat and optimistic outlook on life will keep your energy level up. Yes, the worst thing that can happen might actually happen, but giving it too much worry will only drain you. Look for the positive in every situation and you won't be so tired.

30. Take a mini-vacation.

Take one day and just do whatever you want. No work, no chores, no errands. Enjoy your one full day of vacation, then come back to work more motivated and energetic.

31. Eat a satisfying breakfast but a light lunch.

A heavy lunch, especially one with lots of carbs or fat (like a burger combo) will hit you as soon as you get back to the office. And it'll be a sluggishness that lasts to the end of the day. Eat a big breakfast instead. It provides the fuel you need for the day, at the time when your body needs it the most. Not only will you avoid the afternoon food coma, the big breakfast will make you more productive in the mornings. Double win.

32. Choose protein over fat or carbs.

Foods with lean (low fat) protein help you feel fuller for longer. It also prevents blood sugar spikes, giving you more steady energy. Lean protein foods include fish and other seafood, lean pork, or chicken breasts ("white meat").

33. Shed a few pounds.

The things you do to lose weight — exercise, drink water, avoid simple sugars — are actions that also have a positive effect on your energy level. Even better, the actual loss of excess fat provides an energy boost of its own. You'll feel "lighter" and things that use to make you breathless will now seem much easier. Losing weight provides a double-impact to boosting your energy.

But be careful with fad and/or crash diets. Cutting out too many calories (ie., energy your body needs) too fast will cause you to be even more tired. Take small steps, and make it a lifestyle change so you shed the fat for life.

34. Listen to tunes while you work.

It's well known that our brain's pleasure centers light up when we hear music. Throwing on the headphones and listening to any music you like while working will give you a productivity boost.

35. Start exercising.

If you have a fairly sedentary life, just the idea of starting an intense exercise program is exhausting. But if you go slow, literally taking one step at a time, you can go from being sedentary to becoming a runner just like Leo.

36. Eliminate stress.

Stress is draining. Sometimes it's worth it, like when you're on a deadline to delivery a big project. Sometimes it's just a waste of energy. Leo says,

Certain things in our life just cause us to be more exhausted than others, with less value. Identify them, and cut them out. You'll have much more energy and much less stress. Happiness ensues.

37. Have more sex.

Talk about an endorphin rush! If you keep those endorphins flowing regularly, you'll have more natural energy. Literally, more bounce to your step.

38. Move gym time to the morning.

A lot of people go to the gym after work. Try going to the gym in the morning instead to get energy that lasts all day. Sure, you'll have to wake up an hour or two earlier, but you get that time back at night. That exercise in the morning gets the endorphins flowing, which keeps you happy and productive the rest of the day. By exercising in the morning instead of at night, you spend the same amount of time at the gym, but get the added benefit of having more energy at work.

39. Purge low-value tasks from your todo list.

If you have a ridiculously long todo list that is impossible to get all the way through, you'll feel tired just thinking about the todo list. If you want to actually cross off tasks from your todo list, you'll need to throw out the crap tasks that you don't want/need to deal with. Either delegate those tasks, move them into a second "nice but not critical" list, or just admit that they're probably never going to get done and move them to the "maybe/someday" list. Shortening your todo list to just the most critical, must-do tasks will give you the "energy" to start knocking out those tasks.

40. Avoid the mid-day cocktail.

If you want to function in the afternoon, avoid alcohol at lunch. Even if it's just one beer. Alcohol's sedative effects will take hours to recover from, killing the rest of your afternoon.

41. Get a massage.

Loosen up those tight muscles and you'll feel more relaxed. A more relaxed you means a happier and more productive you. Trade a quick shoulder rub with a coworker after lunch to perk both of you up for the rest of the afternoon.

42. Dress up.

Feeling better about yourself has a magical way of giving you more energy. Put just a tad more effort into looking your best for work, and you'll get compliments from coworkers that will make you feel better — and make you a perkier, more energetic worker bee.

43. Don't drink yourself to sleep.

Alcohol keeps your body from entering deep sleep, so even if you get the same hours of sleep, you won't feel as rested. Limit alcohol the hours before bedtime to get the best night's sleep.

44. Get a thyroid test from your doctor.

If you are chronically fatigued, it may be a symptom of hypothyroidism. That's when not enough thyroid hormone is produced, with fatigue as one of its symptoms. Visit the doctor if you've been tired for a long time and haven't had a checkup in a while.

45. Take a walk outside.

Getting outside for some fresh air, a change of scenery, and a quick walk to get your blood going will do wonders for your mood and motivation. Seeing the sun is a signal to your body that it's not bedtime yet.

46. Lower your blood pressure.

Besides being a risk factor for a heart attack, high blood pressure makes you fatigued. If you haven't seen your doctor lately, go in and get your blood pressure checked.

47. Rotate yogurt into your diet.

Yogurt with live cultures keep your digestive system clean, which helps your body absorb all the nutrients from food. That makes you healthier and more energetic. Yogurt is also a good low-fat snack.

48. Have a laugh.

Laughter is great medicine for exhaustion. Make sure you laugh regularly to keep your mood up. Seek out funny people or subscribe to a daily email joke. I like the geeky comic xkcd for a quick smile. What's your favorite quick funny pick-me-up?

49. Add more cardio to your gym time.

The aerobic exercise gets your blood pumping. It builds stamina and endurance, which is useful for both triathalons and neverending department meetings.

50. Take up yoga.

The stretching, slow controlled movements, and focus on breathing reduces tension (and stress). The benefits include better sleep, feeling more relaxed, and being mentally sharper.

51. Eat eggs.

When people have eggs (mostly protein) for breakfast, versus bagels (all carbs), they feel more energy and eat less at the next meal. Protein makes you feel fuller without feeling stuffed, and they provide a steady stream of energy for your body (versus the quick high and crash of carbohydrates). Eggs are a great for breakfast or as an addition to a lunch salad.

52. Get a good night's sleep.

We need 7-8 hours of sleep to be fully rested. Consistently sleeping less than 6 hours a night builds up a “sleep debt” that is hard to recover from. If you're getting enough sleep, it should take you up to 30 minutes to fall asleep. If you're falling asleep as soon as your head hits the pillow (or while sitting at your desk), that's a symptom of sleep deprivation.

53. Get more ginseng.

Ginseng is well-known to have energy boosting properties. It is an adaptogen, which means it build resistance to stress and boosts energy. A ginseng supplement or sipping tea with ginseng can help improve energy.

54. Socialize.

Turn off the Internet and go socialize with friends. Humans are social animals, and we need regular socializing to keep ourselves in peak health and energy.

55. Get on your toes.

Roll up and down on your toes. This stimulates your circulatory system, which will deliver much-needed oxygen and fuel (glucose) throughout your body. You'll be more energized and sharper. You can do this right now.