

Everyday energy boosters



Want to get more out of each day? Read these six tips to lift your energy and wellbeing reserves.

Prasanna Panditharatne Consulting Psychologist

Summer has landed and you're ready to take on your Christmas shopping, pre-holiday work out, and of course, those December deadlines. You're going to need energy by the forklift load. Read on.

Energy booster 1: Discover the 'super foods'

'Super foods' are nutrient-dense foods that provide essential vitamins and minerals for good health, vitality and longevity. The secret to including super foods in your diet is to eat rainbows! Choose the most vibrant, richly-colored fruits and vegetables. Some of these are as follows:

Blueberries - These brightly colored fruits deliver high levels of antioxidants called anthocyanins. Anthocyanins have been shown to help prevent blood clotting, protect body cells and have anti-inflammatory actions.

Spinach - Popeye was half right and half wrong! He was right in eating spinach which is a true super food, but not because it is high in iron. Spinach does contain a mix of plant nutrients and antioxidants including folate, vitamin K, lutein and zeaxanthin. Folate is important for women planning a pregnancy and for heart health. Higher lutein and zeaxanthin intakes have been associated with a lowered risk of macular degeneration, a leading cause of blindness.

Kiwifruit - This is high in vitamin C and potassium, as well as being a low-fat source of vitamin E. It contains zinc, magnesium, folate and dietary fibre, as well as powerful antioxidants. Other fruits to include are tomatoes, sweet potato, broccoli and mangoes.

Oats - It is true that porridge is the perfect breakfast food! Oats are rich in beta-glucan, a soluble fibre which may help lower cholesterol, help control blood sugar levels and help your stomach to feel satisfied for longer.

Fish - Rich in omega-3 fatty acids, fish offers protection for heart health and inflammatory conditions like arthritis.

Energy booster 2: Stay active

Be active every day in as many ways as you can! Benefits of exercise include better weight control, decreased depression, reduced disease risk, more energy, prevention of osteoporosis, better mood and improved body image. Put together 30 minutes of moderate intensity exercise most days of the week. Vary your activities to work your muscles, heart, bones and brain. Also combine stamina, strength and suppleness activities.

Energy booster 3: Top up your energy nutrients

Cars burn petrol to get the energy they need to move. Your body burns food to produce energy. Many nutrients play a vital role in making energy inside your cells. Deficiencies of these nutrients can cause fatigue, low blood sugar levels, sugar cravings, muscle twitches, insomnia and even hair loss. Some of the main nutrients are:

B vitamins - are essential for conversion of sugar into energy.

Chromium - which works with insulin in moving sugar into your cells, where it can be burned to produce energy.

Iron - is an essential part of haemoglobin, the protein in red blood cells. It carries oxygen from the lungs to the tissues. Oxygen is needed for energy production in cells.

Zinc - is important for growth, vision, smell, taste, immune health, skin and energy production.

Selenium - is an antioxidant that protects cells from free radical damage.

Magnesium - is essential for energy production in cells. Deficiencies can cause muscle twitches, cramps, fatigue, insomnia, stress.

Iodine - is used to make thyroid hormone, required for maintaining overall metabolic rate.

Beware the nutrient robbers! These include caffeine, alcohol, cigarettes and some medications.

Energy booster 4: Do a detox

Number of programs designed to help you improve the functioning of your digestive system and help your body eliminate waste more effectively.

It is based on the naturopathic belief that health problems may be caused by the digestive system not working efficiently.

A detox program should work in four ways by:

- 1. Helping the entire digestive system function as it was designed to
- 2. Assisting sluggish liver function
- 3. Helping to maintain optimum levels of friendly bacteria in the intestines
- 4. Gently helping cleanse the bowel

Energy booster 5: Make some 'me time'

Taking time out is essential in maintaining balance and revitalising ourselves. It is important to recognise that we need time to relax in order to feel energetic! Consider these suggestions:

- Hop into a warm bath - remember that the world won't stop if you don't get something done and by keeping stress at bay, things will be a lot easier to accomplish.
- Plan well to help free up your time.
- Delegate, prioritise and sometimes put your needs first.

Energy booster 6: Find your passion

The key to feeling fully vital is to be connected to a purpose, to have a passion. Your spirit will be ignited when you have a clear reason to live and work. As Petrea King says: "Your life matters. You are not here by accident. You are on the right planet. You are not here for the kids, the career, the mortgage. You are here to make the journey of your life, via the kids, the career, the mortgage. The journey matters more than the destination."