

BOOSTING ENERGY: 7 TIPS TO COMBAT FATIGUE

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Causes of Fatigue

Thyroid imbalance

Adrenal Imbalance

Clinical depression

Seasonal Affective Disorder
(SAD)

A virus

Too little sleep

Sleeping in (no kidding)

Sleep apnea

Allergies

Most medications

Boredom

Anxiety

Nutrient deficiencies/poor diet

Fatigue: It's one of the health complaints I hear most about from clients. I was once plagued by chronic fatigue myself, severe enough to keep me from reaching for my coveted goals and even from going out with friends. And, of course, no one wants to go to a tired nutritionist. I had to figure out why I was so tired, and how to turn it around.

After years of searching, I discovered strategies and energy-boosting remedies for all kinds of energy problems. My vitality is at an all time high and one of my great joys is helping others tap their own energy source. I often speak on Eating For Energy to groups including Kaiser Permanente, The UCSF Nurse Leadership Foundation, pharmaceutical companies and sales groups. These tips work for mothers, nurses, CEO's, sales teams, and they can work for you.

Although you should always address underlying causes of fatigue, the following have helped boost energy associated with a variety of causes:

1. **Drink enough water.** Dehydration is a big cause of fatigue. Thirst is not always a reliable indicator. The one-size-fits-all *8-glasses of water a day* rule is not the right approach either. You may need three glasses of water a day or three liters. If your constitution is *cold* and *damp**, or you eat a diet rich in vegetables, fruits, soups and stews, you need less water than if you are *heated up* and *dry** or eat lots of meat, bread and packaged foods.
2. **Back off the Sweets and Carbs.** Nothing zaps your energy like a steady diet of muffins, cookies, bread and pasta. Americans eat too many carbs. Simple carbohydrates wreak havoc on blood sugar, which leads to low energy. If your breakfast is generally pancakes, cold cereal, sweet yogurt or toast and jam, you're probably having too many simple carbs. Try starting out your day with sausage, cheese, turkey bacon, eggs, and/or beans. Put walnuts and butter on your oatmeal, not maple syrup and raisins. Avoid pasta-only meals. See my [Shopping Guide](#) for choosing healthy breakfast meats and cheese.

The Afternoon Slump: 5 Quick Fixes

Vitamin C: A disease-fighting antioxidant, longevity aid and energy booster; try 1-2 grams of powdered sodium ascorbate mixed into a tall glass of water with lemon.

Powdered Greens: Chlorophyll-rich greens mixed into water make an energizing cocktail. Try chlorella, blue green algae or barley green.

Siberian Ginseng: For restoring vigor, especially when drained from stress, try 1000-2000 mg in capsule form or 1 tsp tincture 2-3 times a day.

Hot Green Tea: A source of slow-release caffeine and other mild stimulants, antioxidants, and cancer-fighting agents. Brew high quality loose leaf teas.

Breathe: Take three deep and quick in-breaths. Finish with three full inhalations and three long, slow exhales.

- 3. Eat Your Greens.** Cooked spinach, broccoli, collards and other leafy greens are a powerhouse of energy-boosters, including chlorophyll. At the center of this photosynthesizing pigment is magnesium, a co-factor for many energy-generating reactions in the body. A 2002 study published in the *Journal of Nutrition* found people with low magnesium levels tire more quickly during exercise than those with adequate stores. Virtually all depressed patients and over half of the general public are magnesium deficient. Greens also provide energizing B vitamins. Magnesium and several B vitamins are needed to make serotonin and thus to keep us happy and at the top of our game. According to Chinese medicine, greens – with their upward, quick growing pattern -- stimulate life energy, or Qi.
- 4. Exercise and Breathe.** Studies show regular aerobic exercise improves mental performance and physical well-being. It works better than drugs at alleviating depression. The deeper breaths and circulation-stimulating effects of a daily walk, hike, bike ride, swim, or dance keep us physically energized and mentally alert. Make sure your exercise is aerobic. I once attended a highly advanced aerobics class. For 90 minutes, I kicked, jumped and leaped as hard as I could to keep up with the class and then for the next 24 hours I was too tired to get off the couch. Anaerobic metabolism results from high-intensity exercise that uses up blood sugar, not fat, thus leaving you feeling depleted, tired and probably craving sugar.
- 5. Get in Yang* Foods at Breakfast and Lunch.** According to Chinese medicine, meat, eggs, fish, poultry, nuts, and seeds are *yang foods**; they provide that get-up-and-go energy many of us need to get things done. Studies show protein foods at breakfast increase focus, mood and energy. Protein foods at lunch sustain afternoon energy and prevent sugar cravings. After 20 years as a vegetarian, I grew sluggish, cold, and lethargic (a *yin* pattern*). When I began adding fish and chicken to my diet, my energy quickly turned around and I was able to turn my knowledge into a book and

a series of presentations. Not everyone responds this way to eating animal protein. There is also a huge difference between nutrient-rich [grass-fed, humane-raised meats](#) verses potentially toxic feedlot meats. Notice how these foods impact your energy.

6. **Get sunlight.** Shunning sunshine and slathering yourself with sunscreen can lead to fatigue and disease. You need sunshine on your skin to make vitamin D**, a nutrient commonly lacking in Americans. Deficiency causes fatigue and muscle weakness. It also leads to several kinds of cancer and weak bones. Sunlight is not only the best source of vitamin D, it helps reduce cortisol, the stress chemical that can leave your adrenals exhausted. Twenty minutes of sunlight on your arms and legs from 10am to 2pm in most parts of the world does the trick. Burning is not helpful.
7. **Plan Something Exciting.** There's nothing like looking forward to a get-away, implementing a new idea, starting a new project, or learning something new. Such anticipated activities stimulate your mind and give your body reason to give you energy.

*All things, including food and human qualities, can be described as relatively yin or yang. To see how yin or yang food impacts specific human characteristics, [** click here to see my article on Yin and Yang Balance and Food Choice.](#)

[** Click here to learn more about vitamin D](#)

If you suffer low energy or a health problem, turn your life around with a personalized nutrition plan. [Click here for programs and rates.](#)

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