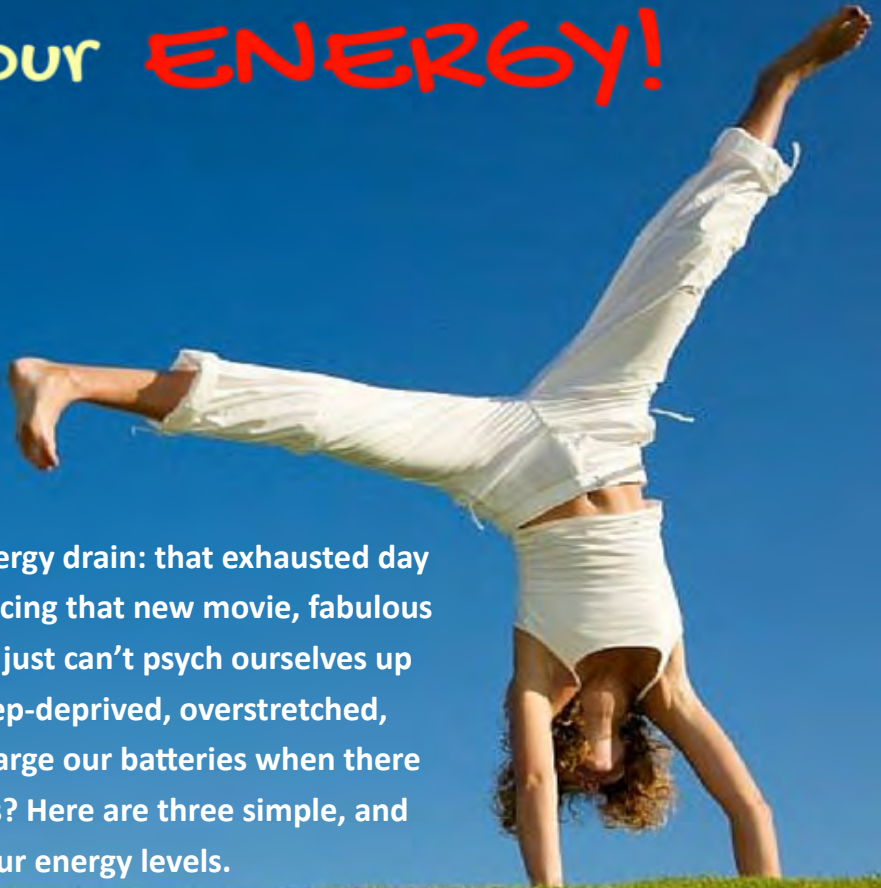


BOOST your ENERGY!



Everyone is familiar with all-out energy drain: that exhausted day (or night) when no matter how enticing that new movie, fabulous shoe sale, or friendly barbecue, we just can't psych ourselves up to go. Energy is essential in this sleep-deprived, overstretched, high-speed world. How do we recharge our batteries when there is a constant drain on our resources? Here are three simple, and probably familiar, ways to boost your energy levels.

Watch your diet. Boost your energy with fatty acids and protein from lean meats like chicken and turkey, fatty fish like salmon and tuna, and nuts. While eating large amounts can feed your body more material for energy, it also increases your risk for weight gain, which can lower energy levels. When lack of energy is an issue, it's better to eat small meals and snacks every few hours than three large meals a day. Also, it is critical that you drink enough water. If your body is short on fluids, one of the first signs is a feeling of fatigue. Although individual needs vary, the Institute of Medicine recommends men should aim for about 15 cups (3.7 liters) of fluids per day, and women about 12 cups (2.7 liters). Besides water and beverages like coffee, tea, and juices, you can also get your fluids from liquid-heavy fruits and vegetables that are up to 90% water, such as cucumbers, zucchini, squash, strawberries, citrus fruit, and melons.

Get plenty of sleep. Most of us know that 8 hours of sleep per night is optimal. But studies are suggesting that the actual time you fall asleep is important too. Sleeping from 1 am to 9 am is not thought to be as restorative as sleeping from 10 pm to 6 am. The reason why is because hormone secretion, body temperature, digestion, and other important restorative processes follow a 24-hour cycle linked to natural light exposure. The later in the evening we fall asleep and the later in the morning we wake up, the more out-of-sync our cycle becomes. If you've ever gone to bed at 3 am and woken up the next morning at 11 am, you may have noticed that you feel worn down and not fully "with it."

Stick to an exercise routine. Exercise can boost energy levels by raising energy-promoting neurotransmitters in the brain, such as dopamine, norepinephrine, and serotonin, which is why you feel so good after a workout. Exercise also makes muscles stronger and more efficient, so they need less energy. It doesn't really matter what kind of exercise you do, but consistency is key. Some research has suggested that as little as 20 minutes of low-to-moderate aerobic activity, three days a week, can help you feel more energized.



*This healthy living information is provided by
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