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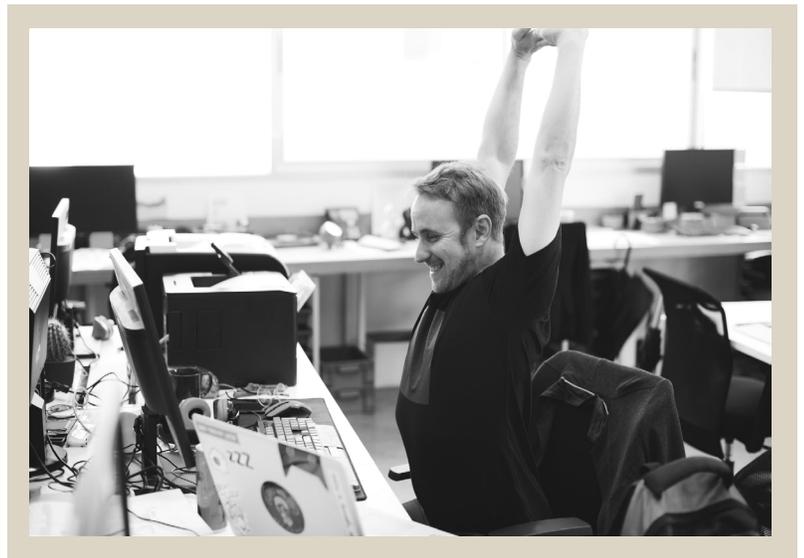
# Wellness Wednesday

## Seven Ways To Boost Your Energy That Are More Effective Than Coffee

If your energy reserve has reached drought status, consider yourself in the majority. Roughly 75 percent of Americans feel physical symptoms of stress, including missing energy, according to a recent survey by the American Psychological Association.

Odds are there are several tiny habits you have that make you incredibly lethargic. So it stands to reason that there are little things you can start doing to balance the energy scales.

Take a look at the small changes you can make today that will help you feel more energized tomorrow:



### 1. Double Your Chews

Chewing is a super-important part of the digestion process. But beyond that, getting your munch on makes it easier for your body to break down the nutrients in your grub and convert it into energy, said Edwina Clark, head of nutrition and editorial content at Raised Real. Digestion is also a pretty demanding process as it is, so when you suck down your meals like a Shop-Vac, your body has to work that much harder to break down the food, gobbling up your energy stores in the process. "The optimal number of chews per bite is unclear. However, it's been suggested that you may need to chew food 25 to 40 times to enjoy the appetite regulation benefits," Clark said.

### 2. Drink One Less Cup Of Coffee

Yep, you read that correctly. The caffeine in coffee blocks certain receptors in your brain from receiving adenosine, a neurotransmitter that causes fatigue. "Although caffeine prevents your brain from receiving adenosine, it doesn't stop your body from producing it," said Niket Sonpal, an assistant professor at Touro College of Osteopathic Medicine in New York. So once the caffeine wears off, it's the buildup of adenosine that causes you to crash (and, you know, reach for more caffeine), creating a vicious, energy-sapping cycle.

To get off the roller coaster, consider drinking lower doses of coffee and spreading them out so you're not drinking them back to back (tapering things off by early afternoon at the latest to also improve the quality of your sleep, Sonpal said). This subtle change can help decrease your intake without feelings of deprivation while also cutting down on the crash factor. This will make your energy level feel more stable. "Though reducing our reliance on caffeine sounds scary, it can help you feel more energized over the long term," Sonpal said.

### 3. Take 250 Extra Steps

More movement means increased blood circulation, which decreases the amount of effort your body has to use to keep your systems running. "By simply adding 250 more steps to your daily average each week, you're training your muscles, energy system and mind to move more and get better at doing it," said Menachem Brodie, an exercise physiologist and trainer at Human Vortex Training.

As your cardiorespiratory fitness improves (the length of time you can exercise before you start to feel tired), you'll find it easier to get through your daily grind, Brodie said. Pacing during phone calls, walking briskly around the office, and hoofing it up the stairs are all nonintrusive ways to increase your step count.

### 4. Take A Few Deep Breaths

Your cells need oxygen for energy. So when your breathing is sluggish, your body follows suit. Shallow breathing is one of the (many) pesky side effects of stress, explained Sonpal. By not breathing deeply enough, often enough, you end up sending a signal to your nervous system that amps up your anxiety even further. Changing your breathing habits by taking a few long, slow breaths throughout the day — during your commute, waiting in line, even sitting on the throne — reduces the stress response while energizing your cells.

Try an abdominal breathing exercise to achieve this: Simply breathe in through your nose for a count of three and out through your mouth for a count of three. Repeat as necessary. "The more you practice breathing deeply, the more natural it becomes, and over time your body will breathe this way without you having to remember to do it," said Dori Gatter, a Connecticut-based licensed psychologist.

### 5. Add Another Dose Of Fiber To Your Meals

Complex carbs, which are found in foods like whole grains, veggies, legumes and seeds, contain glucose, which is the main energy source for the brain and body, said Lisa Cooper, a registered dietitian at Orlando Health in Florida. And because they also contain fiber, they're digested at a slower rate, "providing for more sustained energy over time," she said. As a bonus, fiber will help you get your z's, which in turn will improve your energy. "Foods with higher fiber have been associated with increased slow wave sleep, the stage of sleep that's typically associated with feeling more refreshed the next day," said Vikas Jain, a sleep medicine specialist at Northwestern Medicine Central DuPage Hospital in Illinois.

### 6. Check The Color Of Your Urine

"When you're dehydrated, your blood pressure drops, heart rate increases and blood flow to the brain slows — all of which can make you tired," Sonpal said. By making sure you score enough H<sub>2</sub>O, you ensure your body won't have to work as hard to function. Take note of your urine color during bathroom breaks — it should be a pale, straw-like yellow — to ensure you're well hydrated, Cooper said. And if it's darker than that, bottoms up at the water cooler.

### 7. Write Down Three Things That Went Well Today

"Our brains are Velcro for bad events and Teflon for good ones," said Elizabeth Cohen, a New York-based clinical psychologist. "This is because it was evolutionarily advantageous to remember where pain was found, whereas remembering where you encountered joy was less essential for survival." Nowadays not so much: When you're perpetually stewing over what's gone wrong (and worrying about what might go wrong next), it cues the body to release more stress hormones more often, which our bodies weren't built to do, Cohen explained. Enter: burnout.

Take some time to reflect on the positive by writing down three things that went well during your day or just items you feel grateful for. This exercise can prime your mind to give equal billing to what's going right in your life, hitting the brakes on stress hormone surges while helping to protect your energy reserves.

Source: <http://bit.ly/2vt0aq8>

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# This Week's Exercise

## TREADING WATER WITH MASS



### HOW TO DO IT:

Using anything weighted, such as a five or ten-pound dumbbell, a gallon of water, or even just a towel, hold the object overhead in one hand while you tread water in a scissoring motion.

Exercise source: <http://bit.ly/2vn2gbk>

*Regular exercise can help you control your weight, reduce your risk of heart disease, and strengthen your bones and muscles. But if it's been awhile since you've exercised and you have health issues or concerns, it's a good idea to talk to your doctor before starting a new exercise routine.*

**DON'T  
COUNT  
THE DAYS.  
MAKE  
THE DAYS  
COUNT.**

## VEGGIE LASAGNA STUFFED PORTOBELLO MUSHROOMS



### Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 400F. Spray a baking sheet with oil.
2. Gently remove the stems, scoop out the gills and spray the tops of the mushrooms with oil, season with 1/8 tsp salt and fresh pepper.
3. Heat a large nonstick sauté pan over medium heat, add oil, onion, garlic and red pepper and season with 1/8 tsp salt. Cook until soft, 3 to 4 minutes. Add the baby spinach and sauté until wilted, about 1 minute.
4. In a medium bowl add the ricotta, parmesan cheese and egg, mix well.
5. Add the cooked vegetables and basil and mix.
6. Stuff the mushrooms with ricotta mixture and top each with 2 tbsp marinara, 2 tbsp mozzarella.
7. Bake in the oven for 20 to 25 minutes. Garnish with basil and enjoy!

### Ingredients

*1 teaspoon olive oil  
2 loose cups baby spinach, chopped  
3 cloves chopped garlic  
1/3 cup chopped onion  
1/3 cup chopped red bell pepper  
kosher salt  
3/4 cup part skim ricotta  
1/2 cup grated parmesan cheese  
1 large egg  
4 large basil leaves, chopped  
4 large portobella mushroom caps  
1/2 cup marinara sauce  
1/2 cup part skim shredded mozzarella*

### Nutrition Information

Yield: 4 servings  
Serving Size: 1 mushroom

Amount Per Serving:  
Freestyle Points: 6  
Points +: 7  
Calories: 236  
Total Fat: 13g  
Saturated Fat: 0g  
Cholesterol: 83mg  
Sodium: 522mg  
Carbohydrates: 13g  
Fiber: 2.5g  
Sugar: 4g  
Protein: 20g

Recipe source:  
<http://bit.ly/2vn2JdA>