



Improve Your Eating Habits And Gain More Energy

One of the most frequently asked questions I get from people is how can I increase my energy levels?

To me it's simple because I've been doing this a long time and have done years and years of research. However for many of you, from a young age we are not educated correctly on how and what to eat. In turn, we feel sluggish, weighed down, bloated, fat and lack energy and vitality.

So here are six simple tips to help you make the changes needed to increase your energy levels and feel alive.

1. Reduce your processed sugar intake.

This also includes reducing your intake of artificial sweeteners. Artificial sweeteners such as aspartame (also known as 950, 951) are known as "excitotoxins". These have been linked to a range of health issues, a minor one being fatigue. They are the topic of much research at present and in my opinion it's not good. They have also been shown to increase weight gain, not decrease it, so cross them off your list completely.

Sugar in general will give you a quick hit of energy. So you peak quite quickly but what happens next is that your energy levels come crashing down to lower levels than before. The issue here is that people continue increasing the sugar consumption to try and raise their energy levels but this results in bigger peaks and falls.

To compound the problem the sugar will go straight into your fat stores resulting in weight gain and lethargy or lower energy levels.

Instead of having sugar as a sweetener, replace it with a small amount of honey - choose raw honey if you can. If you need a hit of energy have natural, healthy foods like fresh or dried fruit, such as bananas, apples, grapes, berries, dried apricots or medjool dates and add in a small handful of mixed nuts. This is a super nutritious snack with no processed garbage added.

2. Stay away from energy drinks.

This is very similar to tip one. These energy drinks are filled with caffeine and sugar or artificial sweeteners not to mention other harmful additives. These drinks cause insulin spikes as well as spikes in adrenalin which can result in weight gain and lethargy, right through to adrenal fatigue, which is quite hard to diagnose. Why do we have all these people drinking these energy drink yet they have no energy?

Stay away from energy drinks! Have a natural fresh coffee for a boost if you need it.

3. Instead of energy drinks have a coffee.

Many of you just can't live without coffee. There are some of you who look forward to your first cup of coffee as soon as you get up from sleeping to help wake up, those of you who just love the smell and those of you who have multiple cups of coffee to get you through a hard day at work. For you coffee lovers, there are some benefits to get your health and energy roaring.

- Caffeine stimulates the nervous system, including the nerves controlling intestinal activity, blood pressure and airway size which may keep you alert and awake.
- Coffee has plenty of nutrients and antioxidants. Many of the nutrients in the coffee beans do make it into the final drink, which actually contains a decent amount of vitamins and minerals.
- Don't add sugar or artificial sweeteners to your coffee. If you want a healthy substitute add some raw honey for sweetness, it's natural and delicious! I'd stay away milk or cream – you'll just be adding fat and calories to your body. If you have to have milk then have a very small amount.
- You also need to be aware that coffee may also impair sleep, cause jitters and anxiety. So keep your coffees to a maximum of 2-3 per day.

Most people don't realise that depending on the amount of caffeine in your coffee it can have a half-life of 7-10 hours in your system. So don't have coffee in the late afternoon or night.

Also be warned, not all coffee is the same. I personally buy organic coffee beans and use a grinder to grind them up into a powder myself. This is because the true organic coffee beans have been grown without the use of pesticides or herbicides. Generally, organic beans are grown in the shade and can thrive without chemical assistance. Personally I'd stay away from instant coffee!

As per tip two, don't have energy drinks and replace with a good cup of coffee if you are in need of a quick energy boost.

4. Decrease your intake of processed foods.

Processed foods usually contain an array of different ingredients such as additives, flavours, emulsifiers, preservatives, rising agents, salts, sugars, anti-caking agents, oils, acidity regulators, flavour enhancers, extracts just to name a few. Not to mention the synthetic vitamins and minerals if the item is "fortified" or so called "enriched".

I have a saying, "The bigger the ingredients list on the packaging usually the worse it is for you." Plus, there are many codes and words I'm sure you haven't heard of which to me indicates bad ingredients. Notice how an apple doesn't have an ingredients list... yet is has thousands of nutrients.

When you feed your body with processed foods this adds to the work load your body has to go through to process them. This is part of the reason why you may feel sluggish and lack the concentration and energy to carry out your everyday activities.

Replace processed foods with wholesome foods including lots of fresh fruit and vegetables and you watch your energy levels start to increase.

5. Reduce your portion sizes and increase your meal frequency.

I've been saying for a long time that 3 square meals a day have made the western world round. It's a great way to slow down your metabolism, make you feel sluggish and lethargic. Instead of 3 square meals a day, raise it to 5 to 6 meals a day. I know some of you are saying what? It's true and works a treat. However, don't have the big meals that many of you are used to - I'm talking about 5 to 6 smaller portioned meals.

Having nutritionally rich smaller portioned meals keeps fuel going in, helping keep your metabolism firing and making you feel more energised throughout the day. As they are small meals you haven't overeaten, therefore you won't feel bloated and sleepy, which happens to so many people when they have a big meal.

Gradually introduce these healthy eating tips into your daily routine and in no time you'll feel much more energised!

6. Drink more water.

One of the biggest reasons why many people have low energy levels is due to dehydration. We must have water to stay alive... yes that's water, not energy drinks, soft-drinks or 8 cups of coffee each day. You get some water from the foods we consume especially if you eat lots of fresh fruit and veggies, however we must hydrate with water as it not only keeps the body in a good state of health but it helps flush toxins from the body.

Dehydration has been linked to tiredness or lethargy, aging, impaired brain function, impaired athletic performance, depression, headaches and migraines, dry skin, constipation, dizziness, irregular blood pressure to name a few. Start your day by drinking water and keep drinking it throughout the day and you'll see how much more energy you have. It's not only good for you, but it'll help you stay alive.

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