



NutritionZone

Recharge your batteries

Low energy levels and ways to raise them through nutrition and lifestyle. *By Elizabeth Montgomery*

Do you struggle with maintaining your energy levels throughout the day? Or find it hard to get out of bed in the morning? The stresses of daily life can be very demanding, with more and more people finding it difficult to maintain the energy levels needed to get by. The plain truth is that living a modern on-the-go lifestyle can often result in eventual burn out.

The good news is that there are numerous dietary and lifestyle adjustments we can make to help raise and maintain healthy energy levels. But first let's take a look at some of the primary causes of energy depletion.

Poor dietary choices

Our bodies were not designed to consume what most Westerners currently consider food. This includes: most animal products, glutenous grains, processed foods, coffee, fizzy drinks, alcohols, the list goes on. In fact, most forms of modern eating count as 'dis-ordered overeating' which creates a huge demand on the body's energy reserves. Furthermore, never before in our evolutionary history has the human body been subjected to such high amounts of sugar. High sugar intake creates ongoing stress for the pancreas causing it to release high levels of insulin (the hormone needed to regulate glucose), which is needed to lower blood sugar levels by

pushing sugar out into the cells. This is what creates the high/low energy crash cycle after eating sweets, leading on to even more sugar cravings. Sugar also places stress on the adrenals (the glands on top of the kidneys), in response to the spike in blood sugar they release 'fight or flight' hormones. Over time, this may lead to a common condition called adrenal exhaustion which gives rise to a host of uncomfortable symptoms such as fatigue, feeling anxious, mood swings, and sugar cravings.

Chronic stress

Many people feel a degree of stress on a daily basis. Busy, multi-tasking lifestyles make it hard to find enough time for adequate mealtimes, rest and relaxation. Unfortunately, over-stimulating recreational activities have now become the social norm. Watching TV, or spending hours engaging on social media may seem enjoyable, but it actually stimulates the delicate adrenal glands to produce 'fight or flight' hormones which creates internal stress. According to traditional Chinese medicine, the kidneys and adrenal glands are the centre of the body's precious life force known as *Jing* energy. *Jing* is seen as our primordial life force which determines our overall sense of vitality and longevity. When we live in such a way that depletes our *Jing* energy, then health issues such as adrenal exhaustion, lack of sex drive, rapid ageing, among other things, will eventually ensue.



There are the four major types of stress:

Physical: poor nutrition, lack of sleep, intense physical exertion

Mental: worry, anxiety, perfectionism

Emotional: fear, anger, guilt, shame

Psycho-spiritual: life challenges, difficult relationships, lack of spiritual alignment

Lack of exercise

Our bodies were designed to work and move all day long. Our ancestors spent the majority of the day outside working and searching for food which was crucial for survival. Unfortunately, what's known as 'modern convenience' now equates with living a sedentary existence. When we fail to get enough exercise then this will eventually impair multiple physical functions necessary for health. Think of the body as a car that requires fuel from food and water. And plenty of exercise in order to fire up the engine and get out onto the road.

Key tips for lasting energy

Nourish your body

When it comes to sustaining energy, skipping breakfast is not an option. Having a good breakfast is key for balancing blood sugar. Aim to include a protein component to help slow down the glycemic response (sugar release) in the body. Try protein rich smoothies, or almond butter on rice cakes, or quinoa porridge (which is a complete protein) and say goodbye to those sugary cereals.

Aim to include raw foods into your diet which are bursting with life force energy and enzymes, most of which are destroyed by heat. Eating raw foods means the body doesn't have to use a lot of energy to produce digestive enzymes for the digestive process; resulting in more energy available for daily activities. A good way to introduce a raw component into your day is by having a green vegetable juice as snack. Green juices are very low glycemic and won't spike blood sugar levels.

Make certain all meals and snacks include some good quality protein to prevent blood sugar dips (think nuts, seeds, pulses, blue/green algae super-foods). Raw hemp powder and rice protein powder are the new kids on the block and make a great protein addition to smoothies, soups and drinks.

Hydrate your body


Aim to drink around 6-8 glasses of pure water daily for fatigue prevention, hydration and adrenal health. Decrease the caffeine, bump out the alcohol (big adrenal stressors) and go for vegetable juices (fruit juices spike blood sugar) and herbal teas instead.



Exercise

There are many types of energising exercise we can all do. As little as 30 minutes of exercise four times a week can help to raise energy levels and add years to your life. Try yoga classes, power walking, dancing or interval training. The key is to move your body on a regular basis and to always find ways to enjoy it.

Earthing

The therapeutic benefits of 'earthing' have gained popularity in recent years. According to scientific research, walking barefoot as little as 10 minutes a day, helps to absorb electrons from the earth up through the feet and aligns the body's electro magnetic field to that of the earth. This has a beneficial effect on the immune system, greatly reduces stress and helps to maintain adequate energy levels throughout the day. 

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