

WELLNESS MINUTE

April 2020



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EATING FOR ENERGY



**Do you rely on caffeine to give you energy?
Do you often turn to snacks for a boost?**

This is pretty common, but not the healthiest way to maintain your energy level. Many people feel like they're running on empty these days due to habits that can zap energy. For starters, most people don't get enough sleep, which can increase appetite and cravings for carbs that offer a quick energy boost, followed by a crash.


The foods you choose to eat and the timing of those foods can make a big difference. Here are three eating habits that can help you feel more energetic:

Start your day with protein. Starting your day with refined carbs like a bagel, muffin, cereal or toast is a sure-fire recipe for an energy slump. These foods can give you an energy boost due to their high sugar content, but it's followed by a dip. This can result in cravings for more carbs, which puts you on the sugar rollercoaster. Instead, start your day with protein and/or healthy fats. If you want toast, make it avocado toast with an egg on top. If you like oatmeal, make it overnight oats that include Greek yogurt and chia seeds. Or, simply prep a batch of hard-boiled eggs.

Cut out the late-night snacking. Eating too close to bedtime can interfere with sleep since your body is digesting the food. This can also wreak havoc with your appetite hormones and metabolism, which can contribute to weight gain. It's best to stop eating 2-3 hours before bed. If you tend to get hungry within that time, try eating a bit more for dinner. Snacking after dinner may also simply be a habit or a need for a reward at the end of a long day. Find other ways to relax or treat yourself, like reading a good book.

Reference:

<https://www.realsimple.com/food-recipes/recipe-collections-favorites/healthy-meals/eating-for-energy>

The background image shows a healthy meal. In the foreground, a dark blue ceramic bowl is filled with a mix of roasted vegetables, including red bell peppers, zucchini, and eggplant, topped with a piece of grilled fish and fresh green herbs. To the right of the bowl is a fresh salad with purple and green leafy greens, sliced red onions, pine nuts, and shaved parmesan cheese. In the upper left, a stack of white mozzarella cheese slices is topped with sliced red tomatoes. A silver fork is visible on the left side of the bowl.

Eat real food. Our busy, hectic lives can make cooking feel like a daunting task, which makes us turn to processed food for convenience. This is okay on occasion, but if you're choosing processed instead of whole foods the majority of the time, it's going to take a toll on your energy and your health. Meal prepping is a great way to make at least some meals in advance so you don't have to cook every day. It may also help to shift your mindset and view cooking as an opportunity to bond with family members, teach your kids to cook, or if you live alone, a way to nourish your body. It's the ultimate self-care!

If you still want a snack, check out this month's recipe for a healthy, energy boosting option! And, be sure to read the follow-up article on energy-boosting foods.

ENERGY BOOSTING FOODS



Are you ready to reduce the carbs and processed foods that drain energy, but wondering what to eat instead? I'm sure you want to be certain you'll have enough energy to stay focused and productive throughout your day.

Here are 5 foods that have been shown to promote energy:

Bananas – they're an excellent source of complex carbs, potassium, and vitamin B6.

Fatty fish – offers protein, healthy fats, and B vitamins.

Brown rice – unlike white rice that has been processed, brown rice retains more nutrients in the form of fiber and manganese, which helps to break down protein and carbohydrates and generate energy.

Sweet potatoes – the fiber and complex carbs allow your body to digest them at a slower pace giving you a steady stream of energy.

Eggs – they're a perfect breakfast food since they do not spike blood sugar and are a good source of protein and healthy fats. There is no need to avoid the yolk!!

Reference:

<https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/energy-boosting-foods#section7>

“Snickers” Protein Balls

Looking for an energy-boosting snack?
Look no further! These easy to make, protein balls are delicious and nutritious.

Ingredients:

- 1 cup of roasted peanuts (or swap peanuts for your favorite nuts, such as almonds or walnuts for more Omega-3 fats)
- 2 tablespoons raw cacao/cocoa powder
- 1 ½ cups pitted, dry dates
- Pinch of salt

Directions:

1. Place 2 tablespoons of the peanuts (or nuts) in a food processor and process until ground well. Remove them and set aside.
2. Add the remaining peanuts (or nuts), cacao powder, dates, and salt to the food processor and process until the ingredients form a “dough”. Add a little water if needed to combine everything.
3. Roll the mix into 10 balls and roll each one in the ground peanuts.
4. Store the balls in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to one week.



Reference:

<https://www.thehealthymommy.com/recipe/snickers-protein-balls/>

TIME YOUR EXERCISE FOR GOOD RESULTS

We all know that exercise promotes fitness, reduces stress, improves mood and sleep, and much more. Did you know that the timing of your exercise matters?

It can be difficult for many people to fit exercise into busy schedules. Exercising in the morning, not only helps get it out of the way early to ensure it gets done, but it can also give you better results. The body's hormonal composition is ideal for exercise in the morning, particularly while you have an empty stomach. That's when we naturally have higher levels of cortisol and growth hormone, which allows exercise to draw energy from fat stores. This can potentially enhance weight loss.

In fact, a 2019 study found that men who exercised before breakfast burned double the amount of fat compared to men who exercised after breakfast. They also had reduced insulin spikes after meals and more insulin sensitivity, which can be helpful in preventing diabetes.

Granted, everyone is not a morning person so the important thing is to fit it into your day at a time that works for you, keeping in mind that it's best exercise 2-3 hours after a meal.

Reference:
<https://time.com/5533388/best-time-to-exercise/>



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