

Energy Basics

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Lynn Mayer, MA, CNC

In my practice I have found one consistent truth. Lack of energy is intricately connected to our day-to-day life patterns. These basic patterns: food choices, exercise, and sleep, determine the vitality of our bodies. When these fundamentals are brought into proper alignment, the result is always improved energy.

The most common complaints I hear are afternoon sluggishness, insomnia, and emotions run amok. The medical model usually responds by prescribing drugs like Ambien and Prozac. I work to treat the cause, not the symptoms by looking at their daily patterns.

No breakfast, coffee, a skipped lunch, and a diet loaded with carbohydrates – how can we expect our bodies to run efficiently? And yet we complain when they don't.

Most of my coaching work is helping people get clear of what food and drink will work best for their body. Genes, blood and metabolic type all play into the equation, but here are some basics that can benefit anyone.

Blood Sugar.

The body works best in a very tight blood sugar range, often called “the zone”. When we are in the zone we are patient, kind, and have clarity in thought and action. The best way to get in the zone and stay there is by eating balanced meals of good quality protein (eggs, fish, poultry, beef, nuts), complex carbohydrates (vegetables, fruits, whole grains), and fats.

Starting your morning with coffee, and carbs, such as bread, cereal, and bagels, only ramps up your body's blood sugar. What goes up must come down – down and out of the zone. The rest of the day we crave sweets, depend on caffeine to combat our sluggishness and energy drop, and generally operate on a very short fuse.

To start your day with high energy and stay that way, eat a balanced breakfast, lunch, and dinner, as well as a small mid-morning and mid-afternoon snack. Your cravings will disappear, clear thinking will reappear, and you'll get a good night's sleep, which in turn will support your energy the next day.

Water

We often mistake dehydration for fatigue. The body needs a minimum of one half ounce of pure water for every pound of body weight. Adding sea salt to your diet assists the adrenal glands in energy production as well as helping water move through the cells more efficiently.

Exercise

Daily exercise is the ideal. The rewards will far outweigh the sacrifice. Try for a minimum of 30 minutes a day, working up to 40-60 minutes. Exercise can positively effect your blood sugar, stress levels, energy levels, sleep patterns, emotional stability, and best of all, can help produce endorphins, a powerful, feel good drug produced by our own body.

Sleep

Adequate and appropriate sleep is a crucial part of our energy puzzle. The optimal hours of sleep are from 10 pm to 6 am. Our relationship to the sun and our twenty-four hour Circadian rhythms govern our bodies during these hours. This is a period of rest, repair, detoxification, and recovery. Your body can't use this time for recovery if it's busy digesting a meal or focusing on TV or work. Sleeping during these crucial hours will go a long way toward enhancing your energy the following day.

All the elements I've discussed are interconnected. The regulation of your blood sugar during the day affects your sleep at night, which in turn affects your energy the next day. When you feel out of alignment, the best therapy is a day or two of really minding the basics. Tending to the basics can give you more physical, mental, and spiritual energy or calm your frenetic energy. When you're in the "zone" every aspect of life is easier.