

# Boost Your Energy



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With the demands placed on us by 21<sup>st</sup> century living and the relentless pace of our lifestyles, there often comes a point when we experience a feeling of tiredness, a slump in our levels of concentration and a general feeling of just not having the energy to complete the task at hand. Often, we may not even get excited about tasks that we normally love doing. Left unchecked, lethargy and listlessness may become more pronounced making it increasingly difficult to function efficiently. This is generally the time when we need to take stock so that our health is not negatively affected.

To have enough energy means that the balance in our body and mind needs to be maintained. This can only happen when energy intake is adequate to meet energy output. Sadly, with the stress placed on our bodies in our day-to-day lives, we often use more energy than we have, and the resultant imbalance may lead to illness conditions.

These days, a great deal of emphasis is placed on energy supplements, boosters and drinks to provide a quick fix. However, before turning to that energy drink that promises to give you wings, the question you need to ask is what has brought about the feeling of lethargy and how can you change it using your body's own defenses? Furthermore, your individual needs should be taken into account. A person sitting behind a desk all day may need a lot less energy than a manual labourer, and over-the-counter energy boosters are therefore not ideally suited to all of us.

The greatest source of energy is actually the food we eat. A well balanced diet is thus, the first step towards boosting your energy levels. The energy derived from the foods we eat is in the form of carbohydrates, fat and proteins and should ideally be in the following proportions:

- protein 10 - 15 %
- fat 15 - 30 %
- carbohydrates 55 - 75 %

Carbohydrates provide our main source of energy and are therefore vitally important in our diets. If one's diet is low in carbohydrates, you often do not have enough energy to meet your body's demand. Many people eliminate carbohydrates in an attempt to lose weight. When taken to the extreme this can be detrimental. Tibb suggests that to maximize your energy levels and still maintain an ideal weight, it is best to eat carbohydrates, especially whole-grains and vegetables, at a time in the day when energy is most needed and will be used, e.g. at lunchtime when you have a busy, active afternoon ahead.

Other than eating correctly there are many other ways to boost energy levels.

- Increase magnesium levels – magnesium is involved in over 300 biochemical reactions in the body and a lack of it may cause energy to drop
- Exercise regularly, appropriate to your age, health and weight – even walking for as little as 10 minutes per day can increase your energy levels

- ∑ Do not miss breakfast. Missing any meal can lead to a lack of energy but breakfast provides energy at the time of day when we most need it.
- ∑ Try and reduce stress in your life. Stress depletes energy reserves very quickly. Try to take some quiet time out of each day to meditate or pray, and always seek counsel for problems that are affecting your well-being.
- ∑ Drink more water – dehydration, however slight, can lead you to feeling tired. By drinking water, especially after exercise or physical activity, your energy levels will quickly return to normal.
- ∑ Eat low GI (glycaemic index) foods – this will help to provide constant low amounts of energy into the system and avoid the problem of peaks and troughs of energy
- ∑ Check your thyroid function and full blood cell count – constant low energy may indicate a thyroid problem or anaemia, having these tests done may sort the problem out from the source.

Energy supplements are very popular these days. As mentioned earlier, the type of supplement you take depends on how much energy you need. Energy supplements can be broken into a number of classes, namely:

- ∑ Energy stimulants such as caffeine, guarana, green tea, capsaicin and ginseng. Energy stimulants may be effective in the short term but be wary of negative side-effects such as palpitations.
- ∑ Energy supplements are substances that affect energy metabolism directly. These include Coenzyme Q10,

Vitamins B6 and B12, Folic acid, thiamine and niacin. Amino acids such as creatine, carnitine, tyrosine and phenylalanine may also affect energy metabolism. These can all help to boost energy but unless you are a competitive athlete or have a rare metabolic disorder the effects may not really be noticeable.

If you do feel that you need some sort of supplement to boost your energy, look out for well-researched products with fewer side-effects. These products normally have their ingredients listed and are rich in natural vitamins and minerals. Tibb's Enerlift and Apiton syrup or Completone tablets have been used with great success for many years and meet all these criteria.

As with all aspects of your health, always be mindful of the factors that may influence you negatively. Ensure that lifestyle factors, emotions, rest and elimination are also addressed alongside your diet and exercise. This will help maintain consistent levels of energy in the long term, and hopefully give you the 'gusto' you need to face each day head on.