

# Lose the Stress & Gain Energy

By [Jenna Birch](#) , January 15, 2016

When you are lacking that extra pep in your step, it is tempting to reach for a quick fix to solve your energy woes. But grabbing an espresso or energy drink is just putting a bandaid on the larger problem and leaving you prone to a crash later on. Instead, you need strategies for *sustained* energy.

First things first, start by tackling the root of your tiredness: stress. If the fading energy is a new phenomenon, do some self-analysis. Ask yourself what new changes in your life might be causing your energy to tank.

Chances are, any shake-ups to your recent routine are triggers for stress and they require some added mindfulness. Every time you encounter a new stressor, develop a specific plan for conquering it that involves lessening the stress and improving energy.

## **Nosh on complex carbs and whole grains**

Complex carbohydrates are your body's best energy source. These sugars are pieced together in long strands that that body slowly breaks down for lasting energy, while delivering a shot of key vitamins, minerals and other nutrients. The convenient simple sugars found in processed foods will only give you an initial burst of energy, followed by a big crash later on.

Choose complex carbs to keep hunger at bay and energy high. Try whole grains like whole-grain breads, quinoa, oats and brown rice, along with other nutrient-dense, fiber-filled carbs like fruits and veggies as snacks.

## **Work in cardio or aerobic exercise**

Time and time again, research reinforces that the cure for dwindling energy isn't rest but is movement. One study from the University of Georgia showed consistent low-

intensity exercise could boost energy levels by 20 percent while reducing fatigue by 65 percent.

Next time you're drained after a major meeting at work or an argument, try exercising instead of a nap or laying on the couch in front of the TV. Take a walk, go for a jog, bike around your neighborhood or go hiking in a scenic area.

### **Try music and other relaxation techniques**

If you ever feel tempted to turn up the music and block out the world when you're stressed and tired, it's not a bad idea. Research has shown that listening to music is therapeutic, improving the body's immune function and lowering levels of stress-hormone cortisol.

To keep your energy high, explore relaxation methods to escape stressors. Mindful meditation, deep breathing, yoga, tai chi, massage and peaceful visualization may help, so your stress level never becomes oppressive.

Test different techniques and decide what works best for you over the course of your day. Maybe it's taking a 15-minute walk at lunchtime to escape the pressure at the office, or starting your day with a bowl of oatmeal instead of that grab-n-go pastry. That way, you'll have a tried-and-true set of strategies to tackle stressors, so they won't be draining all your energy.

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