

How to eat to improve your energy levels

A little extra energy during the day could benefit just about anyone. Late morning mental fatigue and the post-lunch yawns may seem unavoidable, but there are plenty of ways to improve energy levels throughout the day. One such means to getting an extra hop in your step involves utilizing food.

The health care experts at Kaiser Permanente® note that every part of the body, including the brain and heart, require energy to work. The body gets that energy from food. According to the National Health Service, the publicly funded health care system of the United Kingdom, a healthy, balanced diet is the best way to maintain sufficient energy levels throughout the day. A dietary approach rooted in eating to energize can change the way people eat, potentially helping them avoid unhealthy foods that won't give them the boost they need.

The American Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics echoes the sentiments of the NHS, noting that eating better is an effective way to improve energy levels. The AAND also recommends additional strategies for people

looking to foods to provide an energy boost.

- Eat every three to four hours. The AAND notes that eating every three to four hours helps to fuel a healthy metabolism. This approach also can prevent the between-meal hunger pangs that compel many people to reach for whatever food is readily available, even if it's unhealthy. When eating every three to four hours, remember to prepare smaller portions than you would if you were eating three meals per day. The AAND points out that feeling comfortably full but not stuffed is a good indicator that you've eaten enough.

- Aim for balance. A balanced plate should include foods from multiple food groups. The AAND notes that even a small amount of fat can find its way onto your plate, which should include a combination of whole grains, lean protein, fiber-rich fruits and vegetables, and fat-free or low-fat dairy. If that's too much for a single sitting, ensure these food groups are represented on your plate at some point during the day.

- Avoid added sugars. Added sugars can adversely affect energy levels. In addition, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention notes that consuming too many added sugars, which are found in sugar-sweetened beverages like soda and iced tea and sweet snacks like candy, increases a person's risk for obesity, type 2 diabetes and heart disease. The AAND notes that the energy provided by foods with added sugars is typically misleading, as it wears off quickly and ultimately leads to an energy crash. If you're looking to eat and drink for energy, then choose water or low-fat milk instead of coffee and soda and replace sweet snacks with fruit.

- Choose the right snacks. The AAND recommends snacks have lean protein and fiber-rich carbohydrates. Low-fat Greek yogurt, apples, a handful of unsalted nuts, and carrots are some examples of healthy snacks that will provide an energy boost between meals.

How people eat can help them overcome fatigue or exacerbate existing energy issues.



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