

Nutrition tips for boosting energy

Food is an energy source. Used well, it will maintain a steady energy level throughout the day, used badly and your energy levels will peak and trough, along with your ability to function properly. Our expert tips will help you get the most out of your diet to feel great every day.

Many of us spend hours every day thinking about what we're going to eat. It's often our first thought in the day. But despite all the hours spent daydreaming about food, how many of those hours are used to consider the correct balance of our plates?

It skips many people by that food is first and foremost our source of energy. The same way the fuel you use to power your car will affect its performance, so your food affects how you will perform throughout the day.

The blood sugar rollercoaster

This is how your blood sugar (which provides you with energy) responds when you eat certain food groups:

- ♦ Slow-releasing carbohydrates: they are digested slower and keep blood sugar levels stable
- ♦ Proteins with carbohydrates: protein slows the release of sugar so combine them with carbohydrates to manage your blood sugar
- ♦ Sugary foods/fast-releasing carbohydrates/sugary drinks: blood sugar rises within minutes, followed by a dramatic fall
- ♦ Missing a meal: blood sugar drops. Missing breakfast can have a dramatic effect because there is a long gap between dinner today and lunch tomorrow.



Nutrition tips for maintaining high energy



Maintaining a consistent level of energy throughout the day will improve your resilience. The key to this is balancing your blood sugar. You can do this in a number of ways:

1. Never skip a meal: This will help prevent blood sugar drops that lead to energy lags and binges
2. Eat little and often: The aim is to eat before you get hungry and this should mean eating something balanced no longer than three hours apart i.e. breakfast, lunch, dinner and mid-morning and mid-afternoon snacks
3. Combine carbohydrate and protein at each meal: Aim to snack with approximately half the amount of protein to carbohydrate
4. Avoid sugary snacks and processed ready meals with high sugar content: There are hidden sugars in many processed foods, including cereal and juice drinks, so always look at the packaging
5. Stay hydrated: Water makes up around 60% of our body so when our supply is depleted, it's no surprise our energy levels will dip too. So, drink lots of water throughout the day to sustain energy levels
6. Drink less caffeine: Caffeine raises blood sugar and provides a false sense of energy. The long-term effect of drinking too much caffeine depletes the body of energy. So, try to reduce your caffeine intake and swap the odd coffee for a glass of water instead.



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