

# CHALLENGES OF OUR REALITY



## Tips for Fighting Fatigue

Fatigue is a term that describes an overall feeling of tiredness or lack of energy. It isn't the same thing as simply feeling drowsy or sleepy – though that could be a symptom of fatigue. When you're fatigued, you have no energy and no motivation to do... anything.

The good news is that in many cases, you can make changes to fight fatigue and boost your energy. But first, you need to get to the root of the problem. It can be caused by a number of lifestyle factors including lack of exercise, poor diet, or stress. Fatigue can also result from physical or mental health conditions, so you may want to visit your doctor to be sure you don't have any underlying medical issues that need to be addressed.



### Energy Explained

Food is the source of our energy. When it's broken down by our digestive system, some elements such as water and glucose are absorbed through the stomach while other elements are absorbed through the small intestine. The body's preferred energy source is glucose from carbohydrates, but it can also use fatty acids (from fats) and amino acids (from proteins). Glucose is delivered to virtually every cell in the body through the bloodstream and is then burned with oxygen to produce energy.

### So, what can you do to overcome fatigue?

**CONSIDER YOUR DIET.** If you want more energy, look at what you're eating and drinking. Below are a few basic guidelines, but consider your own needs and any specific regimes that work well for your body.



- **Drink lots of water.** A dehydrated body functions less efficiently.
- **Limit caffeine.** One to two caffeinated drinks per day can boost your energy and mental alertness, but more than 6 can make you anxious and irritable, and negatively affect your performance.
- **Eat breakfast.** Food boosts your metabolism and gives your body energy to burn. Because your brain relies on glucose for fuel, choose whole-grain carbohydrate-rich foods (oats, cereals and breads).
- **Don't skip meals.** Going without food for too long lets blood sugar levels dip. Eat regularly to maintain energy levels throughout the day.
- **Eat a healthy diet.** Increase your intake of fruit, vegetables, whole-grain foods, and lean meats. Limit foods high in fat, sugar, and salt.
- **Don't overeat.** Large meals can drain your energy. Instead of three big meals, try eating 6 smaller meals to spread your calorie intake more evenly. This will result in constant blood sugar and insulin levels.

**EXAMINE YOUR LIFESTYLE.** Pay attention to your habits and patterns. Our behaviours, environment, and state of mind can have a big impact on our energy levels.



- **Reduce sedentary behaviours.** A sedentary lifestyle is known to cause fatigue, while physical activity boosts energy levels. So, limit the time to spent sitting in front of the tv or computer and move! A good workout can also help you sleep better at night.
- **Spend time doing nothing.** A hectic lifestyle is exhausting. Try to carve out at least a few hours in your week to simply relax. If you can't find that time... it may be time to rethink your priorities and commitments. Self-care is essential!
- **Have more fun.** Laughter is one of the best energy boosters! Spend time doing activities you enjoy and with people you enjoy.
- **Manage your stress.** Consider your emotional well-being and ensure that you are dealing with stress effectively. We know there are countless sources of stress: work demands, burnout, interpersonal conflict, relationships, family obligations. You must take steps to address stress so it doesn't lead to more serious issues.

**CLEAN UP YOUR SLEEP HYGIENE.** Lack of sleep or poor-quality sleep are common causes of fatigue.



- **Get enough z's.** Most adults need about 8 hours of sleep each night. If you fall short at night, take a brief afternoon nap. A 10-minute nap is usually enough to boost energy, but keep it under 30 minutes to avoid having trouble falling asleep that night.
- **Ease up on the caffeine.** Too much caffeine – especially in the evening – can cause insomnia. Limit caffeinated drinks to fewer than 5 and avoid them entirely after dinner.
- **Learn how to relax.** A common cause of insomnia is fretting while lying in bed. Experiment with different relaxation techniques until you find what works for you.
- **Avoid sleeping pills.** They may be a quick fix at first, but they don't work in the long term since they don't always address the true causes of insomnia. It also may be a good idea to connect with a health care professional for supplemental support, medication or advice.
- **Ban electronics.** Keep televisions, computers, and phones out of the bedroom. Even consider swapping your phone for a traditional alarm.
- **Improve your routine.** Establish a schedule so you go to bed and wake up at the same time each day. This will help your body adopt a natural rhythm and help ensure you get the hours of rest that you need.



Sources | [www.health.harvard.edu/staying-healthy/fighting-fatigue](http://www.health.harvard.edu/staying-healthy/fighting-fatigue) | [www.webmd.com/balance/features/get-energy-back](http://www.webmd.com/balance/features/get-energy-back) | Images from Freekpi.com