Get Energized Today

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Feeling foggy in the morning? Yearning for a nap after lunch? Battling the mid-afternoon slump? We've all been there – struggling to get through a busy day because we feel sluggish and zapped of energy. Sometimes just changing daily eating and physical activity habits can give you a boost and help you focus on the things you need to get done. Check out the tips below to boost your energy levels throughout the day:

Choose the Right Carbs: Carbohydrate foods are the body's preferred fuel source. Although all carbohydrate foods provide energy, it is the fiber-rich complex carbohydrate foods that are best for long-lasting energy. Foods like fresh fruit, vegetables and whole grain cereals, breads and crackers are ideal choices. Aim to eat mostly complex carbohydrates at every meal, plus a moderate amount of protein food such as lean meat, poultry, eggs, nuts, legumes, yogurt or cheese, to feel satisfied and energized.

The Value of Variety: Now that you know what carbohydrate foods to eat, don't get stuck in an eating rut. Eating a variety of foods every day is necessary to provide your body with the essential minerals and vitamins it needs to operate optimally, maintain health and provide adequate energy levels. For example, choose fruit and vegetables that cover all the different colors of the rainbow. When it comes to protein foods, try to include different vegetarian, fish and meat containing meals over the course of a week. Try different whole grain foods like whole wheat breads, whole oat cereal and brown rice.

Begin with Breakfast: Your body has just gone 8 or more hours without any food – it needs a good breakfast to get the motor running and to fuel the brain. Skipping breakfast or any meal can leave you feeling depleted mentally and physically and it can also cause you to overeat at lunch – not good for your waistline or for energy levels. Try a breakfast of whole grain cereal with low fat milk topped with fruit. This type of balanced breakfast will give you energy to last through the morning.

Lighten up at Lunch: Avoid the lunchtime binge – overeating, especially on fatty foods, can leave you wanting to curl up and sleep the afternoon away. (Remember, it is much easier to eat a lighter lunch if you ate a balanced breakfast.) Stick to eating an amount of food that leaves you feeling satisfied but does not require you to loosen your belt. Try a nutritious light lunch like a sandwich or salad made with lean meat, veggies and a light dressing (or a small amount of dressing rich in monounsaturated fats, like olive oil vinaigrette). Add fruit and/or yogurt on the side. A lighter lunch may leave you feeling hungrier in the afternoon and that's a perfect opportunity to reach for a snack to help you fuel up until it's dinnertime.

Snack Smart: Sugary, simple carbohydrate, foods like candy and soda can increase blood sugar levels momentarily but do not provide long-lasting energy. Eating these types of snacks can also produce a hormone called serotonin which can make you feel very relaxed and sleepy. Try a complex carbohydrate snack like fresh fruit, light popcorn, whole grain crackers paired with a protein food like a handful of nuts, seeds, hummus or light cheese.

Pep Up with Power Walks: Even a short but brisk 10-minute walk can help you fight off fatigue and feel more alert by upping your heart rate and oxygen levels. If at work, try squeezing in a quick walk during break time or after lunch. Additionally, multiple brisk walks a day can increase overall fitness levels giving you more stamina in the long term.

Water Works: You need 8-12 cups of fluid a day to stay adequately hydrated. To avoid unwanted excess calories, stick to calorie- free drinks like diet sodas, juice drinks and water. Try keeping a water-filled sports bottle water close by to sip on and refill a few times during the day.