

7 STEPS TO OVERCOME LOW ENERGY LEVELS

- 1. Start the day with a healthy breakfast.** Breakfast really is the most important meal of the day. After a long night of sleep, it is crucial to “wake up” your metabolism and start fuelling your body and mind for the day ahead. Include some quality carbohydrate such as fruit and whole grains for energy, as well as some protein for staying power.
- 2. Consume meals and/or snacks at regular intervals.** Keep the momentum going by nourishing your body at regular times throughout the day. This will help to regulate blood sugar levels, manage appetite and control periods of low energy, excessive hunger and cravings. Be sure to eat every 2 – 3 hours for smaller meals and snacks or every 4 – 6 hours if you prefer larger meals and less snacking.
- 3. Balance your meals.** A balanced meal contains high quality carbohydrates and protein, as well as healthy fats. To ensure your meals are balanced, fill $\frac{1}{2}$ of your plate with vegetables, $\frac{1}{4}$ with protein and the other $\frac{1}{4}$ with carbohydrate. Include a small amount of healthy fat in cooking, dressings, etc. This balance will provide you with the energy you need to make it through until the next meal or snack.
- 4. Plan for healthy snacks.** Healthy snacking is a great way to manage your energy levels. Ensure your snacks are healthy by including food from the four food groups. Include a small amount of carbohydrate for energy and a small amount of protein for staying power.
- 5. Stay hydrated.** Dehydration can also lead to low energy levels. Be sure to consume lots of water to keep hydrated. Avoid high sugar drinks, energy drinks and large amounts of caffeine. These do not provide lasting energy.
- 6. Get moving.** If you spend most of your day sitting at your desk, get up at regular intervals to stretch and walk – whether it's around the room or to a colleague's office. Go for a walk during your break. This will help get your blood flowing, clear your mind and give you a boost of energy.
- 7. Sleep well.** Finally, getting a good night sleep of about 7 – 8 hours is very important in maintaining energy levels. If you have difficulty sleeping, try developing a nighttime routine that helps you to relax. Also, go to bed at the same time each night and get up at the same time each morning (including on the weekends). Following the previous six steps should also help improve your sleep.

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EASY MEAL IDEAS

Breakfast

- Eggs (Fried, Scrambled, Poached or Boiled), Whole Grain Toast, Fruit
- Peanut Butter and Banana on Whole Grain Toast, Milk or Alternative
- Baked Beans on Whole Grain Toast, Fruit
- Oatmeal Topped with Berries or Banana Slices, Milk or Alternative
- Cold Cereal (with Fibre) Topped with Berries or Banana Slices, Milk or Alternative
- Cottage Cheese Topped with Peach Slices
- Yogurt Topped with Berries
- Protein Smoothie

Lunch

- Leafy Green Salad Topped with Sliced Boiled Egg, Leftover Meat/Poultry, or Handful of Nuts and Seeds and Shredded Cheese, Whole Grain Crackers
- Quinoa Salad Topped with Black Beans or Chickpeas, Tomato and Cucumber
- Canned Tuna or Salmon Sandwich, Carrot Sticks, Milk or Alternative
- Egg Salad or Fried Egg Sandwich with Tomato and Lettuce Slices, Fruit
- Sandwich Made with Leftover Meat or Poultry, Tomato and Cucumber Slices, Milk or Alternative
- Peanut Butter and Banana Sandwich or Wrap, Milk or Alternative
- Cottage Cheese Topped with Fruit, Homemade Muffin
- Homemade or Low-Sodium Soup, Whole Grain Bread or Crackers, Fruit

Dinner

- Baked Fish, Steamed Broccoli, Baked Potato
- Pasta, Pasta Sauce, Baked Chicken Breast, Sautéed Spinach
- Pasta, Meat Sauce, Steamed Green Beans
- Stir-fry Made with Any Vegetables and Shrimp or Small Strips of Meat or Poultry, Serve on Rice or Noodles
- Chili, Whole-Grain Bun
- Homemade or Low-Sodium Soup, Leafy Green Salad, Whole-Grain Bread or Crackers
- Mini Pizzas Made on Flat Bread, Pitas or English Muffins
- One Dish Meal – Pork Roast, Roasted Potatoes, Carrots, Turnip

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FIVE STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESSFUL HEALTHY SNACKING

1. Make a plan. Keep healthy snacks handy so that grabbing a snack will not interrupt your workflow. Having healthy snacks on hand and knowing in advance what you will eat will also help you to avoid less healthy snack options.
2. Complement your meals. Snacks should complement your daily meals to ensure that you meet all of your nutrient requirements for the day. Low on fruits and vegetables? Increase your daily intake by including them at snack time.
3. Include protein. If you're not feeling satisfied with a light snack, try including a small amount of healthy protein. It will help manage your blood sugar levels and your appetite until your next meal.
4. Be creative. Keep it interesting by including lots of variety and textures from all food groups throughout the week, rather than having the same snack every day.
5. Consider timing. A snack should be consumed midway between meals (e.g., about 2-3 hours after the previous meal and 2-3 hours before the next meal).

Simple Healthy Snack Ideas

Fruit + Nut Butter
Fruit + Yogurt
Fruit + Cheese/Cottage Cheese
Vegetables + Bean Dip
Vegetables + Yogurt Dip
Hard Boiled Egg + Whole Grain Crackers
Whole Grain Crackers + Cheese/Cottage Cheese
Protein Smoothie

Easy Grab-and-Go Snacks That Won't Interrupt Your Workflow

Small Handful of Nuts and/or Seeds
Piece of Fresh Fruit (choose portable fruit such as banana, apple, grapes, pear, peach, pre-peeled and separated orange wedges)
Sandwich Cut into Half or Quarters (keep it simple so that it doesn't get messy – nut butters or sliced meats are good options)
Homemade Muffins
Protein Bars
Pre-made Homemade Smoothie
Cheese Sticks

Nutrition Coaching by [mijava dietitian@mijava.com](mailto:dietitian@mijava.com)
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