

HEALTH AT A GLANCE



Operating with Peak Energy

The fall season is here, and that brings lots of events that demand us to be ready for anything—family get-togethers, school activities, and starting to prepare for the busy holiday season. Heightening your awareness of your daily healthy habits will help you optimize your energy levels so you are always at your best.

Fuel for Success

Did you know that certain nutrients can help our body better cope with stress when life demands the most of us, and prevent you from becoming burned-out (or if you're already starting to feel the effects of burnout, they can help you bounce back)?

- Complex carbohydrates (ex: whole grain pasta, oats, brown rice, sweet potatoes, whole grain cereals) increase serotonin in the brain, which can make you feel better.
- A and C vitamins (ex: brightly colored fruits and veggies—dark leafy greens, bell peppers, carrots, oranges, strawberries, squash) boost the immune system and energize the body.
- Protein (ex: lean beef, chicken, turkey, fish) repairs damaged cells in the body and helps mental performance.
- Potassium (ex: milk, nuts, bananas) relaxes muscles and restores “calmness.”
- Note: Keep simple carbohydrates (refined grains, sugary treats, sodas and sugary drinks, etc.) and caffeine to a minimum to avoid an “energy crash” feeling. Also, stay away from fatty and fried foods, which can depress the immune system.

Exercise to Energize

Fall is a great time to try a new group exercise class, or start something on your own (such as a morning walk/jog routine). Your body will experience benefits that will keep your energy levels up so you're ready for anything:

- Uses up extra energy released by the body's “Fight or Flight” reaction so that the energy doesn't turn into built-up “stress” in the body.
- Improves blood circulation to help your body operate efficiently.
- Helps the mind re-focus and clears out worrisome thoughts.
- Improves self-image and confidence.

Relax and Rejuvenate

Whether you have 45 seconds to do some deep breathing, or 45 minutes for a full yoga class, it's important to give your body the time it needs to recover in order to be even stronger and more energized for what is coming next. Here are some quick strategies:

- In one minute, you can: Repeat the cycle of inhale for 3 counts, hold for 3 counts, exhale for 3 counts; take a quick walk away from your desk to let your eyes and mind re-focus; do a quick alignment-check—make sure you are sitting tall and ergonomically correct; close your eyes, take a deep breath, and think of something that makes you SMILE; do some desk stretches and squeeze a larger-than-normal amount of lotion into your hands and give yourself a hand massage.

KEY WEBSITES

National Institutes of Health: <http://nccam.nih.gov/health/stress/relaxation.htm>

Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics: www.eatright.org

WebMD: <http://www.webmd.com/fitness-exercise/guide/fitness-beginners-guide>

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