



Eating to Boost Energy

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Let's face it, we are in an energy crisis. We, as a society, are busy, overweight, stressed, out of shape and have poor eating habits — all contributing to low energy levels. One way to fix our energy deficit is how we eat. The right combinations of food can give you a much needed boost.

Follow these strategies to maximize your energy.

Eat often. Eating every 3 to 4 hours can help to fuel a healthy metabolism, maintain muscle mass and prevent between-meal hunger that leads to unwise snacking. If you're currently only eating 1 to 2 meals a day, this will be an adjustment. As you're learning how to eat more frequently throughout the day, remind yourself that you will feel better and be more focused when you have fuel in your system on a regular basis.

- Eat light.** Eating just enough, but not too much, helps to curb cravings and reduces chances of overeating. Keep in mind portions are often too large. If your meal carries you 5 to 6 hours without hunger pangs, it's likely that you're eating too much. Eating light will also prevent you from getting too full and feeling sluggish.
- Balance plate.** A balanced meal includes whole grains, lean protein, fiber-rich fruits and vegetables, fat-free or low-fat dairy and a small amount of healthy fats. Balance out your plate with all the food groups for sustained energy.
- Snacks are a bridge.** Don't skip this important eating event. Snacks should have protein and fiber-rich carbohydrates to provide lasting energy. Grab an apple and a handful of nuts, carrots and string cheese, or Greek yogurt and fresh berries. Keep in mind that snacks are not intended to fill you up, but to bridge you from one meal to the next.
- Remove energy zappers.** Skip the soda, sugary coffee and energy drinks. These foods may leave you buzzing for an hour, but will likely cause an energy crash. Quench your thirst with water, fat-free or low-fat milk, low-calorie flavored water or unsweetened tea.