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Solve Your ENERGY CRISIS

GET UP AND GO WITH THESE FATIGUE-FIGHTING STRATEGIES. TRY A TIP A DAY AND IN NO TIME YOU'LL BE FULL-SPEED AHEAD.
BY MARIDEL REYES

MORNING

SEE THE LIGHT Crack the curtains before bedtime to let the sun shine in when it rises, and open the blinds as soon as your alarm goes off. Daylight signals your biological clock to stop producing melatonin, the hormone that makes you sleepy, says Judith Wurtman, Ph.D., coauthor of *The Serotonin Solution* (Ballantine). If your family's schedule requires you to get up when it's still dark, consider buying an alarm clock like Philips Wake Up Light, which simulates dawn by gradually lightening the room.

LOOK AT SOMETHING BRIGHT Warm tones like red, orange and yellow remind you of the sun, evoking feelings of alertness, says Leatrice Eiseman, executive director of the Pantone Color Institute. Choose a vibrantly colored alarm clock or slip on a pair of yellow socks—even drinking a glass of orange juice will give you a lift.

CHILL OUT End your shower with a blast of cold water. According to celebrity trainer Jim Karas, coauthor of *The 7 Day Energy Surge* (Rodale), skin is much more receptive to cold

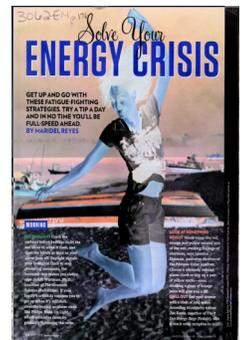
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Hair: Jeanie Syfu for TRESemmé/Contact NYC. Makeup: Viktorija Bowers for Kate Ryan Inc. Shot on location in Playa Del Carmen at CondoHotelsPlayaDelCarmen.com.

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than heat. "I call it my personal electric shock," says Karas.

USE A BODY LOTION WITH

JASMINE The floral scent increases your beta brain waves and makes you feel awake, says Alan Hirsch, M.D., founder and neurological director of the Smell and Taste Treatment and Research Foundation in Chicago.

RISE AND SHINE Try to get outside within 15 minutes of waking for a 20-minute walk. Face east for the strongest sunlight, suggests Wurtman. If possible, arrange your kitchen so the table is near a window to shed some light on your daily breakfast routine. On weekends read on your porch.

BECOME A CEREAL MONOGAMIST

People who ate a high-fiber cereal in the morning showed a 10% reduction in fatigue, as well as lower rates of depression and better cognitive skills, according to a study in the *International Journal of Food Sciences and Nutrition*. Soluble fiber is a prebiotic that feeds



Stealth Energy Zappers

These sneaky saboteurs might be dragging you down.

LOW THYROID About 13 million American women suffer from low levels of thyroid hormones. If you've gained weight, feel tired and achy, and can't tolerate cold (seriously), ask your doctor to test your levels.

FOOD ALLERGIES Common allergies to gluten, sugar, milk, soy and eggs can overwhelm your immune system and drag you down; your body needs to work harder to digest the forbidden food. If you suspect a food allergy, eliminate the above-mentioned allergens for 7 to 10 days and slowly reintroduce them one by one to monitor how your body responds.

MEDICATIONS Prescription drugs like antidepressants can contribute to fatigue. Ask your doctor if you can forgo your regular dose for 3 to 4 days to see if energy increases.

MENSTRUAL CYCLE Levels of progesterone drop a few days or up to a week before your period, which can lead to sluggishness.

DEPRESSION Flagging energy is a classic sign. Discuss with a doctor if it's accompanied by a loss of interest in normal activities or hobbies, sleeping problems, feelings of sadness, changes in appetite or slow thinking.

friendly bacteria in your gut, expelling toxins from your body and helping you absorb more nutrients. Look for a cereal with at least 10 g of fiber per serving, like Kashi GoLean.

CAFFEINATE RIGHT Pounding too much java in the early hours can give you a temporary lift followed by the feeling that you need a nap. For staying power, sip your coffee throughout the morning. The U.S. Army Research Institute of Environmental Medicine found that mini servings of caffeine (8 ounces of coffee or less over the span of a few hours) keep you awake longer than one jumbo serving.

DAYTIME

KNOW THYSELF In general, energy is low after waking, peaks around 11 A.M.

to 1 P.M., drops from 3 P.M. to 5 P.M., and lifts again from 6 P.M. to 7 P.M. Its lowest point is before bed (around 11 P.M.), says **Jacob Teitelbaum, M.D.**, author of *From Fatigued to Fantastic* (Avery). Plan your most difficult tasks when you have energy to burn, then switch to easier projects as your concentration wanes.

STROLL WITH IT A brisk, 10-minute walk gives you oomph and reduces anxiety, say researchers from California State University in Long Beach. Walking boosts not only your brain but also your metabolism and cardiovascular system. In contrast, volunteers who ate a candy bar were tense and exhausted an hour later. To log more steps, loop around the block on your lunch break or park your car farther away from store entrances.

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STRAIGHTEN UP Poor posture puts uneven pressure on your spine and makes muscles work extra hard, draining energy. Sit tall to open the chest and increase oxygen intake by as much as 30%, says **Dr. Teitelbaum**. To improve posture, imagine someone pulling up on an invisible string tied to your head. Or swap your desk chair for an exercise ball.

GROOVE TO IT Volunteers completed cognitive tests 10% faster while listening to up-tempo music (no lyrics) compared with silence, finds a study from the University of Dayton in Ohio. Research suggests music also reduces anxiety, lowers blood pressure and decreases stress hormones.

GET FIT QUICK Karas tells clients to squeeze in fitness moments to counter the enervating effects of sitting all day. "When we're seated, the body shuts down, increasing risk of disease," he says. Stand while on the phone, or try his slow squat to tone the lower body: Rise from chair, shift your weight to your heels, engage your abs and, with your arms in

front of you, sink slowly until your butt taps the chair. Repeat 10 times.

POP A PEPPERMINT Sniffing mint or chewing mint gum stimulates the trigeminal nerve, which increases activity in the area of the brain that controls alertness, say researchers at the Smell and Taste Treatment and Research Foundation.

NIX MULTITASKING Are you IM-ing and chatting on the phone while reading this? Tackling one thing at a time is more efficient, says Noelle Chesley, an assistant sociology professor at the University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee. The human brain isn't designed to multitask, and while you may think you're successfully juggling projects, you're actually switching from one to the next. The back-and-forth forces you to reorient yourself to a "new" task over and over.



Treat yourself to a peanut butter (or almond butter) and banana sandwich for energy-boosting potassium and magnesium.

TAME TECHNOLOGY Incoming phone calls and e-mails keep us in fight-or-flight mode. Constant adrenaline hits with each ring or e-mail wear us down over time, says Chesley. Her research reveals that mobile phones are particularly stressful for women, especially when family-related calls interrupt work. For non-emergencies, request a text. Or try trading days off with your spouse; that way only one of you is on call for the small stuff.

EAT FOR ALL-DAY ENERGY!

This one-day plan from Ashley Koff, R.D., author of *Mom Energy (Hay House)*, will power you through even the busiest days. Pick one dish for each meal.

BREAKFAST

- ✓ **Overnight oats** Soak rolled or quick oats in water or skim milk or dairy replacement in fridge with 1 tsp cinnamon and ¼ cup chopped almonds. In the morning, just stir and enjoy cold or warm.
- ✓ **Blazing-the-trail mix** Combine ½ cup high-fiber cereal (Nature's Path Optimum Slim or Smart Bran), ¼ cup unsweetened coconut shreds and ½ cup mixed nuts.
- ✓ **Chia pudding** It's a great source of fiber and brain-powering, heart-smart omega-3s. Mix ¼ cup chia seeds (found at Whole Foods and other health food stores) in ¾ cup water or milk; add 1 tsp of honey, 1 tsp cocoa powder or ½ tsp vanilla extract and 2 tbsp dried fruit (without extra sugar). Let sit 5 to 10 minutes, stirring occasionally.

The chia expands to create a porridge-like consistency.

LUNCH

- ✓ **Simple salad** Salad greens with fish and lemon juice or salsa, ½ a banana (or 1 small banana) with 1 tbsp almond butter or peanut butter. Eat the other banana half at 3 P.M. for a snack.
- ✓ **Potato skins** 1 baked potato with most of the flesh scooped out (save for later to make a mash or pancake with veggies like spinach and broccoli), filled with ground turkey, steamed spinach, and 1 tbsp shredded cheese or avocado on top.
- ✓ **Quinoa tabbouleh** ½ to ¾ cup cooked quinoa with 2 tbsp pine nuts, 1 cup chopped cucumber and tomatoes (drained), topped with a mint-and-rice-vinegar dressing in lettuce cups.

SNACK

- ✓ **Popcorn balls** 1 cup air-popped popcorn mixed with almond butter, cinnamon and 1 tsp honey, rolled into balls.
- ✓ **The parfait** Top 6 ounces plain Greek yogurt and berries (½ cup) with 1 to 2 tbsp organic cacao powder (or take 1 oz dark chocolate bar and crumble it up) and 1 tbsp ground flaxseeds.
- ✓ **DIY nachos** 10 to 15 whole-grain chips with 1 tbsp guacamole, ¼ cup salsa and ¼ cup shredded cheese (jalapeño peppers are optional).

DINNER

- ✓ **Frittata** Use up all the ingredients in your fridge with this fast frittata: Sauté 1 to 2 cups mixed organic fresh or frozen vegetables, ½ cup beans, ½ cup egg whites and a little low-

Salad greens with fish and lemon juice or salsa for lunch will give you a boost!



sodium broth in a pan. Add spices and herbs like garlic and basil. (Season with hot sauce, if you like it spicy.)

- ✓ **Spaghetti squash pasta and meatballs** Add turkey meatballs to 1½ cups spaghetti squash and 1 cup tomato sauce and shredded Parmesan or ricotta cheese.
- ✓ **Pizza flatbread** Drizzle olive oil on a whole-grain crust. Top with fixings that you have at home: shrimp or chicken, goat cheese crumbles, olives, pumpkin seeds, sun-dried tomatoes, mushrooms or more.

- ✓ **Blazing-the-trail mix** Combine ½ cup high-fiber cereal (Nature's Path Optimum Slim or Smart Bran), ¼ cup unsweetened coconut shreds and ½ cup mixed nuts.

like spinach and broccoli), filled with ground turkey, steamed spinach, and 1 tbsp shredded cheese or avocado on top.

GO GREEN Workers brainstormed more creative ideas when they had flowers or plants on their desks, say researchers at Texas A&M. A nature-inspired photo or screensaver can also inspire you.

TAKE MINI BREAKS Set an alarm on your computer to remind you to get up every hour and move around, suggests **Dr. Teitelbaum**. Deliver messages to co-workers in person rather than via e-mail or phone.

EAT CARBS Dips in serotonin between 3 P.M. and 5 P.M. can lower energy and mood, says Wurtman. A snack with 25 g to 30 g of carbs can boost levels of the feel-good hormone. Nosh on low-fat foods, like popcorn, pretzels, graham crackers, vanilla wafers or a low-fat granola bar, for the quickest serotonin hit.

EVENING

INDULGE IN DARK CHOCOLATE The sweet stuff has phenylethylamine in it, which improves mood and attention span, says celeb nutritionist Ashley Koff, R.D. Serve a dark chocolate fondue or a dark hot chocolate for dessert—but not too much—since you'll also get stimulants theobromine and caffeine.

RETREAT TO A CALM SPACE Decorate your bedroom with blues and greens found in nature (like sky blue or pine green); your mind links these colors with relaxation. Steer clear of over-stimulating hues like reds, oranges and yellow-greens on bedroom walls or linens, says Eiseman. These colors can make it difficult to fall asleep, zapping the next day's energy.

TURN OFF THE COMPUTER And your smartphone. And your e-reader. Bright light (like the kind emitted from electronic gizmos) increases brain activity and makes it harder to snooze, says Karas. Shut down about an hour before bedtime and turn the face of your alarm clock away from you. (Winding down to TV is okay because you're usually sitting a few feet away.)

STRATEGIZE YOUR SLEEP No excuses: Aim for seven to eight hours nightly, says Karas. To stay on schedule, go to bed (and get up) around the same time every day—give or take 30 minutes—even on weekends.

LATHER IN LAVENDER The scent increases alpha waves that induce relaxation, says the Smell and Taste Treatment and Research Foundation. Vanilla and baby powder might also have a similar calming effect. Try a combo of these aromas in lotion or bubble bath to help you fall asleep faster.



ANYTIME

TAKE A DRINK Dehydration causes the cells in your body to shrink and function less efficiently, says Koff. Combat fatigue by sipping water with a squeeze of citrus—the fragrance of orange, lemon and grapefruit are energizing. Or jazz up H₂O with ice cubes made with coconut water, frozen fruit or herbs.

MEDITATE FOR 3 MINUTES No ohm-ing required. Sit in a quiet place (the bathroom works in a pinch) and focus on your breathing to get endorphins flowing, suggests **Dr. Teitelbaum**. If your mind wanders, think of a single word (like "one"). Inhale deeply and slowly, forcing oxygen into your cells.

MOVE IT In one Austrian study of 40,000 women, the more physical activity they did, the more energized they reportedly felt. Researchers suggest that exercise stimulates neurotransmitters such as dopamine, which may enhance liveliness. Aim for 20 to 40 minutes of cardio four or five times a week.

STRIKE A POSE People who followed an eight-week yoga and meditation program experienced a significant increase in daily energy. Yoga can also increase momentary clarity. Doing simple stretches—you don't even have to get out of your chair—can have a similar Zen effect, say researchers. ●