

# Optimizing your energy throughout the workday

August 26 2014, by Kim Eaton

---



Dr. Rebecca Kelly

As more and more Americans work long hours, it is no surprise that individuals are looking for ways to improve energy, feel better and perform at their best – both at work and at home. Researchers have noted that fatigue in the United States workforce is a common symptom with reported prevalence ranging from 7 percent to 45 percent.

Employees with lower energy and signs of fatigue are significantly more likely to miss work and experience long-term work absence than workers

without fatigue. The University of Alabama's Dr. Rebecca Kelly offers a daily guide on how to boost energy during the workday.

## **6 a.m. The Morning Wake Up**

Starting your day with a few extra minutes will help you better prepare. Set your alarm 10 minutes earlier – or even 30 minutes earlier—to get in a morning walk or workout. This added [time](#) will allow your mind and body to wake up and be ready for the day.

## **7 a.m. Break the Fast**

After eight or more hours without food, your body needs fuel to get going. In addition, breakfast helps to get the body's metabolism moving. Include a whole grain bread or cereal, fresh fruit, milk or yogurt and a little protein, such as nuts, nut butter, low-fat cheese or an egg. The balanced breakfast will keep your energy high during the morning hours. Studies have also shown that people who skip breakfast have a higher risk of gaining excess weight.

## **7:30 a.m. The Morning Commute**

If the morning commute is one that you can walk or bicycle, the added exercise will add more energy to your day. If not, use this time to pause at traffic lights and stop signs to breathe deeply, reflecting on the most important things you wish to accomplish for the day. Give yourself an extra 10 minutes, and park further away to allow for a stroll to work.

## **8 a.m. Celebrate the Start of a New Day**

Arriving at work can be stressful. Add to this, messages, letters and emails all waiting for your attention. Before beginning your day, take

time to pause and celebrate the day, greet your co-workers and create your priority list to focus on the essential tasks that need to be completed. Taking time to share a positive message with others can also boost your energy and that of others.

## **10 a.m. Time for a Cup of Java**

Enjoy a morning break with a cup of coffee or tea. Caffeine is a mild stimulant and may have protective properties in reducing the risk of certain health diseases. Consuming moderate amounts each day (usually less than three cups or 300 mg) can be beneficial, yet the key is to enjoy the cup, and limit the overall consumption. If you're looking for an alternative, try green tea. It is an excellent source of antioxidants with less caffeine.

## **12 p.m. Enjoy a Power Lunch**

Take time to get away from work, and find new scenery at least once daily. Lunch is the perfect time to take a walk, meet with colleagues or find a quiet bench to relax and enjoy lunch outdoors. Packing your lunch will likely be more nutritious and lower in calories. After lunch, try to take a 20-minute walk to boost your levels of dopamine, norepinephrine and serotonin – all of which will give you more energy when you return to work. For added benefit, you can use a pedometer to keep track of your progress.

## **2 p.m. Take an imagination vacation**

Take a virtual vacation while at work. Find a quiet place to sit, close your eyes, take a deep breath and imagine a peaceful place – such as the lake, beach or mountains. Once you feel fully relaxed, gradually ease yourself back into the present. You can also use this time to relax your

eyes from the strain if using computers most of the day.

### **3 p.m. Stretch for Success**

There are several easy stretches you can do quickly at your desk, all of which can help you refocus on work. For added afternoon fun, try one of the following exercises every time you send an email or on the top of the hour. Sit down in your chair and stand up without use of your arms. Shrug your shoulders up to your ears and hold them for a few seconds. Give yourself a hug by placing your hands on opposite shoulders – repeat each five times.

### **4:30 p.m. End the Day with a Laugh and a Smile**

Putting in extra hours is one of the easiest ways to get tired. It's not always possible to leave on time – but try to do so by 6 p.m. During the end of a work day, take a few minutes to do something that makes you smile and laugh. Watch a clip on YouTube, for example, or read a favorite blog. If you can, involve a friend. Studies show that people laugh more when they're laughing with others. This extra five minutes of fun will do much to enhance your energy and boost your work productivity.

### **5 p.m. Rock Out on the Way Home**

If you enjoy music, take this time to soak it in. If a good conversation helps you unwind from the workday, meet up with a family member or friend to have a nice chat while walking. This is also a great time to participate in physical activity – join a gym, enjoy a walk at the park, a group fitness class or a yoga class.

### **7 p.m. Go Slow for Dinner**

Dinner is the perfect time to relax and enjoy friends, family, fellowship, as well as fresh and local food and favorable conversation. Involve others in the meal preparation, and take time to reflect on the joy of the day. If time permits, take a nice walk or play in the backyard to further enjoy outdoor family time.

## **9 p.m. Falling to Sleep**

To ensure another energized day, you'll want to get seven to nine hours of sleep. For a good night's sleep, avoid overeating at dinner, as well as bright screens, computers, phones and television. Use this time more favorably by enjoying a hot bath, a cup of water or reading.

Provided by University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa

Citation: Optimizing your energy throughout the workday (2014, August 26) retrieved 20 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2014-08-optimizing-energy-workday.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------