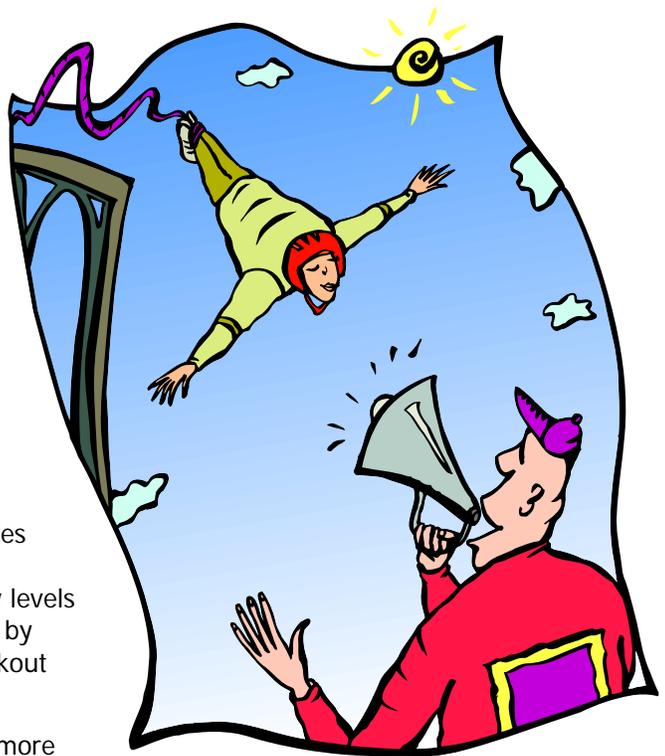


Keeping Energized at WORK



Studies by occupational and environmental medicine researchers report that up to 40% of U.S. workers experience fatigue. Low energy levels can sap your motivation, reduce productivity, lead to increased errors, and harm interpersonal relationships by making you cranky and difficult to work with. Keeping energized at work can vastly improve the quality of your time spent on the job, and it can help you jump-start your career.

What You Can Do at Home

1 Get enough sleep

Although medical professionals recommend that adults get at least 8 hours of sleep per night, the average adult reports sleeping just 6.8 hours per night according to a 2005 Sleep Foundation poll. Getting a good night's rest is the simplest way to dramatically boost your workday energy levels.

To maximize the quality of your sleep, avoid using alcohol, tobacco and caffeine (include tea) close to bedtime. All three interrupt sleep patterns. If you chronically snore, check with your doctor to see if you may be suffering from sleep apnea, a condition that disrupts oxygen flow to the brain during slumber.

2 Exercise regularly

Although exercising before work is a great way to increase both mental

and physical energy, studies show that you can permanently boost energy levels throughout the entire day by maintaining a regular workout schedule.

Better yet, consistency is more important than intensity. Even a brisk walk for 20 minutes each day can make the difference between feeling awake and energetic or sleep-walking through the day.

3 Eat right

Not only are vegetables and whole grains good for you, they help maintain consistent energy levels because their sugars are absorbed slowly by your body, thereby helping it to avoid blood sugar crashes that lead to exhaustion. (Looks like your mother was right all along!)

4 Reduce stress

Stress takes both a mental and physical toll on your energy. Look for positive ways to release work or family related stress. Seek counseling or mental health guidance for problems that seem overwhelming.

What You Can Do at Work

1 Put down the coffee, pick up the water

Although coffee can be a quick energy boost, users inevitably surf that wave right back to the bottom. Coffee also causes dehydration, one of the most common causes of fatigue, delivering a double whammy to your energy levels.

Experts recommend that adults drink at least 8-10 cups of water per day. Coffee junkies can vastly improve energy levels by swapping out their coffee consumption with water.

2 Take a short break

While putting your nose to the grindstone for 8-10 hours may seem admirable, taking short breaks every hour or two can actually increase productivity. When your attention starts to waver from your work, take a step away from what's in front of you and allow yourself a quick walk outside the building, or inside the building—anything to change the scenery.

3 Snack regularly

Health experts agree that eating several smaller meals a day instead of the usual three large meals helps to smooth out energy levels. Keep supplies of healthy snacks available at your desk for between-meal snacking.

4 Keep learning

Repetitious and mundane tasks can sap mental energy as boredom replaces enthusiasm. Proactively seek out new tasks and responsibilities in order to challenge yourself mentally. When you can seemingly do a job in your sleep, it's time to move on to something new.