



Fatigue Reduction: Eat for Alertness

Did you know that lack of sleep can lead to eating too often?

Poor sleep can increase your cravings for unhealthy foods and make you less likely to make healthy food choices.

Unfortunately, this may make you gain weight. Cravings, hunger, and overeating result from skipping meals or not eating on a schedule. This kind of eating leads to peaks and lows in your energy levels.

Take the time to stop for breaks, and do your best to eat your meals and snacks at the same time every day or night.

Besides eating regularly, you should try to eat foods that release energy slowly. You don't need to go on a tofu and celery juice diet to prevent fatigue; just choose foods carefully to keep up your energy at work.



Healthy Foods

- Lean meats (e.g. skinless chicken or turkey)
- Fish & Shellfish (crab, salmon, tuna, trout, sea foods).
- Beans & Pulses (e.g. low salt/sugar baked beans, lentils, chick peas)
- Low-fat dairy products (e.g. cheese, yogurt)
- Fruits (e.g. apples, bananas, oranges, strawberries)
- Vegetables (e.g. cabbage, kale, spring greens, broccoli, carrots)
- Wholegrain rice, breads, cereal, and crackers
- Potatoes
- Nuts and seeds

Foods to Avoid

- Sugary snacks and sweets (e.g. cakes, pastries & muffins)
- Fatty meat (e.g. beef, pork, lamb & chicken with skin)
- Fried foods (e.g. chips, donuts, onion rings, crisps)
- High-fat dairy products (e.g. whole milk, butter, cheese, ice cream)
- Fast foods (e.g. pizza or burgers)
- Sugary fizzy drinks
- Alcohol



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Serving suggestions

- Drink lots of water. Dehydration can reduce your alertness.
- Be careful with caffeine. 1 or 2 caffeinated drinks per day like coffee or tea can boost your energy and mental alertness, but more than 6 caffeinated drinks per day may make you anxious, irritable, and negatively affect your performance.
- Eat breakfast. Food boosts your metabolism and gives your body energy to burn. Choose a complex-carbohydrate breakfast like porridge or whole grain bread.
- Don't skip meals. Going without food for too long allows blood sugar levels to dip. Try to eat regularly to maintain your energy levels throughout the day.
- Don't crash diet. Low calorie diets or diets that severely restrict carbohydrates don't contain enough energy for your body's needs. The typical crash diet also deprives the body of vitamins, minerals and trace elements.
- Eat a healthy diet. Increase the amount of fruit, vegetables, whole grain foods, low fat dairy products and lean protein in your diet.
- Eat iron rich foods. Women in particular are prone to iron-deficiency (anaemia). Make sure your diet includes iron rich foods such as lean meat, fish and greens.
- Reduce the amount of high fat, high sugar and high salt foods. Consider swapping sweets with dried fruit, replace salty foods such as crisps, with nuts or olives. For fast food lovers, replace the pizza or doner kebab with a chicken shish kebab with all the salad.
- Make an extra portion of your evening meal so you can eat it for lunch the following day.



Things to think about

- Do you make time to eat healthily when working?
- What is your favourite 'healthy meal' and when did you last have it?
- What tips could you give to someone living a hectic life to enable them to eat healthily?
- Have you experienced a time when your healthy eating has led to a demonstrable rise in energy and alertness?
- Is there anything you can do to increase your healthy food intake?