

Wellness Wednesday



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7 tips to live a happier life

Do you wake up feeling sluggish most mornings? Have caffeinated beverages become a necessity to help power you through the day?

If this sounds familiar, it's time to ditch the quick fixes you rely on, and develop an energy management plan. Getting started may seem daunting, but soon you'll be energized to keep going once you recap the benefits of a happier, healthier and more productive lifestyle.

What is energy management?

Think of your energy as a limited resource, like money in an account. You begin the day with a certain amount to spend. The amount varies from person to person based on factors, such as age, sleep, stress levels, medical conditions and lifestyle.



Activities and interactions withdraw energy from or deposit energy into your account. While you may not always have control over activities that deplete your energy, you can take steps to deposit more energy into your account.

Follow these seven tips to increase your energy and live a happier, healthier, more productive life:

1. Eat nourishing food.

A well-balanced, healthy diet is at the core of well-being. But it's common to regard healthy eating primarily as a tool for weight loss. According to the 2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans, a balanced diet high in fruits and vegetables, lean protein, low-fat dairy and whole grains is needed for optimal energy. You really are what you eat.

Consume a variety of foods from all the food groups to get a range of nutrients to provide energy throughout the day. Opt for fresh or frozen fruits and vegetables, especially nutrient-dense dark, leafy greens and broccoli, as well as orange vegetables, like carrots and sweet potatoes. You can choose from many types of fish and legumes to choose from for healthy protein options. Aim to eat 3 ounces of whole-grain cereals, breads, rice or pasta daily.

2. Sleep at least seven to eight hours per night.

Prioritizing sleep is one of the best things you can do to set yourself up for a successful, energized day. Sleep deprivation can perpetuate serious health conditions, as well as negatively affect your mood, motivation and energy levels. Getting quality sleep is a healthy habit many people need to improve. Most adults need at least seven to eight hours of shut-eye each night, so what prevents them from getting it?

Observe your sleep patterns if you struggle with sleep. Take note of how much you sleep each night, factors that contribute to your sleep or lack of it, how rested you feel, and how much energy you have during your day. Then try sleep strategies to improve your sleep, like creating a relaxing and restful environment, minimizing light and noise, establishing a bedtime routine, managing stress, and turning off electronic devices.

Whatever you decide to start with, be consistent. Utilizing the same sleep routine and sleep strategies will help develop your body's internal alarm clock and can lead to improved sleep quality. With improved sleep quality, people experience better health, and improved emotional well-being, lower risk of diseases, and are more productive.

3. Keep company with good people.

Maximize the amount of time that you spend with people you enjoy being around. Connecting with others who radiate positivity and have similar interests will excite and energize you.

On the other side, people you don't relate to or who have negative outlooks, complain often, or make poor choices will only drain your energy account. Be selective about the company you keep.

It's important to set limits and boundaries to protect yourself and conserve your energy when around people who do not refill your energy reserves.

4. Avoid news overdose.

Consuming news is an important way to stay connected to what's happening in the world. It can be educational, entertaining and even uplifting.

Unfortunately, the news too frequently is filled with stories of suffering. These stories can skew your view of the world and cause you to focus on your worst fears instead of recognizing the good that surrounds you.

You can't avoid these stories altogether, but try to minimize your exposure when you can, especially during trying times.

5. Get regular exercise.

Do you find yourself feeling lethargic halfway through the day? Have you ever gotten winded by simple everyday duties, such as grocery shopping or household chores? The Department of Health and Human Services recommends that adults complete at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity each week. Contrary to what you might believe, this will add to your energy account and not subtract from it.

Exercise relieves stress and tension, strengthens muscles and boosts endurance, and helps your body work more efficiently during other physical tasks or activities.

6. Do something meaningful each day.

What do you feel passionate about? Do you have a special talent that you'd like to practice more often or share with others? Do something you enjoy every day, even if it's a simple act like cooking a healthy meal or listening to your favorite song. Putting effort into the things that matter most to you will help you use and reserve your energy in ways that will bring out the best in you.

7. Think good thoughts for others.

Maintaining a compassionate mindset is another way to conserve energy.

One example of practicing this way of thinking is called kind attention. For example, try to make eye contact with a stranger and smile, while thinking "I wish you well." This positive act can, instead, keep you from judging that person. Judging others can cause us to place judgment on ourselves, and that type of negative internal dialogue can be exhausting.



You'll feel better with each step you take toward this important self-care investment.

Here are a few simple activities that will help you become more mindful of caring for yourself:

- **Monitor your energy.**

Take your energy "temperature" at various points throughout the day, assigning it a number from 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest energy level. Pay attention to the details of your day so you can identify the people or events that impact you the most.

- **Make incremental changes.**

Once you are aware of some of the people or events that sabotage your energy, consider your next steps. Rather than tackling everything at once, choose an area that is important to you, and be realistic with the goals you set. For instance, if disorganization in your home is a big source of daily stress, pick one cabinet, closet or drawer to clear out each week instead of overwhelming yourself with doing it all at once. Then move on to your next goal when you feel ready.

- **Plan and prioritize.**

Take note of the times during the day when your energy levels tend to be the highest. Decide how you can take advantage of those moments by prioritizing important tasks when you are feeling fresh and productive.



ENGLISH MUFFIN BREAKFAST SANDWICH

242 Calories | Prep: 5 mins | Cook: 10 mins | Total: 15 mins
YIELD: 2 servings | Course: Breakfast | Cuisine: American



INGREDIENTS

- olive oil spray
- 2 light, whole wheat English muffins, toasted
- 2 slices turkey bacon, cut in half (I love Applegate)
- 2 slices cheddar or American cheese
- 2 large eggs
- salt and black pepper, to taste
- optional condiments: hot sauce, ketchup, etc

Variations

- **Meat:** Swap the turkey bacon for ham, Taylor ham, center-cut bacon, Canadian bacon or a turkey sausage patty.
- **Bread:** Switch up the bread and use gluten-free muffins, rolls, bagels, or sliced bread.
- **Cheese:** Substitute cheddar with pepper jack, provolone, mozzarella or Swiss.
- **Seasoning:** Season the eggs with everything bagel seasoning or Tajin.
- **Vegetables:** Add avocado, red onion, or tomato.
- **Vegetarian Breakfast Sandwich:** Leave out the meat.
- **Make It Dairy-free:** Skip the cheese or use dairy-free cheese.

This delicious, healthy English Muffin Breakfast Sandwich with turkey bacon, egg and cheese is my go-to sandwich and the best way to start the morning!

Skip the drive-thru and make your own breakfast sandwiches! They take less than 10 minutes to whip up and are easy to make ahead and refrigerate or freeze to reheat during the week.

Nutrition Information

Serving: 1 sandwich, Calories: 242 kcal, Carbohydrates: 29.5 g, Protein: 18.5 g, Fat: 9.5 g, Saturated Fat: 2 g, Cholesterol: 211 mg, Sodium: 671 mg, Fiber: 8 g, Sugar: 3.2 g



INSTRUCTIONS



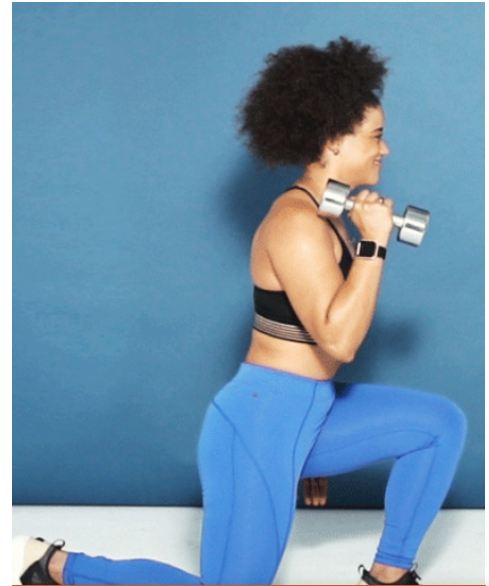
1. Open the English muffins, top with a slice of cheese and toast in the toaster oven or broiler about 6 inches from the flame until the cheese melts (careful not to burn).
2. Meanwhile, spray a large skillet with oil and cook the turkey bacon as directed.
3. Set aside and spray the skillet with more oil.
4. Crack the eggs in a nonstick skillet, season with a pinch of salt and black pepper and cook on low, covered until the yolks are cooked to your liking, I like to keep them on the runny side but you can also make them scrambled.
5. To make the sandwiches: place the bacon on one side and the egg on the other.
6. Top with optional condiments, if desired.

FEATURED EXERCISE

<https://www.self.com/gallery/exercises-top-trainers-do-every-time-they-work-out>Featured Exercise ► Reverse Lunge to Overhead Press 

» **Do it:** *This exercise is great because it gives a great bang for your buck and targets the glutes, quads, and core while you are in the split stance, the core during and knee drive, and the shoulder during the press.*

- Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart. Hold a dumbbell in your right hand and rest it on your shoulder.
- Step back (about 2 feet) with your right foot, landing on the ball of your right foot and keeping your heel off the ground.
- Bend both knees to create two 90-degree angles with your legs.
- In this position, your shoulders should be directly above your hips and your chest should be upright. Your left shin should be perpendicular to the floor and your left knee should be stacked above your left ankle. Your butt and core should be engaged.
- Push through the heel of your left foot to stand up straight. As you do, press the weight directly overhead and drive your right knee in toward your chest. This is 1 rep.
- Hold for a beat, and then step back into a reverse lunge to immediately go into the next rep.



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Regular exercise can help you control your weight, reduce your risk of heart disease, and strengthen your bones and muscles. But if it's been awhile since you've exercised and you have health issues or concerns, it's a good idea to talk to your doctor before starting a new exercise routine.



**DON'T FEAR
FAILURE. FEAR
BEING IN THE
EXACT SAME
PLACE NEXT YEAR
AS YOU ARE
TODAY.**

- Unknown

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