

POWER HUNGRY? Learn How to Raise Your Metabolism

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Out of energy?

You may not be giving your body what it needs. If you are watching your diet or working out strenuously, you may actually be telling your body to conserve its energy! But you can get your body running like a machine by giving it proper fuels and keeping it well-oiled.

Carbs are a body's best friend

When it comes to providing energy and helping you burn fat, carbohydrates are the answer. The ultimate diet mistake is to cut out carbohydrates. This results in decreased metabolism and a lower body energy level. Fat is only burned in the flame of adequate carbohydrates. Low carbohydrate diets cause quick water loss, not fat loss. And, because no one can sustain such restrictive eating for very long, you will eventually crave carbohydrates so severely that you may actually end up bingeing on high-calorie, high-fat foods to satisfy your body's ravenous hunger.

When you consume enough "healthy" carbohydrates throughout the day, your body's food cravings for both energy and sweets will be satisfied. Eating these foods at each meal can actually raise your metabolism, increasing your fat-burning capacity. Most Americans do not consume enough carbohydrates. The average American eats only 45 percent of his calories in the form of carbohydrate foods — grains, vegetables and fruits. Ideally, we should get at least 50 percent of our daily calories from these foods.

How do you know what to eat?

Step one: Plan menus around the new food pyramid, starting with healthy "high fiber" carbohydrates. Forming the base of the pyramid are the foods that should form the base of your entrees — grains, breads, cereals and starchy vegetables. At a minimum, allow for two servings (or one cup) from this group at each meal. If you are very active or are trying to maintain your weight, consider eating more portions. Some athletes need up to two times the serving indicated by pyramid guidelines.

Step two: Add in the second level of healthy carbohydrates – fresh fruits (two to four servings per day) and vegetables (five to eight servings per day). These two groups contribute metabolism-raising high-fiber choices to the diet. And fruit, a natural sugar source, is an excellent dessert or snack option to help satisfy sugar cravings.

Step three: Allow a minimum of two servings each from the meat and dairy categories. Whenever possible, choose the lowest-fat selections to limit the amount of saturated fat in the diet. Don't kid yourself into eating too much – portions are two to three servings, 3-4 ounce each, in the meat group, and two to three 8-ounce portions of milk or yogurt in the dairy group. Eat them at meal time (e.g., milk with cereal in the morning, or yogurt as a dessert option at lunch or dinner) to ensure meeting your calcium needs.

If you are dieting, reduce your meat-protein group intake to the lower end of the range (two servings, 2-3 ounces/day). Another helpful tip is to eat a larger proportion of your

protein earlier in the day. For example, eat 3-4 ounces of protein at lunch and save 1-2 ounces for dinner. By eating a lighter dinner, you lessen the potential to store extra calories eaten in the evening.

Last step: Provide your body with fats and oils daily, but only in small amounts. Your body needs ½ of your body weight in grams with the majority of essential fatty acids per day found in vegetable fats such as grain, seed and nut oils like salad dressing, oils, mayonnaise, and margarine.

We get some hidden fat just from eating baked bread products that have been made with vegetable fats. So, “use sparingly” means just that – use small amounts of condiments or hidden fats in moderation throughout the day.

If you are trying to lower your fat intake, counting fat grams may be helpful. Just keep in mind the balance with the other food groups, and maintain your total concentrated fat sources at no less than 15 grams per day. A simple suggestion is to allow yourself one teaspoon portion of margarine, mayonnaise, or oil per meal. This allows you to have a calorie-satisfying energy source at each meal and helps satisfy your appetite. Most adults maintain their weight on 60-80 grams/day. When trying to lose weight, the total fat gram count for the day should range between 30 and 50 grams per day. The menu described below keeps the fat percentage below 30 percent of the total calories.

Don't forget snacks.

Grazing can help you to maintain a higher overall energy level plus give you more energy to be able to exercise later in the day. Starving your muscles by not fueling them when you are truly hungry lowers your metabolism. Choosing snacks from both the fruit and bread group can energize and raise your metabolism throughout the day.

What about exercise?

We have heard for years that exercising, especially aerobically, raises the metabolism. Activities like aerobic dance, bench stepping, jogging, treadmill, walking, racewalking, hiking, stairstepping, cycling or swimming done on a regular basis are calorie-burning activities that will definitely contribute to healthy weight management.

When planning any exercise regimen, consider three primary factors: intensity, duration, and frequency. **Intensity** refers to the heart rate you achieve during the exercise session, **duration** means the length of time you exercise per session, and **frequency** means how often you exercise during the week. While there is no exact best formula, experts generally agree that one's heart rate should be in the target zone of 50 to 80 percent of the maximum heart rate (220 minus your age equals maximum heart rate), the duration should be a minimum of 30 minutes up to 60 minutes, and the frequency should be a minimum of three times per week up to five times per week.

Don't forget about anaerobic exercise. This type of higher intensity activity – calisthenics, stretching, yoga, Pilates, and strength training – can increase your metabolism by helping maintain lean tissue. Don't forget this part of your exercise routine because it not only increases your fat-burning capacity, but it helps tone and shape your body. New muscle tissue gives your motor more power to burn the fuel you place in your engine!

When is the best time to exercise?

Pick the time of day that's best for your routine. While there is no concrete evidence supporting that exercising at a specific time of the day will raise your metabolism more, exercising at the end of the day can create a calorie burn that helps suppress appetite and prevent nighttime overeating. So, if your schedule allows, try to fit your activity in before or after dinner. One idea would be to do your strength training first thing in the morning, as an energizing start to the day, and your aerobic exercise in the evening.

Don't forget to get adequate rest.

Your body needs not just sleep, but rest from physical activity to allow tissues to regenerate. Make sure that you take a day off from exercise two times per week and, remember, if on an exercise day you feel really fatigued or sore, your body is telling you to lay off. Likewise, if during exercise you feel a pain or twinge in a muscle or joint, stop immediately and relax. The injury you avoid now will allow you to continue exercising regularly in the future.

The menu example below gives you an idea of how to use basic food group planning as a tool. A suggested schedule is described below for programming your exercise routine along with your food intake. Remember, you cannot do one without the other. Nutrition fuels fitness!

Creating the Ideal Day for Raising Your Metabolism (based on minimum nutrition needs)

6:15-6:45 a.m.

Activity Session: Stretching or yoga

7:30-8 a.m.

Breakfast: 1 bagel or 1 slice toast and $\frac{3}{4}$ cup dry cereal

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup orange juice or $\frac{1}{2}$ banana

8 ounces 1% skim milk or 8 ounces of nonfat or low-fat fruit-flavored dairy yogurt

1 teaspoon of regular margarine or 1 tablespoon of diet margarine on toast or bagel

10 a.m.

Snack: 1 orange or apple, with half a bagel or 1 oz pretzels

12-12:45 p.m.

Lunch: 2 slices of sandwich bread or 1 large baked potato

1 apple or peach and a garden salad

3 to 4 ounces of lean deli sliced turkey breast for sandwich and 8 ounces of nonfat or low-fat fruit-flavored yogurt or 3 to 4 ounces broiled skinless chicken breast

1 teaspoon of regular mayonnaise or 1 tablespoon of diet mayonnaise on sandwich, or 1 tablespoon regular Italian or Catalina dressing on the salad or 2 tablespoons of diet dressing of the same type for salad

3 p.m.

Snack: 8 ounces of nonfat fruit-flavored yogurt
3 graham crackers or 1/3 cup high fiber cereal

5:30-6 p.m.

30 to 45 minutes of walking, stairstepping or any aerobic activity

7 p.m.

Dinner

1 cup pasta noodles or 2/3 cup rice

1/2 cup light fruit cocktail or applesauce (natural) and 1 cup of steamed broccoli or asparagus

1-2 ounces of broiled fish filet or 1-2 ounces of canned tuna in water for a topping on a salad or as tuna salad

1 teaspoon of regular margarine or 1 tablespoon of diet margarine for the steamed vegetables, pasta or rice; or the same amount of regular or diet mayonnaise to mix into the tuna for a tuna salad