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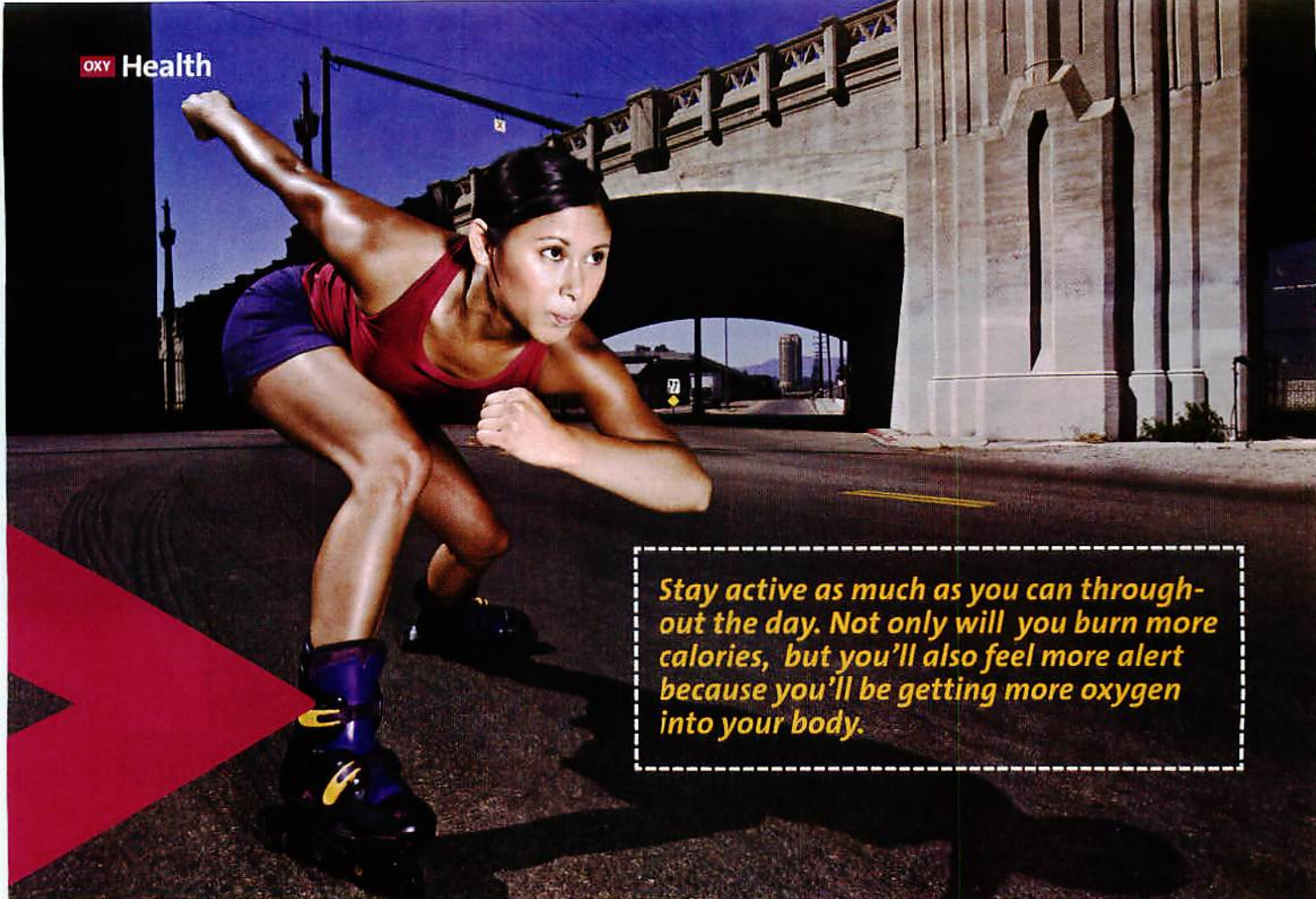
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Stay active as much as you can throughout the day. Not only will you burn more calories, but you'll also feel more alert because you'll be getting more oxygen into your body.

Blast Past Your Energy Crash

Create your high-powered day!

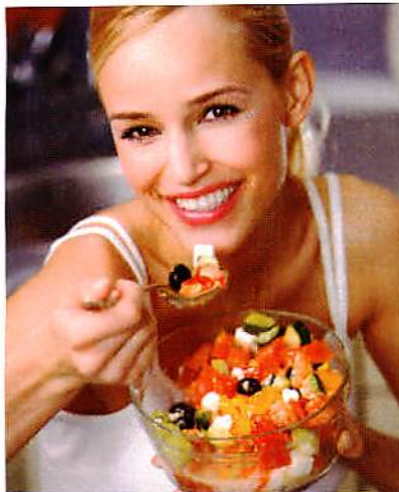
Hate that 3:00 p.m. slump? We've gone straight to leading experts to find out how you can combat it. BY KAREN ASP

It happens every day without fail: Around 3:00 p.m., you feel so lethargic that you crave a couch where you can curl up and take a snooze. You've thought about sauntering over to the vending machine to grab a candy bar – a sugar rush might give you a kick in the pants – but you're way too commit-

ted to clean eating and your active lifestyle so you know it's best to ride it out.

What exactly is making your body crash? While feeling sleepy during the mid-afternoon is actually a normal part of everyone's day, your lifestyle may be making the slump worse.

IMAGE: JUPITERIMAGES



Jump Start

Even though you usually eat clean, by the time 3:00 p.m. hits you could still be making a few nutritional flubs throughout the day.

While a protein shake is a great option for after your morning workout, shame on you if that's all you're sipping until lunch. "Without fuel in that tank, you'll be exhausted by mid-afternoon," says Mary Horn, MS, director of exercise science and nutrition at Miraval Resort in Tucson, Arizona. Plus, if you're downing a Starbucks grande bold, having a caffeine rush will make you tank faster.

MORNING MEAL: Kick caffeine off the breakfast table! Instead, combine protein with complex carbohydrates. Some suggestions: a hard-boiled egg with whole-grain toast or scrambled eggs and beans.

Pack Protein

Examine your lunches. Mixed greens and vegetables are jammed with nutrients, but if you're only munching on lettuce, you're never going to make it through the day. "Without protein and fiber, there's nothing in your body that will buffer the natural rise and fall of your blood sugar," says Orli R. Etingin, director and founder of the Iris Cantor Women's Health Center at Weill Cornell Medical College in New York.

BOX IT: Make sure that all your lunches have a solid combination of complex carbohydrates, essential fats and protein to fuel your body's energy stores evenly throughout the day. Add a source of lean, high-quality protein, such as chicken, tuna or salmon to that salad.

Power Picks

Horn also recommends eating a snack between lunch and dinner to keep your blood sugar from dropping and prevent fatigue.

SNACK PACK: Sprinkle slivered almonds on yogurt, smear a rice cake with peanut butter or dip celery and carrots in hummus.

Find Your Rhythm

To understand what's going on, look at your body's circadian rhythms, which include a rhythm of sleep propensity. "Most people have a strong sleep propensity at night and little sleep propensity during the day — except for a mild slump around lunchtime, which is normal," says Roberto Refinetti, Ph.D., director of the Circadian Rhythm Laboratory at the University of South Carolina. However, "If the person is sleep-deprived, the afternoon slump can be perceived as stronger," says Refinetti, adding that even if you log enough sleep, you'll still feel a mild slump.

Getting a better night's sleep to help reduce the strength of afternoon fatigue isn't always easy. That's why a mid-afternoon nap could help recharge those batteries. Nap for no longer than 45 minutes — even a five-minute power nap can help — and don't do this past 5:00 p.m. because it will mess up your nighttime sleep, says Jacob Teitelbaum, MD, author of *From Fatigued to Fantastic* (Avery, 2007) and medical director of the national Fibromyalgia and Fatigue Centers. After you get up, splash cold water on your face to further energize you.

SOUND SLUMBER: Consider taking half a gram of melatonin to boost sleep. Or, herbs like wild lettuce extract (28 to 112 milligrams), Jamaican dogwood extract (90 to 360 milligrams) and valerian extract (200 to 800 milligrams) can induce higher-quality sleep.

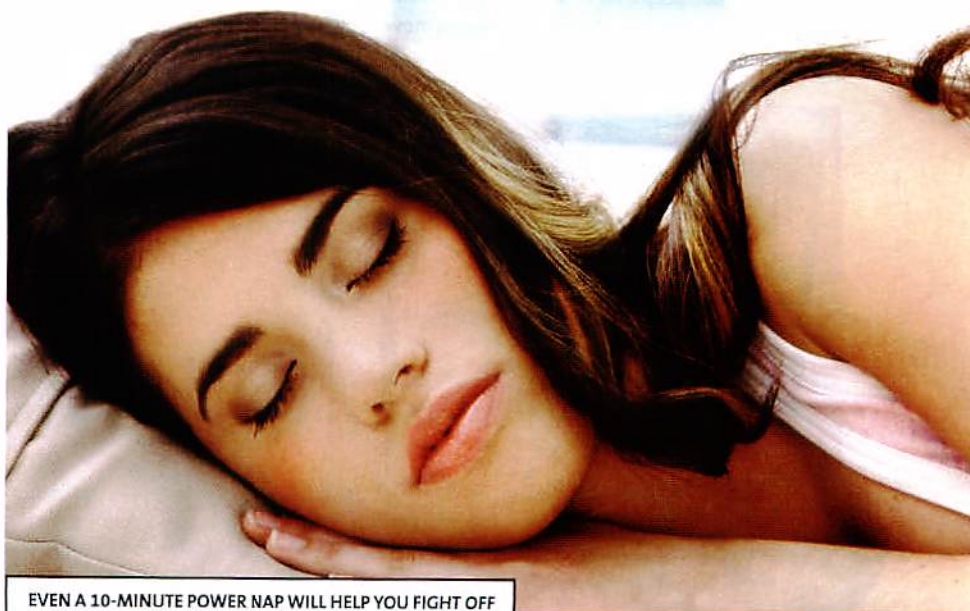


Exhaust Your Options

THERE ARE A FEW MEDICAL CAUSES THAT COULD BE BEHIND YOUR FATIGUE.

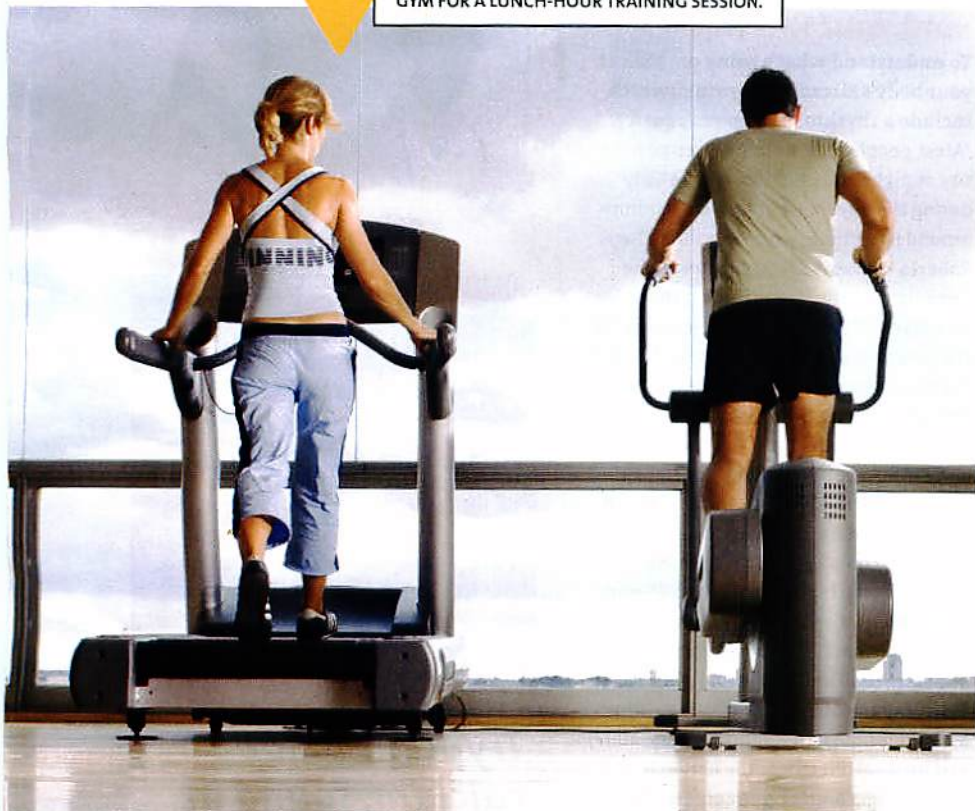
If you're anemic, a vegetarian or have heavy periods, low iron levels could be to blame. Ask your doctor to run a simple blood test to check your iron levels. If you have constant fatigue, aches and trouble sleeping you could have fibromyalgia or chronic fatigue syndrome, so see your doctor.

Tryptophan and calcium, found in fat-free milk, may help restfulness by assisting your brain to relax for sleeping.



EVEN A 10-MINUTE POWER NAP WILL HELP YOU FIGHT OFF MID-AFTERNOON FATIGUE.

REFRESH YOUR BODY BY DUCKING INTO THE GYM FOR A LUNCH-HOUR TRAINING SESSION.



Move It & Drink Up

Stay active as much as you can throughout the day. Not only will you burn more calories, but you'll also feel more alert because you'll be getting more oxygen into your body. If you're glued to your desk most of the day, set an hourly timer and move for a minute or two whenever it goes off. Simply walking briskly to the photocopier will help increase your blood flow, giving your body a total refresher. According to Joel Fuhrmann, MD, a family physician based in Flemington, New Jersey, and author of *Eat for Health* (Gift Press, 2008), the point is just to move to avoid that lethargic feeling. When you're training, you know you have to down water to maintain hydration. Even if you're parked at your desk, staying hydrated can help your body fend off fatigue. So if you're sipping caffeine for an extra energy boost, you'll need to swig extra water.

GET A MOVE ON: Keep a set of hand weights stashed under your desk and complete one or two sets of strength-training moves or grab a skipping rope at home and skip for 10-minute intervals.



Break your crackberry addiction

Energy Zappers

JUST AS THERE ARE ENERGY BOOSTERS, THERE ARE ALSO ENERGY ZAPPERS. HERE'S WHAT YOU SHOULD AVOID:

- Toxic people:** They're called "energy vampires" because they suck energy from you. Eliminate them from your life or decrease your exposure to them.
- Energy drinks:** These highly caffeinated, heavily sugared drinks will take you down as quickly as they boost you up.
- Technology:** You love your BlackBerry, but it can rule you to fatigue. Cut the cord on technology, even just once a day. For instance, as tough as this sounds, go two hours without checking your email.

Energy Quickies

HERE ARE OTHER SIMPLE STRATEGIES FOR CONQUERING THAT MID-AFTERNOON ENERGY SLUMP:

- Take a brisk 10-minute walk,** which research has shown can boost mood and energy. — Leah Sarago, star of the *10 Minute Solution: Dance Off Fat Fast* DVD.
- Sip a powdered vitamin drink in the morning.** — Jacob Teitelbaum, MD, author of *From Fatigued to Fantastic* (Avery, 2007) and medical director of the national Fibromyalgia and Fatigue Centers.
- Rub your ears with your thumb and first finger for 10 to 20 seconds.** — Teitelbaum
- Rewrite your inner dialogue.** Rather than telling yourself how tired you feel, take a few breaths and say to yourself, "I am energized." — Jessica R. Smith, master fitness trainer.



5 • Seek sunshine. Just a few minutes of sunshine produces chemicals that will make you more alert and refreshed. — Deborah Enos, a certified nutritionist in Sammamish, Washington, and author of *Weight a Minute* (Book Publishers Network, 2007).

6 • Find your passions — and go for them. If you're living a life you love, it's tough to not feel energetic. If necessary, dust off that resumé and make some changes. — Teitelbaum

7 • Take an energy break. It doesn't matter what it is — laughing, dancing or being with a friend — do it for 10 seconds for an instant boost. — Kelly McGonigal, Ph.D., health psychologist at Stanford University in Palo Alto, California.