

Wake-Up Call: Energy Boosters to Power You Through Your Day

Add these science-backed energy boosters to your daily routine for a makeover that'll leave you super-charged from dawn to dusk.

By Mallory Creveling



Ann E. Cutting



1 OF 5 |  [View All](#)



Throw Open the Shades (7:00 a.m.) Seeing natural light will help you rise and shine, especially if you're like the 24% of *Family Circle* readers who say they're most tired when first waking up, according to a recent poll.

"Environmental cues play a huge role in our circadian cycles—the internal clock that tells us when to get up or go to sleep," says [Holly Phillips, MD, author of *The Exhaustion Breakthrough*](#).

Start Moving (7:30 a.m.) Do 10 squats, lunges, push-ups or jumping jacks as part of your get-ready routine, suggests [Pedram Shojai, OMD, author of *The Urban Monk* and *Rise and Shine*](#). Exercise enhances blood flow, pushes oxygen throughout the body and sends nutrients to muscle tissue, leading to wakefulness that lasts all morning.

Savor an Aroma (8:00 a.m.) Rev yourself up with scents like peppermint (flavored toothpaste will do) or jasmine (look for it in body wash), which increase alertness.

Improve Your Breakfast (8:30 a.m.) The ideal morning meal mixes protein, carbs and healthy fats to keep you satisfied and stabilize blood sugar levels, explains [Bonnie Taub-Dix, RDN, founder of *BetterThanDieting.com* and author of *Read It Before You Eat It*](#). Instead of a bagel, have a smoothie: Blend 1 cup Greek yogurt, 1 tbsp almond butter, 1 cup berries and a handful of ice. (Click [here](#) for more breakfast ideas.)

Be Positive (9:00 a.m.) Call your funniest friend, chat with an upbeat coworker or jot down three things you're thankful for. People who experience more happy events in their day tend to feel less drained, says Phillips.

Drink Coffee (9:30 a.m.) In addition to caffeine, coffee provides health-boosting antioxidants. Experts say sipping a cup of joe a few hours after waking up makes it more effective, because it won't interfere with the body's natural stimulant, cortisol, which tends to peak between 8 and 9 a.m.

Chew Gum (10:30 a.m.) When you're losing power, pop a piece of gum. Several studies show that it increases attentiveness and improves work performance.

Do a Tension Inspection (11:00 a.m.) Is your jaw clenched? Are your shoulders hunched? Uncomfortable posture sucks up extra energy, Phillips explains. Fix it by rolling your shoulders down away from your ears with your chest up, back straight and feet flat on the floor. Now take 10 deep breaths, imagining you're sending oxygen to the spots that feel tight.

Eat a Hearty Lunch (1:00 p.m.) "Energy and satiety are BFFs," says Taub-Dix. Eat enough fiber and protein to feel satisfied, not stuffed, which will make you lethargic later. Your best bet: whole grains (they have invigorating B vitamins) and 2 ounces of meat or fish. Toss items like beans, quinoa, nuts and salmon into your salad. Or choose a turkey sandwich on 100% whole-grain bread.

If you feel sleepy all the time, these problems may be to blame.

Dehydration: When you don't get enough H₂O, your heart has to work harder, leaving you sluggish. People often feel fatigue before thirst, so track your intake. Keep at least a 16-ounce water bottle on your desk or counter, carry it with you on the go and have about a cup every hour. Foods high in water content, like broccoli, oranges and soup, also replenish liquids.

Vitamin Deficiency: A lack of magnesium or iron can cause your vitality to nose-dive. Magnesium helps turn food into energy and improves nerve function. Muscle cramps are a sign you need more—remedy that with seeds, fruits and veggies. Iron, present in red blood cells and found in foods like kale or steak, is vital for transporting oxygen throughout the body.

Hormone Imbalances: For many women 45 and older, testosterone dips, causing stamina to plummet. A healthy diet and strength training can boost hormone levels. Constant stress can lower them, because anxiety exhausts the adrenal glands, where some testosterone is produced. Relieve tension with meditation or yoga.

Obesity and Depression: Research has shown that overweight or depressed individuals have a higher risk of daytime drowsiness. Fat cells produce compounds that magnify sleepiness, while sadness elevates stress hormones, making it difficult to doze off. Set a goal to drop pounds or talk to a therapist about ways to increase your happiness.



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3 OF 5 |  View All



Stride Right (2:00 p.m.) Research shows that midday exercise will help you cross more projects off your to-do list. If you don't have time for a class or gym session, take a brisk walk around the block. Just shoot for 10 heart-pumping minutes.

Sip Ice Water (2:30 p.m.) Down 8 to 12 ounces of cold H₂O for the same adrenaline rush you get from splashing your face (but without the makeup smudges), suggests [Jacob Teitelbaum, MD, director of the Practitioners Alliance Network and author of *The Fatigue and Fibromyalgia Solution*](#).



Grab a Smart Indulgence (3:00 p.m.) Go ahead and treat yourself to chocolate! A small square, whether dark or milk, will pep you up. Chocolate contains theobromine, a cousin to caffeine that has similar but less intense energy-enhancing effects, Teitelbaum explains. Opt for a chocolate bar topped with sea salt for extra zing—the body needs sodium to steady blood pressure and fight foginess.

Play Wonder Woman (3:30 p.m.) "A body at rest loves to stay at rest, so break the inertia of sitting," says [Tami Meraglia, MD, author of *The Hormone Secret*](#). Get out of your chair and strike a power pose: Stand with legs a little wider than your hips, chest puffed out, chin up and hands on your hips or behind your head. Harvard research found this stance increases testosterone, which makes you feel more confident and awake.

Schedule a Meeting (4:00 p.m.) Head to a colleague's office or call a pal for a brainstorming session. One study found that quick thinking, like throwing around new ideas, makes people feel more lively.

Play Your Favorite Song (4:15 p.m.) If you're dozing off while tackling the next task, put on your headphones and crank up the tunes, says Phillips. Research has found that listening to music reduces stress and stops sleepiness.

Fill a Mug (4:30 p.m.) In a *Family Circle* poll, 45% of moms said they're most sluggish between lunch and dinner. Beat that p.m. slump with sugar-free green tea (if you're sensitive to caffeine, choose decaf). It contains theanine, which leaves you focused yet calm.

Give Yourself a Massage (5:00 p.m.) Rub the entire outer edge of both ears for 30 seconds with your thumb and forefinger, says Teitelbaum. According to Eastern medicine, all the body's energy pathways run through this area.

Dish Up the Right Dinner (6:30 p.m.) To stay full until bedtime—crucial for avoiding midnight munching, which can affect your slumber and, therefore, your wakefulness the next day—have a protein and carb combo, says Taub-Dix. Whole wheat pasta loaded with veggies and chicken is a smart choice. For more healthy dinners, [click here](#).

Put Away Your Devices (7:30 p.m.) Staring at your computer or phone can mess with melatonin in the brain, disrupting your sleep-wake cycle and affecting the quality of your shut-eye (good morning, grogginess). Phillips suggests taking a technology break for at least an hour once a day and, ideally, 60 minutes before bedtime.

Wind Down (9:30 p.m.) Nineteen percent of *Family Circle* readers surveyed report being most energetic right before bed. Here's how to get calm: Run a warm bath with 2 cups of Epsom salts (to loosen muscles) and a few drops of lavender oil. A 30-minute soak allows your mind and body to relax.

Zone Out (10:00 p.m.) Listen to a guided meditation like those on [Headspace](#) or [OMG. I Can Meditate!](#) (Android and iOS, free) or just focus on deep breathing. You'll doze off faster, making it easier to get seven to nine hours of shut-eye and reach a deep sleep, which you need to feel rejuvenated and ready to start the next day.

You may think these five habits give you some juice—but they only leave you drained.

Turning to Sweets: Filling up on lots of cookies, candy or other sugar-laden snacks is tempting, but they quickly spike your blood sugar, resulting in an even lower drop in energy later.

Downing Caffeine: While a cup or two of coffee in the a.m. is great for jump-starting the day, stop there. A few more in the late afternoon may prevent you from falling and staying asleep. The result: a really rough time waking up.

Multitasking: You may think you're getting more done in less time, but multitasking can cause you to crash. One study found that tackling a mental and physical job at the same time makes you more exhausted than finishing the two separately. Turns out tough cognitive tasks steal brain resources that power the body.

Taking Long Naps: A midday snooze provides a power boost, as long as you keep it to 30 minutes or less and before 4 p.m. That way, you won't be dazed afterward or too alert to nod off at night.

Sipping a Nightcap: Even if a glass of wine helps you fall asleep, you'll likely have shorter REM cycles and wake up in the middle of the night. Avoid drinking a few hours before hitting the sheets for better zzz's.