

everyday **ayurveda**

energy boosters

BY SHANNON SEXTON

Most of us could use an extra dose of energy. Our media-drenched society knows this and markets a plethora of pills, drinks, and snacks that are “guaranteed” to give us a lift. But at what cost?

When we start using uppers like caffeine and sugar to get through the day, we’re heading for trouble. We stay up late, oversleep, and jolt ourselves awake with a cup of coffee; we eat fast food on the fly; we resort to shallow breathing and yawn through an entire meeting. And then we wonder why we’re tired!

Quick fixes won’t do it: if we want to increase our energy in a sustained and balanced way, we have to examine our lifestyle, determine which of our habits are depleting, and make changes accordingly. Here are a few of the common energy culprits and some alternatives.

yiextra.org

For more ayurvedic tips on exercise, visit yiextra.org and click on “Get Physical.”

you are what you eat

Lifeless food yields lifeless bodies and minds. Fast food, frozen dinners, and prepackaged snacks aren’t going to provide us with much nourishment or energy. Stale, overprocessed food is difficult to digest and contributes to our toxic buildup (*ama*) which accumulates and leaves the body susceptible to disease. According to ayurveda, the closer our food is to its natural state, the more life-giving energy it has. Whole food is also easier for the body to assimilate. So eat fresh fruits, vegetables, grains, and legumes whenever you can. And limit your intake of caffeine and sugar; they give you a short-term illusion of energy but they drain you in the long run.

get physical

How do you feel about exercise? Do you avoid it or overdo it? Either way, this could be another reason why you’re tired. According to ayurveda, the most energy-giving exercise is regular and moderate—a daily routine of walking, jogging, or biking, for example, where you work hard enough to sweat but don’t overexert. Choose an activity that balances your constitution and be sure to do something you enjoy.

breathe!

Long ago the sages discovered a powerful relationship between breath and energy. The breath, they say, is the bridge between body and mind. Improving the quality of your breathing improves the quality of your energy and attention. And the truth is, most of us could use some improvement.

To begin, make a conscious commitment to practice deep, diaphragmatic breathing while you walk, talk, work, eat, and travel from place to place. You can also practice sitting and standing with your head, neck, and trunk in alignment; this will set the stage for deep breathing. (For more on this subject, see page 62.)

to thine own self be true

How often do you ignore your intuition? How often do you set aside your goals and aspirations in favor of someone else's? When we aren't true to ourselves, we create inner conflict that depletes our energy and leads to disease-producing ama on mental, emotional, and physical levels.



mega-foods

Look for these green mega-foods at your local health food store or order them online:

- Kyo-Green by Wakunaga of America, www.kyolic.com
- Barlean's Greens by Barlean's, www.barleans.com
- Organic Spirulina Powder by Royal BodyCare, www.spirulinap.sun-cell.com
- Liquid Chlorophyll by Nature's Sunshine, www.healthywarehouse.com

The solution? Begin taking steps to honor yourself at a higher level—end a draining relationship; do the career exploration you've been putting off; or spend some time on a creative project that has been calling you.

try a green drink

Enzyme-rich drinks with spirulina, barley shoots, wheat grass, chlorella, and/or alfalfa will boost your energy. Rich in a variety of minerals, vitamins, amino acids, and enzymes, these green mega-foods help restore us to better health. They provide nutrients that are often lacking in our diet and boost our body's energy production and detoxification processes.

practice a relaxation technique

A simple systematic relaxation will refresh the body, calm the mind, and evenly distribute your energy. (For a specific technique, see page 42.) ●

