

30 DAYS TO Boost Your Energy

stressed, our bodies release the hormones adrenaline and cortisol. This is to initiate a 'fight or flight' response to deal with the cause of the problem as quickly as possible. These hormones increase heart rate and blood pressure and make you breathe harder to boost circulation and get more energy to the organs and muscles. You become more alert and have quicker reaction times as a result. This is good for situations where you might need to act quickly or run fast, but not if you are having this kind of response when you want to relax or go to sleep.

If you are frequently stressed, your body will be using more energy, which will make you feel fatigued regularly. It might lead you to reach for a sugary snack or a cup of coffee to boost your energy levels, but these are only short-term fixes that can impact your

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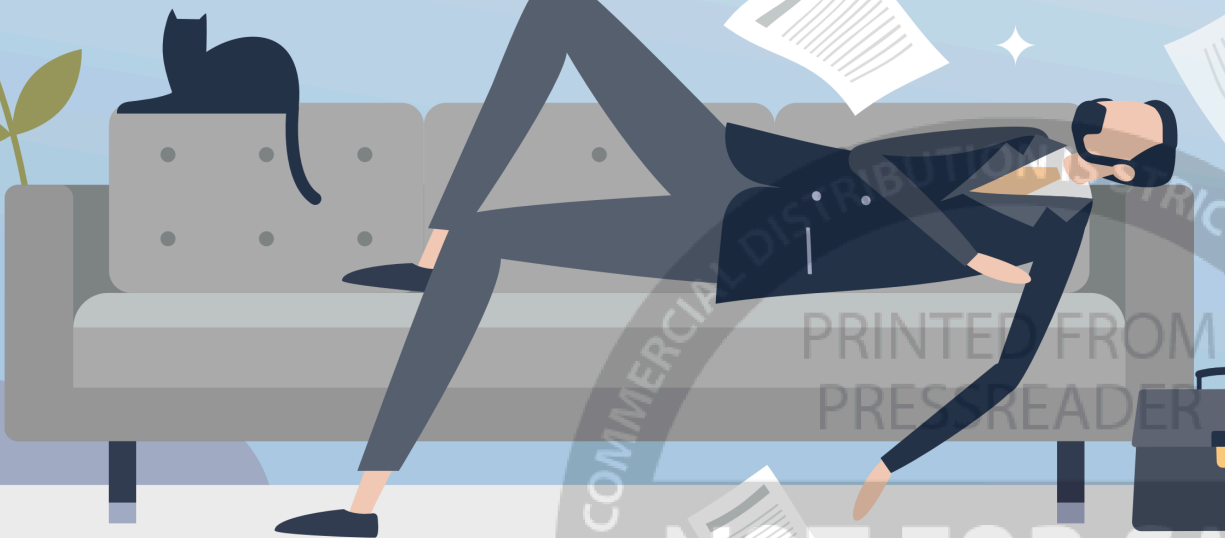
long-term health. They can also hinder your ability to sleep well, again adding to your lack of energy, so it becomes a vicious cycle.

Setting exercise goals

Gill says to break out of this pattern, you need to "get out of your comfort zone" by making "small but achievable" exercise goals, as movement has been proven to counter the negative outcomes of stress by boosting your mood. She recommends: "Start walking and

increase the distance and intensity each week. Finding a friend to walk with will further reduce your stress levels as you can share stories and have a laugh. You could consider hiring a personal trainer to keep you accountable and to be more sociable. They can help schedule exercise into your daily routine and ensure you build up gradually to avoid injury."

Gill, who is 75 years old and enjoys keeping active, recommends writing a journal so you can see your progress and look back with pride at what you



have done. She encourages: "If you can make small changes to be more active in your daily life, I can assure you that the experience will be enjoyable and you will improve your mood, reduce stress, improve sleep and boost your self-esteem."

Start the day right

Leanne Davies, a business and marketing coach (leannedaviesmarketing.co.uk), agrees. She suggests starting each day with movement to feel good, and to do it before other commitments or being tired get in the way. "I love the power of morning exercise for productivity," she says. "It improves my focus, mood and energy. It enables me to make clearer decisions and approach the day with a positive mindset."

Sometimes Leanne, who is also the founder of the Run Mummy Run community, will combine her morning exercise with work by having a meeting while walking. On other occasions, she prefers to leave her mobile on silent so she can start her day screen-free and stress-free.

"Try not to dive into emails or onto social media accounts first thing," she advises. "Go for a walk, stretch, or write in a journal before logging on." For those who spend their working day looking at screens, it's also a good idea to limit screen time during lunch

breaks and after work. You can set timers on social media apps to prevent you spending too much time on them, and swap reading on your phone for a paper copy of a newspaper, book or magazine.

Crucially, the time to avoid your mobile is before going to bed. The light from a phone can make you feel more alert and prevent you nodding off more easily. The addictive nature of scrolling through reels can mean you

spend more time on your phone than you intended, or you might raise your stress hormones at a time when you need to unwind if you see something worrying or annoying. Leanne points out that prioritising sleep is one of the big lifestyle changes you can make to boost your energy levels. "It sounds obvious, but it's the foundation of everything. Try setting a consistent bedtime routine and winding down properly without screens." ■

TOP TIPS

Simple lifestyle changes for more energy



Create boundaries in your work and relationships to prevent stress from one sapping your energy for another. For example, have a rule that you don't respond to work emails or texts from friends after a certain time in the evening, or take work emails off your mobile so they don't interrupt your non-working hours.

Avoid energy slumps that will see you reach for sugary snacks and caffeinated drinks by eating more protein and fibre and staying hydrated with water and herbal hot drinks. To achieve this, planning ahead is key. Meal prep so you have healthy meals and snacks in the fridge or freezer at home, or take a packed lunch to the office instead of buying fast food or ready-made sandwiches from supermarkets.



Embrace the power of saying 'No'. Trying to do it all can often lead to burnout. Instead of trying to do everything and please everyone, prioritise what is more important for you to do at that moment, and who you want to spend more time with. Otherwise, it will all catch up with you and you'll be forced to take time off work or miss a social engagement you were looking forward to due to illness and fatigue.