

7 Little Habits That Are Making You Tired

Energy zapped? Cut out these things and you'll start feeling more energized.

By Nancy Sharp



Little Energy Zappers

Always tired? You're not alone. A study from the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](http://www.cdc.gov/features/dssleep/f) (<http://www.cdc.gov/features/dssleep/f>) found that 58% of people age 55 and over sleep less than seven hours a night. The study also found that 80% of people age 55 and over had unintentionally fallen asleep at least once during the day within the last month.

"While the correlation between sleep and aging is undeniable, it might surprise you to know that energy does not necessarily diminish with age or lack of sleep," says Julie Hammerstein, nutritionist and director of [The Source for Weight Loss](http://www.juliehammerstein.com/) (<http://www.juliehammerstein.com/>). In other words, you might be tired because of little things you're doing throughout the day.

Not sure what could be zapping your energy? Read on to discover seven little habits that you can change easily to up your energy.
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1. Breakfast Without Carbs

It's a myth that if you eat carbohydrates it can zap your energy later on. In reality, your body needs carbs to produce fuel.

A study in the Journal of the American Dietetic Association found that low-carb dieters experienced greater fatigue and reluctance to exercise than dieters who ate more carbohydrates. Researchers at the [Mayo Clinic](http://www.mayoclinic.org)

http://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2004-03/pcf-r-dsl030904.php) found similar results. The key here is the kind of carbs you're eating. Sugary cereals and white toast are not so good for you. Natural, unprocessed carbs (whole grains, fruits, and vegetables are your best sources). And if you don't get them, your brain will steal energy that is stored in your muscles. Over time, this causes a loss in muscle mass and a slower metabolism. You'll feel slower altogether.



2. Prescription Medication

According to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db42.htm) (<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db42.htm>), some 76 percent of Americans 60 and older use two or more prescription drugs, and 37 percent use five or more. "Prescription medicine certainly has its place," says Hammerstein, "but medication can stress the liver, which is what frees the body of toxins." And if the liver is fatigued, so is the body. Talk to your doctor about whether this is a concern, and make sure you're taking only medication that is essential.



3. Clutter

Piles of stuff everywhere? Papers covering your desk? This clutter could be zapping your energy. When clutter is around it can make your brain feel overwhelmed and unable to focus, according to research from the [Princeton University Neuroscience Institute](http://www.princeton.edu/neuroscience/) (<http://www.princeton.edu/neuroscience/>), and that can make you fatigued. Best solution: clean up a small area that's cluttered and see how it changes your mood and energy level. Once you see the amazing effects

a little order can have, you can get going on the rest of the mess!



4. Vitamin-Enhanced Water

New kinds of bottled drinks are everywhere you look. And few product categories have seen as much growth as the non-carbonated bottled water market—nearly \$5.9 billion in sales according to the beverage industry.

The problem: “Vitamin drinks trick your body, especially those with B vitamins and taurine, another energy enhancer,” says Hammerstein. “They can actually have the reverse effect by making you tired.” This is because the body doesn’t easily metabolize B vitamins taken in an isolated form—as in energy drinks. The drinks can overexcite you, causing a jittery, wired, and yes, tired feeling. Before you buy, check the labels carefully.



5. Using the Computer

If you’re someone who can sit in front of a computer screen for hours and surf the Web, it could be making you tired. Prolonged use of the computer can cause **Computer Vision Syndrome** (<http://www.aoa.org/x5253.xml>), according to the American Optometric Association.

Symptoms can include fatigue, blurred vision, and headaches. How to solve the problem?

Experts suggest that for every 20 minutes of computer reading you do, look away for 20 seconds and focus on an object 20 feet away.

That should reduce your eye strain. You should also make sure your computer is at the **right level for your eyes**

(<http://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2012/09/how-to-keep-computer-screens-from-destroying-your-eyes>)

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6. Not Eating Your Veggies

Simply put, micronutrients (vitamins, minerals, and plant nutrients found in fruits and vegetables) are necessary for optimal health. Antioxidants found in veggies protect our bodies from free radical damage, which can lead to everything from accelerated aging to a lack of energy to cancer. So eat your spinach, kale, red grapes, and papaya—all vital sources of energy.



7. Too Much Exercise

Yes, everyone tells you to exercise to feel better. But overdoing it can over-tax your adrenal glands by causing your body to release too much cortisol. This can lead to fatigue, which can sap your energy for days. On a scale of 1 to 10, The Mayo Clinic recommends your exercise exertion should be 6 or 7. This is moderate exercise. Anything less is too mild; anything close to an 8 or 9 leads to burnout. Know your body and your level of fitness. You should be able to wake up the next day and repeat the same activity without substantial effort. If you can't do that, you're overdoing it.

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