



NINE HABITS TO INCREASE YOUR ENERGY

Energy, not time, is the basis for productivity. Having all the hours in the day won't help you if you're exhausted for most of it. Here are nine habits you can work on to increase your energy levels.

1. Go to sleep early

Sleep is the foundation of your energy. If you don't get enough sleep, you'll start to underperform. While some people claim to work best on six or less hours of sleep, research says they're kidding themselves. Seven to eight hours are pretty much mandatory if you're going to stay cognitively sharp in the long run.

A LOT OF ENERGY IS SQUANDERED BECAUSE THE DIFFERENT PARTS OF OUR LIVES, BOTH INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL, ARE IN CONFLICT WITH EACH OTHER

For some people the sleep deprivation may have mentally plateaued, meaning they feel slightly tired all day, but they don't think they're getting any worse. An interesting experiment (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SVQlcxiQlzl>) showed that sleep deprivation caused continuous declines in mental performance, even though subjects felt like they were holding steady. Try this: Go to bed by 10 pm every night, including weekends, for the next 30 days.

2. Exercise every day

Exercise is a long-term investment in your energy levels. It's easy to cut in the short-term, but over time you'll reduce your overall fitness, making it harder to think straight and stay alert throughout the day.

If you struggle to find time for exercise, don't make going to the gym your prerequisite. Make a habit of doing some push-ups or burpees every day throughout the day. These will get your heart pumping and blood moving, and they don't require setting aside two hours from your already busy schedule. You can add gym or fitness classes on top of this foundational habit, but this basic investment in exercise will keep you sharp when you can't make it to the gym. Try this: Do at least ten burpees every day from your home.



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3. 20-minute naps

There's research showing (<https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/291282.php>) that napping has a range of cognitive benefits. This is particularly true if you're doing a lot of learning, since the short burst of sleep can help with memory.

THE KEY IS TO LEARN HOW TO TAKE SHORT NAPS

A short nap can turn you back on for work in the afternoon, when you'd normally be exhausted. Even if you work in an office that doesn't encourage napping, you can use a slice of your lunch break, to quickly rest.

The key is to learn how to take short naps. Many people take naps which are too long, pushing them into deeper phases of sleep which cause them to feel even groggy when they wake up (although the benefits to even these naps often occur after the initial grogginess wears off). The key is to wake up immediately with your alarm. If you start adding more time, a quick nap can become a long sleep. Try this: Insert a 20-minute nap after you eat lunch.

4. Do your hard work in the morning

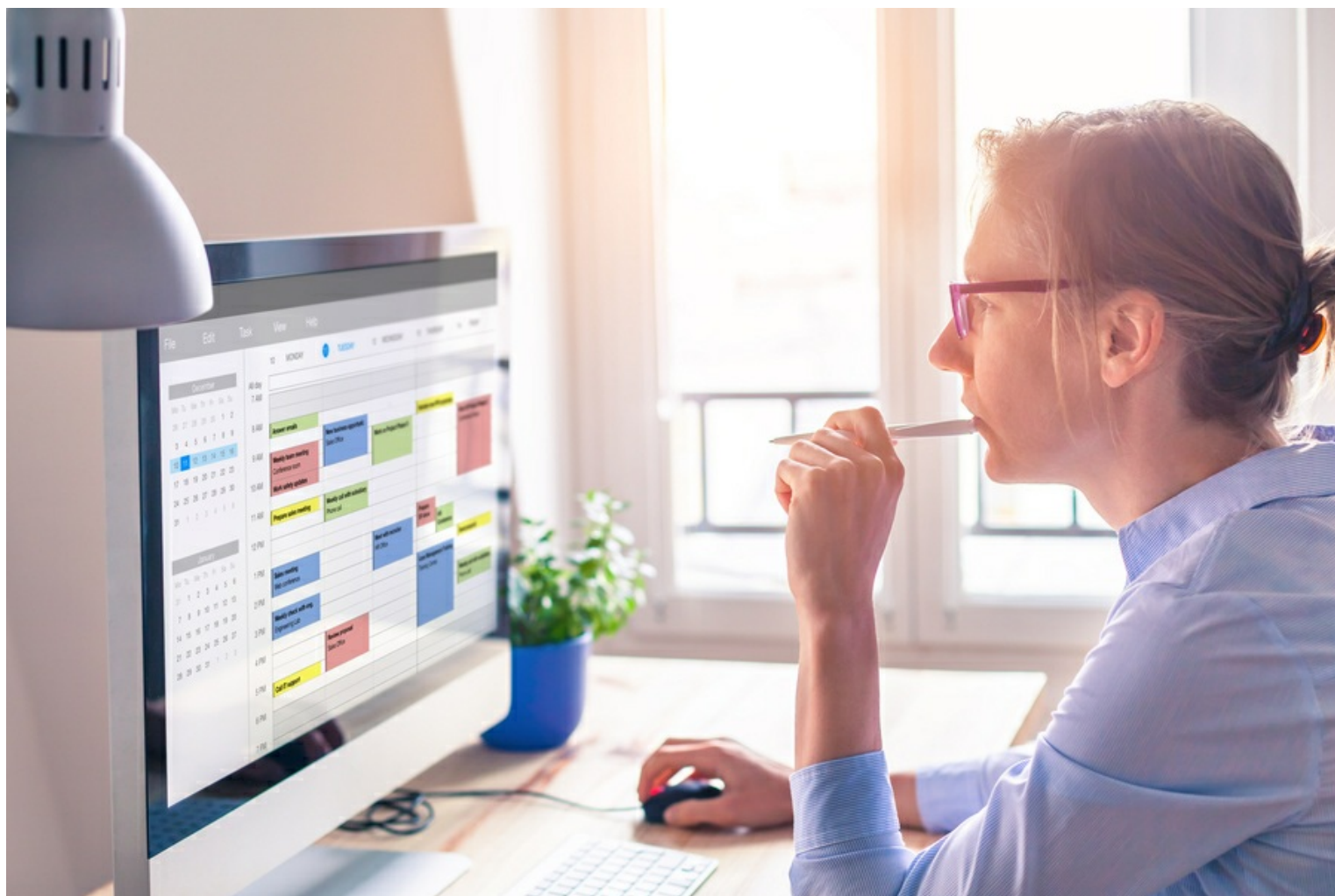
Aim to get your most important work done in the first four hours of the workday, starting as soon as possible. The benefits to your energy here are mostly psychological. My energy levels depend a lot on my mood. If I've gotten some important work done, my mood is usually good and I feel productive. If I've wasted time on emails, meetings, calls or failed to produce something valuable, I'm often frustrated and exhausted entering the second half of the day.

The other reason for this approach is that deep work isn't always sustainable for the full workday. Better to concentrate it into a specific period than randomly insert it across chunks of time. Try this: Make the first four hours of your morning a quiet, deep work zone.

5. Set your intention the day before

Energy is often about momentum. Start working hard and you'll overcome procrastination and keep going throughout the day. Start

slow and you may end up struggling against your own impulses, wasting the energy on things that aren't productive.



One way to avoid this is to set a very clear intention of how your day will go, particularly in the beginning, the night before.

TRY THIS: SET ASIDE TEN MINUTES EVERY DAY TO THINK ABOUT WHAT TODAY'S ACTIONS ARE HELPING YOU BUILD TOWARDS

One way to avoid this is to set a very clear intention of how your day will go, particularly in the beginning, the night before. Visualising this intention and writing it down in to your schedule can make it happen more automatically when you wake up. Try this: Before you go to bed, write down your plan for the next day and visualise it.

6. Sell yourself on your goals

You need to become the salesperson for your own goals. Part of that starts with packaging – how you frame your goals and projects can have a huge effect on your motivation.

Next, it comes from refreshing and reminding yourself of your inspirations. Why did you get started down this path? What were you hoping to achieve? Good marketers know to focus the customer on visualising what they want to drive sales. You can focus yourself on what you want to have the energy to get it done. Try this: Set aside ten minutes every day to think about what today's actions are helping you build towards.

7. Get better friends

You may not be able to choose your parents, colleagues or your boss. But you do have some control over the friends in your life. Conversation with some friends leaves you feeling excited and energised, while with others it leaves you feeling even worse than you did beforehand. You don't need to exclude friends who are going through temporarily rough times, but you should consider who you spend your time with when there are people who consistently create one-sided emotional exchanges as the basis for your relationships. Everyone needs a shoulder to cry on sometimes, but some people will expect you to be their permanent shoulder. Try this: Set a time limit on friends who leave you feeling drained.

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8. Read better books

One of the great benefits of reading books isn't simply to give you ideas and information. Rather it's to reinforce a mentality that often occurs at a subconscious level. The best books aren't those that teach you facts, but those that subtly change your entire thinking patterns.

Audio books can be very useful for this, since you can listen to them and re-listen to them on the go every day. A good book for this is one that, when you listen to it, automatically adjusts your thinking onto the things you need to work hard on. Just like a good song can be the background for a particular emotion, a good book can be the background for a particular energy of thinking. Always have an audio book that motivates you to work on your goals.



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SET A TIME LIMIT ON FRIENDS WHO LEAVE YOU FEELING DRAINED

9. Align your life

A lot of energy is squandered because the different parts of our lives, both internal and external, are in conflict with each other. That could be the colleague at work who doesn't want you to get promoted, the friends who make fun of your goals or even the internal fears and assumptions that keep you hesitating.

Spend some time untangling the different conflicts in your life to see how you could resolve them. Sometimes that can be done in the short term, by making a change. Sometimes, it requires a long-term plan to escape the toxic environment, social circle or belief system that holds you back. Try this: Sit down for an hour and brainstorm all the things which assist your goals and all the things which hold you back. How could you resolve those tensions?

Source: *Medium* (<https://medium.com/swlh/9-habits-to-increase-your-energy-69d65265beaa>)