

The Energy Diet

Feeling fatigued? Supercharge your meals with the 10 most vibrant foods and you may never have another “energy crisis.”

WE ALL KNOW BETTER, but sometimes when we're in the grip of an afternoon energy slump, feeling weak and foggy, we reach for cookies, candy, and coffee for a quick fatigue fix. Sure, we get the fix but it sets us up for a vicious

cycle of highs and lows that eventually leaves us with less energy than we started out with, says John Douillard, M.D., author of *The 3-Season Diet* (Three Rivers Press, 2001).

We crave caffeine and sugar, he says, when we're not getting what we need from 'real' food. And the types of real food we need depend upon the time of year and the individual, says Douillard, who subscribes to the principles of Ayurveda—the ancient Indian healing practice. In early spring, Douillard recommends the calming energy found in lower-fat foods like citrus fruits and cruciferous vegetables and those that help stabilize blood sugar, like bitter leafy greens and brown rice. (For recipe ideas, see page 98.)

During your next energy crisis, forego the quick fixes and choose one of the ten foods we suggest for a real and lasting boost. (For other fatigue-busting tips, see “Energy Secrets” on page 72.)

By LINDA MONASTRA

Photography by DASHA WRIGHT





FRIED EGG & ARUGULA SALAD SANDWICH COMBINES THE LONG-LASTING ENERGY OF EGGS WITH FIBER-RICH WHOLE GRAINS AND VITAMIN-PACKED ARUGULA (RECIPE ON PAGE 98).

1. Broccoli Loaded with nutrients, broccoli offers a huge dose of vitamin C—which has been shown to reduce fatigue by increasing iron absorption—and is a good source of non-dairy calcium. Vitamin C can also keep your adrenal system running strong, which helps stabilize your energy through stressful situations.

2. Brown Rice A high-fiber complex carbohydrate that's packed with manganese, amino acids, and magnesium (important in many cellular functions including energy production), brown rice provides a complete meal when paired with lean protein like tofu, fish, or chicken. (For a healthy, hearty serving of both broccoli and brown rice, try our Chicken Stir-Fry with Broccoli, Spinach & Red Peppers on page 98).

ENERGY SECRETS

Want all-day energy? Eat enough of what you need at every meal. This checklist will help you do that.

▶ **COMPLEX CARBOHYDRATES** that are high in fiber (like oats, brown rice, and other whole grains) are absorbed more slowly and sustain you for longer periods. They also help keep blood sugar levels stable, evening out energy highs and lows, and preventing you from overeating later in the day.

▶ **PROTEIN** (soy, lean meats, nuts) helps regulate the release of energy throughout the day. "Protein takes a long time to turn into glucose, providing a steady release of energy into your body," says Jacob Teitelbaum, M.D., author of *From Fatigued to Fantastic!* (Penguin/Avery 2007).

▶ **"GOOD" FATS** (cold-water fish, olive oil, eggs) are concentrated sources of energy. "A 2002 Danish study showed that the mono-unsaturated fatty acids (MUFA) in nut butters help curb your appetite so you don't overeat, which helps keep you from feeling weighed down," says Heather Zwickey, Ph.D., of the National College of Natural Medicine.



MULTIGRAIN WAFFLES with SAUTÉED APPLES & YOGURT CREAM TASTE SO GOOD YOU MAY FORGET HOW LOW IN SUGAR AND FAT THEY ARE (RECIPE ON PAGE 98).



DRIED FRUIT COMPOTE with CASHEW CREAM IS LOADED WITH ANTIOXIDANTS AND “GOOD” FATS—NOT SUGAR OR EMPTY CARBS (RECIPE ON PAGE 99).

3. Eggs Very high in protein and choline, which is vital to brain functions like memory, eggs also contain tyrosine, an amino acid that helps your brain produce the chemicals norepinephrine and dopamine, which improve your mental function and keep you feeling energetic. (Our quick and easy Fried Egg & Arugula Salad Sandwich recipe is on page 98.)

4. Green Tea For calm, alert energy, sip on green tea. The small amounts of caffeine (30 micrograms) and theanine, an amino acid that stimulates GABA (the calming molecule in brain receptors), produce feelings of relaxation, as well as improve cognition and mood. Green tea also stimulates your metabolism, which may make weight loss easier.

5. Oats This breakfast staple, also great in chili, bread, and waffles (see our Multigrain Waffles with Sautéed Apples & Yogurt Cream recipe on page 98) is a complex

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SUPER SNACKS

A morning or afternoon snack keeps blood sugar from spiking and dipping. Teitelbaum also suggests a high-protein snack just before bedtime to keep your blood-sugar levels from crashing while you sleep, which may wake you up.

- ▶ Granola with nuts and dried fruit mixed with yogurt
- ◀ **Apple slices with cheddar cheese**
- ▶ Whole-grain crackers and hummus
- ▶ Tuna fish on a whole wheat cracker
- ▶ Whole wheat bagel with nut butter and a banana



LEARN MORE: To make your own high-protein energy bars at home, go to naturalhealthmag.com/granolabar.

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carbohydrate that's high in heart-healthy soluble fiber and unsaturated fat, which means it provides a steady stream of energy. They're also packed with energizing and de-stressing B vitamins.

6. Oranges The fruit's well-known vitamin C content aids in the production of carnitine, a molecule that helps the body burn fat for energy. (For a healthy dose of orange juice, try our Green Energy Smoothie or Dried Fruit Compote with Cashew Cream, page 99.)

7. Nut Butters The fat and protein in nut butters provide a concentrated source of energy, plus the soluble fiber in peanuts works to control blood glucose

and prevents saturated fat from entering the bloodstream. Most nuts—including peanuts, cashews, walnuts, and almonds—are loaded with the amino acid arginine, which may relax blood vessels for better blood pressure control. Look for nut butters that don't have added sugar, which could contribute to an energy crash.

8. Salmon A great source of omega-3 fatty acids—which keep cell membranes healthy and maintain cardiovascular health by regulating blood clotting and vessel constriction—cold-water fish like salmon, herring, and scallops are also high in protein and magnesium, which aids in converting glucose (blood sugar) into energy.

9. Sea Vegetables Ounce for ounce, seaweeds like arame, dulce, and nori contain the broadest range of minerals of any food, plus the B vitamins pantothenic acid and riboflavin your body needs to produce energy. (Our rich-tasting recipe for Arame Sauté with Bay Scallops is on page 99.)

10. Yogurt This creamy treat is an excellent source of energizing protein and B vitamins—which are critical to converting nutrients into energy and reducing stress and anxiety—including vitamin B12, which fights fatigue by building strong, healthy red blood cells. If you want added flavor in a yogurt, look for those sweetened with honey or real fruit. 

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