



GuidanceResources®

Tips for Boosting Energy

Feeling a little sluggish? Try these simple tips for increasing your energy:



Stay hydrated:

Even slight dehydration can leave a person feeling tired and lethargic. Keep a tall glass of water or a water bottle with you throughout the day.



Get moving:

A brief bout of exercise (as little as 10 minutes) can improve energy levels and mood. Physical activity, even walking, is a great energy booster. Walking can be done anywhere and only requires a good pair of shoes.



Get a good night's sleep:

Getting seven to nine hours of sleep per night is optimal. Aim to go to bed and get up at the same time every day, even on the weekends.



Choose healthy snacks:

It is important to snack throughout the day. However, make smart snack choices. Have a couple of snacks that combine protein, fiber and a little fat, such as an apple and string cheese or yogurt and nuts. This helps to sustain energy levels. The carbohydrates provide an energy boost, protein keeps energy up and the fat makes energy last.



Reduce stress:

Stress has a major impact on energy levels and can leave you feeling mentally and physically exhausted. Try to take 20 minutes for yourself every day just to relax.



Maintaining your energy levels from one day to the next can be hard. If you're feeling sluggish, contact your Employee Assistance Program. We have the guidance, tools and resources to help you recharge.

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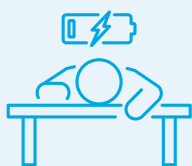
Caregiver Burnout

Providing care for an elderly or ill relative is a full-time job in itself and can become especially difficult if the caregiver is also balancing work and family responsibilities.

Too often, caregivers place so much focus on their caregiving duties that they experience feelings of stress, hopelessness and helplessness, resulting in burnout. If you have found yourself in a caregiving role, chances are you will experience some periods of

burnout. It is important to remember to take the time you need to care for yourself. The individual receiving care will benefit more from a happy and healthy caregiver than from a stressed and burned out one.

The following are some of the most common signs of caregiver burnout:



- Anger toward the individual or other family members
- Social withdrawal, depression, sleeplessness and loss of focus
- Anxiety about the individual's future care needs and your ability to meet those needs
- General feelings of being overwhelmed along with irritability or mood swings
- Physical and mental health problems

Steps to Take

- 1. Get a diagnosis.** Do not delay seeing a doctor if your mental or physical health is at risk.
- 2. Know that help is out there.** Seek support from family, friends, social service agencies and your faith community. Local support groups can put you in touch with area services to help you provide the best care.
- 3. Prioritize.** Make lists and establish a daily routine.
- 4. Use a respite care service to take a break.** When you get that break, go shopping, see a movie or enjoy an uninterrupted visit with a friend.
- 5. Take care of yourself.** Watch your diet and exercise habits and get plenty of rest. You also still need your own hobbies and activities.
- 6. Manage stress.** Be aware of how stress affects your body (stomach aches, high blood pressure) and your emotions (overeating, irritability).
- 7. Anticipate changes.** Eventually your loved one will need more and more intensive kinds of care. Find out about the options now so you are prepared.
- 8. Be realistic.** The care you give does make a difference, but many behaviors cannot be controlled. Grieve the losses, but focus on positive times and enjoy good memories.
- 9. Give yourself credit.** Do not feel guilty. You are only human and it is normal to lose patience or feel like your care may fall short sometimes. Keep in mind you are doing the best you can.



Caregiver burnout is a serious issue. If you're struggling as a caregiver, remember that you are not alone. Contact your Employee Assistance Program for support, tools and resources to help you take good care of yourself so you can take good care of others.

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Challenge Your Thinking Traps

Thinking traps refer to patterns of thought that can limit our ability to achieve our goals. For example, if we are upset, we may overestimate the possibility that things will turn out badly, jump immediately to worst-case scenarios, or treat every

anxious thought as a fact. Although thinking traps, also known as thought distortions, aren't based on reality, they are not always easy to give up. The first step is to recognize our unhelpful thinking patterns so we can begin to challenge and change them.

Thought Distortion or Thinking Trap	How it may show up	What it sounds like
All-or-nothing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seeing things in black or white Lacking flexibility and the ability to see that exceptions exist 	<p>"If everything is not perfect, I'm a total failure."</p> <p>"This person upset me so they must be bad."</p>
Overgeneralizing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assuming the worst Negative self-talk Thinking one mistake means all attempts will result in failure 	<p>"If I didn't pass the test the first time, I'll never pass it."</p> <p>"I'm a terrible speaker and always mess up."</p> <p>"A friend once lied to me, which means you can never trust anyone."</p>
Filtering out the positives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coming up with reasons to ignore positive results Focusing only on the negative aspects of the situation while ignoring the positive 	<p>"I did well on the presentation, but that must have been luck."</p> <p>"I received one area of negative feedback on my review, so I must be not doing anything right."</p>
Jumping to conclusions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Making negative interpretations without actual evidence When you think the future is set in stone and the outcome is sure 	<p>Mind reading: "I can tell she secretly doesn't like me."</p> <p>Fortune telling: "I just know something terrible is going to happen."</p>
Catastrophizing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expecting the worst-case scenario to happen 	<p>"I'll mess up and everyone will think poorly of me."</p>
Emotional reasoning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Believing the way you feel reflects reality Drawing conclusions based solely on how you feel 	<p>"I feel it, so it must be true."</p> <p>"I'm nervous about this presentation. That must mean I'm going to bomb it."</p>
Labeling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Criticizing yourself based on mistakes and perceived shortcomings Using a negative word to describe yourself 	<p>"I'm a failure. I'm an idiot."</p> <p>"I don't deserve to be happy."</p>
Personalization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assuming responsibility for things that are outside your control 	<p>"My friend canceled our plans. They must not want to spend time with me."</p> <p>"My partner seems distant today. I must have done something wrong."</p>
Unreal ideals or "Shoulds"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Holding yourself to an unrealistic or perfectionistic standard 	<p>"I should never make any mistakes at work. If I do I'm incompetent."</p>



If you're having trouble escaping the trap of negative thinking, contact your Employee Assistance Program. We have the guidance, tools and resources to help you embrace a more positive outlook.

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Building a Healthy Mindset

When it comes to reaching our health and wellness goals, such as improving sleep, losing weight, quitting smoking or exercising more, our mindset plays a huge role in our success.

Our minds are responsible for processing our thoughts and making choices, which can have a big impact on how we feel about and navigate our wellness journey. A healthy, positive mindset makes achieving any goal much easier.

Building a healthy mindset:



1 Become aware:

When developing a healthy mindset to reach your goals, it is important to first become aware of your current thoughts about your progress and goals.



2 Reflect:

Are these thoughts limiting you or are they pushing you forward?



3 Reframe:

How can you reframe depreciating thoughts to make them more positive and growth focused?

For example:

"I can't do this" to "I have the choice to take action in my life"

"I will never get there" to "This is my journey, and each step I take is closer to who I am becoming"

"I am scared I will fail" to "I learn from each bump in the road and push forward"

"I feel worthless" to "I know I am worthy of feeling good"

Depreciating thought → Positive and growth focused thought



4 Repeat:

It's not easy to reframe our thoughts. Like building a muscle in the gym, it takes time and practice.



5 Practice self-compassion:

Take some time to focus on what you love about yourself and what you have accomplished. Focusing too much on what we haven't achieved or don't like about ourselves can push us further away from motivation and action.

The following techniques can help you improve your mindset and practice self-compassion:

A

Journaling:

Set time aside each morning to write out any thoughts or feelings. You can use journaling to let go of any negativity and reframe your situation.

C

Visualization meditation:

Take 10 minutes each morning to close your eyes and visualize your goals. What does success look like? How does it feel?

B

Affirmations:

Affirmations are positive statements that you can recite to yourself when you notice negative chatter. For example, "I am strong" or "I am capable of change."

D

Setting intentions:

Setting intentions gives us a clear, simple picture of who we want to be and what we need to focus on to make it happen. Setting one simple intention each day instead of several can make this more meaningful and achievable.



Need help adjusting your perspective?

Contact your Employee Assistance Program. We have the guidance, tools and resources to put you on a more positive path.



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For Leaders:

Positive Intelligence



Positive Intelligence is a term coined by author and business leader Shirzad Chamine to describe the ability to choose your thoughts and emotions as needed so that you can perform at your best. The idea behind Positive Intelligence is that changing the way you think can help you put a more positive spin on what happens in your life. This makes you more productive overall.

Try these simple steps to improve your Positive Intelligence:

- 1 If you are depressed or anxious, think of the opposite. Instead of dwelling on the worst-case scenario, imagine the most unlikely best-case outcome.
- 2 Pick an area in which you are having trouble and then create or invent new memorable or extremely favorable options to deal with that situation.
- 3 If your confidence and self-esteem are low, imagine scenes in which your confidence is increased.
- 4 Negative thoughts maintain their power unless neutralized by stronger, positive thoughts. With practice, eventually the positive thought will grow and associate with other positive thoughts.
- 5 When you cannot do anything to change a situation, work toward acceptance. Use thoughts like, "I don't really need it" or "it wasn't a good fit anyway."

The Power of Positive Attitude

Keep in mind, having a positive attitude is not the result of having a great life; having a great life is the result of having a positive attitude. Make an active choice every day to enjoy life and you will.

Here's how to start your day with a positive attitude:



Tell yourself:
"It's going to be a beautiful day."



Greet everyone you meet cheerfully
and say something positive.



Respond "I'm great!"
when people ask how you are.



Spread some good news around.



Smile.



By responding positively, you set the tone for the rest of the day and put yourself in a better position to cope with difficult situations. A positive attitude can also help you achieve your goals, whether personal or professional.

Try these tips:

Avoid

- Negative thoughts and concentrate on positive ones
- Trying to be a “mind-reader”

Don't

- Dwelling on the past is a mistake. Forgive people who insult you.
- Seeing life as “all or none” or “black and white” limits your potential for growth
- Never take rejection personally

Keep

- Humor in your day
- Things in perspective



If you're having trouble seeing the positive side of life, contact your Employee Assistance Program. We have the guidance, tools and resources to help you develop your Positive Intelligence.

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Healthy Habits for a Healthy Brain

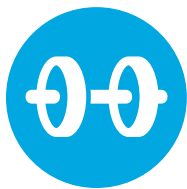


1 Nutrition

The brain is negatively affected by excess sugar, unhealthy fats, high salt intake and low fiber content of poor diets.

Tip: Try replacing refined sugars for 30 days, satisfy your sweet tooth with dates, monk fruit or applesauce.

Tip: Reduce salt by seasoning with herbs and spices (freeze fresh herbs in ice cubes).



2 Exercise

Poor blood flow, oxidative stress, and inflammation negatively affect the brain.

Tip: Take a walk. Studies show a daily 25-minute brisk walk reduces your chances of Alzheimer's by 45%.



25-minute brisk walk



3 Unwind

Altered dopamine and serotonin levels cause anxiety and depression.

Tip: Write in a journal for 20 minutes. Examine the things that cause you bad stress.

Bad stress is defined by activities that do not serve a purpose, do not have a clear direction or do not result in clear victories.

Good stress on the other hand is purpose driven, timebound and results in a clear victory or success.



4 Restore

While you are sleeping, your brain enters a different metabolic and processing state.

Tip: Go to bed at the same time every night for 7 days and get up 7-8 hours after. Condition your brain.

Sleep reorganizes your brain for the next day. It is the most important source of cleansing for your body.



5 Optimize

Cognitive reserve is the brain's intellectual store that may resist or offset damage and decline.

Tip: Have a structured conversation with a friend by phone or, better yet, invite them to walk and talk.

Cognitive reserve can be developed and sustained through life-long mental and physical activity.

Structured Conversation



Your Employee Assistance Program offers a wealth of guidance, tools and resources to keep your mind and body in shape. Contact us anytime for more tips on mental, emotional and physical

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6 Ways to Bring Mindful Movement into the Workday



Take deep breaths

Inhale through your nose for 4 seconds, hold for 7 seconds, and exhale through your mouth for 8 seconds. Repeat this cycle as needed.



Dance in your chair

Stimulating your digestive system can help to replenish vital energy when you feel you're beginning to fade. To do this, try some simple seated twists.



20-20-20

Every 20 minutes spent using a screen, look up and focus on something 20 feet from you for a total of 20 seconds.



Forward bend

This posture boosts circulation to your upper body and brain, soothing the nervous system and easing stress. Hold for 10 cycles of breath.



Inhale energy

Hit a mental energy slump? Stretch your arms up, interlock your fingers, palms to sky, and imagine toxins leaving your body.



Stand up

Schedule short 3- to 5-minute breaks in your calendar to get up and unwind your body.



For more tips on adding healthy movement to your day, contact your Employee Assistance Program. We offer guidance, tools and resources to support your mental, emotional and physical health.

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