

Energy Intervention Worksheet

Now that you have assessed your energy and increased your energy awareness, it's time to take action to improve your energy. You might think about taking one of two approaches: (1) try to do more of the things that give you energy or (2) try to reduce doing the things that deplete your energy. Below we provide some documented strategies for increasing your energy.

Managing Physical Energy

The body is our fundamental source of energy – sleep, nutrition, and exercise are the fuel.

Sleep. Sleep deprivation causes slower cognitive and social processing, problems with memory, and difficulty concentrating (Field, 2008). Sleep experts suggest that individuals should get 7-8 hours of sleep and go to bed and get up at the same time each day (Dement & Vaughan, 2000).

Nutrition. Nutrition experts suggest that for maximum energy throughout the day individuals should eat breakfast and 5-6 smaller meals to speed up their metabolism (Loehr & Schwartz, 2001). They also suggest that we eat a balanced diet (with fat, protein and carbohydrates from all the food groups) and reduce empty calories like sugary snacks and soda (Thayer, 2003). Individuals should moderate caffeine and sip water throughout the day as well (Batmanghelidi, 2008).

Exercise. Not only will this reduce the likelihood of obesity and its associated health problems but exercise can also improve concentration and cognitive performance (Troost, 2007). Loehr and Schwartz (2001) suggest these specific recommendations for energy management: Exercise to get the heart beating intensely 3-4 times a week for 20-30 minutes, engage in strength training at least once a week, and get outside and go for a walk.

Managing Mental Energy

Mental energy is about focus and concentration.

Stop Multitasking. Multitasking results in decreased mental speed, more errors, and even increased risks of health problems (Rubenstein, Meyer, & Evans, 2001). For important tasks that require full attention, avoid distractions by finding a quiet space to work; in addition, experts recommend turning off the phone and disengaging from email when trying to focus attention (Schwartz, 2010).

Take a Break. The most powerful restoration effects come getting into nature (Kaplan, 2001) or doing something you enjoy (Troughakos, Beal, Green, & Weiss, 2008). Schwartz (2010) suggests trying to take a short break every 90-120 minutes to maximize attention and focus.

Managing Emotional Energy

Emotional energy is about having excitement and enthusiasm about what you do each day.

Be Positive. Positive emotions have been shown to broaden thinking and build key psychological, social, and intellectual resources (Fredrickson, 2001) They can “undo” negative emotions and be the building blocks of resilience that combats physical illness (Fredrickson, Tugade, Waugh, & Larkin, 2003). Both smiling and laughter have been found to boost your mood (Neuhoff, & Schaefer, 2002). Moore good ideas for evoking positive emotions can be found at <http://www.happinessprojecttoolbox.com/>.

Help Someone/Do a Random Act of Kindness. Research indicates that it is better to give than receive (Brown, Nesse, Vinokur, & Smith, 2003). It’s even been found to be contagious when others witness an act of kindness (Haidt, 2000). Possible interventions might include: offering to assist a friend or coworker with a task, give authentic compliments, or treat the person behind you at Starbucks to a drink. Students can download the “Do Good” app for your iPhone.

Managing Spiritual Energy

Spiritual energy focuses on meaning and purpose in life.

Reflect on Gratitude. Research has shown that gratitude is associated with better life satisfaction, increased social support and may help prevent stress and depression (Emmons, 2000). Experts suggest keep a gratitude journal by writing down three things one is grateful for each day (Emmons, & McCullough, 2003). The most enduring gratitude intervention involves writing a gratitude letter to someone who has made a difference in one’s life (Seligman, Steen, Park, & Peterson, 2005).

Reflect on What is Meaningful to You. Research demonstrates that writing about life goals for 20 minutes a day can increase well-being and health (King, 2001). Similar effects have been found when writing about what is meaningful in one’s daily life – what is most positive in one’s life (Seligman, Steen, Park, & Peterson, 2005).

<p>What Intervention(s) Can You Commit to Doing for the Next Week? Be as specific as you can in terms of who, what, where, when, why. Try to pick something that is out of your normal pattern of activity.</p>
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