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20 ways to boost your running energy

Running energy tips

There's nothing worse than running out of energy and hitting the wall during a training run or race. We've all been there, and we all want to make sure we never experience that helpless feeling again, right? Don't worry, we've got you covered. Here are 20 top tips for keeping your running energy high throughout your runs.



Count your calories

As a runner there is a big difference between watching what you eat and not taking on enough fuel. The daily recommended calorie intake for men and women is 2500 (10460 kilojoules) and 2000 calories (8370 kilojoules) respectively, and those calories are the fuel that keeps you going throughout your runs. A 15 mile (24km) run burns around 1500 calories (6275 kilojoules), so it's clear you'll need to up your calorie intake slightly on your long run days to fuel yourself.

Eat more whole grains

Whole grains are the holy grail of runners' foods. The high fibre content of whole grains means they take longer for your body to digest, therefore fuelling you for longer during your runs. They're also packed with other body-friendly nutrients like iron and magnesium.

Warm up properly

As well as helping to prevent injury, warming up before you run gets your body kick-started and ready to train. That means your energy reserves will be ready for you to dip into as soon as you need them, allowing you to keep going for longer when you reach the run itself.

Eat consistently

Keeping your energy levels high is all about eating consistently throughout the day. Try having multiple small meals instead of one large meal at the end of the day. By doing so you make sure your energy intake is constant, rather than one large spike at the end of the day.

Sleep more

Did you know Paula Radcliffe used to sleep around nine hours each night when she was at her peak? Sleep is when your body is able to recover from your training sessions, and tops up your energy reserves for the next day. The National Sleep Foundation recommends seven to nine hours of sleep per night – get that and your running energy will soar.

Mix up your routines

No matter how much you love running, if you use the same routes and routines over and over again you will get bored. We all know that boredom leads to lack of motivation and energy when it comes to running, so make sure you mix up your training by adding a variety of sessions to your schedule.



Add lentils to your meals

Lentils are tasty, versatile, and a great energy source for runners. They're high in energy-boosting carbohydrates, and most importantly have a low glycaemic rating. That means they won't lead to spikes in your blood sugar level, which can often lead to tiredness while exercising.

Eat natural honey

This is one snack that is best eaten before a run, rather than generally throughout the day. Natural unsweetened honey contains sugars that are easily digested by the body, making it a quick boost of natural energy to keep you going during your run.

Reduce your stress levels

One of the biggest causes of tiredness is stress. If you're feeling stressed at work or at home this can spill over into your running training by making you feel tired and lethargic. Take steps to de-stress and you'll soon notice a newfound burst of energy when you run.

Snack on nuts

With their healthy fats and high levels of protein and fibre, nuts are a great snack for runners. Almonds, pecans and hazelnuts are all great options, as they're also high in vitamin E, which is an antioxidant.

Avoid caffeine

You might think of it as an energy boost, but as soon as you consume caffeine you've kick started a cycle that leads to tiredness while you run. Caffeine causes dehydration, and one of the most pronounced effects of dehydration is a lack of energy.

Eat sweet potatoes

A study carried out by the Center for Science in the Public Interest pitted all vegetables against each other to find out which had the highest nutritional value, and sweet potatoes came out on top. As well as being a healthy source of carbohydrates, they contain fibre, vitamin C and potassium.

Have a sports massage

If your muscles are feeling stiff and tired, you may need a sports massage. Sports massages are great for loosening your muscles and reinvigorating your performance, so the next time you run you'll be brimming with energy.

Drink more water

As well as avoiding diuretics, one of the best ways to prevent dehydration is obviously to drink enough water throughout the day. By drinking enough water you'll avoid any feelings of mid-run fatigue, and make sure you're full of energy until the end of your training session.

Avoid sugary snacks

Snacking on sugar during the day of a run is never a good idea. With every sugary high there has to be a low, and if that hits when you're running you'll feel sluggish, tired, and will really struggle to perform at your usual level.



Try flexibility exercises

Supplement your training with flexibility exercises such as yoga and Pilates to seriously increase your energy levels. The breathing and flexibility taught in these disciplines will make you a more efficient runner, which means you'll be losing less energy.

Eat bananas

When it comes to quick and easy energy filled snacks that are good for you, it doesn't get much better than bananas. Their high carbohydrate contents will boost your energy levels before a run, and they also contain the mood boosting amino acid tryptophan.

Stay active

Even on days where you don't have any running planned, make sure you stay active. Small tasks like walking to work instead of driving, and taking the stairs instead of the lift all add up, and ensure that your energy levels don't start to dip due to inactivity before your next run.

Try energy gels

If you know you're going to be running a long way then energy gels are always a great idea. They're easy to carry, easy to use, and will give you a real burst of energy when you need it most. There's plenty of varieties out there, so experiment during training runs to find what works best for you.

Snack on blueberries

Blueberries are a great food for runners because they're high in both fibre and carbohydrates, as well as the antioxidant vitamin C, which all combine to keep energy levels high. As an added bonus, research carried out by the U.S. Department of Agriculture found blueberries also improve balance and coordination.