

Carpe Diem – Seize the Day Blog

Editor's Note: Content presented in the Carpe Diem – Seize the Day Blog is for awareness and informational purposes only, and it is not meant to be a diagnostic tool. As always consult your medication professional for medical advice.

Being a caregiver for someone with epilepsy can leave your energy levels on low or empty. What are some ways to replenish your energy levels? Caffeine is one example of how to replenish your energy level. Richard Chachowski says that America runs on caffeine. Many people are trying to decaffeinate these days due to the impact that too much caffeine can have on your overall health. Are there other ways to wake yourself up besides caffeine? According to the American Academy of Sleep Medicine, 85% of Americans consume caffeine, usually through coffee (which accounts for 54% of the world's caffeine intake) or tea (about 43%).

Despite its prevalence in our society today, caffeine is an imperfect stimulant. It does pack some potent health benefits, such as improving cognitive performance and decreasing the risk of Parkinson's and Alzheimer's, but it also leads to the dreaded caffeine crash. Excessive caffeine consumption can also disrupt sleep and even lead to dependency, resulting in headaches, fatigue, and insomnia when you can't get your fix. The good news is there are some alternative ways to raise your energy levels to help you get through the day.

Peppermint tea

Most teas have about half the caffeine of coffee, but for a completely caffeine-free option, we suggest switching to an herbal tea like peppermint, known for its cognitive-enhancing properties. In a 2016 Northumbria University study, researchers found that peppermint tea improved memory quality, secondary memory, working memory, and speed of memory, compared with other herbal teas. Peppermint tea also boosted attention speed and levels of alertness. A 2018 study in *Nutrients* similarly found evidence that peppermint essential oil, with higher levels of menthol, increased performance and lessened mental fatigue from lengthy cognitive testing.

Peppermint has other health benefits. When combined with white tea (a relatively low source of caffeine), peppermint was likewise found to have increased antibacterial and anti-inflammatory effects, according to a 2021 study in the *Journal of the Science of Food and Agriculture*. Menthol improves digestion, and is used to treat nausea, skin conditions, IBS, headaches, and menstrual cramps, and is used in aromatherapy to reduce post-op nausea and vomiting.

Ginseng

Ginseng—sometimes called the “king of all herbs”—has a long history of medicinal use in East Asian countries. Today, it remains one of the popular herbs worldwide, known for its antibacterial, antiviral, anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, and anti-fungal properties. According to a 2017 *Journal of Ginseng Research* study, ginseng influences the pituitary gland, triggering a hormonal reaction and resulting in beneficial physical and mental effects, combating stress, depression, and anxiety, as well as osteoporosis, vascular diseases, and arthritis. It has also been

shown to be beneficial in treating neurological diseases such as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's, namely by improving memory and concentration.

A 2018 review in the Journal of the International Society of Sports Nutrition found that certain ginseng species led to improved physical performance, increased alertness, and combated mental fatigue in athletes. You can try ginseng in its well-known tea form (since it is herbal, there is no caffeine) or as a supplement. Ginseng does have some adverse effects in high doses, however. Too much can cause insomnia, increased heart rate, and digestive issues.

Apples and other fruit

Fructose and lactose are slower digesting than their refined counterparts, providing you with energy for a longer period of time, and helping you avoid sugar crashes.

For example, a medium apple has about twenty-five grams of carbohydrates, and approximately nineteen grams of sugar, making it a long-lasting source of energy and better than chips or a cookie.

A 2021 Journal of Cognitive Enhancement study found that a beverage made from apple extract and combined with 75 mg of caffeine improved cognitive processing speed, increased alertness, and decreased fatigue. Other fruits that contain higher amounts of natural sugars and carbs include bananas (about twenty-nine grams of carbs and fifteen grams of sugar) and grapefruits (16 grams of carbs, ten grams of sugar).

Eat more meat

B vitamins, such as B-12, are essential for strength and energy. Sourced from lean meats, eggs, and dairy products, B vitamins are critical to the production of red blood cells, nerves, and DNA. B-12 must be sourced from food or supplements. The body needs 2.4 micrograms of B-12 daily. B-12 deficiency may result in weakness, fatigue, memory loss, and difficulty thinking and focusing. Food sources include seafood and certain grains.

Spinach

Iron is critical for energy production, moving oxygen through your bloodstream to your brain and muscles. Decreased oxygen flow, resulting from iron deficiency, can cause anemia, and may leave you feeling tired or weak. The prospect of spinach replacing your daily cup of joe might be a strange one, but spinach is a source of iron, as well as magnesium (also critical to energy production) and potassium, both of which are known for improving muscle, skeletal, and nerve functions. You can also try regularly taking iron and magnesium supplements to ensure healthy blood circulation and energy production.

Start 2022 off with the extra energy you will need to carry you throughout the year. If what you are doing now to get your energy level up, continue to do what is working for you.

Editor's Note: The Carpe Diem – Seize the Day Blog will be distributed and posted weekly.
Always remember – **CARPE DIEM – SEIZE THE DAY!**

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