

## 10 Quick Ways to Boost Your Energy Levels

In today's article, I'll be sharing 10 routines that can be incorporated into your busy day to boost your mental and physical energy levels. For a quick 'pick-me-up', try any of these:

- 1. Morning awakening stretches:** Getting up soon after you wake allows you to use your morning energy, which drains away if you stay in bed for more than a few minutes after waking. Instead, start the day with this awakening routine. Lie on your back with your eyes closed as you gently move into wakefulness. Slowly lift your arms above your head, breathe in and stretch from the tips of your fingers to your toes. Breathe out and relax. Breathe in and stretch your right hand and right foot away from each other, then breathe out as you relax. Continue breathing in time with your movements as you stretch your left arm and left leg. Stretch your left arm and your right leg, then your right arm and your left leg. Next, hug your knees up and in toward your chest and curl your body into a ball, bringing your forehead up toward your knees. Feel this stretch along your back, being mindful not to strain your lower spine. Finish by stretching out on an in-breath to the tips of your fingers and toes with arms and legs apart and forming a star shape with your body. Bring your knees back in to your chest and do the star stretch again.
- 2. Body brushing, then showering:** Flagging energy is often linked with sluggish circulation. Taking a hard-bristled brush to your body might sound a little torturous, but it stimulates surface micro-circulation to activate the lymphatic system, bringing fresh oxygen to the skin and removing waste. Before bathing, brush over the soles of the feet and work your way up the legs, torso and arms, always brushing towards the heart. Avoid any areas prone to sensitivity such as the chest and face. Next, don't rush your morning shower. Make the most of its energising potential. Start by being fully present in the moment, enjoying the feel of the warm water as it flows over your body. Raise your right arm and watch the water flowing down it, then do the same with your left arm. The refreshing qualities of a shower are more than just physical. The touch and sound of breaking water will lift your spirits and increase feelings of vitality. Allow the water to flow over your face and body and visualise it washing away any old stale energy. Reduce the temperature, then alternate between cool and warm water. Finally, turn the temperature down and allow cool water to flow over your face and neck. If possible, work your way to cold for the last 30 seconds. This will help strengthen your immune system and is guaranteed to boost energy.
- 3. Stay alert when driving with an ear massage:** To combat lethargy when driving, take the chance to massage your ears when you're in a traffic jam or waiting at traffic lights. According to Chinese medicine, the whole body is represented by points on the ear, so ear massage provides all-over energy. Start by folding your ear over to cover the opening. Find the place where your ear joins your scalp and, starting at this point, gently press your ear lobe between your index finger and your thumb. Work your way around the edge of the ear from top to bottom, pinching and releasing. Repeat this gentle pinching movement over your whole ear.

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4. **Take a break at your desk:** Turn away from your computer screen so that it can't distract you while you take a much needed break. Sit with your feet flat on the floor, or stand with your back straight. Lift your shoulders and drop them a couple of times to release built-up tension. Interlace your fingers and stretch your arms out in front of you. Adjust your position if your shoulders have crept up again. Feel the stretch across your back and hold this position for a few breaths. Turn your hands so your knuckles are facing you and stretch forward again. With arms still outstretched, wing your interlaced hands above your head, palms upward. Relax your elbows and drop your shoulders. Straighten your arms and stretch strongly toward the ceiling. Still facing forward and stretching upward, bend to the right and to the left. Repeat these movements, or at least stand up and take a little walk every 20 minutes or so whenever you're working at a desk.
  
5. **Go outside and breathe in the universe:** Another beautiful routine comes from *Spring Forest Qi Gong* and is called *Breathing of the universe*. It works by balancing the energy both outside and inside your body. To do this, stand with your toes pointed forward and your knees slightly bent. Then, set your feet a little more than shoulder width apart for good balance. Look forward. Smile. Relax! Draw your chin back a little to straighten the spine. Open your fingers. Drop your shoulders. Now shift your elbows outward a little. Slowly take three deep, silent and gentle breaths. Imagine using your whole body to breathe. Visualise the universal energy coming into every cell of your body. When you exhale, visualise any pain or sickness in your body changing into smoke and shooting out from every cell in your body to the ends of the universe. Close your eyes and repeat the words **'I am in the universe. The universe is in my body. The universe and I combine together.'** Take a moment to feel the emptiness, the quietness, the stillness of the universe. Start with your hands poised in front of you, fingers parted, as if holding a large ball. As you inhale, move your hands away from each other to the sides. As you exhale, bring your hands back together, but without touching. Feel the energy in the space between your hands as you move them apart and back together again. Do the exercise for six minutes. When finished, sit and relax for several minutes more.
  
6. **Revive tired eyes:** If your eyes start feeling dry or scratchy, take a break. Fill your hands with cold water and splash it over your face and eyes, repeating several times. Make sure you're drinking plenty of water at regular intervals throughout the day. Don't wait until you feel thirsty to have a glass of water, as chances are that dehydration will have already set in. If your body is dehydrated, you'll feel lethargic. Blink frequently to spread soothing tears across your eyeballs. Awaken your eyeballs by using them to their full capacity. Instead of constantly focusing at the same distance, let your eyes settle on something at the other side of the room. Then look at something nearby. Finally, look out of the window and give your eyes a few moments to focus on a distant object. Turn your head to the left, and focus on whatever forms the horizon where you are - probably a wall. Very slowly turn your head all the way to the right. Your eyes should not move, just allow them to be carried along by the movement of your head. Let your focus sweep along without making an effort. Rub your hands together to warm them. Then lift your hands up to your face and rest your face in your hands. Cup your hands around your eyes so that all light is excluded. Open your eyes and let them rest in the warm, dark space. Visualise a place where you feel happy and relax for a few minutes.

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7. **Try yoga breathing:** Devote a few minutes each day to regulating your breath. It will not only increase the amount of oxygen you use effectively, but will also provide a quick-fix solution for stress, calming your mind and restoring a sense of balance. This in turn reduces your body's stress response. Sit comfortably with your back supported and your feet flat on the floor. Gently rest your hands in your lap. Close your eyes and allow your breathing to slow to a normal, steady pace. Place the index and second fingers of your right hand on top of your nose, pointing toward your forehead. Practise alternately covering your right nostril with your thumb and your left nostril with your ring finger until the movement becomes easy. Breathe in. Close your right nostril with your thumb and breathe out steadily through the left nostril to the count of four, then inhale through the left nostril to the count of four. Close your left nostril with your ring finger and uncover your right nostril and breathe out through the right nostril to the count of four, then inhale through the right nostril to the count of four. Close your right nostril, open your left nostril and breathe out to the count of four. Continue this sequence for several minutes.

8. **Bring tired feet back to life:** Rest your right ankle on your left knee. Hold your right foot in both hands, with your two thumbs on the sole. Massage the centre of the sole just below the ball of your foot, which is an acupressure point said to boost energy. Continue over your sole, toes and the sides and top of your foot. With your thumbs back on your sole, gently move the sides of your foot up and down as if trying to fold it. Circle your ankle. Gently pull each toe. Interlace your toes with your fingers as far as you can go without forcing your toes uncomfortably apart. Move your hand in a circle to mobilise your toes. Now, repeat these steps on your left foot.

9. **Add organic flaxseed oil to your diet:** Ensure your body receives sufficient quantities of energy-sustaining essential fatty acids by including 2-3 tablespoons of organic cold-pressed flaxseed oil in your meals every day. Try drizzling some over a salad or mix it into a fruit shake or smoothy.

10. **Practise (emotional freedom techniques) before bedtime:** EFT is one of my favourite, quick techniques to shift any stuck subtle energy that's emotionally draining you. For example, you can use EFT to reduce your stress levels or to clear the emotional charge associated with any negative unresolved emotions. After just a few minutes of EFT, your energy levels will top up and your mood will be lifted too. Incorporating a little EFT into your evening routine will also promote a better night's sleep.

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