



Ready to **RENEW** your **ENERGY** this Spring?

by Rachel Lerner, HHC

For some reason winter seems to be the longest season for many of us. It could have to do with the more extreme weather, shorter days and less time engaging in outdoor activities. Thankfully, spring is here which means we can start thinking about warmer weather as well as renewing our energy.

There are many factors that contribute to our sense of energy. Believe it or not, there are some factors, four to be exact, which actually ZAP our energy:

- **Chemical stress (which can be caused by the foods we eat)**
- **Emotional stress**
- **Mental stress**
- **Physical stress**

Hopefully you can see the common theme here is **STRESS**. One of the many harmful side effects of too much stress in our lives is depletion of energy.

The foods we eat also play a role in our energy levels. The foods we consume that can decrease our energy are caffeine, coffee, soft drinks, alcohol, meat (either too much or too little), processed foods (MSG, food dyes or artificial sweeteners), tobacco, milk, sugar and trans fats.

Many of us reach for that afternoon cup of Joe, or visit the vending machine for our afternoon sugar fix for an energy boost. These stimulants actually deplete our bodies of energy by drawing out minerals and nutrients. Sometimes you will feel a surge in energy shortly followed by a crash in energy.

It can be extremely helpful to reduce or eliminate several of the foods I mentioned from your diet. You can replace them with more beneficial ones that will actually increase your energy.

Here are some tips:

- Whenever possible, focus on the highest quality possible. Think local (although it's harder during the winter months) and organic (especially eggs and milk).
- The Environmental Protection Agency (www.epa.gov) has a list of several foods, called the dirty dozen, which they recommend to buy organic due to the high residue of pesticides, and they are: peaches, apples, sweet bell peppers, celery, nectarines (imported), strawberries, blueberries, kale, imported grapes, spinach, lettuce and potatoes.
 - Buy within the seasons.
 - Eat whole foods: grains, vegetables and beans. These foods have not been processed and thus keep all the components of

their original, natural state: fiber, vitamins and minerals. Processing removes these elements.

- Sea plants, such as green algae and seaweeds, are also powerful sources of nutrition and energy.

Because stress plays such a pivotal role in governing our energy levels, it is important to manage our stress in a healthy way. The numerous demands and expectations of our everyday lives can leave many of us feeling overwhelmed and "stressed out." While this may not seem like such a big deal, the truth is, stress can take a serious toll on your health. Stressful emotions trigger the release of harmful chemicals like cortisol that can wreak havoc on nearly every aspect of our well-being. A study done by Carnegie Mellon University found that stress contributes to a range of diseases including heart disease and depression. The good news is there are ways to effectively manage your stress, or de-stress, which are easy to implement!

THREE QUICK AND EASY WAYS TO DE-STRESS:

- 1. Don't rely on caffeine.** Loads of coffee and caffeine can dehydrate you and cause energy dips. Enjoy your morning cup and switch to more hydrating beverages in the afternoon, like coconut water or regular water. You can also try herbal coffee and teas.
- 2. Exercise!** When we are extremely busy, we need to find balance. Aim to maintain your regular exercise routine as much as possible (even if you can only do 15 minutes of exercise). You will be surprised at how much more energy and positivity you will have to carry out your daily activities.
- 3. Meditate to calm your mind.** When our minds are racing, we need to stop and take a moment (three to five minutes is enough) and do less, even if we have the urge to keep going. This can be hard for most, myself included! Meditation helps bring us more balance, so we feel much more centered and don't get bothered by the little things. Any time we quiet our minds from the constant cycle of thinking, it is meditation! •



about rachel...

Rachel Lerner, HHC is a certified holistic health and wellness coach and founder of Personal Web Nutrition, a company devoted to empowering individuals to find the right food and lifestyle choices that best nourish their mind, body and spirit. Rachel works with clients all over the country by phone or in-person. Her practice is focused on supporting women to learn how they can live more vibrant, healthier, happier lives.

Please visit www.personalwebnutrition.com for a **FREE** guide to grocery shopping and to learn more information about Rachel, her services and client success stories.