

## How to Boost Energy at Work

A busy work day can send your head spinning. In this case, many people like to have a cup of hot coffee or hot tea, as the caffeine in these drinks can stimulate the central nervous system for energising effects. However, reaction to caffeine differs from person to person. Excessive intake of caffeine can lead to anxiety, racing pulse, tremor, disturbed sleeping, upset stomach, etc.

If you have a low tolerance to caffeine, or if you don't want to rely on caffeine for energy, try these alternatives below:

### Do you often get tired at work?

There are many causes of fatigue, one being the body lacking energy: when blood sugar is low, say, after a night of sleep or about three hours after a meal, the only form of energy supply to the brain—glucose (blood sugar)—will drop, affecting concentration and causing tiredness.



At this critical moment, take some carbohydrate-rich foods to refresh and rejuvenate yourself !

### Don't miss breakfast

"I got up late", "I worry about weight gain", "I want to save up"... these are the common excuses for not taking breakfast. In fact, skipping breakfast can lead to poor concentration and thus performance. A UK survey conducted on 126 persons concluded that a nutritious breakfast may boost your resilience against stress, improve your concentration and your analytical power<sup>1</sup>.

So, remember to eat a nutritious low-fat breakfast if you want to work better without gaining weight. Here are some recommendations about what to eat:

Recommended breakfast foods:

	Chinese	Western
Foods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✧ Congee with lean meat or slices of fresh fish</li> <li>✧ Rice sheet rolls (in less sauce)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✧ Oatmeal in low-fat milk</li> <li>✧ Sandwich with low-fat cheese or with tomato and egg</li> <li>✧ Bread with raisins and</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✧ Rice noodles with beef in soup</li> <li>✧ <i>Mantou</i> (Chinese buns)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>walnut, or with tuna</li> <li>✧ Macaroni and diced chicken in soup</li> </ul>
Drinks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✧ Low-sugar soy milk</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✧ Low-fat or skimmed milk</li> </ul>

### Choose healthy snacks

In about three hours after lunch, our food has been digested and the nutrients have been absorbed by the body. Around this time, our blood sugar level may have dropped to a low level. To maintain a stable blood sugar level, you can take a healthy snack; it can rejuvenate yourself, soothe hunger before dinner and prevent overeating at dinner.

Foods: fresh fruit/dried fruit  
low-fat and low-sugar yoghurt  
unsalted roasted nuts, e.g. peanuts and cashew nuts  
crackers, saltine crackers, plain biscuits  
cherry tomatoes

Drinks: low-fat or skimmed milk  
low-sugar soy milk



### Stretching exercise

Apart from diet, stretching exercise is useful too, not only in relaxing tense muscles, but also improving blood circulation and refreshing body and mind.



To know more about ...

- ✧ healthy eating, please visit 'Health Zone' website at <http://www.cheu.gov.hk>
- ✧ 'Health@work.hk Project', please visit <http://www.healthatwork.gov.hk>

<sup>1</sup> Smith, A.P. 1998, 'Breakfast and mental health', *International Journal of Food Sciences and Nutrition*, Vol. 49, No. 5, Pages 397-402