



Wellbeing Insights

Living a Better, More Vibrant Life



Energy Management 101 Tend to Your Energy to Get the Most Out of Your Time

Energy management has become a buzz term as of late, and even if you don't use this term you probably understand what it means. It boils down to being intentional about where and when we exert effort and incorporating rest and recovery into our day. It's also an alternative way to think about time management. The success of time management is limited by the fact that we have 24 hours in a day. Additionally, more time doesn't necessarily mean a better outcome; you can waste hours feeling drained and dragging yourself through a task, producing mediocre work.

However, energy is renewable, and having more energy and focus does guarantee a better outcome regardless of additional time. Learning to manage that energy helps us increase productivity with more zest and less exhaustion.

How we spend our energy is only half of the story. We are designed to work rhythmically between expending and then renewing energy. Think of recharging a battery, filling up a tank of gas or stretching after a workout. It's important that we not just throw more time at a task/project but also ensure we renew our energy to

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bring the level of focus and attention necessary to do the best job in the least amount of time.

5 Tips for EXPENDING Energy Wisely

1. Work with your natural energy level.

Determine your natural energy flow throughout the day. When are you most and least energized? If you're not sure, journal for one week to track your energy levels throughout the day. Designate creative projects for high-energy hours and more task-oriented items for lower-energy hours. For tasks in your work schedule that are beyond your control, being aware of your natural energy levels can help you plan in advance for how you will respond.

2. Identify your drainers and sustainers.

Are there things/people/activities that drain you,

but you still have some control over? Consider how you might lessen or eliminate the impact of these things. Are there things/people/activities that sustain you that you are not maximizing? Your sustainers are not only worth your time and energy but also a precious necessity, so make room for them. This may mean making plans with someone months in advance or shifting some things in your budget for a beloved hobby.

3. Be smart with your to-do list.

Start big, then get specific. Once you have a weekly to-do list, break things into manageable tasks. Then, determine the best time to get specific tasks done (again, working with your natural energy rhythm). Put it on your calendar, and schedule reward and recovery immediately following.

4. Communicate wisely.

Consider the best modes of communication for various tasks. For example, would

a phone call be faster than typing out a complex email? Conversely, do you have a meeting scheduled that could easily be handled with a quick email, delegating tasks? Carry this over to your personal life as well, considering the sensitivity of the topic and what you want out of the interaction. If you need a sense of connection or are handling a miscommunication, talking on the phone (or even meeting face to face) may be a better choice.

5. Be your own guardian.

When you have clear priorities for the day, guard your plan as you would if an emergency came up. Set your mind that your priorities will happen, so everything else has to adjust. Everyone and everything is vying for your attention. If you don't consciously choose where to put it, someone else will decide for you.

5 Tips for RENEWING Energy Wisely

Establishing practices that renew our energy after bouts of intense focus is critical to bring your best self to all you do. These things must become automatic – a habit. In order to do this, you'll need to be very intentional about creating prompts and reminders for these rituals until they do become habit.

1. Mindfulness. In general, this refers to intentional awareness of the present moment where you observe your thoughts, emotions and experiences without judgment. Check out the Mindful Minute for an easy energizing practice, or visit mindful.org for tips on

getting started. Another very simple exercise is to get away from electronics and spend at least 1 minute breathing, making each inhalation and each exhalation 4 seconds.

2. Move. The longer we sit, the more our body slows down, muscles tighten, and brain function and metabolism decrease. Doing any short bout of activity during the day will help boost energy – 10 squats, 1 flight of stairs, a 5-minute walk ... whatever is realistic for you in the moment.

3. Snack. When it comes to energy renewal, you need real, nourishing food. The ideal pick-me-up snack includes fat (e.g., avocado, nuts, seeds) and a little protein. Avoid

sugar, which is a minor, short-term fix that in the long term has negative consequences on your energy and overall health. Do not just snack at your desk; switch scenery and take 5 minutes to enjoy your snack break.

4. Interaction. Turn to your sustainers for connections. This could be a 5-minute FaceTime, a Snapchat or walking to a coworker's desk (no gossip or complaining allowed).

5. Alone time. Just as important as connection and interaction is alone time. Find a quiet place to do something that makes you happy (e.g., listen to your favorite song, doodle). If it's possible, even take a quick nap or at least close your eyes for a bit.

On the Menu

Millet

Cultivated for many centuries, millet belongs to a trendy food club called ancient grains, which also includes barley, farro, bulgur, oat, sorghum, quinoa and several other grains and wheats. Its ability to grow in infertile ground and tolerance to drought make it a very important agricultural staple in parts of Africa and Asia.

In the U.S., millet has historically been most commonly found in birdseed. However, as a grain naturally devoid of gluten, it has gained more popularity for human consumption in recent years as gluten-free diets continue to trend. While millet is a nutritious grain to add to any pantry, when ground into flour it does not make an acceptable substitute for leavened bread.

Millet can be eaten similarly to how you would have rice, quinoa or oatmeal. Nutritionally speaking, it provides a nice variety of vitamins and minerals, including niacin, vitamin B6, folic acid, calcium, iron, magnesium and potassium.

Here are some other reasons to consider adding millet to your diet:

- It's a vegetarian protein source; just 1 cup of millet provides 5 grams of protein.
- The B vitamins in millet help with red cell production, boosting energy and regulating the nervous system.
- The grain is loaded with phenols, which are compounds that act as antioxidants and aid in preventing degenerative diseases like heart disease, cancer and diabetes.
- It's high in insoluble fiber, which can help prevent gallstones and lower triglycerides.

Keep It Fresh

Millet is a good storing grain and will keep fresh (uncooked) in a pantry for 1 to 2 years. Once cooked, refrigerate up to 3 days. Millet does dry out quickly, so simply add a small amount of water when reheating.

Morning Millet Porridge

Ingredients:

- 2 cups water
- 1 cup millet
- ¾ cup milk of choice
- 1 tsp vanilla
- ½ tsp cinnamon
- ¼ tsp salt

Optional toppings: raisins, nuts, seeds, fresh fruit, honey, maple syrup or other sweetener of choice

Directions:

In a small saucepan, bring water and millet to boil. Reduce the heat to low, cover and cook at a very low simmer for 15 to 20 minutes, without stirring, or until the liquid is absorbed and the millet is the consistency of oatmeal or cream of wheat. Remove from heat and let sit covered an additional 10 minutes. Stir in milk, cinnamon, vanilla and salt. Drizzle with maple syrup or desired sweetener and add toppings of choice.



Nutrition Info

Per Serving (¼ of recipe)

Calories	216
Total Fat	3.1g
Carbohydrates	39g
	Sugar 2.2g
	Fiber 4.4g
Protein	7g
Sodium	175mg

Finding Ease with a “Mind Like Water”

The concept of a mind like water or ‘Mizu no Kokoro’ is most commonly traced back to Japanese philosophy. It has many metaphorical meanings that can aid us in becoming more mindful of how we expend our mental energy. There are three basic concepts that can be tied in with this metaphor to keep your reactions in check, go with the flow and find your inner stillness. Let’s explore each of these in a bit more detail:

1. Reaction. Imagine you throw a pebble into a still pond. How does it react? Appropriately – every single time. The ripples are a perfect reflection of the force of the disturbance; it never overreacts or underreacts. Most of us give more or less attention to things than they deserve, operating without a mind like water. When we overreact or underreact to situations – our email, our boss, our kids – we lose our perspective and don’t get the most effective results. Reacting appropriately requires a keen self-awareness. If we allow small things that may deserve some attention to build up (i.e., underreacting), we are bound to get to that proverbial straw that breaks the camel’s back and, as a result, may overreact to a small event. Work to cultivate awareness of your reactions to daily events. Simple in theory yet difficult in practice, this discipline can greatly affect your relationships, productivity and emotional health.

2. Adaptation. As with any liquid, water is formless. It adapts to and takes the shape of whatever vessel it is put in. The lesson here is more obvious – adapt to what life gives you. Harmonize with your circumstances and embrace change. Although we do not always have the ability to control what happens to us, we always have the ability to choose how we react. Be like water; stay fully true to yourself while adapting to your surroundings. As Darwin said, “It is not the strongest of species that survives, nor the most intelligent, but the most responsive to change.”

3. Stillness. The surface of the vast ocean is full of activity, continuously experiencing and reacting to countless disturbances. Despite all of this, in the depth of the ocean there is always a place of calm. This is also true with your mind. Regardless of what is happening in your life and the constant stream of stimuli we have to respond to, always remember that there is a calm, still, unshakable and unmovable place of pure peace in your mind. Some days discovering this place of peace will feel quite difficult; other days it may be easy. In turbulent times, practice connecting to your stillness – your mind like water.



Mindful Minute

In moments when you need a quick pick-me-up, try this **energizing light exercise** to visualize your way to an energy burst sure to get you ready for whatever lies ahead in your day.

1. Find a comfortable seat and close your eyes.
2. Imagine with each inhalation you are filling your body with fresh energy and replenishing vitality. You might imagine this revitalizing energy as a stream of golden light.
3. With each exhalation, let something go. This could be a specific interaction or event that has occurred, or simply visualize letting go of the old which no longer serves you.
4. After several breath cycles of breathing in this light and exhaling stagnant thoughts/emotions, imagine the golden light moving through your body, permeating every cell. Imagine the light radiating out of your hands, feet and head, energizing your surroundings.
5. Open your eyes and take this renewed sense of energy and capability with you as you move on with your day.



“Rest and self-care are so important. **When you take time to replenish your spirit**, it allows you to serve others from the overflow. You cannot serve from an empty vessel.”

– ELEANOR BROWN



Parenting Corner

Conquering the Morning Mayhem

Anyone you talk to will share chaotic stories about their mornings with kids, pets, partners, multiple bags, forgotten lunches, etc. Perhaps with a bit of forethought and a lot of practice, we can transform morning routines from a dreaded battle to a pleasant time to enjoy the company of our family and experience some quality time.

Here are some simple practices you can try to move toward happier mornings:

Be the first one up. This may not be easy for all, but enjoying a cup of coffee, having a moment of alone time to set an intention for the day or practicing a little self-care is a golden way to begin your day.

Map out a schedule. This might include shower times and chore assignments. As you get started with this, everyone needs to be clear and onboard to maintain boundaries and hold each other accountable. Just as in work, clear expectations and goals are important. If you are asking your kids to do something they haven't done in the past, be sure they understand why and enlist the help of author Amy

McCready's "When/Then" approach. Identify something your child enjoys that can be done in the morning and tie it to the completion of a chore or compliance to the schedule. For example, once they make their bed, then they can eat breakfast.

Start the night before. Checking backpacks and calendars the night before allows for late-night trips to the store for milk, locating missing permission slips, ensuring sports clothes are washed and packed, etc. Then, it's lights out. Bedtimes are important for kids and adults of all ages. A good night's sleep will set everyone up for a less grouchy morning.

Watch the weather. Looking for missing gloves and umbrellas, having to scrape your windows or de-ice the stairs, shoving little feet into snow boots; these all take time that was unbudgeted. Preparing ahead and adding time in your schedule makes a world of difference. There may even be time to enjoy the beauty of snow instead of searching for the ice scraper.

Stock the car with a kid emergency kit. While we can aim for day-by-day preparedness, it won't always happen. Your car kit is a safety net for the day when they don't brush their teeth (gum), forget breakfast or tantrum through it (granola bars), don't wash their face (baby wipes), leave their lunch on the counter (few dollars cash) or have their hair sticking straight up (comb).

Designate a launch pad and landing zone. Whether you have an actual mudroom or not, dedicating a space in a hall or corner of a room near an entry point can be life changing. "That spot remains sacred: Coats, backpacks and shoes come off and stay there," says Laura Vanderkam, author of *I Know How She Does It: How Successful Women Make the Most of their Time*.

Review your calendar. Do this as a unit at least once a week to divide up duties such as driving and coordinate schedules. Ideally, have a shared calendar that is out and visible to everyone. Planning time should happen at the same time and place every week to make it a habit.

Give Happy; Get Happy: Bringing kindness to work

For many, kindness might be the last thing that comes to mind in the workplace – with overcrowded schedules, workloads, deadlines and quotas. However, being kind isn't just the right thing to do; it has amazing benefits for you as well. When you witness kindness your brain produces oxytocin, which helps lower your blood pressure and increases self-esteem, optimism, energy levels and overall happiness. Kindness also has healing powers by stimulating the production of serotonin. This feel-good chemical helps to decrease anxiety, pain and stress.

Think of kindness as a skill as opposed to an inherent trait people either have or don't have. It's something we can all get better at by becoming just a little more mindful of the needs of those around us. There is no better place to practice this than in the workplace where we spend so much of our time and where we stand to benefit tremendously by having supportive relationships with those around us. Here are a few ways you can bring a little more kindness to work:

Show appreciation. Every week, leave one coworker a note of appreciation or a compliment. Some weeks may be challenging, but reflecting on the positive traits of even the grumpiest or most difficult teammate will benefit you both. Who knows, they just might pay it forward!

Ask questions. Simply showing interest in your teammates' lives outside of work will help you build a relationship. And taking interest in someone is an inherently kind thing to do. The answers to these questions may open the door to further engage in something kind – a small favor to help them out or perhaps a gift of their favorite take-out for lunch.

Tune in and take action. It's easy to come to work and tune out the more human side of our colleagues. If they seem gloomy or sad, we tread lightly, assuming it's not our place to intervene. Be mindful of the moods and emotions of your coworkers; perhaps they could use a kind note or someone to say hello to them. If someone seems a little off, there's probably a reason. These are not the moments to write them off; instead, lean in with compassion.

Encourage connection. Spread the kindness by making introductions within your place of work or connecting people over shared interests they may not know they have. You could even consider starting a Kindness Committee dedicated to spreading kindness within your organization.



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“
No act of kindness, no matter
how small, is ever wasted.
”

- AESOP