

# ENDLESS ENERGY

THE SECRET TO INCREASED PRODUCTIVITY AND HAPPINESS



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# Introduction

If only there were more hours in the day, we would be happier, richer and more content.

Right?

All of us tend to have big plans for all the exciting things we're going to do with our lives and even just our evenings – but often they just don't come into fruition.

These include plans to get into better shape, to fix our diet, to learn a language, to go travelling, to spend more time with friends, to look for alternative jobs...

All of these are things that could legitimately make our lives better and help us to get more out of them.

But then we get home from work and we crash.

We hit the sofa, we turn on the TV and we just lie there watching it. And often we don't move for the rest of the evening.

Spend a little time cooking as well, getting washed, washing dishes and putting the kids to bed (if you have them) and before you know it – the day is over.

So much for those plans – as they say, the road to hell is paved with good intentions!

So again – if only you had more *time*. If only you had time, then you'd be in better shape, you'd have a better job, you'd get to enjoy time with your friends, you'd read books...

Time is the problem.

Or is it?

Because actually, when you stop and really think about it, you'll probably find that you *did* have the time all along. Ask yourself: if you don't have any time, how is it that you managed to watch that entire box-set of *24* recently. That is literally an entire day you managed to squeeze in last month.

And how many hours have you spent watching useless videos on YouTube? How much time have you spent on the train, tube or bus on the way to work. Couldn't you have been working, reading or learning a language then? Or maybe catching up with a friend?

Did you really need to sleep 11/12 hours on Sunday?

What did you do that last Saturday you had free?

Suddenly, it becomes very apparent that you have lots of time. Time is *not* the problem after all. And so it follows that time *management* isn't the solution.

The problem is *energy*.

The reason you crashed out in the evenings is because you had no energy after a tough day at work.

The reason you spent half of Sunday in bed, is because you were recovering from an intense week.

The reason you just stared out of the window on the tube home is because you didn't have any mental bandwidth left to do anything more useful.

Energy management is the answer.

And so is looking after your health to have more energy.

## Imagine a You With More Energy

Many of us have chronically low energy and we don't even realize it. Many of us never stop to consider that our energy levels perhaps aren't what they should be, or that we could do a lot to get them back. But now imagine what a typical day might be like if you had boundless energy. Imagine if you had energy like you had when you were a little kid again...

So the day would start and you would wake up refreshed and buzzing and not at all groggy. You know how you currently slam the alarm off and then let it buzz again? There'd be none of that – you would sit up onto the bed, stretch and just feel ready to go at full steam *immediately*.

So then you'd get ready in record time and have 30 minutes to spend reading the paper, watching the news or just enjoying a cup of coffee outside in the garden. Imagine: a morning where you weren't rushed and late out of the door!

You'd head to energy and on the way there you could be reading, chatting to a friend, playing a game and just enjoying yourself.

At work, you'd power through everything you had to do in no time flat. You wouldn't procrastinate and you wouldn't take hours to write out e-mails –

and as such, you'd be able to be finished in half the time of anyone else in your office.

That would mean the latter half of the day would be stress free and you'd be able to pack up and leave on time, taking no stress from the day before with you!

Another productive train/bus journey home and you'd throw on some clothes and go for a run. These days you've got ripped abs and a slim waistline because you burn extra calories every day.

Then you'd get back and play with the kids and wife/husband. Only as you did this, you'd be on top form and full of positive energy. You'd be a ton of fun and you wouldn't have any of those stressful arguments you used to have – because you wouldn't be stressed!

Next up, you'd go and cook a great home meal that actually had proper ingredients. Then you'd eat it at the table together and guess what – you'd wash up right away. It's staying on top of cleaning like that that means your house is spotless and beautiful these days as well.

Then you'd spend the evening with a hobby. Learning a new one perhaps, or reading a book, learning a language, painting, writing.

And then you'd have amazing sex with your partner because you'd *still* have tons of energy. Low energy is responsible for countless lackluster sex lives.

And then you'd fall into a deep sleep. More energy actually means you sleep better as your body has the fuel to make all of the important restorative repairs to your system.



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So how does all that sound?

Amazing?

You've got more energy, better health, more vibrancy, no aches and pains and plenty of time to do all the things you want to do. No more lethargy, no more slowness, no more wasting hours just lying there...

And guess what – it's something you can easily accomplish as well! Just read on and we'll look in detail at how you can get boundless energy actually very easily. And change your entire life as a result...

## Managing Energy

Later in this book, we're going to look in depth as to how you can go about changing your body to give yourself more energy. That will mean boosting your energy levels through the roof by changing what you eat, changing how you train and changing how you sleep.

But before we get to that, let's focus on something much quicker and much more immediate: let's focus on using that energy you already have in a much more productive way. This is energy management and if only more people focused on this rather than time management, we'd actually have a hugely more energetic and youthful society.

### The Energy Cycle

The first thing you need to understand about managing your energy levels, is that energy begets energy. That is to say, that if you're smart with your energy management, it will ultimately yield even more energy for you.

On the other hand though, if you go about energy management in the wrong way or you don't think about it properly, then you will have *low* energy that *gets worse*.

Let's look at it this way. Say you wake up in the morning with zero energy. As a result, you're likely to wake up late, rush out the door stressed, get to work, work slowly, finish late, come home late and stressed, throw on a microwave meal, sit in squalor and then go to bed late. And guess what? After that hectic day, you're actually going to have even less energy tomorrow.

On the other hand, imagine that you wake up with lots of energy. As a result, you get to work on time after a slower morning, you finish your work on time and you leave in time to eat well and do a workout. As a result you give yourself much *more* energy and you sleep a lot better. This leaves more energy for tomorrow.

So the point to bear in mind is that your energy levels are deeply ingrained into your routine and they have likely become self-sustaining. If you're not happy with where they are at this point, then that means you need to look for ways to break the cycle with a positive change.

The best way to do that right away is by taking a day off, or having a weekend where nothing is planned. Better yet, tell your boss you need some help on your current project. The point is, you need to give yourself a break and this will ultimately give you a chance to catch up and to manage your time better next time.

## **Energy: A Finite Quantity**

At the same time, it's simply important to start looking at energy as a finite quantity. Stop asking yourself whether you have time to fit something in and instead ask yourself whether you're going to have the *energy* to fit that same thing in.

This means right away that sometimes you're going to have to turn down invitations to go out. If you always say yes to friends when they invite you to go for drinks etc., then eventually you'll run yourself into the ground and you'll have no free evenings to allow yourself to catch up.

Likewise, if you currently are a member of five after work activities, it might be time to cut one of them back.

Similarly, remember that you can't just work late and expect there to be no consequences. You *will* pay for it later so if you work harder now, you need to have a slower morning tomorrow. If you can't do that, then you've taken on too much work and you need to scale back.

### **Finding the Energy Drains in Your Routine**

And with this in mind, it of course makes sense to ensure that you aren't *wasting* energy at any point in your routine. If you are losing energy at any point on a daily basis doing things that aren't necessary – or that could be made easier – then this is a great place to start getting energy back.

Here are some examples of common 'energy drains' in our routines that could be replaced...

#### *The Commute*

As we will see later, stress is one of the biggest drains on our energy that there is. And there are few things more stressful than a commute into work. In fact, psychologists believe that 'having people walk at you' is the *only* universal fear across all cultures. When you walk to work, you have countless people walk at you!

Add to this the fact that you're often running late, the fact that you're crammed onto a bus or tube/stuck in traffic... and you have a recipe for stress.

The solution is to change this routine. You can do this by changing the way you get into work (consider driving if you currently train it in, or cycling which can become your exercise as well).

Alternatively, you can do it by leaving earlier or later to avoid rush hour. It might feel worse but in the long run you will save a *lot* of energy.

### *Household Chores*

How long are you spending every week washing up and ironing? How much energy do you think that's draining?

There is a solution: and that's to simply automate or outsource your household chores. If you can afford a cleaner, then you'll probably find they are worth every single penny – especially because we feel less stressed in clean environments and thus save a lot of energy that way.

Just as effective in many ways though is to get a washing machine to wash your clothes, a steamer to remove wrinkles from your shirts, a robotic vacuum cleaner to clean your house *etc.*

### *Decisions*

Did you know that making decisions taxes your energy? Some serious productivity gurus actually avoid making decisions whenever possible because they believe that they use up their ability to make good ones.

Steve Jobs was the classic example of this: he would wear the same black top and jeans every single day to remove the stress of choosing what to wear in the morning!

You don't have to go that far but if you set yourself an eating plan and set yourself out clothes for the week, then both these things can help you to save a lot of time.

### *E-Mail*

When you're at work, your e-mail is probably a big source of stress and energy consumption – especially if you find yourself checking it every five minutes. One solution is to make a rule that you only check e-mail twice during the day. Another is to consider getting a smartwatch which will show you your notifications without you having to bring up your Gmail account/Outlook.

There are many more little changes you can make like this and they can all help you reduce stress and energy usage throughout your day. So try running through your normal routine in your head and during this process, identify all the points that you find stressful and tiring. Now just eliminate those!

### **Kaizen**

At the same time, there are plenty of little things you can do to *give* yourself more energy which will give you cumulative improvements throughout the day. When you're stuck in a rut with bad habits for your energy, sometimes the little changes are the easiest to make.

For instance, if you aren't getting enough sleep, try going to bed literally just 10 minutes earlier. If you find yourself tired from the commute, try getting a slightly lighter bag to take with you. If you hate ironing, try wearing

more 'easy iron shirts'. Instead of having that coffee in the morning, swap it for a smoothie – it costs the same and as we'll see later, it's packed with goodness and energy.

These are tiny changes but they all add up! Making small changes like this is what is known as 'kaizen' and it makes a huge difference.

## Open Loops

As we've mentioned already, stress is highly responsible for our low energy and this uses up a lot of mental and physical bandwidth that we could otherwise channel elsewhere.

And what makes matters worse, is that when we have low energy and when we are stressed, we tend to *avoid* the things that are making us stressed rather than getting them out of the way.

Consider what are known as 'open loops'. These are all the little jobs that you need to do but keep putting off – things like calling your grandma to thank her for the money, or sending an awkward e-mail at work that you might get shouted at for.

But the thing is, the longer you leave those loops open, the more they're going to play on your mind and drain your energy throughout the day. So instead of putting them off, you need to get them out of the way as soon as possible – this way, the *only* things taking up your mental bandwidth, will be the 'big jobs'. Make a commitment to dealing with annoying niggles right away!

## Ebbs and Flows

Another thing to consider when managing your energy is that you will always have natural ebbs and flows.

This is partly due to our body's natural rhythms. In the morning, you will wake up with a high amount of cortisol and norepinephrine. Throughout the day, you will accumulate adenosine which will make you tired and slow you down. As it gets darker, your brain will produce more GABA and melatonin and eventually you will fall asleep. Interestingly, you also have a 'lull' at about 4pm and all of us will have more lulls that will be caused by our routines and activities.

The point is, that even if you have high energy, there are still going to be points where it will feel lower. Likewise, those who have low energy will have points where it is *relatively* high. The trick is to learn your own ebbs and flows and then rather than fighting them, to embrace them and utilize them to your advantage.

A lot of people will find that when they come home from work, the first thing they do is to sit down on the couch and turn on the TV. If you eat in front of the TV, then you'll find that this is a particularly dangerous point when it comes to energy levels. At this point, you are telling your body and brain that you're finished for the day and you can unwind. Then, when you've eaten, your body will be using its energy to digest. It's probably dark in the room and you probably will find that you struggle to do anything useful from this point on.

So what's the solution?



One solution might be to do away with that point entirely, by sitting on stools around a table to eat – or even eating outside while it's light. Then get up right away and clear up. This way you can stall that point where your energy levels suddenly trough.

Another option is to simply acknowledge the fact that you won't get anything done after this point. The answer is to eat a little later (maybe have a snack to see you through) and to do any household chores *before* you sit down to feast.

You should also try and coincide your resting periods with these natural lulls in your energy. At first you can do this simply by listening to your body. When you're tired *let* your body rest.

There is a saying that goes:

*Walk or sit; don't wobble!*

What does this mean? Simply that it there's no point being 'half productive' and that you should either be 'on' or 'off'.

Let's say that you have a big project – perhaps you're planning a wedding. Now the temptation would be to spend every last minute planning that wedding, to the point where your evenings would be spent absent mindedly browsing through venues or flowers.

Actually though, you'd be *far* better off giving yourself some time off from time to time. Why? Because that way you would be able to regain your energy lost during the working periods. By having an evening or two off a week when your energy is low, you'll actually be *more* productive on the other days.

So walk when your energy is high and sit when it's low. Don't force yourself to wobble when your body says no!

Likewise, you should try to avoid putting any important activities at 4pm. Similarly, we know we have more cortisol and energy in the morning but it takes a while for that sleep inertia to wear off. A good time to do something productive then would be an hour or two after waking up. Maybe this is a good time to close those open loops?

Remember, we're all different: so take some time out to map out your energy ebbs and flows. Ask yourself every couple of hours throughout the day how your energy is holding up. Overtime you should learn to accurately predict where your energy will be at any given time.

And as well as having daily rhythms based on our internal body clock and 'external zeitgebers' (environmental cues), we also have energy ebbs and flows on a longer term basis. This can happen monthly for instance or even quarterly. Any athlete will know that sometimes they're able to hit the gym hard for weeks on end and then suddenly they lose all energy and enthusiasm to go. We'll look into this in more detail later but for now just follow this tip: *listen* to your body and give it time to rest when it needs it.

## Perfecting Sleep

So that's energy management pretty much covered. Now you need to start thinking about how you can increase that energy and keep it high. In other words, how do you fix your biological energy levels? How do you encourage your body to produce more energy? How do you increase the 'starting point' and the 'baseline' for your energy?

That's what the rest of this book is going to be about and really there are three big pillars to this: sleep, exercise and nutrition.

We're going to start with sleep because it is *by far* the most important aspect when it comes to increasing your energy. Energy is what sleep is *all about* and when you consider that we evolved to spend 8 hours of our day (at least) asleep, this tells you that we probably really need it. In fact, if you look at any animal, you will find that they tend to nap throughout the day too whenever they get the chance. If they're not exercising/active/exerting themselves, they're resting. Simple! (Remember that 'no wobbling' thing? Animals are pros at it!)

So the very first tip is to start prioritizing sleep again. Keep track of how many hours you are sleeping a night and if the conclusion is anything under 8, then change your routine. Again: this will often mean doing less with your day or week but note that you will feel better in nearly every single way if you do this. Consider your sleep sacred because after a great night's sleep, you'll feel *much* better. Once you get into the habit of sleeping properly, you'll find that you actually start being able to do *more* in the fewer hours you are spending awake.

## How to Get More Restorative Sleep

But sleep quantity is only one part of the story. What's actually arguably more important is sleep *quality*.

In other words, making sure that your sleep is restorative and that you are getting good value out of it.

Now, we're not going to go into detail on all the things you need to do to sleep better here. The basics you already know or can probably guess. At the very least, there are plenty of online resources on tips for fixing your sleep.

Just to recap, this is what you should already be doing to enhance your sleep:

- Keep your room dark
- Keep your room quiet
- Maintain the correct temperature – ideally slightly cooler than normal
- Only use your bed for sleeping and sex so your brain associates it with sleep
- Try wearing socks to bed
- Avoid eating too soon before bed
- Get plenty of exercise and fresh air during the day
- Avoid caffeine

At the same time though, there are a few other things you can do that will have a more powerful benefit.

One of the very most profound is to have a hot shower or bath before bed. Why? Because it relaxes your muscles and at the same time encourages

your body to produce melatonin and growth hormone. Have a hot bath and then *immediately* go to bed and you'll feel yourself sinking into the mattress. As an added bonus, you'll now also have one less thing you need to do in the morning!

Supplement with vitamin D in the mornings. This will help your body to better regulate your internal clock and in turn that will ensure you are producing the right hormones at the right times for sleep. You should also make sure you are getting plenty of zinc, magnesium and tryptophan in your diet – all these things will help you to sleep better.

And as well as keeping your room darker, you should also avoid light as you get closer to bed. In particular, you should avoid light from screens which stimulates cortisol production. Another option is to try wearing 'blue blocking glasses' which theoretically block the wavelengths that cause the cortisol production – but actually this will make a marginal difference at best. Instead, just stay away from your phone an hour before bed or try reading quietly.

This is all great but if you only follow one tip, make it the bath before bed!

Oh and *definitely* avoid alcohol before bed. Avoiding alcohol *in general* will do wonders for your energy levels but it's especially important for your sleep. If you drink alcohol and then go to bed, your body will fight to get rid of the toxins and your heartrate will be high all night. As a result, you'll barely get any benefit from your sleep. You're also unlikely to go into the deepest stages of sleep (SWS – Slow Wave Sleep) at any point. So keep clear!

## Why Am I Waking Up Groggy?

So what if you're following all these tips and you're still waking up with a groggy head or just generally feeling unrefreshed?

It may be that something's wrong and you're not getting the full benefit from your sleep as a result. Common culprits include:

- Mold – If you have mold in your room then you'll be breathing in mycotoxins and mold spores. These can dry out your throat and lungs and cause inflammation and poor sleep.
- Dehydration – If you wake up dehydrated, then you can expect to have a headache and dry throat. Not a great start to the day! Go to bed with a big glass of water and consider having some chia seeds which will store hydration while you rest.
- Pollen – Another reason you might be waking up feeling rough could be that you're having an allergic reaction to pollen! Even if you didn't know you were allergic, this is something that can develop at any point during your life. So close the window!
- Medication – If you are using antianxiety medication, antidepressants or – ironically – antihistamines, then these can leave you tired and groggy in the morning. Even some sleeping tablets will make you feel tired in the morning – steer clear of relying on melatonin to get to sleep!
- Apnea – If you still can't work out what's wrong, it might be that you have a case of sleep apnea. This means that you are stopping breathing in the night and waking up for short periods and often patients are unaware when they have the condition. Go to a sleep

clinic and they may recommend you try using a CPAP machine (continuous positive airway pressure).

## How to Get Out of Bed Right Away, Every Time

One of the biggest ways to ruin your energy levels *and* to waste your time is to keep hitting snooze on your alarm. We *think* it will make us feel better but in fact we will feel much worse!

The first tip to help you stop doing this? Just acknowledge that fact. Remind yourself when you go to hit snooze that you *will* feel worse. This is basic CBT (cognitive behavioral therapy) and if you can really believe it, it will help you to avoid making the mistake.

Of course going to bed earlier also helps. And another trick? Try just sitting up when the alarm goes off and reading. Instead of launching out of bed – which can seem a Herculean task – just aim to sit up. After five minutes, you'll find it's much better to go the whole distance.

Another tip is to invest in a daylight lamp. These include the likes of the Lumie products which are basically lamps combined with alarm clocks. These work by gradually getting brighter as it gets closer to morning and this can slowly wake you up. What's more, they make a light that is that much closer to the wavelength of the sun and this helps send the right signals to your brain. They're actually used to treat SAD but everyone can benefit from being woken by a simulated sunrise!

## Exercise for Energy

Now we've mastered sleep, it's time to look at something else: exercise.

Exercise has a complex relationship with energy because it is one of the most powerful tools there is for boosting energy levels. At the same time though, there are few things that are more difficult to do with low energy than workout. If you have low energy, you won't exercise – it's that simple. But this is a shame seeing as exercise is one of the best ways to improve your sleep, to raise your mood and to boost your energy efficiency.

In this chapter then, we'll look at how to exercise for energy and how to exercise *with low energy*.

### Introducing: HIIT

If you have no time or energy for working out then the solution for you may well be HIIT.

HIIT is a type of training that is perfect for this situation for two reasons. The first reason is that HIIT doesn't take very long. So if you have low energy, you don't need to try and encourage yourself to train for two hours – rather you can get a good workout in under ten minutes!

What's more, HIIT is highly effective at increasing your mitochondrial function. The mitochondria are the 'energy factories' that live inside our cells. They convert glucose into ATP and from there, they then allow us to use that ATP to move our muscles and even to think and run around. If you have more mitochondria and they function better, you will have more focus,



better mood, improved memory, healthier sleep and more energy for working out.

As an added bonus, HIIT is also very good for boosting your VO2 max. This is your body's ability to extra oxygen from the air and to then use it. The better your VO2 max, the less out of breath you will likely become. And like all forms of cardiovascular exercise, HIIT will also improve your heart health and thus your circulation.

So what exactly is HIIT?

Essentially, this stands for 'High Intensity Interval Training' and describes a type of training that involves short periods of high exertion punctuated by short periods of active recovery.

If you go jogging for an hour, this is what you call 'steady state cardio'. This type of exercise does have its merits and can be useful but it is less efficient than sprinting for 2 minutes and then jogging for 1 for a total of four reps. And that's what HIIT is all about.

A typical HIIT session then might last 20-30 minutes and involve periods of running or sprinting and periods of light jogging or slow walking. If you only have four minutes to spare, then you can use the incredibly intensive 'tabata workout'. Build up to this, because it's a big challenge, but once you have the baseline fitness this training involves sprinting for 20 seconds and resting for 10 for a total of 8 repetitions. It's brutal but it's highly effective.

Do your HIIT outside and you'll find that you also benefit from fresh air and sunlight that will help you to sleep better. Use it 4 times a week and you'll

see noticeable differences to your energy levels *and* your physique in no time.

## But I Don't Have the Energy!

As mentioned, HIIT is great for those short on energy and time because it only has to last 30 minutes at most. This means you can always squeeze it in when you're busy.

But that said, it's still very intensive and you won't always have the motivation to train like this when you're feeling tired.

So what do you do instead?

Well, consider HIIT the best tool for your energy levels but when you can't use that, know that *anything* is better than nothing. If you have low energy, then doing 10 press-ups before bed is *still* going to help. It may not be much but even this short amount of exertion can still burn calories, improve your energy efficiency and help to increase your energy levels for tomorrow. Moreover though, after you've done 10 press-ups, you'll almost always find that it becomes much easier to do a bit more.

Another tip for exercising when you don't want to?

Come up with some kind of exercise you enjoy.

If you absolutely *hate* running, then don't try and force yourself to do it. How about skipping instead? Or playing tennis? Or punching a punch bag? Most of us enjoy some kind of physical activity, so just think about how you can make that into a workout. And if that means playing a Wii game... then

so be it! Actually, if you're going to be trying to lose weight on the Wii, then you may as well pick Zumba Fitness Wii – it's actually pretty good for weight loss!

Make your workouts fun and make sure to do at least *something*. If you make this your target for the first two months, then by month three you should have enough energy to start using low-level HIIT.

## The Right Shoes

Another very important tip to help make working out easier if you're going to be running, is to make sure you invest in the right shoes. These can make a huge difference because when you get a light, snug fitting shoe, it will make you feel much more light-footed, faster and generally more 'springy'. This translates into more energy in the gym and on the roads and that means better workouts and better payoffs.

So what *are* the right shoes? This will depend somewhat on your natural stride but it's well worth looking into a minimalist shoe. This will be something like the Nike Free Run 5.0 or the Vibram Five Fingers. These allow your foot to move flexibly and they will bend and contort in all manner of directions. As a result, you can then allow your foot to bend and use your feet muscles as you run – which makes a massive difference to your technique.

## **Ebbs and Flows for Exercise**

Now, if you're going to make your training as effective as it possible can be *for your energy levels* then it can pay to borrow some ideas from professional bodybuilders. Actually, we're going to borrow one idea in particular – that being the 'back-off week' or 'deload week'.

So what is a deload week? Basically it's a week where you're going to take it very easy. You can also do deload sessions, which means for that workout, you're going to give yourself a break. In our case, this might mean just going for a walk instead of a run.

Why is this important?

Well, allow me to introduce you to a little concept called 'heartrate variability'...

### **What is Heartrate Variability?**

Whether you're a runner, a bodybuilder, a footballer or any other kind of professional or amateur athlete, overtraining is a very real and serious threat and something you need to work hard to avoid. While we need to push ourselves hard in order to stimulate growth and change, it is likewise crucial that we don't push *too* hard, lest we impair our performance in subsequent training sessions and increase our chance of injury and illness. It's a lesson that will take many of us decades to learn; but the reality is that rest and recovery is one of the most important factors in any training program.

And that's where heartrate variability comes into play...

The general idea behind heartrate variability, is that it can provide us with a useful measure of how well we've recovered from any given workout. Furthermore, it can also give us a fairly good indication of how well we've recovered from any given day. It basically serves as a quick check for your nervous system and this can then give you an indication of whether you're going to be performing at the top of your game, or whether you need to take it easy for a bit.

We all know that a slower heartrate is generally an indicator of better cardiovascular fitness. What is less well known however, is that the *consistency* of the heartrate also gives us some insight into our current physical condition. And specifically, when there is *more* variability between each heartbeat, this shows us that we are more recovered and ready to go again (probably the opposite from what many people would have expected to be the case!).

To understand why this works the way it does, it may be useful to take a moment to consider the way the nervous system works. Essentially, the nervous system is comprised of two separate branches. They are:

### *The Voluntary Nervous System*

This is the part of the nervous system that you control consciously in order to move around. Whether you're going for a run or playing a computer game, your voluntary nervous system is in control.

### *The Autonomic Nervous System*

The autonomic nervous system meanwhile is the unconscious part of the nervous system that controls things like breathing, digesting and heartrate. It can be further subdivided into:

### *The Sympathetic Nervous System*

This controls our 'fight or flight' response, increasing heartrate, breathing and physical performance.

### *The Parasympathetic Nervous System*

The parasympathetic nervous system meanwhile controls our 'rest and digest' state which kicks in when we're relaxed and recovering. Note that these are not binary states but more of a continuum. At any given time, your parasympathetic and sympathetic nervous systems will be working in tandem to leave you in a state somewhere between.

Now, as you probably guessed from the mere existence of heartrate variability, your heart does not actually beat in a steady consistent manner. Rather, the frequency varies each time you breathe in and out. When you breathe out, the brain sends an inhibitory parasympathetic signal to slow the heart slightly and when you breathe in, that signal disappears and the heartrate marginally increases.

Basically then, this means that your heartrate will change *more* when everything is running healthily and when you're recovered. Use a heartrate variability monitor (an app and a chest strap) and you should be able to measure this. Use this as a guide for how hard to push yourself in the gym and you can avoid the dreaded 'overtraining'.

## Diet for Energy

And now we're onto our final pillar: nutrition.

Of course everything we eat provides energy and this is what calories are. But unfortunately, eating for energy isn't quite as simple as carb loading every day! In fact, if you do this, you'll find you have much *lower* energy overall.

That's because excess energy in our food will be stored as fat, which will make us heavier and less healthy. What's more, if you have a surplus of energy all the time, your body will become *less efficient* at using that energy.

Eating for energy is a little more complex than that, so read on and we'll bring this thing to a close...

### The Slow Carb Diet

The first tip then? That's actually to eat *fewer carbs*. Carbs are our worst culprit because they spike the blood sugar which results in a release of insulin, causing the body to then start removing the energy from the blood. This gives us a sudden surge of energy but then a trough once all that energy has been used or stored as fat.

The worst culprit for this is 'fast carbs'. Fast carbs are the simple carbs with a high glycemic index and are usually the ones that taste sugary. Cake, chocolates, sweets, white bread, white pasta and potatoes are all 'fast carbs' and will leave you quickly feeling low on energy.

Slow carbs with a low GI – such as rye bread, sweet potatoes and vegetables – are much better at releasing energy slowly throughout the day for us to use. Likewise, so too are fats such as butter, coconut oil (which also gives us ketones – another source of energy for the body), avocado, meats etc. These are higher in calories (9 per gram, versus 4 for carbs) but they release that energy slower allowing us to avoid an energy peak and trough.

In a slow carb diet then you eat fewer simple carbs – less bread, less sugar, less cake – more complex carbs and more protein. Protein is also very important because it's what our body uses to repair itself and to rebuild our muscle after a workout. Fueling your body with a protein is another way to avoid overtraining and to develop a lean and toned physique.

## Nutrition

And finally, another crucial goal for an energy-focused diet is to be highly nutritious.

That means ensuring that everything you eat provides *some* nutritional value. 'Empty' carbs are your enemy while superfoods are your ultimate ally. Fruits are fast carbs but they should be the exception to that rule as they're just so packed with goodness. Organ meats are also incredibly good for you, as are eggs and fish.

Why does all this matter? Because vitamins and minerals can boost just about *every* aspect of your health and particularly your energy. Get more



omega 3 fatty acid and your cells will communicate better, get more creatine and your body will be able to recycle ATP for more energy, get more vitamin C and you'll keep a healthy immune system that doesn't get ill, get iron and your body will have more oxygen and fuel for long runs, get more zinc and you'll have more testosterone which speeds up your metabolism, get more CoQ10 and your mitochondria will perform better, get more vitamin B6 and you'll get more energy from your food, get more magnesium and you'll sleep better...

The list goes on. And sure, you can get this stuff from supplements but it will do *much* more good if you get it from a full and healthy diet.

## Conclusion – The Secret to Endless Energy

So there you have it: you now know how to manage your diet, your exercise, your sleep and your routine for maximum energy. We covered a lot of different topics and subjects throughout this book but to recap, here are some things you can start doing *right away* to boost your energy levels:

- Start seeking out more fruits and vegetables
- Acknowledge the times you feel most tired and let yourself rest
- Avoid the activities that leave you feeling exhausted
- Remove small stresses from your routine
- Invest in a daylight lamp
- Get minimalist shoes
- Spend more time outdoors
- Supplement with vitamin D
- Treat sleep as sacred
- Have a warm bath before bed
- Use HIIT training
- Use training you enjoy
- Reduce your fast carbs

If you do just these things, then you'll start enjoying more energy in everything you do and you'll find your whole life is transformed as a result. The world has more color when you're not exhausted all the time!