

## Energy Boosts at Work - *Stay Alert All Day, Every Day*

You see the computer screen, but you really don't. It's more like a two-foot blur. Your eyes are between open and closed, although you're not sure where. At the moment, you have no idea what you're working on. And it's only 3 p.m. Sound familiar? Is this a typical afternoon or morning? Are you looking for an energy boost at your desk? Office life can suck the energy right out of you, if you let it. But, there are numerous ways to take advantage of your workspace and stay energetic all day.

Did you realize bad posture alone can give your brain up to 30% less blood and oxygen? Along with good posture, the most effective way to fight energy lulls is with heavy doses of good stretching and good breathing. Shoot for five minutes of mental or physical activity per hour, every hour at the computer.

Here are more, different ideas for rejuvenating your mind and body. Each will only take a few minutes.

- Go to the staircase and step up and down the bottom step, like in step aerobics.
- Massage your head and shoulders. Find trigger points of tension in the shoulders and base of the skull. Hold pressure for 6-10 seconds. Don't forget your face and jaw.
- Take two steps back from your desk and lean forward until you're at an angled push-up position against the edge of your desk. Do a couple quick sets.
- Lift 1-3 packs of printer paper in each hand. Curl them like weights or lift them over your head.
- Close your door and shadow box. Imagining a stressor while you're punching will increase your energy, guaranteed.
- Jumping jacks. Simple, quick and pumps you up.
- Squeeze a stress ball. Relieves stress while strengthening forearms and wrists for typing.
- Try word puzzles. Keep a jigsaw puzzle in your office.
- Switch hands with whatever you're doing.
- Stand perfectly still for two minutes. Regroup.
- When you first arrive at work, take as long as possible before sitting down.
- Forget the boardroom. Hold walking meetings.
- Hand-deliver mail, memos and faxes.
- Chat face-to-face instead of by e-mail or phone.
- Use a bathroom on the other side of the building or another floor.
- Have a lot of phone time? Buy a cordless and move around while talking.

Another approach, one that adults rarely consider but could greatly benefit from, is a nap.

A 2001 survey by the National Sleep Foundation found that 63% of Americans don't get enough sleep. Naps will combat this. They cannot replace a good night's sleep, but they can help you perform at your peak throughout the day. Plus you can save that daily \$4 on Starbucks, because the energy you gain from a nap is better and longer lasting than caffeine. The ideal nap length is 20 minutes, easily squeezable into the workday.

No matter the method, try to find tricks that work for you. Remember, if you don't want to feel drained at the end of the work day, you don't have to.



Article Information Provided by:

*Mike Kramer and Liz Noelcke, Staff Writers Spark People*

The contents of the CommonHealth weekly emails may be reprinted from an outside resource in the area of health, safety, and wellness and is intended to provide one or more views on a topic. These views do not necessarily represent the views of the Commonwealth of Virginia, CommonHealth, or any particular agency and are offered for educational purposes. If you have questions or concerns about this article, please email us at [wellness@dhrm.virginia.gov](mailto:wellness@dhrm.virginia.gov)