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Energy!

Escaping fatigue in a healthy way

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I have been working in the medical profession for years and have always been passionate about an emerging branch of preventive medicine – one which looks at the individual as a whole, aiming to maintain health. It has never been good enough, in my opinion, to manage symptoms and “iron out” diseases by simply administering medication. It is so rewarding, as a doctor, to hunt down the underlying factors disturbing the body’s natural internal balance, also known as homeostasis. Once this has been done, we can effectively prevent diseases and derive personalised therapies. Over the years, I have developed the Dr Fleck method, based on a combination of traditional approaches, innovative orthomolecular and nutritional medicines, as well as reliable natural healing methods. This medicine is based on holism and the search for root causes – it is about health, not disease. And the success that I have seen with my patients has shown just how fruitful this approach can be. Seeing so much healing – healing that I couldn’t have even imagined twenty years ago – fills me with great pride.

What you can expect from this book

With this book I want to give you effective tools for healing: up-to-date background information and proven healing approaches. You will hopefully gain a new perspective on your health, along with exciting insights into your own body. You will learn to trust your body. Your body does not lie, after all. Indeed, it is trying to tell you something when you feel symptoms like fatigue. The same goes for when your immune system goes on strike. There are usually a variety of contributing causes that come together to form a richly coloured mosaic. In order to uncover this mosaic, an archaeologist is required to carefully identify all of the individual pieces – and this archaeologist can be you, with the help of this book (and a doctor, in some cases!). You must always remember that these things do not affect you alone.

This book is about you, your health, and your energy for life. It is about understanding the language of your body and finally taking action. The ENERGY! programme, developed on the basis of the Dr Fleck method, offers you a way to dig out what is really causing you to feel so tired, to unlock your health potential, and to significantly improve your quality of life.

Let this inspire you to keep on learning. Did you know, for instance, that the gut’s mucosal barrier is one of your body’s most vital defences? And that there are very simple ways to strengthen it? Did you know that your latte or the organic-wholemeal-spelt-sandwich from your local deli can actually be source of fatigue? Yes – many of us have hidden intolerances to protein or gluten! And did you know that inflammations, immune disorders, and infections can lie dormant in your body, quiet as a mouse, all while robbing you of all your energy? Did you know that amalgam and gold fillings can damage your mitochondria, your body’s energy power plants, and consequently make you tired and ill? And that the same goes for whiplash injuries? In this book, we will find out the science behind all of these facts – and much, much more.

Once you have taken out your magnifying glass and, with the help of this book, set out on the exciting search for clues, you will be given practical solutions that will lay the foundations for your new, energetic life. And this part of the journey will be just as exciting: you will learn, for example, how to identify foods as energy thieves, how to find your ideal time for eating, drinking, exercising, and sleeping, and how to time all of these to fit in with your body’s natural rhythm. By starting with the simple recipes in the smart ENERGY! diet and by

changing your lifestyle – to the extent that you wish – so much is possible. You will learn how to strengthen your digestion, build up a healthy intestinal flora, encourage the body's detoxification process, improve your sleep, heal hidden infections, and finally, to reduce the stress in your everyday life.

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EATING AND DRINKING IN THE RIGHT RHYTHM

Not only is what and how we eat and drink important for maintaining a healthy energy level, but also when we eat. In principle, your habits should be guided by both what time of day it is and what your instincts are. Get into the habit of only eating when you have an 'honest' hunger. You may think that what I am saying is obvious, but it's actually less obvious than you may think! Hunger does not just come to you as a simple emergency signal from the body, à la 'Hey, it's time for you to eat something!' You're probably aware that when you eat, neurotransmitters are released in the brain that drive away your bad mood. But this kind of 'emotional eating' is less than ideal not only for your weight, but also for your energy levels. The stronger the blood sugar stimulus after the meal, i.e., the more carbohydrates and sugar end up on your plate, the stronger the insulin release and the subsequent energy-sapping drop in blood sugar. My advice, therefore, is to pay attention to more than just your food choices (see Part 2, Chapter: The Power of Nutrition, ENERGY! Food List) – you need to also be aware of potential emotional triggers for hunger.

Tip: only eat when you are actually hungry – when your hunger is 'honest' – and finish your meal when you feel about 80 percent satiated. Don't forget that the feeling of fullness comes on with a slight delay!

The three-meal rhythm

Current research recommends two, to a maximum of three, main meals per day. You should take breaks of at least three to six hours between meals during the day. Smaller meals in between should be the exception, not the rule.

Drinking in rhythm

To survive, we need oxygen and food – and, crucially, fluids. Without food, a healthy person can survive for up to 50 to 60 days; without fluids, they will die within a few days. About 70 percent of our body is made up of water. Water is, therefore, the ideal thirst quencher for humans – also from an evolutionary point of view, as you will see.

Today, drinks are pretty much always at hand: Reusable coffee cups and reusable water bottles beckon us from close by on our desks, and travel with us in our bags, or on the passenger seats of our cars. In the past, though, things were different. Interestingly, thirst is the only stress response that doesn't produce aggression and anxiety. Because the hormone oxytocin – which causes this calm reaction – is released in greater quantities when you are thirsty, there is never a struggle for existence between thirsty animals, and rarely aggressive crowding at watering holes in the wild. Oxytocin relaxes all living creatures and leads to a temporary truce. This admittedly unusual stress response is exactly how evolution intended it to be, as water is needed by all living beings – humans, animals, and plants alike – to survive.

Oxytocin is often called the "education hormone". It accompanies you from birth (the term comes from the Greek, meaning 'quick birth'), inducing labour, being vital for breastfeeding (it stimulates milk production in the mother) and deepening the bond between mother and child after birth. Yet oxytocin is involved in so much more than just thirst, cuddling, or labour, with data extraordinarily proving that the hormone is also involved in the function of the nervous system and stress regulation. It fights silent inflammation and

strengthens immune cells. Finally, and perhaps most excitingly, high levels of oxytocin curb hunger and inhibit the desire for sugar and carbohydrates.

From these findings, a better rhythm for your liquid intake can be established. If you drink too frequently, without really feeling thirsty, the anti-inflammatory and immune-boosting effects of oxytocin and its positive effects will be slowed down. Therefore, you should drink your daily quota of fluids (30 to 40 ml per kilogram of body weight) at intervals throughout the day and get into the habit of drinking optimally 15 to 20 minutes before, rather than during, mealtimes. Drinking outside of mealtimes, instead of during, is especially useful to prevent your stomach acid and digestive enzymes from being diluted. Since older people are often less thirsty and are at risk of dehydration, they should drink small, regular amounts of water. It is a good idea for the rest of us to drink larger quantities so that we feel somewhat satiated – this is sometimes called ‘bulk drinking’. Note: Soups count towards your recommended total fluid intake.

Conclusion: If you drink water when you feel thirsty and between meals, you can maintain your health and prevent fatigue.

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The best formulae for an instant spike in energy

Stress is an everyday reality. Things happen to all of us that frustrate, anger, and sadden us, entangling us in a web of stress. Unless we change how we think, unless we find a productive balance, stress will chip away at both our energy and our health. How we perceive stress – or whether we perceive it at all – is up to us. How you overcome stress varies from person to person. While one person sees skydiving as pure, unadulterated relaxation, many of us panic just at the thought of it. Some love to kick back and listen to heavy metal, Lemmy Kilmister, Lady Gaga, or loud drums, while others prefer the gentle chords of Chopin or Albinoni, or their favourite ‘Rain Sounds’ playlist. We are all different. Many of us have, however, become so stuck in the hamster wheel that is daily life that we have lost sight of the need for balance. Without a fresh approach and new rituals that nurture an inner balance, our energy reserves will be exhausted.

How you best reduce stress and lovingly support your troubled adrenal glands is up to you. But the following formulae have proven to be real energy boosters – stay curious and find out what suits you best.

Breathe properly

Breathing is the simplest way of filling yourself up with energy, and, if done correctly, can be applied directly to every second of your life, in every corner of the world.

Our lives begin and end with a breath, and about 841 million breaths come between during an 80-year-long life (28,800 breaths x 365 days x 80 years). Breathing gives us oxygen, which we, of course, need to survive. Yet we hardly notice the breaths we take. We take them for granted, even though our breath controls all organ functions – and the body's energy metabolism, too. If we breathe consciously and properly, it can increase our energy levels by not only alleviating rising fatigue, but also by preventing a complete crash in energy. But what do I mean by proper breathing?

First of all, it has a lot to do with our posture. Too often we sit hunched over at our computers, with movement being reduced to a bare minimum and our airways being restricted. But poor posture is not the only thing that is the bane of our energy levels. Many of us also breathe too ‘shallowly’, and on average use only one twentieth of the approximately 750 million alveoli in the lungs. Breathing properly is the only way to

supply yourself with more oxygen. Fact: With a long, deep breath into your belly, you can take in six to ten times as much air as with a 'normal', shallow breath. Deep abdominal breathing also regulates the autonomic nervous system, turning off any internal 'alarm signals' – thus relieving the adrenal glands and automatically leading to more energy. On average, you breathe up to 28,800 times a day. This means you have a wealth of opportunities to influence your energy positively, and just as many to impact it negatively. So let's learn how to do it positively!

In the following section, I will introduce you to a simple but highly effective breathing technique. With a little practice, you will be able to relax deeply and recharge your batteries within no more than a few seconds. This is something that you can do all the time – even in the middle of your working day. Your breath is available to you everywhere as an ENERGY! source. Get to know it well.

ENERGY! Exercise: Conscious abdominal breathing

Abdominal breathing as a technique triggers effective relaxation of both body and mind. Take your time to read the ENERGY! steps and then get started.

- Place your hand on your belly. Breathe deeply through your nose for 4 seconds. Relax and let your belly expand, pushing it out as far as possible.
- Hold your breath for 4 seconds.
- Breathe out slowly through your mouth for 8 seconds. As you do this, your belly should suck back in again, and your hand should move gently towards your spine.
- Hold your breath once more for 4 seconds, with empty lungs.
- Repeat.

While the breath is briefly suspended, your body enters the same state that an orchestra is in when the conductor raises the baton, highly attentive and ready for what is to come. If you notice that your thoughts are restless while you are practicing, try to repeat an affirmation to yourself – 'I am calm,' for instance. If you doze off, which may well be the case at first, continue as soon as you wake up again. Practice makes perfect! Practice this simple ENERGY! exercise for about 5 to 10 minutes – optimally in the morning, just after waking up, and in the evening before going to sleep. You will be stunned by just how much your energy levels improve in such a short time. A couple of deep abdominal breaths can be sneaked into a draining Zoom meeting as an energy kick. But you can also try conscious breathing while in a more serene setting, like during a walk in nature.

Tip: Blow your nose before beginning your breathing exercise. This will allow your body to absorb more oxygen from the air. For chronically blocked noses and, on a slightly unrelated note, also before flights (especially on long journeys!), I recommend using nasal sprays with sea salt and sesame oil. This way you have a well-oiled and open entry point for oxygen. You can find pre-made products for this in pharmacies and drugstores. A moist mucous membrane, when paired with a pinch of sea salt, is capable of scaring away all sorts of microbes in the nasopharynx. If you have previously had poor immune defences, try treating yourself to a small pinch of sea salt in your nose before as you leave the house. Alternatively, you can also care for your nasal mucosa with a nasal rinse, also known as a nasal shower.

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WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

“What now?” you may be asking yourself.

Now that your future has come knocking at your door, you can finally adjust your rhythm, diet, and supplements as you wish. If the ENERGY! diet has done you some good, stick to the principle that it espouses, rely on the wide variety of timelessly healthy foods, medicinal herbs, and spices, and increase your nutrient balance naturally. Perhaps you miss some of the foods you used to enjoy before the programme? Although not necessarily the packets of crisps or deep freeze pizzas, I hope... You can always add things back into your diet, just – please, for my sake – without torturing your taste buds and your body again with sugar and sweeteners, or the latest pre-packaged hyped-up product. It's best to revel in the simple pleasures. If your craving for a food is strong, maybe try giving in – but make sure to pay attention to your body's reactions. Remember that you are its boss. Side note: If you suffer from autoimmune diseases, though, you should follow my recommendations carefully and intuitively. Speaking of which, my diagnostic and therapeutic recommendations are always adapted to the latest research. I will keep you up to date on relevant content via my website, www.docfleck.com.

Now, after the 30 days have passed, you can slowly try to re-implement legumes and nightshade vegetables (tomatoes, peppers, aubergines and potatoes), one after the other. Eating these in smaller portions will allow your digestion to regenerate. And one more thing: your taste buds have now recovered, too. If you crave coffee one day, or you fancy a glass of wine when you're out with your partner: go ahead! But keep Paracelsus' wise words in mind: “The dose makes the poison.” Again, pay attention to what your body – your best friend – is telling you. It will tell you honestly what gives you energy and is good for you, and what isn't. The beauty of this programme is that after you have completed it, you will understand your body better than ever.

We are not quite at the end of this fascinating journey yet. There is a reason why, in the first part of this book– you will remember the somewhat exhausting mountain tour – I told you in detail about the relevant and often hidden fatigue and illness inducers. Don't forget about my list of all the current tests, which I provided as a “cheat sheet” for your visit to the GP, which you can carry out after the 30-day programme to further reveal hidden issues and prevent illness.

Take out your magnifying glass! Look at things in detail

Even if you are already feeling much better, I recommend you keep on uncovering further causes of fatigue, consistently but relaxedly. Don't rush things but keep at it. One thing is certain: The ENERGY! programme anticipates an immense part of the solution to these problems through innovative changes in your lifestyle. But you may still be missing the icing on the cake, still lacking the best energy and health you deserve. I encourage you to decide for yourself what is missing! You may be thinking something along the lines of “this book has already helped me enough – what I don't know won't hurt me.” And that is, of course, an option. A better option, though, is to continue getting to the bottom of things.

Please note: The solid diagnostic possibilities of modern medicine should be exhausted first, so as to rule out any more serious illnesses.

Choose the option that is best for your energy levels and immune system. Life is beautiful, but short. We all want to have the energy for the valuable things in our lives, and to have it for many years to come – for our family, our friends, acquaintances, friendly exchanges with other people, for the chance to play and laugh with our children and grandchildren. We want to enjoy our old age with the highest possible quality of life and not let life pass us by as we sit there, tired, worn out, and harassed by countless illness. If you feel this way,



then here is my advice: wipe the dust off your magnifying glass and dig further into what your body needs. Use the comprehensive recommendations that I have provided here in order to look for clues with your doctor and therapist. Never forget the ENERGY! rule, though – stay relaxed, and have fun with it! Try not to act frantically, running around like a headless chicken. With a feeling of relaxed alertness, use your polished magnifying glass to explore the last corners of the fatigue maze with focused attention.