



The secret to
**sustained
energy**



The role of renewal

It may sound counterintuitive, but the key to getting more done in less time isn't pushing yourself harder. It's actually easing up and taking time out regularly to replenish your energy levels—even when you're at your busiest. But it definitely doesn't mean shying away from stress or dodging challenges. "Stress isn't the problem; for most of us it's under-recovery," explains May. "In elite sport these days, as much time is spent on recovery as it is on training and performance, because athletes know it's essential to hit a personal best." As well as taking regular breaks across the day, try these simple tactics to recharge:

Cultivate self-kindness

Compared to the task-driven approach of time management, energy management calls for gentle self-awareness. "It's about judging what your activity should be, based on how you're feeling and how you're travelling both physically and energetically," explains consulting psychotherapist and *Prevention* adviser Marie Rowland. For instance, if you've come home feeling exhausted, swapping your planned high-intensity spin session for some gentle yoga or a walk may be a smarter way to 'pace' your energy. And if you're yearning for a lazy afternoon, do just that! "It's often in those down times where you're not being productive that you come up with truly inspired ideas," explains Rowland.

Make sleep a priority

It's generally the first thing to go when we're pressed for time, but getting enough shut-eye is a vital part of the energy equation. In fact, you could say an energised day starts the

night before. "Your body responds best to a rhythm, so go to bed and wake up at the same time every day, and always turn in for bed before midnight because deep sleep seems to occur before that time," adds Fraser.

Reclaim your lunch break

Whether you tend to dine 'al desko' or scoff on the run, skipping a proper lunch break sets you up for an afternoon slump. In a recent UK survey by healthcare company Bupa, almost half of workers admitted the afternoon 'crash' gobbled up about 40 minutes of their day—ironically, time that could have been used for a fatigue-fighting lunch break. "Aim to have lunch away from your desk for 15-20 minutes at least once or twice a week," suggests May.

Master the relaxation response

Yoga, meditation, massage and spending time getting back to nature all help evoke the relaxation response—a state of rest in which your heart rate and blood pressure drop, breathing slows and any muscle tension eases. Need a shortcut to serenity? Even a few minutes of deep breathing can help you to decompress. "Take in a deep breath for the count of three and then slowly exhale to the count of six," advises Francisco.

Easy ways to find fulfilment

Yes, ticking off your to-do list is incredibly gratifying but energy management is about shifting your focus from putting out fires to kindling internal ones. That is, doing things that light you up from within, so you live a life that's fulfilling—not just filled.

1. PRIORITISE WHAT'S MOST IMPORTANT

"Prioritisation is having a conversation with yourself about what really matters," says Rowland. Think beyond the old 'urgent' and 'non-urgent' categories. "That so-called 'non-urgent' activity could be the one thing that gives you an instant energy boost."

2. HOLD YOURSELF ACCOUNTABLE

Vowed to start learning Spanish... for the fifth year running? Make yourself accountable for it. "Even as a weekly experiment, slot an engagement into your diary and make sure it happens, in the same way you would for a work appointment," suggests Cosgrove.

3. GET COMFORTABLE SAYING 'NO' OFTEN

Fact: when we say no to someone else's request, often what we're doing is saying 'yes' to ourselves. "You must consider if it's beneficial to you to say 'yes' in that instance and what the impact will be," advises Rowland. Still guilt-ridden? Consider the relationship 'ripple' effect: if you're happy, others will benefit, too.

