

Prevent the Afternoon Slump

10 Tips

By Jerry V. Teplitz

If you're like two-thirds of the population, you've experienced the afternoon slump. You know the feeling -- it's only 2 p.m., yet you feel drained and want to call it a day.

This drop in energy is not all in your head. It is a physiological response from your body. Fortunately, you can employ methods to reduce the slump's frequency and to shorten its duration. When you utilize these 10 tips, you will turn the afternoon slump into a time of increased productivity.

Drink water. Your body uses water even if you're not exercising. If you wait until you feel thirsty, you're already dehydrated and your physical and mental functioning may be impaired. Keep a water bottle handy all day.

Avoid sugar and simple carbohydrates. While a mid-afternoon candy bar may give you a quick sugar rush, it actually worsens the slump. Sugar and simple carbohydrates get absorbed immediately into the bloodstream. In response, your blood sugar rises, and your body secretes insulin to bring your sugar level back down. To avoid this, incorporate more proteins and complex carbohydrates into your diet, such as products made with whole wheat flour, brown rice, etc. They won't trigger blood sugar highs and lows.

Eat small meals. Have six small meals over the course of the day instead of three large ones. When you eat a big meal in one sitting, it overwhelms your body and causes it to work harder to digest the food. As a result, the digestive process diverts blood away from your brain and extremities and uses it in the digestive track.

Evaluate your lighting. Most offices are lit with cool, white fluorescent tubes which have a terrible effect on how people feel and function at work. A better option is full-spectrum, fluorescent tubes, as these simulate the wavelengths of sunlight.

Take time for walks. Walking gets your blood circulating, helps you breathe better, and stimulates your brain due to the increased blood flow. Take a five- or 10-minute walk during the day.

Meditate. Meditation is great for rejuvenating your body. By meditating for 15 to 20 minutes twice a day, you're keeping your body continually energized and rested.

Take your vitamins. Several vitamins have an energizing effect on your body, such as B-complex and ginseng. You get the maximum benefit from your vitamins when you divide your dose and take them with separate meals.

Listen to music. Music can energize you, but choose carefully. Some music can actually weaken your system and fatigue you. For example, hard rock can make you feel jittery. Upbeat music can get your body into a more upward stance.

Take time to breathe and stretch. Deep breathing exercises give you an energy boost by introducing fresh air into your system. Equally important are standing up and stretching. You increase blood flow in your body and stimulate the lymphatic system.

Handle negativity. Negative people and images can have a draining effect on your energy. Make a conscious effort to stay positive even when others are negative around you.

Jerry V. Teplitz, J.D., Ph.D., is the author of Managing Your Stress: How To Relax and Enjoy, Switched-On Living and Brain Gym for Business. Teplitz consults on management, leadership, sales, and personal development issues and specializes in showing people how they can become more positive, energized, focused, and effective. Contact him at 800/777-3529 or visit www.teplitz.com.