

Why Am I SO Tired? : Identifying the many causes of fatigue

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Fatigue is one of the most common complaints we see in our offices, and the fading battle cry of nearly every American. Everyone, it seems, is tired from over-doing, over-caffeinating and over- scheduling. It is also one of the most complicated conditions to figure out because there are so many possible causes.

There are some obvious reasons, such as insomnia and dehydration. But what if you are sleeping eight hours every night and still waking up exhausted? Or drinking eight glasses of water every single day and still feeling tired?

Well, that's when the holistic health detectives start to run down their checklist of what may be causing your fatigue. Often, there are multiple causes of fatigue, and even if one is corrected, there are others that are still causing less-than-optimal-energy levels. All areas must be addressed for best results!

So, let's look at the top 10 reasons:

Poor Sleep Habits: The optimal window for restorative sleep is 10 p.m. to 2 a.m. This is the time when our bodies naturally wind down and we can sleep deeply and soundly. Staying up too late regularly disrupts this rhythm. Make sure you are sleeping in a pitch dark room, with your head away from electronic devices and electric sockets. (The electromagnetic energy from these can disrupt our own energy fields and diminish sleep quality.) Keep the temperature cool and of course, make it as quiet an environment as possible. It may be helpful to run a white noise machine such as a fan or an app on your phone to block out background noise.

Chronic Dehydration: A simple formula to determine how much water you need is to take your body weight, divide by two and that's the number of ounces you need each day. So if you are 150 pounds, you require 75 oz. of water. If you drink caffeine or alcohol, you will need to match those drinks with an equal amount of water. **Try this:** drink a big glass of water and see if you don't get a burst of energy.

Missing Nutrients: The vitamins and minerals that we assimilate from our food act as co-factors for the many metabolic processes that go on in our bodies each day. These include B vitamins, anti-oxidants, and minerals. If any one of these is missing or in short supply, then the associated metabolic pathway cannot function properly, and this may lead to fatigue. **Try this:** Start using a B Complex vitamin with breakfast and lunch and see if your energy improves.

Hidden Food Allergies: There is a dramatic upswing in food allergies (watch for the next issue of *Centered* to learn more about this timely topic). The food allergies that can be the most problematic when it comes to fatigue are caused by IgG antibodies that are reactions in the blood as a result of intestinal hyperpermeability or Leaky Gut Syndrome. There is often no obvious immediate reaction, or if there is, it can occur up to 48 hours after eating the problem food. So these reactions are very difficult to track and the only symptom may be fatigue. **Try this:** Avoid gluten and cow dairy for at least two weeks and see if your energy improves.



Poor Fatty Acid or Carbohydrate Metabolism: Sometimes we are unable to fully utilize our fats and carbohydrates because we are missing the co-factors (vitamins or minerals) to fully convert our food into energy. This is truly a case of having a “slow metabolism.” The solution may involve not only adding the missing nutrients, but may also require changing our diet to adjust total carbohydrates and/or quality proteins and fats.

Hidden Infections: Hidden bacterial or yeast infections in the small intestine can be a source of both fatigue and digestive upset for many people. The overuse of antibiotics and antacids both create an environment in which unfriendly bacteria, yeast and even parasites can dominate the digestive tract. Their waste products generate toxins that cause not only fatigue, but also fuzzy thinking and even depression and anxiety. **Try this:** Add a probiotic to your dinner every night for at least a month before you may see improved digestion and energy.

Mitochondrial Insufficiencies: This problem must be assessed through functional testing. It refers to the inability to produce energy *inside* the cell. The usual interventions include B Complex vitamins, Lipoic Acid and COQ10.

Depleted Adrenal Function: Being in a chronic state of fight or flight, too much caffeine, too much to do, emotional, mental and even physical stress can result in adrenal burnout. There are many stages of adrenal dysfunction, and where you are in that continuum can be determined through testing. If you feel worse after exercise, have morning fatigue and generally feel better later in the day, or remain exhausted after nine hours of sleep, you are probably burned out. The good news is that the adrenals can be restored with a combination of dietary and lifestyle changes and a few targeted supplements

Excess Stress Hormone Production: There is usually a long period of chronic stress and tension that leads us to adrenal burnout. Tension can make us tired. Reducing the brain chemicals of tension, the catecholamines can sometimes improve energy significantly and actually prevent burnout.

Amino Acid Deficiencies and Imbalances : Amino acids are the building blocks of every cell in our bodies, including the neurotransmitters, or brain chemicals. When certain ones are depleted, we are tired. *Very* tired. Replacing the amino acids can correct brain chemistry and result in a sense of well being, energy and optimal mental and physical health. And the good news is that once restored to homeostasis, the supplements are no longer required.

Lack of exercise: No explanation needed here! Exercise is key for feeling our best. It enhances circulation, oxygenates your tissues and removes metabolic waste products. Whether it's a run, a walk, yoga, or kick boxing, *just do it!* Regularly!

Getting to the bottom of fatigue causation is an extremely important step toward better health. Functional testing is a great way to evaluate how your body is functioning and to correct areas where it is not . For more information please visit www.bewellassociates.com/TRIAD.

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Summary

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