

6 Tips to Boost Mood and Metabolism

What you eat can have an effect on your mood and metabolism. Learn what food you should eat to boost your energy and spirits.

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By making a few simple adjustments to your diet, you can elevate your mood and boost your metabolism. The benefits are huge: Maintaining a good mood will help you stick to a healthy diet, be more productive, and increase your self-esteem. Metabolism is the process your body uses to break down food. “Ensuring your metabolism is working most effectively will help you feel your best and energized to get the most out of life,” explains Nicole Berkowitz, RD, a nutrition consultant in Toronto, Canada.

Here are six simple tips to help you optimize your [diet](#) to boost mood and metabolism.

1. Resist Skipping Meals

Skipping or missing a meal can cause a dip in your blood sugar, leading to crankiness and lethargy. Maintain your blood sugar levels, and your energy, by eating small amounts of food throughout the day. You might even prefer eating six smaller meals rather than three large ones.

2. Stay Hydrated

Dehydration can also make you feel sluggish and lethargic. Be sure to drink throughout the day, and don't rely on thirst alone to remind you to have another glass of water. The average person needs about eight glasses of water, and that may be hard to drink without reminders.

3. Think Moderation, Especially for Low-Nutrient Foods

Avoid a lot of caffeine, refined carbohydrates (sugar), alcohol, salt, and other food additives. Any of these, especially in large amounts, can decrease your metabolic efficiency. “Eating large quantities of [carbohydrates](#) tend to cause an energy rush and then a big crash; this can lead to crankiness and fatigue,” says Heidi McIndoo, MS, RD, a nutrition consultant in Roslindale, Mass. Excess salt can disrupt your fluid balance, changing your daily water needs, not to mention increasing health risks like high blood pressure.

4. Strive for Balance in the Food You Eat

Properly combine [protein](#), carbohydrates, and fat to achieve a balanced energy intake. In general, a healthy diet includes a mix of whole grains, fruits and vegetables, and some protein, but each person has individual needs based on age, sex, physical activity level, body size, and stress factors. To find out the best foods for you, consult a nutritionist who can help you determine the right balance.

5. Get a Boost From “Good Mood” Food

While research about the mood- and metabolism-boosting qualities of certain foods is mixed, foods high in the amino acid tryptophan can increase serotonin levels in the brain, contributing to feelings of optimism and calm. Add some bananas, avocados, dried apricots, walnuts, sunflower seeds, or pumpkin seeds for some extra tryptophan. Polyunsaturated omega-3 fats help elevate mood and reduce anxiety and depression. Look for omega-3-rich fish, like salmon and mackerel; walnuts and pumpkin seeds are also sources of these healthy fatty acids.

6. Keep a Food Diary

Some foods can have the opposite effect of tryptophan and instead trigger negative changes in mood and cause irritability or headaches. If you think a particular food might be affecting your mood, start a food diary. Record all the foods you eat each day and how you feel before and after every meal. After two weeks, review your entries to see if any foods line up with specific moods, either good or bad.

In addition to following a healthy diet, regular **exercise** will keep your body working most effectively and will augment both your mood and metabolism. The key message here is balance. A variety of healthy foods with a dose of exercise will help you maintain your energy, speed up your metabolism, and boost your mood.

Reference website: http://www.everydayhealth.com/diet-nutrition/food-and-mood/tips/boost-mood-and-metabolism.aspx?xid=nl_gdp&xid=nl_GodsDailyPromises_20090929