More Power to You!
Beat Fatigue With This High-Energy Rx

Diana Dynamo is the kind of person who leaps out of bed at 7 a.m., jumps into the shower, and positively bounces into her 8 o'clock class. Ahh, you say, a morning person. Not so. Diana Dynamo is a perpetual motion machine; all day long. She is always bursting with energy, alive and animated, sparkling with wit and full of good cheer. As evening falls and other mortals are winding down, D. D. is just getting her second wind. There's so much more to do—suppose visitors to entertain, Friday offical ball game to watch before dark, plus homework. And in her spare time, D. D. manages to devour an average of three movies and two books every week.

Where does she get all her energy, you wonder, as you drag out of bed, barely pull yourself together and leave your disheveled body to class? You may find this hard to believe, but you probably have just as much energy as Diana Dynamo. The difference is that D. D. is maximizing her personal energy supplies. You can use your own energy resources to better advantage, too. The payoff is tremendous. When you drag, life drags; a good move bores you, lively books put you to sleep, gourmet food tastes bland and your best friends seem irrelevant. But when you feel energetic, life is fun for you and you are fun for others.

Converting low-energy drags to high-energy enjoyment is not as simple as swallowing a pill or taking a pain killer. Your personal energy is found, or lost, in many different aspects of your life. You can understand this, visualize yourself as a whole system. Just as in an ecological life chain, everything in your system is interlocked with other parts. A change in one affects others, and not always in an obviously or very pretty, clear way, for example, that getting less than three hours of sleep will leave you less than peppy the next day. But did you ever think that there could be a connection between fatigue and concerns about your love life? Or that there could be a change in eating habits could possibly make you feel sleepy at odd times?

The links of your system that affect your energy level fall into three broad components: the physical, the emotional and the attitudinal. Maximizing your personal energy means bringing all three components into harmony.

1. Get Your Body in Good Working Order

It's easy to see that your physical condition affects your energy level in a multitude of ways. For instance, doctors say that the people who are most likely to report fatigue are the very fat and the very thin. Overweight people tend to overeat, putting extra weight on their frame, which increases the burden on muscles and organs and tends to wear them out faster. Underweight individuals are more sensitive to short-changes in the system of basic needs for daily functioning. Crash diets or occasional fasts can be physically exhausting simply because they don't provide the system with enough energy supply to keep going normally. Quality counts as well as quantity. Junk food can provide quick bursts of energy. For more sustained effort, though, such a full day of attending classes, or thinking through a term paper, your system needs protein and vitamins and minerals and all those other good nutrients.

Sleep also has a direct effect on energy. And, though it is impossible to say how much is enough for each person, it is clear that very few people get enough sleep. Each person's needs, some experts suggest you keep a record of how much you sleep and how much work you do. If you find yourself not tied down to a fixed schedule or an obligating alarm to suit your body's rhythms, you may be able to get more sleep. And if you are tired, you are fun for others. As you drag out of bed in the morning, you'll be—well, you've heard the expression 'hangover from the night before'? Or that exercise produces energy? Or that you need to eat?