

Ten Ways to Energize Your Workplace

1. Water: The Simple Solution

Dehydration, even mild dehydration can lead to fatigue very quickly. If you have a community refrigerator, keep a filter pitcher filled and ready for use. Personalize large water glasses and encourage water breaks.

2. Stretch Away

Sitting for long periods of time makes anyone a bit drowsy, especially after lunch. Set up a special area in office or break room just for stretching. By doing a few mild stretches, the body will respond and feel more alert. Keep a couple yoga mats and an exercise ball around. Just a few bounces on a ball or mini trampoline can energize the lymphatic system.

3. Fruity Friday

It isn't a big deal to buy a few bags of apples. Really, that simple act isn't going to dramatically affect the bottom line of most businesses. And supplying your employees with a piece of fruit in the afternoon is a great way to energize and give a natural sugar boost. Setting out the bowl of fruit encourages some afternoon movement that stimulates creativity and productivity.

4. Not So Sweet

Often the coffee pot becomes the area employees go to recharge. And caffeine does play a role in helping your staff feel energetic, not to mention just helping them wake up. But the sugar or artificial sweeteners and creamers that are added to coffee have detrimental effect on energy levels. Energy that would be used to be productive is instead used to process sugar and detox chemicals from the body. Artificial sweeteners have been linked to headaches and fatigue. Replace sugar and artificial sweeteners with Stevia, the natural plant-based sweetener.

5. Club Sandwich

Okay, maybe that should be "sandwich club". Form a lunch club and supply recipes or ideas for healthful lunchtimes. You may provide the main course and encourage employees to bring side dishes to share. Not only are nutrient dense meals good for a productive afternoon, the comradery shared around a table can create goodwill amongst employees. Take the club to the next level by inviting speakers to share knowledge on healthy topics.

6. Tell a Joke

Studies all show that one of the best ways to de-stress and feel good is to have a good laugh. Start a joke of the day via email or text. Or post it a white board in the conference room. Assign different departments a day to share the jokes. There is nothing like a bit of competition to energize an office.

7. Get Juiced

Fresh vegetable juices are one of the fastest ways to feel energetic. A vegetable juicer costs a couple hundred dollars, but keeping one available in the staff kitchen is a great remedy for afternoon slumps. Don't have the facility for juicing? Find a local juice bar that delivers. Instead of an afternoon coffee run or trip to the soda machine, have a juice. Because very little digestion takes place when you drink juice, nutrients go directly to the cells to be converted to energy.

8. Candy Jar Make Overs

Many employees keep a candy stash. The jars, bowls and bags of mini treats abound in most work environments. Change it up. Have a contest for the most creative snack bowl. First encourage everyone to show exactly what they keep stashed away. Then give employees the list of ideas that included at the end of this list. Have a contest for best healthful snack bowl.

9. Love Coffee

Most workplaces don't have a problem with this. And I don't either. But I have some limits around what is the acceptable use of caffeine. Caffeine tricks the brain into thinking it has gotten a usable form of energy. But the delivery system that we use to get our caffeine is the problem. We need to remove the sugar, artificial sweeteners and flavorings from our source of caffeine if we want to enjoy and get the benefits of our national addiction. Stock the coffee area with high quality coffees and don't forget teas. There are many healthful benefits to great tea.

10. Educate Your Staff

Continually letting your employees know that you care about their well-being can lead to positive feelings and an energetic and enthused work force. Call me: 412-427-1137 or Kathy@KathyParry.com to schedule your next event. **Organizations call me most often for:**

- For management conferences to **power up your team's performance.**
- During associate on boarding to **ease transition to professional life**
- Prior to busy season to **optimize staff utilization and reduce absenteeism**
- For opening or closing keynote to **inspire and motivate your team towards success**
- At association conferences to **educate on productivity and stress management**
- For company retreats to **show commitment to work/life balance**
- For annual conferences and events to **entertain the audience.**
- During quarterly management meetings to **show methods to increase utilization**
- As an association keynote to **increase awareness of retention**
- At Rotational Program graduation to **empower early career leaders**

Snack Suggestions

Proteins and fats help you feel full. Plan your snacks. Avoid sugar and simple carbs. Try the following things to keep you full and satisfied.

1. Hummus and vegetables or whole wheat pita. The beans and fat in this hold you. Pick a day to cut up vegetables so you have them ready to eat. The easier it is to find a snack the more likely you are to eat it. This goes for your kids too.
2. Nuts – nuts have wonderful trace minerals like selenium and magnesium that we often don't get enough of. Make your own trail mix if you need that sweet/salty combination. Add dried fruit or sunflower seeds for different tastes. Nuts are higher in fat than some snacks, so don't go crazy.
3. Almond butter or a natural peanut butter on apples, bananas or whole wheat pretzels
4. Pita Crisps or Tortilla Crisps - cut whole wheat pita/tortillas into 6-8 wedges. Spray a cooking sheet with Pam or lightly coat with olive oil. Sprinkle the chips with your favorite seasonings. I use salt, garlic powder, sometimes cumin and chili powder. Bake them at 350 for 10 minutes or until slightly brown on edges. Eat with salsa or yogurt dip (see below)
5. Yogurt – add Stevia and cocoa powder to plain/no fat yogurt. This tastes a lot like chocolate pudding and no sugar or fat. I also like to add instant espresso for a mocha flavor. You can also add a low sugar fruit spread to the yogurt.
6. Cheese – I'm not a huge fan of snacking on cheese because it usually is higher in fat and you shouldn't eat a ton of it, but it does hold you for longer than some snacks. Cut small cubes ahead of time so you know how much to portion.
7. Flavored popcorn. Try sprinkling with different herbs or seasonings. Avoid artificially flavored seasonings and look for natural ones.
8. Chocolate covered almonds – my favorite treat. These really satisfy because they offer more substance than just straight chocolate. Your brain actually receives the message that you ate something. These are what broke my straight chocolate habit.
9. Fruit. Fruit is a natural sugar, so you can eat too much. Eat an apple a day. It is crunchy, high in fiber and the pectin has been shown to be a natural detox agent. Because you get to chew an apple you get more satisfaction than some other fruits
10. Smoothie – if you're craving sweets a smoothie is a great way to feel satisfied. Fruit and yogurt work well. You can also use one of the many powdered varieties out there. Look for ones without artificial sweeteners or flavors. Add flax or chia seeds for fiber and to lessen the insulin response.
11. Protein Bars. Look for all natural, whole food ingredients. Bars with nuts or whey protein are good choices. Look for less than 10 grams of sugar.
12. Eggs. Throw a hard-boiled egg in your bag when you leave the house. The protein and fat help you feel full for many hours. A great in-between meals snack to hold you over. No insulin spikes!
13. Bean spreads. Look for all-natural bean and lentil dips and spreads at Trader Joes and other markets.

