

8 Tricks for Boosting Your Metabolism

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Remember how, during your teens and 20s, you could eat practically anything and not gain a pound? Now that you're hovering around middle age, you've probably found that's just not the case anymore. Part of the problem is that your metabolism decreases as a result of other age-related factors, like decrease in muscle mass. However, there's no need to give in to a bigger pant size just yet! Read on for eight ways to rev up your metabolism and keep those unwanted pounds from your waistline.

Do Intervals

Mixing in fast-paced intervals raises your metabolic rate higher than doing a steady cardio workout, and will continue to do so up to an hour after you're done, says Kristin McGee, a trainer and Pilates instructor whose client list includes Tina Fey and Bethenny Frankel. An Australian study also found that women who did intervals while they were biking lost three times as much fat as those who worked out at a steady pace. If you're a walker, simply walk at your normal pace for 1 to 2 minutes, then speed-walk for 30 to 60 seconds. Repeat sequence 10 to 15 times.

Opt for Caffeine

It's time to hit Starbucks. A study published in the journal *Physiology & Behavior* shows that coffee drinkers have a 16 percent higher metabolic rate than those who abstain or drink decaf joe, because caffeine increases your heart rate and stimulates your central nervous system. Spread out the cups over your entire day to keep your metabolism running at a boosted rate—just be sure to have your last cup by early afternoon so you can hit the pillow with no problems later on.

Add Some Ice

Though the increase is modest, there is some evidence that drinking cold water can cause a slight surge in metabolic rate. Since your body maintains a core temperature around 98.6°F, cold water will be brought to that temperature after

being consumed and calories are burned during the warming process. *Discovery Health* deduced that you can burn up to 70 extra calories a day if you follow the common rule of drinking eight 8-ounce glasses of cold water per day. Need another reason to up your water intake? Researchers at the University of Utah found that participants who drank half of the recommended amount of water per day (four 8-ounce glasses), not only showed signs of dehydration, they also experienced a 2% decrease in calories burned per day.

Eat a Big Breakfast

It's time to nix the oatmeal with skim milk. Instead, start your day with a fatty breakfast, including eggs and even a piece of bacon, suggests Molly Bray, PhD, lead author of a recent study showing that a fat-filled morning meal will jumpstart your metabolism for the day faster than a lowfat, low-calorie breakfast. Another study published in the *American Journal of Epidemiology* found that people who eat 22 to 55 percent of their total calories at breakfast gain 1.7 pounds over four years. That's not bad considering those who eat 0 to 11 percent of their calories in the morning gain nearly 3 pounds.

Drink Green Tea

Not only does green tea contain enough antioxidants to keep colds and the flu at bay, but it also does wonders for your metabolism, according to a study published in the journal *Phytomedicine*. Researchers found that people who drank the equivalent of three to five cups daily for three months shaved 5 percent off their body weight. Green tea contains ECGC, a plant compound that stimulates your metabolism, says Rania Batayneh, MPH, a nutritionist in private practice in San Francisco and Portland, Oregon, and founder of Essential Nutrition consulting.

Don't Skimp on Dairy

Calcium-rich foods and drinks, including milk, yogurt and cheese, increase the rate at which fat turns into waste, says a study by researchers at the University of Copenhagen published in the *The Journal of Nutrition*. It doesn't matter what form of dairy product you're consuming as long as the serving size is adequate (keep it lowfat!)—either a full glass of lowfat milk or 6 ounces of yogurt is perfect. Also, the study noted that you have to actually ingest the calcium in its natural form; supplements don't work due to differences in the chemical makeup.

Build More Muscle

Gaining lean muscle mass boosts your metabolism and makes losing weight much easier, McGee says. If you add just 5 pounds of muscle to your body, you'll burn up to 150 more calories per day without even working out those muscles. And, you can burn an average of 600 calories per hour during your cardio workout thanks to that extra muscle mass. "Muscle burns more calories than fat does, even at rest, so any strength-training activities to build lean muscle are excellent," McGee says. The key is to challenge all your muscles and do a full-body strength-training workout, hitting your core, arms, legs, back and chest.

Pick Up Heavier Weights

By using heavy weights at a very slow rate—twice as slow as would feel natural—you break down your muscles (you'll know the weights are heavy enough and the workout slow enough if you start to shake after just a few lifts or squats). Researchers at Wayne State University found that when your body repairs those overworked muscles, it causes your metabolism to increase for up to three days after the workout.

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