

Tips offered to help fend off workplace fatigue

Written by Holyoke Enterprise

Fatigue can prove a formidable foe to anyone. Exercise enthusiasts and couch potatoes alike periodically can suffer from fatigue, which can affect performance at work and one's relationships with friends and family.

Fatigue can be temporary or chronic, and while quick fixes like an energy drink might work for a little while, such solutions may only mask fatigue for a brief period before it returns once the stimulant wears off. Many times fending off fatigue involves making some lifestyle changes that can boost energy over the long haul and make fatigue a distant memory.

—Eat breakfast no matter what. According to a study published in the *International Journal of Food Sciences and Nutrition*, a high-fiber, high-carbohydrate breakfast can increase alertness between breakfast and lunch, a period of time during which many professionals begin to feel fatigue settling in. Whole-wheat toast or a bowl of high-fiber cereal can pack an energetic punch that lasts all the way to lunchtime.

—Choose high-energy snacks. One of the problems many people have when dealing with fatigue is how they choose to combat their feelings of sluggishness. Eating a candy bar from the office snack machine might seem like the ideal energy booster, but a sugar boost does not last very long. Chances are feelings of fatigue will return sooner rather than later.

—Take a break. Burning the midnight oil might be necessary, but failing to take breaks throughout the day will likely exasperate any feelings of fatigue. That's because taking periodic breaks throughout the workday has been proven to be very effective at combating fatigue. A study conducted at Louisiana State University compared a trio of different work schedules for workers who used a computer. Those who took brief, frequent breaks were better at fighting fatigue and more productive at work than those who did not. A short break of 5-10 minutes can be enough to provide an immediate energy boost and fend off feelings of fatigue.

—Hit the road, Jack. Another way to effectively fight fatigue is to get walking. A decades-old study conducted by a researcher at California State University, Long Beach, found that walking briskly for 10 minutes provides people with more energy than eating a candy bar.

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Though the candy bar led to an initial energy boost, that boost died down within an hour, whereas the boost provided by a brisk walk increased energy levels for roughly two hours. Get up and walk around the office or take a brisk walk around the block or the parking lot of the office complex. Employees will come back to their desks refreshed and ready to resume their workday.

Fatigue is no laughing matter for many men and women, but a few tried and tested fatigue-fighting methods can increase energy and productivity.

Holyoke Enterprise April 25, 2013