

# FEEL LIKE A MILLION BUCKS BEFORE EVERY WORKOUT

*How to capture and replicate that high-energy*

**E**VER NOTICE THERE SEEM TO BE “GOOD” AND “BAD” DAYS FOR working out? On a “good” day, we wake up refreshed, rested, and arrive at the gym with a sense of purpose. Doing reps or on the treadmill, it’s easy to tap our inner strength and train hard. We’re pumped up, inspired, and committed to the plan.

But on a “bad” day, that pre-workout excitement just isn’t there. Maybe it’s lack of sleep... the wrong dish at dinner... or we just don’t “feel” like working out that particular day. So we muster through and cross our fingers that it doesn’t happen again.

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Reality is, we don't have to leave the "good" days, those dream workouts, to chance. We can create them, just about every time. By controlling the foods we eat, the thoughts we think, and how we transition our bodies from rest to a rigorous workout, we can set ourselves up for powerful workouts.

We've put together an arsenal of techniques to set you on the right path for a workout that leaves you feeling invigorated and glad to be alive. So the next time a "bad" day happens, you can turn it around on a dime. Here's how.

## PRE-WORKOUT NUTRITION

Napoleon Bonaparte summed up the importance of sound nutrition when he said, "An army marches on its stomach." The great emperor realized the importance of good and bountiful food for his soldiers, and so should you.

The nutritional requirements of modern-day troops and civilians can be attained with a balanced diet of six portion-controlled meals throughout the day. In fact, the latest scientific research promotes the benefits of eating every two to three hours to increase lean body mass.<sup>4</sup> The success or failure of your next workout starts with what crosses your lips.

## Winning Strategies Time your meals

If you mobilize first thing in the morning, drink two cups of water and head straight to the gym, you're well on your way to an excellent workout. You, early bird, will reap the fat-burning benefits of exercising in a "fasted state," says Sheah Rarback, R.D., spokesman for the American Dietetic Association.

You see, when we fast for several hours, the body still

needs food to carry out all sorts of chemical reactions in order to keep us alive. And while our minds are enjoying the warm, comfy hours of nocturnal bliss, our bodies are absorbing bits and pieces of the grilled Cajun tuna steak and steamed broccoli that we ate last night. In other words, most of yesterday's cuisine has been digested and stored in our cells for future use—we want to use this stored food, not today's breakfast burrito, as fuel for the sunrise workout. In this way, the body burns stockpiled carbohydrates and fat like an automobile consumes gasoline.

For those who enjoy a mid-morning, afternoon, or evening workout, it is even more important to exercise on an empty stomach to make every session extraordinary. Plan your last meal at least two to three hours before you train. "The two-hour fast allows food to move from the stomach and into the small intestine," says Dennis McGorry Jr., M.D., physician at Bryn Mawr Hospital in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania. "Also, you will use food reserves for fuel."

## Saturate the cells

Feeling your best before exercise means establishing a fluid intake plan one day in advance. Drink at least 10 cups of water, 24 hours prior to your workout, recommends Rarback. "Fluid, preferably water, should be consumed throughout the day with your meals," he says. Not only will this keep you satiated, but research shows that adequate hydration can increase sport performance and decrease the chances of heat-related injury.

The American College of Sports Medicine suggests waiting a bit to exercise after tossing back 16 ounces of water to promote adequate hydration as well as allow time for a pit stop.<sup>1</sup>

After your session, drink four to six ounces of H<sub>2</sub>O to begin to replace fluid loss due to sweating, suggests Rarback.

## Get a boost

"I use an EAS supplement called Phen-Free right now," says Challenge Champion Lynn Lingenfelter. "It's a thermogenic metabolic formula... a chemical cousin of ephedrine and caffeine so that it enhances that feeling, you know, like, 'Whoa, I'm ready to work out.'"

## Losing Strategies Indulging in energy drinks

To avoid stomachache, stay away from pre-workout, sugary sport drinks, says James Cornell, M.D., gastroenterologist at Sacred Heart Hospital in Pennsylvania. "Unless you are performing intense exercise for more than one hour, carbohydrate drinks are unnecessary. They cause bloating, gastrointestinal distress<sup>3</sup> and are unnecessary calories," he says.

## Skimping on water

"Not drinking enough fluid may result in dehydration," says Rarback. "Dehydration causes headache, muscle spasm, a rapid increase in core body temperature, and greater cardiovascular strain."

## Eating "unauthorized" foods

"Consumption of pre-exercise simple sugars such as white bread, bagels, breakfast cereal, and white rice, for example, results in sluggishness," says Dr. Cornell. "Plus, you won't burn your fat stores during exercise." These particular foods make our body release insulin—the hormone that instructs certain cells to pull nutrients from the blood and stockpile them for later use. The end result: "You feel drained, like you've been in the sun too long," says Dr. Cornell.

## Ingesting fatty foods

Even if it's several hours before your next workout, avoid butter on your sausage or that not-so-lean ground beef. High-fat food eaten less than two hours before exercise may cause heartburn, warns Dr. Cornell.

## YOUR WINNING MINDSET

So, you've already committed to improving your body and overall health by eating well and training hard. Now, start training your mind. With practice, you can teach your mind to focus before your workout in order to achieve a great session on a regular basis. A reliable coach, an organized plan of action, and a little mood music will lift your spirits and hasten your progress.

## Know where you're going

Before heading out to the gym, David Kennedy, a Challenge Champion from Fayetteville, North Carolina, writes down what exercises he's going to do that day, including number of reps and target high points. "I have goals for every workout, and that motivates me," he says.

## Develop "future vision"

"I use what Bill [Phillips] describes in his book as 'future vision,'" says Challenge Champion Lezlee Jones. "Before a workout, I envision how I want to look and how I want my body to feel. I think about how won-



derful I will feel after I exercise and the energy I'll have... I try to think beyond the moment to what the workout is giving me, the sense of well-being after I've done it. You know, I've got all these things in my closet that I want to wear, and I look at them every day to inspire me. Also, I have specific numbers that I

want to reach for my weight. I think about being 70 years old and looking 40 years old. You can do that when you weight train."

## Practice the buddy system

Success is about longevity. In other words, the best planning and the best exercise sessions

will fall flat unless they can be repeated often and with intensity. One surefire way to obtain consistent high energy and spark in the gym is to exercise with a companion, a reliable partner. "An enthusiastic training partner can help you muster a high degree of effort on a regular basis," says Paul Chek,

***"Be intentional. Know which exercises you'll do before you***



exercise specialist and founder of the C.H.E.K Institute. "This can speed up your progress dramatically as well as help you reach your exercise goals." Be sure to choose someone with similar objectives.

According to Chek, a partner will make you better by ensuring a safe environment with careful spotting techniques, providing you with positive feedback and making your training fun. A partner can also inspire you with healthy competition. Set a time limit on your workouts and schedule to eval-

### **Document your progress**

Your training diary or daily progress report notebook is a scientific study in the making. Careful note-taking will allow you to determine what combination of exercises, sets, and repetitions produce the most efficient gains in muscle strength, size, or endurance. "Learn which exercise protocol produces desirable results and use that information to create routines that are tailored to your body," says Chek. A daily progress report not only helps you organize your workouts, it

enables you to prepare for and focus on the immediate objective of your workout.

Writing your goals on paper also helps you prepare for future sessions. "Unless you carefully document your workouts, you have no means of monitoring improvement," says Chek. In addition, the act of writing a schedule makes you more cognitive of what you are doing. And cognitive awareness makes you intentional about your actions, allowing you to immediately see what's working and also

## ***"Train with a positive-energy person for inspiration."***

uate each other on a specific date. Use "before and after" pictures, girth measurements, and body-composition testing.

To find your perfect training partner:

### **Look for your missing link.**

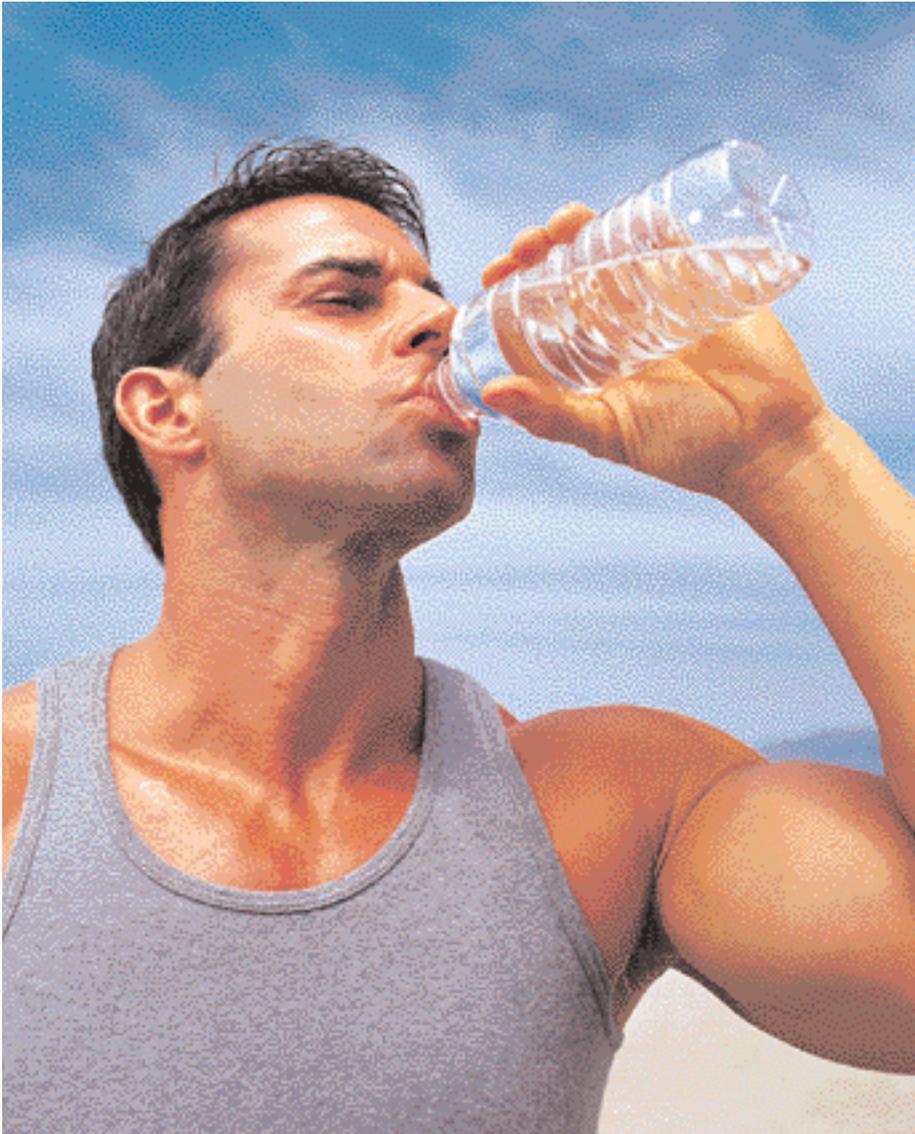
When browsing for a training partner, make sure that you look for someone with the qualities you're lacking. "If you tend to be lazy, find someone who is highly motivated," says Chek. "If you are highly motivated, look for someone who is good at balancing an exercise program—someone who knows how to avoid overtraining."

### **Consider compatibility.**

"Locate someone with similar goals and objectives, so your training programs match up," says Chek. A powerlifter and a marathon runner are an unlikely couple. Because their training goals are so different, exercising together could reduce training efficiency.

**Go with the positive-energy person.** You should enjoy spending time with your partner. "This person is basically a friend," adds Chek. If your personalities get in the way of the training goals, go solo until you find someone with whom you're better suited.





what isn't, so you can make the necessary changes to your routine.

### Inspire yourself with music

As you enter the gym after a stressful day at the office, you're greeted by throngs of athletes raising and lowering shiny tonnage to the theme from Rocky. You feel a rush of excitement and anticipation to join the brawny masses—or you become annoyed. When it comes to the right pre-workout state of mind, personal music preferences have only one requirement: They must inspire you.

Scientists at Nottingham Trent University in the United Kingdom reported that certain

music played during vigorous exercise helped subjects perform more work with less fatigue.<sup>10</sup> "Music is a distracting stimulus," says Bunny Dickerman, M.S., movement therapist. "In the case of exercise, it may distract us from fatigue. Choose music that places you in a frame of mind that is pleasurable." Whatever your tastes may be, research touts the arousal-producing benefits of certain music.<sup>5,7</sup> The right tunes can put you in the right frame of mind.

### PRE-EXERCISE WARM-UP

A warm-up can ensure an intense and productive training session.<sup>2,6</sup> According to John Cianca, M.D., assistant professor

of physical medicine and rehabilitation at Baylor College of Medicine, the benefit of a five- to 10-minute warm-up is threefold. "Muscles and joints become more elastic, heart irregularities associated with sudden exercise are reduced, and the nervous system is activated, thereby increasing coordination. All three make you less susceptible to injury," he explains.

C. Bella Hebrew, R.N., exercise specialist, recommends warming up on a stationary bicycle. "Pedal at an intensity between 45% and 55% of your age-predicted maximal heart rate for five to 10 minutes," says Hebrew. Use this formula to figure out your warm-up intensity level:

$$220 - \frac{\text{your age}}{\text{your age}} = \frac{\text{pre-exercise warm-up heart rate}}{\text{pre-exercise warm-up heart rate}} \times .45 = \frac{\text{pre-exercise warm-up heart rate}}{\text{pre-exercise warm-up heart rate}}$$

The length of your warm-up period should increase as you age—and as outdoor thermometer drops, says Hebrew. So, this means plan for at least 20 minutes of warm-up activity if you are over 50 years of age or if you must trek through sleet and ice before your workout.

### Save the stretching for later

In a study published in *Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise*, scientists subjected more than 1,500 male army recruits to a flexibility program before exercise. The conclusion: There was no less incidence of injury compared to the non-stretching control group.<sup>8</sup> Now, this doesn't mean that you should eliminate stretching altogether. Just perform any flexibility movements after your muscles and joints are adequately warmed up.<sup>9</sup>

"Begin with several stretches for the area to be exercised," says Dr. Cianca. "This will increase the muscle length

available for contraction and hence the power that can be generated. In addition this enhances the work that can be done during exercise as well as reduces injury potential by preventing sudden overload."

Still, many people prefer to perform simple stretching exercises before the workout. If you do, keep it light and simple. And concentration is paramount to getting value out of your stretching. "During my preworkout stretching, I focus on my breathing," says Lynn Lingenfelter. "I usually stretch for about 10 to 15 minutes, but it can be as little as five minutes. I use this time to mentally prepare for my workout."

## CONCLUSION

You see, you really can capture and replicate that high-energy state of mind. The idea that occasional pre-workout dread is a fact of life belongs in the basement with other myths of exercise.

Starting today, begin putting into practice the techniques that will set you up for a winning workout. Repeat them over weeks, months, and years. Long-term compliance to exercise and nutrition is the ultimate goal for a healthy, active lifestyle. A balanced diet of portion-controlled meals is your high-octane, premium gasoline for the body. Your like-minded training partner, stimulating music, and careful planning will get you excited about exercise. A gentle warm-up activity performed immediately before your session will lower your chances of unnecessary injury—and that will definitely bring a smile to your face.

Practice these strategies every time you train, and you'll get to enjoy that million-dollar feeling on a regular basis—and you'll inspire others to feel the same way!



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