

Top 10 Tips to Fire-Up Your Metabolism



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Metabolism. Simply put, it is the process by which the body makes and uses energy (calories) for everything from the cellular absorption of nutrients to running a marathon.

Knowing *how* to efficiently metabolize calories could translate into a healthier, leaner body.

Whether you're trying to lose extra pounds or preparing for the inevitable metabolic slow down that comes with age, here are some successful ways to fire-up your metabolism to keep your energy levels high and keep your body in shape.

1. Build lean body mass. As mentioned above, metabolism slows as we age by as much as two percent a year! But there is something you can do to counterbalance nature. Muscle is the single most important predictor of how well you metabolize your food, how well you burn calories and burn body fat. Strength training your large muscle groups with dumbbells or resistance bands at least twice a week is essential to boosting your metabolism. I repeat **essential**. And therefore, the really good news: Your metabolism stays pumped for many hours after you finish your workout, especially if you workout first thing in the morning.

2. Get your body moving. You know the drill, but here's a reminder. At least 30 to 60 minutes of walking, salsa dancing, jogging, martial arts, kickboxing, cycling, swimming

or some other form of aerobic exercise a minimum of three times a week is the other half of the exercise equation. People don't like to hear it but you have **got** to exercise! It kick starts your metabolism into high gear.

3. Eat your food. If you think that reducing calories is the only way to go, think again, it actually causes your metabolism to SLOW DOWN. Recent studies show that eating smaller meals every three to four hours aids metabolism and weight loss. Eating your largest meal earlier in the day and shutting the kitchen down 2 -3 hours before bedtime will aid in the weight loss process and help speed up your metabolism.

4. Kick the sugar addiction. Of course, you still have to make good choices about *what* you eat. When you eat sugar you throw your metabolic switch into fat storage mode. Artificial sweeteners do the same, believe it or not. Studies suggest a predominately low glycemic index diet, meaning foods that, unlike sugars, are broken down gradually to help maintain an even blood-sugar level.

5. Don't skip breakfast. It's a fact that people who eat a healthy breakfast are leaner and healthier than people who don't. You need to incorporate protein into your breakfast routine. And try to think outside the (cereal) box. A breakfast bowl of vegetables, brown rice and beans is a great way to kick-start your metabolism for the day.

6. Include hot foods and drinks. If Mexican and Thai are favorites, you're in luck. Spicy food that has hot peppers are good for your metabolism. **A good recipe to start your morning:** warm water, freshly squeezed lemon juice, 1 tablespoon 100% natural maple syrup or agave nectar, and a

pinch of Cayenne pepper will give your metabolism a good boost.

7. **Drink green tea.** There are unhealthy choices that can boost your metabolism, like a really strong cup of coffee. Never overdo it on caffeine, which has undesirable side effects. Instead, go for green tea which is known to stimulate metabolism and has many other immune boosting benefits.

8. **Water anyone.** Staying well hydrated is essential to flushing the body of toxic byproducts that are released when fat is burned. Cold water may also give your metabolism a small boost because energy is required to heat the body. Drink a ½ oz of water per your body weight. (Ex: if you weigh 100 lbs you should drink 50 oz of water).

9. **Reduce stress.** Stress can actually cause weight gain, particularly around the tummy. Why? Because physical and emotional stress activates the release of cortisol, a hormone that slows metabolism. Try yoga, a massage, reflexology or a daily 10 minute meditation.

10. **Get your ZZZ's.** Research shows that people who don't sleep for seven to eight hours a night are more prone to weight gain. Your body heals itself during the night while you are sleeping; give it the time it needs. Additionally, we now know that lean muscle is regenerated in the final couple of hours of sleep each night. Which takes you right back to tip number one!

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