Eat for ENERGY

Pattern your eating and food choices to help you stay alert and focused throughout the day

By Sally Rummel
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Food is your body’s fuel, so each snack and meal decision you make will affect your energy throughout the day.

Here’s how it works: Your body uses food for energy by turning it into blood sugar, or glucose. Carbohydrates convert most easily into this ready-to-burn fuel, making them your macronutrient of choice for energy eating, according to Prevention magazine.

The problem is that some simple carbohydrates, like sugar, tend to break down so fast that after providing a short burst of energy, they leave your blood sugar levels low, your energy inadequate and your plans for the day unaccomplished. Complex carbs, like whole grains, replace this spike and dip with a steady energy supply to keep you at peak performance.

Don’t forget the power of exercise, in addition to diet. Regular physical activity can improve your muscle strength and boost your endurance, according to mayoclinic.com. When your heart and lungs work more efficiently, you have more energy to do your daily work.

WHAT’S THE IDEAL MIX?
High (but not exclusively) carbohydrates, moderate protein, low (but not dry) fat. Some examples: whole-grain turkey sandwich with low-fat mayo, a small serving of whole-wheat spaghetti and meatballs or a bowl of chili.

HOW TO EAT FOR ENERGY
Distribute your calories equally among breakfast, lunch and dinner. Having a skimpy breakfast, hurried lunch and huge evening feast is the least energy-efficient meal plan.

Never, ever skip a meal. By skipping breakfast or lunch, or both, you deprive your body of calories during the day when you need it the most. You’re also more likely to overeat when you finally do eat.

Eat five mini-meals a day by incorpora-
ting a mid-morning and mid-afternoon snack into your meal plan. You’ll be less likely to overeat or under-eat, and you’ll get energy into your body when you need it most. If you’re trying to lose weight at 1,400 calories a day, your meals should be 300 calories each with two 100-calorie snacks.

If you’re overweight, slim down. The best way to feel energetic is to maintain a proper body weight for your height and frame size.

Don’t crash diet under 1,200 calories or you’ll sap your energy and sabotage your metabolism.

FOODS TO EAT FOR ENERGY

SMART CARBS
Eat whole wheat bread, brown rice and cereal.

CASHEWS, ALMONDS AND HAZELNUTS
Rich in protein and magnesium, they play a role in converting sugar into energy. Other good sources of magnesium are whole grains and some fish, including halibut.

LEAN MEATS
Lean protein offers the energy benefits of the amino acid tyrosine, which boosts levels of two brain chemicals that help keep you focused and alert. Meats also contain vitamin B-12, which may help ease insomnia and depression.

FIBER
Fiber keeps energy steady throughout the day. Include more beans, whole fruits, vegetables and whole grains into your diet to boost fiber.

WATER
Staying hydrated can keep you from getting tired throughout the day. Fresh produce, vegetables and oatmeal, and pasta that sop up their cooking water also help keep you hydrated.

COFFEE
Frequent mini-servings of coffee will help keep you alert and focused and is a healthi-

er way to take in caffeine.

DARK CHOCOLATE
Caffeine and another stimulant, theobro-
mine, helps boost your energy and mood.

Source: WebMd Images: Metro Creative Graphics
Eat and exercise your way to **flat abs**

A commitment to nutrition and working out will put you in the best shape of your life

**By Sally Rummel**

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While there’s no magic pill that will get you the “rock-hard abs” of an athlete or actor without a lot of hard work, there are diet and exercise tips that will help you tone and flatten your belly.

“It’s all about diet and exercise,” said Don Hobson, certified licensed personal trainer at Powerhouse 365 in Fenton. “You can’t have flat abs without concentrating on both. The hardest part is committing to a program, putting in the time and being very dedicated.”

**DIET**

If you really want a sleek midriff, you’ve got to tweak your diet, according to Fitness magazine. All of the best waist-whittling foods contain fiber to banish bloat, antioxidants to boost your abs routine’s effectiveness and protein to help maintain a healthy metabolism.

- Almonds, eggs, soy protein, apples, berries, leafy greens, yogurt, vegetable soup, salmon and quinoa are just a few of the healthy foods that Fitness magazine recommends for flatter abs.
- You have to lose all-over body fat to show your fit abs,” said Kelly Rickabas, owner of Anytime Fitness in Fenton. “A low sodium diet is important, too.”
- Eating every three to four hours to keep your blood sugar even is another important flat abs strategy.
- “Eat a snack that contains protein between 3 and 4 p.m.,” said Natasha Turner, in her book, “The Hormone Diet.” “It’s important because it boosts metabolism and balances blood sugar. The lower you keep your blood sugar, the lower you keep your insulin, and insulin makes you store fat around your middle.”

Eliminating junk food from your diet is extremely important for sleek abs and overall health. “If you’re eating fast food or junk food, you aren’t going to see a flat tummy,” said Shawn Stevens, owner of Transformation Time Fitness in Fenton.

**EXERCISE**

In general, an effective belly fat loss workout program might look something like this, according to fitness-blender.com:

- **High intensity interval training** two to three times per week.
- **Lower intensity steady cardio** on remaining days of the week, aside from one to two rest days.
- **Strength training for the upper and lower body** two times a week.

A Pilates workout and training is a “secret weapon” against belly fat, according to Prevention magazine. It works all of the abdominal muscles: the six-pack rectus abdominis which runs down the center; the waist-defining obliques, which wrap around the sides and the deep transversus abdominis, which is often missed in traditional ab workouts.

Shirley Ciofu, fitness director for Southern Lakes Parks and Recreation, says that a number of six-week Pilates classes will be starting in April, including “Pilates on the Ball” and “Pilates Barre Mat Mix.” Summer classes will include “Pilates by the River” in July, plus “Zumba Toning Party in the Park,” using weights on the lawn of the Fenton Community Center.

“Pilates is outstanding for conditioning and strengthening,” said Ciofu. “Especially the hips, joints and the deep supporting muscles around the spine. It’s also excellent conditioning for the golf season.”

Many local fitness studios also offer Pilates classes, Zumba, Jazzercise, yoga and other strength and resistant classes, “Turbulence Training,” a boot camp-style class, zeroes in on fat loss at Transformation Time Fitness. “It’s a full-body workout that focuses on the science of fat loss,” said Stevens.

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Build MUSCLE TO Lose WEIGHT

Diet is your number one weight-loss tool, followed by resistance training.

By Sally Rummel
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If you want to get serious about your weight-loss efforts this spring, turn your walking routine into a more fat-burning exercise routine, combined with a healthy eating plan.

“When it comes to losing weight, your diet is #1, your diet is #2 and your diet is #3, as far as the top three things to do,” said Mike O’Hara, PT., OCS, CSCS, of Fenton Physical Therapy and Fenton Fitness & Athletic Center. “Then it’s exercise. You can’t out-exercise a poor diet.”

Rather than recommending a specific diet plan, O’Hara suggests that people read books and articles about how to form good habits. “People know what they should eat,” he said. “Any diet will work, as long as you change your habits.” He says that women, in general, don’t eat enough protein, especially when their daily lifestyle is active and includes lifting groceries, picking up kids, etc. “I see it at the gym all the time. Women often need about three times the protein than they’re getting.”

O’Hara prescribes an exercise routine that will build muscle to help people who struggle with weight issues. “It’s not so much that people are overweight as they are under-muscled,” he said.

Since muscle burns more calories than fat, resistance training that builds muscle is a more effective weight-loss tool than cardiovascular exercise. “Walking isn’t a great weight loss tool for most people,” said O’Hara. “But it is good for cardiovascular fitness, especially interval power walking.”

In fact, O’Hara’s exercise prescription for the general public includes long, strong power walks three or four times a week, along with strength training twice a week and balance training every day.

Now that spring has sprung, you can take your walking workout outdoors, enjoying the benefits of fresh air and even more calorie burn with hills and uneven terrain.

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Anderson also tells shoe shoppers that a median price for a quality pair of fitness shoes will be $80 to $110. “You want a shoe that doesn’t bend in half,” he said. “Usually, a shoe of that quality will be in that price range.”
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Confused by vitamins?

Here are three supplements you may want to consider taking

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Taking vitamins and supplements should never be thought of as a substitute for a healthy diet. But in order to get optimal levels of key nutrients or to fill in nutritional gaps of your daily eating habits, you may want to consider adding them to your daily routine.

“These are the three supplements I make as a general recommendation for most people,” said Marjie Andrejewicz, natural holistic counselor and owner of Marjie’s Gluten Free Pantry in downtown Fenton.

1. VITAMIN C
   - a minimum of 1,000 milligrams per day, up to 3,000 — taken in divided doses.

2. MINERAL SUPPLEMENT
   — especially helpful in adding iodine and selenium to the body to support thyroid function. Follow the bottle’s directions for dosage.

3. COD LIVER OIL
   — not fish oil. “It’s high in omega-3 fatty acids, plus it’s a natural source of vitamins A and D. Take 1 to 3 teaspoons a day.”

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Fill your grocery cart with

‘Super Foods’

These everyday foods are affordable and full of nutrients

By Sally Rummel
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The foods that are best for you to eat are whole foods, with only one name, and contain no complex list of chemicals you can’t pronounce.

Fill your shopping cart with these foods named by Eating Well magazine, and you may feel better than you ever have before.

Marjie Andrejcic, a holistic nutrition counselor and owner of Marjie’s Gluten Free Pantry in downtown Fenton, also suggests that people enjoy a “green drink” every morning.

“As Americans, we’re busy,” said Andrejcic. “We don’t tend to get in as many vegetables as we should. Our green drinks, NanoGreen by Biopharma and Macrogreens by Superfoods, come in powder form and are like having 10 vegetable servings in one glass. It’s a really good start to your day, reducing inflammation, increasing energy and supporting detoxification.”

To get your pantry started with healthy ingredients, add these 10 foods in your shopping cart on your next trip to the grocery store:

1. BERRIES — they’re a great source of fiber, especially raspberries with 8 grams per cup. Blueberries are packed with antioxidants that help keep your memory sharp and strawberries give you a full daily dose of vitamin C.

2. EGGS — this high-quality protein gives your meal staying power. The yolks contain lutein and zeaxanthin, two antioxidants that help keep your eyes healthy and may reduce age-related macular degeneration. Lutein may also shield the skin from UV rays.

3. BEANS — they’re a good plant-based source of iron; paired with a vitamin C-rich food like sweet potatoes or lemon juice will aid in your body’s iron absorption. Beans also boost fiber, the soluble kind that benefits blood cholesterol levels.

4. NUTS — these nuggets are rich sources of heart-healthy unsaturated fats. Walnuts are at the top of the list with their high level of ALA, an omega-3 fatty acid linked to heart health and improved mood. Walnuts also help reduce total and bad LDL cholesterol while maintaining healthy levels of good HDL cholesterol.

5. ORANGES — rich in vitamin C, these sweet orbs are critical for producing white blood cells and antibodies that fight infections. They also contain powerful antioxidants that help protect cells from free radicals, produce skin-firming collagen and are high in fiber and folate.

6. SWEET POTATOES — these contain alpha and beta carotene which convert into an active form of vitamin A, keeping your eyes, bones and immune system healthy. “They’re one of the most nutritious vegetables in the land,” touted the Centers for Science in the Public Interest.

7. BROCCOLI — this green giant packs vitamins C, A and K, as well as folate. Its healthy dose of sulforaphane is thought to thwart cancer by stimulating the body’s detoxifying enzymes.

8. TEA — fresh home-brewed tea reduces the risk of Alzheimer’s, diabetes and some cancers, promotes healthier teeth, gums and bones because of flavonoids.

9. SPINACH — this powerhouse vegetable contains vitamins A, C, K and E, plus fiber, iron, calcium, potassium, magnesius and folate.

10. YOGURT — this dairy product’s “good” bacteria helps maintain gut health and reduces the incidence of intestinal illnesses. Rich in calcium, it also contains phosphorous, potassium, zinc, riboflavin, vitamin B12 and protein.

Most people need to consume more whole foods, which will make for better overall health. Below are 10 food items that can easily be added to anyone’s diet.

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I’d also add coconut oil to the list, which contains naturally saturated fatty acids that are your body’s preferred source of sustainable energy.

Marjie Andrejcic
Marjie’s Gluten Free Pantry

“I’d also add coconut oil to the list, which contains naturally saturated fatty acids that are your body’s preferred source of sustainable energy.”

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