5 PROVEN WAYS TO

BOOST YOUR ENERGY

TRIED-AND-TRUE IDEAS FOR BUSY MOMS BEYOND A CUP OF COFFEE

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INTRO

You can have your coffee and enjoy it too. But what if you're experiencing an ongoing exhaustion that a cup of coffee or two (or three) doesn't seem to touch? Or you may notice you don't have the energy to do everything you need or want to do.

Sometimes our expectations are unrealistic. Afterall, we moms can be pretty hard on ourselves. But sometimes you know it's more than impossible goals and you are struggling to do the things you used to do. Why is that and **how do you get your energy back?**

MY STORY

I'm Erika and I have experienced bone-numbing fatigue that zapped my energy for years. At one point, it was so bad, I could hardly get out of bed. I had what some people would call "Chronic Fatigue Syndrome." **With four children, including a son who has high functioning autism, I couldn't live like that.**

After much research and advocating for myself (because most doctors don't take fatigue seriously), I learned that I had hypothyroidism, a condition where my thyroid was weakened and functioning poorly. Some of the common symptoms of thyroid issues are fatigue, weight gain, hair loss, brittle nails, etc. I had all of the above.

In addition to thyroid issues, I developed Hashimoto's disease (an autoimmune disorder where my immune system attacked my thyroid. I have since recovered and no longer have Hashimotos!) I also had and am still prone to Adrenal Fatigue.

Adrenal fatigue is becoming an epidemic across America as we push ourselves to do more and more. In truth, something has to give and if we don't take care of ourselves, that will be our health, whether it's physical, mental, or most likely a combination of the two.

Over the past few years, I've learned a lot about energy levels and most of all, **how to improve this vital part of life.** Now, I feel great with lots of energy. Sure, I have some days where I feel less energetic than others or times when I feel a little rundown, but now I know how to listen to my body and make simple, yet highly effective changes when needed.

If I can get my energy back, so can you! I'm going to share my favorite tips on how to get to the bottom of your energy loss and most of all, how to feel better in this book.

FIRST, A DISCLAIMER

Remember we are all individuals so what has worked for me may not work for you. You may need to follow just one of the tips in this book or you may need all of them, like I did. Personally, I do recommend a combination of all 5 because not only are they likely to increase your energy levels, but they can help improve your overall well-being and health.

You should also remember that I am not a medical professional and nothing you read here should be taken as medical advice. Always talk to a medical professional if you have concerns or questions about your own health and what is right for you.

Also remember that fatigue, especially severe, ongoing exhaustion, can be a symptom of a more serious issue. If this is the case for you, please do not hesitate to seek help from a qualified medical professional.

Next, you need to understand that the ideas in this book do work, however they are not likely to be instant fixes. It also depends on you as an individual.

If you've had low energy for a short period of time, you'll probably be able to gain more energy more quickly.

However, if you're like me and have dealt with low energy for an extended time and/or it's more severe, it may take longer and more dedication to see results.

Ultimately, it's about making yourself a priority so you can feel better.

Hang in there; it is absolutely possible to feel great again!

Tip: You don't have to tackle all five tips for boosting energy right away. I did things slowly one at a time myself. You can start with just one of the tips and see how you're feeling with the adjustments you may make. Then, when you're ready and able, you can try another.

PART I

DETECTIVE MODE

The first thing you need to do is put on your Sherlock Holmes' detective hat and think back to when you first started feeling a lack of energy.

- Do you have a newborn baby?
- Do you have a special needs child, perhaps like myself - a child or teen who has autism?
- Is your home life stressful with a less-than-supportive spouse?
- Are you dealing with an outside-the-home stressful situation, for example, your job or maybe you have an ill extended family member you are helping to care for?
- Perhaps you agreed to new activities this school year, but it's wearing you out.

There are many things that can affect us and drain our energy. If you can start to pinpoint what those things are, you can start to take steps to help yourself. Sometimes you can do something about the cause.

Maybe you need to say "no" more often. This is often far easier said than done, but if you can learn the practice of setting healthy boundaries for yourself and your children, you will reap the benefits, both physically and mentally.

If you have a teething baby or your kids have a nasty virus, you may not be able to fix it immediately, however, you can remind yourself that "this too will pass."

Think about the things in your life that may be affecting your energy levels. Be honest with yourself.

Sometimes taking a step back and looking at your situation with a new perspective can be a real eye-opener. Maybe you didn't realize just how much you are doing or how much you have on your plate. You are probably doing far more than you realize.

Regardless of where you are at in life, there is almost always something you can do to help support yourself. This could be some big changes or maybe a few simple tweaks that can help.

For example, are you drinking enough water? Dehydration can lead to a lack of energy too.

Another thing to consider that is often overlooked is caffeine. Too much caffeine can have the opposite effect and make your more tired. This can sometimes be the cause of tired adrenal glands because caffeine makes them work harder.

My fatigue worsened after my youngest was born and continued after he was a year old. At that point, he was sleeping well through the night and when I was still exhausted, I began investigating to see what else might be affecting me.

Boost Your Energy By...

What are the top things you feel are contributing to your low energy levels?

Jot down your thoughts, especially the first things that come to mind. Be honest - you don't have to show this to anyone else.

Now that you've played detective, let's move on to the practice tips for getting your energy back.

I encourage you to read each of these ideas and even if one doesn't feel right or make sense for you right now, keep it in mind for future reference.

TIP #1

GET ENOUGH SLEEP

While some people can get by on a few hours of sleep, others need more in order to function well. When you're a busy mom, the chances are pretty high that you're not getting enough sleep.

I know this is a tough one because if you choose sleep, you have to say 'no' to something else, like some much needed "you-time." Believe me, I get it. The kids are finally in bed after a struggle, the house is quiet, and you have to choose between finishing the dishes and throwing in a load of laundry so everyone will have clean clothes tomorrow or vegging in front of your favorite show (which is what you really want to do) or going to bed. It's not an easy choice, because either way you will be sacrificing something.

I will say that from personal experience, when you prioritize sleep more often (not necessarily all the time), you WILL feel more energetic.

I am personally very affected by a lack of sleep. I have learned (through trial and error and mostly listening to my body) that I feel the best when I get 7 to 8 hours of sleep. The ideal amount of sleep for me is 8 hours, but most days I do well with somewhere in the 7-8 hour range. If I get less than that, I notice a definite decrease in my energy levels. And if I'm feeling run down or am getting sick, I need even more sleep, like a solid 8 to 9 hours.

Back when I was doing very poorly and in the thick of chronic fatigue, I needed 9 hours of sleep every night.

You may do well on 6 hours of sleep each night, but if you are often worn out, you probably need more.

I know it's not fun to be the one to say "I have to head home so I can go to bed" or not get up at the crack of dawn to work out (by the way, I have tried that maybe three times in my whole life and it did NOT work for me), but remember, it's more important that you're feeling well.

Practical Tip: Try prioritizing your sleep for at least 3 nights in a row. Aim for one more hour of sleep than you usually get and see how you feel. You may need to work up to even more sleep than that, but it's important to be practical too. However, if reading this has reminded you that you are desperately short on sleep and it is possible (not necessarily easy) for you to make this happen, aim for a higher number.

Boost Your Energy By...

Prioritize your sleep by allowing yourself 30 more minutes of sleep each night for 3-4 nights in a row.

Keep track of your sleep and how you feel. Listen to your body and if needed, take it a step farther by aiming for even more sleep.

TIP #2

EXERCISE

Exercise is a tricky one because if you're chronically exhausted like I was, it can actually make you feel worse. But that's usually extreme cases and chances are, light exercise will help you feel better.

Though if you are a dedicated fitness fan, you might need to lower your activity levels a little depending on what's going on with the rest of your life.

One of the challenges with exercise is that there's always someone who is doing more than you. You might do 15 minutes of pilates and then see an acquaintance do an hour on Facebook with her washboard abs. That can be deflating.

This comparison trap has caught me a few times too. But I've had to remember - and I will remind you here too - that we are all different. Maybe that fit mom simply has more time and energy than you do. That doesn't make her better or you better. It just means you're different and that's okay.

There's also the expectation factor. We might set the bar too high and become discouraged when we can't find the time to fit that in. **Sometimes you need to do less and remember that that's okay too.**

I get it. I'm not a runner and I've never had a desire to try hot yoga. I've found over the years that when it comes to me exercising, **something is better than nothing**.

You see, I used to try to set up these plans of exercising for an hour, whether it was a brisk walk around my neighborhood or moderate yoga, etc. But that wasn't realistic for me, so I've learned to tone it down and now I actually exercise consistently.

Now I simply walk one or two miles every day with my dog and the fresh air and brisk movement energizes me (and wears out my doggy.) Occasionally, I'll push myself to do something more, but if I'm stretched for time I don't worry about it.

I also love yoga and try to fit in a 20-minute workout when I can (usually on the rainy days when I don't want to venture out for a walk). But doing both a 2-mile walk and 20 minutes of yoga in one day? It's rarely do-able for my busy routine and I've learned to let that go.

Find what works for **you** when it comes to exercise.

Maybe your best friend loves one thing but that thing doesn't float your boat. One of my best friends loves karate and while we have often done things together with similar interests, karate isn't something I'm interested in.

Exercise doesn't have to be an hour at the gym. It can be anything that gets you moving. It could be walking with a good friend for accountability and fun. Or perhaps a weekly Pilates or kickboxing class is more your style.

Or maybe you need something very simple because you already have enough things on your busy schedule. In this case, try tracking your steps with a

pedometer (tip: most smartphones now have built-in technology to do this.)

Simply being more mindful of your activity level can help you do more without a huge effort.

I started tracking my steps a few months back and that's helped me a lot. How? Seeing that number motivates me to walk more. Even if the weather is awful and I can't walk around the neighborhood, I'll make sure I walk more around the house or go grocery shopping (that always adds at least couple thousand steps.)

Find out what works for you with exercising. If you're currently doing well, then realize it is making a difference. But remember it's okay to change it up, try new things, and do something different too.

Boost Your Energy By...

Get moving by exercising in your favorite way. If you don't have a favorite way to exercise, try something new.

Exercise 3-5 times this week and see how you feel.

Remember: keep it simple and don't overdo it. Do what works the best for you.

TIP #3

YOUR DIET

Diet is even more individual than exercise. I encourage you to take a close look at what you're eating and also remember that what works for someone else will likely be different for you.

For me, I've learned that gluten makes me tired and I avoid it now. I've been mostly gluten-free for about four years now and that was one of the best things I ever did for myself.

Now, after years of healing, I can eat a small amount of gluten on occasion, but if eat a large amount (ie a piece of bread or a pumpkin spice donut), I get an awful fatigue feeling in the middle of my chest and feel crappy the next day. (I don't have the common digestive issues from gluten that most people get, isn't that interesting?) For me, that is motivation to avoid gluten. And it's not something I do grudgingly, I avoid gluten gladly because I feel so much healthier and energetic when I do.

Am I saying you should avoid gluten too? No. However, I do suggest you **look closely at your diet and consider what changes you might make to help you feel better.**

Don't jump on a fad 'diet' just because others are recommending it. Do some research and **decide what's right for you.**

You may need to be more mindful of what you are eating and focus on eating generally healthier.

Sugar and carbs can and do zap your energy, so simply reducing your intake of those two categories can make a difference. (I know it's never "simple" but even being more mindful of your sugar and carb consumption may help.)

Sometimes it may be as simple as eating more. Many moms are so busy and often on the go that they don't eat enough and when they do eat, it's nibbling leftovers from the kids or snack food that does nothing to fuel them.

Food is meant to fuel our bodies. The question to ask yourself is **does your food fuel you?**

There are plenty of more drastic eating plans like Paleo (grain-free, back-to-basics whole foods) or keto (very low carb, high fat). Some people have had fantastic results on these eating plans but for others, it doesn't work as well.

For me, I've learned that I feel my best when I consume a moderate amount of carbs. This is as simple as eating a piece of fruit mid-morning, like fresh pineapple or a banana. This keeps me full longer and I feel more energetic. Low carb (even with high fat) has consistently made me feel exhausted.

Again, this is something to think about for what works for you. The best thing you can do when it comes to food is listen to YOUR body.

Boost Your Energy By...

Write down what and when you eat for the next 7 days and pay attention to how you feel.

This is not about counting calories or measuring quantities, but simply noting what you've eaten and when.

The "when" is important because this alone can be very valuable. Many moms are so busy, they skip breakfast and don't find time to eat until later in the day when they are so hungry, they reach for the first carb-loaded food they can find, like chips or another readily available food. Making some simple changes in this area alone may make a huge difference for you.

The "what" is important because it will start to tell you what fuels and nourishes your body compare to what does not.

Look for patterns and be sure to write down how you are feeling.

TIP #4

SUPPLEMENTS

Supplementing with vitamins, minerals, herbs, etc. isn't for everyone, but it can prove very helpful for some.

I learned a long time ago that a multivitamin did nothing for me and was practically throwing money down the drain. Eventually I learned that it was far more effective (and even cheaper) to buy the individual vitamins at a dose I needed.

Here are a few supplements you may find helpful:

Adaptogenic herbs

Ashwagandha, Rhodiola, and Holy Basil are adaptogenic herbs that can help support your adrenal glands which help regulate how your body responds to stress. Simply put, if your adrenals are stressed, you will almost certainly have less energy. These herbs can help boost your adrenal glands which in turn can help boost your energy.

I have found Ashwagandha a can't-live-without herb for me as it helps me feel calmer and better able to handle life, which means I waste less energy on feeling stressed and overwhelmed. And when I take a capsule of Rhodiola with Chaga mushroom powder in the morning, I find I'm able to wake up and get going faster than when I don't.

Beef liver

Beef Liver - while liver may sound gross, it is a nutrient dense food with many benefits and has been known to help boost energy levels for many people. If the

thought of eating liver grosses you out, relax; there are beef liver supplements available for easy, no-fork-required consumption. Grass-fed dessicated beef liver capsules are easy to swallow and you won't taste anything.

I have supplemented with grass-fed beef liver capsules for 2 years now and I definitely notice more energy when I'm taking them compared to the times when I run out and go without for a few days.

Note: you likely will not notice an immediate energy boost with beef liver because it's not like caffeine. It's more of a slow and steady gradual fuel toward increased levels of energy.

Mushrooms

Medicinal mushrooms can be extremely helpful and not just for boosting overall wellness, but improving immune function and increasing energy levels.

I discovered medicinal mushrooms about a year ago and they are one of my favorite supplements EVER.

If you're not a fan of mushrooms, don't worry; you can supplement with medicinal mushrooms using capsules or powders that you can add to smoothies, etc.

I do not like mushrooms in my food (I never have) and this is why I hesitated with trying medicinal mushrooms for so long, but I don't taste the mushrooms the way I take them (in powder form) and they work great for me.

The following mushrooms in particular can be helpful for boosting energy:

Cordyceps can help improve energy levels and increase endurance. As an added bonus, it has anti-aging properties!

Chaga can help boost the immune system, fight inflammation, and increase energy levels.

Reishi can help boost the immune system and help you feel more balanced with reduced stress, thanks to its adaptogen properties.

Lion's Mane can be great for improved cognitive function. If you find it hard to focus or you simply have 'mommy brain', Lion's Mane is fantastic! When I take Lion's Mane, I always notice I'm more productive when I write and the words flow more easily. Coincidence? Possibly, but I doubt it.

I regularly use a combination of the medicinal mushrooms above to help boost my immune system, improve my energy levels, increase focus, reduce inflammation and more great benefits.

Please note: I highly doubt you would be tempted to do this, but just in case, please do NOT go pick mushrooms by yourself unless you are well trained in the harvesting of mushrooms as some wild mushrooms can be highly poisonous.

There are many more supplements that may help boost your energy and again, this depends on you as an individual. These are simply the supplements that I have found the most effective for me.

For a list of the supplements I use and love, visit my blog **here**.

Boost Your Energy By...

Research supplements and talk to your medical provider about what may be beneficial for you.

TIP #5

SELF-CARE

According to Oxford Dictionaries, self-care is: "The practice of taking an active role in protecting one's own well-being and happiness, in particular during periods of stress."

It sounds simple, but self-care is something many of us struggle with doing.

Why is this? When it comes down to it, self-care is a mindset. In order to take care of yourself first **you have to believe that you deserve it**. If, deep down, you don't believe you deserve it, you will never do it.

I understand this because I had low self-esteem for years. I constantly looked down on myself, wondering why I was such a failure. Truth be told, I was and am a fighter and have overcome incredible odds to become the person I am today. I know that now, but there was a long time where I didn't believe it.

Let me tell you: **you are important and you are incredible just the way you are**.

You are enough. You don't have to be someone else, do anything else, or change anything about yourself; **you are enough right now**.

If that's hard for you to truly embrace, that's okay and it's normal for that to take time. Like I said, it took me years - specifically 2 solid years of regularly looking in the mirror and telling myself "you are enough!" before I started to slowly believe it.

One of the first ways you can start to do self-care is to simply be kinder to yourself. We are so hard on ourselves and are usually our own worst critics. Tell that inner mean girl to be quiet and replace her cruel words with kindness.

Instead of focusing on everything you're not doing, think about everything you ARE doing. This includes anything - from soothing your teething baby who will not sleep to helping calm your autistic child from a meltdown once more. All of that matters.

You matter.

Here's a simple tip: start by doing one small thing each day for you. Here are a few ideas to inspire you:

- Put on makeup when you normally don't
- Buy yourself that new book or bullet journal you've been wanting to try
- Schedule the dentist appointment you've been putting off
- Put the kids to bed early and enjoy a hot bath or ask your spouse to handle it
- Enjoy a latte from your favorite coffee shop as a special treat

Remember: **if you aren't okay, your family won't be either.** Whether they acknowledge it or not, you are so important to them. Take care of you so you can take care of them too.

Boost Your Energy By...

Do one small thing for yourself every day. Use one of the examples above or come up with your own way to show yourself love and appreciation.

CONCLUSION

Imagine yourself with more energy again.

Imagine getting out of bed when your alarm goes off or the kids get you up without needing three cups of coffee to function.

Imagine if your coffee was a nice part of your morning but you didn't require it to wake up.

Imagine if you were able to do the things on your to do list without feeling overwhelmed or completely exhausted.

Imagine having energy to play with your children and even do the extra things you've been longing to do.

It is absolutely possible to get more energy and be able to think clearly again. I am living proof of this and I know **you can do it too**.

Have hope. You've got this!

ABOUT ERIKA

Erika Bragdon is the creator and owner of LivingWellMom.com. She lives in New Hampshire with her husband and four children, including her oldest son who has high functioning autism. She loves baking, coffee, and her mini farm with chickens, rabbits, and goats. She overcame years of chronic fatigue, anxiety, depression, and other health challenges by making self-care a priority alongside simple healthy lifestyle changes.

Because of her experience with poor health and being well acquainted with that feeling of defeatedness, Erika is passionate about making healthy living reality for busy moms, including autism moms. She believes it is possible for every mom to take back her health by taking an individual approach with one SIMPLE step at a time. She helps take away the overwhelm and pressure to be perfect and shares this message of hope with simple, realistic tips and ideas on her blog, Living Well Mom, along with her email list, books, and other offerings.

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