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Turbocharge Your Metabolism; Burn Calories Even While You Sleep.

Metabolism.

Metabolism may sound mysterious and complicated, but it's actually pretty simple: It's the amount of energy (aka calories) our bodies need daily. About 70 percent of those calories are used for basic functions like breathing and [blood circulation](#). Another 20 percent is fuel for physical activity, including working out, walking and even holding our bodies upright while standing. The remaining 10 percent helps us digest what we eat. The trouble starts when you consume more calories than your body needs to do these activities, that's when you put on the weight.

Genes also can determine the speed of your metabolism. Genes contribute to the levels of appetite-control hormones we have in our bodies. Some people are genetically programmed to be active, they are naturally restless and use more energy, those are the lucky high-metabolism types.

Gender also plays a role. The average male's metabolism is about 10 to 15 percent higher than a female's. That's mainly because men have more [body fat](#) than women do, which means they burn more calories. Not only that, but women's bodies are designed to hold on to body fat in case of pregnancy.

The good news is that you can make your metabolism faster, despite genetics and gender. These are some simple ways to turbocharge your metabolism.

Exercise.

Exercising is the number-one way to keep your metabolism burning. The more lean muscle you have, the more calories you burn all day. That's because muscle uses energy even when you're resting. Exercise enough and you can help prevent the natural metabolic slowdown that can begin as early as your late twenties.

Try to workout five days a week. Do three days of aerobic activity and two days of weight lifting.

Aerobic intervals will help you maximize your burn, doubling the number of calories you burn during a workout. Intervals also keep your metabolic rate higher than a steady pace routine does for as long as an hour after you stop exercising. That means you can burn as many as 65 additional calories after you workout. The ideal metabolism boosting interval routine is to go hard for a couple minutes, then take it down to an easier pace for a minute or two, and keep alternating like that throughout your workout.

Aim for exercises that require your body to work its hardest by using a lot of muscle groups, that means running is better than cycling. Do a variety of activities like running up stairs, jumping rope and squat thrusts for two minutes each, aiming for a total of 10 minutes.

Too many women fear that they will bulk up if they use weight machines and steer clear of them. Don't make this mistake. A head to toe strength routine will turbocharge your metabolism. Add five pounds of muscle to your body and you can burn as many as 600 calories an hour during your workout. Choose a weight lifting routine that targets your core, legs, arms, chest and shoulders. Do a 20 to 30 minute moderate intensity cardio routine before you go to sleep to keep your metabolism burning all night.

Never skip meals.

Eating breakfast will switch your metabolism from idle to high speed. This is because your level of cortisol, a hormone that helps you use calories to build muscle, is highest just before you get up in the morning. When you eat in the morning your body is primed to turn those calories into muscle, the only time of the day this happens. Also the more frequently you eat, the more your metabolism "revs up". Missing a meal or going too long between meals, brings your metabolism to a crawl. Your body switches into starvation mode and your system slows down to conserve energy. Keep your metabolism burning by having three healthy meals 300 to 400 calories and two snacks 200 to 300 calories every day. Eat smart foods, have a serving of protein with every meal. Not only does your body need it to help build lean muscle mass, but protein also takes more calories to digest. Have low-fat yogurt at breakfast, chicken in your salad at lunch and salmon for dinner. Between meals, snack on protein rich walnuts. Eat more foods that slowly release the sugar you need for sustained energy, like high-fiber fruits and veggies and whole grain breads and pastas. Eat foods high in fiber three hours before your workout and you'll also burn fat.

Go to bed earlier.

Research has found that those who slept seven to eight hours a night had the lowest risk for major weight gain. Depriving yourself of sleep throws your bodies hunger hormones leptin and gherlin out of whack, making you more likely to overeat. When you get two hours less sleep than you normally do, your system becomes stressed and produces about 50 percent more cortisol, that triggers your appetite. Deprive yourself of sleep for too long and you could be facing a serious weight problem

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