

Burn Baby Burn

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High metabolism equals weight loss and skinny jeans. Low metabolism equals weight gain and depression in the department store, or at least that's what we think of when we hear the word metabolism. In reality, that isn't too far from the truth. Metabolism refers to the process our body uses to get energy out of food. Our metabolic rate is the rate at which we use that energy, or burn those calories. If you have a high metabolism, you have a high metabolic rate, and will burn a larger amount of calories during the day than someone with a low metabolism. So, the question is, what can we do to give our metabolism a serious boost?



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1. Get More Sleep

The typical American gets just under seven hours of sleep a night with 15% of adults receiving less than six hours of sleep a night during the week. Our bodies require between seven and nine hours each night for optimal health. Too little sleep and/or poor quality sleep can lead to weight gain and obesity.

2. Eat a Balanced Diet

A balanced diet is one in which about half the calories are from carbohydrates, one fifth are from protein, and less than one third are from fat. Try to spread the calories you consume throughout the day. For some, spreading those calories out over several small and frequent meals works best. For others limiting those calories to set meal times with no snacking between is the best option.

3. Hydrate

When well hydrated, not only is fat burning increased but muscle breakdown is decreased.

4. Exercise

In order to increase our metabolism, we need to increase muscle tissue. Increasing activity through things such as endurance training and high intensity interval training can help improve the metabolic rate. Do not get scared by the words "high-intensity". Start with a stroll around the block and increase your activity as you are able and/or motivated to do so.

This list can be a bit daunting at first glance, but it isn't an all-or-nothing list. Start slow and start simple. Making one change at a time and allowing yourself to adapt can have a significant impact on your metabolism and on your life!

If you'd like to learn more about increasing your metabolism, visit a registered dietitian and/or check out www.eatright.org.



Christin Swingle is a Registered Dietitian and recent graduate of WVU Healthcare's dietetic internship program. As the nation's food and nutrition experts, registered dietitians are committed to improving the health of their communities. To find a registered dietitian in your area, visit www.eatright.org and click on "Find a Registered Dietitian."