



## 3 Nutrition Tips to Boost Your Energy for Spring

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Cathy Mazanec, MS, RDN, CSSD, LDN

Ole Man Winter has taken his sweet time getting out of here this year challenging even the most complacent weather watchers. But, last night I finally heard it - the beautiful trill of the Southern crickets. If you're not from North Carolina or parts nearby, you may be unfamiliar with this phenomenon. It's a high pitched chorus of the sweetest sound as it often designates that winter is coming to an end and warm weather is approaching (at least that's what it means to me). Last night the crickets performed an extraordinary symphony in high volume as they, along with us, celebrated the melted snow and the warm temps that blessed us the past few days.

We still may have a few more weeks of Winter to endure, but Spring is on the horizon. So, it's a good time to shed your hibernation mentality and boost your energy for the warm months ahead. With these simple strategies, you can add extra pep to your day no matter what's going on outside.

### Tip #1 – Anchor all of your feedings

This means, whenever you eat, include a lean protein, healthy fat and nutrient-dense carbohydrate in your meal or snack. These 3 macronutrients digest at different rates so when eaten together, they provide a slow, sustained release of glucose into your bloodstream giving you hours of energy. In the US, many of our meals and snacks are very carb heavy which gives you a short energy boost followed by a quick energy drop. Not the best way to fuel for the long term.

So, make it a goal to avoid carb-only meals and snacks. The exception would be if you're about to do a workout or endurance event. Then carbs-only is appropriate to fuel you for the next hour or so.

#### Lean Proteins

- **Grass fed beef, pork and bison**
- **Low mercury, cold water fish: wild Alaskan salmon, sardines, anchovies**
- **Free range, pastured poultry and eggs**
- **Organic dairy**
- **Beans and lentils**

#### Healthy Fats

- **Extra virgin olive oil**
- **Avocado**
- **Nuts and seeds**
- **Natural nut butters**
- **Olives**
- **Coconut oil (small amounts)**
- **Organic grass fed butter or ghee (small amounts)**

#### Nutrient-Dense Carbohydrates

- **Whole intact grains: steel cut oats, quinoa, wheat berries, amaranth**
- **Sweet potatoes**
- **Winter squashes: butternut, acorn, spaghetti**
- **Whole fruit, especially berries**
- **Sprouted grain breads**
- **Seed crackers**

## Tip #2 – Clean up your carbs

Are you a sugar addict? If yes, you can bet this is contributing to energy drain (though that may seem counterintuitive). Commit to getting sugar and white processed carbs out of your eating plan. Or at least, reduce them to a minimum. An occasional splurge of a sweet or savory treat is not a problem but a daily diet of chips, white bread and crackers, cookies, candies, soft drinks, sweet tea and more can wreak havoc on your energy level and blood glucose.

Assess your current eating plan and determine how many of these energy robbing items you eat daily. Then begin replacing them, one by one, with healthier options.

Here are a few examples:

<u>Replace This:</u>	<u>With This:</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Sweet tea</b></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Green or black hot tea with lemon (use a couple of drops of honey, if needed)</b></li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Dessert</b></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>3/4 oz 70% or higher dark chocolate</b></li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Soft drinks</b></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#"><u>Sparkling infused water</u></a></li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Fruit juice</b></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Low sodium vegetable juice</b></li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>White rice and potatoes</b></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Brown or wild rice, sweet potatoes, winter squashes, quinoa, whole intact grains</b></li></ul>

## Tip #3 – Start your day with protein

After a night of sleep and fasting, our energy gas tank is empty. Breakfast is a critical meal for refueling your tank to provide energy for the coming day. Unfortunately, many breakfast foods and traditions are high in sugar and white processed carbohydrates. Dumping these foods into our systems first thing in the morning is like putting diesel fuel in a regular gas tank. We're asking for trouble and paving the way for a huge energy drain in about 1-2 hours.

If you're a high carb breakfast person, consider changing up your tradition and include a healthy protein source in your a.m. meal. Give it a try and notice the difference this makes in your satiety and vigor the rest of the morning.

Here are some yummy ideas for protein-packed, energy-sustaining breakfasts:

- [Apple and peanut butter sandwiches](#)
- Steel cut oats with 1 Tbsp cashews, coconut milk and 1-2 Tbsp protein powder
- Plain Greek yogurt with 1 Tbsp chia seeds, 1 Tbsp almonds, ½ cup blueberries
- ½ avocado with 1 egg in the hole, baked
- 2–3 links of organic turkey sausage, 1 egg and ¼ cup raspberries
- [Homemade protein bars](#)
- Grilled chicken with spinach and a small sweet potato
- Egg muffins and fresh fruit - Check out the [full blog post](#) for this recipe