



# The little book of energy

Smile



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## ENERGY FOR LIFE

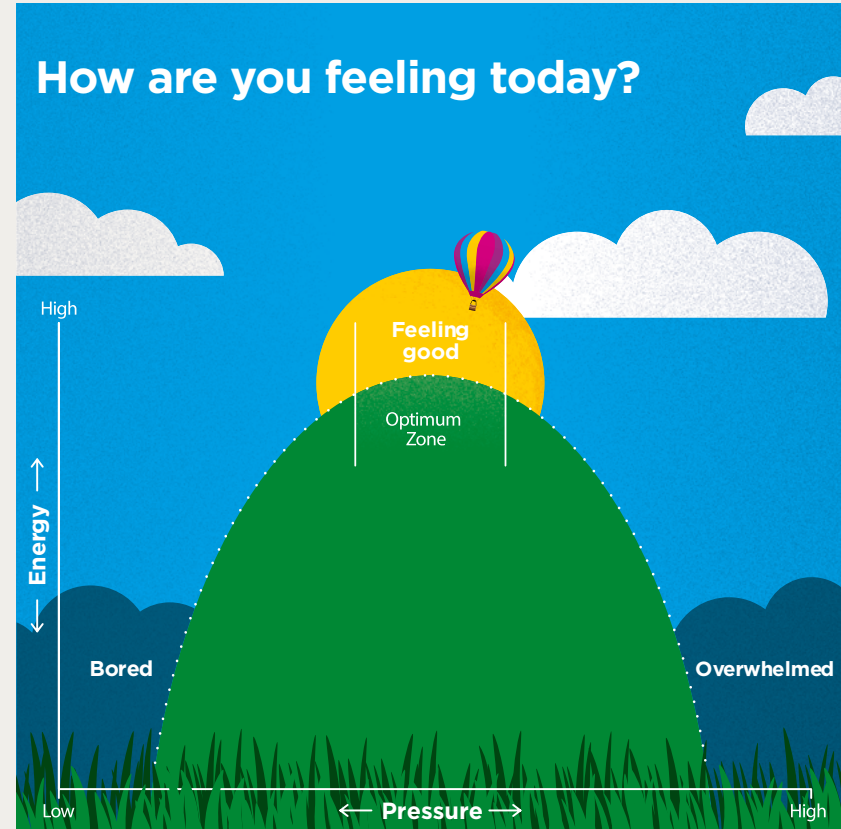
### Energy is at the heart of everything

It's crucial for our health and happiness, brightening up our days both at home and at work.

On our best days, when everything just flows, we feel full of energy and can tackle anything – for our customers, our team and our family. But if the pressure builds too high and we don't take care of our energy, we can start to feel stressed or overwhelmed.

Pressure can come from many different places – like work, family, friends and hobbies. And sometimes we can put pressure on ourselves through things like our own high standards or feelings of guilt. Tuning into warning signs or 'red flags' like poor sleep, irritability, or feeling low can help us realise that we're starting to drift away from feeling good.

## How are you feeling today?



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So what can we do to make sure we have the right levels of energy for everything we need and want to do?

1

Take better care of ourselves – from diet and exercise to sleep and spending time with loved ones.

2

Make smart choices to manage the demands in our life.

3

Understand how our attitude and mindset affect what we do.

**This book will help you think about the changes you can make to keep you more energised.**







## KEEPING YOURSELF IN GOOD SHAPE

When you don't have the right amount of energy, you can feel tired, slow, or irritable.

Stress hormones like adrenaline and cortisol can give you energy but long-term stress could be harmful to your health.

**There are lots  
of ways to  
keep yourself  
in good shape.**

## Physical activity

Exercise can help keep your heart and mind healthy. And your body feels and works better when you are physically active throughout the week.

### Did you know that being physically active can have a positive impact on your mood?

What could you do to introduce more physical activity into your life, especially if you have a job where you sit down a lot?

- Walk or cycle to work or get off the bus a stop earlier.
- Take a brisk walk with a colleague during a break.
- Have walking meetings.
- Find an exercise class you enjoy and commit to going with a friend.





## Downtime

It's important to completely switch off and take time for yourself.

Long periods of stress without relaxation can increase stress hormone levels. And this can leave you feeling anxious, raise your blood pressure, affect your weight and interfere with your sleep.

## Did you know that slower breathing can help you feel more relaxed?

Take a deep, slow breath in and breathe out even slower. Repeat a few times.

Everyone will have something different that helps them to switch off, for example:

- listening to music
- reading a book
- gardening
- arts and crafts like painting.

What's yours?

## Sleep

Sleep is vital to recharge your energy.

A good night's sleep refreshes your mind for the day ahead. You should try and get between seven and nine hours of sleep each night, or each time you sleep if you work night shifts.

**Did you know that less than six hours of sleep could increase your risk of diabetes, cardiovascular disease, coronary heart disease and obesity?**

How much sleep do you get on average?  
How could you improve your sleep?

- **Take some time to relax properly before bed.** Have a warm bath, read or listen to quiet music.
- **Avoid caffeine** too close to bedtime.
- **Write to-do lists** for the next day to organise your thoughts and clear your mind of any distractions.
- **Only get into bed when you're sleepy.** If it's hard to fall asleep, get out of bed, go to another room and do something you find relaxing. Return to bed when you feel sleepy.
- **Don't sleep in if you've had a bad night.** It will make it harder to get to sleep the following night.





## Diet

Eating a healthy balanced diet can help you have the energy you need throughout the day and when you get home from work.

Eating at regular times may also make it easier to sustain your energy levels.

### Did you know most people don't need to take vitamin supplements to improve their energy levels?

What could you do to make good food choices on a busy schedule?

- Plan your meals.
- Schedule a food preparation day – involve family and friends and make it fun.
- Where possible, choose wholemeal or wholegrain varieties of bread, pasta or rice. They're higher in fibre and will keep you fuller for longer.
- Try to avoid snacks with artificial or added sugar – they may give you a burst of energy, but it will wear off quickly (and too much can be bad for your teeth and waistline too).





## Social life and relationships

It's important to have the support and love of friends and family.

It's great to be able to share with friends, discuss good things and any problems that you may be facing, as well as help them with theirs.

## Did you know that laughter is great for your energy?

It inhibits the biological 'fight-or-flight' responses in your body, relaxing you and your mind.

### How could you get a better social balance in your life?

- Think about combining activities with social time. Take a walk with a friend, play a game or something else you like doing together.
- Turn the TV off and have a conversation.
- Make time for you and your partner – away from the family, just the two of you.

## MAKING GOOD CHOICES

### Shaking up your habits

Habits can sometimes stop you finding time for the things you enjoy and give you energy.

For example, turning on the TV without consciously deciding that you want to watch something. Or mindlessly scrolling through social media. Shaking up your habits can help you make different choices about how you use your time.

**Did you know  
that most of our  
choices are made  
unconsciously?**



What could you do to break existing habits and make better choices?

- **Be specific.**  
You are more likely to stick to something when you have identified the details e.g., what you want to do, when, where, how often and for how long.
- **Think about why you want to change something.**  
Why is it important to you?  
How will it make you feel?
- **Tell your team or family about the change you want to make.**  
You're more likely to stick to a goal when you have made a public commitment.
- **Start small.**  
Think about what you could change first rather than changing too much at once.
- **Think ahead and be prepared.**  
What might get in the way of your plan and what could you do instead?



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### Finding areas of flexibility

**Some people have more control over their days than others but look for where you do have choices and where there could be some flexibility.**

Think about things you could take more control of, sources of support and different things you could do to help get a better balance. Making different choices could also help you find slots of time for things you enjoy throughout the working week – not just on your days off.

### Did you know that prioritising what matters most can help you feel more in control on days when you feel overwhelmed?

What could you do to help balance your week?

- Use your diary to plan out slots of time for yourself – during work and non-work days.
- Think about how you could use your break times for things that give you energy.
- Talk to people. Could anyone share your demands at work or home to help create some time?
- Prioritise. What really matters in the next 20 minutes/hour/day?





## ATTITUDE AND MINDSET

**Your mindset is the way you think about things and can have a powerful impact on your choices and how you approach your life and work.**

For example, feeling guilty can sometimes stop you doing the things that are important to you. Giving yourself permission to make good choices can help you prioritise the things that help you feel more balanced and energised.

You can also react to things in different ways depending on whether you see it as a threat or a challenge. Like feeling worried if your manager asks for an update on something or just thinking they want the information.

**Being more conscious of the way you perceive things can help adapt your reactions.**

What could help you think differently about things?

Reframing is a technique to identify unhelpful thoughts and replace them with more positive ones. For example, if you are worried about a task, think about a previous time when you have done it well and reframe how you are thinking about the task ahead.



## Did you know that gratitude is strongly related to wellbeing?

Gratitude is regularly focusing on and appreciating the positive aspects of life.

### What could you do to increase your levels of gratitude?

- Write a list of the things you are grateful for on a regular basis.
- Think about positive experiences you have had recently. For example:
  - What have you done today that you feel good about?
  - Who have you helped today?
- Express your gratitude to others in person.

## Top tips

Focusing on some small, practical actions or activities that make you feel good can help you have the energy to do everything you need and want to do – even when life gets more demanding.

You could call these ‘non-negotiables’. What are yours? Tell your colleagues, friends and family about them so they can help you make time for them.

And remember that the way you think about things influences the choices you make, including your ability to make time for the things you enjoy.





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