

**ENERGY SHORTAGE?**

**You may be a victim of Hidden Energy Zappers**

**Have you lost that spring in your step?** You're dog-tired....and this feeling starts before you even get to Spinning® class? Not only is this feeling sabotaging your workouts, it is also slowly affecting other parts of your life.

Taking a serious look at some silent saboteurs can solve this "having a bad day/week/life" dilemma.

**• Low iron levels.**

About 12% of American women and 7% of men have an iron deficiency, which leaves you feeling totally drained and lethargic. A runner can be reduced to a "jogger" and still be tired. In Spinning classes, the effects can be even worse because you are indoors focusing on your heart rate monitor and literally not "moving." Vegetarians, dieters and athletes, especially bikers and runners are at an increased risk. Iron-rich foods such as meat, beans and cereals can keep iron levels high. To maximize absorption into your system, they are best consumed with a food high in Vitamin C. You can also purchase over-the-counter iron pills or multivitamins with iron. However, you may want to consult your doctor due to some small risks associated with the onset of too much iron in your system.

**• Low blood sugar.**

Food is energy. If you regularly skip meals—especially breakfast—you are going to pay dearly for it. In addition, meals should be well-balanced with the proper amount of carbs, protein and fats. Take a serious look at your diet, and slowly

make lifestyle changes.

**• Medications.**

Many drugs, including blood pressure medication and some birth control pills, can affect energy. Antibiotics can cause strange fluctuations in your strength. If you suspect that your medicine is zinging your stamina, check with your doctor about making a switch.

**• Poor sleep.**

Are you trying to survive on six hours of sleep? Quit it. Does your spouse snore? The quality of your sleep can have as much of an impact as the quantity. We often have to make a conscious effort to get in bed an hour earlier. This may be tough at times but will make you a much better athlete... and person. Turn down some of those engagements so you can turn down the sheets.

**• Unrecognized allergies.**

Histamines and other chemicals released by an allergic reaction can make people feel tired. Allergies can also interfere with breathing, which deprives your muscles of rich oxygen.

**• Dehydration.**

Are you getting enough water? Eight glasses plus? Think about it this way: your blood is practically 80 percent water. If you are dehydrated, it gets really thick and can't move around your body as effectively to efficiently feed your muscles with much needed oxygen. Then your heart has to pump much harder. Drink more.



**• Depression.**

Even mild forms of depression (e.g., from lack of sunlight) and anxiety are associated with low levels of serotonin, a chemical in the brain that can affect energy and mood. You may want to seek professional help if you think you may be a candidate for serotonin-increasing drugs such as Prozac.

**• Overtraining.**

Are you doing too much? Have you followed a hard/easy regiment or are you constantly pushing yourself day after day with no plan, no goal? What's the use if you are going to feel like this? Keep a journal of your daily workouts. Refer to it often to see if you are following a structured plan.

If you think that one or more of these factors has contributed to your low energy, there's good news: now you know what is wrong and can fix it fairly easily. It's also a good starting point from which to reevaluate your lifestyle and move forward. Best of all, it will bring the fun back into your workout so that you feel like you're "going out to play" again.