

Morning workout increases metabolism throughout the day?

[1]

Alice,

I have heard that if you exercise/work out in the morning before you eat breakfast that it will cause your metabolism to increase throughout the day, helping you to burn calories. Is this true?

Answer

Dear Reader,

When it comes to physical activity, both early birds and night owls experience a metabolism boost from getting their heart rates up. And, though there's a difference in *what* is burned when you're gettin' your sweat on before downing a bowl of cereal in the A.M., overall, morning workouts don't offer any extra metabolic benefits when compared to afternoon or evening exercise sessions. Additionally, skipping breakfast prior to a morning sweat session may not adequately get your engine running and enable you to sustain longer, more efficient workouts (if that's your jam). You might be happy to know though, there isn't just one way to rev up your metabolism (more on that later).

The key to burning calories (or increasing energy expenditure) is more complex than simply excising before or after breakfast. During exercise, muscles burn a combination of carbohydrates and fat. As an individual becomes more fit, her/his muscles utilize a greater percentage of fat for energy. Research indicates that while folks burn more fat when they're physically active before a meal, the total energy expenditure is equal regardless of the order (i.e., no matter if you eat breakfast before physical activity, or after). What it really comes down to is personal preference to eat or not to eat prior to getting active. That is a question only you can answer.

Before you forgo breakfast, you may also want to consider that many people have low blood sugar levels in the morning, which means they're low on energy. So, physical activity before breakfast could leave you feeling lightheaded and tired more quickly. In turn, this could translate to shorter, less intense workouts. Eating a small mix of carbohydrates and protein (e.g., one medium banana and a four ounce non-fat plain yogurt) will give you the energy for a more strenuous, fat burning, calorie-torching session.

Lastly, if a metabolism boost is what you're after, the [American Council on Exercise](#) [2] has a few additional tips:

- **Drink green tea.** The antioxidants and caffeine in green tea can cause a metabolism boost and green tea drinkers may burn up to an extra 70 to 100 calories per day.
- **Add spicy peppers to meals.** Capsaicin, the chemical in peppers that gives them their heat, is also responsible for boosting metabolism. It's theorized that metabolism increases because hot peppers literally heat you up — for every half degree that body temperature rises in Fahrenheit, metabolism is estimated to increase roughly seven percent.
- **Eat lean proteins.** While all foods create a thermic effect and will slightly raise your metabolism, eating protein provides a larger boost compared to eating carbohydrates or fats.
- **Incorporate strength training.** Muscle requires more calories to exist than body fat, so the more lean muscle tissue you have, the more calories you burn.
- **Add high intensity interval training (HIIT) to your workouts.** When you're doing cardiovascular exercise, HIIT keeps the body guessing by constantly alternating faster, more intense exercise periods with slower, shorter recovery paces. The body is forced to continually pump up the intensity and it helps exercisers to burn more calories and get in shape faster than if you exercise at a stable pace.

There are many strategies you can incorporate into and add onto your exercise routine to help you get your metabolism goin'. You've just got to figure out what works best for you!

Alice!

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