



# 5 Ways to Boost Your Energy

I think we can agree that being a leader is not easy work. It takes time, effort, and energy.

And as I'm sure you're experiencing, leaders are being asked to do more in less time and with fewer resources than ever before. It's draining, to say the least! All the dials are moving in the wrong direction, the 'more with less' gap is getting bigger, and we are trying to stretch ourselves to bridge it.

I know. I see it in my clients, and I've experienced it myself.

## CULTIVATING ENERGY

So whilst the need for effective, high-quality performance in workplaces is increasing, the tried and tested method of putting in longer hours can't work indefinitely because time is a limited resource. This is why we need to focus on managing our energy rather than our time in order to feel well, do well and lead well – because personal energy is a renewable resource.

Far from being intangible and inconsequential, energy influences you and the people in your life in significant ways. Studies have found that when our energy levels feel higher, our minds are sharper, our interactions with others are better, we have better health and fewer days of missed work, we feel more positive, and we persist amid daily challenges without burning out.

Rather than managing time, you can leverage your leadership impact by focusing on managing and replenishing personal energy. When you do this, you'll get more done, in less time, at a higher level of quality and in a more sustainable way.

Building and sustaining personal energy is exactly that – personal. There is no prescribed course and it is neither a one-off nor a one-size fits all. The actions below are evidence-based ways for you to boost your energy. Think of this as a personal energy experiment – if you try one and it doesn't 'fit', then try another, it might be 'just right'.

## 5 SOURCES OF PERSONAL ENERGY



### Physical Energy

Inadequate nutrition, exercise, sleep and rest diminish basic energy levels and the ability to manage emotions and focus attention. Physical energy is the foundation of your energy resource.

**Action:** Go to bed at the same time for the next 7 nights and aim for between 7-8 hours' sleep – this is the optimal amount for adults.

### Mental Energy

'Switching time' – a temporary shift in attention from one task to another – increases the time needed to finish the primary task by as much as 25% and drains mental energy.

**Action:** Minimise switching time by blocking time in your day to do like activities together e.g. creative writing at the start of the day.





## Emotional Energy

Being able to effectively and appropriately manage emotions improves the quality of relationships and levels of personal energy, even in the face of external pressures.

**Action:** Take a one-minute time out when you feel yourself getting 'triggered' by bringing your attention to your breathing and intentionally slowing it down. Taking three deep breathes from your belly rather than your chest will reset your nervous system and reduce stress levels.

## Relational Energy

Our brains are hard-wired for connection. The mental and emotional resources we gain from connecting with others makes us more effective and satisfied at work, and beyond.

**Action:** The evidence supporting the positive impact of expressing gratitude on relationships is compelling. Whether you choose to speak, write it or 'say it with flowers', take the time to let someone know how much you appreciate their efforts and the impact they've had in your life. You'll both benefit from an energy boost if you do.



## Spiritual Energy

A sense of meaning and purpose creates positive energy, and enhances focus, resilience and perseverance.

**Action:** Understand how your life values are being supported at and through work. Make a list of the 5 things that are most important in your life – things like family, friends, spirituality, money, career and work/life balance. Then ask yourself how your work is serving those values, so that you understand how what you value in your life is supported and/or met at work and can feel more aligned with your job.

**Leadership is important work. It requires energy to do it right.**

Building new habits also requires energy, so choose just one of these actions to try for a while and see if it works for you. Focus on creating small, busy-proof habits that you can practice regularly and keep your personal energy goals manageable.

I can't tell you what particular strategies will work best for you, but I do know that by investing in these five sources of personal energy you'll feel the difference in your own leadership and in your capacity to bring out the best in others.

Happy experimenting!