7 Ways to Boost Your Energy With RA

by ANNA SCANLON

7 Rheumatoid Arthritis Energy Boosting Tips

When you suffer from rheumatoid arthritis (RA), having enough energy to get through the day can be challenging. Luckily, there are many ways you can boost your energy, both naturally and with supplements, however, it is important that do not try these when you're suffering from a flare.

When you're flaring, you need as much rest as possible, so it is essential you resist the temptation to try and get in more energy.

Add Exercise to Your Daily Routine

Getting regular exercise with RA is essential for keeping up your energy. Although getting in regular exercise is difficult when you're flaring, when you're not flaring, you may find that going for a walk, going swimming, playing a sport, or even enrolling in a dance class may give you an extra energy boost.

If you have trouble finding an exercise that doesn't hurt your joints, try something that doesn't involve abrasively banging your joints or gripping something with your hand. This can include bike riding, swimming, using the elliptical, or beginner ballet classes that focus more on fun than professional technique.

Barre work, or stretching and movement done while holding on to a horizontal pole that helps support your weight, is both trendy and easy on the joints.

Try Yoga

Doing yoga can help bolster energy and stretch stiff joints. Not only that, but it may provide some meditation and allow you to feel a bit more centered and calmer emotionally.

Most gyms will offer daily yoga sessions, but if you're uncomfortable with the idea of being at one or don't want to pay the fees, you can purchase a yoga mat and find an appropriate yoga tutorial via a podcast or YouTube.

Remember, although yoga is generally helpful for people with RA, it is vital you don't overdo it and injure yourself further.

Drink Caffeine, in Moderation

Caffeine as an energy supplement should be used sparingly and only when absolutely necessary. Many people find themselves addicted to the stimulant and in turn drink multiple cups of coffee, tea or soda per day.

If you begin to drink too much caffeine, you will find it ceases to have an effect on you as a stimulant, so it is important to ration it. If you need energy for a special event or to get through an afternoon slump at work, you can

rely on caffeine to help perk you up.

Remember, it can cause you to crash later, meaning you'll have to weigh the pros and the cons of using it to gain energy.

Keep Hydrated as Much as Possible

Keeping well hydrated is one of the best ways to stave off fatigue. Even small amounts of dehydration in the body can lead you to feel like you have less energy, so keep drinking water, milk or fruit juice throughout the day.

You can also get in liquids by eating water-dense foods like lettuce, cucumbers, celery, watermelon and tomatoes. Although caffeinated beverages may hydrate you in the moment, too much of them can cause excess urination, which in turn will cause dehydration.

While caffeine may work as a quick fix in an emergency, it is best to stick with decaffeinated beverages to keep your energy at a stable level throughout the day.

Have Healthy Sleep Hygiene

Sleeping for seven to eight hours per night without waking up will help you reduce daytime fatigue. Although this may seem quite elusive for many, you can ensure you get quality sleep at night by avoiding naps during the day and being physically active when you can.

If you have trouble sleeping at night, try a podcast of a guided meditation or progressive muscle relaxation. You should also ensure you keep electronic devices away from your bed so as not to tempt yourself into using them right before you go to sleep.

This can kick-start your brain's activity, making it much more difficult to get the good sleep you crave. While it may be difficult to get into a pattern at first, once it is established, it can be incredibly helpful for fighting off your fatigue.

Talk to Your Doctor About RA Energy Levels

Sometimes fatigue can come from increased inflammation, and increased fatigue may be a sign that your disease is active. If you suddenly feel far more fatigued than you normally do or are having trouble staying awake, it is worth it to make a visit to your doctor to have some blood work done.

Your doctor can then monitor you to see if you need a stronger medication to combat your flare or try and find another root cause of your fatigue. Remember, it is important to always keep lines of communications between yourself and your doctor, as sudden major fatigue can be indicative of many issues linked with RA.

Even if you find your fatigue has only increased slightly but has negatively impacted your life, it is also important to discuss this with your doctor.

Try Medication for RA Fatigue

If your issue with fatigue is you find it very difficult to sleep through the night, speak with your doctor about medication to help you do so. Be cautious, however, as sleep aids can be habit-forming and should only be taken under the care of your doctor.

It is also worth it to note that melatonin, a popular over-the-counter sleep aid, should not be taken if you are on immunosuppressants, as they may interfere with one another.

Your doctor may also be able to prescribe you medication that keeps your fatigue at bay. There are a variety of

medications on the market that can help those with extreme fatigue or ADHD stay awake and function properly.

However, as with many of these types of medications, there may be a period of trial and error when sorting out which is the best medicine for you. You may also find the fatigue is easier to deal with than the medications, depending on your symptoms and how well you handle the medicine.