

5 WAYS

Brain boosters

These top tips from Dr Jenny Brockis may help boost your cognitive energy



1 MOVE IT

Prolonged sitting is the arch nemesis of mental energy. While 20-30 minutes of huffy puffy exercise each day primes your brain for best performance, adding in a regular stretch, or brief walk every hour will boost your level of attention by up to 40 per cent. Look for opportunities to stand more during your day, while on the phone or in meetings – why not try a walking meeting?

2 REFUEL SMART

Refueling regularly ensures your energy tanks don't run on empty. Your neurons don't store glucose, their primary energy source, so avoid skipping meals, and enjoy some healthy snacks of nuts, hummus, veggie sticks or fruit. Eat a wide variety of fresh, unprocessed foods (mostly vegetables) to ensure your brain receives all the essential nutrients required for best performance.

3 GIVE YOUR BRAIN A BREAK

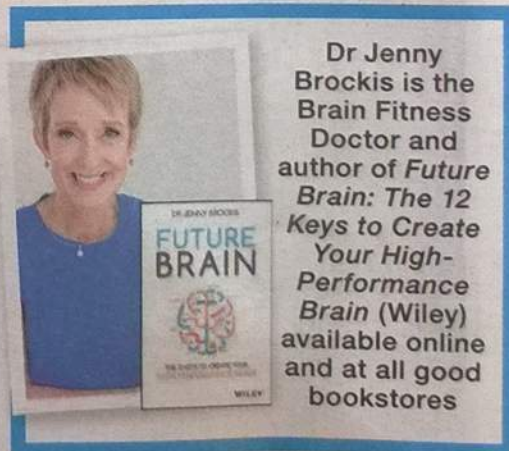
Over-worked, over-stimulated, no wonder our brains feel tired. Our massive to-do lists and perceived time poverty can lead to unhealthy work practices of working too long without proper breaks. Choose instead to work with your natural flow of energy, the ultradian rhythm that pulses through your day. Block your work into 60-90 minute sessions then give your brain a well-deserved break – 20 minutes to reboot and refresh, and be ready for the next chunk of focused work.

4 SLEEP RIGHT

We are sleeping an average of 30 minutes less each night than we were 10 years ago. While that doesn't sound much, over time this contributes to our rapidly growing sleep debt. Getting enough sleep is essential for best brain health and function. While individual requirements may vary, we all need around 7-8 hours of good quality uninterrupted sleep to encode long-term memory, regulate emotion and take out the brain's trash. A rested brain works far better the next day.

5 SLOW DOWN YOUR MIND

The most important time each day is your scheduled appointment to still your mind. Take 15 minutes to press pause and just be. Switch off your phone, close the door and take time out to reflect and provide your brain the thinking space it needs to work at your best.



Dr Jenny Brockis is the Brain Fitness Doctor and author of *Future Brain: The 12 Keys to Create Your High-Performance Brain* (Wiley) available online and at all good bookstores