

# 9 Ways to Boost Your Mitochondria, Increase Energy and Enhance Longevity

by Dr. Frank Lipman | Apr 22, 2019 | Health & Wellness



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When we are feeling wiped out, exhausted and dragging through our days, often it's because we're not treating our mitochondria right. Most of us don't realize it but mitochondria play a massive role in our energy levels, how well our metabolism functions and even how much brain fog we deal with every day.

In a nutshell, our mitochondria are the trillions of microscopic energy factories that power our body, turning the food we eat and the air we breathe into the energy that powers the biochemical reactions in our cells. That energy is used for everything from flexing muscles to making essential enzymes and hormones.

So, if we're pummeling our mitochondria daily with a litany of bad habits – like crappy food, poor sleep, high stress levels and an office-chair-to-couch-potato lifestyle – we won't have enough energy on hand to power our day.

When we're young, we have plenty of mitochondria. But, as with every other system in the body, over time, our mitochondria decline in both size and number – and with it, much of the energy we once took for granted. In fact, researchers now think mitochondrial decline is one of the primary drivers of aging – of feeling tired and looking tired – and a major culprit behind the diseases of the brain and the cardiovascular system that impact so many people as they age.

But the good news is that we do have some control over how fast or slow we age – and a lot of it comes down to how well we treat our mitochondria. Not surprisingly, many of the healthy habits everyone encouraged to adopt to sustain health are, at the microscopic level, great for our mitochondria too. So, to support and manage our mighty 'mitos', the following mitochondria-boosting moves are recommended:

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## 1) Don't eat crap — particularly the stuff that spikes blood sugar.

Say 'no' to sugar, refined grains (think flour), even the whole grains people think of as healthy, all of which spike blood sugar and contribute to unwanted pounds and body fat – which, in turn, promotes mitochondria-crushing inflammation. In addition, try to keep our diet 'clean' by avoiding processed foods, pesticide-laden produce, and factory-farmed foods meats.

## 2) Feed our mitochondria well.

While the mitochondria can use either fatty acids or carbohydrates to create the ATP needed to produce energy, doing so with fat is loads more efficient and creates fewer free radical byproducts. Keeping our carb intake low so our mitochondria will burn fat for energy, will help keep us trim to boot. In addition, look for foods packed with vitamins, phytonutrients and antioxidants. On our plate, that means goodies like high-quality, pasture-raised animals, wild-caught fish, (preferably) organic veggies, avocados, extra virgin olive oil, nuts and seeds, and some low-sugar fruits. We can't go wrong loading up on leafy greens and cruciferous veggies, like cauliflower and Brussels sprouts.

## 3) Get into intermittent fasting.

To boost mitochondrial function and longevity, practicing intermittent fasting a few days a week is a great 'bio hack' that supports mitochondria health by reducing mitochondrial free radical production. How to do it: Compress your 'eating window' from the typical 12 -16 hour graze-all-day routine down to 8-hours. We'll eat dinner earlier and breakfast later – and give our body many more non-eating hours.

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## 4) Keep moving!

Need another reason to exercise? Our mitochondria *love* it. Get into a high-intensity interval training (HIIT) groove that will boost mitochondrial production, and minimize the risk of overtraining and mitochondrial damage. A regular HITT routine will build up muscular endurance as well as the number and size of the mitochondria that power those muscles, so don't just sit there – move for our mitochondria!

## 5) Add meditation and massage to our routine.

Recent research suggests that meditation and other relaxation-based techniques can reduce oxidative stress – and that means, as time passes, less damage to the mitochondria. And don't forget to relax our body too. One recent study showed that massage could give the body's production of mitochondria a boost.

## 6) Focus on good quality sleep.

Sleep protects our brain by clearing out neural waste products that build up daily and, the research suggests, preserves the mitochondria as well. Think of sleep as our brain's time to 'take out the garbage,' so don't cut corners on this mitochondria-protecting activity.

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## **7) Soak up some sun.**

It turns out that exposing our body to sensible amounts of sunlight (turning pink means you've overdone it) is nature's way boosting mitochondria production, so don't be afraid to catch a few rays every now and then.

## **8) Expose ourselves to the cold.**

Another way to trigger new mitochondrial production is to expose ourselves to quick bursts of cold temperatures, be it in the great outdoors for 20 -30 seconds a shot, or in the shower. Doing so will, in essence, trick our body into survival mode, and kick mitochondria production into high gear.

## **9) Supplement our mitochondrial health.**

While nothing encourages the mitochondria to thrive more than a clean, healthy diet, we can give our 'mitos' a targeted boost with some carefully chosen nutrient supplements. The right combo of diet and supplements translates to enhanced mental sharpness, fewer body aches and pains and protection against the most common and dreaded diseases of aging. The supplements recommended to support mitochondrial health include: Nicotinamide Riboside, Alpha Lipoic Acid; Glutathione; CoQ10; the B vitamins; Magnesium; Fish or krill oil; L Carnitine; and PQQ, a relatively new one on the research radar and it looks not only to reduce oxidative damage but to stimulate new mitochondrial growth.