



Performance-enhancing diet tips

By [Rachael Anne Hill](#) |

Five tiny breakfast changes that will make a huge difference to your day

If watching all these Olympic athletes performing at the top of their game has made you want to perform a little better throughout your day, read on. Here are five simple breakfast changes that will help you feel alert, energised and raring to go all day long.

Start your day with a bowl of wholewheat cereal © Rex

Start your day with a large lemon cocktail

Ok, not quite a 'cocktail' but a large glass of water with a squeeze of fresh lemon juice to help boost your vitamin C intake and stimulate your digestive system will do wonders for your energy levels throughout the day. That's because being dehydrated by just two per cent can leave us feeling tired, lethargic, lacking in concentration and clumsy.

Drinking alcohol, eating too many salty foods or spending eight hours spent tucked up under a warm duvet all help to rob our bodies of vital fluids so drink a large glass of lemon water when you wake and then continue to do so every couple of hours throughout the day.

You may find you visit the bathroom more frequently in the first couple of weeks of drinking more but as your body adapts this should soon settle down.

Choose your cereal wisely

It's true that breakfast is the most important meal of the day but not all breakfast cereals are created equally. In fact, some are little more than biscuits in a box packaged up with a whole load of sales patter designed to convince you otherwise, but you will be tired and hungry again shortly after eating them.

To make sure you're getting the best start to your day go for a breakfast with the word 'whole' before the name of the food such as 'whole oats', 'wholegrain wheat or 'wholegrain bread'. Porridge, Shredded Wheat, Bran Flakes, Weetabix and wholegrain muesli are all good options that will help to keep your energy levels high and your brain functioning well all morning long.

Add a little spice

Once you've chosen your cereal try adding a teaspoon of ground cinnamon to it. According to a study published in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition adding just one teaspoon of ground cinnamon to a high carb meal such as breakfast cereal or rice pudding can slow the rate at which it releases its sugars into the blood stream by up to 34 per cent. This will help you to feel fully fuelled all morning long.

Other studies have found that adding a little cinnamon to your food can significantly improve brain function, co-ordination and memory too.

Kick the caffeine habit

Tea, coffee and cola may be what you crave when you're flagging but in the long run they'll leave you feeling drained. The caffeine they contain stimulates hormones that act in a way similar to 'over revving' an engine. You feel energised for a short while but your body pays the price afterwards when you experience a negative rebound effect.

Far better to slowly cut back on drinks that contain caffeine - no more than one or two a day - and switch to herbal hot drinks instead. These will help to rehydrate you and balance out those stimulating hormones.

Harness the power of protein

Good quality, protein rich foods such as nuts, seeds, beans, pulses, meat, fish and eggs all help to slow down the rate at which foods release their sugars into your blood stream, therefore helping to ensure a more constant stream of energy throughout the day. Use this to your advantage by adding a handful of mixed seeds to your cereal, putting a dessert spoon of ground almonds in your breakfast smoothie, having a poached or boiled egg with your wholegrain toast or sprinkling a handful of nuts on your porridge.