

How to achieve 100% vitality!

We all want to be fizzing with vigour, but nurturing mental, emotional and spiritual energy is just as important if you want to enjoy life to the max. Follow Alyssa Abbey's four-step plan to lift your mind, body and spirit..

Why is it that sometimes you can't find a solution to the simplest problem, but look at it when you're fresh and the answer is staring you in the face? Why do you sometimes want to fall asleep in a meeting when you know you're not 'tired'? How come sometimes you snap at people over nothing?

Think about what's going on in these scenarios. There's clearly a lack of energy, but it's not physical energy. These situations describe a lack of mental, spiritual and emotional energies, respectively. In order to stay happy, healthy and balanced, you need to renew these energies continually, alongside your physical energy, which acts as a foundation for the others.

Perhaps you've already understood these things intuitively, but never labelled them in this way. I'll bet, for instance, that you've had the experience of having someone light up a room just by walking in, even though it's hard to say why. I'll bet you've also noticed when someone lit up a room by walking out, such is the power of emotional energy!

If you develop an awareness of all four energy currencies, then you're better placed to develop tools and habits that keep them topped up. Some people have very few conscious strategies for energy renewal, and I want to tell you the secrets of maximising all four energies. When you're overflowing with all of them, life feels pretty awesome. When you're significantly lacking even one of the four, life feels flat, and you probably sense that something's missing.

The four energies

You don't need to be a rocket scientist to connect to what the four energies are, and the tools for increasing them similarly aren't difficult to understand. What does take effort is putting them in place in your life permanently, in one form or another. That's about making it imperative to do so, and we'll come back to that. For now we'll look at what they are and how to have more of them.

Physical energy

Let's start with physical energy because it's the one most people understand best. Technically, its components are stamina, strength, suppleness and speed. You know you've got physical energy when you feel light but powerful, quick but smooth. One client of mine described it as a relaxed bodily readiness. To develop and maintain it, you need uncompromised rituals (there's no getting around this) for:

- Good quality sleep through regular relaxation and specific wind-down routines to help to banish worry
 - Regular relaxation such as visualisation, meditation or sitting quietly contemplating nature/a roaring fire/a candle/your breath.
 - Good nutrition, including limited caffeine and alcohol – and zero nicotine
 - Physical exercise at least three times a week that enhances cardio-vascular endurance, strength, flexibility and speed
- No surprises here. And being Natural Health readers, you probably have some pretty good habits in these areas. But is there an area of neglect, something you keep saying you 'should' do, but somehow never do? Make these things a must, and you'll have a strong foundation on which to build the other energies.

Physical energy is also about what we experience through our senses – the sights, smells, sounds, tastes and touch we encounter

each day. That's why your environment has such a profound impact on your energy levels. Do whatever you can to brighten your surroundings, and spend some time in nature – daily if you can, but at least weekly.

Mental energy

Mental energy has to do with alertness and concentration, learning, analysis, logical process, creativity and intuition. We feel it as mental sharpness, creative 'flow', challenge, certainty, and those 'a-ha' moments. With high levels of mental energy you can easily solve problems, multitask and be witty, too. The four most important things you can do to maintain mental energy are:

- Set clear goals and objectives in all areas of your life – without being completely structured and rigid. And remember, there are lots of different sorts of goals. Yours might be to create a loving and peaceful home, and that's brilliant!

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- Be disciplined over where and how your time is spent – your brain can become frazzled when you're over-committed.
- Train your brain like an athlete trains muscles: challenge it consistently, but schedule regular downtime to rest it and regain power for the next mental bout.
- Regularly engage in activities that stimulate your creativity – anything from scrapbooking to playing a musical instrument.



Emotional energy

Emotional energy comes from relationships that give you positive feelings of love, connection and teamwork. You're getting it when you feel valued and warm inside. There are so many ways you can generate more emotional energy, but the following habits are essential if you want happy relationships:

- Empathy and seeking to truly understand others
- Showing constant appreciation for the friendship, love and help you are getting.
- Assuming the best intentions of all friends, colleagues, children and lovers. If you can't do this, the relationship needs some work.
- Giving your love and energy freely

Spirit energy

Spirit energy is about inspiration, aspiration, enthusiasm, future vision and possibility, optimism, hope, joy, and meaning to life. It is experienced in many different ways for different people; as a god or higher purpose in the universe, a higher purpose of a life, or as unwavering principles, truths or values about how to live your life. As with

emotional energy, it is associated with peace and love. Capturing spirit energy is also highly individual, but some routes may be:

- Developing perspective on life and what brings you the greatest happiness
- Living your values
- Personal development, growth and learning
- Relaxation, meditation, prayer and time-out spent in nature
- Seeking to understand the meaning of life
- Seeking a meaning for your life
- The ability to be playful and laugh

They're all linked

Ever notice how, when you exercise, you not only feel physically better, but emotionally higher and mentally sharper? That's because the four energies are connected. When you work on one, you get more of the others, too. Other examples you might have noticed are: feeling proud improves your posture; a burning desire enhances creativity; working creatively can increase patience; finishing a mental task brings feelings of satisfaction or fulfilment.

Maximising the four energies

There is no one formula of habits or behaviours for building and sustaining these four energy currencies. But if you want fabulous vitality, it's essential you create a recipe for yourself that is both workable and enjoyable. A key ingredient, as I mentioned before, is to focus on or create an imperative. Don't we all do the things that are absolute 'musts'? We never seem to get around to the things we don't value so much, even though we might say or think all the time that we 'should' do them.

How could you make your energy-giving habits a 'must'? You need to be creative, but here are some ideas to spark you off:

- Imagine yourself when you're 70 (and if you already are, imagine yourself at 90!). Could you create an image of a fit, energised, sharp, 'twinkle-in-the-eye' you at that age? Is it a powerful enough image to get you to the gym or to skip the chips?
- Cut out a photograph of your face and stick it on Angelina Jolie's body. Now put that on your fridge, or your bathroom mirror.
- Hire a personal trainer, or commit to train with a buddy. Make a pact to crack the whip at each other, or even to pay a financial penalty to a charity you aren't fond of every time you don't show for a session.
- Schedule your energy habits into your diary (in red ink). They don't happen by themselves. And make sure you include time with friends and loved ones. Whoever said on their deathbed that they wish they'd spent more time at the office? Or cleaning the house?

One final thing to remember – you're allowed to have fun, so make this stuff enjoyable, and it will never be a chore.

Get radical

One client of mine who lived in London literally sold his car so that he would have to cycle the five miles to work each day, or face a difficult journey by public transport. He said that he found he didn't really need a car living in the city, he saved enough money for a fabulous holiday, and it also got him to make other short journeys by foot or bike.

Further information



Alyssa Abbey is a Bupa energy management expert and vitality consultant with nearly 20 years experience and has helped thousands of individuals and

organisations to increase their well-being. She is also founder of Live With Energy. Alyssa's new book *Stop Making Excuses, Start Living With Energy* is due out on April 4th. Please visit livewithenergy.com for more information.