

The Myth of the Caffeine Energy Boost

Caffeine and Sleep

What is bad about coffee is the caffeine. Caffeine stimulates the adrenal glands which express the fight or flight hormones that are necessary for emergency-only situations. One of these is cortisol. When this response occurs reproduction and digestion are interrupted. This stimulation has been proven to continue from one cup of coffee for up to 18 hours.

Caffeine is very hard on the liver, causing it to break down glycogen, which further causes a surge of sugar into the system and gives a feeling of more energy. But this is not true energy, and a low blood sugar reaction quickly follows.

Caffeine also:

- increases the heart rate
- increases blood pressure
- increases bad cholesterol
- increases Homocysteine levels (high Homocysteine levels increase the likelihood of several major diseases)
- increases production of Hydrochloric Acid in the gut
- causes the release of Calcium, Magnesium and Potassium and other trace minerals from the body
- may make menopause symptoms worse
- can cause cysts to occur in breasts

Dr. Pam said that when people say that they can drink a cup of coffee before going to sleep and still sleep well, that they may indeed sleep – but due to the adrenal response set in motion by the caffeine, one cannot experience deep sleep. Why is deep sleep so necessary? It is during the deep sleep phase that our bodies are regenerated and healed. If we don't experience this type of sleep, then we often wake up more tired than when we went to sleep. And when we reach for another cup of coffee in the morning, the cycle of courses begins again.

Dr. Pam said that in her opinion chocolate, coffee and cookies et al should be treats for special occasions, rather than part of our daily regimen.

I personally got a lot out of this message. What was interesting to me was that Dr. Pam sent the message at 3:20 AM, and she often sends messages into the wee hours and seems to have lots of energy. She must be walking her talk.

The Myth Of Decaffeinated Coffee

(paraphrased from a world-renowned PhD of Nutrition from the USA)

Many people ask if it is kosher to "switch to decaf". If the same people are determined to keep coffee in their daily regimen they will often cite some study to support their belief. The doctor said that there is a "study" to support any diet you wish to start. There are even ones that claim The Atkins Diet is heart healthy, citing the reduction of bad cholesterol that can occur while on this diet. Your cholesterol will always go down somewhat no matter what diet you choose, so long as you lose some weight.

In order to render coffee decaffeinated, two strong chemicals are used. The US Health Dept. says that decaf coffee may have no more than 2½% caffeine. Since most decaffeinated coffee has the allowable amount of caffeine, this works out to about 7 mg. of caffeine per one cup of coffee. This is enough to trigger the adrenal glands to be in a hyped-up state. Bad news for those who thought they could have the best of both worlds by switching to decaf.

The good doctor recommends a product that she thinks is spelled Teeccino and is a blend of chicory, dates et al and smells, looks, brews and tastes like coffee. It is denser and makes a stiffer cup / pot, so use less than you would in your measuring spoon. This product is now widely available at health food outlets and grocery store health aisles.

Getting Over Caffeine, Period!

Many people notice one of the first signs of withdrawal of caffeine from their diet are some nasty headaches. This is due to the fact that caffeine causes vascular constriction in our body, including vascular constriction of the blood vessels of the brain. If they quickly withdraw caffeine, the "non-restriction" if you like, causes the headaches. This will pass.

What the doctor recommends is that you wean yourself gradually from coffee. While you are in the throws of weaning yourself, beware that some clear pops and other foodstuffs have caffeine, beside the obvious caffeine found in cocoa products like chocolate and of course, my personal favourite Earl Grey tea. Her recommendation is to remove this drug from your daily regimen over one to three weeks. Here's how:

- mix in a natural coffee (brewable) like Teeccino with your regular grind
- as they days go by, simply increase the substitute and reduce the regular coffee grounds until you are free of the caffeine

To reiterate something from the first message, this gradual withdrawal is only if you have no life-threatening health issues. In such a case, you must eliminate all caffeine immediately from your system as it is a very detrimental drug / poison.

What Is Life Like Post-Caffeine?

One of the truly great things about getting over the caffeine habit is you will find how truly exhausted you really are. Why this is good is obvious and fundamental to a preventive lifestyle. Previously, I talked about hyped-up adrenals from coffee addiction leading to not reaching the deep sleep state; the flip side of this is that once you are caffeine free you will enjoy reaching deep sleep where all healing and restoration of our body occurs.

Being hyped up on the drug caffeine (one cup a day is enough) is analogous to a car being on overdrive. When our body is like this we may not notice some daily aches and pains. When you aren't jagged on caffeine you may notice some aches and pains. The doctor says that this is good as many drugs, caffeine included, help us to literally "not feel any pain". Actually though, the more we can identify our body pains, the faster we can take real steps to aid the healing process naturally, adding to the brightness of a longer and healthier life.

Isn't it great that this is just another way to be in control of our own health picture on the exciting road of prevention?

Mike Thompson

TommyFit Hockey-Specific Strength Training & Conditioning

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