



Revving it up

You're getting towards the end of the day and your work load doesn't look any less than it did this morning. You're finding it hard to concentrate, and your energy levels feel like they have bottomed out. The problem is that sometimes this flat feeling coincides with an important task that has to get finished on time, or has a higher element of risk to it.

The challenge is to find something you can do in a couple of minutes to boost your energy levels and concentration so you can attend to the task. Here are some suggestions that rely on physiological stimuluses in the brain and body that can help get you back 'into the zone'.



Standing up quickly using the core muscles – standing without using something to leverage your body up.



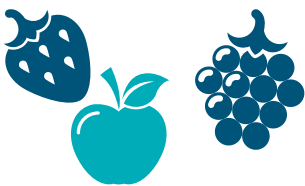
Walk at a fast pace for a couple of minutes – walking up or down a flight of stairs will work wonders.



Rub the palms of your hands together vigorously – clapping the hands together also works.



Have a glass of water – confusion and fatigue can happen with only a 5% drop in your hydration levels and often when we're tired we not rinking enough water.



Eat a natural, healthy sugar food – the energy from the food will keep you going for the longer haul and the action of chewing is an immediate stimulus to the brain.



Smile or laugh to yourself – even if there is nothing to smile or laugh about the brain can be tricked into experiencing a positive burst of energy simply by the physical action of smiling or laughing.



Use some directed thinking – if you keep saying to yourself "I'm so tired, I can't think" then that is the direction you are giving the brain, so change the direction to what you want to achieve like "I need to get energised and focused".

What could that look like in a two minute routine to get you back 'into the zone'?

Stand up quickly, rub the palms of my hands together and tell myself right, I need to get energised right now; walk quickly to the stairwell and go up to the next floor and back down again; then into the lunchroom to grab a glass of water and an apple, all the while smiling to myself and anyone I pass on my walk; finally returning to my desk I'll rub my hands together again and say Time to get this done. What is the first action I need to take right now?

Whilst most people think about caffeine and energy drinks as the most common stimulants in the workplace, the problem is that it takes the body approximately 30 minutes to metabolise the caffeine and make it available in the brain as a stimulant. If you need to be paying attention in the next few minutes, 30 minutes may be too late to get energised. So, don't just use stimulants as your default choice for revving up the engine, try some of the other techniques, you never know what might work for you.

My story

Why it's important to have regular skin checks

Written by: Anonymous Local Government employee

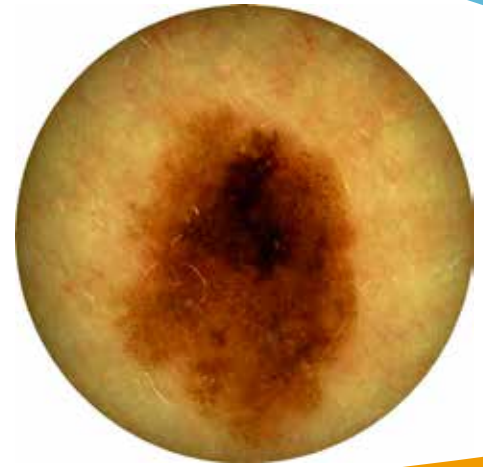
I have had annual skin screenings since joining the Shire, with some areas of keratosis that have been treated by freezing.

This year however I was referred by Spotscreen with a suspicious pigmented lesion on my back. The lesion was excised and found to be an invasive malignant melanoma that was at Clark level 3/early level 4 and spreading both radially and vertically [see image].

I had to return for further surgery to have a wider margin excised and the second biopsy results showed complete excision of the invasive melanoma.

The skin screening provided by my employer through LGIS has most probably saved my life, as if the melanoma had progressed to level 5 then the 5-year survival rate is about 15%. The melanoma was unexpected as I had been screened only 12 months prior, there is no family history of melanoma and my skin has only mild sun damage. I work indoors, and even though I am in my 50's, I have never been an extensive beach goer/sunbather.

Talk to your human resource or occupational, safety and health manager to find out when your skin screens are being held. Contact Renee Rohde, LGIS Health and Wellbeing Manager for more details on 08 9483 8888.



Quinoa: What's the fuss?

Quinoa, pronounced 'keen-wah', is an ancient grain from South America which has been a staple food for the Inca's for thousands of years. It has been labelled a superfood because of its long list of nutrition credentials which include:

- Contains three times the fibre of brown rice.
- Double the protein of most grains.
 - Is low GI - 53, which makes it slow absorbing and good for anyone with diabetes.
 - Is gluten-free so ideal for anyone with a wheat intolerance or coeliac disease.
 - Excellent source of minerals (magnesium, manganese, copper, phosphorus, potassium, zinc, iron) and vitamins (vitamin E and B-complex vitamins).
- Is a complete source of protein which is good news for vegetarians and vegans.

Quinoa is extremely versatile. It can be used in place of rice or cous cous, and can also be used in sweet applications, such as replacing oats in porridge. Try this healthier version of fried quinoa.

Fried Quinoa

Ingredients:

- 2 cups cooked quinoa
- 1 onion, diced
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- Chilli (optional)
- 1-2 tsp roasted sesame oil
- 3 tsp tamari (or low salt soy sauce)
- 1 tsp olive oil
- 1 head broccoli, chopped
- 1 medium zucchini, diced
- 1 medium carrot, diced
- 2 eggs
- Roasted cashews, to serve

Serves 

Gently sauté onion in a pan on medium - low heat, stirring frequently. Once onion has softened, add garlic and chilli, sauté for a further minute. Add all the chopped vegetables, sesame oil and tamari, cover the pan with a lid to gently steam the veggies, stirring every couple of minutes. After 5 minutes, add the cooked quinoa and stir to warm through. Make a hole in the middle of the pan and crack the two eggs in the hole, gently stir through until cooked completely. Top with roasted cashews to serve.



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Renee Rohde is a specialist health and wellbeing professional and Program Manager at LGIS.

Contact Renee on 9483 8888 for more information regarding these programs.