

Seven Ways to Stay Awake

1. Caffeine

Ah yes, caffeine, the old standby. Whether it's an energy drink, a spot of tea, or a good old-fashioned cup of coffee, this stuff is sure to help you stay awake. Caffeine is a psychoactive stimulant that increases wakefulness, attentiveness, the ability to focus, and overall energy levels. One important caveat though: this is a short-term solution to your problem. The effects of caffeine last for only two or three hours, and then you're susceptible to what is known as a "crash," which causes you lose all energy completely. Caffeine isn't the healthiest choice on this list, but it works in a pinch.

2. Chewing gum

If you're looking for a healthier solution to office- or school-related tiredness, gum can provide you with what you're looking for. Chewing a piece of gum has been proved to help people stay awake and attentive in situations of boredom. This is due to the stimulation of facial muscles causing an increase in blood flow to the head. In addition, because chewing is not an involuntary muscle movement like breathing or blinking, it slightly stimulates the brain, even though you may not realize it, which helps you stay awake.

3. Exercise

An increase in blood flow is an excellent way to wake up in a hurry. If you find yourself nodding off, a quick set of jumping jacks or a few push-ups will increase your heart rate and get more blood pumping to your brain. Such exercises may not be appropriate in a business meeting, so find creative and discreet ways to get moving. Swivel in your chair, cross your legs, wiggle your feet, or scrunch up your toes. The use of muscles releases epinephrine, also known as adrenaline, which is one of the most potent stimulants known to exist.

4. Stretching

Stretching is another great way that you can re-invigorate yourself during, say, a particularly long [PowerPoint presentation](#). There are three great benefits to stretching: First off, stretching causes you to breathe more deeply than you normally would; this provides your body with an adequate supply of oxygen, which is essential for helping you stay awake. Second, stretching releases stress that is stored in your muscles. Third, studies have shown that stretching activates your body's lymphatic system, which is responsible for cleansing your body of pollutants. So during your next business meeting, touch the sky, roll your shoulders, or rotate your wrists and ankles. Remember to focus on your breathing and hold each stretch for 20–30 seconds.

5. Music

Sound can also serve as a way for you to stay awake. Playing loud, energetic music can effectively wake you up through auditory stimulation of the brain. If you need to stay awake, pause the "whale songs" and play something fast paced and with a lot of bass, as it is more likely to stimulate your mind. In most situations, be sure to put on headphones so as not to bother everyone around you by blaring "Ride of the Valkyries" over and over.

6. Lifestyle changes

If you're looking for a healthier, more long-term method of maintaining attentiveness during life's less exciting moments, a lifestyle change may be in order. Regular exercise has been found to provide the body with more disposable energy, meaning you'll be able to stay awake without having to drink cup after cup of coffee and listen to "Flight of the Bumblebee" continually. Eating properly will also provide you with the energy your body needs to make it through a day without dozing off. Making sure that you get the right amount of sleep every night is also an important factor in being able to stay awake during the day. Too little or too much sleep causes lethargy and sluggishness in your daily life. Maintaining a healthy lifestyle isn't the easiest solution to tiredness, but changing your lifestyle is definitely the healthiest and most effective choice that you can make.

7. Take a nap

Since we began this list with a classic, it only seems fitting to end it with one...the power nap. A power nap is defined as a quick nap of no more than 20 minutes, aimed at achieving the revered "second wind." A quick foray into dreamland can be an effective, albeit often impractical, solution to a tired mind. Naps can often increase alertness and productivity if done correctly. However, there is an important warning that accompanies this method: if you sleep for more than 20 minutes, you'll most likely wake up more tired than ever. Also, if your boss catches you curled up under your desk, you'll likely have a lot more time to sleep, if you catch our drift.