

Wake up your skin

If heaving your bump up out of bed and into the shower is the hardest part of your day, wake yourself up fast with a spot of body brushing. 'Before you get under the water, start brushing in circular motions from your feet (if you can reach them at this point) moving up towards your heart, to boost circulation,' says beauty expert Sarah Chapman (sarahchapman.net). 'The increased blood flow will make you feel more awake and boost your pregnancy glow. Go for a brush with softer bristles if your skin is sensitive.' Try Botanics Hip & Thigh Body Brush, £7.50, boots.com.

Begin with breakfast

Battle pregnancy exhaustion with food that maintains your energy levels through the day, starting with a great breakfast. 'The type of carbohydrate you eat determines how quickly your body breaks it down into energy,' says Marilyn Glenville, author of *The Natural Health Bible For Women* (£16.99, Duncan Baird). Refined carbohydrates like white bread are broken down quickly, and give you an energy spike that doesn't last. 'Wholegrain foods, such as brown bread and porridge, are broken down slowly to provide a steady supply of energy. For an energising breakfast, try porridge with blueberries or scrambled eggs on wholegrain toast.'

Breathe deeply

Regular antenatal yoga will calm your mind and body but, for a quick lift, yoga expert Vinay Menon (thechelseaclub.com) suggests the following breathing technique: 'Sit comfortably with your eyes shut. Press your right nostril closed, then breath in and out through your left nostril five times. Switch nostrils and repeat. Now alternate nostrils, breathing in through one nostril and out through the other, for 10 breaths. This helps oxygenate your blood, allowing your body to produce energy more effectively.'

Drink up

'Dehydration – either because of morning sickness or the extra blood volume in your body – saps your energy,' says Marilyn. 'To combat it, aim to drink six to eight glasses of water each day, sipping it regularly. Don't wait until you feel thirsty as, by that time, you're already dehydrated.' Fruit and herbal teas count towards your fluid intake so go for caffeine-free varieties. 'Redbush (rooibos) tea is lower in tannins than black tea,' says nutritionist Charlotte Stirling-Reed. 'Tannins can reduce the absorption of iron, which is vital for maintaining energy levels in pregnancy.'

Enjoy some fresh air

Is pregnancy fatigue making you want to just curl up under your duvet? Take 10 minutes out of your day to go outside for a brisk walk. 'Daylight is important for regulating our health and energy levels,' says researcher Dr Victoria Revell, from Surrey University. 'Light is detected by our eyes and passed on to specific areas of the brain that influence our level of alertness, so getting outside will help increase energy. During the shorter winter days, you could use a lightbox, which simulates the effects of bright daylight.' Try the Lumie Desk Lamp, £149, lumie.com

Snack well

When you hit that afternoon dip, it's tempting to head for the biscuit tin, but reaching for a sugary snack won't perk you up in the long run. 'The sugar in chocolate or biscuits will cause your blood-sugar levels to rise quickly, then plummet,' says Marilyn. 'You'll feel more tired and will want another snack to keep you going. Like breakfast, you need snacks that release energy slowly. A handful of nuts or celery sticks filled with peanut butter are good options. For an alternative to sweets, have a small handful of dried fruit.'

Press for energy

Acupressure is a traditional Chinese medicine where you apply pressure to certain points on the body to stimulate the flow of your internal energy, known as chi, promoting internal healing and boosting energy. 'Pressing the following acupressure point helps increase energy and relieve morning sickness in mums-to-be,' says naturopath Elaine Rasmussen (greatvine.com). 'Measure two thumb-widths down from the crease of your wrist and massage the area between the two tendons in the centre of your arm. You may feel a tingling, energising sensation in your chest or stomach as you do this.'

Grab a pillow

Propping up your bump with a cushion or investing in a special pregnancy pillow can make all the difference when you're trying to sleep well. 'A back pillow reduces the pressure on tired abdominal muscles, while placing one between your knees eases heavy legs and pelvic pain,' says Denise Linay, from the Royal College of Midwives. Try the multi-tasking Pregnancy Support & Feeding Pillow, £45.99, dreamgenii.com.

Put on some music

Playing music to your bump is a great way to bond with your baby, and can also act as a quick energy booster. A study of 236 pregnant women in the *Journal Of Clinical Nursing* found music could help relieve stress and fight fatigue. 'Singing to your bump also encourages you to breathe deeply, which gets more oxygen into your bloodstream,' says Alyssa Abbey, author of *Stop Making Excuses And Start Living With Energy* (£10.99, Capstone). 'If singing isn't for you, dancing to your favourite song is also effective, as exercise is an excellent body booster.'

Try colour therapy

Some experts believe the colours you look at and surround yourself with could have an impact on the way you feel. 'Colours are thought to be able to affect you physically and emotionally, with some increasing your energy levels,' says colour psychologist Angela Wright (colour-affects.co.uk). 'My research has found that black drains you, but red and blue boost energy.' In fact, a recent study** found the colour red could enhance physical reactions and make muscles move faster. 'Just avoid wearing tones that are very bright, as they can be over-stimulating and leave you stressed,' adds Angela.

The cheat sheet

Need to think yourself awake? Follow these pointers for instant energy

- **Perfect your posture** Slumped shoulders suggest a tired and deflated air. 'Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart, stretch your spine upwards and roll your shoulders back – you will immediately appear more alert,' says Judi James, author of *Being Confident* (£10.99, Vermilion).
- **Wake up your eyes** For an instant pick-me-up, massage in some Laidbare Pack Your Bags Eye Cream (£7.99, lovelula.com). It contains buckwheat to reduce dark circles, shea butter to hydrate and eyebright to brighten.
- **Talk up your energy levels** Your voice can be a giveaway for fatigue. 'Breathe out slowly to release tension and to make your voice sound stronger,' says Judi. 'Try to keep your speech concise to avoid waffling, and drop your tone by one note as stress and tension make your voice higher.'