

**Resilience**

Intervention



n/a



Client



Yes

The Energy Audit

Human energy is like a battery; it depletes over time and needs regular recharging. Human energy can be defined as the amount of vigor, vitality, or zest we have. Human energy can be depleted in several ways. First, long work hours can significantly decrease the amount of time available for people to unwind and recover. Second, due to modern technology, they are constantly “online” and connected, available, and often feeling obliged to respond to emails, texts, and messages, among others. Third, increasing workloads and work-related pressures create feelings of stress and anxiety and can lead to sleep disruption and increased fatigue (Spreitzer & Grant, 2012). In our fast-paced modern world, we should find ways to replenish our energetic resources regularly. Loehr and Schwartz (2001) suggested that human energy can be managed physically (by building endurance and fitness), mentally (by cultivating focus and attention), emotionally (by cultivating excitement and connection), and spiritually (by cultivating centeredness and presence).

According to the conservation of resources (COR) theory, human beings strive to retain, build, and protect their resources, both personal (e.g., energy) and social (e.g., emotional support), because psychological stress occurs when these resources are lost, threatened with loss, or not replenished after their depletion (Hobfoll, 1989). Research on the COR in the workplace has shown that job resources, such as supervisory and co-worker support, social capital, and performance feedback, enhance employee energy (Spreitzer & Grant, 2012), whereas job demands, such as workload, deplete energy. Studies also show that employees who use their time off (i.e., evenings, weekends, and vacations) to recharge their energy by engaging in replenishing activities, such as relaxation, are better able to recover from work-related stress (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2006). Chronic stress without recovery depletes energy reserves, leading to burnout and breakdown, which has a negative effect on performance and health.

This tool aims to help clients manage their changing energy levels throughout the day, to help them become healthier and more productive in their personal and professional lives.



Author

This tool was adapted from Spreitzer and Grant’s (2012) Energy Audit exercise by Lucinda Poole (PsyD) and Hugo Alberts (Ph.D.).



Goal

This tool is designed to help clients (1) become aware of their changing energy levels throughout the day and (2) develop strategies to replenish energy when reserves are low.



Advice

- Encourage clients to set the alarm on their phones to remind them to rate their energy levels hourly throughout the day. This will ensure a more accurate and reliable account of their changing energy levels throughout the day.
- Provide your client with the following practical advice to help them better manage their physical, mental, and emotional, energetic resources.
 1. Sleep, diet, and exercise. Sleep is vital for daily energy. People should aim to get 7-8 hours of sleep per night, and they should go to bed and get up at the same time each day. Further, a healthy, balanced diet (with fat, protein, and carbohydrates from all the food groups) provides the body with the energy it needs to sustain optimal everyday functioning. Regular exercise keeps the body fit and energized.
 2. Single-task. Many clients may be under the impression that multi-tasking is a good thing; however, in fact, multitasking is an illusion. Attempting to do multiple things at once depletes our energy. It is recommended that people employ single-tasking (doing one thing at once) as much as possible to conserve energy reserves.
 3. Take breaks. Encourage clients to take mental breaks periodically throughout the day as needed, even if for just a few minutes.



References

- Fritz, C., & Sonnentag, S. (2006). Recovery, well-being, and performance-related outcomes: The role of workload and vacation experiences. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 91(4), 936.
- Hobfoll, S. E. (1989). Conservation of resources: A new attempt at conceptualizing stress. *American Psychologist*, 44, 513-524.
- Spreitzer, G. M., & Grant, T. (2012). Helping students manage their energy: Taking their pulse with the energy audit. *Journal of Management Education*, 36(2), 239-263.



The Energy Audit

Instructions

This exercise involves tracking and plotting your daily energy levels to help you become aware of how your energy tends to ebb and flow throughout a given day.

Step 1: Track your energy levels

In this exercise, you will track your energy levels throughout an entire day. In the Track Your Energy log provided, take note of your energy levels (second column) and activities in which you are engaging (third column) at hourly intervals from 7 am until 10 pm. Use the following scale to measure your energy levels:

1-2: Very low

3-4: Low

5-6: Neutral

7-8: High

9-10: Very high

Track your energy

Time	What is your energy level?	What are you doing?
7 am		
8 am		
9 am		
10 am		
11 am		
12 pm		
1 pm		
2 pm		
3 pm		
4 pm		



Time	What is your energy level?	What are you doing?
5 pm		
6 pm		
7 pm		
8 pm		
9 pm		
10 pm		

Step 2: Plot your daily energy levels

In the graph below, plot your hourly energy levels by placing a dot in the appropriate energy rating at each time point. Then, connect the dots to see how your energy ebbs and flows throughout the day.

10									
9									
8									
7									
6									
5									
4									
3									
2									
1									
Energy	7 am	8 am	9 am	10 am	11 am	12 pm	1 pm	2 pm	3 pm



Step 3: Evaluate patterns in energy levels

When was your energy high during the day?

When was your energy low during the day?

What patterns can you observe about activities that are associated with high energy?

What patterns can you observe about activities that are linked with low energy?



Step 4: Replenish energy resources

Considering those times in the day when you experience low energy, what could you do differently to replenish and/or boost your energy levels? For example, if you experience low energy at around 3 pm when you're at your computer at work, you might choose to engage in a brief bout of exercise at this time (e.g., 20 x jumping jacks) to give yourself a boost in energy. Remember that energy can be managed physically (by building endurance and fitness), mentally (by cultivating focus and attention), emotionally (by cultivating excitement and connection), and spiritually (by cultivating centeredness and presence). To help you come up with possible energy-boosting actions, look to what you are doing during those times in the day when your energy is high.

Low-energy activity	Energy-boosting action