

# Choices

Vancouver Island Counselling

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## TIRED ALL THE TIME?

*Lack of sleep isn't the only thing sapping your energy. Little things you do can fatigue you both mentally and physically, which can make getting through your day challenging.*

- ★ **You skip exercise when you're tired** - Regular exercise boosts strength and endurance, helps make your cardiovascular system run more efficiently and delivers oxygen and nutrients to your tissues. So next time you're tempted to crash on the couch, at least go for a brisk walk—you won't regret it.
- ★ **You don't drink enough water** - Dehydration causes a reduction in blood volume, which makes the blood thicker. This requires your heart to pump less efficiently, reducing the speed at which oxygen and nutrients reach your muscles and organs.
- ★ **You're a perfectionist** - Striving to be perfect—which, let's face it, is impossible makes you work much harder and longer than necessary. You set goals that are so unrealistic that they are difficult or impossible to achieve and in the end, there is no sense of self-satisfaction. Set a time limit for yourself on your projects and commit to honoring it.
- ★ **You make mountains out of molehills** - If you assume that you're about to get fired when your boss calls you into an unexpected meeting, or you're too afraid to ride your bike because you worry you'll get into an accident, then you're guilty of "catastrophizing," or expecting that the worst-case scenario will always occur. This anxiety can paralyze you and make you mentally exhausted. Getting outdoors, meditating, exercising or sharing your concerns with a friend may help you better cope and become more realistic.
- ★ **You rely on caffeine to get through the day** – Studies show that up to three cups of coffee a day is good for you – but using caffeine improperly can seriously disrupt your sleep cycle. A study revealed that consuming caffeine even six hours prior to bedtime affects sleep, so cut yourself off by mid-afternoon.
- ★ **You stay up late on weekends** – Burning the midnight oil on Saturday and then sleeping in Sunday morning leads to difficulty falling asleep Sunday night – and a sleep deprived Monday morning. Since staying in can cramp your social life, try to wake up close to your normal time the following morning and then take a power nap in the afternoon. Napping for 20 minutes or so allows the body to recharge without entering the deeper stages of sleep, which can cause you to wake up more tired.
- ★ **You check e-mails at bedtime** – The glaring light of a tablet, smartphone, or your computers backlit screen can throw off your body's natural circadian rhythm by suppressing melatonin, a hormone that helps regulate sleep and wake cycles. It's a good idea to avoid all technology for at least one to two hours before bedtime.
- ★ **See your doctor** – If you have been feeling unusually tired in spite of best efforts to make positive lifestyle changes, consider talking with your MD about it. Sometimes medication or health conditions can effect or cause fatigue

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