



Not only is she beat, she has to pee every 10 minutes.

# The Weird Reasons You're So Tired

It may not be the heat that has you feeling wilted. Read on for **unexpected causes** of a summer energy slump.

By Kimberly Dawn Neumann

Marc Riedl, MD, assistant professor of medicine at UCLA. "Plus, if you're uncomfortable, your concentration suffers." The result? You're tired, scattered, and eyeing your sweater on 90-degree days.

**Fatigue fighter:** If your AC gatekeeper won't turn it down when you ask, Dr. Riedl recommends pacing to pump up your blood—try walking to talk to co-workers instead of e-mailing them.

## Breakups by Proxy

When a pal gets dumped, you're there with the ice cream. But since you empathize, you naturally start feeling heartbroken too. "Trying to take care of her can wear you out," says therapist Dan Neuharth, PhD, author of *Secrets You Keep From Yourself*.

**Fatigue fighter:** Instead of working to heal your friend's heartbreak for her, just let her vent. "Eighty percent of therapy is listening," says Neuharth. "Most people will get through their problems by themselves if someone just hears them out."

■ It's summertime, and you'd be loving life...except that you feel like a slug when your alarm goes off or by midday. What gives? "Plenty of surprising physiological things can drain energy," says Richard Schwab, MD, codirector of the University of Pennsylvania's Penn Sleep Center. "Plus, emotional stress can be just as tiring." Read on to see if one of these sneaky energy zappers could be keeping you from feeling rested.

## Summer Fruits

This time of year, fresh produce and lifeguards are equally drool-worthy. Fruit's healthy, but the postsnack crash can leave you dragging. "Certain fruits send your blood sugar sky-high, and what goes up will come down," says Dan Hamner, MD, author of *Peak Energy*. How quickly a food spikes your blood sugar is measured on the glycemic index (find it at [glycemicindex.com](http://glycemicindex.com)). Fruits with GI scores over 55 (like cantaloupe and pineapple) can catapult you into a fructose frenzy.

**Fatigue fighter:** Dr. Hamner suggests eating some nuts with your fruit—their proteins and fats stabilize blood sugar.

## Swimming in a Pool

Playing in the water is one of the joys of summer (again: lifeguards), but the chlorine can irritate sensitive sinuses. And sinusitis can lead to exhaustion and even chronic fatigue.

**Fatigue fighter:** If you get forehead pressure when you swim, avoid diving (and cannonballing), which shoots water straight up your nose. "Using a nasal saline solution or going to a steam room after your swim can help prevent sinusitis," says Alexander C. Chester, MD, clinical professor of medicine at Georgetown University Medical Center.

## Hyper-AC-tivity

Chattering teeth, numb hands: This common summertime work complaint is called air-con fatigue. "When you're chilly, your body works to produce heat, and that consumes energy," says

**That's the Point**  
Students in one study who applied acupressure to themselves during class reported feeling less sleepy during lectures.

SOURCE: UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN HEALTH SYSTEM

### That Mondo Purse

How bad can toting an oversize bag of essentials be? "Carrying everything on one side of your body can lead to strain and fatigue of the back and shoulders," says health and fitness consultant Tim Moore, PhD. Plus, slumping compresses your lungs, so there's less oxygen to take to your muscles. That leaves you feeling bagged, er, bogged down.

**Fatigue fighter:** Dump out your bag and put back only what you need for the day—you'll be way lighter and less lopsided without every nickel and lipstick you own.

### Outdoor Happy Hours

Toasting with friends in the perfect weather is your Cosmo-given right. But imbiber beware: "Over a quarter of people have mild allergic reactions to the complex ingredients in beer and wine, which cause drowsiness the next day," says Dr. Chester. And booze also screws up your sleep. "Drinking causes sweating and snoring and can prevent deep sleep states," says Dr. Schwab. Add irritation from cigarette-smoke exposure and pollens and you have a triple whammy.

**Fatigue fighter:** Don't tittle too late, since even one drink stays in your system for hours. Order white wine or simple mixes like vodka tonics to reduce possible allergens.

### A Big Secret

Think about what a drag it is keeping something little, like a surprise party, under wraps. Multiply that by 1,000 if it's serious—like that you cheated on your guy, are drowning in credit-card debt, or got a DUI. "Keeping a guilty secret is like trying to keep a beach ball underwater," says Neuharth. "It becomes a 24/7 low-level energy drain."

**Fatigue fighter:** Confess to a third party who won't judge you, like a neutral friend or a therapist. "Just telling someone breaks the isolation and neutralizes shame," says Neuharth. Still too scary? Post in an anonymous online support group first.

### Too Much Cardio

A recent study from the University of Adelaide found that PMS hormones during weeks three and four of your menstrual cycle actually help burn fat when you exercise and rid your system of related wastes. But during the two weeks starting the day you get your period, those hormones dwindle, so you can feel wiped out faster.

**Fatigue fighter:** Drink extra water in weeks one and two to flush out waste, says Dr. Hamner. And eat 15 or so grams of protein (an energy bar, some meat) postworkout to help rebound.

### Your iPod

True story: Struggling to hear can create physical stress. "Many people listen to their iPods at 115 decibels," says Ray Hull, PhD, an audiologist at Wichita State University. "That is as loud as a plane taking off and can damage your hearing and balance after 15 minutes." If you blast Rihanna before a big lecture, you then have to strain to hear, and you may be nap-ready before noon.

**Fatigue fighter:** Earbuds blast right onto your eardrums, so wear noise-canceling headphones instead, and download iPod volume-control software. ■

## Fast Energy Boosters

Here's how quick-fix revitalizers rate.

THE PICK-ME-UP	THE PROCESS	STAYING POWER
 <p>A sugary snack</p>	<p>The carbs in cookies, candy, and sodas are easily absorbed by the bloodstream, giving you an instant rush.</p>	<p>Your sweets-induced energy burst can likely end in a crash within the hour.</p>
 <p>Caffeine (coffee, pop, energy drinks)</p>	<p>This stimulant gets your neurons firing and causes adrenaline to flood your system. In short, you're hyped.</p>	<p>You'll peak about an hour after consuming the caffeine but could stay amped for up to six hours.</p>
 <p>A cigarette</p>	<p>The nicotine in a poison-packed cigarette instantly spikes your blood pressure and heart rate.</p>	<p>The drug buzz only lasts about 30 minutes, and then you're fiending for another nicotine hit.</p>
 <p>A catnap</p>	<p>Naps give your brain cells time to rest and regenerate, leading to enhanced performance and fewer mistakes.</p>	<p>A 20-minute nap can energize you for hours. (But sleep much longer and you may feel groggy.)</p>
 <p>A quick walk or midday workout</p>	<p>Physical activity ramps up your metabolism, blood flow, and the alertness areas of your brain to boost your energy.</p>	<p>A brisk 10-minute walk has been shown to give increased energy for two hours afterward.</p>