You're listening to, you've got this episode 261. Welcome to you've got this, a weekly podcast for higher education professionals looking to increase their confidence and capacity for juggling the day-to-day demands of an academic. I'm your host, Dr. Katie Linder. On this episode, I want to chat a little bit about some tips for staying energized during long workdays.

I feel like this is the time of year where we're trained to squeeze in as much as we possibly can before the holiday breaks. And also sometimes we just have long work days where we have grading, we're trying to get done, or we have. Deadlines that are coming up, you know, before the end of the calendar year.

And there's just so much that we're trying to pack into our days and that doesn't even include, you know, time with our family and holiday time and all these other things that we're going to be trying to squeeze in. And so I've been thinking about this a lot lately because I have a calendar that is pretty packed with meetings and I have lots of.

Cognitive and creative engagement at work where I'm having to really give a lot of my mental energy to what I'm working on. And also we're starting to get to the point where we're leaving home in the dark and coming home in the dark. If you are traveling and commuting into an office, at least here in the north.

That's what we're experiencing as we head into the winter season. So how do we stay energized in the midst of all of this? I don't think any of what I'm going to propose in this episode is earth shattering. I will admit, but when things are really busy, I know that I can use some reminders of even the most basic ways to take care of myself and to stay energized.

And I'm guessing that maybe you're in this boat too. So I thought I would talk about some of the ways that I am trying to stay energized as I'm writing. You know, pushing my way through these work days. And, uh, here are some suggestions that that might be helpful for you too. So the first one is I am back on the morning exercise train.

So I may have mentioned on the show that I recently purchased a Peloton tread, and this is helping me to get in a morning walk before I go into work, sometimes a run. It kind of just depends on how I'm feeling. Um, and this definitely helps me have more energy during the day. I found one. Between, you know, four to 6,000 steps before I head out the door.

Uh, that feels pretty good to me and most of my day, because we're on zoom so much. Now I am sitting at my desk and I am not getting out a lot, even over my lunch hour. So to have that kind of movement in the beginning of the day and just to get kind of my blood flowing, it feels pretty. Now I also have in my office, uh, a snack drawer and mine includes right now, primarily what I'm using is nuts for like a quick protein hit during the day.

I also have a mini fridge in my office where I have, um, some like vegan cheese that also has a little bit of protein in it. But it's really just like, if I'm feeling like I need a little bit of a kick of energy, sometimes I'll have a little bit of a snack, like mid morning or mid afternoon. And I think that for me, uh, something like sugar tends to like crash me.

It might give me an initial, um, you know, boost, but then I crash, but something like protein gives me something that's a little bit more, um, kind of long, long standing in terms of what I'm looking for in terms of energy. Now, the other thing that I have in that snack drawer is a bunch of tea. So I really try to focus on tea and hydrating.

And I may have mentioned before that I don't drink caffeine, but I found that peppermint tea in the afternoon can often give me a little bit of a boost. So I use herbal tea and hopefully that can kind of help me to wake up a little bit, especially after lunch, if I'm feeling a little bit groggy. And I also try to make sure to drink plenty of water throughout the day.

Now this is especially important because Denver has a really dry climate. So I feel dehydration way more acutely if I'm not getting enough water. So I actually bring in a bottle of water in the morning that I kind of drink from throughout the day. That helps me to see how much I'm drinking. And then I also have a electric kettle in my office and I use a water from that to make my tea.

So I'm, I'm probably getting, I mean, at least 64 ounces a day, if not significantly more, just depending on how much I'm drinking in terms of the tea. But I feel like I need extra, um, to make sure that I'm kind of keeping my energy up. Now. I also think that when you're having a long Workday, having some kind of break for lunch is really significant.

I will say, I, I'm not great at this right now. I mean, I've definitely working through my lunches, um, which is not my long-term strategy, but I try to what I, um, other than just like eating my lunch and spending that time, having my lunch, if I can. And I don't feel like there's something else I'm trying to get done in between me.

I will try to give my brain a bit of a rest during this time. And for me, sometimes that looks like reading something fun. If I'm like in the middle of a novel, um, I can pull up my Kindle app on my phone and it's like really easy for me to read a few pages. Um, sometimes I just catch up on social media posts.

Like I'll, I'll open up Instagram and just kind of look around and see what's going on there. Or I may even listen to a podcast and try to catch up on that. If I feel like I have a little bit of extra time now, again, this is not something I feel like I'm doing super great at right now, but in the future, I would also love to maybe even build in like a walk in the middle of this.

Right now that's feeling a little bit harder for me just because my back-to-back meetings, my lunch hour is sometimes like when I'm actually getting things done in the middle of the meetings. And I'm sure that some of you can really relate to this, that if you have these back to backs, it's like, how are you even supposed to get the tasks done that are coming out of the meetings?

And that can feel really challenging. And right now I'm pretty committed to not taking work home unless it's absolutely necessary. So I really am trying to use every spare minute of my Workday to get these kinds of tasks done so that when I can go home, um, I am I'm really home and I'm not continuing the work once I get.

Now I also think something that's helping me to stay energized during these long work days is I particularly need solitude time. And this is something I've talked about pretty extensively as an introvert. Um, sometimes I just need to shut my door and be on my own, like for a moment just by myself. And I'm lucky that the floor that I work on is it's actually pretty quiet.

There's not a lot of noise and conversation going on. But I am interacting with other people via zoom and in-person meetings pretty much all day. And I was just actually talking with my partner tonight at dinner, um, that this is kind of stretching my introversion in that I I'm kind of hitting my limit on some days where I'm just tired by the end of the day.

And so knowing that I have. You know, kind of lack of capacity for that social interaction, because I'm so introverted, um, to stay energized. Sometimes I do need to take a moment if I have, you know, 15 minutes in between meetings, or even if like a meeting gets canceled, I will use that windfall of time to just like quietly work in my office with the.

And I feel very comfortable doing that. There are a lot of people on my floor who do do work with their doors shut. It's not a space where you always have to have your door open. Um, but I feel very good about doing that when I can, because I know it's something that's going to help me keep my energy up.

Now, the other thing that I found that really works for me, And I, I wasn't really doing this, um, in my last job, because with remote work, I just wasn't feeling the strain of the, the long Workday as much, but now I'm really making a plan for what I want to do or what I need to do after work. And I have a pretty good sense of that.

Um, sometimes from like the very beginning of my day, like, I, I know if I have something scheduled after work. Or I know if I have like a chore or something that I want to get done. And if I have things that I need to do, um, to kind of accomplish after my Workday, it really does help me to know that they're there in advance.

And then I kind of keep myself in work mode until my day is truly, truly over. So when I get home, what that looks like is I might not fully change into like comfortable clothes. Um, if I have some meetings or something on zoom, uh, Coach training or something like that. I might put on like sweatpants, but I keep like the, the top part in my, in my like work.

And that helps me to understand that, like it's not entirely time to relax yet. Like I, I still need to be kind of on, in terms of facilitating or doing something like that. And even tonight, when I walked in the door, I had a number of things I wanted to get done. As I record this, we're going to go visit some family over the weekend and it's cutting into like my normal time to get some things done, like food prep and things like that.

And so I had a list of like what I wanted to do tonight before we started to engage with this family time so that I could be really present with my family. But it did mean that I walked in the door and I like did not. I took my shoes off and I, and I took my jacket off, but then I like went straight into the kitchen and I started kind of prepping things and getting things ready to go.

So I think that for me, it helps me to stay in that mode of like productivity for as long as I need to knowing that it's going to help me kind of stay energized to get that work done. Once I. Uh, the day over to like putting on my sweat pants and like sitting down and like reading a novel. And like, I know that that's what I want to do.

It's so much harder for me to get back up and do some of these other tasks. And then I ended up kind of pushing things to the next day or something like that when it's, you know, if it's something I really want to get done, I just walk in the door and. So I think that these are all things that have helped me to stay energized during these long work days.

But I would imagine you all have some tips and strategies and tricks for how this looks for you. I do think this is so unique depending on your work schedule, depending on, um, your personality and things like introversion and extroversion and, and the kinds of things that give you energy throughout the day.

Um, I would imagine that many of you do rely on caffeine and I have to admit I'm kind of jealous of that. Um, but I've made a decision a long time ago that that caffeine just doesn't work for me. So, um, I would love to hear if there are certain kinds of things that you're doing to give yourself energy during these long work days.

And I guess one more thing I would add is I do think it's really important to give yourself a reward, whatever that looks like for you. So at the end of. Stays. I do squeeze in some reading. Sometimes the thing that is my reward is actually getting a chore or something done that I've been putting off. So like sometimes changing sheets is a great reward for me.

I love going to bed with a set of clean sheets or doing some kind of prep that I know is really gonna help me with the next day. All of those kinds of things are rewarding for me. And so I really try to build in something that just feels. Like, um, I'm getting something good for all that I've put in throughout the day.

And, uh, I always can appreciate that too. So I would love to hear if you also have that, if you have rewards built-in or other kinds of tips for how you stay energized, you can always email me at hello at Dr. Katie linder.com. I would love to hear from you and I hope you are hanging in there as we get into kind of these dark days of winter.

And we're putting in a lot of work, but the break for winter is coming. Again, at least here in the Northern hemisphere. And I know that we're all going to get a little bit of a rest and reset in just a few short weeks. Thanks for listening. Thanks for listening to this episode of you've got this show notes and a transcript for this episode can be found at Dr.

Katie linder.com/podcasts. If you found this episode helpful, please also consider rating and or reviewing the show in iTunes. Thanks for list.