

Mindless Habits That Fuel Overwhelm and Exhaustion

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STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- › Daily habits like poor posture, shallow breathing, and cluttered environments significantly drain your energy without your awareness
- › Workspace chaos such as cluttered desks, too many browser tabs, and constant interruptions scatters focus and depletes mental energy throughout the workday
- › Task management problems like leaving things unfinished, overplanning, and letting small tasks accumulate create mental weight that exhausts you
- › Lifestyle choices including intense TV shows and bright lights before bed disrupt your circadian rhythm and emotional balance, leaving you tired
- › Sensory overload from environmental stimuli and ignoring your body's needs overwhelm your nervous system, requiring intentional breaks and stress management

Do you often feel wiped out, even after sleeping all night? You're not the only one — lots of people deal with low energy every day. The sneaky part? Your daily habits could be the culprits, quietly draining you without you noticing.¹ From putting up with household clutter to staying up with bright lights, these little things add up fast.

But here's the best news: you can turn it around with easy fixes. Let's explore why these habits tire you out and give you simple tips to feel better. Soon, you'll spot these energy-drainers in your own life and know how to kick them out — starting right now.

Your Body's Energy SOS — Habits That Wear You Down Physically

Your body needs steady care to keep going strong. Disregard that, and you'll feel slow and tired. Here are three habits that zap your physical energy — and how to stop them.

- **Sitting like a couch potato** — Slouching feels cozy, but it's secretly exhausting. When you hunch over, your muscles strain to hold you up, and your lungs can't fill with air. It's like lugging a heavy bag the wrong way all day — it wears you out. Sit up straight with a cushion or a good chair to help your back. Stretch a couple times during the day, and you'll feel a lift.
- **Breathless and drained** — Ever catch yourself barely breathing when you're stressed? Quick, shallow breaths don't give you enough oxygen, leaving you foggy and worn out. But instead of taking deep, vertical breaths that trigger the stress response, practice [horizontal breathing](#).

This means expanding your ribcage sideways rather than lifting your chest upwards. Horizontal breathing promotes relaxation by avoiding the activation of stress pathways in your nervous system.

- **Why it matters and what to do** — These habits creep in because they're so normal — slumping in your seat or holding your breath when you're busy. But they drain your body little by little. Start small: sit less, adjust your chair or set a breathing reminder. You'll feel stronger soon!

Chaos at Your Desk — How Your Workspace Steals Your Energy

Your work area either keeps you sharp or leaves you fried. These three habits might be tiring you out at your desk — here's how to take back control.²

- **Clutter chaos** — A desk covered in papers and knick-knacks scrambles your brain. It's like cooking in a kitchen with no space — stressful and slow. Clutter pulls your focus, so everything takes longer and tires you out. Take 10 to 15 minutes a day to

tidy up — put things away and keep only what you need. A clean desk clears your head too.

- **Tab overload** — A screen full of open tabs is like juggling too many balls — you'll drop one eventually. Your brain gets frazzled switching between them, draining your energy quick. Every hour, ask: "Which tabs do I need right now?" Close the rest or save them for later. Fewer tabs mean more focus and less burnout.
- **Phone call fatigue** — Jumping to answer every call yanks you off track. It's like someone pulling you around while you walk — you stumble and lose steam. Switching focus fast wears your brain out. Let calls wait unless they're urgent — pick a time each day to deal with them. Send a quick text to check if it's a good time, and save yourself the hassle.
- **Taming your workspace** — A jumbled desk, too many tabs, and constant calls turn work into an energy trap. Imagine a calm setup: neat, focused, and quiet. Pick one fix to start — like clearing your desk tonight — and watch how much better you feel by day's end.

Task Trouble — When Your To-Do List Drains You Dry

How you manage tasks can keep you pumped or leave you swamped. These three habits overload your brain — here's how to lighten up.

- **Leaving things half-done** — Like pausing a movie before the end — keeps your brain hooked on it. Experts call it "attention residue," and it tires you out juggling old and new information in your head. Finish what you can before switching, or write down where you stopped. That quick note frees your mind for the next thing.
- **Overthinking the future** — Planning every detail weeks ahead sounds smart, but it stresses you out. It's like stuffing a suitcase so full you can't carry it. A jammed schedule stops fun and rest, draining you dry. Plan the big stuff (work,

appointments), but leave some days free for whatever. Less planning means more energy.

- **Letting small tasks pile up** — Ignoring tiny tasks — like replying to a text or changing a bulb — builds a mental mess. It's like snow piling on your roof; it gets too heavy to handle. All those "I'll do it later" thoughts drag you down. Knock out quick jobs (under five minutes) right away, or list them and hit them weekly.
- **Getting back in control** — Unfinished tasks, overpacked plans, and a growing to-do pile weigh your days down. Picture the opposite: finishing tasks, keeping plans loose, and clearing small jobs fast. Try one tweak this week — like jotting tasks down — and feel your energy climb.

Everyday Choices That Tire You Out

Your daily routine can sneakily sap your energy. Are these three habits hiding in your life? Let's dig them out and fix them.³

- **TV that wears you out** — Love gripping shows? They wear you down with an emotional rollercoaster. It's like running a feelings marathon — you're beat after. Big emotions, even fun ones, tire your brain. Switch to lighter shows or save dramas for weekends when you can relax after.
- **Bright lights before bed** — Bright lights and [blue light at night](#) fool your brain into thinking it's day. It's like sleeping with the sun in your face — hard to rest! This throws off your sleep and your [circadian rhythm](#), leaving you tired the next day. Block blue light in the evenings by using blue-light blocking glasses, installing blue light filters on your devices, and opting for warmer, dimmer lighting in your home as it gets dark.
- **Following bad-fit advice** — Adopting tips that don't suit you often backfires. Advice that doesn't fit wastes your effort. Figure out what works for you — like tweaking your diet or skipping a rule that feels off. Custom fixes save your energy.

- **Reclaiming your spark** — TV binges, late-night lights, and mismatched advice gradually drain. Start with one swap, like dimming lights tonight, and keep going.

Sensory Overload — When Your Senses Steal Your Energy

Your brain is a processing powerhouse, but it has limits. When sensory input overwhelms it, you're not just tired — you're truly overstimulated. Here are three habits that lead to sensory overload, and how to reclaim your calm.⁴

- **Ignoring your limits** — Pushing through crowded spaces, loud events, or visually busy environments without breaks overwhelms your sensory processing. Recognize your triggers and plan breaks in quiet, low-stimulus environments.
- **Neglecting your nervous system** — Failing to manage stress leaves your nervous system primed for overload. Chronic stress heightens sensitivity to sensory input. Practice [stress reduction](#) and slow breathing regularly, even when you're not feeling overwhelmed.
- **Ignoring physical needs** — Not eating healthy, or not getting enough sleep, leaves your body less able to cope with sensory input. Focus on proper sleep, [healthy carbs](#), and daily exercise to build up your resilience.
- **Taming your sensory overload** — A constant barrage of sights, sounds, and stimuli turn daily life into a sensory minefield. Start by identifying your triggers and implementing simple strategies to manage your sensory input. Even small changes, like taking regular breaks, make a significant difference in your overall well-being.

Breaking Free from Harmful Habits

Remember, feeling tired all the time isn't your fate. Whether your desk stresses you out, tasks stack up, or your routine throws you off, small changes flip the script. You don't have to fix it all now — start with one or two that feel familiar. Little steps add up quick.

Look at your day: which habits ring a bell? Write them down and pick one to tackle this week. You'll be shocked how much pep you get back.

FAQs — Common Questions About Energy-Draining Habits

Q: What's the best way to stop feeling tired all the time?

A: Check your habits first. Sitting tall, decluttering your environment, and proper breathing lift you fast. Try tidying your desk and dimming lights at night — small wins work. Remember, consistency with these small adjustments is key to sustained energy improvements.

Q: How does a messy desk affect my energy?

A: Clutter messes with your focus, making tasks harder and longer. A clean desk keeps your brain calm and saves energy. Therefore, regularly dedicating short periods to organization significantly enhances your focus and reduces mental fatigue.

Q: Why do I feel drained after binge-watching shows?

A: Intense shows stir big emotions, tiring your brain out. Go for lighter options or save dramas for when you can rest after. Consider balancing screen time with activities that promote relaxation, such as reading or gentle stretching.

Q: Can bright lights really make me tired?

A: Yes, nighttime bright light and blue light trick your brain into staying up, ruining sleep. Dim lights at sunset and avoid blue light from screens at night for better rest and energy. Implementing a consistent evening routine with dimmed lighting helps regulate your circadian rhythm and promote better sleep quality.

Q: How can I manage tasks without getting overwhelmed?

A: Finish what you start and do small tasks fast. A quick list or note keeps your head clear. Prioritizing tasks and breaking larger projects into smaller, manageable steps prevents feelings of being overwhelmed.

Sources and References

- ^{1, 2, 3} [HuffPost February 2, 2025](#)
- ⁴ [Cleveland Clinic, How To Manage \(and Even Overcome\) Sensory Overload July 20, 2023](#)