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Afternoon Delight…Along with My Lunchtime Meal Combination

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Okay, Happily Whole Members, I've already written about **my morning routine [1] (start there if you missed that one)**. Now it's time to tackle the next portion of the day—***afternoons.***

Afternoons present a particular kind of challenge for me because, well, I'm a morning girl! There's still a lot of running around to do, lists to tackle and tasks to accomplish in the afternoon. The problem is that I sorta run out of steam from time to time.

And you know what happens when energy is low and emotions run a bit on the anxious side, don't you?

In my case, I become a little complacent about the choices I make, succumbing to scavenging for sweet treats or more comforting caffeine.

But, alas, those things never work to refresh or rejuvenate me. So, I had to start trying something new that will keep my motor running for the rest of the day. Here's a little list of what I do when I feel a little run down (**I call these things the 'intangibles'**):

- **Cleansing Breaths with a Deep Stretch:** I breathe deep several times, holding the inhale for just a couple of counts and slowly exhaling though my mouth. No, I am not kidding! I do this almost every day….sometimes while I whisper a prayer. Along with some neck or side stretches, this is sometimes all I need.
- **A Short Inspirational Read:** I always have at least three books going at one time. One of them usually consists of short devotions. So, when I reach for that and take just a couple quick moments to read and reflect, my mind is suddenly prepared for what remains of the day. It's a God thing! He is always there to stand behind us and equip us when we are willing to tap into Him.
- **Cardio Burst!** Seriously! When time allows, I might hop on my cross trainer for 20 minutes or even do a short series of heart-pumping exercises. Here's a quick workout to try: Ready Set Go! [2] (or, if you don't have time for the whole thing, just choose a couple execises from the workout to energize you). It takes time, but I am often so much more productive afterwards that the time I took to move more is well worth it. I know that not everyone can do this because of your location mid-day. But, maybe you could walk the workplace halls, do some stairs or even get outside for a breath of fresh air. *Whatever it takes to get your blood moving and your mood stimulated*.

Now, I know you are all waiting for the actual food remedy that I use to keep myself feeling light and energetic during the day. So, here it is, pure and SIMPLE (**I call this stuff 'the tangibles'**):

- **I almost always eat a raw salad mid-day.** It fills me up and nourishes my cells with energizing nutrients. I always include a combination of raw veggies, a protein source, some type of dressing and something with good fats. If you choose something from each of these categories, you will mimic what I eat in my salads most days:
  - **Approximately 2 cups greens**: mixed greens, spring mix, spinach, baby kale, romaine



  - **Any combination of the following raw veggies** to equal about ½ to ¾ cup total: chopped colored peppers, cucumbers, tomato, sliced carrots, chopped broccoli or cauliflower, leftover veggies from the night before
  - **A protein source:** I almost always choose nuts, seeds or beans (legumes) as a protein source for my salads. 2 tablespoons of seeds, a bit under ¼ cup of nuts or ¼ cup of legumes works. Think: sesame seeds, pumpkin seeds, sliced almonds, walnuts, cashews, black beans, chick peas, lentils, chia seeds, etc. Be sure your seeds and nuts are RAW/unpasteurized when possible (more on that topic at a later time---one thing at a time, Ladies!). If you are a meat eater, you can certainly have a bit of meat or chicken from the evening before atop your salad.



- **Good Fats/Dressings:** Oftentimes, the dressing I choose is also the good fat source. I will drizzle olive oil and squeeze lemon over the salad and shake some spices on. Or sometimes I mix up my own concoction of olive oil, kombucha (yep!) or vinegar with spices (see picture) and keep it in the fridge ready-made. I also sometimes slice some avocado on the salad from time to time, especially when I am NOT choosing nuts and seeds as my protein source (because nuts and seeds have their own good fats in them so you do NOT need both).



- **A secret ingredient**: I love shaking **Nutritional Yeast** over my salads! It's high in B complex and the taste is delish! It's sorta cheesy.
- Here are a couple salads I've share on the site that meet these requirements. **Strawberry Beet Salad** [3] **and Pumpkin Seed Salad** [4]. But be sure to concoct your own favorites, too!
- **Afternoon ADD-ON:** Along with the salad, I usually have one of the following either right away alongside the salad but most the time I save it for a bit later when I'm feeling hungry again:
- A piece of Ezekiel bread with real, grass-fed butter
- A Medjool date stuffed with almond butter (maybe 2!)
- A cup of homemade soup (typically left over from a dinner or taken from the freezer). Here are my hands down favorites right now: **Winter Wellness Soup** [5] **and Squash Sou** [6]**p**
- A slice of raw cheddar cheese and green apple. Or on a cold day, I might slice up an apple, sprinkle cinnamon on it and toast it in my toaster oven. YUM!
- Any piece of fruit with a bit of plain yogurt sweetened with a touch of pure maple syrup
- A homemade muffin with a bit of real, grass-fed butter. Here's an example of a muffin I'd eat: **Pumpkin Spice Muffin** [7] **or Cranberry Millet Muffin** [8]

You can certainly come up with combinations of your own. This is just what I do on a daily basis and hopefully it gives you some ideas to run with. ***The key is eating REAL, unprocessed, 'clean' foods and incorporating a variety into your weekly routine.*** You don't have to eat everything on one day or even in one week. But think about how you eat over the course of a month and be sure to vary the content throughout that time.

Now….I'm hoping to hear from some of you! Share your thoughts, ask some questions or post your ideas in the **Member's Forum**.

Next Member post: **My Daytime Snacks**

OHHHHH…and the one after that: **Grocery Shopping Trips and Tips**

So stay tuned, Sisters! I am going to keep ‘em coming!



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