

ADRENALINE QUICKEN YOUR PULSE

How do you get your thrills? If the answer includes a bacon roll and a chunky Kit Kat, then you might be missing out. Adrenaline junkie Richard Pullan of the Altitude Centre explains why we all need a buzz



WHAT IS ADRENALINE?

↳ THE HIGH-STRESS HORMONE

- Adrenaline is a hormone naturally produced by the body that stimulates heart rate and dilates your blood vessels.
- It is most often produced in high-stress situations, such as a job interview, or physically exhilarating circumstances – winning a road race, for example.
- The term ‘fight or flight’ is commonly used to describe our response to stressful situations, when adrenaline is released into the body.
- The release of adrenaline is an early evolutionary adaptation that allows us to cope with dangerous situations. That said, humans don’t normally experience the most dangerous of situations – there isn’t normally a tiger chasing us down the road, for instance.

HOW DOES IT AFFECT MY BODY?

↳ QUICK PULSE AND HYPERAROUSAL

- Common effects of adrenaline include hyperarousal, increased blood flow, heightened pulse rate and increased physical performance.
- An adrenaline rush is usually accompanied by an increase in endorphin activity. Endorphins are responsible for feelings of wellbeing and pain relief, and their effects can often last for up to 12 hours.
- A surge of adrenaline can be effective when weight training – it can be used to push your muscles to new levels. So, before you hit the gym, get your boss to tick you off – you’ll be revved up and ready to go.
- Although its effects are largely positive, too much adrenaline in an already stressed body can cause high blood pressure and other stress-related diseases.

HOW CAN IT HELP ME?

↳ PUSH LIMITS AND REMEMBER STUFF

- Confronted with a stressful situation, your heart races and your breathing rate increases. Now is the time to put the adrenaline surging through your body to good use.
- Take a deep breath and call on the extra energy and vigour that you feel. Use the adrenaline to push your limits.
- Your memory can also be enhanced during a stress response. Everyone remembers where they were when Princess Diana died – the shock would have stimulated adrenaline and released glucose stores in your brain, helping your memory of the event to be long-lasting.
- Adrenaline can play a part in motivating you to do something that you would not normally – this can give your confidence a huge boost.

HEALTH QUERIES

CAN I STRETCH IN QUICK TIME?

THE EXPERT



SIMON LOVELL

I hate spending time stretching in the gym. Are there any stretches that I really shouldn’t skip?
 “Ensure you stretch the muscles that you’ve worked on during your session. If you’ve been for a run, calves, hamstrings and quads are key. If you’ve done a chest session, then do a chest stretch. If you’re in a gym, rowing is a great warm-up.”
 Simon Lovell is a personal trainer – see www.theheatfitness.co.uk

CAN MAN LIVE BY CEREAL ALONE?

THE EXPERT



HENRIETTA BAILEY

I’m considering the cereal diet – two bowls a day and a healthy dinner. I’m 5ft 6ins and weigh 13 stone – should I go for it?
 “Your body mass index indicates you are overweight, but it is advisable to adopt a gradual weight-loss strategy, which will be sustainable, rather than a quick weight-loss plan over a short period. A varied diet is vital to getting your valuable nutrients.”
 Henrietta Bailey is a nutritionist – see www.puresportsmed.com

Sport has assembled a crack team of experts in the fields of fitness, nutrition and general wellbeing to answer all your questions. Send your questions in to sarah.shephard@myfreosport.co.uk...

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WHO IS IT GOOD FOR?

→ FIREFIGHTERS, AMBULANCE DRIVERS AND TRADERS

- ▶ Adrenaline can be useful in many jobs, particularly those requiring bursts of energy, such as firefighting or driving ambulances. For some, it is almost a daily requirement.
- ▶ Stock-market trading floors attract adrenaline junkies who need to be constantly on the ball, something that requires a lot of adrenaline.
- ▶ If you think you may be at risk from high stress levels and too much adrenaline, then it's time to take control.
- ▶ Do that by finding a release for the 'fight or flight' response through regular exercise.
- ▶ Conversely, if you live a life of routine and can't remember the last time your heart rate reached triple figures, give yourself an adrenaline hit. Book a skydiving course or throw yourself into a boxing ring for a white-collar bout. That should get your heart pumping. ∞

SARAH SHEPHARD

Richard Pullan is director of The Altitude Centre. For further information, visit www.altitudecentre.com. Alternatively, call 0870 950 4479 to book an appointment at The Altitude Centre.

NOT SURE WHAT TO DRINK

THE EXPERT



JOHN BREWER

I usually stay in the gym for about an hour, or do a 45-minute run. Should I use sports drinks, or is water good enough?

"Recent advances in sports science have shown that both your performance and recovery will be enhanced if your drink contains electrolytes to help replace the minerals and salts your body loses when you exercise. They also ensure that you rapidly absorb the fluid you're drinking – just a small fluid loss will quickly cause you to grow fatigued and lose concentration."

John Brewer is performance director at the Lucozade Sports Science Academy – see www.thelssa.co.uk