



Caffeine Cut Back Challenge



CHALLENGE DESCRIPTION:

Welcome to the Caffeine Cut Back Challenge! Whether you're aiming for better sleep, less anxiety or just a fresh start, this challenge will provide you with tips, tricks and plenty of encouragement to help you cut back on caffeine. If you rely on caffeine to wake you up and keep you going, it can be daunting to think about cutting back. The headaches? The fatigue? No thank you.

Here's the good news, there are ways to cut back on caffeine that support your body's transition – without the withdrawal symptoms. Over the next 14-days this 5-step challenge will help you gradually reduce your caffeine intake to get back to a healthier, more vibrant you!

WHAT IS THE HEALTH IMPACT OF CAFFEINE?

Even though many of us know too much caffeine is 'bad for us' – you may be wondering how excess caffeine actually impacts your health. Even at moderate doses (200mg or one 16oz coffee), caffeine can have a lasting impact on anxiety levels and sleep. **Research** has suggested that caffeine reduces total sleep time and the amount of time your body spends in deep restorative sleep. Poor sleep is linked to **many chronic health problems**, such as, heart disease, kidney disease, high blood pressure, diabetes and stroke.

While caffeine has its perks, it can pose some serious health problems too. **Health Canada** advises a daily intake of no more than 400mg, a little over 3 8oz cups of coffee. For pregnant or breastfeeding women, the recommendation drops to 300mg per day. The first step of this challenge is to calculate your caffeine intake, so you know where to start.

Step 1: Work out how much caffeine you're really drinking

So how much caffeine I am drinking anyway? It may come as no surprise that people are usually drinking far more caffeine than they might initially think. For example, a grande-sized drink at Starbucks is 16oz. – that means 2 of these would tip your intake to the upper limit. Add in a Diet coke or an energy drink, and you are well beyond your daily allowance.

Use the following guide to calculate how much caffeine you are drinking (in milligrams):

- Can of pop – 30—40mg
- Cup of Green or black tea (8oz.) – 30-50mg
- Cup of coffee (8oz.) – 80-100mg
- Can of energy drinks – 40-250mg

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Step 2: Cut back gradually

Avoid quitting caffeine abruptly! Your body has grown accustomed to a certain amount of caffeine and without it you may start to experience withdrawal symptoms like headaches and fatigue. Instead, aim to reduce your intake by 20% within the first week. For instance, if you usually have five cups of coffee, decrease to four. Continue this pattern for a few weeks until you find a consumption level that keeps you energized throughout the day. If you find yourself reaching for something to drink, consider switching to decaf coffee or tea, or opt for a caffeine-free alternative.

Step 3: Beat the afternoon slump

Around mid to late afternoon, your circadian rhythm naturally dips, signalling to your body that it's nearly time to rest. Think of your circadian rhythm like a 24-hour internal clock that regulates your sleep pattern and tells your body when it's time to be alert and when it's time for rest.

During this natural afternoon dip, many people reach for caffeine, hijacking their circadian rhythm to push their body into a more alert state. This is why caffeine can have a very disruptive effect on your sleep, especially when consumed in the late afternoon when your body is trying to slow down.

Instead of reaching for iced coffee, consider engaging in physical activity to naturally boost your energy levels. A 10-minute power nap, a quick chat with a friend, or consuming foods low in sugar and high in fiber can also help prevent energy dips. Opting for foods with slow sugar absorption can help you steer clear of energy crashes, maintaining a steady energy level.

Step 4: Establish regular self check-ins

As you work through your Low Caffeine Challenge, establish regular check-ins with yourself to reflect on how you're feeling. Every day or every few days, work through the following questions:

1. How do I feel physically compared to before I started cutting back on caffeine?
2. Have I noticed any changes in my sleep patterns or sleep quality?
3. Am I experiencing fewer or more headaches than usual?
4. How are my energy levels throughout the day? Do I feel more balanced?
5. Have I experienced any changes in my mood or anxiety levels?
6. How has my concentration and focus been since reducing caffeine?
7. Am I finding it easier or harder to wake up in the morning?
8. How have my cravings for caffeine changed over the past days?
9. Have I found any new beverages or activities that help boost my energy naturally?
10. What has been the most challenging part of cutting back on caffeine for me?

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THE CHALLENGE

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Each day keep track of your caffeine intake and make note of it in the chart below. This will help you to become more aware of how much caffeine you are drinking each day.

Your 2-Week Challenge

DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3	DAY 4	DAY 5	DAY 6	DAY 7
DAY 8	DAY 9	DAY 10	DAY 11	DAY 12	DAY 13	DAY 14

CHALLENGE COMPLETE!

Congratulations on completing the Caffeine Cut Back Challenge! Over the past two weeks, you've taken important steps towards becoming more aware of your caffeine intake and making healthier choices. Take a moment to reflect on your journey. How has tracking your caffeine intake impacted your daily routine and overall well-being? What positive changes have you noticed in your energy levels, sleep patterns, and mood? Celebrate your commitment to making healthier choices and the progress you've made.



Congratulations on completing the **Caffeine Cut Back** Challenge

The journey of wellness is ongoing, and each step, no matter how small, is a victory to be celebrated. Keep pushing forward, embracing each day as an opportunity to live your best life.

