

Where do they fit the stamina... and can I have some?

As a grim winter draws near, why do some people seem to have all the energy, and what can you do to boost your own drive?

SAY what you like about the Prime Minister — but the man certainly has stamina. For more than 10 years covering the most gruelling and distressing events, there have been dire predictions that he was about to cave in, collapse or be ousted. But stamina is the most under-rated gift in politics and much of the rest of life, too. It does not mean never being tired — but the

ability to bounce back from tiredness. People with stamina have tricks to sustain themselves through times when their bodies and minds are crying "get me out of here". Mr Blair's stamina is part of a political personality which thrives on being in the limelight. He is a little tired and must have been overworked. Margaret Thatcher — who was compared to a Mini Metro in her ability to go distances without the fuel of sleep required by ordinary mortals, had the same ability. It is no accident that they are the modern long-stayers of power.

In the rest of life, it is often those with stamina who prevail while others fall to earth. Whether it is Gordon Ramsay in the kitchen, Mick Jagger on stage or Philip Green just about everywhere on the high street, they are the people who have the ability to just keep on keeping on.

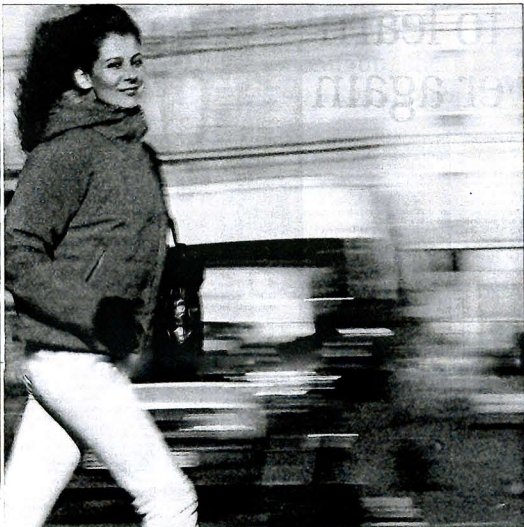
But the pace of everyday life demands staying power, too. Mothers of small children know that sheer sense of pride that enables them to finish baking birthday cakes an hour ago to rise again a couple of hours later is a real test of stamina.

With Kelly as the Cabinet's Mother Courage pines four children off to school and oversees their music practice before she starts her 12-hour day. Sometimes, of course, even this lot of super troopers need to put their head back under the duvet and about. "Give me another hour". But for the rest of the time, stamina is the key to success.

Remember it is not just about the food you eat, the supplements you take and working out for hours on end. It is also about something within the individual — an attitude of mind that drives you on when your body tells you to give in. Here is our guide to how to get it — and how to keep it in the winter months.



Anne McElvoy



STAMINA STARS

Tony Blair, 52: photocopist at dawn, tennis, power politics over lunch, Question Time in the Commons and a constant round of summits.

Ruth Kelly, 37: even with four children and the long ministerial day — including weekends — the Education Secretary manages to look bright-eyed and lively.

Gordon Ramsay, 39: cooking on TV, cooking in his restaurant, writing books, and still he has the energy to run home from Chelsea to Wandsworth and have time with his wife.

Samantha Cameron, 34: pregnant mother of two, whose eldest child is disabled and whose husband is heading to be the next Tory leader, she is also creative director of Bond Street stationers Smythson and mistress of two large houses.

Mick Jagger, 62: still exercising like mad and strutting the boards at 100 when his contemporaries are contemplating carpet-slippers.

Amy Poehler, 36: always available, always available with two children, her own global business and consultancy deals, too.

Philip Green, 52: driven man, ever though he's a billionaire, he wants more, a game of tennis is one of the few things that will see him emerge from work.

Sadie Frost, 40: fashion designer with four children, and still has the enthusiasm to try all manner of new exercise from pilates to pole dancing.

Brent Hoberman, 36: triathlete, too, with two young children, cope with charity dinners virtually every with two children, her own global business and consultancy deals, too.



Tireless talents: Sadie Frost and Mick Jagger

with two children, her own global business and consultancy deals, too.

has had 12 hours' sleep. Nicola Horlick, 44: City supervisor who makes juggling job and children, fighting of would-be nippers and churing the school's board of governors all part of a day's work.

Boris Johnson, 41: Mayor. Spectator editor, novelist and designer with four children, and still has the enthusiasm to try all manner of new exercise from pilates to pole dancing.

The Queen, 79: rarely off duty and still patron of 620 charities and carrying on 170 engagements a year.

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Be a smart partygoer

It's unavoidable in the run-up to Christmas, you will have more opportunities to drink more alcohol than at any other time of year and will need to have a little extra stamina on your sleeves. On your energy levels and your mood the next day (and then there's the prospect of hangovers...) " Alcohol makes the body deplete of B vitamins and vitamin C," says Patrick Holford, author of *The New Optimum Nutrition Bible* (Piatkus, £12.99). "If you go to a party and notice more tired in the morning and lacking in energy before you start on the day."

"Don't start drinking during the day just as important during winter as in the summer." "If you don't let drinking cold water in winter, try hot water and lemon, or hot water and ginger," says nutritionist and author Natalie Savona. When you have been out the night before and had a few drinks, one of the best remedies for picking you up and packing in a couple of minutes is a smoothie, says Savona. "Add some fruit — limited berries or carrots are best, as they are full of antioxidants — to natural yogurt, perhaps with a splash of soy milk."



Wake up to the light

The mornings are darker, the evenings are darker. It's all too possible in winter that you leave home in the dark, spend all day in the artificial light of the office and travel home in the dark, making it doubly important to take a break at lunchtime and walk outside in order to see the day light.

"The human body wakes up more easily if it wakes up to natural light," advises Patrick Holford. "One product that can help is the Lumie BodyClock, an alarm clock with a bulb on the top which simulates dawn by lighting up gradually in the half hour before the alarm goes off." www.outside.co.uk/bodyclock.htm, £29.99.

"Light is the cue which resets our internal body clock each day," says Dr Jan Van, a consultant psychiatrist specialising in the treatment of depression and seasonal affective disorder (SAD). "Brightlight suppresses the release of the hormone melatonin, and when the alarm clock goes in winter and there is no day light, we become sluggish." For patients with SAD, Dr Van recommends a portable light source called a Lightbox (0195 500000, www.lightbox.ltd.uk, 09790 433 812).

Plenty of sleep and sex

The body needs a certain amount of sleep, though this varies from person to person. "As a rule," says sleep expert Dr Chris Mihalovic, "if you need a nap at the weekend, you are not getting enough sleep during the week. There are two techniques to help during the day — how much sleep you do has had, and what your internal body clock is saying."

"During the winter, our body clock becomes confused because there is not enough light to give the cues to wake up, although we've got on getting up at the same time. Another reason we may feel more sleepy during winter is that our bodies are fighting off infections, which has a sleep-inducing effect on the body."

"Regular sex is a lovely relationship that can help you feel better about yourself," says biotech consultant Denise Knowles, "and there is nothing more energising than knowing that you are special to someone else. Also, sex is a form of exercise, so satisfying sex should help you to sleep better."

Try these supplements

"The most important supplements for enhancing stamina are the B vitamins, vitamin C and the mineral Chromium," says Patrick Holford. "B and C vitamins are necessary to turn the food you eat into energy. These are present in high levels in whole foods, fruits and vegetables — food which, traditionally, people eat less of in the winter. Chromium specifically helps keep blood sugar levels even, which is important because dips in blood sugar levels mean dips in energy."

"In order to optimise your energy levels, you need more B vitamins than the Recommended Daily Allowance (these levels are well within the Suggested Upper Levels laid down by the Food Standards Agency). Aim for 25mg each of the major B vitamins, Riboflavin, Niacin and B6. Berocca (which is sold in bottles) is a reasonably good source, though for optimum amounts I'd recommend Solgar's V1M3 or Higher Nature's Optimum Nutrition formula." One company recommended by those in the know is Genus of Cambridge, which sells products called VegaPro (a natural fatty acid and Evening Primrose oil) and VegaCo which contains B and C vitamins and zinc.

Eat up your porridge

Feeding the right kind of foods is crucial in helping your body develop stamina. Porridge is the best breakfast for stamina because oats provide slow releasing energy. Add a handful of pumpkin seeds to provide extra vitamins and minerals such as zinc and vitamin E to keep up your immunity.

"Fresh juices are fantastic if you have the time to prepare them: a mixed carrot, apple, celery and ginger juice will whack up your intake of immune-boosting nutrients," says Natalie Savona. But the cautions: "Juices are full of fast-releasing energy, so drink them with other food, rather than on their own."

For lunch, if you want something hot, have a jacket potato but scrape out half of the potato (it has a high glycemic index, so will provide a short burst of energy) and pack the jacket with a hot filling such as baked beans. Don't forget to have sustaining snacks during the day, to keep your blood sugar steady. Seeds, nuts, natural yogurt and oatcakes are all good choices. For dinner, fish, vegetables and brown rice are good foods.

Get out and exercise

Exercise is vital to keep your body functioning properly. As well as keeping you fit and improving your mood, regular exercise will improve your mental and physical stamina and boost your immune system, so you will be less likely to catch the colds circulating in the office or Tube. "Try adjusting your exercise routine in winter so you go out in the morning or at least in the afternoon (the 'winter daylight')," says Kathryn Preadlove who runs Absolute Fitness, a mobile personal training company (020 7284 0006, www.absolutefitness.com).

"Exercising outside in the cold makes you burn more calories in order to keep your body warm. Also, walking or running on uneven surfaces outdoors provides a more 'functional' form of training than gym work in that it is harder work for the body than running on a treadmill and more likely to stick to. "Try to recall to doing a regular amount of exercise — I would recommend three to five hours a week, depending on what suits your body and your lifestyle."

Compiled by Alice Hart-Davis