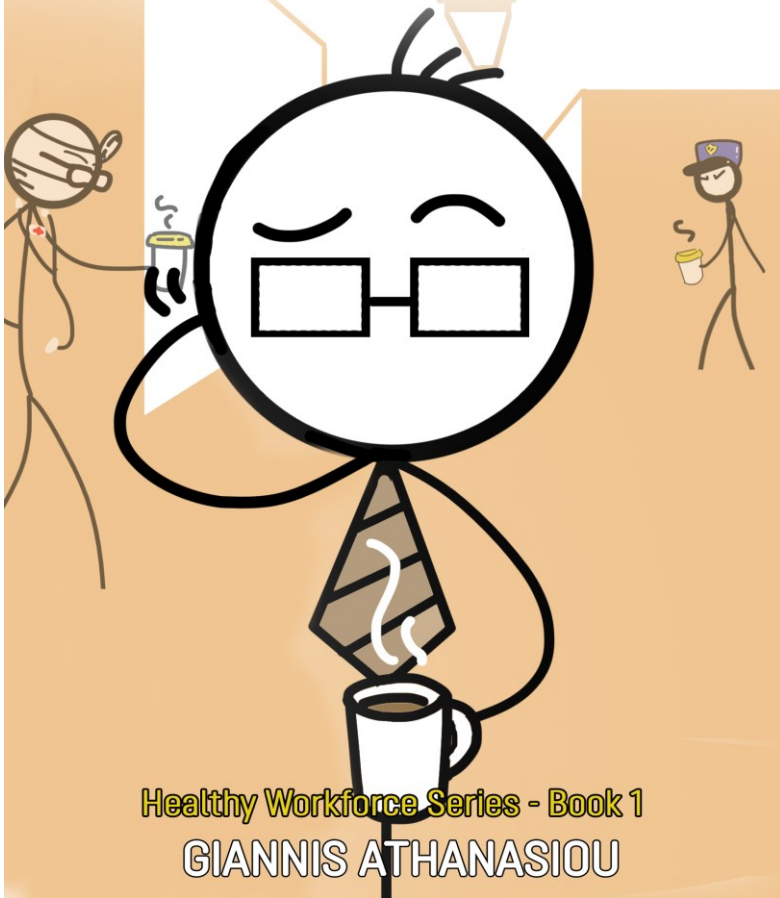


IN TROUBLE WITH
COFFEE



4 STEPS FOR CONTROLLING CONSUMPTION IN THE WORKPLACE



Healthy Workforce Series - Book 1

GIANNIS ATHANASIOU

In Trouble with Coffee

*4 Steps for Controlling
Consumption in the
Workplace*

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Book 1

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This is a work of creative non-fiction. Some parts have been fictionalized in varying degrees, for various purposes.

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Dedication

I dedicate this book to my beloved brother Dimitris, who is an immensely intelligent individual with a unique mind. I also dedicate this book to my parents, who always provide me emotional support and motivation to go further as well as encourage me to never stop educating myself.

Preface

Greetings coffee lovers in the active workforce! I am one of you. Struggling with everyday tasks at work is challenging, but can be much more entertaining with the gentle company of my...cappuccino. Its smell, taste, and the small ten-second break to take a sip and think, “Ahh, this is really refreshing!”

My name is Giannis Athanasiou and this is my first book on self-improvement. I am currently working as a consultant in the pharmaceutical industry and have an educational background in health economics. My main interest focuses on economic psychology and health-related behaviors, as I have studied the health effects of smoking, physical inactivity, and substance abuse over time. As a result, I decided to write a book and offer solutions to people who have the same problem I used to have—in this case, coffee addicts (or those close to becoming addicted) at work—especially if those people are

working in an anxious, stressful, and extremely demanding environment.

Although caffeine is consumed in many different forms, this book focuses on consumption of caffeine in the form of coffee (espresso, latte, cappuccino, etc.) which is the most consumed beverage in the workplace.

I personally hope this book will influence your relationship with coffee, guide you, and show you why the apothegm of Cleobulus—“μέτρον ἄριστον”, meaning “Everything in moderation” or “Nothing in excess”—is a common principle which when applied, should lead to a happy, entertaining, and fulfilling life. Yes, it is that simple! Sometimes my father exaggerates by saying, “Even a little poison should be safe for your health.”

Throughout college, I used to drink coffee while studying, before stressful exams, and with friends.

In the transition to professional life, I reflected upon myself and thought, “Am I going

to drink coffee for the rest of my life? Furthermore, am I going to increase its intake when I am not feeling productive? Or when I want to feel good, albeit temporarily? How about wanting to overcome an anxious situation?”

Those thoughts were not going to help. I asked myself, “In ancient times, did great Greek philosophers like Plato, Socrates, and Aristotle need coffee to complete majestic projects which impacted humanity?” Of course not! So, why would I? Why would *you*?

I completely stopped drinking coffee in the workplace and now limit my intake to when I hang out with my friends and during leisure activities. What’s awesome is I no longer need coffee to either wake me up or to function and be productive in the workplace. I just want to enjoy it in moderation, just as you should enjoy your T-bone steak at a barbeque at your best friend’s place!

There is no better feeling than taking control of the things in your life. Now that I have taken

control of my coffee consumption, following the four specific steps outlined in this book, I can tell you with absolute certainty that I am feeling more energetic and fulfilled.

In Trouble with Coffee: 4 Steps for Controlling Consumption in the Workplace is the first self-help book of the series *Healthy Workforce*, which aims to assist working individuals in overcoming a critical problem and enhancing their wellbeing—in this case, to provide guidance and motivation to control (or even quit) coffee consumption as part of their normal routine at work. No magic tricks here; discipline and simplicity are the keys to success! Adopting this program, while utilizing the step-by-step process herein, will break your addiction to coffee and have an impactful result on your life!

This book is not meant to prevent someone from drinking coffee. Much has been said on it theoretically, however, this book provides practical advice on learning to control coffee consumption. It would be best to quit coffee

completely, but the hectic schedules of the modern lifestyle make it difficult for many workers to do so. In fact, many readers of this book will not be willing to abandon their coffee habit and are mostly just trying to find some way to control it. Thus, if you like drinking coffee, just do it the correct way!

In a few words, this book is ideal for people who:

- Are concerned about the amount of coffee they consume at work and want simple everyday tactics to reduce its consumption.
- Love coffee and try to consume it within healthy limits.
- Are HR professionals, managers, or CEOs and want to improve their team's culture concerning their coffee habit.
- Are employed and want to educate themselves on behaviors associated with drinking coffee.

I would like to say the following: Although this book is primarily aimed at problems adults face when consuming excessive amounts of coffee at work, there are still useful insights for people of every age. If you are among those who have already established—or are afraid of establishing—an addiction and want to enjoy coffee without suffering the unpleasant side effects of this natural stimulant, then this is the book for you!

Acknowledgements

Apart from my own personal efforts, this book is a result of hours of work from capable and extraordinary people who are professionals in their respective fields. I would like to thank my editor, Angela Walker, who is really one of a kind and helped me correct my final manuscript. Much credit goes to my brother Dimitris, who has multiple years of experience as the co-founder and CTO in his working environment, and was gracious enough to provide me with insight in terms of the content in this book. I would also like to thank my brilliant cousin Athina, as well as my friends Eleni, Vasilis, and Alex. Many thanks goes to my cover designer, Miltos Baltas, a very talented artist. Finally, I would like to thank the successful authors Jean Marie Stine and Gundi Gabrielle, who, through their books, guided me in the process of writing, structuring, and editing my book— and being the mentors, I never had.

Introduction

Caffeine (especially coffee) is one of the most widely consumed food and beverages in the world. Caffeine has a long history of use and historians suggest that it may have been consumed, in one form or another, as far back as the Paleolithic period.

Most workers think coffee and caffeine are safe and tolerable. Guess what? They are right! However, according to science, coffee is a psychoactive drug and like each drug, should be consumed very carefully.

Let me clarify a few things. This book is not about condemning coffee consumption. This book is about different strategies that can be applied to avoid coffee overuse, through the implementation of a 4-step program.

Everything written in this book is a combination of extensive research on the substance and its effects on our health as well as on personal experience with coffee addiction.

So, let us get more in depth about the content of this book.

Chapter 1 describes the position of coffee, caffeine, and addiction in the working environment as well as potential factors that influence how someone can overcome problems related to caffeine.

Chapters 2, 3, 4, and 5 provide a full 4-step guide on how to successfully control the overuse of coffee at work through simple everyday tricks and tactics—which, trust me, are easy to follow and provide desirable results!

Finally, the book concludes with some bonus tips in chapter 6.

The modern lifestyle is so imbued with the overconsumption of coffee that even the most restrained consumer cannot resist. However, at the end of the day, one should remember the following quote from the famous billionaire Art Williams: “I’m not telling you it is going to be easy, I’m telling you it’s going to be worth it.”

Colleagues, let's face our problems with coffee together!

Chapter 1–Coffee Consumption in the Workplace

Coffee, My Right-Hand Man at Work

Coffee is undoubtedly an integral part of everyday life and becomes even more important as society evolves. Taking into account that most adults spend more than eight hours in a working environment, the workplace is an ideal spot to examine peoples' behaviors, to include coffee consumption.

Following water, coffee is the most widely consumed beverage in the US, as approximately two-thirds of Americans drink coffee habitually. Between 2017 and 2018, around 161 million 132-pound bags of coffee were consumed globally, a substantial rise of 2.1% from 2012.

But let's focus on the book's main theme. What about consuming coffee in the workplace?

The average worker drinks twenty cups of coffee per week; that is a minimum of two cups per day.

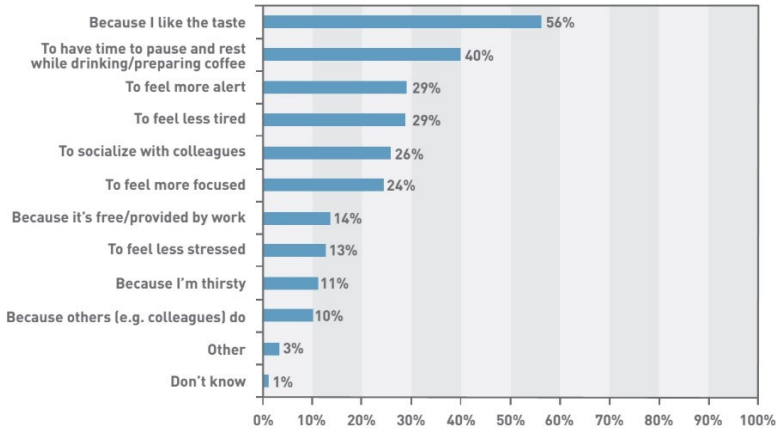
With approximately 157 million people actively employed in the US, that means millions are regular coffee drinkers!!

The Institute for Scientific Information on Coffee commissioned a large survey of workers across six European countries, which showed that 67% of 8,239 participants drink coffee during a typical workday.

Forty-eight percent of the respondents said they were working an office-based job, 7% were working at night, and 25% were shift-workers.

The reasons for consuming the beverage are presented in the following figure:

You said you drink coffee during work...Which, if any, of the following are your reasons for this? (Please select all that apply)



Base: all country workers who drink coffee during work (3493)

The research concluded that taste preferences had a stronger influence on the choice of drinking coffee, rather than on what respondents thought about the true health effects of our beloved beverage.

Taste may be a potential cause leading to coffee addiction in this group. The respondents seemed to care more about the taste of coffee than its effects on alertness, cognitive performance, and other mental and social factors.

The results may not be applicable to the global population but you get the point...there is a higher tendency to drink coffee just for the taste. Skeptical? Just ask your fellow colleague why she or he drinks coffee. I'll bet that among the top reasons would be for its taste. Ask yourself why you drink coffee because you very well might have the same answer!

Why aren't more workers concerned with the effects of coffee on their health? Simply because they view coffee as an "old friend."

This friend will help them finish a difficult, tedious task during work and will be there when they need him, like a right-hand man.

They continue to rely on him, no matter what, while ignoring the potential caveats of trusting him.

Determining the Problem

I still remember those days, a few years ago, when I served in the army as a lance corporal. And yes, it had nothing to do with war and stuff, it was just an ordinary

office job, but with serious responsibilities on workplace safety. As with other officers, the first thing on my to-do list, at 7:30 a.m., was to either make coffee or order some from the nearest coffee shop. By 11 a.m., I had already ordered my second cup of coffee. It was pretty habitual, and made the workday flyby seem a little more fun to me rather than a boring chore. After lunch, around 2 p.m., I was feeling kind of sleepy, so I drank my third cup of coffee. Apart from that, whenever I had a night shift, two more cups were added to my schedule. After several months, even more cups of coffee were needed to satisfy my enjoyment.

The aforementioned scenario is a classic example of someone who was once a coffee addict.

But what determines the problem? The scientific community agrees that for healthy people, up to 400 mg a day is not harmful to their health.

Taking into consideration that caffeine is mostly consumed as coffee by working people, that is approximately three to four cups of coffee a day.

For occupations that include monotonous activities like military sentry duty, a dosage of

caffeine around 200 mg (a little less than three cups), can help maintain optimal physical and mental performance, as these jobs require shifts and result in limited amounts of sleep.

So, is this fact an excuse for consuming excessive coffee?

In our scenario, there is always a point where our lance corporal understands that his habit goes beyond a simple enjoyment.

In fact, coffee would not harm him, even if he continued to follow this same schedule every day. What would harm him for sure, since his body had built a tolerance to it, is trying to stop drinking coffee suddenly, also known as going “cold turkey.” He will then experience signs of caffeine withdrawal, including headaches, excessive drowsiness, and irritability.

Of course, there was also one more clue that indicated the lance corporal was really in trouble with coffee.

His body began to build a tolerance to caffeine. Over time, he allowed his coffee intake to increase in order to achieve the desired effects.

Interestingly, numerous studies, which have proven the health benefits of coffee, did not account for other adverse health behaviors, which often coexist with coffee addiction, namely smoking, lack of physical activity, and poor nutrition.

That is, overuse of coffee could directly contribute or co-exist with behaviors directly related to serious health illnesses.

Unfortunately, most workers think that coffee will never cause harm to their health. They do not equate coffee with more “dangerous” substances, like alcohol and tobacco, because it’s sold worldwide without any restriction and control.

Is Coffee Troublesome for You?

The appropriate scientific term for people who have trouble with coffee overconsumption is Caffeine Use Disorder.

So, do you think you have serious issues with coffee? According to the American Psychiatric Association, if you manifest at least the first three of the following criteria within a twelve-month period, then you probably suffer from Caffeine Use Disorder:

1. A persistent desire or unsuccessful efforts to cut down or control coffee use.
2. Continued coffee use despite knowledge of having physical or psychological problems that are likely to have been caused by coffee.
3. *Withdrawal*, as manifested by either of the following:
 - The characteristic withdrawal syndrome for coffee.
 - Coffee is taken to relieve or avoid withdrawal symptoms.
4. Coffee is often taken in larger amounts or over a longer period than was intended.
5. Coffee use resulting in a failure to fulfill major role obligations at work (e.g.,

repeated tardiness or absences from work related to coffee use or withdrawal).

6. Tolerance, as defined by either of the following:

- A need for increased amounts of coffee to achieve the desired effect.
- Markedly diminished effect with continued use of the same amount of coffee.
- A great deal of time is spent in activities necessary to obtain coffee, use caffeine, or recover from its effects.
- Craving or a strong desire or urge to use coffee.

If you identify with at least the first three criteria, it's time to change your daily routine, as you are now in trouble with coffee!

Breaking Down the Factors

Larry is a senior manager in a private enterprise. Last year, he used to drink coffee daily. He filled his cup with

hot cappuccino twice a day, without being addicted to it. He wasn't bound to caffeine and coffee was not a necessity for him, like with other colleagues. "Hey Roger, do you have time for a break?" Of course, coffee accompanied his break with the colleague. Although not a heavy drinker, Larry felt that coffee could not satisfy his needs. The anxiety of meeting the strict deadlines, coupled with the pressure from his supervisors, started to become unbearable. He suffered from insomnia, became nervous around family and friends—and worse, he couldn't even perform simple tasks anymore, and was not as productive as he used to be. He decided to search for help. He went to doctors, psychologists, psychotherapists, and other professionals to get advice. The doctors told him he could not metabolize caffeine the way others did and was susceptible to an increased risk of heart disease, even with just two daily cups of coffee. After a considerable amount of time, he understood that he needed to tailor his coffee consumption, to a level that was tolerable for his body. Reducing coffee consumption was the only way to get back to his old self.

In this example, the manager sought help in order to personalize his coffee consumption. If someone had told him to give up coffee a year ago, he would have said, “I can’t imagine a world without coffee.” Now he knows he can be more productive at work, change his overall mentality, express positive thoughts to family and friends, relieve stress in everyday work tasks, and reduce his risk of suffering from fatal diseases. All he had to do was limit his coffee intake—a commitment that only he could make.

Sandra, a nurse working in the oncology hospital, faced similar problems.

“Dealing with cancer patients in a hospital clinic can be a really stressful job. Coffee keeps me alert in this really fast-paced work environment,” Sandra explained to her manager, who tried to help her cope with stress. She consulted her family doctor and a week later, she decided to quit coffee.

Sandra found no reason to limit coffee consumption. She thought coffee was a means to help her get through difficult days at the hospital clinic. What she didn't know was, apart from the stimulatory effects of coffee in the central nervous system, which made her feel awake and alert, caffeine interacted with the medication she was on that controlled asthmatic attacks. It amplified the effects of caffeine, which could have resulted in overdose symptoms, possibly having increased the risk of high blood pressure, heart attack, stroke, or seizure. That was the catalyst for her decision to abstain from coffee.

Jenny is a primary school teacher, in the early stages of pregnancy. Like many other American teachers, she drinks coffee—sometimes too much of it. She thinks that three or four cups of coffee are normal and without knowing it, she puts her pregnancy at risk.

In fact, a scientific publication found a significant connection between coffee/caffeine

consumption and an increased risk of spontaneous abortion in women. For women who plan to become pregnant, guidelines suggest caffeine consumption shouldn't exceed 300 mg a day.

What are the takeaways from the aforementioned examples? Of course, that caffeine consumption and its effects on human health depend on many factors, is different among individuals, and interacts with many behaviors.

Genetics

Some workers can handle amounts of caffeine above the recommended levels without having any side effects, while others cannot. In other words, it may be easier for some workers to avoid (or quit) caffeine and coffee than others, due to small variations in their DNA.

Medication use

Certain medications and herbal supplements may be harmful when consumed together with caffeine. It is suggested to speak with your family

doctor about whether caffeine interacts with specific medications.

Specific conditions

Pregnancy, mental health disorders, or other systemic conditions can interact with coffee consumption. Workers who belong to any one of these categories should be fully aware of the additive effects, which could occur with coffee consumption.

Key conclusion: Coffee is normally considered safe, however, workers should be aware that coffee is a drug and may be troublesome in certain circumstances.

Finding a Balance

Most studies claim that coffee and caffeine are good for your health, when consumed appropriately and efficiently. All you need to do is

find a balance with it, just as you would with anything else.

Coffee can improve cognitive function, physical performance, and boost your metabolism. On the contrary, drinking excessively can be harmful for your overall health.

You need to find your own limits when you want to drink coffee, especially at work.

In the following chapters, I outline the necessary steps you need to follow in order to personalize your coffee consumption and be able to enjoy the benefits during the workday.

Chapter 2–Step #1: Let’s Face It, You Are Drinking Too Much

Recognize the Problem

The first rule you should follow to fight your problem is admit to having one. It is very easy to recognize that you may have some issues with coffee. Whether you are refilling your coffee cup more than your water bottle —even more times than your visits to the bathroom—or your colleagues jokingly calling you “Mrs. Espresso,” it is time to start thinking you should change things and start taking action.

Types of Coffee Drinkers

Look at the categories below and determine which one describes you best.

“The Yawny”

These kinds of employees are always tired at work. They may have been out with friends the night before or stayed up watching the new Netflix series with their girlfriend/boyfriend, and most likely did not get sufficient sleep and rest. They usually yawn all around the workplace, especially in the early morning, and keep drinking coffee throughout the day to keep them going without falling asleep. These types should address the root cause of the problem, which is none other than the lack of sleep. The National Sleep Foundation suggests a sleep duration between seven and nine hours per night for adults between the ages of 18 and 65 as a means to improve their health and wellbeing.

“The Cravers of Taste”

These employees do not crave coffee for its well-documented positive effects on performance and productivity. They desire to smell and taste coffee in its different blends, roasts, flavors, and beans. They tend to consume quite a large amount of coffee and caffeine simply because they can't stand living without its unique and extraordinary taste. As we mentioned before in this book, research has shown that a vast majority of working people consume coffee because they like the taste. If taste matters, then switching to decaffeinated coffee could be a better solution, although not preferred. While decaffeinated coffee may not have the adverse side effects of regular coffee, it also does not offer the same health benefits as the latter, when consumed appropriately. Moreover, it is shown that decaffeinated coffee could increase cholesterol levels and induce damage to the heart, due to the higher fat content of decaffeinated coffee beans.

When I tried to control my own coffee addiction, I drank tea in different varieties: black, green, rooibos, white, oolong—all unique with exceptional flavors. Each one satisfied my needs during busy days and most importantly, they contain much less caffeine than coffee.

“The Distracted”

A common characteristic of these types of workers is the “hamster wheel” state of their minds—minds which are not present where they need to be, such as at work.

Distracted workers feel energetic while they’re on their way to work, ready to spread their spirit of productivity to colleagues. Then, unexpectedly, they start scrolling through Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, other social media platforms, and the news—forgetting the reason they came to work in the first place.

Udemy’s research has shown that 70% of US workers feel distracted at work and 36% of

millennials spend two or more hours per workday looking at their phones for leisure.

Sometimes, these kinds of people may suffer from a range of disorders and find that coffee consumption improves concentration. This is because coffee induces dopamine production in humans, a neurochemical that controls the ability to focus and maintain concentration.

Eventually, most workers will end up drinking coffee to help develop focus and concentration for tasks that need to be done, blocking all the other distractions of the working environment.

There are plenty of reasons for drinking coffee in the workplace. The first step a coffee lover should take is to recognize the reasons which are contributing to excessive intake.

What are some reasons which make you want to drink coffee?

It's normal for us to want to try something when we see coworkers engaging in a behavior repeatedly. We'll say things like, "Why not give

it a try?” This is what happens with coffee. The same thing happens with many other behaviors; from ordering food with your colleagues online, to smoking consistently during breaks, etc.

This is okay. However, you should make a clear comparison. Which behaviors are good and which are considered harmful? Go ahead and incorporate positive behaviors into your life (e.g., socializing in the workplace, learning to be as productive as other colleagues, etc.). Smoking and ordering junk food are harmful behaviors, but coffee consumption has a certain particularity: It is a good behavior which can easily transform into a bad one, either in the short- or long-term.

Key conclusion: If you regularly consume coffee, make sure it remains a good habit and do not let it morph into a bad one.

Let Your Coworkers Know

Socializing is very common and expected these days. In fact, being social in the workplace is of the utmost importance.

There are typically two groups of workers in the workplace. Some people prefer to be alone when working; they just want to get the job done and that's it. Others prefer to get in touch with fellow workers and share their news, issues that concern everyday life at work, and even personal problems.

Belonging to the second group of workers could be very rewarding, especially if you are a coffee lover who tries to balance consumption.

Discussion with colleagues and fellow workers can always help with your personal problems.

Tell them your story. Why do you think you are drinking too much coffee? You never know—your colleagues may have had a troublesome past with coffee as well, or have friends who

were in your shoes, and could propose solutions that assisted them in overcoming their own problems.

Chapter 3-Step #2: Acquire Natural Energy, Not Coffee

Caffeine Produces “Fake” Energy

The reasons you drink too much coffee may undermine your lack of energy in the workplace. For most of us, caffeine is a way to boost energy during the workday. In fact, caffeine and coffee don't provide actual energy to our bodies. They simply fool our bodies into producing “fake” energy. Why is that?

Caffeine has three primary mechanisms of action, one of which is antagonism at the level of the adenosine receptors.

Coffee and caffeine increase the levels of several neurotransmitters which are responsible

for blocking adenosine receptors' action in the central nervous system. These receptors serve as a way to promote sleep, which makes us feel drowsy when our energy levels drop and we've been awake for a long period of time.

In other words, caffeine just tricks our brain by ceasing a decline in energy instead of producing legitimate chemical energy.

Additionally, caffeine increases hormones like adrenaline, which makes the heart beat faster, sending more blood to our muscles and releasing energy throughout our body.

Increasing ATP Levels

Studies have shown that our body's actual energy originates from the adenosine triphosphate (ATP) molecule. ATP is a high-energy molecule that stores the energy needed for our bodies to perform everything we do.

ATP molecules act like "human" batteries and are created and maintained from the sources in which we absorb energy (e.g., food). When ATP

levels are below normal, those batteries need to be recharged, otherwise physical and mental fatigue will occur.

Thereafter, increasing ATP levels is key in your attempt to find balance with coffee consumption.

B Vitamins, Real Sources of Energy

“Hey Jack, I noticed you’re drinking fewer cups of cappuccino lately.”

“I gave up my afternoon cup of coffee, Bob. That one cup made a huge difference. Before, I couldn’t even sleep at night!”

“How did you manage to do that? Without that cup, I don’t think I could even continue working. I’d fall asleep on the desk in no time!”

“It’s the quality of my food that’s changed, Bob. My meals at lunch are enriched with B vitamins.”

Jack counteracted the lack of caffeine with proper nutrition. He is now eating foods containing plenty of B vitamins.

There are a total of eight B vitamins: B1, B2, B3, B5, B6, B7, B9, and B12. Apart from their overall benefit to human health, they help our body produce considerable amounts of energy—in the form of ATP—synthesizing important signaling molecules and neurochemicals.

More specifically, B2 supports energy metabolism, B3 and B6 assist in ATP production, B5 facilitates mitochondrial enzyme formation, and B12 delivers necessary oxygen to cells.

B vitamins can be found in foods presented in Table 1:

Table 1: B Vitamins and good dietary sources

Vitamin	Good dietary sources
B1	Cereals, brown rice, green vegetables, potatoes, pasta, liver, pork, eggs
B2	Dairy products, leafy vegetables, legumes, liver, kidneys, yeast, mushrooms
B3	Meat, fish, whole grain cereal, legumes, mushrooms, nuts
B5	Meat, whole grain cereals, broccoli
B6	Meat, fish, legumes, nuts, bananas, potatoes
B7	Eggs, liver, pork, leafy vegetables
B9	Leafy vegetables, legumes, citrus fruits
B12	Meat, fish, and other animal products

So, if you want to recharge your batteries, consuming foods like fish, whole grain cereal,

nuts, mushrooms, meat, potatoes, bananas, and legumes can supply you with vitamins B3 and B6, directly increasing ATP levels.

Just bring those energetic foods to the workplace. It is up to you and your personal taste! You can try a wide range of beverages instead of coffee and achieve the same satisfaction, like banana milk and other smoothies containing a mixture of fruits, all of which are beneficial and healthy.

But wait, I forgot...you prefer energy drinks, don't you? Well, after all, it is about how disciplined you are so be sure to build your healthy schedule!

Lighten Your Workload, Be Flexible

I know you might be working long hours. If you are working full-time in a fast-paced industry, it is not easy to find a work/life balance. However, it is essential for your health

and energy to find this balance. Do you work to live or live to work? Which of these best describes you?

- Are you career driven?
- Are you looking for work–life balance?

Whatever the case may be, one thing is certain: Overworking harms your health and you end up drinking huge amounts of coffee. I find this sentence so important that I'm going to repeat it: *Overworking harms your health and you end up drinking huge amounts of coffee.*

To reinforce my point, the World Health Organization recently introduced the term *burnout*, a syndrome resulting from overworking that leads to feelings of energy depletion and exhaustion, as well as reduced professional efficacy.

For many workers, when feeling tired and needing energy, coffee and caffeine are the instant solutions to get through the day.

But that's not the appropriate solution.

What should you do?

- Do not try to finish all your tasks in one single day.

Of course there are deadlines, but setting a proper schedule throughout the week can make things work. Maybe you should enhance your project management skills!

- Unless your job requires you to be there, discuss remote working opportunities with your manager/supervisor.

Do not be afraid to ask for it. When I first did, I argued that working from home once or twice per week makes me feel comfortable, more dedicated to my work, and more productive—without having to commute to the office!

I saved approximately two hours of commuting in total, which instead became devoted to my work. Most importantly, working remotely helped me skip two or three cups of

coffee on those days and I found the “true”
energy I was looking for!

Chapter 4-Step #3: Meditation, a Spiritual Ally

Meditation is Medication

Sometimes, building the right mindset can help you find the missing energy you are looking for, as well as help you become a better version of yourself.

Meditation refers to a variety of practices, from improving relaxation and focus, to enhancing wellbeing and promoting selfless acts. In fact, long-term meditation effectively

stimulates different parts of the brain, inducing changes to everyday cognitive functions.

Meditation, in my opinion, should be considered adjunct medical treatment, akin to a doctor writing a prescription. It is a practical solution to counteract coffee addiction, in comparison with conventional treatments. Simply put, meditation naturally releases dopamine (the “happiness” hormone), which is very beneficial.

There are also many reasons why meditation can help you overcome and beat caffeine addiction while you are in the workplace; some include:

- Meditation techniques train your brain to produce the same positive feelings and satisfaction you enjoy, just as when you consume coffee.
- Meditation helps you control the addiction rather than let it control you. It does not hinder you from consuming,

it just trains you to avoid addictive thoughts and behaviors.

Consider this example:

Being addicted is like sitting in the back seat of a taxi where coffee is the driver. Meditation reverses the situation: You now sit in the driver's seat while coffee hangs out in the back seat. It tells you what to do (cravings), but you, as the driver, are fully responsible for reaching the destination (you control your urge for coffee).

- Meditation deals effectively with stress, which is potentially responsible for caffeine addiction.

When reaching your limits of stress, you start feeling bad (e.g., anxious, depressed, etc.). You end up drinking coffee excessively to feel good again, in your need to relieve stress.

- Meditation helps to increase your tolerance to stress, making you immune to coffee.

Meditation techniques are really a breakthrough and help many people live happy and fulfilling lives. Not to mention for people working high stress jobs, with demanding bosses, many deadlines, inhumane work hours, and grumpy colleagues.

Meditation should be necessary in today's world. James Allen, the famous British author, once pointed out: "Meditation is the secret of all growth in spiritual life and knowledge".

Meditation provides exceptional benefits to many health-related problems unlike conventional treatments, as it simply exploits the powerful capacities of your mind. If you run a quick Internet search you will be surprised to see that meditation is included as a helpful alternative (or add-on) to various treatments, including detox from addiction.

Meditation Techniques for Workers

“Meditation? I don’t have time for that! I mean, I know it will probably help me, but I’m overwhelmed at work and I just don’t have the time.”

This is what Nick, an old colleague, had told me when the first signs of addiction to coffee and caffeine appeared to him.

Believe me when I tell you: Meditation can be performed *anywhere*. All that’s needed is a Wi-Fi connection and five minutes of your precious time at work. Don’t think you have the time? Think of those five minutes as the time it would take for you to make your coffee!

In my struggle to beat coffee overconsumption, I searched for help on the Internet. Amongst many things, I found a very promising app, called “Simple Habit/The Best Meditation App for Busy People.”

I must admit, I initially underestimated meditation and mindfulness. I didn't think about the potential benefits it could incur. However, after giving it a chance, it had a tremendous impact on me. I was curious about the app because it seemed specifically designed for busy people, intended for those who didn't have much time to dedicate to meditation.

Indeed, it includes various features of meditation, which, through the guidance of certified experts/therapists, help people improve focus, relieve stress, and breathe easier. They're offered for those on-the-go, and all you have to do is commit yourself for just five, ten, or twenty minutes!

I was also taught an amazing technique: How to be *mindful* during *lunch break*. Instead of eating fast and being gluttonous, I learned to enjoy every single bite, noticing the smell and taste of my food. I am now taking my time to chat with colleagues, being present and aware in the moment, eliminating all distractions.

Forget about eating in front of your business laptop while checking your e-mails. That is totally wrong! And it is not going to help you concentrate either. Stop everything you are doing. Just go to the beautiful park close to the office and enjoy your lunch, without answering any phone calls! You will find calmness and relax your mind.

This type of meditation will certainly help you reset and refocus for the second half of the day, as it did with me.

Embrace the revitalization you will receive to continue working throughout a busy day. It truly makes a difference. Plus, you'll be one step closer to controlling coffee consumption!

Chapter 5-Step #4: Replacing, Not Quitting Coffee

Quitting Makes Things Worse

If you think none of the steps up to this point will work for you, you very well may be thinking of following the “easiest” route, which is none other than stopping consumption of coffee all at once. If you decide that cutting off coffee would be the cure to your issue, then you are probably wrong. Going cold turkey can lead to unbearable withdrawal symptoms. Check out this example:

“I was drinking a lot of coffee, maybe four or five cups in a workday. Then, I decided to cut it off for a couple of weeks to see if my performance and

productivity improve. I was hoping that I would achieve more in less time, but...on the contrary, I had terrible headaches, I couldn't keep my eyes open at work, and...my energy levels...forget about it?"

One of the most serious mistakes you can make is trying to stop coffee instantly, going cold turkey. This is the reason many workers can never overcome their coffee troubles.

Replace Coffee with a Healthier Habit

Recovery from coffee overconsumption isn't easy. In fact, it's a long-term process. For working individuals who overconsume coffee, each day is uniquely challenging, and they may never feel normal without it. To aid in the journey of recovery, a person who finds coffee troublesome should develop healthy routines, activities, and behaviors to replace the harmful habit.

Most workers feel like it's impossible to limit the amount of coffee they consume. It's very common to set a goal with high standards without making a good plan.

Beating a bad habit might take longer than forming a new one, but in the process of forming a new positive habit, you are slowly breaking away from the negative one.

You need to set a reachable goal. I must repeat: *You need to set a reachable goal* and follow specific steps to break this bad habit and form a new positive one:

- Adopt an easily implemented daily plan outside of work.

Below is a conversation between two co-workers I heard while commuting to work in the morning:

“How did you manage to cut down your coffee to a single one each morning at work?”

“Well, I came up with a mantra and I told myself: ‘Hey man, you don’t need coffee!’”

“Hmm...tell me more!”

“I am going to tell you the things I am doing before going to work. First, I am getting restful sleep and averaging no less than seven and a half hour each night. In the morning, I get up much earlier than I did before and eat an energetic breakfast without rushing. Before I leave work, I change into workout gear and head to the gym. When I get home afterwards, I eat fruits or something light, relax, and go to bed around the same time each night, usually between 11 p.m. and midnight. Now I’ve established a routine where coffee doesn’t belong anywhere, and through the implementation of this plan, I managed to reduce my coffee intake.”

Remember: Forming a good routine is *crucial* to your success.

- Listen to loud music instead.

Listening to loud music, especially in the morning before going to work, can have the same effects as drinking coffee!

- Try working out in the morning.

Now, I know what you're going to say: "I have a family, responsibilities, social commitments, etc. I don't have time to work out in the morning!" Yes, our schedule is very busy. I don't mean working out *every* morning, but if you set up a weekly schedule to work out a few days a week, you will only benefit yourself. It is widely documented that physical activity has great effects on physical and mental health, and it is proven that exercise can help with treatment of stimulant abuse and dependence. Consider going to your nearest park for a twenty-minute jog for cardio exercise as well as weight training.

- Chocolate.

You know what I mean! Chocolate, our eternal love. It contains caffeine, especially dark

chocolate. You should grab a piece in the morning and include it in your breakfast!

- One apple a day keeps the coffee away!

Fructose, or fruit sugar, can wake you up and prepare your system to start working, which will boost your energy!

- Try to avoid high-carb meals during your lunch break.

Eating high-carb meals like fast food (burgers, pizza, etc.), as well as generous portions of pasta, can make you feel sleepy within an hour and have you on your way to the coffee maker!

- Stay as far away from temptations as you can.

I know the workplace is full of temptations. Especially when we are talking about coffee. Try not to get sucked into temptation when you see coworkers drinking one cup after the other. If

feasible, consider the possibility of working somewhere away from coffee makers. Yes, even the sound of making coffee can both distract and tempt you!

I am working at a consultancy start-up company and recently we moved to our new office. Prior to that, we were operating out of an open-space office while surrounded by many different coffee makers. My colleague used to refill his cup with hot coffee four to five times a day. Now that we don't have any machines, he limits his consumption to the single cup he brings from home!

- Measure your progress.

Keeping track of your progress is vital. Why?

Just like everything else you've put into motion, tracking your progress can help you spot mistakes that hinder you from achieving your goals, one of those being (hopefully!) to reduce coffee consumption easier and faster. As Darren Hardy states in *The Compound Effect*,

tracking every action that relates to the area of life you want to improve helps you become more aware of your choices.

Did you work out in the morning throughout the week? Did you listen to your favorite songs while commuting to work? Did you enrich your meals with protein-packed foods? In addition, did you limit high-carb calories? Everything new added to your lifestyle can be measured as progress!

You can do this by keeping a diary of your everyday achievements, which will make you much more aware of your progress. A Harvard Business School study on 12,000 diary entries from 238 employees in seven companies concluded that by keeping records of their achievements each day, they became more motivated to achieve their goals, releasing endorphins throughout their bodies. Moreover, they could not wait for the next achievement to come. You feel it, huh?

Chapter 6-Three

Additional Tips to Empower Your Efforts

There are many tricks you can apply to avoid coffee in the workplace. It's never quite black and white, and you can always adjust your plan as you go. Everybody's different. However, there are distinct tips you can follow to succeed in your efforts. In the next few sections, I introduce to you a few bonus—and practical—tips that can be very helpful in reducing consumption.

Tip #1

Tip #1 has to do with the amount of money you spend on coffee every day. I am a person who spends money on coffee (and also make my

own), so the costs are never that high. However, if you never make your coffee, an effective way to control your caffeine consumption is by *setting a monthly coffee budget*.

Buying coffee (sometimes two or three times a day), accumulates to enormous costs!

If the average cappuccino costs somewhere around three to five bucks, you are probably spending nearly thirty dollars on coffee each week (with a five-day work schedule). If you want big-picture information, that amounts to over \$100 a month! If we look down the road thirty years, the cost would be around \$36,000! That could be tuition for college, for example.

Begin by setting your monthly budget to about \$70, which averages to a little more than \$17 per week. Keep records on how much you spent on coffee during the month. Next month, try to reduce your budget to \$50 per month. You don't have to go below this amount if you don't want to. If you manage to spend around \$50 per

month on coffee and caffeine then you have already made significant progress!

Suggestion #1

Set a specific (monthly) budget to spend on coffee and split it between four weeks. As time goes on, consider decreasing your budget.

Tip #2

Another simple trick I practiced was playing with Nespresso capsules (this trick applies only to workers who use an espresso coffee machine and use capsules).

In combination with the bonus tip in the previous chapter, this trick helped me maintain a balance.

So, each Monday, I brought exactly fifteen Nespresso capsules that I put inside my desk drawer. I made a commitment to myself that I would drink coffee only from these capsules. The following weeks I put ten Nespresso

capsules in my drawer, and after several months I was down to only five espresso capsules.

Just like Darren Hardy in *The Compound Effect* indicates, success is a long-term process and is derived from small everyday steps that you commit to putting into action. With my coffee consumption, there was a steady decline, to where I ended up drinking only five cups a week or less.

Suggestion #2

You can achieve significant results at a slow and steady pace.

Tip #3

You surely know the impact friends/colleagues can have on your behavior is immense. So, how can friends/colleagues influence your need to drink coffee?

It's very easy to pick up the bad habits when you spend a lot of time with the same people at work.

That's the power of friendship and socializing!

Remember when you were a kid and the other kids wouldn't play with you unless you played football? You may have loved basketball, or any other sport for that matter. However, to be accepted by the team, you had to play football.

It was the "code of conduct" for socialization. Why not take advantage of it? Why not play football and enhance your footwork skills? Why not join a company of non-coffee drinkers and find out that there are so many other beverages to enjoy, apart from coffee?

I used to invite my best friend over on the weekend to drink coffee and discuss the news of the week. He always came to my place and we had very meaningful conversations for hours, but he never, ever drank coffee whenever I offered some to him. He always kept asking me, "Hey Giannis, do you have that delicious homemade lemonade?"

After months of coffee consumption, guess what! I am only drinking homemade lemonade whenever I am catching up with my best friend!

Suggestion #3

Surround yourself or catch up with colleagues that do not drink coffee!

Ending Thoughts

Now that we reached the end, let's wrap up those key points from the 4 step-program, so you may benefit the most from this book:

Step #1 is about “acceptance” of uncontrollable coffee consumption, because no other step will work if you don't genuinely accept that you are addicted to coffee.

Step #2 targets one of the primary reasons you consume coffee excessively: your true lack of energy in the workplace. It provides guidance on proper nutritional habits that will help you obtain the energy you need at work.

Step #3 reinforces Step #2. You're taught how to build the right mentality through meditation

and mindfulness—extremely powerful tools in today's society!

Step #4 details why going cold turkey can be the easiest choice an addict can make, yet, also the worst. Instead, Step #4 proposes replacing the bad habit (overconsumption of coffee) with a good one (healthy sleep schedule), one brick at a time, which will lead to success!

It's time to make a difference in your life!

Did you like this book?

If you enjoyed reading this book and found it to contain helpful advice, I would really appreciate it if you could leave an honest review on Amazon. Your feedback is invaluable! Just click the following link!

[Leave a review](#)

Sincerely yours,

Giannis

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