

[↓ Jump to Recipe](#) [🖨️ Print Recipe](#)

Most of us believe that our IQ is possibly the most important characteristic that we possess. So if our brain is the biggest asset we have we should make sure we optimise it. In the current day and age, we feel more brain drained than brain optimised. So can we reverse the scales?

Understanding how the brain uses energy

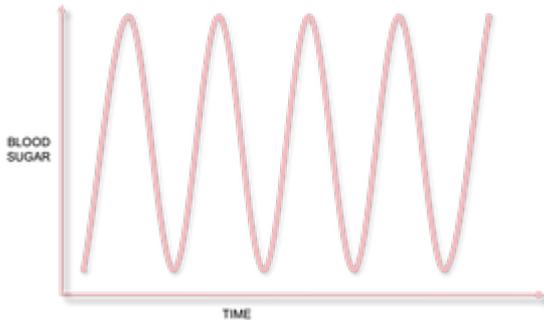
Our brain is made up of 66% fat so it might not come as a surprise that fat is an important fuel for the brain. But the main source of energy for the brain is glucose, which comes from carbohydrate.

Our digestive system breaks down foods like bread, pasta, fruits, beans, grains and root vegetables (which are carbohydrate rich foods) into their smallest molecules. Glucose is the smallest molecule of carbohydrates. Some of the molecules are transported to our brain, muscles and vital organs where they are used for energy. Whatever the body is not using straight away, it will be deposited for later use, ultimately as fat tissue.

On the other side, fat will end up as fatty acid molecules. The liver converts these into ketones which the brain can use to make energy. This can only happen when there are not that many glucose molecules in your blood. In other words this happens when we do not eat too many carbohydrates.

Why is fat a better energy source for the brain

The amount of glucose molecules in the blood are commonly referred to as blood sugar. So the more glucose a food, the higher the level or concentration of blood sugar. The downside of this is that after a carbohydrate rich meal the blood sugar needs to reach its normal levels. So just like a roller coaster there will be a big drop from the peak. The moment the blood sugar drops, we start to feel hungry or without energy. That is the moment where we reach for that sugary kick or caffeine or nicotine to help us get energy back. This is where the vicious circle starts. Because we crave a carbohydrate rich food (like a cake or something sweet) the blood sugar levels rise again. Caffeine and nicotine do not contain glucose, however they activate hormones which tell your body to start releasing glucose from its primary storage.



Fat on the other side does not raise blood sugar levels. In fact, as mentioned the levels of blood sugar need to be low for the body to use fat as fuel.

Objective for brain optimisation: keep glucose levels even or low

The key principles for brain optimisation are:

- eating small amounts of slow carbs;
- eating high amounts of healthy fats;
- getting enough vitamins and minerals.

High fat and low carbohydrate diet is typically referred to as ketogenic diet. If you want to know more about this check out the blog post on [muscle building](#).

What is a slow carb?

[A slow carbohydrate](#) (or a low GL - glycemic load) is a carbohydrate that releases its sugar (glucose) into the blood stream slowly and therefore you maintain your energy levels for longer. You could say it's a measure of its quality. A low GL food therefore will ensure that your energy does not follow a roller coaster pattern.

Isn't fat bad?

There is a lot of confusing information and research on this subject. Most of the information around fat being bad or your health comes from a study done by Ancel Keys which is decades old. The fat that we get from our diet, when consumed alone is not the culprit of bad health. However, the combination of high fat and high carbohydrate (in foods like fast food, cake, etc) is the one that is driving the issue. This topic needs a post in itself to explore the different arguments, which we will do soon.

So I am afraid to say that bread and butter is not the best combination, however tasty it may be. So in practice you can get fat into your diet in the following ways:

- use olive oil on your veggies;
- add avocado to your diet;
- use coconut milk in your dishes;
- add coconut oil to your smoothies;
- add MCT oil to your smoothies;

What is MCT oil?

[MCT](#) stands for medium chain triglycerides. They are a type of fat which is derived from coconut oil and are very effective for energy boost and sharper brain.

There are 4 types of MCTs:

- caproic acid (C6);
- caprylic acid (C8);
- capric acid (C10);
- lauric acid (C12).

C6, C8 and C10 bypass the digestive system which means they are transformed into ketones very quickly. These are in smaller proportions available in the coconut oil and this is why a specialist product is required.

How do I get enough vitamins and minerals into my diet?

The best way is to ensure half of your plate should be made of vegetables, especially green leafy vegetables.



 [Print Recipe](#)

Fruity greens smoothie

A refreshing smoothie that gets your brain turned on.

Prep Time	3 mins
Cook Time	1 min
Total Time	4 mins

Course: Breakfast

Keyword: smoothie

Servings: 2 people

Author: Patricia Bloj

Ingredients

- 2 apples core removed

- 2 large handfuls spinach
- 2 tbsp almond butter
- 1/2 small glass almond milk
- 2 tbsp MCT oil
- 2 cm ginger root

Instructions

1. Place all ingredients into a blender and blitz until smooth.



 [Print Recipe](#)

Berry green smoothie

Not only you have refreshing berries but you also get the goodness of kale and avocado for a creamy smoothie that helps your brain focus.

Prep Time	3 mins
Cook Time	1 min
Total Time	4 mins

Course: Breakfast

Keyword: smoothie

Servings: 2 people

Author: Patricia Bloj

Ingredients

- 1 large handful kale stalk removed
- 4 large handfuls frozen berries
- 1 avocado stone and skin removed
- 1 1/2 small glass almond milk
- 2 tsp MCT oil
- 2 tsp almond butter

Instructions

1. Place all ingredients into a blender and blitz until smooth.

Share this:

- [Click to share on Twitter \(Opens in new window\)](#)
- [Click to share on Facebook \(Opens in new window\)](#)