

Improve Your Baseline Dopamine for Motivation & Drive | Dr. Andrew Huberman

If we are going to feel motivated at all that is if we are going to wake up in the morning or have any period of time during our day in which we feel like we are capable of pursuing goals We are going to have to have a healthy level of baseline dopamine In other words we are going to have to have enough dopamine in the wave pool enough water in the wave pool that is before we can generate any waves or peaks in dopamine let alone troughs and the rest So how do we achieve a healthy baseline level of dopamine Well there we can really look to some foundational practices practices that perhaps you've heard about on this podcast before And that to some of you might seem a little mundane although some of them are a bit more sophisticated maybe even esoteric The good news is that we can all control these things and they don't require purchasing anything but they do require some degree of regular upkeep and effort Those things include what I call the very basics Now the very basics um put in the context of today's discussion are the things that put water in the wave pool Those are going to be getting sufficient amounts of quality sleep each night Something that we've done several episodes on and in have online tool kits for us You can see the master your sleep episode the perfect your sleep episode the light and health episode If you want to skip all that and just get right to the tools We have a sleep tool kit or it's actually called the tool kit for sleep that you can access at Huberman lab dot com Completely zero cost You just go there and download that tool kit getting sufficient sleep each night literally restores your dopamine reserves It allows dopamine to be present and for you to have a level of baseline dopamine that will allow you to even consider your goals in any kind of meaningful or reasonable way Second there are practices that are supported by the scientific literature to increase your baseline level of dopamine that are independent of sleep but are similar to sleep And I like to refer to these as a non sleep deep rest This is not meditation There's actually very little evidence that meditation of the traditional kind of you know sitting eyes closed third eyes focusing on your third eye center which is this area behind your forehead There is very little evidence that that increases levels of dopamine There is a place for meditation in the context of today's discussion but I'll repeat meditation itself is a focusing exercise It is not known to increase dopamine however non sleep deep breaths so called

NSDR Very similar Although different to what's sometimes called yoga Nidra which is where you lie there You do a sort of body scan some long exhale breathing NSDR is very similar You can find a link to a zero cost NSDR on youtube It's a 10 minute long one There are also 2030 minute one out there also on youtube But I'll provide a link to the 10 minute one Those have been shown to increase the amount of dopamine in your dopamine reserves by up to 65% which is a remarkable number So quality sleep non sleep deep breath A K A Yogan Ira very powerful ways to keep your baseline level of dopamine at a sufficient level In addition to that nutrition no doubt plays a role in your baseline level of dopamine Because tyrosine the amino acid is the rate limiting enzyme for the synthesis of dopamine Tyrosine is present in varying levels in different foods You can look those up online You just simply uh put in a search for um tyrosine levels in different foods Everything from particular cheeses like Parmesan cheese has high levels of tyrosine uh certain meat certain nuts certain vegetables without getting into details and specifics You can find those there but you need proper nutrition and therefore nutrients in particular tyro In order to have sufficient levels of baseline dopamine the third thing on the list And again these are things that we come back to almost every episode but I don't think they can be repeated enough because these are really things that we need to focus on every 24 hours You might be able to skip a day here or there if you get sick or you're traveling or you have some major life event But really every 24 hours we need to re up our sleep we need to re up our nutrients Even if you're fasting you're re upping your nutrients from stored sources within your body The third thing is sunlight morning sunlight in particular I've done extensive episodes about this check out the episode on lighting your health if you want all the details but you want to try and view sunlight as early in the day as possible 5 to 10 minutes on a clear day minimum 10 to 20 minutes on a cloudy day minimum 20 or 30 minutes on a very overcast day Minimum without sunglasses don't stare at the sun Please don't damage your eyes Look off slightly off from the sun But yes you want to face eastward towards the sun and on those cloudy days that's especially important to do why Well viewing morning sunlight increases cortisol early in the day which is excellent because you want cortisol elevated early in the day and you want it lower later in the day And because of the relationship between the cells in your eye that sense sunlight specifically morning sunlight believe it or not that happens and signal to your hypothalamus and the relationship between the hypothalamus and the pituitary and other endocrine organs It sets in

motion A dopamine related cascade in neuromodulators dopamine and hormones that lead to states of well being elevated mood alertness et cetera throughout the day It also helps your sleep at night But today we're talking about dopamine So yes believe it or not that morning sunlight exposure does increase your levels of dopamine not just cortisol And fourth on the list is going to be movement exercise of varying kinds be resistance training could be cardiovascular training that does increase levels of dopamine Here we're not talking about achieving peaks in dopamine right That could be accomplished through setting a personal record apr or through sprints or heavy lifts or learning some new dynamic movement What we're really talking about here is getting into a regular exercise program of if not every day at least five days a week a mixture of cardiovascular and resistance exercise that we also know is known to elevate and maintain an elevated level of baseline dopamine So it's not just about the euphoria you feel during or after exercise it's also about the baseline level of dopamine that's achieved through regular movement and engaging in movement And if you're asking how could that be Well you already know the answer the circuits in the brain and body that generate movement not just goal seeking but movement itself As I mentioned earlier that nigrostriatal pathway And yes that circuit is separate from the VT a nucleus accumbens to cortical circuit the meso cortical circuit that we've mainly been focusing on today but they interact and so by engaging in regular movement you ensure that you're maintaining elevated levels of baseline dopamine which is what you want If you're going to be able to engage in any kind of motivated pursuit behavior of any kind So those are the fundamentals that will set the level of baseline dopamine in your system A couple of key points Yes there is variation based on both genetics and circumstance in baseline levels of dopamine someone's going through a particular hard time or if somebody inherited a gene in the dopamine synthesis pathway that simply affords them higher levels of baseline dopamine we likely know these people they seem hyper motivated all the time not just based on prior success but they just seem to have a lot of energy and a lot of go drive you know you talk about activation energy Some of you may know what that term means Others of you won't having low activation energy is great I mean the amount of energy that it takes to get into action to pursue adaptive and meaningful healthy goals Some people just seem to have lower activation energy and higher levels of dopamine are probably associated with that Some of us have lower levels of baseline dopamine regardless everyone needs to engage in the foundational things

that I just mentioned a few moments ago every 24 hours or at least strive to
There is no escaping that