

The basics of boosting your metabolism

Men and women looking to shed a few pounds and keep those pounds off often look for ways to boost their metabolism. Some may not know just what metabolism means and though it is a complicated combination of processes, metabolism is perhaps best explained as the sum of those processes, each of which is instituted to convert food into energy.

So it's no surprise that so many people, especially men and women whose metabolisms have begun to slow down, want to boost their metabolism and turn that food into energy more quickly.

Though metabolism is a collection of complicated processes, boosting metabolism can be rather easy. The following are a handful of ways to do so, which can help men and women reach their fitness goals.

- Eat the right foods and eat more often. Many adults have been turned on to the concept of grazing, an approach to diet wherein adherents eat small portions of food every two to three hours instead of the more traditional three square meals per day. But grazing is only effective when men and women eat the right foods. Each small meal should still have nutritional value just as if it were a large meal. When eating smaller meals, include healthy sources of protein and fiber. Vegetables tend to be especially beneficial because they are high in fiber, a non-digestible carbohydrate that is hard for the body to break down. As the body works hard to break down fiber, it's burning energy and boosting its metabolism along the way. Fish is another potentially beneficial food for those looking to boost their metabolisms, as studies have shown that the omega-3 fatty acids found in fish oils increase the levels of fat-burning enzymes in the body while decreasing the body's level of fat-storage enzymes.

Eating more often benefits the body because doing so stimulates metabolism, reassuring the body that food will be coming on a regular basis. When meals are skipped or there are long intervals between meals, the body reacts as if it might run out of food and begins to store fat.

- Add some lean muscle. Lean muscle can boost metabolism, so a workout dominated by cardiovascular exercise won't have as positive an impact on metabolism as one that includes a combination of weight training and aerobic exercise. When muscles are worked hard, the body needs to work hard to recover and rebuild those muscles, burning more calories and boosting metabolism as a result.

- Don't believe everything you read or hear. Suggestions abound as to ways to significantly improve metabolism. Unfortunately, many of these suggestions boost metabolism but not enough to help people lose weight, which is the ultimate goal of many people look-

ing to boost their metabolisms. For example, green tea has its proponents who feel it can have a significant impact on metabolism thanks to EGCG, a compound found in the tea that has been proven to elevate metabolism. However, the impact of EGCG on boosting metabolism is negligible and therefore won't make much of an impact on a person's weight. The same can be said about capsaicin, an active component found in chili peppers that some feel boosts metabolism enough to promote weight loss. Though capsaicin can boost metabolism slightly, studies have shown that influence is not significant enough to affect a person's weight.

- Don't get too comfortable. Modern technology may be a reason why waist sizes are

getting bigger. Heating and cooling systems may be must-have items, but when the body is too comfortable, it burns less energy to stay warm in the winter or comfortably cool in the summer. A study from the National Institute of Health Clinical Center found that people who slept in a room kept at 66 F burned seven percent more calories than those who slept in a room at 75 F. Sleeping in a cooler room may just be the easiest way for men and women to boost their metabolisms.

Boosting metabolism and shedding extra pounds is a goal for many men and women. But while metabolism is a complex set of processes, the various ways to effectively boost that metabolism can be quite simple.

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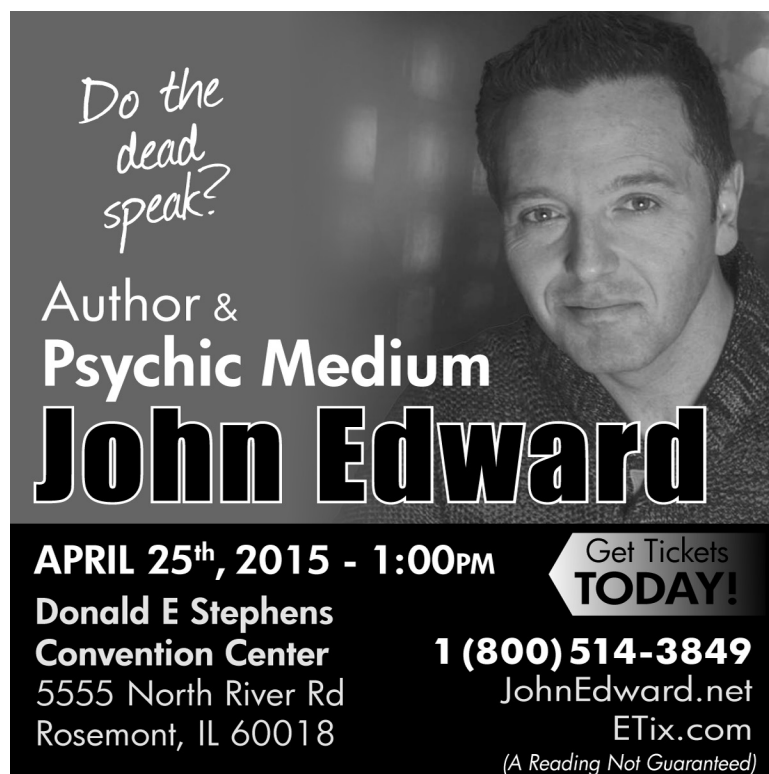
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Percheron horses— The favored breed of French/Canadians



by Bonnie Bergeron

For the many French/Canadian farmers who lived in the Bourbonnais area in the late 19th and early 20th century, the Percheron draft horse was considered essential for heavy farm work. The breed was well known for its intelligence, docile nature and ability to work long hours without tiring. They were used almost exclusively for plowing, thrashing and

pulling heavy work wagons, but they could also be hitched to a buggy for a trip into town. In addition, many breweries in large cities used the horses to pull heavy beer wagons.

It is impossible to know exactly how many farmers in Bourbonnais and the surrounding area owned Percheron horses but we do know that several French/Canadian families bred and sold Percheron horses. According to "Images of America, Bourbonnais" a Prairie Farmers Directory listed the following breeders of Percheron horses: Joseph Benoit, Francis X. Bergeron, Amedee Brais, Lionel and Charles Cyrier (sons of Flavier), Fred DesLauriers, Eugene Granger, Jerome Grise, Alexis Rivard and Louis Edward Surprenant.

Percheron horses originated and were named after the location where they were first bred, which is in the northern part of France in the Huisne River Valley of the province of Perch. The horses were first bred in the 17th century for war horses and to pull stage coaches. Eventually, Arabian blood was added to the breed.

Ancestors of the current breed were smaller and were also used as mounts for armored knights. During the French Revolution, horse breeding was suppressed and the breed almost became extinct. However there was enough stock left to restart the breed and a heavier and taller horse resulted, better adapted for farm work. Most of the horses range in color from light gray to black but some can be roan or brown colored. Many have white markings on their foreheads but Percheron registries consider too much white undesirable.

Initial efforts to import four Percheron horses to the U.S. in 1839 resulted in the survival of only one. However, the one surviving stud sired more than 400 foals. In 1851, three more studs were imported and sired hundreds of foals. More horses were imported during the Civil War and in 1870 through the 1880's thousands more were imported. After World War I imports dwindled and then increased until the 1930's when approximately 70 percent of the draft horses in the U.S. were the Percheron breed. Their numbers remained fairly stable until after World War II when motorized farm equipment replaced the use of horses on most farms. By 1954 the breed had declined so alarmingly that only 85 head were recorded. Because of a few dedicated individuals and with the use by thousands of Amish farmers who prefer the breed, the Percheron has rebounded and by 1998 more than 3,000 head were registered by The Percheron Horse Association of America.

For the French/Canadian farmers who worked the soil in the Bourbonnais area a century ago, this hard working, docile and much loved animal was an integral part of successful farming operations.

Even though farm equipment can now do in a few hours what it would take a team of horses days to accomplish, I believe that those farmers of long ago would still want a Percheron or two in their stable even if they were no longer needed for working purposes. After all, rubbing the ears, stroking the neck and looking in the eyes of a beloved animal is so much more gratifying than starting up a tractor.

Sources: Wikipedia, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Percheron; Johnson, Vic and Bourbonnais Grove Historical Society; "Images of America Bourbonnais"; and Percheron Horse Association of America, www.percheronhorse.org/.

The Bourbonnais Grove Historical Society is dedicated to preserving and promoting local history. Monthly meetings are held at 7 p.m. on the first Thursday of each month, March to December. Museum hours are 1 to 4 p.m. on the first and third Sundays of each month, March to December or by appointment. Visit bourbonnaishistory.org, find them on Facebook at [facebook.com/bourbonnaishistory](https://www.facebook.com/bourbonnaishistory) or phone 1-815933-6452.