

THE SUSTAINED ENERGY EDITION

# The energy *cliff.*

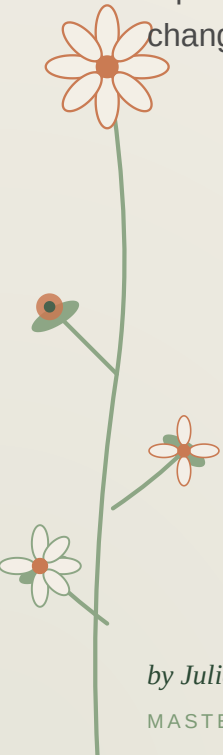
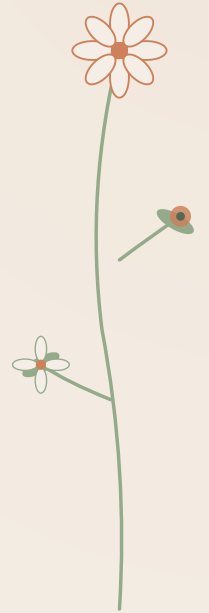
Why your energy doesn't have to come and go like a bad WiFi signal.  
A plain-English guide to blood sugar, sustained focus, and the small  
changes that actually keep you running steady all day.

by *Julia Garrahan*

MASTER NUTRITION THERAPIST

10 MIN READ

*Settle in*





## Hey, it's *Julia* again.

If you read Volume 01, welcome back. If you didn't, no quiz. Here's all you need to know: I'm a Master Nutrition Therapist, I built Wholara to make real nutrition science accessible to busy humans, and I have opinions about the granola bar industry.

This one is about blood sugar. Yes, even if you're not diabetic. Especially if you're not diabetic. Because blood sugar is quietly running the show on your energy, your focus, your cravings, and whether you can be a fun person to live with at 8 pm.



*Same humor. Same no-jargon promise. Same goal: by the end of this, you know one or two things you can actually change tomorrow.*

## WHAT'S INSIDE

# Five short *chapters*, ten honest minutes.

- |       |   |       |
|-------|---|-------|
| 01    | Meet your blood sugar                                       | p. 04 |
|       | The invisible thing deciding whether you're a person today. |       |
| <hr/> |   |       |
| 02    | The cliff, the crash, and the cookie                        | p. 06 |
|       | How a "healthy" smoothie can wreck your afternoon.          |       |
| <hr/> |   |       |
| 03    | Why this matters even if you feel fine                      | p. 08 |
|       | Mood, sleep, weight, brain. All of it.                      |       |
| <hr/> |   |       |
| 04    | Seven tiny hacks that work                                  | p. 09 |
|       | Backed by real research. Zero pills required.               |       |
| <hr/> |   |       |
| 05    | Your new normal Monday                                      | p. 12 |
|       | What a steady day actually looks like.                      |       |

## CHAPTER 01

# Meet your *blood sugar*.

*Blood sugar is the amount of glucose floating around in your bloodstream right now. Think of it as the fuel level in your car. When it's steady, you cruise. When it's wild, you stall out in traffic and yell at strangers.*

Every time you eat something with carbs, your body breaks it down into glucose and shuttles it into your bloodstream. Your pancreas releases a hormone called **insulin**, which knocks on your cells' doors and says, "open up, food's here." The cells take in the glucose. Your blood sugar comes back down. Energy gets stored or used. Life is good.

That's the calm version. The chaotic version goes like this: you eat something that sends a tidal wave of sugar into your blood, your pancreas panics and dumps insulin like it's discount day, and your cells take in so much glucose so fast that your blood sugar crashes below where it started. Now you're tired, hangry, and somehow looking for a snack twenty minutes after lunch.

## 88%

of American adults have some level of metabolic dysfunction. Most don't know it.

## 30%

drop in glucose spike when you simply walk for 10 minutes after eating.

## The thing they don't tell you in school.

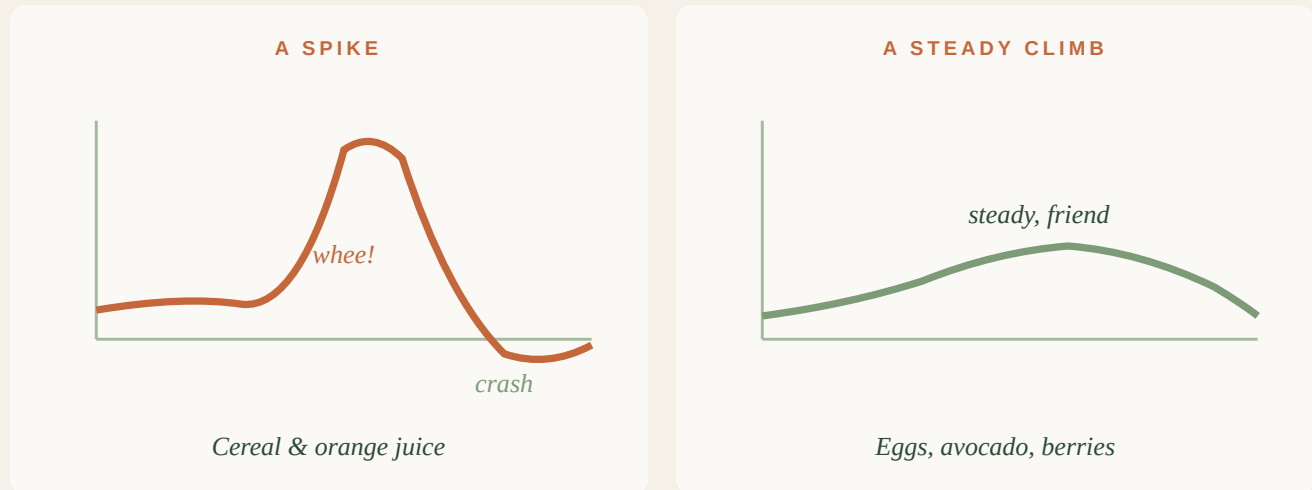
You don't have to have diabetes for any of this to apply to you. Research using continuous glucose monitors (the little arm patches you might have seen) shows that even people with "normal" blood sugar swing wildly throughout the day depending on what they eat. And those swings have consequences.

*Saying blood sugar only matters if you have diabetes is like saying brushing your teeth only matters if you have cavities. Everyone has it. Everyone feels it.*

## A QUICK VISUAL

# A spike vs. a steady *climb*.

Here's the same number of calories, the same general "healthy" intent, but two completely different stories your body is telling. Look at the shapes, not the science. The shape on the left is what wrecks your afternoon. The shape on the right is what makes you a delight at 4 pm.



Same person. Same morning. Wildly different days. The fascinating thing is that the foods on the left aren't "bad." Cereal and juice are how a lot of us were raised. They just hit your bloodstream like a sugar grenade because there's almost nothing to slow them down.

The foods on the right have something the foods on the left don't: **protein, fat, and fiber**. Those three are the bouncers at the door of your bloodstream. They slow everything down so glucose enters in a calm, orderly line instead of a stampede.

THE WHOLE BOOK IN ONE LINE

Eat carbs with the bouncers (protein, fat, and fiber). Avoid naked carbs. That's basically it.

## CHAPTER 02

# The cliff, the crash, and the *cookie*.

*Let's talk about what's actually happening at 3 pm. You sat down at your desk feeling capable. Now you're staring at the same email for nine minutes and wondering if someone in the break room would notice if you ate the rest of the cookies.*

Welcome to the cliff. Your body just walked off the edge of a glucose spike.

Here's the play-by-play. At lunch, you had a sandwich on white bread, chips, and a soda. Maybe a sad side salad with a tiny tomato in it. The carbs in that meal got broken down into glucose almost instantly. Your blood sugar shot up to a peak. Your pancreas saw the spike and dumped a wave of insulin so big it overshot the target. Now there's too much insulin and not enough glucose, and your blood sugar tumbles below where it started.

That tumble is the crash. Foggy thinking, irritability, hunger you cannot reason with, and a deep, primal need for caffeine or sugar. Your body is doing exactly what it's supposed to do. The system isn't broken. It's just responding to a meal that didn't give it any help.

## The villain isn't carbs. It's carbs alone.

I'm not anti-carb. Your brain runs on glucose. Fruit is medicine. Whole grains are excellent. The problem isn't the carb, it's the carb without a chaperone.

When you eat carbs by themselves (a banana, a piece of toast, a smoothie of just fruit) the sugar absorbs fast. When you eat the same carbs with protein, fat, or fiber, the absorption slows way down. Same carbs. Way less spike. Your blood sugar climbs and falls gently instead of doing a roller coaster.

*A banana on its own is a sugar dump. A banana with peanut butter is a snack. Same banana.*

*The fancy term for this is "glycemic load." You don't need to memorize that. You just need to remember the bouncers.*

## PLOT TWIST

# "Healthy" foods that are *not* your friend.

This is the part that breaks people's brains a little. Some of the foods marketed as the healthiest things on the planet are blood sugar bombs in disguise. They have great PR. They have terrible glucose curves.

## 1 Fruit smoothies and acai bowls

Blending fruit destroys most of the fiber and concentrates the sugar. A green smoothie with banana, mango, pineapple, and orange juice is, biologically speaking, a milkshake. Add protein powder, nut butter, and chia seeds, and now we're talking.

## 2 Granola and "healthy" cereal

Most granola is oats glued together with honey and oil. The sugar content rivals dessert. If you love granola, eat it like a topping over Greek yogurt, not as a meal.

## 3 Flavored yogurt

Plain Greek yogurt is fantastic. Flavored "fruit on the bottom" varieties often have as much sugar as a candy bar. Read the label. If it has more than 8 grams of sugar per serving, it's dessert.

## 4 Dried fruit and fruit juice

Dried fruit is just sugar with the water removed. Fruit juice is just sugar with the fiber removed. Whole fruit is what nature intended. The other two are basically candy with vibes.

## 5 Rice cakes

They taste like packing peanuts and somehow still spike your blood sugar harder than white bread. If you love them, top them with avocado, eggs, or nut butter.

*None of this means never eat these things. It just means know what they actually do to your body, then pair them or save them for sometimes.*

## CHAPTER 03

# Why this matters even if you feel *fine*.

*Blood sugar isn't just an energy thing. The same glucose swings that wreck your afternoon are quietly running a whole bunch of other systems in your body. When they're chaotic, the whole show suffers.*

Here's what the research connects to glucose variability, even in non-diabetic people:

1

## Mood & irritability

Studies link blood sugar swings to anxiousness, frustration, and feeling on edge. Steady glucose, steadier you.

2

## Cognitive performance

Research using glucose monitors shows that big swings measurably slow down processing speed and attention.

3

## Cravings & appetite

A crash triggers your body to demand fast sugar. That's not weakness. That's biology asking for fuel.

4

## Sleep quality

Late blood sugar drops can wake you up at 3 am, ravenous, and ruin your sleep cycle. Steady evenings, steadier nights.

5

## Skin & inflammation

Chronic glucose spikes drive inflammation, which shows up in your skin, joints, and how you feel waking up.

6

## Long-term health

Chronic blood sugar chaos slowly pushes the body toward insulin resistance, the gateway to a lot of bigger problems.

You don't have to wait until something is broken to take this seriously. The whole point is that steady blood sugar is the foundation of a steady life. Everything else gets easier when this one thing is calm.

## CHAPTER 04

# Seven tiny hacks that *actually* work.

*These are not "30 days to a new you." These are small. They're sustainable. They're each backed by real research. You don't need to do all seven at once. Pick one. Try it for a week. Add another when it feels normal.*

## Hack 1 · Eat a savory, protein-rich breakfast.

If you do one thing from this entire book, do this. Starting your day with 25 to 30 grams of protein sets up steady blood sugar for the next eight hours. Eggs, Greek yogurt, smoked salmon, leftover dinner, a real protein smoothie. Sweet breakfast (cereal, pastries, sugary lattes, granola) basically guarantees a crash by 11 am.

## Hack 2 · Eat your food in the right order.

Same meal, different order, totally different glucose response. The sequence that works: **vegetables first, then protein and fat, then carbs last.** Sounds weird. Works dramatically. The fiber and protein you eat first slow down everything that comes after. Studies show this can cut your glucose spike by up to 75 percent.

## Hack 3 · Walk for 10 minutes after meals.

This one feels too small to matter. It doesn't. A 2025 study in Scientific Reports found that a gentle 10-minute walk right after eating reduced peak glucose more effectively than a 30-minute walk done an hour later. Your muscles act like sponges and soak up glucose directly from your bloodstream. No gym required. Just a stroll around the block.

## MORE HACKS

## Keep going. They *compound*.

### Hack 4 · A spoonful of vinegar before a meal.

Sounds like a fairy tale. Isn't. A tablespoon of apple cider vinegar in a tall glass of water about 15 minutes before a carb-heavy meal can blunt the glucose spike by 20 to 30 percent in some studies. The acetic acid temporarily slows down how fast carbs get absorbed. If straight vinegar makes you queasy, use it as salad dressing on a veggie starter. Same idea.

### Hack 5 · Add a "veggie starter."

Before your main course, eat something fibrous. A handful of arugula. A few baby carrots with hummus. A small bowl of soup. Anything green and crunchy. The fiber gets there first and slows the absorption of everything else. This is the easiest way to "hack" a meal you can't otherwise control, like a restaurant pasta dish or a piece of birthday cake.

### Hack 6 · Save sweets for after a meal, not as a snack.

A cookie eaten alone, on an empty stomach, mid-afternoon, will rocket your blood sugar to the moon. The same cookie eaten right after a real meal will hit your bloodstream much more gently. Same cookie. Different impact. If you want the cookie, just don't have it naked.

### Hack 7 · Sleep matters more than you think.

One bad night of sleep makes your cells about 25 percent less sensitive to insulin the next day. That means the same meal causes a bigger spike and a worse crash. If your blood sugar feels chaotic and you can't figure out why, look at your sleep. It's almost always part of the picture.

**PICK ONE**

You don't need all seven this week. Pick the one that sounds most doable. Most of my clients start with the protein breakfast. It's the highest-leverage move there is.

## CHEAT SHEET

# How to dress your *carbs*.

*Carbs aren't the enemy. Naked carbs are the enemy. Here's how to put clothes on the carbs you already love, so you keep eating them without paying the energy tax.*

## Instead of a naked banana **TRY THIS**

Banana + a tablespoon of almond butter or peanut butter. The fat and protein turn a sugar bomb into a real snack that holds you for hours.

Almond butter

Peanut butter

Greek yogurt

A handful of walnuts

## Instead of toast alone **TRY THIS**

Toast + avocado + an egg on top. Or whole grain bread with hummus and tomato. You just turned breakfast into a steady-fuel meal instead of a sugar spike.

Avocado

Eggs

Smoked salmon

Hummus

Nut butter

## Instead of pasta on its own **TRY THIS**

Start with a green salad. Add real protein to the pasta dish (chicken, salmon, beans, meatballs). Make the vegetables half the plate. Now the pasta is part of a meal, not the whole meal.

Side salad first

Olive oil &amp; vinegar

Chicken or beans

Roasted veggies

## Instead of a granola bar **TRY THIS**

A real snack with at least 10 grams of protein. An apple with cheese. A handful of nuts and berries. Hard-boiled egg and crackers. Your blood sugar will thank you in about an hour.

Apple + cheese

Nuts + berries

Hard-boiled egg

Hummus + veggies

Jerky + fruit

## CHAPTER 05



# What a *steady* day looks like.

*Theory is great. Here's what this actually looks like in real life, with real food, on a regular Tuesday when you have meetings and a kid to pick up.*

## 7:30 am · A real breakfast.

Two scrambled eggs, half an avocado on a slice of whole grain toast, and a handful of berries. Coffee with milk, sweetener if you want it. You just walked into the day with protein, fat, fiber, and a little carb. Your blood sugar is climbing gently, not vaulting.

## 10:30 am · A real snack (if hungry).

An apple with a tablespoon of almond butter. Or Greek yogurt with a few walnuts. Or just water and you're fine until lunch. If you ate the breakfast above, you might not even want a snack. That's a sign it's working.

## 12:30 pm · A lunch that doesn't betray you.

A big salad with grilled chicken, olive oil, a small portion of quinoa or sweet potato, and lots of veggies. Eat the salad first, then the protein, then the grain. Walk for 10 minutes after, even if it's just laps around your kitchen.

## 3:00 pm · No crash because there's no cliff to fall off.

You're still focused. You might want a cup of tea. You're not eyeing the office candy bowl like it owes you money. This is what steady feels like.

## 6:30 pm · Dinner you actually enjoy.

Salmon, roasted vegetables, a small portion of rice. A glass of wine if you want it. A few squares of dark chocolate after dinner, not as an emergency snack at 4 pm. Everything in its place.



# You don't need to be *perfect*.

I want to leave you with this. Blood sugar work isn't about cutting out the food you love. It's about understanding what your body is doing so you can stop fighting it.

*You can have the pasta. You can have the birthday cake. You can have the iced caramel whatever. Just don't have them naked on an empty stomach when you have a hard afternoon ahead.*

The goal isn't a perfect day. The goal is more steady days than chaotic ones. Pick one hack. Try it for two weeks. Add another. That's how this becomes your normal instead of a project.



If you want help building a real, personalized blood sugar plan that fits your actual life (kids, meetings, restaurant nights, vacations, the whole thing), that's exactly what Wholara is here for.

*Steady on, friend.*

Julia

Wholara

PERSONALIZED NUTRITION · REAL SCIENCE

# Sustained energy isn't a *personality trait.*

It's the result of small, repeatable choices that keep your blood sugar steady. Wholara was built by a Master Nutrition Therapist to make that doable for real humans with real lives. No protocols. No 47-step morning routines. Just real food, real research, and a plan that actually fits your week.

This guide is just the start. When you want personalized support, come find us.

VISIT WHOLARA.ORG