

# The Silver-Bullet Check

Answers to that question nagging you in the energy-booster aisle: *Does this really work?*

## COENZYME Q10

• **WHERE TO FIND IT:** Softgels from brands like Nature Made and Now Foods  
 • **WHAT IT IS:** An antioxidant mostly marketed for countering side effects of statins and treating congestive heart failure, Parkinson's, and hypertension, it has shown good results in those areas. But it's also getting airtime as a possible energy lifter.



**SCIENCE SAYS:** It might help, and it won't hurt. Studies of the antioxidant's impact on energy levels and exercise performance have shown mixed results.

• **GOOD TO KNOW:** CoQ10 can have unpredictable effects on blood pressure and blood sugar.

## RIBOSE

• **WHERE TO FIND IT:** Powders or tablets (look for D-ribose) from Swanson Health, Life Extension, and more

• **WHAT IT IS:** Ribose is a form of sugar in the body, and it's a key component of ATP.



**SCIENCE SAYS:** Studies of it as an energy booster have tended to be small, and most showed no impact. Research does show that ribose can improve blood flow in people with clogged arteries.

## CAFFEINATED WATER

• **WHERE TO FIND IT:** Bottles from brands including Water Joe and Ávitae

• **WHAT IT IS:** Caffeine is a drug that blocks buildup of the sleepy neurochemical adenosine.



**SCIENCE SAYS:** It's been found to boost focus and mental clarity.

• **GOOD TO KNOW:** Caffeine water sometimes contains heart-hammeringly high amounts of the stuff. Limit your intake to 400 mg a day—what you'd get in roughly four cups of coffee.

WATER: MARIA TOUTOUDAKI/GETTY IMAGES

## BEE POLLEN

● **WHERE TO FIND IT:** Capsules from brands including Puritan's Pride and Spring Valley

● **WHAT IT IS:** Pellets of plant pollens and nectar (which bees use as food) and bee saliva. It's a nutritionally rich mix of proteins, carbohydrates, lipids and fatty acids, minerals, and vitamins.

👉 **SCIENCE SAYS:** Studies that show bee pollen gives a boost have been criticized for being small, poorly run, or hard to replicate.



## CINNAMON

● **WHERE TO FIND IT:** Capsules from brands including Nature Made and Puritan's Pride (your spice jar alone won't pack enough punch)

● **WHAT IT IS:** Naturally occurring polyphenols are thought to increase insulin sensitivity and keep blood sugar levels even, which can help energy stay humming.

👉 **SCIENCE SAYS:** It's been found to lower blood sugar in people with type 2 diabetes, but so far the research on its effectiveness as an energy supplement is inconclusive.

● **GOOD TO KNOW:** If you have diabetes, talk with a doctor before taking it, since it could tweak blood sugar.

## L-GLUTAMINE

● **WHERE TO FIND IT:** Powders or capsules from Now Foods, Source Naturals, and others

● **WHAT IT IS:** The most abundant amino acid in the body, glutamine helps move nitrogen through your system and is an important energy source for many cells.

👉 **SCIENCE SAYS:** Glutamine is effective at reducing infections following major surgery, bone-marrow transplants, or burns—but it hasn't shown promise on the energy front.

## CREATINE

● **WHERE TO FIND IT:** Powders or chewable tablets from TwinLab, MusclePharm, and more

● **WHAT IT IS:** Creatine is made naturally in the human body and is also found in meats and fish. It's converted to phosphocreatine, which is stored in muscles to help deliver instant energy whenever it's needed.

👉 **SCIENCE SAYS:** Try it if you want help getting through your workout. An analysis of 96 human studies found it's effective in high-intensity training and explosive activities (read: it'll improve your racquetball game more than your biking endurance).

● **GOOD TO KNOW:** Carbs increase creatine uptake in your muscles, so mix it with something like fruit juice.

—Kate Rockwood