

## No Caffeine for Anyone

Suppose you walked into a coffee shop or your own kitchen and someone said, “No caffeine for you!” How would you react? Most people would be upset. We want and demand caffeine. In the series *Seinfeld*, there was an episode where a soup shop owner had very strict rules about the ordering process. If the customer messed up the order, the owner would shout, “No soup for you!” and banish the person from the premises.

Sarah Purser and I are at the ninth international conference on managing fatigue. The conference offers a morning tea and an afternoon tea. There is coffee and there are four types of tea. I did not see any decaffeinated coffee, but one of the teas was herbal. One thing I have noticed in Australia is that the cups are much smaller than in the USA. Is that good or bad? For me, it just means I had to get refills of tea. That may not be a good sign.

How do you take your caffeine? Starbucks claims there are 80,000 ways to order a beverage at their shops. I think most of their drinks contain caffeine. When you use a fatigue countermeasure at work, is it a caffeinated beverage? I am listening to an Emmylou Harris song titled *Black Caffeine*. Do you share these sentiments?

*I like it black, just black as night  
It keeps me up, it keeps me tight  
It don't matter the size of the cup  
Just as long as you fill it up with black caffeine  
Keeps me lean; You can hear me scream  
Give me black caffeine*

I do not have any complaints about the effects of caffeine although I did stop drinking coffee in 2014 because it increased my anxiety and stimulated my appetite. I need to avoid both of those effects. I now drink hot tea. What about you? Could you abstain from caffeine for a day or two? What would you substitute if you were told: **No Caffeine for You!**

If you are looking for a different way to achieve alertness, research some of these options.

- Ice cold water
- An apple
- Vitamin B-12
- Gingko Biloba
- Ginseng
- Teecino and Cafix (found in health food stores)

I do not know if any of these substitutes would work or not and am not recommending them. I am more likely to try the ice-cold water and eating an apple than the others. When I sleep enough, I do not need caffeine anyway and am then indulging a habit. In addition to the items above, stretching and light exercise are also useful ways to get going upon waking up. Scarlet Knight, our health and fitness consultants, suggests squats as a great exercise at any time. She loves squats! Give them a try right now.

If you believe caffeine is having negative effects on your health and well being, it might be worthwhile to consider how many “doses” you are using each day or night and the amount in each dose.

