

Managing the Caffeine

A Coaching Tool

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Our daily behavior is profoundly impacted by our patterns/decisions regarding sleep, exercise, exposure to light, and the consumption of alcohol, tobacco and other mind-altering drugs (including caffeine). It may be hard to assist other people until they are “physiologically-primed/prepared” for this assistance. Should a coach insist that her client be physiologically prepared for the challenges of coaching prior to beginning the coaching process? If one’s client is taking more than 250 mg. per day of caffeine then this person is likely to be struggling with inadequate (interrupted) sleep. At 350 mg per day of caffeine, one’s client is likely to experience a diminished capacity to focus on a specific issue for a sustained period of time – the kind of concentration that is needed during a coaching session.

The following Caffeine Consumption Checklist can help one’s coaching client determine his or her average consumption levels per day – to see if they total 250 mg or even 350 mg of caffeine.

Caffeine Assessment Checklist

		You Use This on A Regular Basis (Yes/No)	A. Number of Uses per Day (Average) (e.g. “4”)	B. Number of Mg per Use (e.g. “50 mg)	A x B. Average Daily Total
<u>Beverages and Candy</u>					
Drip-Brewed Coffee	100 mg (8 oz cup) (12.5 mg per oz)	_____	A. _____	B _____	A x B= _____
Coffee: Convenience Store [See More Detailed Chart For Starbuck’s Coffee Below]	150 mg (12 oz mug) 175 mg (14 oz mug) 250 mg (20 oz mug)	_____	A. _____	B _____	A x B= _____
Black Tea	50 mg (8 oz cup) (6.25 mg per oz)	_____	A. _____	B _____	A x B= _____

Hot Chocolate (Starbucks)	20 mg (12 oz) 25 mg (16 oz) 30 mg (20 oz)	_____	A. _____	B. _____	A x B = _____
Caffeinated Soda (e.g. Coke, Pepsi)	40-50 mg (12 oz can) (3.75 mg per oz)	_____	A. _____	B. _____	A x B = _____
Super-Caffeinated Colas (e.g. Jolt)	70 mg (12 oz can) (5.83 mg per oz)	_____	A. _____	B. _____	A x B = _____
Energy Drinks (e.g. Red Bull)	80 mg per can (8+ oz can) (10 mg per oz)	_____	A. _____	B. _____	A x B = _____
Milk Chocolate Candy	6 mg per oz	_____	A. _____	B. _____	A x B = _____
Other		_____	A. _____	B. _____	A x B = _____

Over-the-Counter Medications

Maximum Strength Anacin	32 mg per tablet	_____	A. _____	B. _____	A x B = _____
No Doz/Vivarin	200 mg per tablet	_____	A. _____	B. _____	A x B = _____
Extra-Strength Excedrin	65 mg per tablet)	_____	A. _____	B. _____	A x B = _____
Other		_____	A. _____	B. _____	A x B = _____

Prescription Medications

Cafergot	100 mg	_____	A. _____	B. _____	A x B = _____
Fiorinal	40 mg	_____	A. _____	B. _____	A x B = _____
Darvon	32 mg	_____	A. _____	B. _____	A x B = _____

TOTAL CAFFEINE INTAKE ON AN AVERAGE DAY _____

Starbucks [Obtained from Starbucks Website]

De-Caff Coffee

12 oz Tall 20 mg 16 oz Grande 25 mg 20 oz Venti® 30 mg

Latte/White Chocolate Mocha

12 oz Tall	75 mg	16 oz Grande	150 mg	20 oz Venti®	150 mg
Frappuccino®					
12 oz Tall	90 mg	16 oz Grande	115 mg	20 oz Venti®	160 mg
Café Au Lait					
12 oz Tall	115 mg	16 oz Grande	150 mg	20 oz Venti®	195 mg
Caffé Americano (Espresso)					
12 oz Tall	150 mg	16 oz Grande	225 mg	20 oz Venti®	300 mg

Given your client's assessment of their average level of caffeine consumption, you might wish to work with them on the following issues:

- Assisting your client by having him identify the sources of caffeine in his daily life and by encouraging him to reflect on the impact of this caffeine on his capacity to concentrate, manage stress and work effectively in interpersonal relationships.
- Assisting your client by inviting her to consider ways in which to remain alert other than through the consumption of caffeinated products. Perhaps exercise, a morning ritual (such as taking a shower, yoga, stretching) or a good night of sleep.
- Assisting your client in his identification of settings in which he is most likely to consume caffeinated beverages – before breakfast, during breakfast, on the way to work, around the water cooler, during lunch, after lunch, on the way home from work, during dinner, etc.. The environment in which one consistently finds oneself during a specific time of day plays a powerful role in creating expectations and priming one's body for the intake of specific foods, beverages, etc.
- Encouraging your client to vary the environment in which she operates from day to day. Habitual behavior can be more easily controlled if the environment is varied. For example, instead of eating breakfast before leaving for work, one can eat breakfast at a local diner once or twice a week on the way to work. Similarly, one can chat about the day's news and events with a colleague while walking around the block rather than at the water cooler (with a cup of coffee in hand).

- Setting a boundary for your client, refusing to engage in coaching with her until she reduces her consumption of caffeinated substances. Without this reduction in caffeine consumption can she really concentrate on the coaching process? Can she really change her behavioral patterns? Can she really handle stress associated with any transitions or transformations in her life?
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Further Reference:

John Preston (with Agnes Mura), Lesson from Neuropsychologist John Preston, Psy.D.: On stress, Sleep, Energy and Solutions that Backfire, *International Journal of Coaching in Organizations*, v. 3, no. 2, pp. 16-21.