

MAKE YOUR MORNINGS MATTER

Create a Morning Routine for a Calmer,
Happier and Healthier You.

MAKE YOUR MORNINGS MATTER



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MAKE YOUR MORNINGS MATTER

Why have a morning routine?

A meaningful morning routine can make such a difference in your life.

I used to hate getting up in the mornings, and definitely wouldn't call myself a morning person, but I now love my 'Morning Routine'. It gives me a reason to get out of bed in the morning, one that I look forward to. My morning routine is made up of things that make me feel better about myself and prepare me for the day ahead.

Before I set myself the goal of making my mornings matter, I found it difficult to get out of my nice warm bed. I had no real plan or intention for the first hour of my day - apart from putting on some clothes and getting out of the door as close to 'on time' as possible!

I wasted far too much time watching breakfast TV and opening and closing Facebook whilst drinking mug after mug of tea. Which is fine now and then, but it wasn't enhancing my life, and it didn't give me the momentum I needed for a productive day.

“ You will never change your life until you change something you do daily.
The secret of your success is found in your daily routine.

John C. Maxwell

A morning routine is a great place to start if you feel generally overwhelmed with life.

It's one of the best things that you can do for YOU. The time you get to yourself in the mornings may be the best chance of getting some 'Me Time' all day.

How you start your day is so important for setting you up for a successful day ahead and has a huge impact on your energy, motivation and your self-control - All essential factors in achieving your goals and moving you closer to the life you want to be living.

“ How you wake up each day and your morning routine (or lack thereof) dramatically affects your level of success in every single area of your life.
Focused, productive, successful mornings generate focused, productive, successful days - which inevitably create a successful life. By simply changing the way you wake up in the morning, you can change any area of your life

Hal Elrod - Author of The Miracle Morning

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The Benefits of a Morning Routine



Reduce Mental Fatigue

It's hard to start the day having to make decisions when our brain hasn't yet woken up. We only have limited energy and willpower resources when we wake up, and having to make decisions can reduce this even further. Instead of creating each day from scratch, your morning routine will give you a step-by-step guide to your perfect morning, with the decisions already being thought through and made.



Reduce Stress and Anxiety

Start your day off calmly and quietly without feeling rushed. Knowing what the first hour of your day looks and feels like is a powerful feeling. It helps you to start the day feeling in control, which reduces anxiety and helps you to have a less stressful and more productive day. If you are feeling down, anxious, or overwhelmed with life in general, being able to look forward to and having the first part of your day already planned can help you get started. Start with a clear head, ready for whatever the day has to throw at you.



Save Time and Energy

As well as not wasting time and energy, not having to think about how to get started in the morning, and creating routines and habits means that you naturally begin to use your time better. Waking up as late as possible and losing precious time in the mornings puts pressure on our minds and our bodies.



Intention and Purpose

By starting your day off with more intention and purpose, you'll be pushing yourself to start doing the things that you know that you need to do for yourself and to advance other areas of your life - Increasing the chances of being happier, feeling better, being more productive and successful.



Look and Feel Better

By reducing stress, reconnecting with yourself, keeping calm and exercising, you will notice the difference in how you look and feel.



Increase Confidence and Motivation

In his book 'The Motivation Hacker' Nick Winter talks about Success Spirals. When you consistently see yourself succeeding at something, it helps build your confidence and increases the likelihood that you will succeed at the next thing you do. Motivation increases with expectancy. Developing and sticking to a morning routine gives you several things you can see yourself achieving every day. This, in turn, builds your confidence, and you will see yourself succeeding at even bigger goals.

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Tips for getting started with your morning routine

What should I do?

What you do during your morning routine is entirely up to you. Everyone and their lives are very different. Achieving a complex 2-hour 'wellness' routine is not realistic for a mum with three children (two of which still wake up through the night), a dog that needs to go out first thing and a full-time job to get to.

You need to focus on what YOU CAN DO.

What would you like to do for yourself? This is your time, so think of things (no matter how small) that will help you to feel good about yourself and ready for the day ahead.

The most important thing is that you have a nice simple flow in the morning. If you try and cram too much in and do everything, you will create resistance and feel like you've failed.

It should be a calm and peaceful time to look forward to, not be about ticking things off your 'to-do' list. It's not about getting the kids ready for school, making packed lunches or answering the emails you didn't get a chance to do last night - this is purely for you. You need an incentive for getting out of bed, not a reason to avoid it.

The goal is simply to be more intentional with the first part of your day.



Make a list of what you'd like to include in your morning routine.

What would your ideal morning hour look like? What benefit does each of these things give?

There are some ideas on the following pages if you stuck.

One Thing at a Time

You don't have to go all in to get started. It's best to start implementing your morning routine one bit at a time, in 15-minute time blocks. So, for example, if one of the things you wrote on your list was yoga or meditation - for one week, set your alarm for 15 minutes earlier than normal and do that one thing for those 15 minutes each day that week.

After that first week, you can evaluate how it's working. Tweak whatever you need, and then the next week, get up 15 minutes earlier and add something else from your list.

Ideally, it would be great if you give yourself, or build up to, an hour in the mornings - but even 15 minutes, and one thing, can make such a difference.

Just Show Up

I love this tip from Courtney Carver at Be More With Less;

"Even if you don't do anything during your morning routine at first, show up for it every morning for a week. Dedicate five minutes to getting on your yoga mat, sitting at your kitchen table, on the floor next to your bed, or wherever you'd like to be. Just show up"

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Can I really 'do' mornings?

yes!

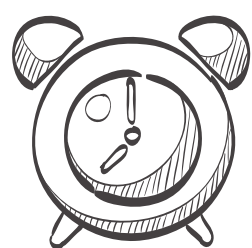
You can! You might not even need to get up any earlier if you're not making the most of the morning time you already have. Saying you are not a morning person is a great excuse, but it doesn't matter. Start whenever your morning starts.

It might be difficult at first - leaving your bed is never easy! It may take some practice, but it will be worth it. Why would you not want to wake up a little earlier to improve your life?

You shouldn't feel overwhelmed or rushed - the goal is entirely the opposite! So jot down your rough timings to keep you on track with your routine and ready to finish for when your other commitments start (family, work..).

If you have a family or children that need you, you should wake up before them so that you can take care of yourself and complete YOUR morning routine before their needs kick in. Your time with them will feel less pressured.

Stick a copy of your routine on the back of your bathroom door or wall if you need to until it becomes a habit you don't have to think about anymore.



Don't press the snooze button: Apparently, our minds know all about the snooze button, so you won't fall back into a deep sleep and will, therefore, wake up more tired than you would have if you had just got up. Put your phone or alarm clock across the room so you have to get out of bed to turn it off.

Create accountability. Tell your family that you are committing to changing your mornings and why you are doing it so they can support and encourage you and give you the space you need. Challenge a friend to practice a morning routine with you, and message each other a simple "I did it" after you've finished.

It won't be easy. You will need some pre-planning and determination to make it work. It probably won't flow effortlessly every day and may never be perfect.

Make an appointment with yourself - put it in your calendar. If you use a digital calendar, add a recurring **time block** for your routine.

Use the planner pages at the end of this guide to help you to design and implement your routine and focus on making your mornings matter for the next four weeks.

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Here are some elements you could try as part of your morning routine...

Rehydrate



Drink some water as soon as you wake up. Your body shuts down while you are sleeping, so drinking water helps provide energy by replacing the fluids lost while you were asleep.

Enjoy a cup of something warm. Try a calming herbal tea, such as chamomile, or warm water with lemon to kick start your metabolism and boost your energy.



Calm Your Mind

Meditation, affirmations, visualisation and gratitude practices are ways to achieve a sense of calm and peacefulness. Start by sitting calmly and concentrating on your breath, going in and out for 5 minutes.

There are lots of apps that you can use for guided meditation if you have never tried it before, such as Calm and Headspace (just stay away from everything else on your phone!)

Gratitude

Think of three things that you appreciate and are grateful for, whether it is your family, friends or even a cup of tea! Obviously, if you can think of more - keep going! The more things you can find, the more positive energy you will bring to your day.

“

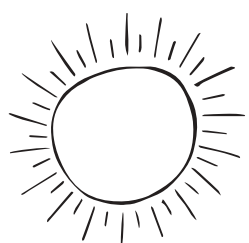
When you arise in the morning, think of what a precious privilege it is to be alive, to breathe, to think, to enjoy, to love.

Marcus Aurelius

Digital Detox

Try and avoid looking at your phone, emails, social media or TV during your morning routine (or, at least, the first 15 minutes). This time should be reserved just for you so that you can start your day on your terms.

How often do you wake up in a good mood, only for that to change when you see something on Facebook or the news that brings you down? Take control of your emotions for the first part of your day.



Let some sunlight in if you can, to awaken your senses and let your body know its morning so it can stop producing melatonin and help you to wake up.

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Get Moving

Get your body moving and your blood flowing, and you'll feel more energised and ready for the day. It can be any type of exercise that you enjoy - simple stretches in bed, Yoga, or going out for a run or walk in the fresh air. Take some deep breaths to oxygenate the blood.



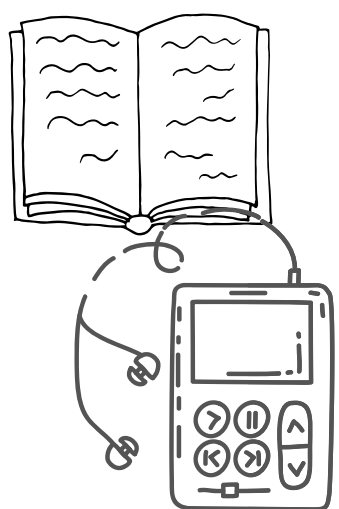
Take care of your skin

Have a shower and take care of your skin. The best thing for your skin and hair is what you feed your body with (lots of fresh, clean foods and water) but paying attention to the outside makes us feel more confident as well. Always keep your skincare routine as simple as possible with as few, non-toxic, products as possible.

I love dry body brushing before my shower to help detox and improve circulation.

Nourish Your Body

Your breakfast is your initial fuel for the day. Eat a clean, healthy breakfast to energise you and get your brain functioning. I



Read for 15 minutes or listen to a podcast, or an audiobook.

Create a morning music or meditation playlist.

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Put Pen to Paper

Putting your thoughts and feelings down on paper helps to clear your mind. Write them in a journal or use a planner to help organise your mind.

Plan Your Perfect Day

Write down the things that you have to do each day, and the things that you would like to do if you're able to. Check your master diary or calendar for any events or appointments for the day ahead and then plan around them.

Planning allows you to be more productive but feel less rushed. With a pre-thought out plan, you will save time and stress of having to think about what you need to do next. Decide on the goals that you want to achieve each day and set your intention.

Take a minute to visualise your day and imagine happy outcomes of all the things you have planned for the day ahead. Leave yesterday behind. A new day is a fresh start. Yesterdays arguments, frustrations and negative thoughts don't belong in your new day.

[You can read more about planning your day on the blog.](#)

Dress for Success

Make sure that your wardrobe is organised, so that finding and choosing clothes that are going to make you look, and feel good, for the day ahead is quick and easy. Getting dressed for the day ahead should be enjoyable, not rushed and stressful, trying to find something to wear.

It really helps to get your clothes out the night before, ready to put on.

Room Reset

Once you have finished your routine, make sure you take a couple of minutes to reset each area that you have used.

Make your bed (it takes one minute), and leave your bedroom and bathroom tidy. Tidying your bedroom psychologically gets you motivated for a productive day, and builds momentum for you to keep putting things in order. And, it's much nicer to come home to a tidy space ready to relax in.

“

The reason that I like having a routine is that not only does it install a sense of purpose, peace and ritual to my day, but it ensures that I am getting certain things done every morning - namely my goals. It's full of small productive habits that act as quick wins. Starting your day off with habits and routines builds up momentum which helps to carry you through the day. Get a sense of flow rather than have to get your thoughts together and start cold every morning.

Leo Babauta, Zen Habits

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Morning Routine*

Claire,
Professional Organiser and Coach, Wife
and Mum.



Wake Up
6.00 am

Using 'Sleep Cycle' App. Think about the things I have to look forward to in the day. Drink some water to rehydrate.

Quiet & Calm
6.05 am

5 minutes meditation

Exercise
6.10 am

15 minutes. I do either Pilates or Yoga (using Blogilates or Yoga with Adrienne on YouTube), or The 7 Minute Workout app, depending on how I feel.

Shower
6.25 am

20 minutes. Dry body brush (5-10 mins), quick shower, wash and clean teeth.

Skin and Hair and Get Dressed
6.45 am

15-20 minutes. Cleanse and moisturise skin, style hair and put a bit of makeup on.

Set my intention
7.05 am

I'll have a cup of hot water and lemon and write down in my planner the things on my mind and my plans for the day. I usually try and have breakfast with the rest of the family later.

My clothes for the day are organised the night before, and ready to put on.

'My' Morning Routine Ends
7.25 am

Kids wake up around this time and their routine and my responsibilities start!

* On week or work days

My ideal morning routine would be made up of the following things...

The things that you would like to do for yourself each morning

1

Why I want to do this...

I haven't been doing this because...

These are the things that I can do to make it happen...

Resources needed...

Time :

Things:

2

Why I want to do this...

I haven't been doing this because...

These are the things that I can do to make it happen...

Resources needed...

Time :

Things:

3

Why I want to do this...

I haven't been doing this because...

These are the things that I can do to make it happen...

Resources needed....

Time :

Things:

4

Why I want to do this...

I haven't been doing this because...

These are the things that I can do to make it happen...

Resources needed....

Time :

Things:

5

Why I want to do this...

I haven't been doing this because...

These are the things that I can do to make it happen...

Resources needed....

Time :

Things:

6

Why I want to do this...

I haven't been doing this because...

These are the things that I can do to make it happen...

Resources needed....

Time :

Things:

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My Morning Routine

A vertical timeline for a morning routine. It features a central vertical line with a small circle at the top and bottom. Six horizontal dashed lines cross the vertical line, providing space for notes. Each dashed line is labeled with "am" at its right end. The lines are positioned at approximately 10%, 35%, 55%, 65%, 80%, and 95% of the vertical line's length.

Your 4-week challenge to...

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HABIT TRACKER PAGE

| Week One | MON | TUES | WEDS | THURS | FRI | SAT | SUN |
|----------|-----|------|------|-------|-----|-----|-----|
| | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ |
| | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ |
| | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ |
| | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ |
| | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ |
| | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ |

| Week Two | MON | TUES | WEDS | THURS | FRI | SAT | SUN |
|----------|-----|------|------|-------|-----|-----|-----|
| | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ |
| | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ |
| | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ |
| | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ |
| | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ |
| | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ |

| Week Three | MON | TUES | WEDS | THURS | FRI | SAT | SUN |
|------------|-----|------|------|-------|-----|-----|-----|
| | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ |
| | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ |
| | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ |
| | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ |
| | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ |
| | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ |

| Week Four | MON | TUES | WEDS | THURS | FRI | SAT | SUN |
|-----------|-----|------|------|-------|-----|-----|-----|
| | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ |
| | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ |
| | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ |
| | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ |
| | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ |
| | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ |

Reflection

HOW DID YOUR MORNING ROUTINE MAKE YOU FEEL?

WHAT WENT WELL?

IF IT DIDN'T GO AS WELL AS YOU HAD HOPED.. WHAT OBSTACLES DID YOU COME ACROSS?

Is there anything that you can do to overcome these obstacles?

Review your morning routine and make any tweaks needed. It can be trial and error to find a routine that really works, flows and feels good for you. Your routines will change over time, as you, your goals and your family grow and change.

If you have days where it just doesn't happen - that's fine. Just don't give up completely - just start again the next day. There's no such thing as a perfect routine every day. Life isn't perfect and is full of unexpected interruptions.

Just keep showing up - even if it is only for 5 minutes!

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NOTES

