

## 6 Productive ways to start your day

Everyone has their own morning routine. You may wake up and make a morning tea, get up and turn on the TV to catch the morning news, or lie in bed and scroll through your favourite social media app on your phone.

### But are you getting the most out of your mornings?

If you're looking for more productive ways to start your day, we've outlined six different methods that can boost your alertness, raise your concentration and reduce your stress levels. And the best part is you get to lay your head down every night knowing you're a step closer to achieving your long-term goals.

Here are some suggestions to get your day off to a productive start:



#### Method #1: Meditation

According to researchers, meditation has longer-lasting effects that go beyond simply clearing your mind (though it does that too). When you practice focused meditation, you're warming up your brain to stay focused throughout the whole day. This occurs because meditation reinforces the connections between brain cells. These stronger connections are believed to lead to faster information processing, better decision making, and improved attention.

#### Method #2: Set Goals for the Day

Setting long-term goals is a step toward achieving all your dreams. But a crucial part of accomplishing a long-term goal is to set smaller goals to strive toward every day. When you set daily goals right after you wake up, you also manage your time throughout the day. Your brain automatically starts piecing together when you can dedicate moments to accomplishing these goals and prioritises which need to be completed first. Then, when it's time to go to sleep, you can look back on your goal list and see how much you've accomplished. This confirms that you've had a productive day.



#### Method #3: Exercise After You Wake Up

Exercise is a natural energy booster. By exercising, you produce more mitochondria in your cells, which work like "tiny power plants to produce energy". So, by exercising in the morning, you'll find yourself more prepared to take on the day compared to just grabbing a coffee and heading out the door. It's preferable for your morning exercise to be light or moderate so you avoid fatigue and reach maximum energy levels. Recommended morning exercise routines include a 15-minute walk, yoga, tai chi, and even resistance training if done with slow, deliberate movements.

#### Method #4: Delay Your Daily Coffee

Coffee is totally acceptable to drink during the day; but drinking it first thing in the morning may be stopping you from getting the most out of your body's natural energy production. Your body produces its peak amount of cortisol between 8 and 9am each day. Cortisol is a naturally occurring hormone in the body that makes us feel both alert and awake. So, your body replicates the effects of caffeine without you having to take a single sip. By delaying your daily coffee consumption, you're giving your body an energy boost when you really need it – when your cortisol has levelled off. And that means higher productivity levels throughout the whole day.



#### Method #5: Take a Cold Shower

A cure for morning grogginess is to take a cold shower after you wake up. What a cold shower does versus a hot shower is raise your adrenaline levels. It works by sending a shock to your system, which initiates your fight or flight response. In turn, cold showers raise your levels of alertness in the morning and get you ready to take on the rest of the day. Cold showers have also been shown to aid in muscle recovery, strengthen your immune system and improve your mental health.

#### Method #6: Eat a Nutritious Breakfast

Eating a nutritious morning breakfast has plenty of benefits beyond staving off your hunger. When you eat breakfast in the morning, you restore your glycogen levels, which are essential to energising your body throughout the course of the day. And when you eat nutritious breakfasts consistently, you improve your metabolism, boost your fibre and calcium intake, stabilise your blood sugar, and increase your memory and concentration. For a nutritious breakfast, avoid standard fare like doughnuts and croissants and elect healthy options like wholegrain toast with peanut butter or avocado, fresh fruit, porridge, yoghurt, eggs, and untoasted muesli.

