

CHEATSHEET

10 TWEAKS TO YOUR MORNING ROUTINE THAT WILL TRANSFORM YOUR ENTIRE DAY



Whether you naturally wake up feeling alert and productive or wake up with the brainpower of a zombie, these tips will help you transform your morning routine and set a positive tone that lasts the entire day.

1. START WITH EXERCISE

Research shows that people who exercise during the workday have more energy and a more positive outlook. Being active releases GABA, a neurotransmitter that makes your brain feel soothed and keeps you in control of your impulses. Exercising in the morning ensures you'll have the time for it and it improves your self-control and energy levels all day long.

2. DRINK LEMON WATER

Drinking lemon water as soon as you wake up spikes your energy levels physically and mentally. You should wait 15–30 minutes before eating (perfect time to squeeze in quick exercise). Lemons are packed with potassium and vitamin C.

3. NO SCREEN TIME UNTIL BREAKFAST

When you dive straight into e-mails, texts, and social media, you lose focus and your morning succumbs to the needs of others. It's much healthier to take those precious first morning moments doing something relaxing that sets a calm, positive tone for your day (*oh, hello Headspace meditation app!*) Jumping right into electronics has the opposite effect—it's a frantic way to start your day.

4. EAT A REAL BREAKFAST

Eating anything at all for breakfast puts you ahead of a lot of people. Those who eat breakfast are less likely to be obese, have more stable blood-sugar levels, and tend to be less hungry throughout the day. When you eat breakfast, the doors to productivity swing wide open. A healthy breakfast gives you energy, improves short-term memory, and helps to improve concentration.

5. SET GOALS FOR THE DAY

Research shows that having concrete goals is correlated with huge increases in confidence and feelings of control. Setting goals specific to the day puts everything into motion. Narrow your goals down to a few achievable ones that can easily be broken down into steps.

Getting your morning started off right at home is important, but it's only half the battle. If you fail to maintain that tone once you set foot in the office, your morning can lose momentum quickly. Here's how you can maintain a productive tone once you hit the office:

6. CLEAN YOUR WORKSPACE

Even though it's a pain to clean right when you get into work, it makes a big difference to your ability to concentrate. A study found that people who worked in a clean workspace out-performed those who worked in a cluttered one because clutter pulls your attention away from your work. Better yet, make it a habit of cleaning your desk before you leave each and every day.

7. NO EMAIL UNTIL YOU'VE EATEN THREE FROGS

"Eat a live frog first thing in the morning, and nothing worse will happen to you the rest of the day." – Mark Twain

"Eating a frog" is the greatest antidote to procrastination, and the most productive people know the importance of biting into this delicacy first thing in the morning. In other words, spend your morning on something that requires a high level of concentration that you don't want to do, and you'll get it done in short order. Make a habit of eating three frogs before you check your e-mail because e-mail is a major distraction that enables procrastination and wastes precious mental energy.

8. KEEP MEETINGS ON SCHEDULE

Meetings are a huge time waster and can ruin a productive morning. Keep your meetings on time and your entire day will stay on track.

9. DON'T MULTI-TASK

Multi-tasking in the morning when you have lots to do and tons of energy is tempting, but it sets your whole day back. Multi-tasking reduces your efficiency and performance because your brain can only focus adequately on one thing at a time. When you try to do two things at once, your brain lacks the capacity to perform both tasks successfully.

10. SAY "NO"

No is a powerful word that will protect your precious mornings. When it's time to say no, avoid phrases such as "I don't think I can" or "I'm not certain." Saying no to a new commitment honors your existing commitments and gives you the opportunity to successfully fulfill them. Research shows that the more difficulty that you have saying no, the more likely you are to experience stress, burnout, and depression. Learn to use no, and it will lift your mood as well as your productivity.

The right morning routine can make your day, every day. The trick is to be intentional about your mornings, understanding that your hours are precious and should be handled with care.

Reference: huffpost.com, 2017

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