

# BUILD YOUR OWN MORNING ROUTINE

Start the day strong.

Having a consistent routine in the morning cultivates good habits that allow time to connect with yourself, move your body and set positive intentions for the day. We are all busy but as little as 5 - 10 minutes can make a notable difference to how we experience the rest of our day, even if it means getting up a tiny bit earlier than normal.

I never used to consider myself an early morning person. Yes, if I needed to be up for something important like a flight then I could force myself to get up early when the alarm went off but otherwise I didn't enjoy the weekday alarm at 6 am. Around a year ago, however, I decided to change my gym routine and began to workout before work which meant a 4.30am alarm, and on rest days the alarm is 5.45am to still allow time for some me time before work begins.

### Benefits of a morning routine:

-  Increases productivity
-  Creates calm and reduces stress levels
-  Grounds mind and body
-  Sets the tone for your whole day
-  You run the day; the day doesn't run you

There is a morning routine that will work perfectly for you, your lifestyle and wellbeing needs. So, rather than prescribe a one-size fits all approach, I want to provide you with some basic principles and possible options that you may want to use in your own morning routine.  
Take a look over the page for some inspiration!

## Finding your perfect morning routine

A good morning routine is preceded by a good night's sleep. Go to bed early enough so that you can get the suggested 7-9 hours sleep (or whatever works for you). Another important tip is to keep your routine simple. Find 1-2 (3 max) things that you can maintain and don't be afraid to try different things until you land on what works for you.

Below is a list of ideas to help build a morning routine. Take a look and see which ones resonate with and come up with your own ideas too.

- **5 second rule:** created by Mel Robbins, this simple rule can be used when the alarm goes off and you feel like hitting snooze. Instead, as the alarm sounds start counting down to yourself 5-4-3-2-1-GO and throw back those covers. The 5 second rule has been a game-changer for me in the morning and generally whenever I'm about to hesitate rather than take action.
- **Put off checking your phone:** why not delay looking at your phone and avoid a flood of external stimulation and comparison from the news and social media. A good trick can be to not have your phone in the bedroom or at least put it the draw of your bedside table.
- **Read a book:** dive in to a new or favourite book and read a few pages in the quietness of the morning.
- **Journaling:** start the day with a stream of consciousness writing or use journaling prompts. You can include writing down your intentions for the day. Journaling is a good way to free your mind of unwanted thoughts and worries.
- **Stretch your body:** keep it simple, no need for a full yoga session just get the blood gently flowing for a few minutes.
- **Drink water:** kick start the hydration process before reaching for a cup of coffee or tea. Hot water with a slice of lemon can be a nice way to start the day.
- **Meditation:** if you haven't tried meditation before then there are lots of easy to use apps (Headspace and Calm) and short guided meditations on YouTube or Spotify. You can sit on your bed or have a quiet space in another room.
- **Short walk:** there is something satisfying, almost magical, about an early morning walk when it's quiet, except for birdsong. The added bonus of a walk is a chance to practice mindfulness too as you tune into and observe your surroundings.
- **Sit down to eat breakfast:** take time to make and eat a proper breakfast in comfort, sitting down rather than stood up or grabbing mouthfuls whilst multi-tasking.
- **Plan your day:** have a quick look at your calendar and see what's there or reflect on your goals and make a short, achievable to-do list so you have purpose for the day.
- **Express gratitude:** before you get out of bed either write down or think of three things you are grateful for already in your life.