

Morning Routines: 3 Simple Steps to Enhance Your Mood for the Day

The morning routine can “make or break” your day in no time.

For many of us, the a.m. routine includes dragging ourselves out of bed, dreading to start even the day. A pot of coffee is added to the morning “to get us going” only to find challenges lead the way.

Making the most of the morning routine changes “the mood” for the rest of the day. The first 60 minutes of the day is the most important in determining how the rest of the day will go.

Here are three simple steps to help provide a more positive (and healthy) attitude for the remaining hours:

1. Change breathing patterns. Breathing patterns are important and related to stress levels. Individuals who are “stressed” all the time are usually not breathing properly. Their bodies are in the “fight or flight” response mode, and their breathing is more shallow. During this time, the heart rate also increases. A vicious cycle then occurs, and the body is in “shallow” breathing much of the time.

The goal is to pay attention to the breathing patterns being used. Take time to breath more deeply on a regular basis. If you feel the tension coming in during the day, take a few minutes to do deep breathing while focusing on relaxing.

- **Five-minute meditation.** During the morning, take five minutes to meditate mindfully. Focus on breathing in a comfortable position. Breath deep with a steady inhale into your stomach region (ten times) and focus on bringing stress levels down. Practice bringing your mind

“back to the breathing” if thoughts consistently come into your head. If needed, this can also be done during the day at break time, or even lunch time.

- **Try box-breathing exercises.** Box-breathing exercises are great for decreasing anxiety, lowering heart rate, and depressing arousal levels. These exercises are also useful for clearing the mind. Box breathing involves inhaling (count to four), hold breath in (count to four), exhaling (count to four), hold breath out (count to four), inhaling (count to four), hold breath in (count to four), exhaling (count to four), so forth. The four-count can also be changed to another number if needed.

2. Increase movement. Increasing body movement leads to a more fulfilled and healthier lifestyle. Our bodies are created to run, play, climb, crawl, lift, balance, as well as other complex moves. Moving the body improves mood and develops a happier state of mind. Blood flow expands with increased movements; lymph removes toxins more quickly with amplified efforts.

- **Body shaking.** As strange as it may sound, body shaking is a wonderful stress reliever. It is one of the best things to do to take away tension and decrease the effects of stress on the body. Body shaking increases the blood flow, helps to remove toxins, and awakens the body for additional movement.
- **Locomotion exercises.** Locomotion exercises improve the overall mobility of the body and also encourages the release of endorphins (feel-good chemicals). Mood is improved during these self-powered actions. Locomotion exercises do not require any equipment. Some of the movements include walking, hopping, leaping, rolling, sliding, skipping, climbing, and swimming.

3. Healthy eating during breakfast. Making healthy choices for the first meal of the day gives the body “sound nutrition” to

get started. Consuming the right food determines how well the body functions for the remaining hours of the day. Eating *improper foods* will result in feeling “down and out” before you even begin your routine.

- **Drinking water.** Drinking a glass of water in the morning (every day) will help the body to fight inflammation, provide hydration, and alkalize the system. Drinking a sufficient amount of water through the day boosts the immune system and improves health. Try adding a squeeze of lemon to drinking water in the mornings.
- **Healthy smoothies.** Sipping a vitamin packed healthy smoothie is another way to start the day off right. Healthy smoothies are easy for the body to digest. Many recipes are quick to create and can be enjoyed by all in the family.

Here is a delightful recipe to get you started:

Green Smoothie with Coconut Water

One ripe banana

Eight oz. coconut water

One tsp. coconut oil

One dozen raw cashews

One handful of spinach

Blend ingredients and sip slowly. Protein powders, potato starches, and superfood formulas can also be added to the smoothie if desired.

Three Simple Steps

Taking these three simple steps can make the day go so much better. So, why not give it a try? Stop to breathe more deeply, purpose to increase body movement, and make healthier

breakfast choices. A healthy morning routine will make the day go much better!

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