

16 EMPOWERING MORNING RITUALS

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What you do in the morning can set the tone for what happens until you go back to bed. Start your day with rituals that make you feel powerful and alive.

Mornings are a busy time for many families just getting everyone out of the door on time.

On the other hand, you and your kids may be spending your days at home. That can be just as stressful as commuting, especially if you're concerned about your health and finances.

The specific habits you choose will depend on your values and goals. Start small and have fun experimenting. Consider these ideas for morning rituals designed to help you thrive.

Empowering Morning Rituals for Your Body:

1. **Skip the snooze button.** Do you feel groggy even after 8 hours of sleep? The trouble could be your snooze button. **It interrupts your body's natural waking process.** That can cause sleep inertia that lasts for hours.
2. **Drink water.** You may want to postpone your first cup of coffee. Plain water will rehydrate your organs and make you feel more alert. You can add a little flavor with berries, herbs, or cucumber slices.
3. **Eat breakfast.** You also need to refuel. Enjoy a balanced meal of traditional breakfast foods or heat up some leftovers. Smart choices include Greek yogurt

with fruit or a fish taco.

4. **Work out.** Complete your main exercise session or move around a little, especially if you'll be sitting at a computer for hours. **Choose an activity that you love, like yoga or swimming.**
5. **Weigh yourself.** If you're trying to lose excess weight, stepping on the scale each day may help. Keep in mind that daily fluctuations are natural, so look for upward or downward trends.
6. **Go outdoors. Morning light wakes up your body and starts a hormone cycle that prepares you for restful sleep at night.** Sit on your patio or bike to work.

Empowering Morning Rituals for Your Mind:

1. **Avoid technology.** Resist the urge to lose yourself in social media. Turn off your phone or check for urgent messages only.
2. **Be prepared.** Starting on tasks the night before can make your mornings more pleasant. Lay out your clothes and pack your briefcase.
3. **Meditate and pray.** Nourish your spirituality. If you're a beginner, start with a few minutes of meditation and build up your time gradually.
4. **Repeat affirmations. Give yourself loving and motivational messages.** Speak in the present tense and keep your statements brief. Looking in the mirror can help you focus.
5. **Connect with loved ones.** Enjoy family time. Play a word game with your kids

while you're helping them get dressed. Tell your partner that you love them.

6. **Cultivate gratitude.** Count your blessings. Think of someone who you need to thank today.

7. **Continue learning.** You could use your mornings to complete your degree online or study more informally. Listen to history and economics podcasts. Read high quality fiction or nonfiction.

8. **Have a project.** Do you struggle to find time for yourself? The early hours may be an opportunity to engage your personal passions or expand your side gig.

9. **Listen to music. Research shows that listening to music reduces anxiety and enhances mental alertness and memory.** Put together a personal playlist or turn on your favorite radio station.

10. **Plan your day.** Set goals and block out your time. Otherwise, external events can keep you from focusing on your true priorities. Remember to leave yourself adequate downtime for refreshing breaks.

Kick off your day with a morning routine that will make you feel more productive and fulfilled. Adopt positive habits and jump out of bed with a smile.