

The World-Class Morning Routine



1. Waking up at 5AM

The foundation of building a strong morning routine is to wake up before everyone else. Because most people in your city are still in bed, you will have a couple hours of quiet, uninterrupted time to yourself. In addition, our willpower and self-discipline levels are highest in the early hours of the day. This means that even if distracting activities are presented, we will find it easier to restrain ourselves!

In my opinion, the best way to spend the morning is by reflecting and preparing for the rest of the day. Although it would seem more productive to work on a project during this time, research has shown that writing down how you want the day to go will increase the chances of your ideal day becoming a reality. Thus, priming the day will not only help you make good use of the morning but the rest of your time awake as well!

As with all habits, waking up at a desired time will take a while to fully implement. Begin by rising 15 minutes earlier than normal and setting the wake-up time 15 minutes ahead every two weeks until you reach 5:00. Be sure not to sleep too late on the day before!

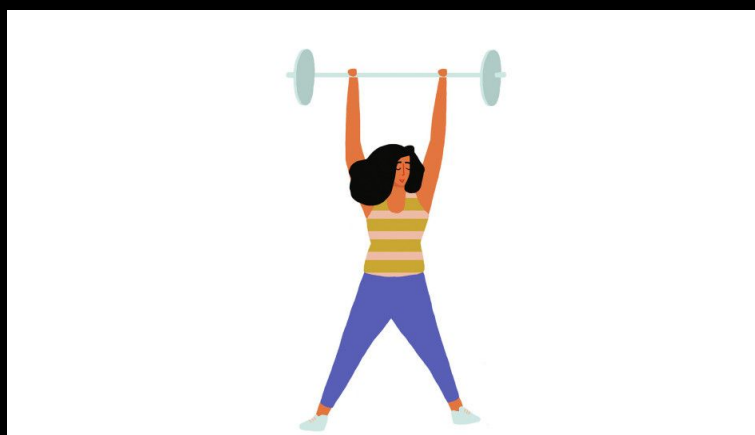
There will be days where you don't feel like waking up early. You might not have a busy day and not need the morning preparation. Nevertheless, continue pushing yourself out of your comfort zone and this habit will do wonders in your life!

2. Exercise (20 min)

No matter how experienced you are at waking up early, you will experience a small amount of fatigue when you rise. The best way to truly “wake up” is with exercise. When you follow your alarm with a workout, a powerful neurotransmitter called dopamine fills your brain. This not only makes you happier but helps you stay more alert, giving you the necessary focus for morning activities.

The importance of exercise in the morning is why it can be found in the routines of so many successful individuals. Without moving and sweating, there is no way for us to shake off the sluggishness we experience when we wake up.

As I was building my morning routine, I found procrastinating on exercise even easier than putting off an early wake up because it was further out of my comfort zone. This is why it's key to begin building this habit by not doing too much at first. If your target was to run 7 km for example, start with 500 m instead of 1 – 2 km. Small steps at first will not terrify the part of your brain that controls your emotions, allowing you to continue building towards your target in the end.



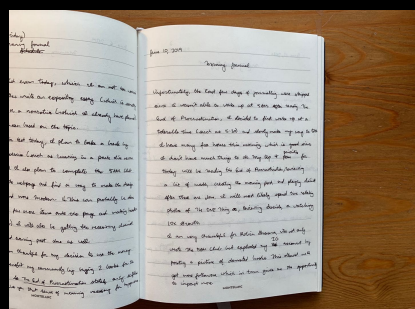
3. Morning Journal (10 - 15 min)

After a challenging but not physically depleting workout, I grab my notebook and complete my morning journal entry. As mentioned previously, it's important to have some sort of activity that helps you plan the rest of the day.

I begin by jotting down my wake-up time. If I pressed snooze too many times, I like to do a small analysis of why this was the case so that I can prevent this from happening tomorrow. Then, I write down my five most important activities and group them based on when I want to get them done (ideally one category for morning and one for the afternoon). By doing so, I will get a sense of how my day will go before creating a detailed schedule.

On the last lines of a page, I write down what I am thankful for. This doesn't need to be very complicated; something like your bed or the internet is just as acceptable as a promotion or a pay raise. The point of this part is to be grateful for what you have already. If you aren't happy with what you have right now, you will never be satisfied with what you will have.

DO NOT neglect the morning journal. Even something as simple as noting down how you want the day to go will be key in affecting your productivity later.



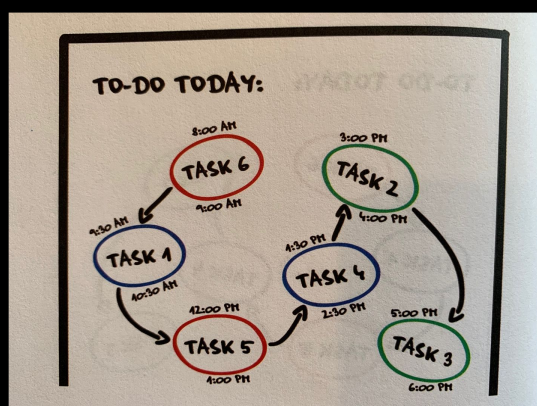
4. To-Do Today (10 - 15 min)

There are many ways to create a schedule and to-do list, and it's important for you to pick one that suits you. One unique method I've used is the To-Do Today from The End of Procrastination.

To describe it simply, a To-Do Today is a fusion of a schedule and a to-do list. To implement, begin by listing out all your tasks on a piece of paper. Circle it in **red** if it's urgent and important, **blue** if it's important but not urgent, and **green** if it's neither important nor urgent. Color coding your tasks will give you an instant visual response, telling you which ones need to be done first.

After you've sorted out the order of which you will be accomplishing these tasks, begin drawing arrows that lead from one activity to another (first → second, second → third, etc.) On top of each one, label the time you will begin tackling it. Now, do your best to follow through!

Creating a strict schedule in the morning and adhering to it will do wonders for your productivity for the rest of your day. Feel free to try out this tool and let me know if it worked for you!



5. Learn (20 - 30 min)

When I was young, my grandmother would always say to me, “The morning is the best time to learn!”

Of all the time we have in a day, why should we focus on our self-education in the morning? First, it’ll still be fairly early in the day after we exercise and create our schedule. This means that our willpower and self-discipline batteries are far from being depleted. In addition, we haven’t encountered any negative information (esp. from media or our job/business), giving us the perfect emotional condition for deep, focused learning.

From reading a skill-boosting book to learning a new language, the word “learn” can embody many things. Personally, I prefer to read a book or continue watching and taking notes on a webinar. If I need to get a lot done today, I may even choose to work on my business. Because of the physical and emotional environment around me, I know I will achieve maximum results in the shortest amount of time.

In summary, spend this time investing in your self-education or completing urgent tasks.



Did you find this productivity pamphlet useful? I hope you were able to learn something new!

Feel free to share it with your friends and family so that they can benefit from the information as well!

If you have any questions or comments, don't hesitate to send me a message at thenovelcolumn@gmail.com! I would love to hear how these tips worked for you!

I wish you all the best on your journey of building a personal morning routine!

Warm Regards,
Henry (The Columnist)