

Nutrition

Healthy habits and key routines for health.

with Ben Warren

There's absolutely no doubt in my mind that we are creatures of habit. For me, our routines (the sequence of events that we do) build into our habits (a routine that we find hard to stop). It's our habits which then give us the reflection that looks at us in the mirror, our daily energy and to a large part, our long-term health outcomes.

The key to being healthy is ensuring the routines and habits that make up our life are actually contributing to our health and wellbeing. However, setting up healthy habits can be challenging because change is tough.

Here are some key routines you can apply into your life.

Bedtime routine

What does a good bedtime routine look like? Everyone is unique so it will vary from person to person. The following list is a guideline – not a set of steps you MUST do in order to get good sleep. Don't forget, if you've had a problem with sleeping for a while, changes won't happen instantly. Stick at it.

7-8pm After dinner - and the chores that go with it - begin to wind down for the evening.

- Limit technology such as computers, phones and iPads. If sleep is a real problem for you, you'll want to limit TV too.
- A good option is to read a book.

9pm Ease the transition from wake time to sleep time with a period of relaxing activities an hour or so before bed.

- Take a bath (the rise, then fall in body temperature promotes drowsiness), read a book, or practice relaxation exercises.
- If you tend to take your problems to bed, try writing them down during this time – and then putting them aside.
- Legs up the wall. Putting your legs up the wall, with your hands gently on your belly, helps activate your rest and digest nervous

system. Simply lie there for 3-10 minutes.

- Take 10-15 minutes to do some mindfulness, meditate, pick a full body relaxation from Insight Timer (a free meditation app) or play one of the sleep assistance tracks.

10-10.30pm Lights out.

Morning time routine

Numerous studies have found having a consistent structure to your morning boosts productivity throughout your day. If you've completed the evening routine, chances are you will be waking naturally with the sun between 6am and 6.30am (don't worry if this takes a little while to happen).

As you start waking, stay in bed with your eyes closed and start thinking about the things you are grateful for in your life, take a few minutes to do this before getting up.

For many people, the best time to exercise is in the morning, so if you are able take this time when your body's natural cortisol levels are high (daytime hormone) to go for a walk, do some yoga or a high intensity training (HIT) routine.

As you are preparing breakfast be sure to squeeze half a lemon into a glass of water and sip to help prepare your digestive system.

One of the keys to a great morning routine is a whole food breakfast.

Day time routine

The traditional work hours lend themselves perfectly to be the main time of day for hydration. I'm a fan of people drinking water based on their body weight and the formula 0.033 litres per kilogram of body weight is a great guide, for example if you weigh 60 kilograms then you are

looking to drink two litres of water a day. Another key routine at work is moving. Have one hour of focused periods of work, interspersed with stretch breaks. Given the amount of water you'll be drinking, it'll also be the perfect time for a bathroom break.

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