Mindful Morning Jump-Start Checklist

A reliable method to start every day on the right foot.

At Night, Before bed

Because the secret to a good morning is that it starts the night before.

- ❏ Write down your Most Important Task(s) for tomorrow
- ❏ Follow a consistent bedtime routine
- ❏ Potential elements of a bedtime routine:
    - ❏ Eliminate screen-time as early as possible
    - ❏ Journal (good things that happened in the day, what you could have improved about the day, insights or important thoughts you had…)
    - ❏ Read
- ❏ Call to mind what you're excited about for tomorrow, and why you want to get up in the morning.

In the Morning

- ❏ Don't snooze. (Recall what you're excited about for the day and get out of bed at the first alarm.)
- ❏ *Don't* check notifications on your phone
- ❏ Drink a glass of water
- ❏ Change your physiology
    - ❏ Take 20-30 deep breaths (preferably outside in the fresh air)
    - ❏ Ease out tension from sleep with joint circles
- ❏ Take a cold shower
- ❏ Sit in meditation for 15-20 minutes
- ❏ Make tea/coffee
- ❏ Journal with beverage
    - ❏ Cultivate gratitude: Write 3 things you're grateful for right now. "I am grateful for…"
    - ❏ Setting intentions: Write 3 things you'll do today to make it a great day. "Today I will…"
    - ❏ Affirmation: Write 2 things that are true about your best self. "I am…"

Other Good Habits

A non-exhaustive list of other great things to do in the morning. I choose not to include these in my daily routine, but you should customize it to make it your own!

- ❏ Eat a light, healthy (full of nutrients) breakfast
- ❏ Exercise
- ❏ Read 20 pages of a book
- ❏ Revisit inspirational quotes
- ❏ Free-write
- ❏ “Eat the frog” first

The Rationale

Why these habits?

Evening

The secret to a great morning is that it starts the night before.

Principles

- Sleep quality matters just as much as sleep quantity.
- Quality sleep requires deliberate preparation, just like any other activity.
- When you prepare for sleep, and sleep well, you wake up with more energy.

Why these habits matter

- **Identifying your most Important Task(s)**: Doing effective work means spending your time on the right things. Identifying your most important tasks ahead of time gives you direction to start your work everyday, and avoid "spinning your wheels" in the morning.
- **Consistent bedtime routine**: Your mind controls your life, and sleep is the foundation of a good mental state. A consistent routine helps condition your body to know that it's time to sleep.
- **Bedtime journal**: Ending the day with thoughtful reflection sets the tone for the following day.
    - **Good things**: Appreciating the little wins in your day-to-day helps cultivate satisfaction.
    - **Improvement Opportunities**: Over time, you'll notice patterns in this category. It's a great way to identify positive changes you can make moving forward.
- **Your wake-up reason:** Waking up is hard. But if you've thought about why it's important for your to seize the day, it makes things easier.

Morning

Principles

The higher level goals that the habits are in service of:

- Minimize amount of time it takes for you to feel energized
- Keep you in a proactive state to do what matters to you
- Sets you up to for the activities of your day (work, in most cases)
- Cultivates a mindset of openness, positivity, and confidence
- Minimizes wasted time

Why these habits matter

- **Up at the first alarm**: Getting up when the alarm goes off is the first test of your willpower every day. Failing to do this sets a bad precedent for the day. Doing this successfully feels like a big accomplishment (to me) and helps me follow through on other challenges throughout the day.
- **No phone**: Emails, notifications, and text messages throw you into a reactive state. In order to be your best self, you need to step into the day proactively, on your terms.
- **Hydrating**: When you're sleeping, you don't drink water. Your body is relatively dehydrated, so you need to fix that.
- **Changing your physiology**: A surefire way to change your mental state, and clear the fog from your mind.
- **Take 20-30 deep breaths** (preferably outside in the fresh air): Oxygen is critical to sustaining life. Breathing deeply floods your body with oxygen.
- **Joint circles**: Physical tension and discomfort are distracting. Your joints are the most important parts of your body for general movement. This habit has helped me increase my flexibility, eliminate aches, and generally feel better about the state of my body.
- **Cold shower**: There are a multitude of benefits here. From a practical standpoint, the cold jolts you awake. On a longer time-scale, cold exposure helps strengthen your willpower and tolerance for discomfort. Each shower is like a meditation, forcing you to calm your breathing, understand that it's just uncomfortable, not dangerous. Willpower is like a muscle. The more you push through resistance in life, the stronger it gets.
- **Meditation**: The most effective practice to understand and train your mind. More information here.
- **Tea/coffee**: There's something calming about a warm beverage in the morning. I also appreciate the caffeine boost from these beverages. (Although I recommend

taking time off from caffeine to reconnect with your mental natural state and eliminate any tolerance that builds up.)

- **Journal**
    - **Gratitude**: Gratitude is a beautiful state. It's impossible to be both angry and grateful. Cultivating gratitude helped me raise my average happiness level significantly.
    - **Intention**: Every day can be an amazing day. But it takes a conscious choice and focused action. This is step 1: identifying what you could do to make today awesome!
    - **Affirmation**: We behave like the person we believe ourselves to be. Reaffirming the positive vision of who you are and who you'd like to be

Other Options

- **Breakfast**: Can be helpful to give you energy through the morning, and avoid cravings to snack.
    - A good breakfast provides lasting nutrients and fuel.
        - **Vegetables**: Nutrients your body needs to thrive
        - **Protein**: Helps regulate your metabolism, build muscle and connective tissue, and much more.
        - **Healthy fats**: Helps with keeping you full to reduce cravings and reduce inflammation.
    - A bad breakfast is loaded with carbohydrates and sugar. These don't keep you feeling full, and are more likely to lead to energy crashes through the morning.
- **Exercise**: Mind and body are one and the same. Getting exercise first thing in the morning can help you stay fresh and focused, and make better choices throughout the day.
- **Read 20 pages of a book**: A reading habit is a reliable way to continue learning throughout life. Reading in the morning can get you inspired and prompt new ideas.
- **Revisit favorite quotes**: Motivation is like hygiene, it doesn't just happen. Assembling a list of favorite quotes to reference can give you an extra boost.
- **Free-write**: Often referred to as "Morning Pages", the instructions are simple. Grab a notebook and pen and write for 5-10 minutes. Just write whatever comes to mind. Don't stop writing.
- **"Eating the frog" first**: Start your workday with the most unpleasant tasks that you're most likely to procrastinate on.

My Mindful Morning Jump-Start Checklist

Goals for my morning

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Habits to get me there

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