



CREATING CALM IN THE CHAOS



If we make a conscious effort to add activities into our routines that nourish our minds, bodies, and souls, we are less likely to get burnt out, bored, or stuck in negative patterns. Allowing yourself to begin your day with confidence, peace, and a positive attitude is particularly important during this period of anxiety, isolation and uncertainty. One simple way you can start to take back control is by establishing a calming morning routine. As the saying goes..."win the morning, win the day'.

Checking your phone first thing, multi-tasking and rushing around are likely to tip you into 'fight or flight' - activated by the sympathetic strand of your nervous system.

The earlier in the day we engage the 'fight or flight' response, the more likely your nervous system is to establish 'fight or flight' as your default setting, meaning you will feel more anxious and sensitive to stressors throughout the day. Creating a morning routine that promotes 'rest and digest', is key to setting your day up for calm.



Five ideas to promote your relaxation response in the morning;

- **10 x diaphragmatic breaths as soon as you wake up** – slow, deep stomach breathing sends a signal to your brain that you are safe. Try putting your hands on your tummy and focusing on the rise and fall, really extending the exhale and relaxing your body.
- **Keep off your phone** – most of us reach for our smartphone the minute we rise, checking emails, messages and our calendar before our brain has had a chance to wake up! We can also end up scrolling social media, wasting time and before we know it, half the day is gone.
- **Do things slowly** – set your alarm a little earlier and resist the urge to start rushing - this sends danger signals to your brain.
- **5 minutes of mindfulness** - either a quick guided meditation using an app (Headspace or Calm are good) or just engaging your senses to listen to the birds outside or enjoy the taste, and smell of your morning coffee, will keep your brain happy and relaxed.
- **Get moving** - Try some gentle exercise before the day gets away on you – movement cancels out the stress response and gets the feel-good endorphins flowing.

Stretching or doing yoga for fifteen minutes will do wonders (and your body will thank you later). An early morning workout sets the tone for a healthier day. This includes your food choices, your mood, and, best of all, will help decrease your distractions.

Thanks to Kristy
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