

PREP YOUR MORNING FOR A PRODUCTIVE DAY

Not everyone's a natural morning person, rolling out of bed with clear eyes, a bright smile and a fully functioning brain. Learning to make a productive start to your day is a fundamental workplace skill. It starts with establishing a good morning routine.



BEFORE YOU COME IN

■ START EARLIER.

Give yourself the gift of extra time. If you're racing the clock as soon as you roll out of bed, you'll arrive at work already stressed.

■ EAT SOMETHING. NO, REALLY. EAT SOMETHING.

Don't skip breakfast. Some good choices include whole grains, fresh fruit and lean protein.

■ GET SOME EXERCISE.

A brisk walk or a few minutes' jog can leave you feeling energized and mentally sharp.

■ DODGE THE TRAFFIC.

Leaving a few minutes earlier can often make your commute quicker and less crowded. If that's not an option, consider using a GPS device with a live traffic feature to help avoid delays.



GETTING STARTED

■ SKIP THE BREAK ROOM.

Social time around the coffee machine is pleasant, but it can soak up a big piece of your morning.

■ IN AND OUT OF THE INBOX.

Don't feel like you need to read every email when you get in each morning. Prioritize the important things, and set up filters in your email program for emails you can leave for later.

■ TRIAGE, TRIAGE, TRIAGE.

Whether it's in the form of a simple handwritten note or a sophisticated app on your computer or tablet, comb through your day's activities and prioritize the most important.

■ PICK YOUR STARTING POINT.

Some people like to start by clearing a few easy things from their schedule, thereby building psychological momentum. Others tackle the day's biggest, toughest job first to get it out of the way. Learn which approach works best for you, and try to follow it every day.



THE LOGISTICS

■ MAKE ONE TRIP.

If your morning's to-do list requires reports from another department, two shipping boxes from the mail room and a few consumables from central stores, take care of it all in one trip rather than trekking around the office repeatedly.

■ ARRANGE YOUR SPACE.

Whatever you need for your current task should be grouped together, within easy reach, at your workstation.

■ KNOW WHAT'S UP NEXT.

Keep an eye on your to-do list, and know what's coming next. Often, while you're getting or putting away things you currently need, you can save time by retrieving items or supplies you'll need for the next activity.

■ GO DARK.

Say no to distractions, by blocking out high-focus time when you avoid calls and emails to focus on the task at hand.



SETTING THE STAGE

■ TOMORROW MORNING STARTS TODAY.

Building a good end-of-day routine can help you ease your way into a good start-of-day routine.

■ STOCK UP.

Whether it's topping off your paper or replacing your discarded highlighter, replenish what you've used today, so you don't have to do it in the morning.

■ CLEAR THAT DESK.

While you're at it, clear and straighten your desk. Tomorrow you can walk in, sit down, and start your day at a run.

■ GET SOME SLEEP.

Mornings are a lot more manageable when you're well-rested. Structure your evenings to allow for winding-down time, and try to get to bed at the same time each night.



GEAR UP FOR GREAT

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