



Wellbeing Insights

Living a Better, More Vibrant Life



Rise and Shine Expert Tips for Getting Up and at 'Em with Ease

“I am not a morning person.” This is one of the most common self-defeating statements that many of us tell ourselves. Who are these morning people anyway? Do they even exist? While some people do have a natural affinity for mornings, the majority of those who identify as morning people became that way with a good mix of dedication, self-discipline and repetition that has paid off with completed passion projects, improved mental health and skyrocketing productivity.

At one point or another most of us have made goals to get up earlier in order to accomplish something meaningful. However, very few succeed long term. So, how can we tap into the magic of the morning hours? The first step is to quit affirming that you are not a morning person. Think of yourself instead as a morning person who just needs a little encouragement. The following is a summary of guidance from morning experts to get you started on your quest to being a morning master.

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March: Sleep Awareness

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Rise and Shine

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An excellent morning . . .

. . . starts the night before.

■ Screen time should end well before you hit the hay. Instead of ending your night watching TV or scrolling social media, create a bedtime routine that doesn't include screens and focuses on powering down.

■ Relax and unwind. Meditation, journaling or gentle yoga are all ways to help your brain slow down and prepare for a good night's sleep. For a specific exercise to try, check out this month's Mindful Minute.

■ White noise can be very useful to help you fall asleep and avoid being woken up by small noises in the night. For more on white noise, see page 4.

. . . has movement.

■ Wake-up lights are an increasingly popular, research-backed way to help you wake up by simulating sunlight and gradually getting brighter over time.

■ Place your alarm out of arm's reach. This will force you to get up to turn it off and help you break your relationship with the snooze button. To keep it interesting you might try [an alarm app](#) or program your phone alarm to a different song each week.

■ Start your morning by engaging in a self-care activity. This will keep you moving and set the tone that simply being awake right now is an act of self-care. You might try:

- Getting some light physical activity like a short walk or a few moments of stretching.
- Drinking a full glass of water. This one is vital no matter when you get up to jump start your digestion.
- Eating something nutritious. Frying up an egg or layering together a parfait is a great way to fuel up while keeping yourself moving.

. . . is fueled by a purpose.

■ Know why you are getting out of bed. If you have no reason, you won't do it. Whether your goal is creating space so you don't feel rushed, making time for a side hustle, continued education or some other personal improvement goal, keep it top of mind. Write down your intention for these added hours and post it on your bathroom mirror or next to your alarm clock as a gentle reminder for when you'd rather crawl back into bed.

■ If you struggle to find the ambition for your purpose, you might consider coming up with another ritual that you really do enjoy to add to your morning routine.



Mindful Minute

Most of us look forward to a good night's rest, yet surveys consistently show most of us aren't getting enough. Not getting enough sleep can make us feel anxious and sluggish and negatively impact our overall wellbeing. If you regularly find yourself lying in bed, unable to sleep, consider this exercise to **relax your mind and prepare to sleep.**

1. Lying in bed, close your eyes and take slow, deep breaths. As you inhale, feel your lungs and chest expand. As you exhale, imagine releasing anything you're holding onto mentally.
2. Starting at your head and moving slowly down to the tip of your toes, mentally scan through your body and note any points of tension or discomfort. As you note places where you feel tense, take a breath or two and use your exhale to release the tension you're holding in that spot.
3. Once you've scanned the sensations throughout your body, recall a positive experience from the day. Think of this experience as you take a final intentional deep inhale and exhale. Then allow your breath to return to its natural rhythm and your body and mind to drift into sleep.



On the Menu

Dates

While the dates we typically see in grocery stores are already dried, a date begins its life as a full piece of fruit grown on a date palm tree. Of the many varieties that are available, the two most common are the Medjool and Deglet Noor.



Due to the natural sweetness of dates, they have become a go-to natural sweetener for a variety of recipes. They're used to replace refined sugar in different recipes, including sauces, baked goods and energy bites. They're also popular by themselves, stuffed with nuts or cheese or on top of salads, and they've become a staple on charcuterie boards in the hippest restaurants.

Dates are also noted for having several health benefits, including:

- **Fiber Content** – Per 50 gram serving, you can expect about 3 to 4 grams of fiber; that's 11 to 13% of your daily need. Because dates are naturally high in sugar, the fiber content is important as it can help reduce the effects of the sugar on blood glucose levels.
- **Potassium Content** – Per 50 gram serving, you can expect about 400mg of potassium, which is 10% of your daily need. Potassium is an important part of your daily diet because it helps enhance muscle strength, metabolism, water balance, electrolytic functions and the nervous system.
- **Antioxidants** – Dates contain antioxidants that include flavonoids (reduces inflammation), carotenoids (promotes heart health) and phenolic acid (also reduces inflammation).

It's important to note that even with all the benefits of dates, their sugar content is higher than other fruits and should be eaten in moderation.

Keep It Fresh

Most dried dates stay fresh for several months with no refrigeration needed. Refer to the packaging of the dates to confirm an expiration date. Dates do have pits, so when selecting them at the store, be mindful of labeling so you know if you're purchasing a pitted or non-pitted variety.

No-Bake Brownie Energy Bites

Ingredients:

- 1 cup dates, chopped
- ½ cup walnuts
- ½ cup cashews
- ⅓ cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- ¼ cup shredded coconut flakes
- ¼ tsp of salt

Optional:

- 1 tsp maple syrup for added consistency
- 1 Tbsp. collagen powder or protein powder for added protein
- Additional coconut flakes or cocoa powder for topping

Directions:

Grind the walnuts and cashews in a food processor until a dough starts to form. Add the dates, cocoa powder, shredded coconut flakes, salt and additional ingredients (if using) and process until incorporated and the mixture begins to turn into a dough. Roll the mixture into round balls until all the mixture is finished. Then roll the balls in the additional shredded coconut flakes and/or cocoa powder, if desired. Makes 14 to 16 bites ready to enjoy. Place in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 2 weeks.

Nutrition Info

Per Serving (1 energy bite)

| | |
|----------------------|------------|
| Calories | 90 |
| Total Fat | 5.1g |
| Carbohydrates | 11.4g |
| | Sugar 7.4g |
| | Fiber 2g |
| Protein | 3g |
| Sodium | 35mg |

adapted from JessicaintheKitchen.com



The Noisy Solution for Better Sleep

Adequate quality sleep is essential for disease prevention, mental health, mood stability, productivity, safety and more. Yet many of us struggle to get the sleep we need due to restlessness, anxiety, racing thoughts and being woken by noises such as a snoring spouse, barking dog, airplane flying overhead . . . the list goes on. If this sounds like you, consistent background noise, commonly known as white noise, may help you get the sleep you dream of.

While it may seem counterintuitive to add noise to induce sleep, it's the type of noise that can make the difference between disturbing sleep and promoting it. Science shows that the brain continues to process sound when we sleep, which is why sporadic noise can be disruptive. White noise is a combination of all the frequencies of sound that creates smooth ambient noise that, in effect, drowns out disruptive noise. The sounds of rain, ocean waves and circulating fans are

examples of naturally occurring white noise known to lull people to sleep. There are numerous white noise machines on the market, along with mobile apps and websites. Many of these offer an array of settings, including nature sounds (e.g., rainfall, ocean waves, chirping birds) and white noise that produces a sound similar to an air-purifying fan.

You may benefit from adding white noise in your bedroom if any of the following are true:

- You have a hard time falling asleep, toss and turn, and/or cannot calm your mind.
- You're a light sleeper and wake up to even distant or faint noises.
- You sleep during the day when outside or household noises are more abundant.
- There are members of your household with varying sleep schedules.

This edition's App in a Snap explores a white noise app that offers an array of pitches, allowing users to choose the most pleasing to them. Check it out; you just might sleep better tonight.

App in a Snap

Name: Soundly Sleeping

Focus: Sleep



Though white noise apps are plentiful, Soundly Sleeping has some unique offerings on a solid platform. This free app includes a simple, single-screen design with clearly labeled, color-coded options of three different sound frequencies to promote a good night's sleep. Choose brown, pink or white noise. Sound frequency is lowest with brown noise and highest with white noise, with pink noise falling somewhere in between. Using these frequencies to drown out other noise promotes good sleep and can also facilitate an auditory environment conducive for studying, writing and other activities that require focus.

Bridgette O'Connor, CBIZ Senior Wellbeing Consultant, shares her experience with Soundly Sleeping, "Apps on my phone are few and far between, yet this is one I never travel without. While we have a noise machine for our toddler's room, when traveling, it's wonderful to be able to have an app that streams continuous, soothing sounds to help our daughter fall and stay asleep, without being concerned that our voices, television, hotel or other noise will wake her up. While I've tried several white-noise apps over the years, Soundly Sleeping is reliable and flexible with its three sound options. As a mom, certified integrative nutrition health coach and someone who thrives on good sleep, I highly recommend this app!"



Exposing Nutritional Myths



Myth: Eating cholesterol raises cholesterol.

Truth: Science disproved this theory several years ago, but many marketers still tout no-cholesterol products. Your body manufactures most of the cholesterol that can be measured in your blood in the liver. The type and amount of fats and carbohydrates you consume have more influence on your cholesterol levels than the cholesterol in your food.

Myth: Eat small meals every three to four hours for weight loss.

Truth: Just like most other things, there is no one-size-fits-all approach to meal timing. Hard and fast rules rarely result in lasting change. Instead, learn to listen to your body. If you're always sluggish late afternoon, your body may be telling you it needs a snack. Keep a journal for a few days in a row, recording how you feel before and after eating. This will help you tune into your body's own cues.

Myth: Carbs are our enemy.

Truth: Not all carbohydrates are created equal. While over-consumption of pro-inflammatory carbs, such as processed flours, white breads and rice, sweet drinks and treats, etc., is associated with obesity, cancers and chronic diseases, complex carbohydrates like non-starchy vegetables, fruits and whole grains are protective and supply nutrients your body needs. "Smart" carbohydrates, such as colorful fruits and vegetables and whole grains, provide vitamins, minerals and fiber, which are vital to vibrant health.

Myth: You should never salt your food.

Truth: The amount of salt you sprinkle on your food likely doesn't hold a candle to the amount cooked into your food. Prepackaged soups, seasoning blends, condiments and prepared foods are often loaded with sodium, so look there first. Additionally, unless you have sodium-induced hypertension, kidney disease or another health condition that can be affected by sodium intake, salt may not be the enemy it's made out to be. Truth is, your body needs some sodium, just don't overdo it.

Myth: Regular detoxing will improve your health.

Truth: Believe it or not, your body is a pretty amazing machine; it was designed to detox itself. Choosing nourishing foods like lean proteins, colorful fruits and vegetables will help your body perform its best. High-fiber foods like seeds, nuts and vegetables will help your body regularly eliminate waste – no special juice or powder needed!

Myth: Diligent calorie counting is the key to weight management.

Truth: Not all calories are created equal. Foods with protein, fiber and healthy fat take longer to digest, helping us feel fuller longer (and, in theory, leading to less calorie consumption during the day) than foods loaded with simple carbohydrates. When you make it a habit to choose nourishing foods and listen to your body's natural hunger cues, counting calories becomes a lot less important.

Foundations of a Savings Strategy

Getting a savings plan on track can feel like a daunting task, especially if you are in a common situation such as living paycheck to paycheck, just starting out in your career and getting used to managing your finances, or experiencing a major life event that impacts your earning or spending habits.

The absolute first “must do” when it comes to structuring your savings is to set up an emergency fund. It is critical to have a minimum of three months’ salary in a savings account that is liquid. If you experience some type of financial distress (e.g., medical bill, injured on the job, lose your job), you will be prepared to pay for necessities such as food, shelter and utilities. Many people don’t think about these types of expenses that can happen unexpectedly and cause major stress if you are unprepared.

Once your emergency account is set up and funded, it’s time to move onto your employer-sponsored savings program. Ultimately, you want to contribute 10 to 15% of your annual income to this program, but that



will take some time. To get started, if your employer offers a matching contribution, contribute at least enough to receive the full match. For example, if your employer offers a 100% match up to 4% of pay, contribute at least 4% into the plan. That way you are saving 8% (4% from you and 4% from your employer) right away. Getting to 10% doesn’t seem so challenging now, does it?

Another consideration for early savers is debt reduction. While this may seem a little counterintuitive to saving, it pays off just as much. If you have any high-interest debt (e.g., credit cards,

student loans, etc.), use any additional money you’ve allocated for saving to increase your monthly payments to those bills. It doesn’t make sense to invest money at a 7% return rate if you’re borrowing money at a higher rate than that. Once you get your debt paid down or paid off, then reinvest those monthly payments into your 401(k) or a brokerage account.

There’s no fast track to saving; it takes time and consistency, so start as early as you can. Remember, every year you delay saving will require a larger percentage of your annual income in order to achieve your goals.

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Visit the CBIZ Wellbeing website at cbiz.com/wellbeing

“*What day is it?*”
“It’s today” squeaked Piglet.
“My favorite day” said Pooh.

– A.A. MILNE