

Morning habits of high performers

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The piercing sound of a ringing alarm clock, it's agitation growing with every "snooze" pressed. The sleepy scroll of social feeds, consuming the successes and triumphs of others while we haven't quite opened our eyes. A large cup of coffee while rushing to our first morning meeting, cursing yourself for giving in to that third snooze...

Many of us begin our days just like this. A fine mixture of sluggish chaos, if you will.

If you get to know the story behind any successful, high-performing individual, from athletes to fortune 500 business owners, you'll be sure to discover that this is exactly the mourning routine they do not practice.

"The best way to get started is quit talking and begin doing." – Walt Disney

Building success takes years of smart decision-making and discipline. And the high performers of the world fully understand that how we start our days sets the tone for how the rest of it will follow. Arising from our slumbers even just an hour earlier and following a nourishing routine will have incredible impacts on our productivity levels.

1. THE EARLY BIRD CATCHES THE WORM

The book "The 5 AM Club: Own Your Morning. Elevate Your Life" by author Robin Sharma, explores the benefits of being an early riser and how it will impact your life for the better.

It explains the impact of incorporating a 3-step morning ritual into your day.

This very routine was found to create astonishing results. It focuses on the process of:

- **MOVING:** taking time to practice movement in some form, from lifting weights to dancing around the kitchen.

- **REFLECTING:** Turning inward and connecting with what's important to you. This could be through journaling, meditation, praying, or visualisation.
- **GROWING:** Taking the time to read, watch and listen to broaden your knowledge.

5 am is referred to as the "magic hour". There's something special and empowering about waking up way ahead of the world when everything is silent and peaceful and getting things done in a way that will make you feel good.

There's no denying that getting up earlier is going to take time to adjust to, but once you make it a habit and experience the highs of improved productivity, you will never look back.

2. VISUALISE SUCCESS

Visualisation refers to the practice of focusing on what you want to achieve in order to create and attract it. When we visualise our desired outcome, we begin to truly "see" the possibility of achieving it. When this happens, we are motivated and prepared to pursue our goals.

While it may sound a bit strange, there is actual science behind it. According to research using brain imagery, visualisation works because neurons in our brains cannot distinguish the difference between what we are visualising and real-life action. New neural pathways (clusters of brain cells that work together to create memories or learned behaviours) are created that primes our body to behave in a way consistent with what we imagined.

It's a method tried and tested by highly successful people across the globe; from 23-time gold medallist Michael Phelps, actors Will Smith and Jim Carrey, to business titans like Oprah Winfrey and Sarah Blakely.

"My imagination has always kept me going. I just imagined myself collecting awards. I just imagined myself getting big parts. That's part of my inner magic. If I can see myself doing it, I can do it." – Idris Elba OBE, Actor, Singer & Producer.

3. KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

In a survey looking at the daily habits of 233 self-made millionaires, a whopping 88 percent of respondents said they devote 30 minutes or more each day to educating themselves.

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Instead of picking up your phone first thing and scrolling through social media with the risk of sucking up your energy through external stimuli, try instead to read half an hour of a self-development book or perhaps biographies of the super successful.

And if reading isn't your thing, you'll be sure to find thousands of podcasts out there to suit your taste. Podcasts are fantastic for making the most of your daily commutes, learning while at the gym, or taking in while you have a soak in the bath.

A little bit of planning will make your day a whole lot more manageable and less stressful. As the adage goes, ***"Fail to prepare, is preparing to fail..."***.

4. BOOST YOUR ENERGY WITH MORNING EXERCISE

Studies have long showcased the benefits of exercise in all aspects of life; from becoming physically healthier, scientifically happier, and allowing you to combat stress.

Exercise in the morning has been shown to be particularly effective at giving you the energy boost needed for a productive day. It doesn't matter how you choose to exercise — it's all about just moving your body. Whether it's a 45-minute cardio workout or a 10-minute stretch, moving your body will help you to get out of your sleepy state and get ready to take on the day.

Exercising in the morning is a habit adopted by many of today's successful business leaders. Billionaire Richard Branson, for example, says that his morning routine of waking up at 5 am to play tennis or bike, has doubled his productivity!

5. SET YOUR INTENTIONS FOR THE DAY

It is so easy to roll out of bed, all tired-eyed, and wander through the day with no direction or drive. Setting daily intentions makes you laser-focused, helps clear your headspace, and commits you to your goals. If you don't take a few minutes of your time to map out the direction of your day, how will you know if you're heading in the right direction? Take at least 10 to 15 minutes of your morning to really think about which goals you hope to achieve, jot down your tasks for the day and allot schedules for breaks.

As well as the good old pen and paper lists, there are so many handy applications that enable you to organise your to-do list and manage your workflow wherever you are in the world.