

Smart ways to live well

FEBRUARY 2008

Prevention

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AND MORE**



[one] wake up refreshed!

EVEN EARLY BIRDS can find it difficult to slip out from under their warm, cozy covers on dark winter mornings. Here's how to make it easy:

Note good things to come

Before going to bed, put a sticky note on your alarm clock reminding you of something fun or exciting that's happening the next day. "Because of hormonal shifts that occur while we're asleep, the majority of us wake up feeling a bit down or in a so-so mood," says **Dana Lightman, PhD**, a behavioral psychologist in Abington, PA. "Remembering that you're having lunch with a friend or that your favorite TV show will be on that night gives you a quick lift."

Keep a cool bedroom

A toasty room temperature makes it easier to nod off, but you may wake up groggy. Lowering your thermostat right before turning out the lights maintains the warmth you need to fall asleep and will cool the room overnight—allowing you to rise and shine. Don't make it too chilly, though: Experts say the ideal temperature is between 60° and 70°F.

Surround yourself with color

"Seeing a bright, vibrant hue when you open your eyes gets your adrenaline going—and that sudden surge of energy helps clear the cobwebs and kicks you into gear," says **Leatrice Eiseman**, executive director of the Pantone Color Institute. Put a red, orange, yellow, or fuchsia

throw pillow, blanket, or piece of art in the area you first see in the morning, or slip on a robe in one of these shades. You can even make breakfast visually stimulating (and get a nutritional boost) by pouring yourself a glass of antioxidant-rich pomegranate or cranberry juice with a sweet slice of orange.

Put flowers by your bedside

Seeing a bouquet of blooms when they first woke up gave women in a new study a mood lift and energy boost that lasted all day, reports **Nancy Etcoff, PhD**, a faculty member at Harvard Medical School and the Harvard University Mind/Brain/Behavior Initiative.

Don't hit the snooze button

There's truth in the adage "You snooze, you lose." When you hit snooze, your brain knows it will go off again in a few minutes—so you won't go into the deeper, more restful stages of slumber. That means you'll be more tired than if you'd gotten up when it first sounded. A better strategy: "Set your alarm for when you really need to get up," says **Jodi Mindell, PhD**, associate director of the Sleep Disorders Center at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. "That extra, uninterrupted sleep makes you feel more rested and refreshed when you get out of bed."

Visualize your day

Once you're awake, close your eyes and picture yourself alert and energetic. "Imagining an activity fires up the same parts of your brain that are used when you actually experience it," says **[redacted]**. "Thinking positively about the day ahead energizes you."

Drink a big glass of water

This is a good way to replenish the fluid your body loses overnight, and it provides instant energy. "Everything that happens in your body requires water," says **Holly Andersen, MD**, an assistant professor of medicine at Weill Cornell Medical Center. "Without enough of it, your systems have to work harder in every respect—which can cause fatigue." Indeed, even a 2% drop in water stores can tire you physically and mentally. Starting to sip early also gives you a head start on the 11 cups of water the Institute of Medicine now recommends women consume throughout the day to stay hydrated.

Let the light in

A splash of sunlight makes you feel more awake, so read the paper by a sunny window or step outside for a few minutes while having your coffee. "Daylight signals your biological clock to stop the secretion of melatonin, a hormone that makes you sleepy, and promotes wakefulness," says **James B. Maas, PhD**, a professor and past chairman of the

department of psychology at Cornell University. It also increases the brain's level of serotonin, a chemical that boosts mood. If it's still dark when you get up, consider purchasing a dawn stimulator (from \$80; lighttherapyproducts.com), a device that gradually brightens a light source at a preprogrammed time. Set it to create a dawn that breaks a half hour before your usual wake-up time and grows to maximum brightness when your alarm goes off—even when your eyes are closed, the light that passes through your lids signals your internal clock to trigger waking neurons in your brain.

Rub yourself awake

"Massaging your face boosts circulation, making it a surefire way to wake up," says **Maggy Dunphy**, general manager of the Aria Spa and Club in Vail, CO. Starting at your forehead and working

down to your chin, lightly flutter-tap or drum your fingertips, varying the velocity, intensity, and location until you've touched your entire face. Bonus: These moves give you a quick healthy glow.

Have sex

Physical activity is one of the best ways to shake off grogginess—and having sex boosts your body's levels of chemicals associated with stamina (testosterone), energy (dopamine), and calmness (oxytocin), says **Helen E. Fisher, PhD**, a research professor in the department of anthropology at Rutgers University. What a great way to start the day!



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