

# Just Another Manic Morning?



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Unless you're a morning person who wakes up full of energy and ready to take on the day like me, mornings can really suck. Whether you're the type of person who experiments with how many times you can hit snooze on the alarm clock without being late like my husband, or you unwillingly pull yourself out of bed after the first wakeup call, mornings are often a grind.

But they don't have to be.

I recently had a couple mornings that weren't like my usual where I bound out of bed, stretch and start following my routine of putting on clothes I'd set out the night before, grabbing breakfast I prepped the night before and heading to the gym before coming home and getting to work. Something was just off ... I was groggy. I was tired. I wasn't motivated to get out of bed. I didn't prepare the night before. I was in a funk.

I realized I had shifted my usual routine and it put me in a morning slump. Mornings can be one of the best times of day if you use them properly. Your willpower is the strongest since you aren't exhausted and your focus is targeted because you haven't faced distractions yet. All of this gives you the ability to determine your day's outcome and productivity.

**Here are a few ways I've learned to make mornings work for me.**

1. Have you ever watched your dog or cat get up from a nap? The first thing they do is stretch. It may feel awkward, but stretch before and after you get out of bed. Studies say this increases testosterone levels – the power hormone – and leaves you feeling more confident and ready for the day.
2. For the first hour of your morning, be a robot. Have a morning routine. Think about it this way: You start your day like a charged battery. Every decision reduces that battery's life until the end of the day when you need a restart. Eliminate some decision-making by prepping the night before. Set out your clothes, prepare your breakfast and/or lunch

depending on your schedule so you just have to grab and go. Wake up at the same time every day and follow the same hierarchy for getting ready. You'll be amazed at how stress-free your morning is, how quickly you get ready and how much energy you conserve. There is also less chance of forgetting any essentials so your day progresses more smoothly.

3. Delay caffeine just a little bit. You already wake up fairly alert. Research says your cortisol levels are naturally higher for the first one to two hours after waking up. Save your caffeine fix for when those cortisol levels drop to normal levels.
4. Absorb some sunshine and get some exercise. Even a small amount of sunlight – 15 minutes – can boost your body's natural wakeup call. I'm also a big believer in morning exercise: an hour of strength training and intense movement increases my energy, decreases my stress and gives me drive for the rest of the day.

*How do you supercharge your mornings? Let us know and we'll share your tips with readers.*