

THE NUTRITIONIST
DR LIBBY WEAVER



THE ENTREPRENEUR
AMANDA McMILLAN



“How I start my day”

Four wellness experts share their life-balancing hacks

BY MELISSA SHEDDEN



THE PSYCHOLOGIST
DR PAULA WATKINS



THE AUTHOR
LISA MESSENGER

When your willpower and the snooze button have their next throwdown, just remember: you're at the peak of your habit-forming powers. Though you might not feel it, you're at the height of your self-control in the morning, says Gretchen Rubin in her book *Better Than Before*. Plus, "Setting a specific, regular time for an activity to recur is one of the most familiar and powerful strategies of habit formation," she adds. Google calendars, at the ready. But first, some inspo from four impressive women whose morning routines make them healthier and happier.



THE NUTRITIONIST, DR LIBBY WEAVER, 40

BIOCHEMIST, AUTHOR AND INTERNATIONAL SPEAKER. WHEN SHE'S NOT ON TOUR 150 DAYS A YEAR, SHE LIVES IN BURLEIGH HEADS, QLD, WITH HUSBAND, CHRIS.

"My routine has to be transportable. At home I wake with the sun, but I use an alarm clock when travelling (no phone or TV in my bedroom, thanks). I build in at least 30 minutes distraction-free alone time first thing, which I'll spend meditating, walking, reading, stretching or taking 'horse stance', a qi gong posture where you place your hands one on top of the other just below your navel. I'll hold this, breathing diaphragmatically and giving thanks, to activate my parasympathetic nervous and digestive systems. When I'm done, I feel calm and ready.

"Around 6:30, I drink green veg wholefood powder mixed with water. I only sit down to eat (organic eggs, avocado, lemon, parsley, butter, gluten-free bread) later, when I feel hungry. I'm what I call a 'flexitarian', believing my body, not my tastebuds, knows what's best for me, so I listen for signals."



THE PSYCHOLOGIST, DR PAULA WATKINS, 34



PSYCHOLOGIST, MEDITATION TEACHER AND MINDFULNESS EXPERT, SHE LIVES IN BONDI, NSW WITH PARTNER, JAMES, AND BULLDOG, PAI.

"I start my day how I plan to carry on: mindfully. I wake up at 5:30am, usually naturally, but I have a backup alarm, too. The bonus? Seeing the sun rise. Then the ritual begins: tongue scraping, neti pot flush and hot lemon water, before my yoga asana (either gentle sun salutations or full hour practice), finishing with meditation, including contemplation and intention setting.

Live by the clock

Chronobiology deems there's an optimum time for everything. Get ready for your perfect day...

Wake up

You'll feel most refreshed if you wake at the end of a 90-minute cycle, says integrative medicine expert and Thrive Paleo symposium speaker, Dr John Hart.

Weigh in

Motivated by results? Track yours at 7am, when you're at your lightest, says author of *The Body Clock Guide To Better Health*, Michael Smolensky.

Drink coffee

A rise and grind routine messes with your body's natural cortisol levels, *AsapScience* research shows. Push your barista date back till after 10am for full flat white benefits.

THE AUTHOR, LISA MESSENGER, 44

AUTHOR, MAGAZINE EDITOR, ENTREPRENEUR AND SPEAKER, WITH NEWEST BOOK, *MONEY & MINDFULNESS*, OUT THIS MONTH, SHE LIVES IN TAMARAMA, NSW, WITH HER CAVOODLE BENNY.

“Although I’m anti rules, certain rituals are non-negotiable—like getting my day started from under the doona. I sleep eight to 10 hours and when I wake up, I quickly scan Insta, emails, Facebook and Twitter, in that order. Emails come in overnight that need responding to first thing – it’s an exciting time!

“Then, ‘me time’. Every morning I train (coastal walk, outdoor boxing session or a run with my dog), meditate (sometimes I get my energy moving with a dance meditation), drink a green juice and journal to clear my head. I silently practice gratitude for the little things I’ve noticed, like a beautiful day, win at work or my morning latte.”



THE ENTREPRENEUR, AMANDA MCMILLAN, 35



COFOUNDER OF WELLINEUX, SHE LIVES IN WILLIAMSTOWN, VIC, WITH HUSBAND, BRENT, AND DAUGHTERS, MIA, 8 AND AVA, 7.

“What I do in the morning has a flow-on effect. My alarm is set for 5:30am and, three mornings a week, I’ll do a beach or garage workout with my PT. On rest days, I head to my front room-sanctuary, for meditation and stretching.

“Around 7, I’ll check social media and overnight emails before picking an affirmation (I’m using Danielle LaPorte cards) and taking three deep breaths of essential oil. Next, I’ll write a daily intention (I like to ask, ‘What’s my unique WHY?’) and review my vision board I’ve kept for five years. It sounds like a lot, but each practice takes seconds only and sets me up for the day.”

#2-SECOND LIFE CHANGER

Create a morning playlist to keep yourself on time. You need to be dressed by the end of *Shut Up and Dance*.

“Around 7am I have something to eat, like porridge, or a spinach, spirulina and banana smoothie. While that’s digesting, I get online, spending 30 to 60 minutes responding to emails and organising my Google calendar. My mindful morning routine closes with a sweat session; I’ll soft-sand run, jog the Bondi to Bronte track, or do weights at the gym.”

PHOTOGRAPHY: CARLY BROWN PHOTOGRAPHY; SCOTT EHLER

→ Stretch

You’re used to doing it post, but foam rolling *before* your workout can reduce muscle soreness after, a study in the *Journal of Strength and Conditioning Research* shows.

→ Workout

Willpower is highest first thing, but *WH* fitness expert and Next Fitness Star winner Cassey Miller says the best time to exercise is the one you can make a regular habit.

→ Check brekkie

Controversial: skipping breakfast aids weight loss, a recent Murdoch Uni study found. But researchers warn fasting can interfere with cognitive ability.

→ Have sex

A study from the University of Texas, US, showed blood flow to the female genital region to be 169 per cent higher after a 20-minute bike ride. Evening spin class, anyone?

→ Power your brain

Cramming actually works: reading up before you sleep boosts retention and recall, research in *PLOS* shows. *WH*