



10 Must do's at the start of each day!



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The first few hours of the work day can have a significant effect on your level of productivity over the following eight hours – so it's important to have a morning routine that sets you up for success.

How you begin your morning often sets the tone and your attitude for the day. It can also derail or direct your focus. If you remain committed to good morning work habits, you won't fall prey to feeling unproductive and distracted at the end of the day or week.

1. Arrive on time

This may be obvious to most people – but some don't realise that showing up late can not only leave a bad impression, but also throw off your entire day. Getting in on time or a little early helps your mindset for the day and helps promote a feeling of accomplishment.

2. Start each day with a clean slate

You may have to attend to projects or discussions that rolled over from the previous afternoon – but try to treat each day as a fresh one. Leave any crap from yesterday behind, tap into what's happening at the outset of the day, get organised and ready or hit the ground running, if that's what is needed.

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3. Take a deep breath

Literally! And do something to focus in on the here and now. Many people come into work stressed because they don't leave enough time at home to deal with "home stuff". Slowing down, taking a moment to pause, and creating a routine around centering yourself can work wonders, he adds.



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4. Don't be moody

You'll want to pay attention to your mood and be aware of its effect on others. First and last thing in the day is when emotional intelligence can have the greatest impact. So if you're not a morning person, try to suck it up and have a positive attitude when you arrive at the office. Grab a second or third cup of coffee, if that's what it takes.

5. Organise your day

The first hour of the work day is the best time to assess priorities and to focus on what you absolutely need to accomplish. Too many people get distracted first thing in the morning with unimportant activities such as diving right into their muddle of e-mail, when there may be a whole host of more important issues that need dealing with.

Make a to-do list, or update the one you made the previous day, and try to stick to it. However, if your boss has an urgent need, then it's OK re-shuffle your priorities within reason, Taylor adds.

6. Be present

It's critical to be present, mentally and physically, and to communicate, especially if you're in a leadership position. One of the biggest office pet peeves from employees is about how their immediate supervisor just blows by them in the morning without so much as a smile. Taking the time to connect with your team members is essential, and doing the seemingly small things—making eye contact, smiling, asking them about their night, and checking in on what they may need help with—helps you as a leader take the pulse of the team, and helps set the tone for all the employees.

7. Check in with your colleagues

A quick five to 10 minute team huddle can also be an effective way for many people to start their day. Make it a short meeting, with no chairs, have everyone share their top goal for the day, and share any critical information the rest of the team absolutely needs to know. Doing the huddles helps people focus and more importantly, connects everyone with the team. And by sharing your goals for the day publicly, the odds of achieving them rise substantially.



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8. Ensure that your workspace is organised

Clearing off the desk and creating a neat workspace sets a tone for the rest of the day.

Also, for many, it's difficult to think clearly, easy to forget important reminders, and just plain stressful if you feel you're fighting the battle and the tornado of mail or paper is winning. Ideally, you'd clear whatever you can out the night before so you can have a fresh start before you even turn on your computer in the morning.

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9. Don't be distracted by your inbox

This one is difficult for most people – but the experts agree that you shouldn't check your e-mail first thing in the morning. If you do, only read and respond to messages that are urgent. There will be time during the day to respond to the less urgent e-mails.

10. Place important calls and send urgent e-mails

If you know you need to get in touch with someone that day, place the call or send the e-mail first thing in the morning. If you wait until midday, there's a greater chance you won't hear back before you leave the office. There's nothing more frustrating than trying to complete something and not having access or answers from people you need because your day time hours were lost on other matters.

If you're stuck in a routine that doesn't include these must-dos, it may be worthwhile to re-examine your habits and make some changes for enhanced career development.

Habits are created out of having regular cues that prompt a routine, which then eventually become our habits. The morning is the perfect time to create some critical habits that will, over time, become routine and help you be more focused and productive.

Resource documents sourced and collated in collaboration with:

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