



rise & shine

Loathe mornings? Wish they weren't such a frantic blur? Lifehacking expert Kelly Exeter shares her six simple ways to kickstart your day

It all starts the night before ...

LAY IT OUT, BABY

Ever found yourself panicking at 7am because there's not a single pair of hole-free stockings in the entire house and your first meeting is at 8am? Try this the night before: lay out all the clothes you need for the next day. This will quickly identify anything crucial that is missing from your ensemble and means you won't have to ask that mind-numbing question: "What am I going to wear today?"

DO THE TOKEN TIDY

Nothing disrupts a morning faster than being faced with a huge pile of unwashed dishes in the kitchen sink. The last thing you might want to do in the evening is tidy up, but all it takes is five minutes. Get those plates in the dishwasher and restore your living area to a semblance of tidiness. This means no little jobs will be nagging at your brain, while you're trying to enjoy your breakfast.

HOOK UP WITH A GOOD BOOK

Many people delay going to bed simply because they can't be bothered getting off the sofa. Best tip for getting to bed "on time"? Get your hands on a great read. This should be enough to tear you away from the comfy couch and comes with an added bonus: reading before bed winds the mind down and clears away the stresses of the day, making it easier to fall asleep *and* stay asleep.

In the morning ...

GET UP HALF AN HOUR EARLIER

Hey, what? That's not a tip, that's torture! Don't knock it till you try it, though. Since you tend to fall asleep earlier in the colder months, getting up half an hour earlier is not going to shake your world. Do you usually find yourself gulping down some form of lukewarm liquid from a travel cup as you bolt out the door? Getting up 30 minutes earlier means you'll have time to drink a cup of tea/coffee while reading the paper or browsing Facebook. What a nice way to start the day!

MAKE YOUR BED

No, really, make your bed. This has two benefits. The first is that right off the bat, you've already accomplished something for the day, so you'll leave the house with a spring in your step. Secondly, when it comes time to crawl under the covers that night (after laying out your clothes and tidying the kitchen), you'll send a fervent "thank you" to your morning self for leaving such a lovely gift for the end of your day.

STAY ON TASK

Look at that: you've suddenly got all this extra time on your hands in the morning. Why not take this opportunity to reply to a few work emails. Er ... no. Your mission is to have breakfast, get dressed, make the bed and leave the house – the end! Add anything else into the mix and you're back on your way to "situation: frazzled".