

Do You Get Up in the Morning?

By Cindy Kubica

(676 words)

The alarm goes off and your heart starts to race,
You stumble from bed as if doused in mace;
You run through the shower and race out the door,
Anxiety building like never before;

You jump in your car and pull out with speed,
Then you remember that thing you need;
You run back in the house, trip on the cat,
Pass by the mirror and think you look fat;
You stand in the hall feeling defeated,
Looking for clues, what was it you needed?

Sound familiar?

We live in a fast paced, technology driven, degree insistent, productivity focused, size 5, “mine has to be better than yours” world. And now with the current state of the economy, we are shrouded in fear and worry because we could lose ‘this lifestyle’. Mmmm.

Our obsession with our stressors alters our behavior and those around us end up getting *the stressed of us, not the best of us*. Researcher Hans Selye discovered that any problem, real or imagined, activates the stress response (fight-or-flight) in the body. For most, the stressor is imagined or at the very least amplified in our mind.

It starts the moment we awaken. Instead of ‘getting up’ in the morning we get ourselves down. We startle ourselves awake with an alarm clock, immediately activating the stress response. Then, we start mentally reviewing our massive to-do list; building anxiety, worry, and overwhelm. Physiological changes occur such as increased heart rate, sweating, and tension in the body. We’ve managed to exhaust about a third of our daily energy before we’ve even reached the front door.

When we are in the fight or flight mode; epinephrine, nor epinephrine and cortisol courses through the body, weakening our immune system and setting us up for illness or disease.

It's time for change. Start your day by learning how to 'get up' in the morning!

- **Let the sun awaken you naturally**, if possible. Sunshine warms the body, increases vitamin D and serotonin (your feel-good hormone). If natural sunlight is not an option use a dawn simulator (an auto-timer light that simulates the dawning of the sun). If an alarm is your only option, choose an alarm with nature sounds that ease you awake.
- **Yawn and stretch.** Yes, lie in bed and yawn; it gets oxygen all the way to the bottom of your lungs. Stretching gets rid of any kinks that could end up being stress points during the day.
- **Stretch some more.** Lift your arms above your head and lengthen your legs—toes pointed; breathe into the diaphragm. Flex, point, and rotate your feet three times in each direction. Hug your knees into the chest and slowly roll from side to side (you'll really like this). Come back to center; breathing normally. Drop your arms to the right and your knees to the left, gently twisting and stretching the spine. Breathe deeply into the lower back. Reverse.
- **Kick negative thoughts out of bed.** If stressful thoughts begin flooding your mind, change them. As Les Brown says, "you can't control a thought from popping into your head, but you can control how long it stays there."
- **Dangle your legs off the side of the bed.** This stretches the spine and releases stiffness. *(Note: If you have any back issues or health concerns, consult your health care professional before doing this.)*



Remember: the goal is to stretch, relax, and rid your body of any residual tension. If your body is already stiff and tense upon awakening, just imagine how stiff and tense you will be when the uncontrollable stressors of the day hit.

Now sit up on the side of the bed. You have two choices; you can simply stand, or you can leap out of bed (my personal favorite—it energizes the body) and begin reciting your daily mantra. A mantra is a word or phrase you repeated regularly. It can be a prayer, meditation, or affirmation.

That's how you get up in the morning. You are now more equipped and energized to handle the events of the day.

Cindy Kubica is a stress to energy expert and whole health educator from Franklin, Tennessee. She presents to audiences across the country and internationally on how to move beyond stress management to energy management. Cindy is an author of six books and is co-owner of a commercial photography studio in the Nashville area.

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