

How To Become An Early Riser

"But there never seems to be enough time
To do the things you want to do
Once you find them?
-- Time in a Bottle, Jim Croce

If you never seem to have enough time to do the things that you want to do, maybe you need to invent longer days. And while you don't have a chance of changing the laws of physics, you can add some hours to your productive time by simply becoming an early riser.

Understanding Your Internal Clock

Often referred to as our internal clock, every living thing responds to circadian rhythms. A circadian rhythm is an approximately 24-hour long cycle that controls specific functions and systems in our bodies. The word circadian is a combination of the Latin words circa (around) and dies (day). So, the literal definition of circadian is "Around a Day?".

Our bodies have over 100 circadian rhythms. Each one directs a different physiological function in our bodies ranging from regulating body temperature to regulating when we sleep and when we wake up. It's the sleep circadian rhythm that we need to focus on in order to become an early riser.

Your sleep patterns become habits just like most other things in our lives. You develop sleep habits and those habits affect your natural circadian sleep rhythms or your internal clock. In order to change those habits you need to reset that internal clock. Now, this isn't as easy as pressing the alarm and the hour/minutes buttons on your bedside alarm clock, although I wish it were. You need to coax your body into developing new sleep habits. Here's how it's done?

Our sleep clocks are photo reactive. Those are big words for the simple fact that our bodies respond to cycles of light and dark. Periods of light tell our brain that it's time to be awake while darkness means bed time. I wonder how much we paid in tax money for some genius to come up with that bit of research material?

Anyway, the key to waking up earlier is to establish new sleep habits that work with the body's natural cycles.

When you go to sleep, make your room as dark as possible. Don't let light from outside enter your room, and don't try to fall asleep with the T.V. on. The darkness will trigger the release of chemicals as well as other changes in our body's natural rhythms that bring on sleep.

Set your alarm to your new wakeup time and keep it set for at least thirty consecutive days until you develop a new sleep habit. Buy an inexpensive lamp timer and plug your bedside lamp into it. Set the timer to turn on the lamp when the alarm goes off. Open your eyes when you hear the alarm, take a deep breath, and get out of bed. Your body will begin producing the chemicals that terminate the sleep period and begin the awake period, as it responds to the light from the lamp. Open the shades and let the outside light enter the room.

Adjust your bed time until you can wake up at your new "awake" time without feeling groggy. After a month or so you'll have added more hours to your daily routine.

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