**What's Your Routine for a Better ROL?**

Establishing a consistent morning routine can give [your physical and mental health a massive boost](https://www.nm.org/healthbeat/healthy-tips/health-benefits-of-having-a-routine). Routines help us to organize and prioritize what we want to accomplish, which can reduce stress and anxiety and help us focus on larger goals. Folks who stick to a sleep schedule tend to sleep better and wake up with more energy and in a better mood. And establishing a set of go-to breakfasts can help you eat well even on those days when kids, pets, or a work emergency demand some flexibility from other parts of your routine.

Mix and match ideas from this list to build a new routine that will start your mornings on the right foot and improve your life throughout the day.

**1. Exercise first.**

Many folks try to squeeze in exercise around the rest of their daily responsibilities. And then, when a meeting runs late or the kids need some extra help with homework, that workout time vanishes. Instead, put your morning run or yoga practice at the very top of your daily to-do list. If you commit to exercising as soon as you wake up, you might discover a 20-minute block of time you've been losing to puttering around the house. Or, start waking up a little earlier. It might take you some time to adjust, but soon you will come to treasure that extra time you're devoting to your health.

**2. Eliminate distractions.**

Worried that you'll wander off course on your way to your morning hike? Put your workout clothes in front of the bedroom door.

Do you want to devote part of your morning to learning the guitar? Leave your instrument and your lesson book in the middle of the living room so you can't walk past them.

Not making enough progress on your New Year's reading list? Leave your current book on the kitchen table before you go to bed and leave your phone on the charger when you wake up.

Tiny hacks like these can be extremely effective at nudging you towards a healthier and more fulfilling morning routine. With repetition, your progress through your day and towards your goals will become almost automatic.

**3. Plan and prep breakfast ahead of time.**

Grocery shopping is one of the easiest ways to cut both calories and costs. Stock up on fresh fruit, eggs, and healthy grains and you'll always have some quick meal options that won't bog down the rest of your morning routine with lots of cooking and cleaning. For a more grab-and-go breakfast, mix up a berry and granola parfait or overnight oats before bed, and start using the brew timer on your coffee machine so that your cup of joe is waiting for you when you get up.

**4. Stack your habits.**

An effective morning routine creates momentum that leads you from one task to the next. Being intentional about how you order your to-do list can help you to reinforce your habits and move through your routine more effectively. "Atomic Habits" author James Cleare calls this ["habit stacking."](https://jamesclear.com/habit-stacking) For example, start telling yourself, "After I get out of bed, then I'm going to put on my workout clothes. After I put on my workout clothes, I am heading out the door." Notice how there's no space in that framework for checking your work email or taking out the trash. Leave things you can do later for after you've crossed off the essentials.

Repetition, automation, and planning ahead can also help you to develop better financial habits. Schedule a meeting and we can discuss how Life-Centered Planning keeps you progressing through your life’s to-do list.