1. Get a quality 7-plus hours of sleep (wake up between 5 and 6 a.m.)

The National Sleep Foundation (NSF) conducted surveys revealing that at least 40 million Americans suffer from over 70 different sleep disorders. Not only that: 60 percent of adults, and 69 percent of children, experience one or more sleep problems a few nights or more during a week.

In addition, more than 40 percent of adults experience daytime sleepiness severe enough to interfere with their daily activities at least a few days each month--with 20 percent reporting problem sleepiness a few days a week or more.

On the flip-side, getting a healthy amount of sleep is linked to:

- Increased memory
- Longer life
- Decreased inflammation
- Increased creativity
- Increased attention and focus
- Decreased fat and increased muscle mass with exercise
- Lower stress
- Decreased dependence on stimulants like caffeine
- Decreased risk of getting into accidents
- Decreased risk of depression

If you don't make sleep a priority, the rest of this article is irrelevant. You may use stimulants to compensate, but that isn't sustainable.

2. Don't check your email or social media (0 minutes)

Eighty percent of people between the ages of 18 and 44 check their smart phones within 15 minutes of waking up. Checking your smartphone puts you in a reactive--as opposed to a proactive--state. Emails and other notifications are databases for other people's agendas. They're distractive inputs that get in the way of creative outputs.

3. Prayer and meditation (5-15 minutes)

Rather than immediately checking your email, and thus setting a reactive tone, go to a quiet place. Take some deep breaths, inhaling through your nose, holding deeply for a few seconds, and exhaling through your mouth.

Close your eyes and express gratitude for this day. Gratitude unlocks within you a view of abundance, as opposed to scarcity.

4. Journaling for two purposes (5-15 minutes)

After reflecting deeply on your blessings, pull out your journal. Write down your top goals--both long-term and for this particular day. Writing down your big picture "vision" everyday keeps it both conscious and subconscious. Research confirms the brain, specifically the prefrontal cortex, is most active and readily creating immediately following sleep. So, thought-dump into your journal about the projects you're working on. With practice, you'll become proficient at getting clarity and ideas.

5. Exercise (20-45 minutes)

Despite endless evidence of the need for exercise, only one-third of American men and women between the ages of 25 to 64 years engage in regular physical activity.

Getting your body going floods your system with dopamine, increases your confidence, and makes you work more productively.

6. Listen to inspirational or instructive content while you exercise (0 minutes)

Ordinary people seek entertainment. Extraordinary people seek education and learning.

By listening to podcasts or audio books while you work out, you'll improve mentally and physically at the same time. After a long enough period of time, you'll have listened to hundreds of books.

7. Take a cold shower (3-5 minutes)

Tony Robbins starts every morning by jumping into a 57-degree Fahrenheit swimming pool. Why would he do such a thing?

When practiced regularly, cold-water immersion provides positive long-lasting changes to your body's immune, lymphatic, circulatory, and digestive systems. It can also increase weight-loss because it boosts your metabolism.

A 2007 study found that taking cold showers routinely can help treat depression symptoms, often more effectively than prescription medications.

8. Consume 30 grams of protein (3-15 minutes)

Donald Layman, professor emeritus of nutrition at the University of Illinois, recommends consuming at least 30 grams of protein for breakfast.

Similarly, Tim Ferriss, in his book, *The 4-Hour Body*, also recommends 30 grams of protein 30 minutes after waking up. According to Tim, his father did this and lost 19 pounds in one month.
Protein-rich foods keep you full longer than other foods because they take longer to leave the stomach. Also, protein keeps blood sugar levels steady, which prevents spikes in hunger. Eating protein first decreases your white carbohydrate cravings.

Eggs, nuts, meats, and seeds are great choices. For me, I just grab a protein shake. Takes two minutes in a blender-bottle.

Conclusion

This morning routine will take you between 60-100 minutes, depending how in-depth you go on each activity. It will change your days, and eventually, your whole life.