

From night owl to early bird

There's nothing intrinsically wrong with being a night owl -- you're looking at one, after all -- but the trouble arises when you have to abide by the schedule of the rest of the world. You know, the one that gets up early for their morning commute and snatches that proverbial worm. Here are eight painless ways to join the early bird ranks.

- **Make a nighttime routine.** Half the battle of getting up earlier is falling to sleep at a reasonable hour. Start a nighttime routine that gets your body ready to relax, and put your routine in motion *at least* 8 hours before your alarm is going to go off in the morning. Maybe this includes taking a warm bath, having a cup of chamomile tea, deep breathing, or getting under the sheets and reading or writing in your journal. Create a ritual that will really get you to slow down and welcome an early bed time with open arms.
- **Turn off the TV and the computer.** Television and the internet are too stimulating for pre-bedtime behavior. Don't watch TV in bed and stop surfing the internet long before your nighttime routine.
- **Lay off the caffeine.** Nineteen cups of coffee during the day may be what's making you a night owl. Switch to decaf at 4pm *at the latest*, preferably earlier.
- **Have a light supper.** Those cheesy chicken enchiladas don't just make you feel sluggish right after dinner. A heavy meal right before bed can disturb your sleep and make it harder for you to wake up in the morning. Stick to lighter nighttime meals for awhile, like [soups](#), [vegetarian stews](#), and [hearty dinner salads](#).
- **Open the curtains.** "Here comes the sun, little darling," and what a way it is to wake up. Excuse the corniness, but there's something life-affirming about greeting the day with the sun streaming into your bedroom. And then there's the practical reason -- it's hard to sleep with the sun in your eyes.
- **Know your motivation.** If you want to wake up earlier just because you feel like a loser when you sleep in, that's not exactly what psychologists would call a positive motivator. You need *a reason to do something* to be successful, not just a reason *not* to do something else. Do you want to get to work before your boss so she can see you looking productive as soon as she walks in? Do you want to have time to write in the morning before the kids get up? Think about what's motivating you to become an early bird in the first place and write down all the reasons. Keep them next to your alarm clock as a motivating reminder when you want to hit snooze.
- **Make morning appointments.** Schedule early morning meetings, workout sessions at the gym with a friend, and teeth cleanings. Make your obligation to wake up earlier not just to yourself but to someone else. You'll hold yourself more accountable if you know your best friend is waiting for you on the elliptical machine.

- **Give yourself an incentive.** If you're the type who responds to rewards for a job well done, this tip is especially important. It can be as simple as a cup of coffee at your favorite cafe or 15 minutes of blog reading before you hop in the shower, but once you've done the hard work of getting out of that big, cozy bed, give yourself a little reward.

questions:

1. How can you relate to this article? Why or why not?
2. Was there anything interesting you learned?
3. Do you agree with their advice? Why or why not?
4. Do you think you can follow this advice for your everyday life? Why or why not?