

WAKE UP MOTIONS

CONNECTING
BODY AND MIND
IN THE MORNING



BY: SLEEKLY

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Wake-Up Motions: Connecting Body and Mind In the Morning

How long has it been since you've gotten out of bed in the morning free from stiff and achy joints? Wake-up motions are gentle movements you can use in the comfort of your own bed to waken yourself gently and help you get out of bed without the usual groans and moans.

Seniors are especially vulnerable to achy joints and muscles as they're less active and more prone to medical conditions such as arthritis. Use gentle exercises and motions to engage the mind and body. Wake-up motions are simple exercises and stretching movements can relax your muscles and joints so you'll have a much easier time moving around after getting out of bed.

A few minutes in the morning can make all the difference in your mood and energy level throughout the day.

“Wake-up Motions: How to Awaken Gently and Completely,” discusses the benefits of waking gently and being able to feel more energetic throughout the day. You'll feel more alert and your circulation will be purring along even before you arise.

You'll learn how important it is to develop a routine before you go to bed at night and how to get a good night's sleep so you're ready to meet whatever the next day has in store.

Next, you'll see how vital wake-up motions and exercises are to your wake-up routine. After you arise, there are some other exercises you can perform to help you meet the day and rid your body of back pain, stiffness and sluggishness. This guide will provide some easy to perform movements which take up a small amount of your morning and help your body perform as it should throughout the day.



You'll also benefit by adding a few minutes of meditation to the morning routine. Your brain and body are particularly susceptible to positive thoughts during the early time of day. Take time to think about what you're grateful for and listen to or read something which motivates or inspires you.

Take some time to plan your early morning routine and how you're going to arrange the morning by performing wake-up motions before getting out of bed. You'll likely awaken refreshed and get up feeling more energetic. It's a great way to start the day!

In the evening, plan for the next day and create a list of appointments or activities. This simple step prepares your mindset for the next day. You'll find doing this also helps you sleep better and gives you something to look forward to in the morning. It may be as simple as planning lunch with a friend or helping someone in your sphere of friends.



Part 1: The Benefits of Waking Gently

There are kinder and gentler methods to awaken in the morning than being jolted up by a buzzing alarm clock or other annoying sound. Wake-up motions, performed before you even get out of bed, can mean the difference in facing the day with a frown or a smile and can determine how well you're going to be able to move and think throughout the day.

Feel More Energetic

One of the most desired benefits of changing your wake-up routine for gentle awakening is to feel more energetic and eager to face the day. Seniors sometimes think feeling sluggish and tired in the morning is inevitable, but a few morning changes can make a world of difference.

When you take some time before getting out of bed to stretch your muscles and relax your joints, you'll move much more fluidly when you arise. Your muscles have been resting throughout the night, but lying in pretty much the same position.

Stretching and relaxing gives you the benefit of getting those "kinks" out of your body before beginning the day and you'll feel much more energetic and ready to engage in work or fun activities.

Improves Brain Power

In the morning, the fuzzy feeling experienced when you're not seeing or thinking clearly when you first get up is a downer to being productive the rest of the day. But, when you perform simple stretching exercises before you arise, your brain becomes engaged and provides better communication to the rest of your body.

You don't have to feel sluggish first thing in the morning. A little planning the night before can help you get the brain power going and you won't necessarily need a first cup of coffee to get you on track.



Improves Circulation

Improving your circulation by engaging in some light exercises in bed helps you get out of bed with more range of motion than usual. Circulation slows down at night so you can rest, but early in the morning you might face the results of slower circulation hampering your movements.

Wake-up motions also help you feel more alert because more blood circulation is reaching all parts of your body - including your brain. Studies show those seniors who performed the easy wake-up motions before rising were much more alert than those who did not.

Better Attitude

When you waken gently, you'll have more enthusiasm for meeting the day with a good attitude. Others around you are likely to notice the change and comment because you'll awaken with a smile on your face.

Meeting the day with a better attitude than usual can set up the day so you're better able to engage in activities you enjoy - or perform better at your work. You don't have to be tired and grumpy when you awaken each morning. Try the wake-up motions you'll learn about in this guide and you're sure to notice the change.



Part 2: The Night Before – Why It’s Important to Have a Regimen

Waking to a kinder, gentler morning requires you to prepare the night before. If you do things to impair your sleep, it’s doubtful you’ll awaken refreshed no matter what you do in the early morning hours.

A good routine at night helps you waken easily in the morning without the sluggishness often accompanying a fretful sleep the night before. There are some rules every senior should incorporate in their nightly routines:

- Avoid napping during the day – Naps during the daytime hours may interfere with your sleep at night and make you feel sluggish and fatigued when you waken. If you do need to snooze during the day, limit it to a few minutes (not over 30).
- Don’t exercise too close to bedtime – You should engage in some physical exercise during the day, but exercising too close to bedtime may keep you awake because you’re energized.
- Make your room comfortable – The room you sleep in should be dark, cool and quiet. Items such as blackout shades, a good quality mattress and pillow and earplugs may help the environment. Arrange your room so it’s set up for the best sleep possible.
- Dine lightly and watch the alcohol content – Heavy meals and too much alcohol can make you sluggish and foggy-minded when you wake. Eat your heaviest meals early in the day and a light meal for the evening.



- Create a night time ritual to lead you to bed and a good night's sleep - When you have a night time routine, your brain tells your body to wind it down and relax. A nighttime routine of relaxing steps also helps you make the transition between being fully awake and drowsy.
- Clear your mind from stressful thoughts - Before you sleep, you should rid the most stressful thoughts from your mind in any way you choose. Sometimes soft music, reading or relaxing in a warm bath helps to relax your body and mind so you can sleep better.
- Try writing down any thoughts which might keep you awake and then give yourself permission to think about it tomorrow. Also, taking a few minutes to list then next day's activities provides a feeling of direction and control.

Stick to a night time routine and sleep schedule as much as you can. Being consistent in your regimen helps your body to become used to the awake/sleep cycles and will help you sleep better at night and waken much easier and more alert.



Part 3: Exercises to Make a Part of Your Wakening Regimen

There are some simple exercises you can perform before you arise which will help back pain and improve your range-of-motion - a couple of problems most seniors suffer from and may interfere with having a good day.

Here are some exercises you can choose from and try them while still in bed. Start with 5 repetitions and increase to 10 as muscles grow stronger:

- Leg Raise - Lying on your back and pressing your hips into the mattress, raise each leg in turn as much as you can and gently lower. Keep your abdominal muscles tight as you perform the exercise.
- Curl Ups - Lying on your back, knees flexed and arms across your chest, slowly curl up your shoulders. Keep your abdominal muscles tight as you do this exercise.
- Bent Knee Raise - Lying on your back, knees flexed, tighten your abdominal muscles and raise one knee towards your chest. Grasp the knee and pull to your chest as far as possible. Slowly lower and repeat on the other side.
- Pelvic Raise - Lie on your back, knees bent and feet flat on the bed. Tuck your belly and tighten your buttocks while lifting your pelvis.
- Hip Flex - Begin on your hands and knees. Slowly bring your hips back until almost sitting on your ankles, then return to the starting position. Repeat several times.

These exercises will help to strengthen both your abdominal and back muscles and also help your posture during the day. Be sure to perform the movements slowly and deliberately, thinking about each movement to keep the momentum.



Part 4: Meditate to Get Your Day on the Right Path

One of the most important exercises you can engage in before you get out of bed and begin the day is to meditate. Take a few minutes to give thanks for your gifts. Think about all the things you're grateful for - friends, family, health, mental acuity or anything to make you glad to be alive. You'll be surprised how this relieves any anxiety or worry you are experiencing.

You can use meditation as part of your wake-up routine by choosing how you'd like to meditate. Here are some suggestions to help put you in a good mood before your day begins:

- Music - Listen to soft music or nature sounds to both relax and stimulate your mind to ready it for the day's work or activities.
- Books or Recordings - Reading a motivational book or listening to a recording during your waking time can make a world of difference in how your day progresses.
- Silence - Even silence can be a good method of meditating if you think good thoughts and just "be" in the moment. Use silence to your advantage - especially in the morning.

Before you get out of bed, think of something to make you smile. Perhaps it's a grandchild who lights up your life or a friend who's always there for you or an upcoming vacation.

Meditation can help you both mentally and physically. Some of the benefits include prevention of stress, lowering blood pressure, decreases tension causing headaches and muscle and joint aches and the increase of serotonin which can improve your mood.

Meditation in the morning can greatly improve your morning and the entire day. Try it for a few days to see how it affects your life.



Part 5: Plan Your Day the Night Before

Making plans in the evening for how you're going to spend the next day can help your waking hours go much smoother and will even help you get a better night's sleep. You'll awaken more refreshed and better able to meet the day.

This only takes a few minutes, but does a lot to keep looking forward to the next day. Be sure to include some activity you can look forward to - whether it's taking your pet to the park, baking cookies, reading a new book or listening to a CD or planning a lunch with friends.

Volunteering is a good way to look forward to the day and also to help others. If you're blessed with more time and energy than others, volunteer your time. You'll feel better about yourself and how you spend a day.

Wake-up motions can change your attitude toward life. As seniors, we often become bogged down in our own aches and pains and what's wrong with our lives. Perhaps you've lost loved ones or suffer in other ways which can lead to depression and hopelessness.

Anyone can make wake-up motions a part of his or her life. The benefits are great and the time it takes is miniscule. The way you greet the day can not only determine how the rest of the day will go for you - it can make a difference in your entire lifestyle and whether you'll be happy or distressed.



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