

How to Relax...

By Stressing Yourself Out Each Morning.

We all want to relax.

There is an epidemic of anxiety.

Countless pills, books, and glasses of wine are purchased every day with the hope of relaxing.

But most of it isn't effective and a lot of it is dangerous with increases in mortality associated with the use of many sedative agents.

Why?

Why is trying to get calm so difficult?

The simple answer is that we are doing it **all** wrong.

I was doing it wrong.

There is a good chance that you are too.

Understanding and applying these next simple points will change your life and make it so much easier to relax and improve your productivity.

There are three things to know to understand implementing these changes.

1. There are two independent systems affecting your level of stress or arousal.

Our bodies have *two* nervous systems a *sympathetic (or activating) nervous system* and a *parasympathetic (or calming nervous system)*.

The sympathetic nervous system traditionally called the "fight or flight" system is designed to activate muscles and face stressors, to pursue food or run from predators.

The parasympathetic is designed to rest and restore the body, to calm down at the end of the day. It is responsible for processing food, emotional bonding, and the healing of wounds.

2. These systems have a daily rhythm

Our ancestors had a daily rhythm when it came to stress. They had most stress and activity in the morning hours. Your stress hormones are highest from around 7a.m. to 10 a.m. as your body is ready for stressful activity.

Emotional stress was highly connected to this period of increased physical activity. They *worried* about food while hunting. They *worried* about shelter while looking for it.

We know that stressors are handled better in this window, particularly when tied to physical activation.

3. The most important part of relaxing is the “release” of this activating system NOT enhancement of the calming system.

Not only do we know that stress is handled better in the a.m. but we know that the most important component of calming is actually facing stressors in this window.

You have to “release” your activating system by engaging it. This will help your calming system take over in the evening for rest, recovery, restoration, and bonding.

We know that morning exercise lowers midnight blood pressure more than exercise at any other time during the day.

How should you change your life?

Morning should be a time of facing challenges (physical, mental, emotional).

Evening should be a time of recovery and emotional bonding.

Anything you're going to worry about you worry about before noon. Pay attention to it. Think about it. While you keep your stressors in mind, try to be active, move around engage your body, your mind and your emotion.

If you can't be physically active, expose your body to some others stressors, take a cool shower, acupuncture, all while imagining all of your emotional challenges for the day.

After noon attempt to deescalate. Do routine or mundane tasks. Avoid too much excitement. Bond with your network. Put off any challenges that you can until that next morning window.