FEEL GOOD

I WOKE UP LIKE THIS!

Waking up in the morning can be difficult, but having a ritual of some kind could help you start your day with more energy. By Boitumelo Mmakou

Your alarm clock goes off and you immediately feel the troubles of the day pile up. Suddenly, you’re overwhelmed with all the work that seems impossible to get done. Having a morning ritual can be helpful to your mental health.

HOW DO MORNING RITUALS BENEFIT US?
Clinical psychologist affiliated to Akeso Clinics, and South African Depression and Anxiety Group (SADAG) chairperson, Dr Colinda Linde says whether we are aware of it or not, we all have daily habits or rituals she defines as unconscious (happens automatically) or preconscious (easily recalled thoughts). Dr Colinda recommends these five morning routines to help you get through your day:

BE ALARMED
Make sure you set your alarm clock the night before; it will help you get out of bed if you usually struggle. Your body can get used to waking up at a certain time and, in the long run, you may not even need to use your alarm.

PREP THE NIGHT BEFORE
Before going to bed at night, write down what you wish to get done the next day. Plan everything – what you will eat for breakfast, the route you will take to work and your tasks for that day. This should put less pressure on you when you wake up. Read the plan in the morning and try to follow it as it is written.

MEDITATION
A five-year study done by a psychiatrist at Harvard Medical School, John Denninger, proves that meditation has health and mental benefits. According to the study, eight weeks of daily meditation for 12 to 20 minutes a day produced a significant 43% increase in telomerase (an enzyme that slows down the ageing of your cells). This will therefore decrease your ageing process. So, whether you start with a breathing exercise, yoga or prayer, you will have less stress when starting your day and reduce your ageing.

EAT YOUR BREAKFAST!
According to a review done by the Journal of the American Dietetic Association in 2005, 47 breakfast-related studies found that eating breakfast is likely to improve mental function related to memory. By eating a healthy breakfast every morning, you can help yourself have a productive day, think clearer and be smarter.

EXERCISE
Studies done by the South African Heart Association show that moderate exercises, such as walking, have reduced risk of stroke by 20% in moderately active people and by 27% in those who are highly active. It’s recommended that you start your day with a 30-minute exercise or activity, five days a week. This will be good for your mental well-being and fitness.

For more on morning rituals visit bona.co.za