

# DAILY ENERGY RHYTHM

*Developing awareness for your daily energy flow*



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*“Knowing yourself is the beginning of all wisdom.” -Aristotle*

The journey I am on drives me toward a complete and total understanding of myself, my thoughts, my emotions, and my capability for physical expression. Though I will never get there (there is no true endpoint) I am endlessly intrigued by the knowledge and strength I am gaining.

Most of everything I have learned has come from increased awareness of the moment, increased introspection after the moment, and speaking only if I have questions to ask or value to provide.

I am by no means the most aware or enlightened individual, however, the pursuit has taught me a great amount about myself. You will be the only one who can introspect on the benefits to you.

What is the flow of your energy throughout the day?

The term “Energy” has come to mean a lot of different things in the health and wellness space. For this conversation when I say energy I am using the dictionary definition of ‘the strength and vitality required for sustained physical or mental activity.’

With this definition in mind revisit the question above.

As you move through your day how much energy do you have for physical activity?

How much do you have for mental activity (for most of us this is work-related)?

When do you tend to have the most energy for these activities and when do you have the least?

When you wake up in the morning how do you feel?

How do you feel before eating?

How do you feel after eating?

How do you feel at the end of your work day?

How do you feel in the evening hours up until bedtime?

For the next week, I want you to write down your answers to the questions above. Take note of your trends over the week. Then you can start to notice how these trends affect you. Do you have more productive days and less productive days? If so, do these days align with higher or lower energy days?

I also want you to notice what habits and behaviors you have that align with your energy levels. These can be positive or negative. Right now is not the time to decide rather it is a time to notice.

Our energy levels are affected by stimuli both inside of our body and in the environment around us. Food, water, light, temperature, physical, and mental activities all can increase or decrease our energy. Paying attention to the stimuli that provide you with energy and the ones that take away from your energy is essential if you wish to improve how you feel, perform, and recover.

For this portion of the ebook, I am intentionally not providing answers to the questions I am asking. All I want to do here is have you notice and in the next portion we will start to discuss what is typical rhythms and the stimuli that bring our energy up and down.

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# Clean up your behaviors and improve your mind

Would it be easier to go through life knowing what will happen or be in a state of constant surprise? If you could know that every morning you will wake up rested and ready to accomplish anything in front of you would you choose to have that experience?

If you do not understand your normal energy rhythms and/or you do not understand how the stimuli in your environment affect your rhythms then you will physically and mentally live in chaos.

There is no way for us to control all of the variables in our life. Nor would we want to. If everything was predictable life would be boring. I believe that to be our best selves, we should strive to live where our energy levels are predictable. The variables we cannot control come from the actions of other humans, animals, and nature. We can control our actions that affect our mood and energy. We will respond best to the variables we can't control if we take responsibility for the ones we can.

To make more sense of this imagine your boss assigning you an unexpected task. The task is difficult and requires more attention than your normal daily tasks. For example, on day one you come into the office with stable and predictable energy levels, and on day two you come in feeling like your energy is on a rollercoaster. How would your thoughts, emotions, and productivity change between the days?

Energy rhythms are largely under our control. If your energy is predictable and stable you will inevitably respond to unstable environments better. Adding chaos to a stable environment will have little effect, however, adding chaos to a chaotic environment can be unmanageable.

The way we feel in our mind and body dictates how well we respond to the environment around us.

Knowing the importance of maintaining your energy levels and building awareness around them is great, however, we have to identify what a typical rhythm is and the biggest factors affecting our daily rhythm.

Most humans will operate best when their day aligns with the patterns of sunlight. The light from the sun is a powerful signal that reaches our brain through our eyes and skin. The sun is responsible for setting our circadian rhythm (our internal clock) which increases our alertness and energy in the morning and helps us drift to sleep in the evening. Taking 10-15 minutes every morning to be out in the sun and removing artificial lights in the evening will promote a healthy rhythm.

A normal rhythm for humans is to wake up (with the sunrise) feeling rested, then experience the highest levels of energy until late afternoon (2-4 pm), and slowly become relaxed and tired as you approach bedtime (dusk into the dark).

The specific times will vary from person to person, however, the general flow for everyone other than shift workers should look similar to this.

How close does your energy follow the pattern above?

### **Behaviors that can optimize your energy levels:**

- Morning Sunlight
- Reduction or removal of stimulants (mainly caffeine and nicotine)
- Consistent Sleep-Wake Cycles
- Optimal Nutrition
- Sustainable Exercise and Daily Movement

### **Behaviors that can dysregulate your energy level:**

- Irregular light exposure (artificial light in the evening and after dark)
- Excessive or poorly timed stimulants
- Poor sleep habits
- Poor nutritional choices
- lack of adequate movement

Many of these behaviors are ones we have discussed in the past. Now is an opportunity for you to assess which behaviors you are doing well with and are benefiting your physical and mental energy as well as which ones you need to put more effort into.

If you can become consistent with the behaviors above then you will find yourself waking up easier, being more productive, and best of all having a stable mood throughout the day.

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