

create a meaningful
morning routine

A MICROCOURSE

Lesson ONE

Welcome and Getting Started

Welcome!

Congratulations on making the decision to live with more intention. This Microcourse will include everything you need to know to start a meaningful morning routine.

Come back to the beginning if you lose motivation or things get in the way of establishing your new habit. There is no shame in starting over. Beginnings can be challenging, but they are also exciting.

After one week of practice, you'll have implemented the basic groundwork for your morning routine. You will also know exactly how to build your 10 minute routine into a 30 minute routine over time.

You could jump right in and start practicing for 30 minutes a day, but it is the slow build that will create a foundation and make this practice important and sustainable.

Stuff Optional.

You won't need much or anything at all to get started. I recommend gathering what you decide you'll need in advance of your first day of practice.

Depending on your morning routine activities, you might need: pen and paper (or journal), timer, music, other supplies depending on activities. Everything is optional and you can practice with nothing if you prefer.

Contents & Getting Started

1. Welcome and Getting Started (that is this page)
2. Day One: Why & How
3. Day Two: Actually Beginning
4. Day Three: Choosing Activities
5. Day Four: Always Before Email
6. Day Five: Habit Stacking
7. Day Six: Road Blocks
8. Day Seven: And Beyond
9. F.A.Q.

You own this course which means you have access to the material forever and ever. You can take this course one lesson per day or week, or at a pace that works better for you.

Also included are links to helpful articles, audio recordings, and recorded video webinars.

Any time you see something in the course material underlined and blue like this --> [blue](#), that is a link. Click on it for new material.

The most important part of the course is closing the gap between awareness and action. The course material will increase your awareness of the importance of a morning routine and how to develop one that is meaningful in your life.

Delivering that information is my responsibility. The action part is your responsibility. This will only work if you implement the recommendations.

Each day will have the information you need for awareness plus a special daily **Action Step** section.

While you can execute the course anyway you like, I highly recommend reading through each day and then reading everything again, one day at a time while implementing the action steps on a daily basis.

Lesson TWO

Day One: Why and How

Before moving forward, it will help to identify your *why*. I can tell you why a morning routine is important and how it will benefit your life, but you should also write down a few reasons you want to establish a morning routine. Write a few sentences in a journal or digitally.

Day One.

Because this is a microcourse, only small steps are required each day. For today, all you need to do is choose one activity and set a time to start your morning routine.

Choose Activity

Before you choose your activity, think about how you want to spend your morning. You can always switch this up later, but it helps to start with something you are either curious about or interested in.

Eventually you will be doing more than one activity, but for today, choose the one you'd like to start with.

Here is a brief list of ideas. Feel free to choose one of these or add your own.

- sitting quietly
- meditating
- reading
- writing
- praying
- stretching
- yoga
- drawing

The first activity in my morning routine is meditating.

Choose Time

What time do you usually wake up? Tomorrow, wake up 10 tiny minutes earlier. You won't be spending 10 minutes on your morning routine, but that will give you enough time to devote 5 minutes to your first activity.

Tomorrow is the big day when you start practicing your morning routine. Woo Hoo!

Day One Action Steps

- choose one activity
- set your alarm for 10 minutes earlier than you usually wake up

Lesson THREE

Day Two: Beginning

Good Morning!

Today *will* be a good morning because this is the actual beginning of your new morning routine. You've been getting ready and now it's time to start.

Day Two.

Find a quiet place where you can practice your first activity. This time is just for you, so you may need to wake earlier than the rest of your family, or find a quiet space. If you don't have a separate space, think unconventionally. A big closet or bathroom might work. If the weather is agreeable, practice outside if it gives you more space.

You are building this practice to enjoy your activity, but more so to create a sense of time and space before you begin your day. Dedicating time to do something for yourself before you dive into your day reminds your body and brain that you are taking care of yourself and that you intend to have the best day possible.

Instead of starting your day with 5 rounds of the snooze button and rushing through breakfast, if you even have time to eat, you are making time to nourish yourself with what you need most. That will look a little different for everyone.

Sometimes our auto-pilot morning actions are more about getting out the door than really getting into life.

If things get in the way of starting, pay attention to what they are so you are prepared the following day.

Common Resistance

Snooze Button. Sleeping in feels good, but studies show that the extra 5 or 10 minutes you gain doesn't contribute anything to energy levels or long term health.

Feeling Selfish. If you feel guilty about giving yourself a few minutes in the morning, consider this: People need you. Those people are in your house, at work and even in your inbox. Your time is in demand and your contribution is valuable. The only way to give fully to everyone is to give fully to yourself first.

Other Distractions. If other things come up that force you to miss your practice, notice what they are. Something may not present an immediate explanation, but usually there is a clear correlation between why you aren't practicing and how you are feeling about taking the time.

Why You need a timer

I highly recommend using a timer at least for the first 6-8 weeks of your practice. You can use the timer on a watch or phone or create a playlist with songs that add up to approximately 5 minute increments.

Without a timer, you will naturally direct your focus to wondering how much time has passed especially if you are meditating or sitting quietly.

I did an experiment during my 7th week of practice to see if the timer was still necessary. I wanted to see if I had a good sense of the time, but also to see it affected things and how long I really wanted to be in my practice. With a timer, I would have spent 22 minutes in practice, but without it, I took 27 minutes.

Now, many years later and much more free time, I don't use a timer. Sometimes I use music to inform me of the time. That allows me to relax into my morning routine instead of trying to guess the time and move faster or slower than I actually need to.

Once you start your practice, you might be tempted to move things along more quickly and spend more time doing your activities. This is especially true if you love what you are doing. Resist! If you are thinking, "if 5 minutes feels this

good, 10 minutes will be amazing”, redirect your focus to the lessons that moving slowly have to offer. While you are establishing your new habits, you are also practicing how to slow down. You already know how more, better, faster works. It’s time to give a slower approach a chance to work in your life.

[Here is a playlist](#) that you might enjoy. The songs and times are listed below, so you can mix and match for the time you need. We may have different taste in music, so feel free to create your own list.

One Fine Day 2:40
Blackbird 2:18
Somewhere 5:20
Beautiful Things 5:10
Thinking Over 5:07
Love Letters 4:56
If I Could 2:25
She is Love 2:38

The times are not exact, but you can come up with several 5 minute-ish combinations to work with.

When you get to the point where there are several activities in your routine, music provides a nice transition so you don’t have to stop and reset a timer in between.

Day Two Action Steps

- drink a glass of water
- practice your activity for 5 minutes (not longer, even if you want to)
- check your alarm and make sure you will wake up 10 minutes early tomorrow
- write about distractions and resistance and see if you notice why they come up.

Lesson FOUR

Day 3: Choosing Activities

Choosing Activities

While you are still in the process of establishing your morning routine habit, eventually you will expand your practice to include multiple activities.

The activities you choose don't replace other time you may spend doing them. For instance, if you practice yoga during your morning routine, you might still attend a yoga class in the afternoon. If writing is one of your activities, you can still write during the day.

Remember, the morning routine is not specifically about the activities, but more about how the practice of the activities informs your day. For instance, each of my activities seem to feed each other and prepare me for a creative, active day.

I start with meditation where I turn inward. I quiet my mind and the outside noise. I pull everything in.

Next, I move into yoga or another type of movement and send all that energy that I just brought in right back out again. I push it out of my mind and body and muscles and into the world.

Then, I take a walk where I start slowly and then start moving more briskly. I bring everything back in sending blood to my heart, oxygen to my cells and ideas to my brain.

Writing completes my morning routine. With my writing practice, I let everything back out onto paper.

With those activities, I'm not just meditating, doing yoga, walking and writing. Instead, through this morning routine practice, I quiet my mind, nourish my body and open my heart and brain to creative ideas. It also helps me to make time and space to let the day unfold instead of trying to control it.

Day Three.

Today you are still practicing your first activity for only five minutes, but take time during the day to identify a second activity for your morning routine. Be curious and experiment to find which activities add the most value to your life.

Choose activity number 2 and starting tomorrow, spend 5 minutes on each activity, adding one minute to each one every week. This is the method I used to build my morning routine. Once I had built a 30 minute practice with 2 activities (15 minutes for each), I added more activities.

You might be thinking that there is no way you can find 30 extra minutes each morning, but if you take it slowly, building by a minute or two each week, waking up earlier isn't a sacrifice compared to the benefits you will begin to notice. And, because you are making the transition slowly, it won't be a total shock to your system.

Make a list of all the activities you may want to build into your morning routine. Don't worry about what you "should" do. If you read somewhere that you need to consume 20 grams of protein within 30 minutes of waking, you can let that go. If someone told you that the best time to exercise is first thing in the morning, consider that it is the best thing for the person that told you the story.

While meditating and movement or reading is best for me, reading and writing or praying and stretching may be best for you.

While you are considering your activities and what your morning routine will look like as it develops, remember that this is not about how much you can accomplish by 7am. Productivity, efficiency and more, faster, better have no place here.

What do you want to do for yourself before anyone else needs you to do something for them?

Day Three Action Steps

- drink a glass of water
- practice your activity for 5 minutes (not longer, even if you want to)
- identify your second activity to add to tomorrow's practice
- check your alarm so you can wake up 15 minutes early tomorrow

Lesson FIVE

Always Before Email

You Run the Day ...

Or the day runs you ... right into the ground. Running the day doesn't mean scheduling away every moment or acting like a Drill Sergeant. It means that you are fully aware of the opportunity to spend the day with your attention on the right things. A meaningful morning routine supports this opportunity.

Your morning routine becomes the place you can revisit during the day when things get crazy. A deep breath, soft stretch or journaling a few sentences can quickly bring you back if things get out of hand.

The practice and foundation you've built acts like an energy source that you can tap into all day long.

Day Four.

Now that you've mastered the snooze button, it's time to really put your morning routine first. With that extra bit of time to yourself in the morning it can be really tempting to peek at your email, glance at Facebook or "check in" to various digital portals.

With that seemingly harmless glance or check, you've given the world permission to invade your brain, thoughts, moods and actions. If you use your phone as an alarm clock, you may even tap into your email before your feet hit the ground in the morning. Stop it.

The world will survive without you for an extra hour (or more) every morning. That urgent work crisis in your email wasn't urgent before you read the email. The drama on Facebook wasn't important or affecting your mood until you sent it a personal invitation.

Do your morning routine before email and any other digital distractions.

Day Four Action Steps

- drink a glass of water
- practice your 1st activity for 5 minutes and add your second activity for 5 minutes. (not longer, even if you want to)
- check your alarm so you can wake up 15 minutes early tomorrow
- keep track of how often you "check" your digital connections via phone or computer or other digital device.

Lesson SIX

Day Five: Habit Stacking

Build Habits on Habits

You are building a morning routine minute by minute and habit by habit.

You probably already practice habit stacking without even knowing it. If you wake up, take a shower, use shampoo, then conditioner, dry off and get dressed, you're a stacker. Perhaps you stack in the evening by brushing your teeth, washing your face and reading a book before bed. You can probably identify little pockets of habit stacks throughout your day.

While I strongly believe in the power of one at a time, habit stacking gives you the momentum to build multiple habits simultaneously. Each habit triggers and supports the one to follow.

Day Five.

Habit stacking is essential for your morning routine. Yesterday you begin practicing 2 activities for 5 minutes each. You should be transitioning from one activity to the next without much (or any) time in between, for a total of 10 minutes.

Music is really helpful when you add activities so you don't have to check your timer. If you know in advance how long each song is, you can gauge how much time to spend on each activity.

Perfection has no place in a morning routine, so don't time your music down to the nano-second. If your first activity runs just shy of 5 minutes and your second activity goes a little longer, nothing bad will happen. You are still a good person and your morning routine will still be powerful!

Day Five Action Steps

- drink a glass of water
- practice your 1st activity for 5 minutes and add your second activity for 5 minutes. (not longer, even if you want to)
- check your alarm so you can wake up 15 minutes early tomorrow
- make a list of your current habit stacks and a few ideas of habit stacks you'd like to develop in your morning routine or during other parts of the day.

Lesson Seven

Roadblocks

When it All Falls Apart

Every good intention will face resistance, distraction and unexpected road blocks. This is part of the habit building process. Each time something comes up, you make a choice to throw in towel or start over. That intentional choice defines you and future decisions.

It's not the action, but the reaction that sets the stage.

Here are a few things that may come up with recommendations to move forward.

1. **You hit the snooze button instead of getting up early.** While doing your morning routine first is important, if occasionally you have to do it later in the day, do it. Don't use getting up late as an excuse to completely miss your routine.
2. **You are sick and don't feel like practicing your morning routine.** If you miss one day, get back on track the next day as if nothing happened. If you miss a few days in the first two weeks, start over. Build your practice from the beginning. It will also help to think through your morning routine even if you aren't actually practicing. Go through the motions in your mind while you are nursing your illness. This process will help you stay connected to your routine.
3. **Your child stays home from school, or you have an early appointment.** Instead of skipping your routine, practice a shorter version. Go to where you practice and acknowledge the space and importance of the practice. Even that simple step will keep you on track.

Day Six.

Once you clearly identify the benefits of your practice, distractions will come up less frequently. You'll discover workarounds and stay committed to the precious time and thoughtful morning routine you created.

After several days of showing up to practice your morning routine, you should be noticing signs of improvement in different areas of your day and life.

Day Six Action Steps

- drink a glass of water
- practice your 1st activity for 5 minutes and add your second activity for 5 minutes. (not longer, even if you want to)
- check your alarm so you can wake up 15 minutes early tomorrow
- identify one benefit you notice already from your morning routine.

Lesson EIGHT

Day Seven: And Beyond

The Benefits

You've been building your practice for 7 days. Each day your commitment becomes stronger and you will notice how spending your morning with purpose and intention changes your day, and your life.

Some benefits you may experience:

Compassion. When you take care of yourself, you treat people more kindly.

Clarity. When you stop rolling out of bed and into your day, you make decisions more quickly and clearly.

Health. A day that starts with healthy habits encourages other healthy habits.

Creativity. You will be more awake and receptive to creative ideas than you are when you need a big coffee to get your eyes open.

Yes, there is more to come. More goodness and health and happiness.

Seven Weeks

If you've committed to developing your morning routine slowly, for maximum impact, you will embrace the following schedule and recommendations.

Week One

Two Activities for 5 minutes each. Total: 10 minutes.

Week Two

Two Activities for 6 minutes each. Total: 12 minutes.

Week Three

Two Activities for 7 minutes each. Total: 14 minutes.

Week Four

Two Activities for 8 minutes each. Total: 16 minutes.

Week Five

Two Activities for 10 minutes each. Total: 20 minutes.

Week Six

Two Activities for 12 minutes each. Total: 24 minutes.

Week Seven

Two Activities for 15 minutes each. Total: 30 minutes.

And Beyond ...

After seven weeks, even if you've experienced a few hiccups, you've established a strong practice and meaningful morning routine.

You can continue your 30 minute practice, or if you are inspired to add new activities, add them one at a time, following the time recommendations detailed above. In other words, it will take another 7 weeks to settle into a new, extended routine.

You can also change up your activities and see how you respond to something new. You won't ruin the habit by trying a different activity.

Day Seven.

While your formal instruction ends here, continue practicing. Be curious and kind to yourself. Don't worry about finishing or doing better or more.

Simply find joy in the practice.

Your goal is not to be the best morning routine maker ever, but instead to notice boosts in health, happiness, kindness and inspiration.

Enjoy your life through the intention and purpose you are creating day by day and minute by minute.

Day Seven Action Steps

- drink a glass of water
- practice your 1st activity for 5 minutes and add your second activity for 5 minutes. (not longer, even if you want to)
- check your alarm so you can wake up 15 minutes early tomorrow
- make a small chart with an outline of the next 6 weeks based on your activities and the timeline recommended above. Add benefits you are noticing each week on the chart to motivate your commitment and remind you why your morning routine is so meaningful.

Lesson NINE

F.A.Q.

Enjoy.

Congratulations! You've been practicing for 7 days, and have a strong foundation for your morning routine. This routine may change depending on seasons and circumstances, but once you know how to establish the habit, and experience the benefits of this special morning time, you will have the motivation and commitment necessary to make it a regular part of your life.

F.A.Q.

Do I have to meditate during my morning routine? None of the activities are mandatory. You are welcome to try meditation, but if something else is more appealing, do that. Think about things that you can practice in 5-15 minute chunks of time.

Do you practice everyday? I go through periods of time when I practice everyday and then others where I only practice my morning routine only on weekdays. It all depends on the time of year and what is going on in my life.

When will I start to notice the benefits? It will vary from person to person, but I think on the first day, you will notice a benefit. Taking the first step is powerful and may inspire other beginnings.

Can I do my morning routine with someone else? You could, but I highly recommend carving out this time just for you.

Can I steal your morning routine? Of course! meditation, movement, walking and writing are great activities to start the day, but only if they make sense for you.

Can I practice my morning routine at night when I have more time? That would be an evening routine, but you are welcome to engage in a routine of healthy habits and activities anytime. The morning routine is great for setting yourself up for the day, but there are great benefits for practicing any time of day. You can use the recommendations in this Microcourse for any habit-stacking routine.

What if my family keeps interrupting my morning routine? You might want to wake up before they do to practice, or have a conversation with them about how important this is to you. Let them know how long it will take and what they can do while they wait for you. Remind them how grateful you are for the time with lots of hugs and kisses when you finish your practice each day.

How can I contact you with questions or feedback on this Microcourse? email me anytime: support@bemorewithless.com

Thank You!

I am so grateful that you took this course and hope that the morning routine you create is powerful in your life.

xo,
Courtney

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