



Do Your Routines Serve or Sabotage Your Productivity?

Routines are important and powerful. They allow us to save time by not having to make decisions. They can support you, your vision, and your goals, or they can work against what you actually want to achieve. From having a cup of coffee every morning to jogging a mile every morning. Everything you do in a day, on routine, can determine how productive you will be in a day or over time.

We all have routines, but few of us actually intentionally chose our routines. We just seem to fall into them subconsciously and we continue them without a second thought, unless there is an obvious indication that they are not working.

Your current routines might be okay, but are they bringing you closer to your goals? Do they support your values and priorities? Examine your daily routines and determine how well they serve you.

Are there small changes here and there that would enable them to serve you better? Even a small alteration in a routine can make a big difference when they are performed consistently. Over time, these actions add up.

Answer these questions about your routines:

1. **Morning routine.** From the time your alarm goes off until you're out the front door, what do you do?
 - ◆ What time do you get up? How many times does your alarm go off before you get out of bed?
 - ◆ What do you think about while lying in bed before getting up in the morning?
 - ◆ What's the first thing you do when you get out of bed?
 - ◆ Do you eat breakfast?

- ✦ What do you have for breakfast? Full breakfast? Coffee? Smoothie?
- ✦ Do you eat breakfast at home or grab something on the way in?
- ✦ Do you decide what to wear in the mornings?
- ✦ What else do you do in the mornings before officially starting your work day?
- ✦ Do you believe you use your pre-work time productively?

2. **Work routine.**

- ✦ Do you take the same route to work every day?
- ✦ Do you get gas before work or after?
- ✦ How do you use the time in your car?
- ✦ Do you usually arrive early, on time, or late for work?
- ✦ What's the first thing you do when you arrive at work, your office or work space?
- ✦ How do you decide what you will spend your time on each day at work?
- ✦ How much time do you waste doing things that don't allow you to get done what needs to be done at work?

3. **Meals.**

- ✦ Do you eat at the same time every day or does it vary?
- ✦ How does the times of day you eat affect your work day or productivity?
- ✦ Do you buy your lunch or bring it to work?
- ✦ What is your snacking routine?
- ✦ Do you prepare healthy meals ahead of time or just throw together what you can at the last minute?

4. **Evening at home.**

- ✦ How do you spend your time after you get home from work? Cooking dinner, laundry, yard work?
- ✦ Do you spend time with your family?
- ✦ What hobbies do you spend time on?
- ✦ Do you engage in work-related activities in the evening?
- ✦ If you are an entrepreneur, do you have a specific time in the evening when you stop all work-related activities?
- ✦ Do you decide what you are wearing to work at night or in the morning?
- ✦ Do you shower in the evening or in the morning?
- ✦ Do you watch TV or listen to music while working at home?
- ✦ How do you use the time before bed?

5. **Weekends.** How do you spend the weekends? What are your weekend routines?

- ✦ Do you wake up at the same time you do during the week on the weekends?
- ✦ Is there something you do on the weekends only?
- ✦ Do you attend church?
- ✦ Do you schedule “ME” time?
- ✦ Is your shopping done on the weekends?
- ✦ Do you take weekend trips?
- ✦ Do you work on the weekends or do you have a “no-work” on the weekends rule?

Evaluating Your Routines

What is your general impression of your current routines? Are there any obvious weaknesses or places where you'd like to adjust and utilize your time better?

Identify wasted time. Look at your routines and determine how much time you're wasting each day. Include all non-value activities, like watching TV. You might be shocked by the number of hours you're wasting. Start thinking about how you could better use that time.

Examine your goals, values, and priorities. Take a few minutes to jot these down. It's not really possible to evaluate a routine without having criteria to evaluate against. This is an important step. If you don't know what's important to you and what you want to accomplish, you're undoubtedly wasting a lot of time.

Also, consider the challenges you're currently facing in your life. Are your routines helping, harming, or having no effect on solving your challenges?

Now, go back and **create routines that make sense for you.** Consider your current challenges and goals:

- ✦ What activities can you do each day that support what you're trying to accomplish?
- ✦ What can you do each day that will move you closer to your goals?
- ✦ What is the best way to use your time in each of your routines?

You might be able to accomplish more in the morning than just getting to work on time. With a proactive pre-bedtime routine, you could teach yourself a language or a new skill that could help your career. What do you want to accomplish?

You can accomplish anything with effective routines. What are you thinking or considering after reading through this document?
