

[IMAGE]

# The Early Bird Gets the Worm: Why Earlier Is Better for Your Health

By Editorial Staff

It is believed that the expression "the early bird gets the worm" first appeared in a collection of English proverbs in the early 17th century, but its meaning and significance from a life and yes, *health* perspective, certainly transcends any time period. When it comes to your health, earlier is indeed better; here are a few reasons why. As you'll quickly appreciate, doing things early is generally healthier than doing them later (or not at all)...

1. *Early to Rise (and Fall)*: Waking up early and getting to bed at a decent hour are both beneficial from a health and wellness perspective. First, the two are generally connected; wake up early and you won't be as likely to push the midnight hour or later on a regular basis. Second, people who wake up early often find they accomplish more; in fact, many business executives and other successful people wake up early. You'll be amazed at how much you can get done first thing in the morning, before the rest of the world joins you in the madness.

On the flip side, retiring for the evening before the clock strikes midnight (or whatever hour you consider "late") ensures you avoid the unhealthy habits often associated with late nights. Turn in early, get a great night's sleep, and then wake up early. Try it out and see how much better you feel.

2. *Early to the Treadmill*: Working out first thing in the morning is a great way to invigorate your body and mind for the day ahead. If exercise isn't your "religion," it also ensures you get it done early, so the "*I still need to work out*" voice isn't reverberating in your brain all day. Evidence also suggests that some people who exercise later, particularly within a few hours of bedtime, have more difficulty falling and staying asleep than people who exercise earlier in the day. And since the need for fuel, in the form of food, is high following a workout, early exercise promotes hunger, which increases the odds you'll get to the breakfast table and reap the health benefits there, too.

early bird - Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark 3. *Early to the Table*: Speaking of the health benefits of breakfast, you can't beat a balanced, nutritious breakfast when it comes to setting yourself up for a great

day. There's a reality in play here: You've been asleep for 7-8 hours, which means you probably haven't eaten anything in at least 9-10 hours (since eating immediately before bedtime can also impair your ability to sleep). When do you *ever* go that long between meals – and what do you probably feel like when you do? Lethargic, unfocused, distracted (probably by the thought of food) and more likely to eat larger-than-needed amounts of whatever comes your way.

Start your day with a healthy breakfast; it doesn't have to be enormous, but eat something that will give your body and brain something to work with. You'll be glad you did.

4. *Early to "The List"*: Ah, it's the list you make every day (in your head, if not elsewhere) that rules your world and never, ever seems to get done. Want to at least have a chance to complete your daily To-Do List? Start by getting to it early. The power of a daily list is only exceeded by the sense of achievement and satisfaction you receive from completing items on the list. The earlier in the day you get started, the earlier in the day you'll reap the positive benefits, including piece of mind that the list won't still be hanging over (and in) your head when evening comes.

5. *Early to Reflect*: We live in a world increasingly devoid of self-reflection. Instead of taking time to think, we click, swipe, tap, scroll and flash from one screen to the next; one activity to the next; one poorly evaluated choice to the next. Start the slow-down process by starting the process of reflection early and repeating it often throughout the day.

How do you feel about yourself? How is your day (week, month or year) going? If you're feeling great, why – and how can you do more of it? If you're down in the dumps, why – and how can you turn things around? Are you using your time wisely? Are you living for yourself – or someone else? Make time for less reality TV and more reality. It may be the healthiest choice you ever make.

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