

The Morning Routines Of These Badass Women Are Your Ultimate A.M. Guide

Snooze no more.

By Emily Abbate

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Every single one of us has 24 hours in a day (yes, even Beyoncé). And how you handle the first few can set you up for success in the rest, making you more proactive and better able to deal with what's thrown your way, research shows.

“A solid morning routine offers you control and peace of mind,” says Mary Kelly, PhD, CEO of Productive Leaders corporate advising. “That way, if something unexpected happens later, you can flex with the situation. You’ve already taken the time to accomplish some important things on your to-do list.”

Truth. At Women’s Health, we’re mildly obsessed with maximizing our early hours, so we wanted to take a closer look at the a.m. habits of powerhouse ladies. These 10 women are experts in managing hectic mornings to fit in sweat, a nutritious breakfast, self-care, and prep for the day ahead. Steal their tips for fitting it all in first thing.

1 - The Wake-Up Warrior



MARCOS CHIN

Ashley Horner, 35, Ironwoman, Reebok-sponsored athlete, owner of American Brew restaurant, founder of the Unbroken Foundation

With a packed training schedule and three boys under 12 running around her Virginia Beach home, Horner has mornings that can be...less than calm. Here's how she gets up and at 'em.

Prep at night: “Laying out all the clothes for my boys, packing lunches, and going over the next day’s schedule make a major difference in the morning rush.”

Write it out: Every a.m., Horner journals before her kids wake up. “I write what’s on my mind, then figure out which thoughts I can let go of, like work stress, being upset about people’s actions, or seeking closure—things I can’t control. A lot of my journaling is about being okay with hardships.”

Create a tradition: For the Horners, it’s Doughnut Tuesdays, and it helps the little ones build a happy association with the early hours. “Once a week, we go to Sugar Shack, a Virginia doughnut chain. We celebrate just getting over Monday.”

2 - The Speed Demon



Jes Woods, a Nike+ Running coach and Flywheel Sports studio manager who is all about quick and early self-care

As an ultramarathoner and coach, Woods is often up before the sun at 5:30 a.m., training for her next race or leading athletes through their workouts. Still, she makes time for a few fast indulgences before heading out the door. Woods swears by a five-minute detox foaming face mask from Malin+Goetz (\$46), as well as oatmeal with dried fruits, nuts, and raw honey for a breakfast that's balanced with carbs, protein, and fats.

On her runs, she typically skips music so it doesn't become a crutch. "I think getting lost in your thoughts on the trails is better than getting lost in your music." But when she does need some extra oomph, it's *The Greatest Showmansoundtrack* on repeat. "Those are my power songs, and it feels like a treat for when times get tough."

3 - The Sweat Seeker



Just because Julie Foucher, 30, has retired as a CrossFit Games athlete doesn't mean her mornings don't start with exercise. Now a family medicine resident in Cleveland, Foucher hits the gym four days a week to wake up with box jumps and burpees before reaching for her stethoscope.

5 a.m. Wake up, get dressed, pack lunch. “I use my phone as my alarm, but I keep it charging in the hallway outside my room. It forces me to get out of bed when it goes off and makes it easier for my husband to sleep.”

5:15 a.m. Drive to CrossFit class at Black Flag Athletics; hydrate with water on the way.

5:30–6:30 a.m. Crush the Workout of the Day (WOD).

6:30–7 a.m. Shake up some chocolate mint Nooma coconut water and dark chocolate Puori whey protein powder to refuel muscles; shower and get ready for work in the locker room.

7–7:30 a.m. Drive to work listening to a podcast. “My go-to is Found My Fitness by Rhonda Patrick, PhD—she interviews experts on the science of nutrition, health, and longevity and explains it in a practical way.”

7:30–8 a.m. Prep for work at the clinic and eat breakfast. “I like [True Fare meals](#). I make their breakfast skillet and eat it with half an avocado and coffee with Nutpods nondairy creamer. It has the best consistency.”

Um, are your mornings ALWAYS that intense? “No! When I don’t do a full workout because it’s a rest day or I just don’t have time, I do something called ‘Morning Fives.’ They’re mini routines I complete right when I roll out of bed. I’ll do 25 burpees or five minutes of yoga, air squats, or pushups. These little combos of movement get my blood flowing and prepare me to conquer the day.”

4 - The Morning Meditator



Jeena Cho, 40, attorney, host of the Resilient Lawyer podcast and coauthor of The Anxious Lawyer

In 2011, Cho was a successful bankruptcy lawyer with a very rushed a.m. routine. “I used to wake up and be in such a frenzy to get through everything. I found that sense of hurriedness carried throughout the day.” It wasn’t until she was diagnosed with social anxiety disorder that she started to really slow down during the early hours and focus on her health.

“Now, I’m more intentional about self-care. I create a morning buffer, spending an extra 10 minutes on things like meditation, showering, and checking emails. It gives me a sense of spaciousness, calms me down, and helps me recognize that negative thoughts from my inner critic, like no one wants to hear me give this speech today, aren’t true.” Cho practices insight meditation (a form that focuses on body sensations and thoughts, with the goal of becoming more in tune with reality). “I keep it short,” she says. “When I forget to do it, I don’t waste time berating myself or getting upset. I simply begin again.”

5 - The Fueled-Up Foodie

Alexandra Dawson, the nutritionist and creator of [In My Bowl](#) (a plant-based lifestyle site) celebrates any a.m. wins.



A mom of two, Dawson, 30, is up around 6 a.m. for some me-time before her son and daughter wake up. “Knowing I have limited minutes, I prioritize what makes me feel best: the ritual of picking a mug, pulling an espresso shot, and slowly sipping it,”

she says. “I wish I could fit everything into my morning—a jog, stretching, answering emails—but I make the most of what I can sneak in and really own that. It puts me in a lovely mindset.”

BOWL GOALS

Dawson has been mixing up this banana-avocado “ice cream” smoothie bowl in the morning for years—and it feels like a treat every time.

Make it: Blend 1 frozen banana, 1/4 ripe avocado, 2 handfuls spinach, 1/2 tsp cinnamon, 1 tsp wheatgrass powder, and 1/2 cup unsweetened almond milk. Pour into a bowl and serve.

6/7 - The Sunrise Greeters



NBC

Always up before the sun, Hoda Kotb and Jenna Bush Hager are a.m. experts who welcome millions of viewers to their mornings as Today show cohosts. We asked them to dish on the predawn hours.

Kotb, 54, cohost of Today's fourth hour, has the happiest morning.

She wakes up at 3 a.m. to make her first Today shift at 7, before joining Bush Hager during the fourth hour. She hops in the shower, then tiptoes downstairs (careful not to wake her partner, Joel, and daughters Haley and Hope). She lights a fresh linen-scented candle and journals.

“I write three things I’m grateful for and one great thing that happened in the past day,” Kotb says. “It level-sets me so I’m not starting off the day thinking about everything I need to do. It fills my head with goodness.”

She has a playlist of “happy morning tunes,” with artists like Jason Mraz, James Taylor, and Stevie Nicks, that she listens to as she writes. When she’s done, she finds a quote to share on Instagram. “It usually has to do with what I wrote that day, and seeing people’s comments on the post always makes me feel connected to the world. It makes you realize we’re all often going through the same things.”

A driver picks up Kotb, and sometimes they chat on the way to the studio. “There’s a sense of kinship, talking to people who are also awake and working that early. Those are my people!”

Breakfast is Peet’s extra-bold coffee and Starbucks Sous Vide Egg Bites, plus an orange later while she’s in hair and makeup on-set. Yum!

Jenna Bush Hager, 37, cohost of Today’s fourth hour, focuses on her spiritual side

5:15 a.m. Wake up; make coffee. “I add almond milk, Moon Juice Brain Dust and Beauty Dust, and cinnamon to get some more nutrients.”

5:30 a.m. “Each year, my dad, sister, aunt, and I read a different devotional together. Every morning we read the same new passage and then text each other our favorite part, illustrated by emojis. It sets my priorities straight.”

5:45 a.m. Shower.

6 a.m. Make a green-veg smoothie to go, then set out bowls and cereal for my girls. “I leave little notes in their backpacks before I head out the door. Since I can’t see them in the mornings, it’s my way of connecting with them.”

6:10 a.m. Ride to work. “I listen to a guided meditation on the [Calm app](#). Each day there’s a lesson on something like self-worth or discipline, and they’re 10 minutes long, which is the exact length of my ride. It gives me time to focus on myself, so that when I arrive I’m ready to attack emails and catch up on news as I prep for the show. I always feel more at peace after.”

8 - The Consistency Queen

MARCOS CHIN

Tara Foley, 34, founder and CEO of natural beauty company [Follain](#)



Foley sticks to a reliable system each morning. She makes the same oatmeal, rocks a Steve Jobs–esque work outfit (a black blouse, jeans, and high-top Nikes), and follows the same foolproof beauty routine daily. “I have so many decisions

and surprises with the business and my kids throughout the day that I try to make everything as easy as possible in the morning.

Face Time: “I use a roller to help my facial oil absorb deeper and give myself a mini massage. It makes my skin look firmer.” [Province Apothecary Dual-Action Jade Facial Roller](#), \$44.

It’s this fundamental need to take out the decision-making process for myself so I have more bandwidth for choices later on.” She’s obsessed with quality skin care and starts off her regimen with only a splash of cold water—no face wash needed. “I don’t like to undo all the good work from my nighttime routine!”

Five Steps, Five Minutes...and her makeup is done.

9 - The Time-Management Wizard



Meggie Smith, 33, MD, reproductive endocrinology and infertility fellow at the University of Southern California, is a total schedule commander who still manages to fit in fun

Case in point: Her 80-hour workweeks didn't stop her from training or running in plenty of races. (Her fastest

26.2 is 3:34:07—a 2013 Boston Marathon qualifying time, no less.) Here's how she does it.

Pace your caffeine: “I drink a Nespresso first thing after my 5 a.m. alarm, then get another coffee across the street from my office before walking in at 7:00. The first caffeine hit helps me feel normal, and the second keeps me sharp for the rest of the day.”

Build momentum: “While I'm sipping my first coffee, I write down the to-dos I must get done that day, and I check off one task. Something as simple as unloading the dishwasher makes me feel productive. Once I get in that mindset, I'm ready to tackle the bigger projects.”

Look at sweat as self-care: “I feel like running is my friend. Even when I'm deep in the depths of residency, or moving or interviewing for jobs, I always have this friend to go back to, anytime, anywhere. That makes me look forward to my workouts.”

“I put my devices in here every weeknight around 9 p.m. My phone is too stimulating, and I need to be able to calm down.”

“The light comes on before your alarm. For me, it gradually gets brighter from 4:30, which means the eventual 5 a.m. nudge isn’t so much of a shock.”

“I like to wind down with some fiction because it helps me get out of my own life and turn off my brain for a while.”

10 - The Rise and Shiner



Trinity Mouzon Wofford, founder of GoLde superfood powder tonic and masks, 26, finds her a.m. routine is key in structuring her day, since home is also the office.

What's the first thing you do?

“Pour myself a really big cup of lemon water. I’m usually pretty dehydrated, especially since it gets hot in our tiny apartment. From there I grab my phone, but I try to limit the screen time to about 15 minutes for emails, social, and the news—otherwise I get sucked in, and the next thing I know, an hour has gone by.”

How do you wake up your body?

“If I don’t have a lot of time, I’ll do 10 to 15 minutes of stretching, but ideally, it’s 40 minutes of Yoga With Adriene. Her videos are super approachable and focused on individual exploration as opposed to achieving perfection. Starting my morning by getting in touch with my breath and my body really makes me feel my best and sets a positive tone that helps me tackle whatever’s to come.”

How do you create work/life boundaries?

“I always take a shower and put on ‘work clothes’ in the morning to differentiate me-time and business time. It creates a great work persona, and as long as I’m in that, I’m in the zone, even though I’m at home.”