

The 5-Minute Morning Routine to Feel Better All Day

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A few minutes in the morning can help your body feel better throughout your busy day.

You might not be able to do anything about the 10 hours per day you spend hunched over a laptop. But spending just five minutes every morning with the right exercises can help you feel better no matter what the day brings.



Try this simple, five-minute morning routine to improve the other 23 hours and 55 minutes of your day.

Minute 1: Diaphragmatic Breathing

Also called belly breathing, it helps regulate your autonomic nervous system to reduce morning stress, says Mike Boyle, A.T.C., owner of Boston-area Mike Boyle Strength and Conditioning.

By teaching you how to engage your diaphragm for every breath, it helps you reduce stress all day long — and prevents the tight shoulders that often result from chest breathing, he says.

Instructions: Lying on your back in your bed or on the floor, put one hand on your stomach and the other on your chest. Take a deep breath in through your nose. As you breathe in, allow the hand on your stomach to be lifted as high as possible without moving the hand placed on your chest, Boyle says. Then, tighten your abdominals to force the air out through your mouth, your hand sinking toward your belly button. Repeat. Watch a quick tutorial [here](#).

Minute 2: Hip Foam Rolling

Foam rolling is good for more than post-workout recovery, Boyle says — especially when it comes to your hip muscles. Excessive sitting can cause those muscles to become tight and inactive, leading to weaknesses and back pain, says Jacquelyn Brennan, C.S.C.S., co-founder of Mindfuel Wellness, which conducts corporate and personal wellness initiatives in Chicago.

Sit on a foam roller and move back and forward in small motions to massage your buttocks and hips. Photo Credit Yeko Photo Studio/Adobe Stock



Instructions: Sit on a foam roller and cross one leg over the opposite knee (as pictured), Boyle says. With your hands on the floor for balance, slowly move your body back and forth on the roller. Switch legs to repeat on the opposite side. Then, flip over facedown so that your pelvic area (the crease where your legs meet your torso) touches the roller. Use your hands to move your body along the roller, leaning to one side at a time to massage that area, Boyle says. Watch a video of how to roll the front of your hips [here](#).

Minute 3: Supine Twist

“Twisting lengthens the spinal rotator muscles that attach one vertebra to the next, and engages other muscles through the core and low back,” Brennan says. “By awaking these muscles, you prepare

yourself for functional movement throughout the day, increase blood flow and stimulate the digestive organs.”

One word of caution: If you often suffer from back pain, wait to perform any stretches until you've been awake for an hour or so, she says. First thing in the morning, an accumulation of fluid within the spinal discs can make the spine stiff.

Feel a slight stretch in your back as you perform the supine twist.

Instructions: Lying faceup on the floor, hug both knees in toward your chest. Stretch one leg out on the floor in front of you. Keep your other leg bent and draw that knee across your body, allowing it to fall toward the floor. Extend your arms out to a “T” position and look to the opposite side of your knee. Take five to 10 deep, slow breaths. Return to center, hug both knees into your chest, and repeat on the other side.



Minute 4: Prone Press Up

This dynamic exercise engages the back muscles to prepare them to maintain proper posture throughout the day. It also opens up the front of your hips to alleviate tension in the hip flexor muscles and resulting back pain, Brennan says. Plus, by targeting the rarely stretched abdominal muscles, it feels amazing.

The prone press up is similar to cobra pose in yoga. Only press up as far as you can comfortably, without feeling any strain in your lower back.

Instructions: Begin with your forehead on the floor, hands under your shoulders, and elbows close to your body. Press your chest up so that you are looking straight ahead. Squeeze your triceps, back, hamstrings and glutes as you press up, Brennan says. It's OK if your hips come off the floor slightly. Pause, lower down to the floor, and repeat.



Minute 5: Seated Forward Fold

By moving your spine through its full range of motion, you gently stretch the hamstrings to move well throughout the day. Plus, by engaging the postural muscles that make up your core and torso with , you develop your ability to maintain healthy posture throughout the day, she says.

Gaze down toward your knees to feel this stretch in your neck. It's OK if you can't touch your toes!

Instructions: Sit on the floor with your legs extended or slightly bent. Reach your arms straight out in front of you. Inhale through your nose and then, as you exhale through your mouth, round your spine forward (all the way up through your neck), she says. Pause, then reverse the movement to return to start. Keep your core muscles engaged throughout the movement. Sit tall: Stack your ribs directly over your hips and your ears over your shoulders. Repeat.

