

Getting through the day

How the right routine can make your life better



People do their morning exercise in Shanghai, China.

What does the word *routine* make you think of? For many of us, it may mean repeating the same actions. However, a carefully planned routine can make your personal and professional life better in many ways.

A routine can also bring a sense of place and purpose—we know where we are and what we have to do. In 2010, 33 miners became trapped in a mine in Chile. To help the miners, team leader Luis Urzúa set up a work and eating schedule for them. Experts agreed that Urzúa's **¹encouragement** to keep a routine was a key factor in keeping the miners alive until their rescue—69 days later.

But routines aren't just **²helpful** for **³survival**. Artists from painter Joan Miró to author Adele Parks have said that a work routine is the key to **⁴creativity** and success. If you don't have to think constantly about what to do every day, your mind is free to think about big ideas.

However, when developing a routine, it's important to set up the right kind. In fact, if you wake up and immediately rush to work, you may be missing out on the best **⁵creative** thinking time of the day. Science journalist Anne Murphy Paul writes that the best approach is to "set the alarm a few minutes early and lie awake in bed, following our thoughts where they lead." This gives your mind time and space to be creative when you aren't thinking about anything else or rushing to the next thing.

It's **⁶unnecessary**, though, for all of us to have the same routine—especially at work. Simon Slade, CEO of a company in New Zealand, says that his employees "have complete control over their personal schedules...the input of hours and how an employee organizes them doesn't really matter to me, as long as they are continuing to improve and producing excellent work." You might think this encourages **⁷laziness**, but researchers in Germany found that workers who set their own schedule actually work more hours than those whose routines are set by the company.

While some routines may lead to boredom, a carefully—and personally—chosen one can increase comfort and happiness. So, ask yourself: is my daily routine working for me? If not, it may be time to **⁸rethink** it.

3 Read the article again. Match the beginnings of the sentences (1–5) with the endings (a–e).

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| 1 In an emergency situation, a routine may | _____ |
| 2 For artists, a routine can | _____ |
| 3 For working people, rushing through their morning routines may | _____ |
| 4 In business, workers who choose their own routine | _____ |
| 5 A personally chosen routine can | _____ |
- a lead to success.
b block creative thought.
c work longer hours.
d save lives.
e make you feel happier.