

Morning Anxiety

Cheat Sheet



Waking up with dread does not mean the day is doomed. This is a plan for the first hour - six small moves, in order, no willpower required.



WHY MORNINGS HIT HARDEST

Around 30 to 45 minutes after you wake, your body releases its biggest cortisol surge of the day - the **cortisol awakening response**. It is built-in chemistry meant to get you moving, but on an anxious morning it feels like proof that something is wrong. **The dread is partly a hormone on a timer, not a prophecy** - and it fades as the surge does.

1

The 10-minute phone rule

MIN 0-10

Dread plus a feed is gasoline. For the first ten minutes the phone stays where it is - no email, no news, no scroll. You are not avoiding the day; you are letting your brain boot up before handing it a fire hose.



2

Feet on floor, curtains open, glass of water

MIN 1-3

Both feet down, curtains wide, one big glass of water. Morning light tells your body clock the day has actually started, and three tiny wins land before the worry finishes its opening argument.



3

One long-exhale minute

MIN 3-5

Before coffee, before plans, take one quiet minute: in through the nose for 4, out slowly for 6 to 8. The long exhale is your body's built-in brake - it tells the alarm system it can stand down now.



4

Move a little before you think a lot

MIN 5-20

A short walk, gentle stretches, a few slow shoulder rolls. Your body already made the stress fuel; easy movement burns it off. Ten minutes of motion beats an hour of lying still, negotiating with the dread.



5

Eat something with protein

MIN 20-40

Eggs, yogurt, peanut butter on toast - anything with protein in it. Steady blood sugar means a steadier mood, and shaky-hungry feels almost identical to anxious, so do not make your brain guess.



6

Give the day's dread an appointment

MIN 40-60

Jot down whatever the worry is shouting about, then book it a slot: "that is a 5 pm problem." Worries with an appointment stop knocking all morning - and most of them look smaller when you actually show up to the meeting.

