

# Brisk Awakening

Brisk awakening is a technique that involves rising out of bed at the same time each day. This is hard to do when you're depressed. The following are the steps involved in brisk awakening:

## 1. Wake up and start your day at a regular time

Officially, the day starts when you get out of bed and stand upright. The nervous system shifts into high gear when you stand up, causing blood to pump more intensely so you don't faint. Those changes also set the biological clock, so if you wake up - and stand up - at the same time each day your energy, sleep, and mood will improve. "At the same time" actually means give or take 15 minutes. That's the margin of error that the biological clock can tolerate.

## 2. Morning routine

Establish a few routines to help you stay out of bed, like:

- Open the curtains and turn on the lights
- Disable the snooze button
- Make the bed
- Shower and dress (put on shoes!)
- Other:

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## 3. Energizing activity

Start your day with activities that make you feel more energized and alert. Energizing activities get you going and keep you going. Perhaps you are already doing these things in the evening, such as surfing the web or decorating the house all night. If that's the case, just move them to the morning, and save the passive, relaxing, wind-down activities for the hour before bed. The following are all qualities that characterize an energizing activity:

- It involves standing, moving, or changing positions, rather than sitting or lying down.
- You get absorbed or caught up in it.
- It's slightly addictive. The more you do it, the more you want to do it.
- It peps you up a little instead of leaving you drained.
- It's interactive instead of passive.
- It's something you look forward to.

**What's energizing to one person can be draining to another, so take these examples with a grain of salt and think about what works best for you:**

- Step outside and move around for 15 minutes
- Aromatherapy (mint, lemon, geranium, juniper, rosemary, and sage are activating)
- Make a cup of coffee or tea
- Make breakfast
- Take a cold shower or wash your hands and face with cold water (this improves wakefulness by causing blood vessel constriction)
- Get a head start on work or chores
- Get some sunlight or turn on bright lights
- Call a friend or talk with the people you live with
- Play energizing music, like dance, gospel, or exercise tunes (for a calmer effect, try nature sounds with a morning feel, like chirping birds)
- Sing, dance, or play a musical instrument
- Stretch
- Garden
- Take care of pets
- Go for a drive or run errands
- Other:

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**For Your Next Session**

Over the next week, check the box for each step of brisk awakening that you completed.

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
Woke at a regular time (____ a.m.)							
Got out of bed upon awakening							
Made the bed							
Engaged in energizing activity							

# Brisk Awakening: Troubleshooting

## **"Nothing energizes me."**

Depression can make it hard to feel energized. If everything you do feels the same, think of things that once felt energizing when you weren't depressed, or choose from the list on the previous page. Brisk awakening can work even if you don't feel the energy, it may just take longer.

## **"It's hard to get up."**

If you find that you are having difficulty getting up in the morning, try some of the following techniques:

1. Use a dawn simulator to wake up (see page 86).
2. Use a lively alarm clock (see page 88).
3. Make it a game. Keep a timer next to your bed to track your progress. Each morning, start the timer when you wake up, and stop it when you get out of bed. See if you can beat your record. Ideally, you'll be out of bed within a minute of waking.

## **"I set my alarm extra early because it takes me a while to get up."**

Although it's tempting to deal with morning fatigue by sleeping in a little longer, that second round of sleep can disorganize brainwaves in ways that cause even more grogginess when you wake up again. When it comes to sleep, focus on quality, not quantity.