

Asset HealthTalk

Keeping your health and wellbeing in the know

Start Your Mornings out **WRITE**



There's a daily ritual that is taking business gurus, entrepreneurs and creative types alike by storm – Morning Pages. It was first introduced by Julia Cameron in her book *The Artist's Way*.

It's simply stream-of-consciousness writing done first thing in the morning. Even if writing isn't your strong suit, this exercise is for you. In terms of what you write, there's no wrong way to go about this practice. You can jot down your fears, ambitions and daily plans, or you can merely string together words you like – whatever comes to mind. How you go about it is key.

THE PROCESS:

1. Fill three letter-sized pages with writing. Words will most likely flow initially. It's when you get to the second and third pages that you need to start digging deep and the good stuff starts to surface.

2. They must be done first thing in the morning when creative juices are flowing – before you're bombarded with the tasks and worries of the day.

3. Morning Pages must be handwritten. You may be tempted to use your computer to complete them if you type fast but the point is to slow down and make the emotional connection of placing your thoughts on paper.

4. They must be kept private. If you're worried about someone seeing what you've written, you may hold back. If you need to destroy the pages when you're done in order to ensure this, go ahead. The power is in the process rather than the product.

Getting your thoughts out at the beginning of your day instead of allowing them to ruminate can help you resolve issues, calm your mind and spur insights. It's a powerful tool for your personal and professional life. Why not give this transformational technique a try!

"Why It's Worth Making Time for This Lengthy Morning Ritual," Jessica Stillman, inc.com, Aug. 7, 2014.

Enhance Your **EYE HEALTH** With This **Power-Packed Smoothie**



In honor of the American Optometric Association's *Save Your Vision Month* this March, here is a tropical smoothie recipe designed to give your vision a boost. This smoothie contains **carotenoids** (vitamin A-like compounds that promote eye health and may prevent age-related macular degeneration) and **lutein** (an antioxidant

that may reduce the risk of chronic eye diseases and cataracts) from the kale; **vitamin C** (which may reduce the risk of macular degeneration and cataracts) from the orange juice and strawberries; **potassium** (an important mineral for the proper functioning of the body) from the bananas; plus fiber (aids in proper digestion).

Combine **1 cup strawberries** (frozen or fresh), **2 cups orange juice** (look for varieties with no added sugars or squeeze your own), **1 tablespoon freshly squeezed lime juice**, **1 ripe banana**, and **2 kale leaves** (stems removed) in a blender and purée until smooth, about 45 to 60 seconds. Serve immediately and enjoy!

Makes 2 servings.
Total Calories: 210, Protein: 4 g,
Fiber: 4 g, Fat: 1 g, Carbohydrates: 48 g

Adapted from yoursightmatters.com.

Strange-Sounding Therapies That Could Help Remedy

Your SLEEP TROUBLES

Sleep hygiene describes the actions you take throughout the day that impact your quality of sleep at night. Examples of these actions include: keeping electronics out of your bedroom, avoiding caffeine or dinner close to bedtime, and lowering the lights a half hour before bed.

According to Michael Grandner, Director of the Sleep and Health Research Program at the University of Arizona College of Medicine—Tucson, sleep hygiene is like being told to wash your hands; it's a form of prevention, but isn't a treatment.

But what about the 70 million Americans who have a sleep disorder? They need more than small changes. The following are therapies that sound strange but may be prescribed by a doctor for those who truly can't fall asleep.

STIMULUS CONTROL

Try adopting the notion that lying in bed equals sleep. If you're in bed and can't fall asleep within 15 minutes, get out of bed. The goal is to reinforce your body's connection with the bed as only a place to sleep. In some cases, sleep deprivation may occur the first few weeks of practicing stimulus control, since you may have to get out of bed a few times each night. However, this technique is a crucial part of cognitive behavioral therapy for insomnia, which targets a person's thoughts and behaviors for better sleep.

SLEEP RESTRICTION

A doctor may tell you to only spend five hours in bed and then get up. This effective treatment for insomnia limits the amount of time a person spends in bed not sleeping. This causes some sleep deprivation that can help a person feel more tired the next night. More time in bed is prescribed as sleep

improves. Given the potential for negative side effects, don't try this technique without a doctor's supervision.

PARADOXICAL INTENTION

This technique involves tricking yourself into trying to stay awake and is used for people who are worried about not sleeping. Don't obsess about trying to be asleep; instead, obsess about trying to stay awake if you really need to fixate on something. Eliminating the frustration of not sleeping may help.

BIOFEEDBACK

For this therapy, you are connected to a device by a sleep specialist, which allows you to watch your own biological signals, such as your heart rate, brain waves and breathing patterns. Then, you train yourself to moderate those measurements, eventually being able to use those skills at bedtime to invite relaxation and sleep.

POLYPHASIC SLEEP

The thought behind this is that humans don't naturally sleep in one long stretch of time. It is completely normal and possibly beneficial to sleep early, wake up, do a task, then go back to bed. Something that is not a good idea (and likely dangerous) is thinking you can "hack" your sleep for more productivity by only taking short naps throughout the day.

THOUGHT CHALLENGING

Some people, if they lie awake and don't fall asleep, convince themselves something horrible, such as a car crash, will happen the next day. Asking people you know how many times that has actually happened is one way to challenge those thoughts, according to Grandner. You can let those thoughts go by making the case that those possibilities are very unlikely, which provides you with some ammunition to fight irrational thoughts.