

FAST FIVE

Set the tone for a better day



Julie Manuel is a licensed professional clinical counselor and clinical program manager at Kettering Health Behavioral Medical Center

Beginning your day on a positive note involves more than waking up on the right side of the bed.

"How you start your morning can set the tone for your entire day," says Julie Manuel.

Even if your schedule feels crammed, these five strategies are simple to practice and can significantly improve your attitude for the entire day.

- 1 Set one alarm.** "Setting multiple alarms sets a precedent of pushing things off," says Julie. "When you hit snooze, not only do you start the day feeling rushed, but you begin it with a pattern of delaying tasks."
- 2 Skip the scroll.** When you use your phone as your alarm, it's easy to start checking texts, emails, and social media notifications before getting out of bed.

"I recommend removing all apps from your home screen," says Julie. "Just seeing notification flags on app icons can trigger stress." Save checking texts, emails, and other notifications until you are ready for the day.

- 3 Stretch.** The health benefits of exercise are undeniable, but you may not always have time for a morning workout. One thing you can do while still lying in bed? Stretch.

"When you stretch appropriately and do a deep stretch, it releases dopamine," says Julie. "Starting your

day with stretching or exercise will help you feel centered and give you the added perk of a mood boost."

- 4 Show gratitude.** Many people might journal or pray in the evenings, but starting your morning by showing gratitude can offer perspective that lasts all day by bringing your awareness to all the good in your life.

- 5 Say, "Good morning."** "Humans are wired for connection," says Julie. "Taking a few moments to connect with your family, friends, or neighbors—whether it's a short conversation in person or a brief phone call on your commute—primes your brain to know you don't have to go through your day alone."

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If you feel like your daily life is becoming unmanageable due to stress, anxiety, or depression, help is available. Call **1-855-807-5590** or visit **ketteringhealth.org/mentalhealth** to learn more about our behavioral and mental health services.