

# Wellness

## Wednesday



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## 6 Things You Should Do at Night if You Want to Be Happier in the Morning

As we all strive for a happier and more fulfilling life, it's important to recognize the impact that our night-time habits can have on our overall well-being. While many of us focus on establishing a solid morning routine, the evenings often get overlooked. However, making a few small changes to our nighttime habits can make a significant difference in our mood and happiness the following day. In this Wellness Wednesday, we will explore six strategies that experts recommend for a happier morning.

### Take an Evening Walk

A short evening walk can do wonders for quieting a busy mind and promoting relaxation. Whether it's a leisurely stroll around the block or a final walk with your furry friend before bedtime, spending a few minutes outside can help reduce blood sugar levels after a meal and allow you to wind down. Psychologist and well-being specialist Lee Chambers suggests that taking an evening walk allows him to process the day's information and create a peaceful environment for a restful night's sleep.

If you decide to take an evening walk when it's dark outside, it's important to take some basic safety precautions. Wear reflective gear or brightly colored clothing, choose a well-lit and familiar route, consider asking someone to accompany you, and bring your phone for emergencies. However, it's best to avoid distractions like texting or wearing headphones that can compromise your awareness of your surroundings.



### Put Your Phone Down

In this age of constant connectivity, it's crucial to disconnect from our devices before bed. The blue light emitted by screens can disrupt our sleep patterns, making it more difficult to fall asleep and wake up feeling refreshed. Yale University psychology professor Laurie Santos suggests turning off screens at least 30 minutes before bedtime and keeping your devices away from your bed to resist the temptation of checking them throughout the night.

Reducing screen time is a step toward creating a more relaxing environment for our senses. Our lives are filled with constant stimulation, and avoiding screens is one way to counteract this. Chambers recommends incorporating sensory wind-down rituals into our evening routine, such as using relaxing scents, calming sounds, and enjoying soothing warm drinks. These activities allow our senses to disconnect and recharge, setting us up for a more peaceful and restorative sleep.

### Take a Warm Bath or Shower

Immersing yourself in a warm bath or taking a pre-bed shower can have numerous physical and mental health benefits. Mind-body psychologist Justine Grosso suggests that a bath can improve mood, sleep quality, and cardiovascular health. If you don't have a bathtub or prefer showers, a pre-bed shower can also enhance sleep by lowering your core body temperature, making it easier to fall asleep and maintain proper sleep throughout the night.

### Practice a Mindful Body Scan

A mindful body scan is a powerful technique for easing chronic stress and mental rumination. Cortland Dahl, a research scientist at the University of Wisconsin-Madison's Center for Healthy Minds, recommends this simple mindfulness exercise. While lying in bed, bring your attention to each part of your body, starting from your head and slowly moving down toward your toes. Pay attention to the sensations you feel, approaching them with warmth and non-judgmental curiosity. This practice activates the brain network responsible for self-regulation and inner balance, helping you de-stress and let go of tension before sleep.

In addition to body scans, other practices like yoga nidra or gentle stretching can activate the parasympathetic nervous system, responsible for the body's "rest and digest" response. These activities promote relaxation and help your body return to a state of ease and emotional regulation after a stressful day.

### Reflect on Your Day

Instead of focusing on what you haven't accomplished, take a moment to appreciate the progress you've made. Lee Chambers suggests noting the steps you've taken toward your goals, the challenges you've overcome, and the tasks you've completed, no matter how small. This reflection on progress creates a foundation for forward momentum and a positive mindset for the next day.

Cortland Dahl also emphasizes the importance of self-reflection as a way to end a busy day. He suggests thinking about what you've learned and how you've grown throughout the day. By reframing stressful events as opportunities for self-discovery or alignment with your values, you strengthen your capacity for insight and approach the next day with an open mind ready to learn.

### Cultivate Gratitude

Before going to sleep, take a few moments to write down three to five things you're thankful for. Expressing gratitude has been shown to significantly improve well-being. Psychologist Robert Emmons and his colleagues found that listing your blessings can lead to increased happiness. Make gratitude a daily habit by incorporating it into your nighttime routine.

Cortland Dahl suggests closing out the day with a short gratitude practice. By reflecting on the people you appreciate and the things you're grateful for, you naturally feel less stressed and more connected as you drift off to sleep. Over time, these practices can help your body return to a state of ease and emotional regulation more quickly after a stressful event.

In summary, the small changes we make to our nighttime habits can have a profound impact on our happiness and well-being the following morning. By taking an evening walk, putting our phones away, indulging in a warm bath or shower, practicing a mindful body scan, reflecting on our day, and cultivating gratitude, we can set ourselves up for a more positive and fulfilling start to the day. Remember, a happier morning starts with a happier night.



# GREEN CURRY NOODLES



## INGREDIENTS

6 ounces flat rice noodles  
16 ounces firm tofu  
1 red bell pepper  
12 ounces baby bok choy  
1 teaspoon neutral vegetable oil  
Kosher salt and fresh black pepper  
3 tablespoons Thai green curry paste, such as Thai Kitchen  
1 1/4 cups canned light coconut milk  
Juice of 1 lime, 2 to 3 tablespoons, plus more lime wedges for serving  
1 1/2 tablespoons fish sauce, check labels for vegan and vegetarian, I recommend Halo brand  
1 tablespoon light brown sugar  
1/2 cup fresh basil leaves

This Thai-inspired recipe combines the creaminess of coconut sauce, the bold flavors of Thai green curry paste, and the freshness of vegetables. Whether you follow an anti-inflammatory diet or simply want to incorporate more plant-based meals into your routine, this dish is perfect for you.

### IS GREEN CURRY VERY SPICY?

Green curry is typically the spiciest among Thai curries. However, the spiciness can vary depending on the brand and personal tolerance. Thai Kitchen's green curry paste, which we recommend, is milder compared to some other brands. If you prefer more heat, you can add additional curry paste or serve your noodles with sriracha.

### IS GREEN THAI CURRY HEALTHY?

Absolutely! These Green Curry Noodles are a healthy choice for various diets. They are gluten-free, high in protein, and dairy-free. The dish is rich in vitamins and minerals from the bok choy and bell pepper. Furthermore, the curry paste contains anti-inflammatory ingredients, making it beneficial for your overall well-being.

### Nutrition Information

Serving: 1 1/2 cups, Calories: 346 kcal, Carbohydrates: 47.5 g, Protein: 15 g, Fat: 10.5 g, Saturated Fat: 4.5 g, Sodium: 1003.5 mg, Fiber: 3 g, Sugar: 9.5 g



## INSTRUCTIONS



### HOW TO MAKE IT

1. Put the rice noodles in a large bowl, cover with very hot tap water, and stir to ensure they don't clump. Let soak for 25 minutes, then drain.
2. Meanwhile, cut the tofu into 1/2-inch cubes. Lay the cubes on a layer of paper towels, then cover with another layer and let drain for 10 to 15 minutes while you chop the vegetables. Remove the core from the bell pepper and thinly slice it. Trim the ends of the bok choy, slice the stems, and leave the leaves whole.
3. In a large nonstick skillet over medium heat, warm the vegetable oil. When it shimmers, add the tofu and season with salt and pepper. Cook, tossing occasionally, until golden on most sides, about 5 minutes. Create a well in the center of the skillet and add the curry paste.
4. Fry, stirring constantly, for just a few seconds, until fragrant (it may start spitting), then add the coconut milk.
5. Add the lime juice, fish sauce, and brown sugar, and stir to combine. Bring to a simmer, then add the red pepper and cook until the pepper is crisp-tender, 4 to 5 minutes.
6. Add the drained noodles and bok choy, and cook, stirring and tossing often to ensure even cooking and to prevent clumping, until the noodles are tender, about 5 minutes. Stir in the basil leaves and serve right away.

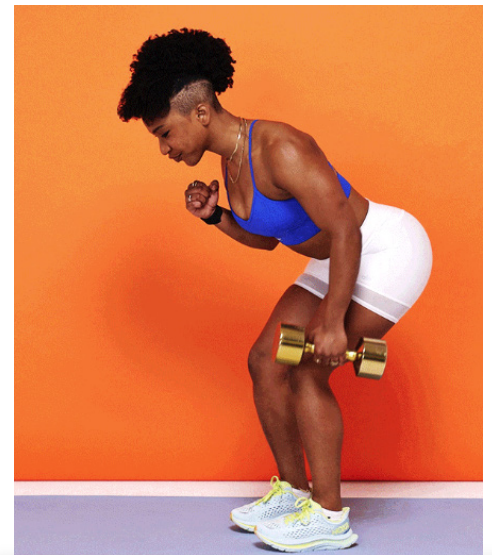
<https://www.self.com/gallery/best-pulling-exercises>

# Featured Exercise ▶ Single-Arm Bent-Over Row



## HOW TO DO IT:

- Stand with your feet hip-width apart, holding a weight in your left hand with your arm at your side. (You can stagger your stance if you feel more comfortable that way.) This is the starting position.
- With your core engaged, hinge forward at the hips, push your butt back, and keep a soft bend in both knees, making sure you don't round your shoulders. (Your hip mobility and hamstring flexibility will dictate how far you can bend over.)
- Gaze at the ground a few inches in front of your feet to keep your neck in a comfortable position.
- Pull the weight up toward your chest, keeping your elbow hugged close to your body, and squeeze your shoulder blade for 2 seconds at the top of the movement.
- Slowly lower the weight by extending your arm toward the floor. That's 1 rep.
- Continue to do all of the reps on the same side, then repeat on the other side.



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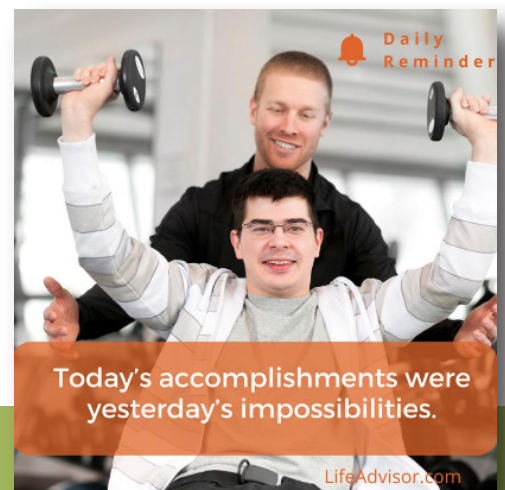
## THE BENEFITS:

This unilateral version of the row (meaning, just one arm is working at a time) hits all the same muscles as the traditional version while delivering an extra challenge to the stabilizing muscles in your core and upper back.

*Regular exercise can help you control your weight, reduce your risk of heart disease, and strengthen your bones and muscles. But if it's been awhile since you've exercised and you have health issues or concerns, it's a good idea to talk to your doctor before starting a new exercise routine.*



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