



# GET YOUR TIMING RIGHT

Ever get caught out doing the right thing at the wrong time? You need our definitive\* guide to getting the timing in your life spot on

Featuring: Diets. Sexperts. Sugar Rush. Yakult.

## 6AM THE BEST TIME TO WAKE UP

We've all heard the one about the early bird, worm etc, but the fact is that all the greats have been early risers: Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Edison, Maggie Thatcher, er, George W Bush. So if you want to get ahead of the game, get up and at 'em.

## 6.30AM ... TO HAVE SEX

"Many people experience an early-morning hormonal boost to their sex drive," says sex expert and author of *Sizzling Sex*, Dr Pam Spurr, "in part due to the rest and rejuvenation that sleep brings." Gentlemen in particular are at their peak in the mornings when levels of testosterone are at their highest, so there's no better time to get amongst it, according to Julie Peasgood, author of *Greatest Sex Tips In The World* and resident "sexpert" on The Alan Titchmarsh Show (and he should know\*\*).

## 7AM ... TO EAT BREAKFAST

"As the name suggests, this is when you need to break your fast," says Zoe Harcombe, diet guru and author of *Stop Counting Calories & Start Losing Weight*. "Studies show that people who don't eat breakfast are heavier than those who do — they don't start their metabolism nice and early and they later get so hungry that they make poor food choices." Branflakes first thing = Yes. Elevenses at Patisserie Valerie = No.

## 7.30AM ... TO EXERCISE

"Kick-start your day with exercise," says personal trainer Katie Russell. "This is when you've got the most energy – and motivation," says Russell, managing director of *insightfitness.co.uk*. "Life is demanding and all anyone wants to do at the end of the day is relax, so it's good to get your workout in early." She recommends half an hour each morning targeting a specific part of the body so that each muscle is getting exactly what it needs in an average week. "This way, you can lose up to a stone and a half and get really fit in six weeks."

## 11AM ... TO CONCENTRATE

"This is when the mind can focus best," says teacher Natalie Davies. "In the afternoon, all of us are either lethargic or a bit hyper, depending on what we've eaten or drunk. We often say that we get nothing achieved after lunch." It's worth making crucial decisions early on, while there's enough time left in the day to deal with any fallout.

## 12.30PM ... TO HAVE LUNCH

The best time to eat again is the middle of the day according to Harcombe: "People should try to have such a healthy and filling breakfast that they don't need to snack before lunch — if they do need a snack, a low-carb snack such as cheese or crudités is best to avoid any insulin production and blood

sugar highs and lows." But don't worry: you're still allowed a glass of wine at lunch. It aids digestion.

## 1.30PM ... TO SEND AN IMPORTANT EMAIL

Want someone to sit up and notice your message rather than just hit delete? Marketing technology experts Email Labs ([www.emaillabs.com](http://www.emaillabs.com)) have devised a formula to establish the perfect time to send an email (DOT - (IF + SD + QF) = ST\*\*\*). But you don't need a calculator to determine the best time to email; you want your message to pop up while the recipient is at their computer. That 'bing' elicits an almost Pavlovian response in most of us to click and see what new mail has arrived, so send your message in the middle of a workday, when people are rested but receptive, preferably 1-1:30pm, Tuesday to Thursday.

## 2.30PM ... TO HOLD A BLUE-SKY SESSION

"Everyone's more creative when they're relaxed," says entrepreneur Tony Haile, "and no one can think when they're hungry, so that 'just-full' time after lunch is perfect for holding an ideas session." Unless they've eaten too many carbs, in which case they may just fall asleep.

## 4.30PM ... TO ASK FOR A PAY RISE

A report by Office Angels showed that 80% of employers are more receptive to requests for a salary increase on Wednesday afternoons "as this is considered the most humdrum part of the working week". The idea that your boss might agree to pay you more because they're bored may seem a bit of a long shot, but the pros also advise asking for more money after you have completed something of note, such as landing a big client contract for your employer (or bringing them coffee).

## 6PM ... FOR YOUR SECOND WIND

"Sex hormones are at their highest in women in the afternoons," says Peasgood, so if you've

got any energy left, try a little afternoon delight. Spurr agrees: "Many women want an early evening cuddle-and-more when their hormones have gone a bit mad during the day. When you get back from work, have a refreshing shower and then see where it leads." You'll be safe in the knowledge that, this time, you can expend every last ounce of energy as all that remains of the day is comfort and relaxation.

## 7PM ... TO HAVE DINNER

Presuming you've worked up an appetite, Harcombe will have you back in the kitchen by 7pm. This keeps insulin levels stable and stops the body going into starvation mode when fat is stored. "Dinner time should be influenced by bed time," says Harcombe, "so you want a good two to three hours for food to settle before trying to sleep."

## 11PM ... TO GO TO BED

The less sleep you get, the more prone you are to gaining weight. Too little sleep increases the production of cortisol, the stress hormone that can also influence appetite. High levels of cortisol make your body believe it's hungry. So to stay healthy and trim, tuck yourself in early for some well-deserved beauty sleep, or try for a hat trick. ●

**W—Helen Russell |—Steven Wilson**

\* Other, inferior, guides may be available.

\*\* Mr MacGregor by A Titchmarsh, 1998 created an orgiastic furore in Middle England

\*\*\*where DOT = Desired Open Time (the first hour time period in which you want your readers to receive and open your email) IF = ISP Factor (the time it takes ISPs to actually deliver emails) SD = Send Duration (the time it takes software/ASP solutions to send a given volume of emails) QF = Queue Factor (the period of time emails may be in the queue behind other email campaigns) and ST = Schedule Time (the time emails are scheduled for distribution).

## YOU SAY

**Ben Addis, actor:** "I do my best creative thinking first thing in the shower, while the mind is still gently lifting itself out of dreamland, free from the constraints of rational daytime thought. Something about the water falling on the head must stimulate blood flow around the brain. Then 11am is bacon and fried egg sandwich o'clock. This may not be as digestively applaudable as Yakult, but it makes me a damn sight more cheerful."

**Tom Rowlands-Rees, comedian/physicist:** "It's been known since Roman times that pooing during work hours is beneficial because, a) you're getting paid to do it, b) you get free paper and c) if you cause a blockage someone else can sort it out. While that may seem like bad news for employers, it should also be remembered that the best time for forming new ideas is on the loo. Well, for me, anyway."

**Louise Telfer, podiatrist:** "I always like to shop in the evenings, especially for shoes. Your feet are at their biggest size at the end of the day and you want to buy shoes at the time your feet are at their largest size. This also avoids both the lunch-hour rush and the post-work dash, so you feel less compelled to kick out at the inevitable hordes of small children or tourists that get in your way."

**Pippa Witcher, PR:** "The best time to cancel plans for the evening is early, such as 9.59am when you're just about to 'run into a meeting'. Then the best time to ring back that difficult client is usually 12.45pm, when they'll hopefully be out at lunch, and the best time to deliver bad news is 6.55pm so you can escape with the excuse of dinner at 7pm if things get awkward. Does that make me a bad person?"