



The Athena Wellness Podcast
Episode 196 – Vancast: How to Recharge Your Morning Routine
April 26, 2023

[music]

[00:00:05] Kathy Robinson: Welcome to The Athena Wellness Podcast, the show that invites you to take a seat around the community fire and listen to stories that inspire. I'm your host, Kathy Robinson, author, coach and founder of Athena Wellness, a company that's dedicated to supporting you on your journey to live more wholeheartedly.

[00:00:30] Kathy: Hello friends and welcome. Thanks so much for joining me for this shortened Wellness Wednesday episode, a little midweek boost to help keep your Warrior Vibe high.

Today's show is a Walking The Talk Vancast, a look behind the scenes into what I'm learning and working through along with a takeaway for you. These portable episodes are informal and casual, recorded on the go from wherever I happen to be at the time. And today, I'm recording in my van near my favorite trails, getting ready to head out and record some vancasts from the road.

[00:01:06] I haven't met or read about someone I respect who doesn't have some sort of a daily routine. As I studied their habits and their lives, I understood that



they built their lives deliberately and I began emulating their practices until I found a combination that worked well for me.

Since I spent most of my adult life adhered to a corporate schedule, my time for such practices was early in the morning or late in the evening. Mornings were focused on activities and evenings were about preparing for the next day. What I slowly realized once I brought my corporate career to a close and began my business is the routine that supported me so well for years was no longer relevant.

I've come to learn that there are a number of reasons why your current routine may be feeling old and tired. Sometimes you just need a break to refresh your mind and body. Other times changing things up a bit will infuse some much needed energy. Or it could be that a full revamp is in order. Pay attention to how you feel. If you're unmotivated, tired or stressed, it's probably time to make some changes.

Which is why it's important to find a morning routine that works for you, one that you can stick with, because these practices set the tone for the rest of the day. So finding something you love that gives you a good dose of enthusiasm and energy is vital.

Routine aside, there are life reasons that your routine may need to be altered. Perhaps your priorities have shifted due to a new goal or a life circumstance like a new job or a move or the birth of a child. Maybe there's a change in your health profile or sleep schedule. Maybe the routine is not effective or you're just not enjoying it anymore.



In my case, it was a combination. I had changed, my work environment changed, and the post-COVID world changed. It was time for a full revamp.

[00:03:13] But before I share how to rework or create a morning routine, let's spend a moment on the benefits. Why should we even establish such a routine?

Among the many benefits is my favorite, waking up feeling more refreshed and energized, ready to greet the day. As a wellness coach, I love that it helps to improve your overall health and well being. Specifically, morning routines can help improve your mood, sustain your concentration, reduce anxiety and stress, contribute to personal growth and development, provide an increased sense of purpose, and help you focus on what matters most. And if you incorporate activities that include others, such as taking a morning walk with a friend, it can also increase social connection.

Whether it's moving your body, fueling with healthy food, or enjoying a little quiet time, you can give your body, mind and spirit a daily boost and start the day knowing that you already invested in yourself.

[00:04:18] Before you settle on specific morning activities, give some thought as to why you're establishing or updating your morning routine. Some things to consider include:

- What are you hoping to achieve with your morning routine?
- Do you have any commitments that might make it difficult to stick with your routine? And if so, what changes can you implement?



- How can you make your routine more efficient?
- If time is an issue, can you shorten or combine activities?
- Would you like to use this time to try or learn new things?
- Would you like to explore spiritual practices during this time?
- Would you like to use this time for things you love, such as listening to music, reading or quality time in nature or with your pet?
- How can you experiment by mixing and matching different activities, lengths and times?
- Will it help to team up with a friend for certain morning activities?
- What can you do in the evening to make your morning routine easier?
- How might you track your consistency and progress?
- How will you revisit your routine and make adjustments as needed?

[00:05:31] Now that you have a good idea of what you're looking to get from a morning routine, you can align those intentions with activities. You can include any activity in your routine, but here are a few common ones to get you started:

- **Exercise** - a great option for improving physical and mental health.
- **Meditation** - perfect for de-stressing and enhancing focus.
- **Mindfulness** - which can be combined with eating a healthy breakfast or preparing for the day.
- **Reading** - for pleasure or for learning new things.
- **Journaling** - reflecting for insight, emotional processing, or as a way to track progress.
- **Connection** - with nature, your breath or a loved one.



- **Gratitude** - expressing appreciation starts the day on a positive note.

[00:06:23] So how do you put this together? Here are five steps:

1. **Set your intention.** Review your list from the considerations exercise we just did and set your intention. What do you hope to achieve from your morning routine? Are you looking to improve your physical health, mental well-being, your productivity? Or would you like to establish a deeper connection with your loved ones or your spirituality?
2. **Determine your preferences and needs.** What would best serve you and what would you enjoy? Do you love movement and want to feel energized? Or do you crave rest and would like to invite relaxation? Would you like to learn something new or spend time on a hobby?
3. **Select your activities.** Brainstorm all the possibilities and then choose the ones that align with your intention, preferences and needs and prioritize those activities that you love. The more fun and enjoyable the morning routine, the more likely you'll stay with it for the long run.
4. **Coordinate with your schedule.** How much time do you have each morning before you need to start your day? If you only have a short time, develop a routine that's quick and easy. If you have more time, you can expand the number of activities or the length of time you spend each day. Whatever you choose, mark the time on your calendar.
5. **Set yourself up for success.** Put a support system in place to help you stay on track and show yourself some compassion by being patient and being



open to experiment. Try different things until you find a routine you love that serves you.

[00:08:11] As I mentioned earlier, I made some recent changes to both my morning and evening routines, the ones that kept me healthy and sane throughout my corporate career. As you can imagine, I was quite time pressed in those days, and my morning routine was all about getting some quiet “me” time, while my evening routine was about making the mornings move like clockwork.

My morning routine used to look something like this: Starting the day in silence, enjoying a cup of coffee at 4am, meditating, journaling and working out. The year before I left corporate, I used that time to write my book and then get in a workout before heading to work.

My weekday evenings were usually spent at the office. When I got home, I'd spend some time with loved ones and prepare for the next day, including food, exercise gear, creating the next day's “to do” list and mindfully preparing for a few hours of sleep. It took me a long time, like years, before I realized that as a business owner, I had other options and needs and preferences than when I was working a traditional job.

These days, my morning start a bit later, like 5am, and include activities that I love and boost my optimism like reading something inspirational, practicing gratitude, and working out with my friends, outdoors whenever possible. Evenings begin in the early evening, allowing more family time after creating a brief list of the next day's schedule.



[00:09:48] As we wrap this up, keep in mind that it'll take some time to settle into a new supportive routine. After trying your initial sequence for a few weeks, revisit the process and make any changes you feel are needed. Remember, the most important thing is consistency. And the key to consistency is enjoying the process. For the longer term, plan to revisit your morning routine periodically, especially when your life circumstances change.

There's no one right way to begin your day. So find what works best for you. Over time, the benefits will far outweigh the earlier start to your morning. Above all, your routine should help you stay on track with your heart's desires.

I'll leave you with the words of Marcus Aurelius, a practitioner of Stoicism, who was credited with saying, "When you arise in the morning, think of what a precious privilege it is to be alive - to breathe, to think, to enjoy, to love."

[music]

[00:10:54] Kathy: Thank you so much for joining me today. I know there are many ways you can spend your time. Thank you for choosing to spend it with me. Until our paths cross again, be kind to yourself and show your Warrior Spirit some love.

If you know anyone who could benefit from today's episode, please pass it on. And many thanks for supporting the show by subscribing and leaving a review. It means a lot and it helps others find their way to our circle.



If you'd like to access the show notes, have a question you'd like addressed on a future episode, or would like a transcript of this episode, visit www.AthenaWellness.com/podcast.

Until next time, be well!

[music]

[00:11:56] [END OF AUDIO]