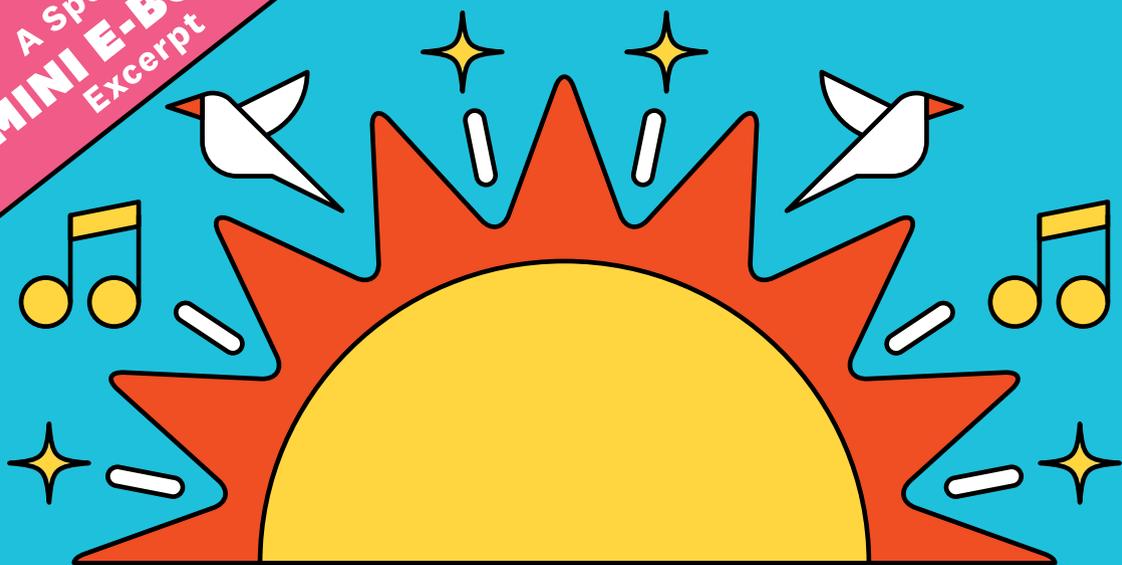


A Special
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Excerpt



OWN YOUR MORNING

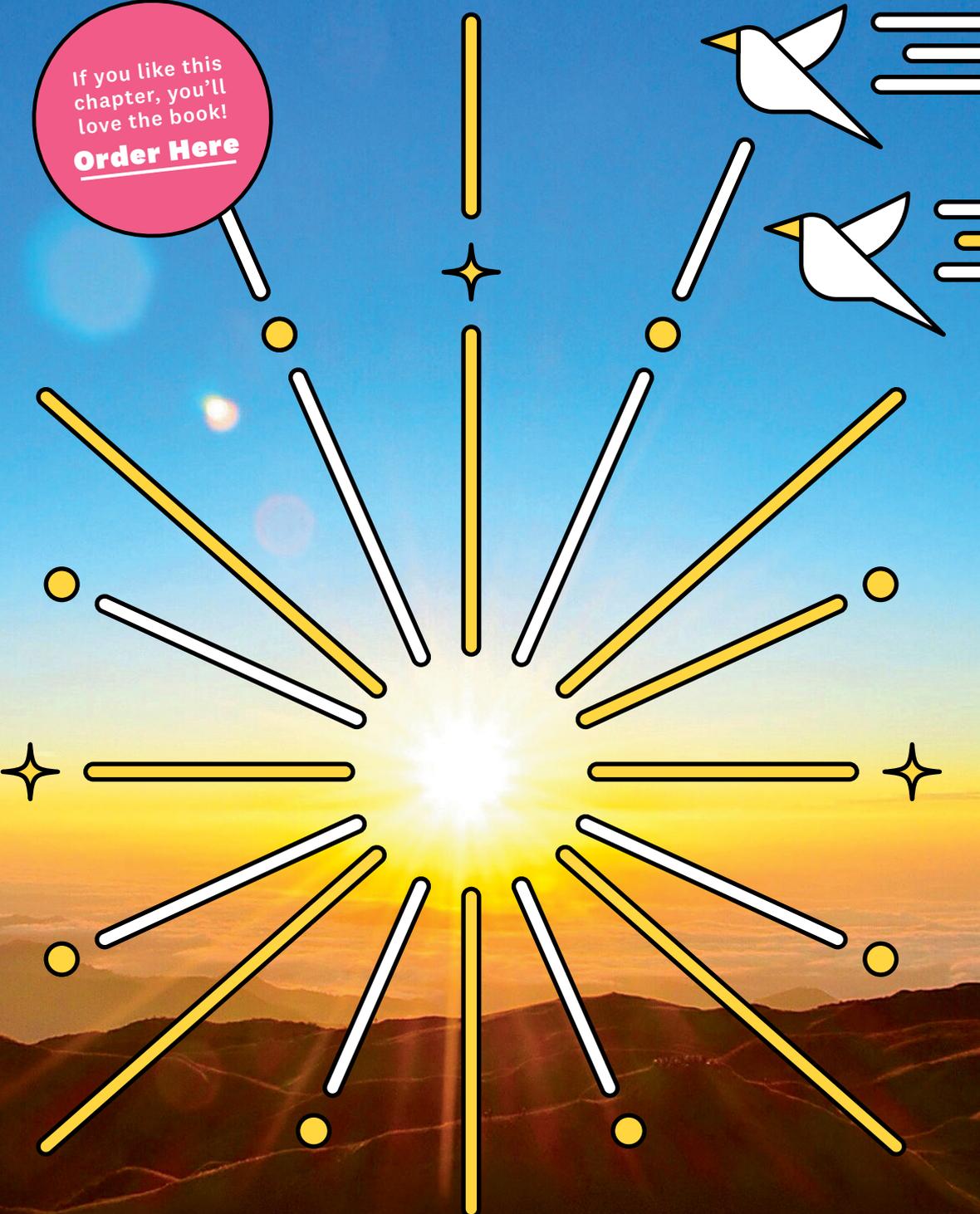
**Reset Your A.M. Routine
to Unlock Your Potential**



LIZ BAKER PLOSSER

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF OF **Women'sHealth**

If you like this chapter, you'll love the book!
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You Are a Morning Person



Seriously, anyone can become one.

No matter what your current a.m. routine looks like, you already have the power inside yourself to transform it into a healthier, happier experience. Think of the first few hours after you wake like a warm-up that will prime you for all of the unexpected twists and turns—and possibilities!—that the rest of the day has in store.

The Magic of Mornings

Although I groan at my early alarm just like everyone else (right?!), I'm always better for it when I begin my day before the rest of the city is up.

My ideal morning includes coffee, a bit of work to get a jump start, a feel-good sweat, and some quality (ahem, chaotic) time with my three young children, my husband, and my puppy.

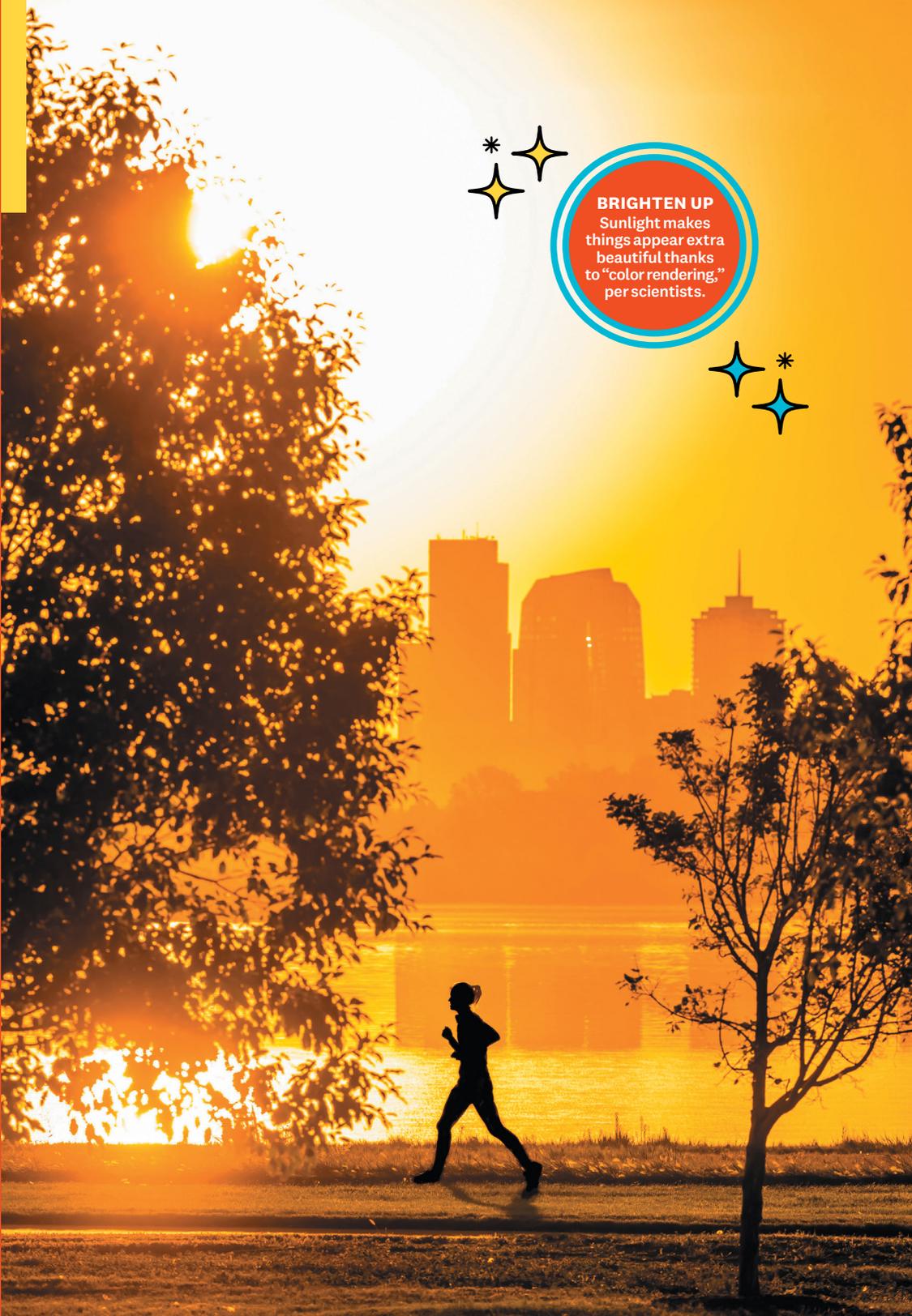
According to my parents, I wasn't always this enthusiastic about mornings. My dad and I still laugh about how the only way he could convince me to jog or play tennis with him before 8 a.m. in high school was if he promised me we'd get a very large latte afterward. (Clearly, coffee has always been nonnegotiable.)

It didn't matter if I promised him the night before that I'd wake up early or if I was training for a big tournament and could use the extra practice. When he came knocking on my door in the morning with a gentle "Lizboo?" it felt

impossible to unglue my head from my soft, warm pillow. I know I'm not alone. (Two of my three kiddos are firmly on Team Pillow.) We're not all born morning people, but I'm guessing you wouldn't mind becoming one.

There is hope. Fast-forward to the present, and I am up at 5:17 a.m. most days, ready to get after my to-do list. (Cheerfully, even, once the caffeine kicks in!) Now, I consider owning my morning to be my superpower. And the cool thing is, I can teach you how to do it, too, whether you are starting at ground zero or just want to upgrade your a.m. routine a bit. It's easy to tell yourself you're "not a morning person." And while that may be true (researchers think your DNA might help determine whether you're an early bird or a night owl. Check out "What's Your Chronotype?" on page 7), there are science-backed ways to train yourself to become one.







It doesn't require a super-early alarm, by the way. A friend recently DM'd me a picture of herself in bed, snuggling with her dog, with the hashtag #OwnYourMorning stamped on it. (Hi, Bridget! I love it when followers do this, BTW.) She added the laughing/crying-face emoji, and I did indeed LOL, but the truth is that sometimes sleeping in is a version of the perfect morning.

An awesome a.m. doesn't require a workout either. After family pancakes on Saturdays, for example, I might hit a farmers' market, filling a tote bag with deliciousness—fresh produce and herbs. All while sipping an iced coffee with a squirt of chocolate sauce. (I know. Always coffee!) Sometimes a perfect morning involves more sweets than sweat.

The point is, there are all sorts of ways to own your morning, and you are the architect of how it looks and feels. An a.m. victory for you might look like beginning a meditation practice, sipping a mug of tea, walking your dog without being rushed, or getting the kids to school minus any drama.

The first few hours after you wake up are a microcosm of your life, and of the people and things that are important to you. I love how beautifully unique that will look for each of us. This chapter features the varied approaches of powerhouse women—use their stories to spark your own morning magic.

What's Your Chronotype?

×

Like your wristwatch, your body's master clock ticks away without your being consciously aware of it, directing the release of hormones and chemicals that make you feel sleepy, hungry, alert, and more. When you combine these biochemical signals, your physiological response, and your genetics, you get a chronotype.

Experts tend to use three chronotype categories: **morning types**, or people who naturally wake up early, feel hungry in the morning, and power down relatively easily and early at night; **day types**, who are more likely to enjoy peak alertness a few hours into the day; and **evening types**, who click with Vampire Hours, working and playing into the night.

Many of us switch types throughout our lives, and (yesss) going from the day or night category to the morning category is quite common for middle-aged adults. Even better news: You can teach yourself to go to sleep earlier and wake up earlier.

If you're not confident what your chronotype is, try the Center for Environmental Therapeutics' "Your Circadian Rhythm Type" survey at cet-surveys.com.



Aspirational Early Birds



Not a self-described morning person? Even love-to-sleep-in-ers can become dawn patrol members. Take it from these four women, who prove that creating some morning me-time is a game changer.



Maud Arnold

Professional tap dancer, producer, and writer

► **“I WRITE A HAIKU AS SOON AS I WAKE UP.** I realized I was becoming addicted to waking up and immediately checking my texts, emails, Instagram, and Facebook. Before I had even started my day, my mind was already working on 10 other things for other people. So I wanted to create a low-pressure commitment to myself—something that would activate my brain and make me happy as soon as I woke up. I literally start smiling when I write them. After I write my haiku, I post it on my Instagram Story—I love getting responses from other people sharing their haiku, which has been super unexpected and very cool—and I turn on some music that suits my mood, which ranges from Prince to J. Cole to Michael Jackson to Drake. Then I’m ready to hit a 7 a.m. Cierpaso workout with my brother, Tadeo.”



Jeena Cho

Host of the *Resilient Lawyer* podcast and coauthor of *The Anxious Lawyer*

► **“I USED TO WAKE UP AND BE IN A FRENZY** to get through everything. I found that hurriedness stuck with me. Now, I’m intentional about self-care with a morning buffer. It helps me recognize that negative thoughts from my inner critic aren’t true. I practice insight meditation, which focuses on sensations and thoughts, with the goal of becoming more in tune with reality. I keep it short. When I forget to do it, I don’t berate myself. I simply begin again.”



Daphne Oz

Natural-food chef and cookbook author

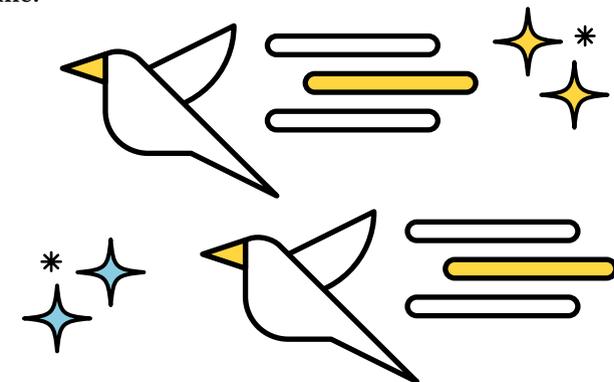
► **“I’M NOT A MORNING PERSON,** but in a perfect world, I’m up at 6 a.m. squeezing in a workout. When I first get up, I try to stream an Our Body Electric class. They’re only 28 minutes and you don’t need equipment, which means I can do it anywhere I can hide from the children or even when they’re climbing all over me. If I can’t get a workout in, I’m not too hard on myself. I set the bar low so that if I can do only 10 minutes of stretching, I still feel good about it.”



Trinity Mouzon Wofford

Founder of Golde superfood powder tonic and masks

► **“AS SOON AS I’M UP,** I pour myself a really big cup of lemon water. I’m usually pretty dehydrated, especially since it gets hot in our tiny apartment. From there, I grab my phone, but I try to limit the screen time to about 15 minutes for emails, social, and the news—otherwise I get sucked in, and the next thing I know, an hour has gone by. If I don’t have a lot of time, I’ll do 10 to 15 minutes of stretching, but ideally, it’s 40 minutes of Yoga With Adriene. Her videos are super approachable and focused on individual exploration as opposed to achieving perfection. Starting my morning by getting in touch with my breath and my body really makes me feel my best and sets a positive tone that helps me tackle whatever’s to come. I always take a shower and put on ‘work clothes’ in the morning to differentiate me-time and business time. It creates a great work persona, and as long as I’m in that, I’m in the zone, even though I’m at home.”





EXTRA CREDIT
Use all of your senses—those sounds, the smells!—when you step outside.



Rise and Shine



If waking up earlier is important to you, here are research-proven tips to help you make it happen.

1 SET YOUR ALARM WITH SOME INTENTION

Most mornings, I rise with my phone's 5:17 a.m. alarm. Psychologically, the seven gives me a little sense of urgency. If it's 5:00 or 5:15 or even 5:20, I feel like I'd roll over and press snooze because, you know, I've got 5 or 10 more minutes to sleep. (More on snoozing, next column.)

Plus, seven is my lucky number—I was born on April 7—and I love starting my day with its energy. I haven't read a study that confirms this yet, but if there's a certain number that's important to you, I highly recommend giving it some love in the morning.

Pro tip: Choose an alarm sound that makes you happy, rather than the default angry bleep noise. Personally, I love the iPhone's chimes sound. Experiment and find your own fave.

2 DON'T PRESS SNOOZE Oh, I know. It's so tempting! But the extra few minutes you get between buzzes (or now, hopefully, chimes!) aren't benefiting you much. The "snooze button, pillow, repeat" cycle could even have negative consequences.

"The final stages of your sleep cycle tend to be REM sleep, or dream sleep," says Reena Mehra, MD, the director of sleep disorders research at Cleveland Clinic. "If you're hitting the snooze button, then you're disrupting that important time."

It's not just that your too-early alarm could cause you to lose out on a portion of your most restorative dream state. It's also that disrupting REM sleep can cause a fight-or-flight response in your body, further spiking your blood pressure and heartbeat on top of the blood pressure and heart rate surges naturally occurring during REM sleep. So determine when you absolutely *have to* get up. That, my friends, is your alarm sweet spot.

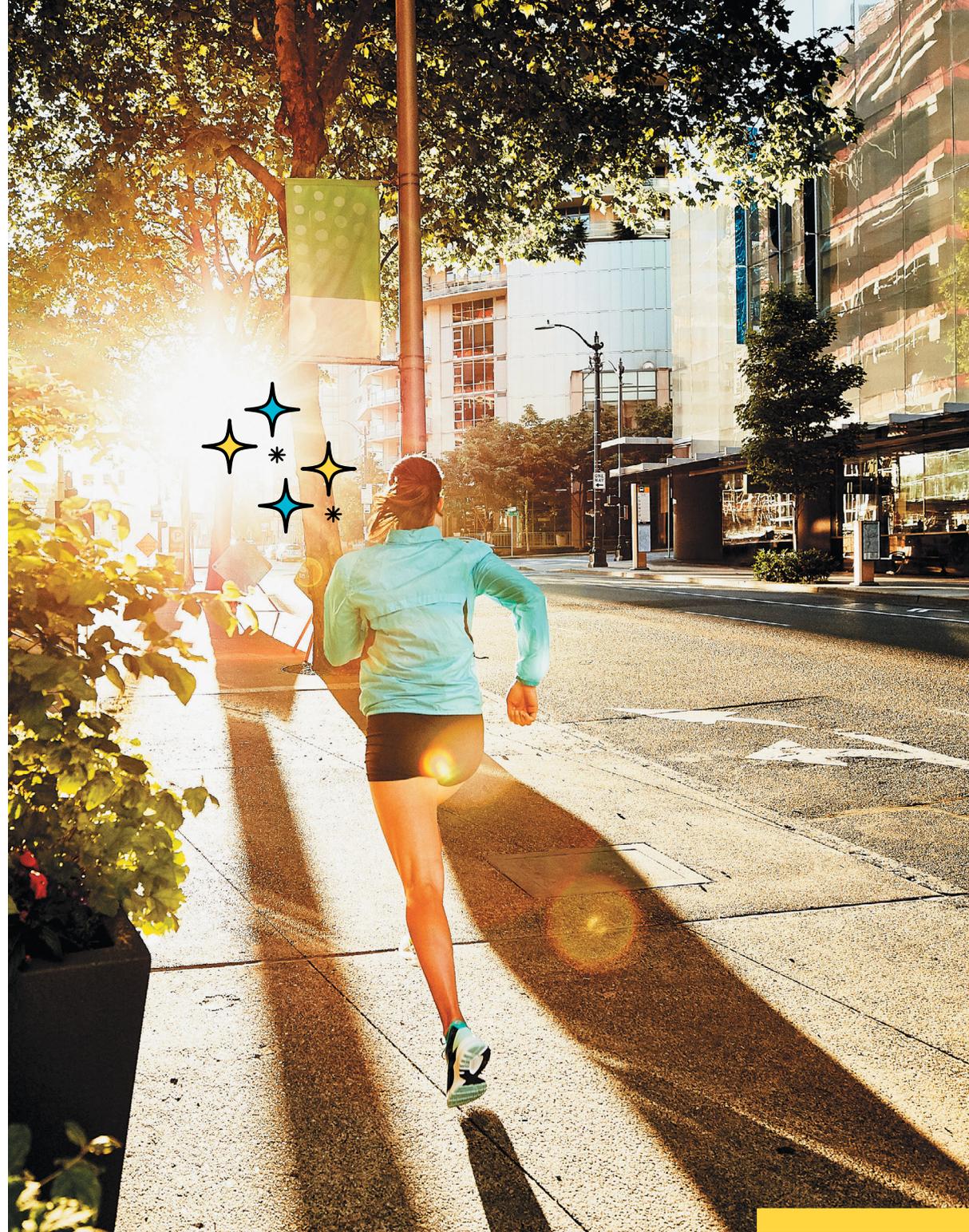
3 ADD (GOOD!) MOOD LIGHTING

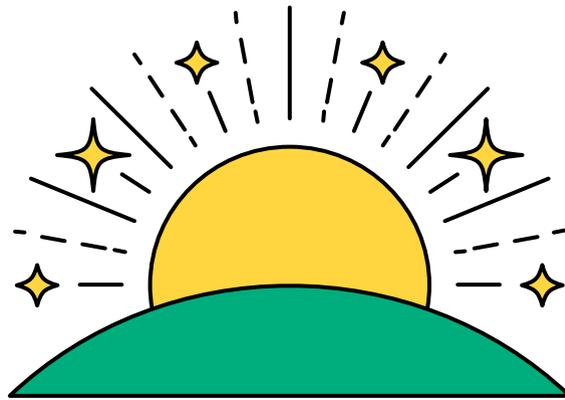
To amp up your alertness first thing, you need to suppress melatonin production in your body. Enter: light! Any kind is helpful, but researchers have determined that certain varieties work best. “A bright, cool, white light is like having a cup of morning espresso,” says Hyeon-Jeong Suk, PhD, an associate professor in the department of industrial design at the Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology, whose research examines how light affects mood, learning, and more. (This is exactly why you should avoid screens at night, when winding down.) All the better if your bulb includes notes of blue, which has been found to improve mood and focus better than the soft, warm light often found in bedrooms.

Try to get some outdoor light ASAP. “It’s a wonderful idea to expose yourself to sunlight first thing,” says Dr. Suk. “It’s free—and things appear more beautiful under the sunlight.” No, seriously: It improves “color rendering,” which is a science-y way of saying that stuff looks extra pretty. (Must be why I can’t stop taking pictures when I’m out at dawn, and sharing them with a heart-eyes emoji.) More bonuses: An early dose of daylight helps with health issues like insomnia, PMS, and seasonal affective disorder, per studies.



► Who can blame me and my friends Kelsy and Brooke for stopping on the run for these pics?





MORNING MAGIC



Lauren Maillian, CEO of DigitalUndivided, the social start-up that leverages data and advocacy work to create economic pathways for Black and Latinx women entrepreneurs



KNOW SOME PEOPLE RISE AT 6, 5, OR EVEN 4 A.M., but I own it that some mornings, I'm not up until 8 a.m. I remember when my teenage children were toddlers in nursery school and everyone was desperate for the 9 a.m. spot. Me? I happily took the 1 p.m. afternoon session and enjoyed those unrushed morning cuddles.

It may not be the traditional "type A" morning, but I'm good with that. Great with it, actually. My version of walking? It's everyone else's version of running! Life is so stressful and high-energy that I need my mornings to set the tone for each day: achieving my goals, staying focused, and enjoying what I do.

As soon as I wake up, I want to feel completely supported, as if I'm receiving a hug. Every day is different for me professionally—I might be speaking at a few conferences or leading a large team meeting or attending two networking dinners—so I shape each morning uniquely to power me up for what I need that day.

One constant: I use my five senses (touch, smell, sound, taste, sight) as a

form of self-care. My day usually begins with me opening a window to let in fresh air and a gentle breeze. Then it's off to each of my kids' rooms to snuggle with them for 15 minutes. Nope, I haven't let those morning cuddles go.

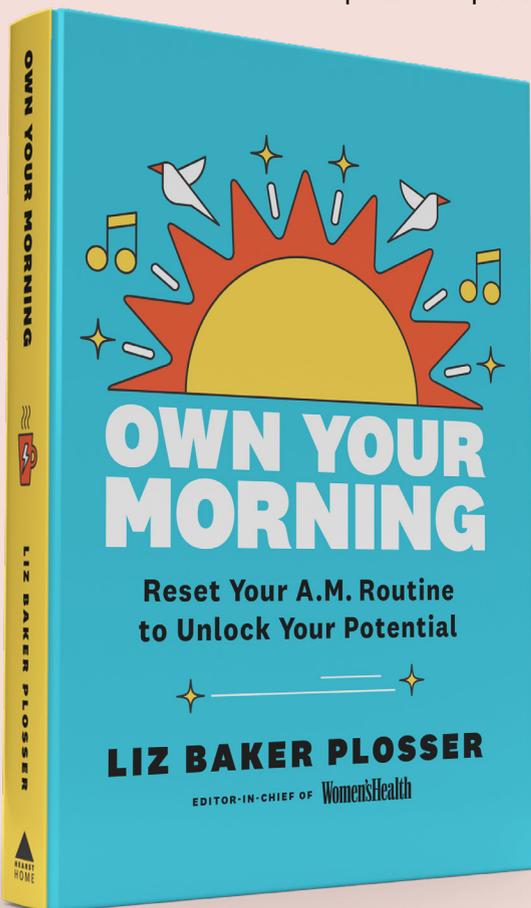
You know how stores and hotels have signature scents? I created my own for my home: It's lavender- and geranium-based, inspired by our family trips to the South of France, along with some notes of magnolia and hibiscus. It's a sweet, sensual, welcoming smell. Similarly, we have our own "soundtrack" playing in the background: usually soft jazz and soul. The tunes don't require me to think, and they don't distract me. They keep just the right energy.

Meditation is saved for my evenings; my mornings are about energy. I always try to get in an a.m. workout, even if it's just 20 minutes on my Peloton, because moving my body lights me up from the inside out. If I've got an event, I take it up a notch with what I call a "Lights, camera, action!" workout (about 45 minutes longer than my usual 20) to feel extra invigorated.

RISE AND TRULY SHINE

WITH A LIFE-CHANGING NEW MORNING ROUTINE.

Find clarity and happiness with this start-your-day plan that prioritizes your wellness and life goals.



“Own Your Morning will guide you to create personalized daily rituals that center you, energize you, and give you the power to fully show up for your day.”

—Jay Shetty, #1 New York Times best-selling author of *Think Like a Monk* and host of the *On Purpose* podcast



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