

Circadian Rhythms



WHAT IS OUR CIRCADIAN RHYTHM?



Our circadian rhythm is our internal clock for the 24 hours in a day.

It controls our sleep-wake cycle (when we feel tired and when we feel awake). One example of our circadian rhythm at work is the time we wake up. Most of us have an alarm that wakes us at a regular time each day, but have you ever noticed yourself waking up just before it starts to go off? That's your circadian rhythm at work. But it's not just about sleep – our circadian rhythms are about managing our energy and productivity.



GOLDEN HOURS

The 'golden hour' is the time of the day when your energy level is at its max and you are at your most creative and productive. You should schedule your more complex tasks to fall within this time.



SLUMP ZONES

'Slump zones' are the times of the day when your energy level drops off completely. 3 pm is a notorious energy slump zone, so it's a good idea to take a break around then.

THE WELLBEING ANGLE

Managing your circadian rhythm helps you manage your wellbeing. It's essential that you're not skipping meals, but are eating well and staying hydrated. If you don't, your body will make you aware of it! Snacks, exercise and breaks all help manage energy levels – and when your energy levels are managed, you can better map your 'golden hours' to the most complex tasks and leave more methodical tasks for the times when your energy is lower.

5 TIPS TO MAXIMISE YOUR WORKING RHYTHM:

- 1 **Schedule breaks to fall into your 'slump zones'.** Give yourself time to recharge before you go back to your work. For example, taking five minutes to walk around the block at 3 pm everyday.

- 2 **Choose the right music.** If you listen to music while you work, pick a genre that leaves you feeling energised. Classical music is one well-studied example of mood-boosting music.

- 3 **Design your workflow around your 'golden hour/s'.** Where you can, allocate that time to problem-solving, critical thinking and creative work. Other, more methodical tasks can fall in around it.

- 4 **Stick to a schedule.** Go to bed and wake up at a regular time each day to regulate your circadian rhythm (and your energy levels during the day). Setting this routine for yourself can also help reset your circadian rhythm to better align with your daily tasks.

- 5 **Work with the rhythms of others.** You can't expect others to work to your rhythm without doing the same for them. Get to know the people you work closely with and set collaboration time when it suits you both. Avoid sending them messages during their focus time and set deadlines for each other that work with your own rhythms.

REFLECTION: MAXIMISING YOUR CIRCADIAN RHYTHM

Reflect on your circadian rhythm and brainstorm any strategies you currently use or could use to maximise your circadian rhythm.