



## **Establishing Routine**

By Dr. Linda Hancock

### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Dr. Hancock has written a regular weekly column entitled “All Psyched Up” for newspapers in two Canadian provinces for more than a dozen years. Over the years, her readers and clients have said that they have benefited from her common-sense solutions, wisdom, and sense of humour. Dr. Linda Hancock, the author of “Life is An Adventure...every step of the way” and “Open for Business Success” is a Registered Psychologist who has a private practice in Medicine Hat. She can be reached at 403-529-6877 or through email [office@drlindahancock.com](mailto:office@drlindahancock.com)

### **Published**

March 9th, 2020

I remember when I had my first child. We lived in a basement suite in Tisdale, Saskatchewan. Our landlady told me that the secret to having healthy and happy babies is to keep their stomachs full and their bottoms dry. That sounds simple but there was a lot of wisdom in that advice.

Babies don't care if they are dressed in designer fashions. They can sleep through a great deal of noise and usually handle being passed around from one admiring person to the other.

The problem is when they start growing. If they don't have a routine or reasonable expectations, they can grow up to be sick and irresponsible adults.

Many times, my clients tell me about their lives, and I am sad for them. Watching movies until the crack of dawn messes up their whole day. When they sleep until noon, they miss sunlight and breakfast. It often takes them until almost suppertime to get into a mood for leaving the house. When they don't have any planned activities, they might spend hours listening to television or just thinking about negative things.

When I grew up we had news reports that lasted about twenty minutes. The newspaper reported events in other countries long after they had occurred. Now we have twenty-four-hour channels that spout opinions rather than news. We watch natural disasters or holds ups as they are happening. Even though these events occur in different countries, they enter our minds and can cause us to feel depressed, discouraged and hopeless. Turn the television off!

It can be difficult to fall asleep but if you are tired and not napping, sleep comes easier. It might take a few days to get into a habit but the best thing you can do is set an alarm for early morning. Get out of bed, eat breakfast and don't take naps. Once you have done this for a few days you will find that you have established a healthier pattern for your life.

Get out of the house! Winter can be difficult for some but going for a walk or doing volunteer work will feed your soul and help her to feel better.

Think about what has been good for you in the past and start doing that again. Were you a person who enjoyed doing crafts, baking or sewing? What were the things that you enjoyed as a teenager? Did you like to swim, play a sport or collect stamps? What are the goals that you have had but haven't started yet? Would you like to work on your family tree or learn a language?

Well, as they say, "Today is the first day of the rest of your life". Instead of just sleep at odd hours, eating poorly and thinking negatively, make a plan that will help you to establish a routine and find a purpose.