

LIFE AT HOME

REPORT #1

A WORLD WAKES UP

ABOUT THE REPORT

This is the first part in our IKEA Life at Home Report series, where we explore the home lives of people all over the globe. This time, we have specifically dug into how the world wakes up by tuning in to eight different metropolises in eight different countries and have investigated the morning routines, habits and wishes of those who live there.

We at IKEA have over fifty years of experience, knowledge and insights about people's lives at home from listening to the needs and dreams of our customers. With the Life at Home Report we want to share our insights, raise awareness and interest, spark debate and contribute to the constant journey of creating an even better everyday life for the many people – together.

The data, which makes up the foundation for this report, is a combination of existing IKEA research and a new survey conducted in eight cities around the globe. The survey was collected through online panels in Berlin, London, Moscow, Mumbai, New York, Paris, Shanghai and Stockholm. With around 1,000 respondents in each city, totalling 8,292 respondents among people from 18 to 60 years of age. The survey was conducted in cooperation with Swedish business intelligence agency United Minds.

The IKEA Life at Home Report is divided in two parts. In the first part we share insights based on our new global survey and our previous IKEA research, complemented with other reputable published study findings, and information shared with us through interviews with experts and opinion leaders from a variety of backgrounds. We've also visited and photographed eight different households in the eight cities to visualize what everyday mornings are like. In the second part we encourage trying our new digital tool – the Data Mixing Board – to find other interesting findings by mixing the survey's raw data and bring new perspectives on the morning lives of our global community.

Good morning, bonjour, guten morgen, god morgon, доброе утро, सकाळी चांगले, 早安 and good morning again to you!

BERLIN

1

EARLY BIRD MYTHS

We are most imaginative when we're sleepy states research in the psychology journal Thinking and Reasoning. As we hurriedly get up, are we discarding our creative potential?

Today's creatives seek their futures and fortunes in cityscapes. Berlin is known as an exciting creative hub noted for progressive attitudes, gritty but fascinating architecture and its divided history for inspiring experimentation. But most Berliners don't feel creative at all on weekday mornings, so how can they harness their creativity even more as the sun rises? Let's reconsider the untapped potential of the late bird.

Described as one of Western Europe's most affordable and effortlessly cool cities, Berlin is quoted by author and Immigration Law Professor Hiroshi Montomura of the University of California as combining "the culture of New York, the traffic system of Tokyo, the nature of Seattle, and the historical treasures, of, well, Berlin". A playground ripe for creativity, in other words.

In today's knowledge economy where creativity is valued currency, nurturing creative talent is less an option and more a necessity. So how can our Berliners continue to nurture it? In light of a 2011 study published in the journal Thinking and Reasoning, it turns out that our up and at 'em morning approach is in fact the opposite of conditions perfect for open-minded thinking. Neuroscientists have found that imaginative insights and inspired connections are most likely to come to us when we're groggy. This is good news for evening people, who aren't the most awake or full of energy in the mornings. Their grogginess is in fact a positive thing. This state breeds unfocused, irrelevant thoughts that can help people see things from different perspectives and enhance their creative problem solving capabilities. Simply put, in a society that tells us that feeling sleepy isn't optimal, science tells us that by we can be more creative by learning to let these groggy moments be.

But what does this mean for Berliners? These German urbanites rise just after 6:30AM on weekday mornings, and considering the metropole's prominent nightlife, it may not come as a surprise that 42 percent of Berliners consider themselves to be evening people. The research from Thinking and Reasoning suggests that they could embrace an easy start of their day for optimal creativity, for example by daring to press the snooze button once more and let their minds wander for a more creative morning. And most Berliners have it right with 55 percent of evening people reporting that they indeed do let themselves ease into the day, with 52 percent snoozing at least once, and 36 percent snoozing more than once.

Are these sleepy Berlin night-owls aware of their creative morning potential? Not really. Only one in twenty evening people say they feel the most creative in the mornings, seeing afternoons as their creative peak. Also, our Berlin evening people who try to get up quickly have science on their side if they want to allow themselves to take it a little easier when waking up to get those creative brain juices flowing. So let's try to embrace the potential of the late bird. Because does the early bird really catch the worm? Well, that probably depends on what kind of worm you're trying to catch.

GROOM OR GLOOM

Our bodies are a battleground for society's ideals – for both women and men. How are the morning moments we spend grooming and dressing making us feel?

Berlin is a place known for its subversive and status-free spirit and cultural cool. As the Head of The German Fashion Institute Elke Giese explains, being a well-dressed Berliner has less to do with one's status and more to do with imagination and individuality. Let's take a look at how Berliners fix themselves up during wake up, and if these grooming sessions are a source of self-confidence or stress.

Growing individualism empowers us to express ourselves through our appearance, and Berlin is a growing ground for both independent art as well as fashion. Yet as individualism has escalated, so have beauty standards, which throughout the 20th Century have become progressively more unrealistic. What could this mean in Berlin, where transformation and experimentation is part of everyday life?

Our research shows that the majority of Berlin's urban dwellers ease into the day instead of getting up quickly in the morning, as most other surveyed metropolitans tend to do. They continue taking it easy in the bathroom after getting out of bed, where 57 percent spend an average of 14 minutes showering or bathing – the longest time compared to other surveyed cities. This is no wonder, since eight out of ten Berliners find it an important grooming routine for their personal wellbeing.

While Berlin women spend much more energy on their physical appearance than men, it's not as common to put on makeup as it is for other women in our surveyed European cities and New York. On the other hand, more Berlin men regularly have a morning shave, second only to men of Mumbai.

But how does all this early grooming affect our Berliners? Most German metropolitans feel rather confident about their physical appearance when they leave home in the morning. As a whole, only about one of ten Berliners feel anxious about their appearance on weekday mornings. Of course, this differs between age groups, where one of four young Berliners consider feeling anxious about how they look a big source of stress. However, this stress dramatically decreases with age, when only about one in ten of those from 30-60 years old feel this nervousness. This anxiety transition from one's twenties to thirties is common around the globe, but the rise in confidence rises in Berliners on the brink of thirty is more dramatic than in other cities.

On another note, gender inequality rears its ugly head when it comes to Berliners feeling worried about their looks. Berlin women, though they groom more than for instance the fashionable ladies of Paris, are less confident than men – even though men groom the most out of all surveyed metropole men. In fact, almost twice as many Berlin women than men find their morning looks a big source of anxiety.

However, the good news is that Berliners overall are relatively relaxed about their looks with only 13 percent feeling anxious about their physical appearance before leaving home, compared to for instance the 20 percent in Moscow. Perhaps it pays off to linger a little long in the shower.

MEANINGFUL MOMENTS

Mindfulness, gratitude and spirituality are the buzz words of health media as our physical and digital lives blur. In today's fast life, how do we find time for reflection and moments of morning meaning?

Berlin is a mainly secular city according to The World Values Survey, often described as the atheist capital of Europe. But many would argue they're still a spiritual sort, as the capital hosts Europe's largest Yoga Festival as well as many meditation and mindfulness meetups. Let's see what our Berlin urbanites see as important for inner peace in the mornings.

In our faced-paced, always-on world, where smartphones have become our modern gurus and advisors, we try to find the time and space to turn our thoughts inwards. In Berlin, where late nights spill over into days, this be a challenge.

Studies from the University of California in Berkeley show that practicing mindfulness fosters compassion and altruism, while also reducing negative emotions and stress. And there are countless studies showing the positive impact of yoga on our wellbeing. For instance, research from the University of Illinois shows that yoga improves focus and working memory, and lowers blood pressure. Can mornings, before the hustle and bustle of the outside world begins, be a moment to do so for our mostly atheist Berliners?

Our research shows that only one in four Berliners report that it's important for their personal wellbeing to take time for self-reflection in the mornings – just secular Stockholm matches this low number. And just two in ten actually make time for self-reflective moments in the early day.

But for the Berliners that self-reflect in the mornings, the bathroom is their main introspection room – half of those that self-reflect spend their morning doing so in their shower or bathtub, watery sessions that last longer than in all other surveyed cities. This is in line with our previous IKEA research which reveals that the privacy tensions caused by a lack of space and increasingly open planned multi-functional rooms have left our bathrooms and toilets as some of the only truly private places left in our homes.

Listening to music is the second most common way to self-reflect for every one in three Berliners, especially young people, and eleven percent take the time to think of something they're grateful for. Exercise, such as yoga or going for a run, is the contemplation choice for only eight percent of Berlin's residents, and meditation or prayer are even less popular, where only four percent out of those who do reflect meditate or pray.

Every day is a chance to start anew when the sun's rays reflect on the Berlin TV Tower and the urban greenery along Unter den Linden is still damp from the night's dew. And despite the fact that few Berliners think morning self-reflection is important or take the time to reflect, a third of Berliners wake up feeling happy. Maybe it's that long shower or bath they're looking forward to.

NURTURING NUTRITION

They say breakfast is the most important meal of the day. As many find it harder to make time for dinner together, could breakfast be as important for nurturing as nutrition?

Big hearty German breakfasts of meats, cheeses and breads are the stuff of foodie legend. But the reality is that Berliners are the least likely of urban citizens in our report to even have breakfast at home. With later working hours, dinner gets harder to get together around, while breakfast is perfect candidate as a time for social exchange. Let's find out if Berliners bond over breakfast.

Berliners, even though many of them ease into the day, don't put much energy into getting their day's first energy through breakfast. In fact, they have breakfast less commonly at home than in all other surveyed cities, where only 57 percent of Berliners have a morning munch before stepping out into the streets, compared to for instance 77 percent in Shanghai.

But, if sharing is caring, the people of Berlin care quite a lot, with over six of ten thinking that making breakfast for the people they live with is important for their personal wellbeing. And when Berliners do eat breakfast, they share this meal together slightly more than those in other European cities and New York. They also spend a little more than 16 minutes on average doing so, more than other metropolises, with nine in ten using this time to talk to each other.

Conversations during Berlin breakfasts are quite varied and distinct from other cities. Interestingly, more than half of Berliners discuss their dreams from the night before – something that's even more common to share among parents whose children live with them. In other surveyed cities, dreams are rather low on the breakfast topic agenda. Could this be the lasting influence of the founding father of psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud? Otherwise, most of the conversations are quite practical and positive – the most common subjects are what's going to happen during the day, work or school, what they're looking forward to during the day and their goals for the day. Just a third discuss the day's worries.

Research from Sherry Turkle, Psychologist and Professor of Social Studies of Science and Technology at MIT declares that while there are many benefits of talking with each other in many new and varied ways – through texts, emails, social media or over the phone – we shouldn't lose sight of what we get from having real life conversations. Such as the rich and more subtle connections we make when being able to look one another in the eyes as we talk, and the skill and empathy required to read each others movements, and the ability to say what's truly on our minds as the conversation unfolds without filter.

So while Freud might be made proud if he were to hear that Berliners are diving into their dreams in the mornings, breakfast may yet be an unexplored territory for many Berliners as a chance to get together.

CUDDLE CHEMICALS

It's easy to forget each other during the stressful start of the day, where we might be more touchy with our smartphones than our loved ones. Are high-tech mornings contributing to low-touch lives?

Berlin is Europe's capital city of collective living, along with London. With Berliners living together, cuddling and caring may seem like easy tasks in Germany's largest city. Yet on a typical morning almost 20 percent don't show physical affection towards the people they live with at all. Let's get in touch with how Berliners physically connect with each other in the mornings.

A warm touch, a loving hug or even a friendly handshake releases the "cuddle chemical" oxytocin which helps us relax and lowers anxiety while simultaneously creating feelings of happiness and joy. Whatever our relationship status may be, touch deprivation is a real thing and we need more than we're getting, according to research from the Touch and Emotion Lab at DePauw University. This is no surprise given that the first thing many of us do when we wake up is check our smartphones or inboxes, even before we check our partners or kids, according to a multi-city survey by mobile testing firm SOASTA. And the more time we spend on our tech lives in the mornings, the less time there is to spend wholly giving our attention to the people around us at the same time.

On a typical Berlin weekday morning, 17 percent of people living with others don't show physical affection towards the people they live with. For example, about four in ten Berliners living with their children under 12 years old make time to play with them. Morning time spent cuddling and hugging in bed is even more scarce, where only 14 percent of Berliners do this.

According to our survey, Berliners spend more time with digital interaction than physically interacting with each other. About two in five Berliners use mobile technology and their computers in the mornings – almost thrice as many than those who spend moments hugging their partner in bed. And less than half of people living with their significant other typically give their partner a hug or a kiss on weekday mornings.

This little time spent on loved ones may lead one to think that Berliners don't find hugging or physical touch that important. On the contrary, just over 60 percent think it is somewhat to very important for their personal wellbeing to play with their young children in the mornings, and about eight in ten think giving a kiss or hug to their loved ones is just as important. Many in Berlin use tech over touch, but 65 percent overall don't actually think that social media is as important for their wellbeing in the mornings, as opposed to giving someone a hug or kiss.

There is a common discrepancy in all surveyed cities regarding what we want to do and feel is good for us and what we actually do during the morning. Small intimate gestures can convey and spread compassion, according to Dacher Keltner, Professor of Psychology at the University of California in Berkeley. Or as stated by neurologist Shekar Raman, MD, and numerous other studies, the more physical contact we have with each other, in even the tiniest way, the happier we'll be.

MULTI-MORNINGS

As we grow in numbers, our homes get smaller. And as we get more connected, our hours at work and home blur. With household multi-functioning and work multi-tasking, what do the walls of our home mean today?

Berlin lies in the heart of Germany and is also the heart of the nation's culture where even business is beating faster. But Berliners don't seem stressed about this. Instead they seem to have a rather relaxed attitude to work or studies during the initial hours of the day at home. Let's try to grip on how Berliners handle their work-life balance at home.

The homes we live in are increasingly smaller and our cities are more crowded as over half of the world's population are now living an urban life, and as property prices hit the roofs of once cheap homes. Berlin is no exception. According to The Observer rents are quickly rising at almost twice the national average in the renter's paradise that Berlin was once known for – a big deal for the nearly 85 percent of Berliners who rent as noted by The University of Pennsylvania in Wharton.

In ever smaller apartments, our multi-functional lives have spread out to most home areas. Traditional room functions are long gone, and we seem to do whatever, wherever and whenever, something which our new digital savviness allows. One third of working or studying Berliners have used the eating area as a place to work or study in the mornings, and just as many have done the same thing from their beds, a place no longer sacred for just sleeping. However, the sofa is slightly more popular with 31 percent of Berliners choosing to take care of their morning business sitting on cushions and not by the desk or table. And speaking of morning business, one of ten Berliners have used the bathroom or toilet, our modern sanctuaries, to work or study.

Berliners are a rather relaxed group of people in the mornings compared to many other metropolitans when it comes to tech, where work and study-related technology doesn't get to them. Only about one in twenty think technology is a source of stress, compared to people in Shanghai, Mumbai and New York, where more than twice as many are stressed by this. And for Berliners, just three of ten consider early bird work or studies important for their wellbeing, compared to as many as eight of ten Mumbaikars. In fact, only Stockholmers consider working or studying in the mornings at home less important for feeling good than Berliners.

In our multi-tasking world, Berliners seem to single-task, simply let their homes be their homes before putting on the day's business suit.

PLAY INTO THE DAY

In today's society, being productive means being successful. Are we focusing too much on how much we get done instead of what really matters?

Being closer to loved ones is something all metropolitans long for in the mornings, and Berliners with kids living at home want to play more with them. However, only about one in six do during this time of day when we're often told to prepare and get ready in an orderly fashion. Let's discover how Berlin residents prioritize play.

Playing, whether it's with your children or playfully kissing your partner, is something many reserve for afternoons and evenings. In our competitive society, we seem to put our priorities in being "busy". A full calendar is a good calendar. Our schedules are packed with work, more work, classes, exercise and hobbies, especially in the latter part of the day. Mornings on the other hand, when we usually have more time for ourselves and our families, may be underrated for activities.

Talking or playing with children, or giving them a hug or a kiss on weekday mornings are among the top things Berlin parents think are the most important for their personal wellbeing. But while 77 percent think giving their kids a hug or a kiss is important, only 43 percent of Berlin parents usually do this on weekday mornings. And while 64 percent of parents with children 12 years or younger think that playing with them on weekday mornings adds to their wellbeing – only 16 percent typically take the time to play with their kids during Monday to Friday mornings.

When it comes to couples, more than eight of ten Berliners living with their partner find it important to hug or kiss him or her in the early hours of the day, but only about half do. Half of Berliners would like to spend time cuddling in bed too, but only 14 percent take time to.

This is a pattern which repeats itself in all cities. We want to have more play time, and feel it is of utmost importance, but we rarely give ourselves the time to have this fun with our near and dear. Using time logs, writer Laura Vanderkam has dug into the mystery of mastering a so-called work-life balance. She has found that writing down what you spend time on is a golden way of actually finding more time by rescheduling and daring to miss out and say no to other activities or duties that you thought you needed to do. She has changed her language and encourages others to do the same. Instead of saying "I don't have time", she now simply pronounces "It's not a priority".

While not everyone, at least not all of the time, always has the luxury of being able to make things a priority, perhaps we should pause and consider what we want our morning priorities to be.

TOMORROW'S MORNINGS

Prepping the evening before a new morning begins is often a suggestion for getting up on the right side of bed, but how much of our nights do we invest in our coming days?

Morning madness and bad hair days might have one thing in common – being too stressed to get things together. Before the day's schedules get in the way, mornings could be a time of control, but for Berlin's urbanites the most stressful hours are when they rise out of bed, even though about 90 percent do something the night before to prepare. Let's take a peek at the plans Berliners make for their mornings ahead.

It makes sense that part of the answer to a smoother morning can be found in the night. While most Berliners do something to prepare for the next day, they prepare less than other metropolitans. In fact, 13 percent don't prepare anything, compared to Shanghai or Mumbai where only about five percent skip preparations. Is this because of their irregular evening routines, where only about one of five go to bed at the same time every night?

When the majority of Berliners do prepare before hitting the sack, the most common thing for them to do is check their schedule for the next day. A third pick out an outfit and a third also pack their bags. However, not even ten percent of Berlin's residents decide what to have for breakfast or prepare lunch, which is a very low number compared to other cities, where around a fifth to a quarter of Stockholmers, New Yorkers, Londoners, Muscovites and Shanghainese prepare their midday meal. Perhaps this has to do with the affordability of eating lunch out in the German capital.

On a more relaxing note, almost three of five Berliners take an evening shower or bath, and a third read a book. These are great winding-down tricks that the US National Sleep Foundation recommends to ensure a good night's sleep. For example, a warm shower or bath can help our body temperature drop, and make you sleepy. But much like other European cities, only 20 percent avoid using technology where the lights from our devices screens actually stimulate the brain which encourages our minds to stay awake.

When the next dawn breaks, Berliners like to ease into their days instead of getting up quickly, taking about one to one and a half hours on average to wake up, get up and get out the door. This is slower than most other city people – the Shanghainese for example do all of this within 30 to 60 minutes. Yet despite easing into their days, 40 percent of our Berliners find mornings stressful, so maybe winding down more the night before in order to wind up the coming day's getting-everything-together tempo is a good idea.

LONDON

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EARLY BIRD MYTHS

We are most imaginative when groggy, states recent research in the journal *Thinking and Reasoning*. As we hurriedly get up, are we discarding our creative potential?

A melting pot of ethnicities and a thriving cultural scene keeps London creative. But Londoners start their day more low key than other urbanites, alarms buzzing from 7AM and snooze buttons being hit more. But are these late London mornings negative? Research shows that being groggy perfect for creative thinking. In a world where nurturing creative talents are a must, let's reconsider the untapped potential of the late bird.

London is the only place where there are more people working in creative industries than in New York City and the city ranks number seven in the world for creativity according to the Martin Prosperity Institute's Creative Cities Index. But in a world where creative talents are less an option and increasingly a growing necessity, we can't rest on our laurels. As recognized by study after study, creativity is not an elusive and magical occurrence, but something we can prime our minds for.

In a study published in the psychology journal *Thinking and Reasoning*, it turns out that our up and at 'em morning approach is in fact the opposite of conditions perfect for open-minded thinking. Neuroscientists found that imaginative insights and inspired connections are most likely to come to us when groggy. This is good news especially for snoozy morning people and evening people who aren't the most awake or full of energy in the mornings. Their grogginess is in fact a good thing. It breeds unfocused, irrelevant thoughts that can help people see things from different perspectives and enhance their creative problem solving capabilities. Simply put, in a society that tells us that feeling sleepy isn't optimal for creative work, science tells us that by learning to let these groggy moments be, we can be more creative.

Slow risers have a bad reputation – and Londoners are rather slow in the mornings with a majority rising at 7AM or later. On the other side of the Atlantic, for instance, most New Yorkers wake up before 7AM. Even Berliners rise and shine earlier than our London snoozers, who push that button more than once. But in the light of recent research, the you-snooze-you-lose logic has been turned on its head. If you're more of an evening person, pressing snooze to lie in bed for a while and letting your mind wander is wonderfully conducive to a more creative morning.

London is a city with an almost equal share of morning and evening people, with the 62 percent of evening people getting their creative clock right by letting themselves ease into the day. This also leaves 37 percent of those evening-orientated Londoners who try to get up quickly to allow themselves to take it a little easier in the mornings to stimulate more inventive thoughts.

But how many of these night-orientated Londoners actually feel these creative morning vibes? Mornings in London don't get much creative credit. In Great Britain's capital, only five percent of evening people say they feel the most creative in the mornings, with most claiming afternoons as their most creative part of the day.

With research on the table, night-owls shouldn't forget that a foggier morning approach is in fact a more inspired morning approach, and let themselves press snooze once more just to see what strange semi-dreams they dream up. So let's try to embrace the

potential of the late bird, because does the early bird really catch the worm? Well, that probably depends on what kind of worm you're trying to catch.

GROOM OR GLOOM

Our bodies are a battleground for society's ideals – for both women and men. How are the morning moments we spend grooming and dressing making us feel?

London is ranked the third best city in the world only to New York and Paris for shopping by the Global Language Monitor, and is frequently credited for its internationally influential fashion-conscious technologists, creatives and entrepreneurs. Let's take a look at how Londoners fix themselves up during wake up, and if these grooming sessions are a source of self-confidence or stress.

London may be the centre of the world for business suits and ties but has simultaneously been fashion-forward hub throughout the years. And throughout the 20th Century, beauty standards have progressively become more unrealistic. On one hand growing individualism empowers us to express ourselves through our appearance. On the other, trying to match the perfection we are bombarded with has become more difficult. The British are no strangers to this and as notable UK artist Grayson Perry at CBE observes: "the British care about taste because it is inextricably woven into our system".

But life around the London Fashion Week catwalk and life in the home are of course very different. Our research shows that Londoners spend an average of just five minutes choosing what to wear, where women spend six minutes and men just four. Also, the younger you are in London, the more time you spend choosing your clothes for the day and the more stressed you are when deciding what to wear. Twenty-four percent of 18-29 year olds feel stressed about deciding what to wear during weekday mornings, compared to only 12 percent in their thirties.

When it comes to grooming, Londoners spend about fourteen morning minutes fixing themselves up, about the same time that other metropolitans spend on grooming. Interestingly though, men in London spend only ten minutes grooming, the least time spent grooming in the mornings of all men in the cities of our report, with the exception of Shanghai.

Overall, the population of London are the least confident about their looks of all surveyed cities when leaving home in the mornings, with an almost equal split of the population feeling very confident compared to having little confidence about their appearance. Additionally, 16 percent consider feeling anxious about how they look a big source of stress during their weekday mornings. And it does appear that confidence in appearance is somehow connected to happiness, since Londoners feeling very confident when they stroll out into their British capital's streets are in fact happier – not just in the early mornings, but in life overall too.

However, the question remains – do people feel happier because they are confident about their looks, or do happier people feel more confident with their physical appearance? Or maybe those anxious Londoners who answered our survey are just being humble and down-to-earth – the British do have a reputation of being polite, after all.

MEANINGFUL MOMENTS

Mindfulness, gratitude and spirituality are the buzz words of health media as our physical and digital lives blur. In today's fast life, how do we find time for reflection and moments of morning meaning?

London is one of the most religiously diverse cities in the world according to the London Councils, where around half are Christian, one in ten are Muslim, and two in ten consider themselves spiritual but not religious. Meaningful moments should be quite colourful in this British capital, so let's see what our London urbanites see as important for inner peace in the mornings.

London's manic pace rivals New York as the city that never sleeps, where money due to London being a financial hub never sleeps either. With city life in the fast lane, taking a few moments to oneself is important for wellbeing. Gratitude, often a part of religious and spiritual practices, is proven by Robert Emmons, Editor-in-Chief of The Journal of Positive Psychology, to be essential for happiness. Not only is it viral, but it significantly and positively influences our relationships and our own emotional status. For example, it can help us reframe memories of unpleasant things in a way that helps lessen the emotional impact.

So it's good news that London is the European capital when it comes to both making time for self-reflection on weekday mornings, and that Londoners find it important for their personal wellbeing to do so. But of the 43 percent of these urban Brits who find it important and the 18 percent who find it very important, still only about one in ten actually pause to reflect during the week – spending an average of 13 minutes when doing so.

The two most common ways to self-reflect are to take a minute or two while in the shower or the bathtub, or listen to music where two in five and a third do this respectively. Otherwise 15 percent of those that reflect take a walk or stretch.

Interestingly, 14 percent of all Londoners pray at least once a week on weekday mornings, which makes it more common here than in any other European city. And in a country where the majority of its people still are religious, London sticks out with a small but still relatively young, self-reflective and praying population. In fact, it's actually more common for younger London urbanites to pray than those who are older, which differs from other metropolitans as one fifth of Londoners between 18 and 29 years old regularly pray on weekday mornings. One reason for this could be that London is home to the second highest number of people in the world born abroad, particularly from India and Pakistan – countries that have strong religious ties. It's also as common for parents with children to pray at least once a week where 21 percent do this. As in New York, the bed or bedroom is the place of choice for introspection, and is also where most Londoners choose to pray.

The start of the day is ripe for reflection, and with most Londoners finding their days starting stressfully, maybe there's something to creating these morning moments of meaning.

NURTURING NUTRITION

They say breakfast is the most important meal of the day. As many find it harder to make time for dinner together, could breakfast be as important for nurturing as nutrition?

The smell of a full English breakfast of bacon, eggs, baked beans and brown sauce is enough to coax the grumpiest out of bed. But the benefits of breakfast extend beyond bacon. It is a perfect and often overlooked candidate as a time for social exchange. Let's find out if Londoners bond over breakfast.

While eight of ten in London think having breakfast at home is important for their personal wellbeing, not all of them manage to, according to the survey. Six in ten Londoners manage to have breakfast at home on weekday mornings which is less than among all surveyed cities, and a quarter of these spend five minutes or less on the day's first meal.

In our digitally connected times, with both genders in our modern workforce, we work more and we work later. Our dinners have long been the staple of home gatherings, but Londoners fighting work-life windmills could try to use breakfast as a time to be social and caring, before the day starts. However, though London is known for its increasingly expensive and thus extensively shared homes, only about one quarter of those living with others usually make weekday breakfasts for those they live with – the least compared to all cities in the survey. Furthermore, only half of Londoners living with others usually eat with others in their household. But among those who do, about half take the opportunity to chat while munching on the day's first meal, mostly keeping it positive and practical concerning what they're doing and what they're looking forward to that day or work or school. But while many Londoners aren't at their social peak during breakfast, 35 percent of London parents with kids that are 12 years old or younger use breakfast time to play together.

Research from Sherry Turkle, Psychologist and Professor of Social Studies of Science and Technology at MIT, states that while there are many benefits to talking with each other in new and varied ways – through texts, emails, over the phone or social media – we shouldn't lose sight of what we get from having real life conversations. These include the rich and more subtle connections we make when being able to look one another in the eyes as we talk, the skill and empathy required to read each others movements, and the ability to say what's truly on our minds as the conversation unfolds without filter.

On one hand, Londoners are not as big home-cooked breakfast fans as one might think, nor are they as social over their first meal at home as in other cities. Yet more British parents than in any other surveyed city seem to be making the most of their parent-child relationships during the early hours, which might make it one of the most precious meals of the day.

CUDDLE CHEMICALS

It's easy to forget each other during the stressful start of the day, where we might be more touchy with our smartphones than our loved ones. Are high-tech mornings contributing to low-touch lives?

With almost half of Londoners living in flats and increasingly expensive housing, more Londoners live together and are getting a little tight on space, according to statistics from the London Councils and the BBC. You could say that England's capital is actually primed for more intimate interactions. Let's get in touch with how Londoners physically connect in the mornings.

The first thing many of us do today when we wake up is check our smartphones, even before we check our partners or kids, and the more time we spend on our tech lives in the mornings, the less time is to spend wholly giving our attention to the people around us at the same time.

Luckily for Londoners, it turns out that they are rather touchy feely on weekday mornings. Eight in ten London urbanites who share their home with others are always or sometimes physically affectionate with the people they live with. These small, often incidental gestures, whether it be a pat on the back or a touch on the arm are actually profound in their ability to convey and spread compassion, according to Dacher Keltner, Professor of Psychology at the University of California, Berkeley.

So what does all this physical affection look like for Londoners? Morning cuddles for couples in bed is a regular thing for almost one in five Londoners living with their partner, and nearly six in ten Londoners who share homes with their loved one gives him or her a kiss or hug before getting on with the day. Only in Stockholm are partners more commonly cuddling up.

But even at this relatively high rate, Londoners could use more hugs and kisses. Research from Matthew Herenstein, PhD and Director of the Touch and Emotion Lab at DePauw University declares that touch deprivation is a real thing, and that whatever our relationship status may be, we need more human contact than we're getting. And Londoners would like to cuddle more.

For instance, Londoners report that they would like to hug or give their kids more hugs and kisses in the mornings, even though they already do this more often compared to other metropolitans, with 46 percent of parents and children hugging on weekday mornings. In fact, eight of ten parents think it's important for their personal wellbeing to do this.

The same pattern repeats itself amongst couples, where 59 percent find cuddling in bed with their loved one important for their wellbeing, but far less do. Also, eight percent of Londoners who live with their partners bring on the day with a little morning sex, compared to almost half of Londoners who think this type of cuddling is important for feeling good.

It is proven in study after study – the more physical contact we have with each other, the better we feel. A warm touch, a loving hug or even a friendly handshake releases the "cuddle chemical" oxytocin which helps us relax and lowers our blood pressure and anxiety levels while simultaneously helping us feel happiness and joy. As Professor Keltner passionately points out, touch is "one of life's greatest joys and deepest comforts" – and what a great way to begin the day with a little cuddle.

MULTI-MORNINGS

As we grow in numbers, our homes get smaller. And as we get more connected, our hours at work and home blur. With household multi-functioning and work multi-tasking, what do the walls of our home mean today?

A majority of the world's people are now urbanites, making city living more compact and small. London itself now has about 13,5 million metropolitans residing in it's greater city alone. At the same time our smartphones buzz and beep, alerting us about to-do's and want-to-do's in our office, our flats or our pubs. Let's try to grip how Londoners handle their work-life balance at home.

The London metropolitan area is now bustling with soon 14 million people, as well as being the most popular city in the world to visit. And London has a housing challenge, visible through the many debates regarding tower buildings in the city area. Many agree that more homes should be built. But the publicly owned 1960s towers aimed at solving London's housing crisis, with big flats let cheaply to those who need them, are surrounded by privately owned recent towers aimed at buy-to-let investors, with tiny flats let expensively to the few who can afford them. Though the U.K.'s and Europe's financial capital does have more billionares than any other city in the world, except Moscow, the everyman or woman – especially the young ones – tend to live with friends or flatmates in shared home spaces. In this busy business city with long work hours, no wonder that work and home life have meshed, with traditional room functions long gone.

But how do work and life work together in London? About half of working or studying Londoners find it important for their personal wellbeing to spend their mornings hitting the books or business. Yet much like the rest of our urbanites, just one in ten London residents work or study before leaving home on a typical weekday morning. However, those who do spend an average of 34 minutes on their tasks.

The most common place for Londoners to work or study is the sofa, followed by the bed or in the bedroom and a dedicated work area. Also, slightly over one of ten has worked or studied in the bathroom or toilet. As in many other cities, we are losing the bed and the bathroom as the last truly private areas at home.

Now even though Londoners spend time on their morning business or studies and most probably use technology to do so, 15 percent find being occupied with work or study-related technology on weekday mornings a big source of stress, and our British urbanites also find early mornings the most stressful time of the day. To sum up, Londoners may not feel stressed about a chance of rain, having an umbrella ready to grip hold of when they leave home in the morning, but when it comes to getting work or studies done during those first hours of the day, it does seem a challenge for Londoners to get a grip.

PLAY INTO THE DAY

In today's society, being productive means being successful. Are we focusing too much on how much we get done instead of what really matters?

Playing is something rather unheard of in the mornings, a time when we're often told to get up, get dressed, get breakfast and then get on with our day. Yet playing is a way to connect more with our loved ones in a different manner, and London parents would like to have more morning fun with their kids. However, only about a quarter do play around. Let's discover how London residents prioritize play.

The city once nicknamed "Swinging London", where people of all ages seemed to play around, seems to be less playful today. But Londoners wish to implement a little more fun in their morning lives. In the British capital, the biggest gap between what people think is personally important to do versus what they actually do is found amongst parent who live with children aged 12 years old or younger. Twenty-six percent regularly play with their children in these early hours, while 80 percent report that this is important to them for their own wellbeing.

The same goes for couples. It's no surprise that love doves in London living with their partners would like to cuddle or have sex more than they currently do on weekday mornings, since the difference between what they want and what they actually do is also quite large. Less than one of five Londoners sharing a home with their partner make sure they hug in bed in the morning, but almost three of five think it's important for their wellbeing. And while only eight percent have sex, almost half of Londoners think it's important.

This is a pattern which repeats itself in all cities. Wanting to play more, especially with one's children, or being intimate with one's partner to start off the day. Using time logs, writer Laura Vanderkam has dug into the mystery of mastering morning matters, and found that writing down what you spend time on is a golden way of actually finding more time by rescheduling and daring to miss out on and say no to other activities or duties that you thought you needed to do. She has changed her language and encourages others to do the same. Instead of saying "I don't have time", she now simply pronounces "It's not a priority".

Playtime during London mornings, for parents with children and couples alike, is something most want to make a priority. So while not everyone, at least not all of the time, always has the luxury of being able to make things a priority, perhaps we should pause and consider what we want our morning priorities to be.

TOMORROW'S MORNINGS

Prepping the evening before a new morning begins is often a suggestion for getting up on the right side of bed, but how much of our nights are do we invest in our coming days?

As Big Ben strikes midnight, our Londoners should be in a dreamy Neverland far, far away according to recommended bedtimes. A good night's sleep and a good morning is sometimes linked to how we get ready for the day to come. Yet even though almost 90 percent of our Brits prepare for their next day, the hours when waking up are their most stressful. Let's take a peek at the plans Londoners make for their mornings ahead.

London is a place of preparation, where nine of ten prepare for their coming day, and the people of England's capital do this in many ways. While four of ten Londoners overall have a soothing evening shower, there are some interesting age differences in the other things they do. Those between 30 and 39 years old seem to know what to do to help get a good night's sleep. For example, almost three in ten 30-somethings regularly avoid stimulants like caffeine or alcohol close to bedtime and try to be in bed at the same time each night.

These are great calming techniques that the US National Sleep Foundation recommends to ensure quality slumber and full alertness for the day ahead. Caffeine blocks sleep-inducing chemicals in your brain and speeds up adrenaline production while a warm shower or bath helps lower your body temperature making you sleepy. Similarly, going to bed at a similar time every night helps to regulate your body's clock so you can fall asleep – and stay asleep.

Younger Londoners between 18 and 29 years old, on the other hand, have more practical evening habits. Thirty-eight percent check their schedules on a weekday night and 27 percent prepare lunch – the most out of all age groups. However, it's much less common for London youth to wind down by reading a book or avoiding using the technology in bed, something that the US National Sleep Foundation would find hard approving of. But even though our London youth is practical, 46 percent within this age group is stressed regarding waking up too late, 22 percent stress about trying to find things in their home, and 36 percent worry about the larger things going on in their lives.

With only about one in ten of our Londoners refraining from doing anything to prepare for the coming day the night before, these Brits should be well on their way for a smoother morning, but their mornings are still most stressful, especially for the younger generation. While the practicalities of planning should certainly help, our Londoners in their thirties show us that a less stressful morning can lie in other moments the night before. And if other British urbanites follow their lead they can have a sharper eye for getting up, out and about as the sun rises over The London Eye and they perhaps hop onto a red double-decker bus.

MOSCOW

1

EARLY BIRD MYTHS

We are most imaginative when sleepy, states recent research in the journal *Thinking and Reasoning*. As we hurriedly get up, are we discarding our creative potential?

Moscow has always been home to bright creative minds, not least of which spurred America's "Sputnik Moment". A new generation of Moscow's creative talents are starting to remake the city in their own image. In a world where creative talent is a growing necessity, continuing to nurture it is a must. Muscovites don't feel creative in the mornings, so how can they harness their creativity even more as the sun rises over the Moscow River? Let's reconsider the untapped potential of the late bird.

Today's creative class seek their futures and fortunes in cityscapes, and Moscow is a creative destination for many Russians. The creative innovation happening now in historically strong technological and computer science fields, and a renewed focus on design hubs, hotels and bars, is being fuelled by increasing levels of wealth and commerce.

In our world where continuously cultivating creativity is key, particularly for emerging cities like Moscow as they make moves away from a manufacturing economy, what role can creativity play during our mornings? Through recent research, neuroscientists have found that imaginative insights and inspired connections are most likely to come to us in the groggy moment between sleeping and being fully awake. When being unfocused, irrelevant thoughts help us see things from different perspectives and enhance our creative problem solving capabilities. In a study published in the journal *Thinking and Reasoning*, it turns out that our up and at 'em morning approach is in fact the opposite of conditions perfect for open-minded thinking. Simply put, in a society which tells us that feeling sleepy isn't optimal for creative work, science tells us that we can be more creative by learning to let these groggy moments be.

Muscovites are rather slow risers according to the survey. Two thirds wake up at 7AM or later, compared to half of all surveyed metropolitans. However, despite snoozing less than other city dwellers, just over half of Muscovites consider themselves evening people. Considering that they wake up later than other urbanites it is no surprise that there are more night owls in Moscow than in any other surveyed city. The good news is that most of these night owls have their creativity-clock right, with 60 percent letting themselves ease into the day. And this is a positive prospect for the other 36 percent, who instead of rushing to wake themselves up could embrace their foggy mornings and let their thoughts wander to connect the creative dots without a bad conscience. For example, pressing snooze to lie in bed for a while longer or standing under the shower head for a few more minutes to let one's mind drift is a recommended way to fuel creativity according to Annie Murphy Paul, author of "Brilliant: The New Science of Smart".

But how many of these night-orientated Muscovites actually feel creative in the mornings? While the survey reveals that only four percent of evening people recognise mornings as their most creative period of the day, almost a third feel very creative in the mornings. But what would happen if the slow rising, evening people recognised that their sleepy moments were perfect for creative momentum? Let's try to embrace the potential of the late bird. Because does the early bird really catch the worm? Well, that probably depends on what kind of worm you're trying to catch.

GROOM OR GLOOM

Our bodies are the battleground for society's values and ideals – for both women and men. How do we spend morning moments dressing and grooming?

Moscow's expression within fashion has exploded, with glitter and gold as common personal showpieces. On one hand growing individualism empowers people to express themselves through their appearance. On the other, trying to match the perfection we are bombarded with has become more difficult. Not least in this dynamic city where people spend precious morning moments on their looks. Let's take a look at if these grooming sessions are a source of self-confidence or stress.

Looking your best in day-to-day life, according to a Datamonitor study, is important for 73 percent of Russians. And in a similar study by Datamonitor, almost half say that they feel under pressure to look good. The pressure is understandable in a country where wealth has grown inordinately, and if you're one of the few that have this monetary freedom, you no longer hold back to expose it. Given this preoccupation with appearance, health and wellness products potentially play a key role for Russians.

While Muscovite women spend only one minute more grooming than the average female in other cities according to the survey, it's what they do in this time that's interesting. For example, 71 percent consider weekday morning makeup a must, compared to just over half among all other surveyed urbanite women. Treatments like face masks are also the most common in Moscow compared to other metropolises, where about one in four treat themselves in the mornings. Interestingly, Moscow is also a city of perfume lovers where second only to Paris, more Muscovite women spray on a scent than in any other surveyed city.

Despite these routines, more Muscovites find their looks a source of stress on weekday mornings than those in any other city in our report where one in five feel this anxiety. But not all stress is created equal. Age and gender make a difference, where the young 18-29 years olds in Moscow are more stressed out than their elders. And only one in ten Moscow men are stressed about their physical appearance, which is three times less than our Muscovite women.

But looking at the bigger morning picture, although many are stressed about their looks, Muscovites feel very confident about their physical appearance overall when leaving home. Those who are anxious about how they look when they leave home also do more to groom and spend more time doing so, even though it's not clear whether grooming causes stress or stress causes one to groom more.

MEANINGFUL MOMENTS

Mindfulness, gratitude and spirituality are the buzz words of health media as our physical and digital lives blur. In today's fast life, how do we find time for reflection and moments of morning meaning?

Muscovites are mainly eastern Orthodox with few reported religious minorities according to the Martin Prosperity Index, but spirituality has its place too. Yoga, which is strongly interlinked with beauty and a healthy lifestyle in Russia, is popping up around Moscow and the old Russian philosophy of "hidden potentials" in science seems to live on. Let's see what our Moscow urbanites see as important for inner peace in the mornings.

Despite being a rather religious country, only two in ten Muscovites take time for self-reflection on weekday mornings, and only about one third think it's important for their personal wellbeing to do so. Thirteen percent think of something they are grateful for, and just one in ten of Moscow metropolitans pray regularly on weekday mornings.

Gratitude, which is often part of religious and spiritual practices, is proven by Robert Emmons of The Journal of Positive Psychology to be essential for happiness. Not only is it viral, but it significantly and positively influences our relationships and our own emotional status. For example, it can help us reframe memories of unpleasant things in a way that can lessen their emotional impact. Countless studies also show the positive impact of yoga on our wellbeing – such as improving our focus, our working memory and lowering our blood pressure according to research from the University of Illinois. So at least two in ten Muscovites get this little extra emotional zing through their morning reflection activities.

Like in most other cities in this report, Muscovites that self-reflect mainly do so in their showers or bathtubs. According to the survey, almost half do this, making the bathroom the most common area for introspection in the Moscow home. The second most popular contemplative activity is listening to music, followed by exercising. Most Muscovites who listen to morning music for self-reflection do this in the kitchen, making it a different new room for inner thoughts, compared to other surveyed cities.

But how does this self-reflection reflect on our Muscovites' morning moods? About one third feel very happy when waking up, which is less than in all other cities, save Stockholm and Berlin. But the survey shows that only about one in five Muscovites feel that mornings are the happiest time of day. However, they do feel more peaceful and calm than other urbanites on weekday mornings – where about one third do compared to one fifth in other cities.

So in a rather religious country, its capital's residents don't make much time at the start of their days to ponder upon life or pray, and they wake up rather less happy than other urbanites. It seems like moments of meaning for Moscow may come later in the day, so they just have to wait a few hours for more happiness to kick in, or perhaps try to create these meaningful moments earlier on for a happier start.

NURTURING NUTRITION

They say breakfast is the most important meal of the day. As many find it harder to make time for dinner together, could breakfast be as important for nurturing as nutrition?

Traditional Russian breakfasts or “zavtrak” foods may be replaced with lighter, healthier options these days, as is the trend in many countries, but more Muscovites are still making time for breakfast at home. Breakfast is a perfect and often overlooked candidate as an occasion for social exchange, as evening meals become more difficult to gather round. Let’s find out if Muscovites bond over breakfast.

Our dinners have long been the staple of home gatherings, but perhaps it’s time to try to switch things around if we’re finding ourselves fighting time in the evenings, and try to share a meal together in the morning. So what do the weekday morning routines of our Muscovites look like from a social perspective?

According to the survey, with seven in ten Muscovites usually eating breakfast at home, only people in Mumbai and Shanghai have breakfast before leaving home to a greater extent. Many Muscovites also take their time doing so, where two in five eat for 15 minutes or more. Interestingly, two fifths of Muscovites only drink tea or coffee for breakfast at home during their weekday mornings, and skip the food. Caffeine kicks are more common in Moscow than in all other surveyed metropolises. For example, almost eight in ten Muscovites drink tea or coffee, and 88 percent note that it’s important for their personal wellbeing. Is this due to their tea culture, where this beverage is served in magnificent samovars?

Research from Sherry Turkle, Psychologist and Professor of Social Studies of Science and Technology, MIT and author of *Alone Together*, insists that while there are many benefits of talking with each other in new and varied technological ways, we shouldn’t lose sight of what we get from having real life conversations. Such as the rich and more subtle connections we make when being able to look one another in the eyes as we talk, the skill and empathy required to read each others movements and the ability to say what’s truly on our minds as the conversation unfolds without filter.

Luckily for Muscovites, they are quite chatty over the day’s first meal as the survey shows that more than half of people who live with someone also usually eat breakfast together, and among them, more than eight in ten chat with each other over breakfast. And speaking of chatty people, it’s also more common in Moscow to watch TV, perhaps listening to a news anchor talk about the latest happenings, while eating, where six of ten do this.

So what do our social TV-watching Russians discuss? It turns out, compared to other surveyed cities, more Muscovites focus on the day’s goals as well as their worries. The most common topics over the morning meal are what they’re doing that day, their goals for the day and what they’re worried about.

A goal that many Moscow women have every day is getting food on the table. Gender differences in Moscow show up during breakfast time, where women take responsibility for making breakfast for others. The gap between women and men in this aspect is larger than in any other surveyed city, as half of women living with others usually make breakfast for others, while less than a fifth of men who live with others usually do this.

All in all, compared to most other urbanites in this report, it seems to be that a majority of Muscovites living together are already bonding over breakfast, or just a coffee or tea. Perhaps there's more to that morning cup than just the caffeine?

CUDDLE CHEMICALS

It's easy to forget each other during our stressful starts to the day, where we might be more touchy with our smartphones than our loved ones. Are high-tech mornings contributing to low-touch lives?

As Muscovites continue to trade up from more cramped older quarters where often three generations shared a small apartment, people in the Russian capital are somewhat used to living closely connected. But with three-generation living on the decline according to previous IKEA research, and device dependency on the rise, let's get in touch with how Muscovites physically connect with each other in the mornings.

With a tradition of multiple Muscovite family members living together, it comes as no surprise that Moscow residents living with others are rather good at being physically affectionate with one another. Two fifths of those sharing their home with others always show physical affection towards the people they live with on a typical weekday morning, and so do another two fifths who sometimes do this. Only 16 percent say they never show this type of affection.

But personal technology, social media and the world's newfound 'work-everywhere' attitude tends to get in the way of people expressing physical affection towards each other. Contributing to the fact that out of our five basic senses, touch is the most neglected, research from Matthew Herenstein, PhD and Director of the Touch and Emotion Lab at DePauw University declares that touch deprivation is a real thing – and whatever our relationship status may be, we need more human contact than we're getting.

It seems Muscovites tend to agree. According to our survey, while 39 percent of parents living with their children usually give their kids a hug or a kiss on a weekday morning – they do so less than most other cities in the report and much less than they would like to. For instance, almost 90 percent of Moscow mums and dads think hugging and kissing their kids on early weekday mornings is important for their personal wellbeing.

Actually, it's more common among parents to for example catch up on the news, use their mobile phones or computers, or watch TV on Monday to Friday mornings than cuddle with their young children up to 12 years old. These tech activities are less important to surveyed Moscow parents for their wellbeing, than cuddling, but those smartphones still manage to get more attention.

The same goes for cuddling with a partner, where 43 percent of Muscovites living with their significant other usually give their partner a hug or a kiss on weekday mornings. Cuddling with a partner, hugging in bed or having sex is however high on the list of importance for wellbeing for Moscow urbanites. For example, in the survey more than four of five find cuddling important for their feel-good feelings, over three of five think hugging in bed is important, and three of five say having morning sex is important for their wellbeing. Yet only slightly under 20 percent of people who live with their partners hug in bed and only 12 percent have morning sex.

There is a common discrepancy in all surveyed cities regarding what we want to do and feel is good for us and what we actually do during our mornings. It is proven in study after study – the more physical contact we have with each other, the better we feel. Muscovites do want to hug and kiss their loved ones more, so release the cuddle chemical!

MULTI-MORNINGS

As we grow in numbers our homes get smaller, and as we get more connected our hours at work and home blur. With household multi-functioning and work multi-tasking, what do the walls of our home mean today?

In one of the fastest growing economies, Muscovites are living in small flats and homes. Small apartments and a more digitally connected always-on work situation means our multi-functional lives have spread out to most home areas. Traditional room functions are long gone, and we seem to do whatever, wherever and whenever. So let's try to get a grip on how Muscovites handle their work-life balance at home.

Russia's capital is Europe's largest city and one of the fastest growing emerging cities. In 2011, Forbes magazine ranked Moscow as the city with the greatest number of billionaires, outnumbering both London and New York. Russia also has a tradition of studies, and is ranked by PWC as number one in education amongst emerging cities, in front of Beijing.

In a city where things are opening up, both physically and digitally, and the people work and study hard, what do mornings in their homes look like? According to our survey, only seven percent of Muscovites who are employed or students usually work or study on weekday mornings from home, making this less common than in other metropolises, except Shanghai. And accordingly, only four percent think being occupied with work or study-related technology are a big source of stress during weekday mornings. That said, 44 percent of Moscow's employed and students report that it's important for their personal wellbeing to work or study at home on weekday mornings, which is also slightly less than the average for all surveyed cities.

Muscovites seem to be the only metropolitans among the surveyed cities, who tend to keep work and personal life separated in their homes, at least on weekday mornings. For example, the most common place for employed or studying Muscovites to occupy themselves is in a specified work area. Two fifths have worked from this type of room or area on weekday mornings, which is more than in any other city. But of course Russians do these activities in other home areas too, where a third have used the sofa, about a quarter have used the eating area, and almost as many have studied or worked in bed or from the bedroom.

Yet even though Muscovites have a talent for separating work and home life, they still think it's the most stressful time of day, and almost 40 percent of Muscovite women feel that mornings are their most stressful hours. Perhaps this has something to do with the fact that many more Muscovite women do their makeup and prepare breakfast for others that they live with more than many other surveyed urbanite women. Multi-mornings are indeed more multi from a social perspective for Muscovite women than for Moscow men, however the Muscovite flats and houses overall are not.

PLAY INTO THE DAY

In today's society, being productive means being successful. Are we focusing too much on how much we get things done instead of what really matters?

Tolstoy observantly remarked in his book "Anna Karenina" that "all happy families are alike, each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way." He was certainly onto something as majority of parents in Moscow find joy in playing with their children in the mornings. However, Muscovites with kids living at home want to play more with them during, and only about one in ten do. Let's discover how Muscovites residents prioritize play.

In Moscow, only every tenth Muscovite with children up to 12 years old plays them on weekday mornings – less than in any other city in the survey. However, seven in ten Moscow parents with young children think that this is an important morning activity for their personal wellbeing. This is by far the biggest difference amongst parents regarding what they think is important to do as the day breaks and what they actually do.

Through this report, it becomes clear that wanting to play more, especially with one's children, is a pattern which repeats itself in all cities. And there might be a moderately quick fix for this. Using time logs, writer Laura Vanderkam has dug into the mystery of mastering a so-called work-life balance, and found that writing down what you spend time on is a golden way of actually finding more time by rescheduling and daring to miss out on and say no to other activities or duties that you thought you needed to do. She has changed her language and encourages others to do the same. Instead of saying "I don't have time", she now simply states "It's not a priority".

Another priority that Muscovites living with others seem to want to make a priority on weekday mornings is to be more physically affectionate and have more conversations with the people they live with. For instance, our survey reveals that 86 percent of parents think it's important for their personal wellbeing to give their kids a hug or a kiss Monday to Friday mornings – but only 39 percent usually do this. And 88 percent of parents think it's important to have a conversation with their kids on these mornings – but only 44 percent usually do this.

The same goes for people living with a significant other. 85 percent of people living with their partner think it's important for their personal wellbeing to give their partner a playful hug or a kiss on weekday mornings – but only 43 percent get around to it. And 83 percent of partners think it's important to have a conversation with their loved one – but only 36 percent usually do this.

More playful mornings are something Muscovites find important, so when it comes to that saying coined by Tolstoy, he might actually be right that happy families are alike, at least when it comes to playing into the day.

TOMORROW'S MORNINGS

Prepping the evening before a new morning begins is often a suggestion for getting up on the right side of bed, but how much of our nights do we invest in our coming days?

It's no secret that a good night's sleep contributes to a good morning, and one secret to more peaceful wake-up is preparing the evening before. According to the survey, Muscovites have many ways to try to prepare for their first daylight hours, and do more things than other metropolitans. Let's take a peek at the plans Muscovites make for their mornings ahead.

The people of Moscow usually do four things to prepare the night before a new weekday, compared to the average for all surveyed cities which is three things. The most common activity among all Muscovites is taking a shower or bath in the evening – 65 percent do this – which is more than all other urbanites.

However, when it's nearly time for bed Moscow metropolitans are the least likely to let go of their technology out of all other surveyed cities, even if they prepare more for the coming morning through many activities. For example, according to the survey only one of ten Muscovites avoid using mobile technology devices in bed. Also, the people of Moscow have irregular bedtimes, where only a fifth go to bed at the same time each weekday night.

Showering or bathing, having regular bedtimes and turning tech off are all calming activities that the US National Sleep Foundation recommends to ensure a night of quality sleep to bring full alertness in the day ahead. For example, a warm shower or bath helps your body temperature drop, making you sleepy and ready for rest. For the few Muscovites that hop into bed at a similar time every night, their body's biological clock is likely regulated so they can fall asleep – and stay asleep.

When the new day finally comes, the residents of Russia's capital spend slightly more time at home than the average metropolitan on weekday mornings, where almost eight of ten have one hour or more at home, from the moment they wake up until the time they leave.

But with the survey facts on the table, it seems that despite quite a few preparations the night before and this long time spent at home in the mornings before taking off, mornings are still the most stressful time of day for Moscow metropolitans. Maybe getting under the sheets at the same time each night could help a bit on the way for a better start of the day in Moscow.

MUMBAI

1

EARLY BIRD MYTHS

We are most imaginative when sleepy, states recent research in the journal Thinking and Reasoning. As we hurriedly get up, are we discarding our creative potential?

The sun is rising over the major metropolis Mumbai, and Mumbaikars seem to sense it. They rise from their beds earlier, feeling happier and more creative than all other surveyed urbanites. However, most Mumbaikars tend to snooze, and we all know that if you snooze, you lose – or do you? Scientific findings show that we're at our most creative when we're groggy, so let's reconsider the untapped potential of the late bird.

The City of Dreams and the Gateway two city nicknames connected to Mumbai. Many believe this Indian city is on the brink of creative explosion, so it's perhaps not surprising that Mumbai is a metropole of morning people trying to get the most out of their days. The survey shows that three of four Mumbaikars consider themselves early birds, which is many more than in other cities, with about four in ten waking up at 6AM or earlier and about six in ten waking up before 7AM. And not only do the people of India's most populous city rise and shine early, they feel shiny inside too – mornings are when 63 percent of Mumbaikars feel the most happy, an exceptionally high number compared to other metropolitans surveyed.

But even though our Mumbai residents get up and get going early, the survey reveals that 57 percent snooze at least once – more than all other city folks. This, however, may not be a bad thing. In light of a recent study published in the journal Thinking and Reasoning, it turns out that our up and at 'em morning approach is in fact the opposite of conditions perfect for open-minded thinking. Neuroscientists have found that imaginative insights and inspired connections are most likely to come to us when groggy. This is good news for snoozy people, who aren't the most awake yet, and it is definitely good news for the 17 percent of Mumbai's citizens who see themselves as evening people. Their morning grogginess is in fact a good thing. It breeds unfocused, irrelevant thoughts that can help people see things from different perspectives and enhance their creative problem solving capabilities. Simply put, in a society that tells us that feeling sleepy isn't optimal for creative work, science tells us that we can be more creative by learning to let these groggy moments be. And creativity is one of the keys for this Indian megacity to prosper.

So in a world where continuously cultivating creativity is key, particularly for emerging cities like Mumbai, what role can creativity play in their mornings? With so much going for them, the 57 percent of evening Mumbaikars who try to get rid of their morning grogginess quickly can well let themselves snooze a bit more, and see down what creative paths their groggy minds lead them. Let's try to embrace the potential of the late bird. Because does the early bird really catch the worm? Well, that probably depends on what kind of worm you're trying to catch.

GROOM OR GLOOM

Our bodies are a battleground for society's ideals – for both women and men. How are the morning moments we spend grooming and dressing making us feel?

Mumbaikars battle constant humidity, especially during monsoon season in India's most crowded city. So essentials like talcum powder have a special place on the bathroom shelves of Mumbai men to tackle the street heat. But what about the self-esteem for these Mumbaikar men and Mumbai's women? Let's take a look at how they fix themselves up during wake up, and if these grooming sessions are a source of self-confidence or stress.

Mumbai is a city of contrasts where glistening skyscrapers and fashion, film and finance meets stark poverty. As many Mumbaikars who try to reach the top of those skyscrapers become more individualistic, so does the climate for individual expression. Yet there is a contrast here as well. On one hand this growing individualism empowers people to express themselves through appearance, but on the other, trying to match the perfection in a modern media landscape becomes harder.

So as start-ups to stars are being born in the city of dreams this of course affects how Mumbaikars dress-up and make-up. How do they wake bright eyed and bushy tailed every morning? Confidence-wise, our Mumbaikars seem to be successful. The survey reveals that a third of these metropolitans think mornings are their most attractive time of day, more than any other urban population where the average is just about one in ten. Considering the heat, it's not surprising that almost everyone, 94 percent, finds taking a shower or a bath on weekday mornings important for their personal wellbeing according to the survey. Mumbaikars also have their own special grooming routines, such as a facial massage, using sunscreen and looking after their nails, which is more common in Mumbai than in other cities in the survey. In fact, 15 percent of these Indian urbanites massage their face, 30 percent of both men and women look after their nails, and around 30 percent of men and women apply sunscreen. More men in this city also shave and do their hair than men in other surveyed cities, where about three in five do both on weekday mornings.

The women and men of India are more equal when it comes to grooming than in any other surveyed city. This may be due to the fact that hygiene and personal care are very important to battle the humidity in the hot Mumbai weather.

So where does all this grooming lead in terms of confidence and anxiety? Well, a large majority of Mumbaikars feel very confident about their physical appearance when leaving home. And on average, just 14 percent in Mumbai consider feeling anxious about how they look a big source of stress on a typical weekday morning, which is almost on par with the total city average. Mumbaikars simply seem to have gotten it together when it comes to their appearance – and maybe that's why they wake up as the happiest morning metropolitans of the eight cities in this report.

MEANINGFUL MORNINGS

Mindfulness, gratitude and spirituality are the buzz words of health media as our digital and physical lives blur. In today's fast life, how do we find time for reflection and moments of morning meaning?

Pūjā. This one word stemming from Sanskrit is a synonym for honour and worship, and the ritual of pūjā belongs to Mumbai morning life for the 80 percent of hindu Mumbaikars. As the sun rises, pūjā prayer is performed by a special altar with Gods placed on it to greet the day. Mumbaikars are the most spiritual of the metropolitans in this report, so let's see what these Indian urbanites see as important for inner peace in the mornings.

In our faced-paced, always-on world, where smartphones have for many metropolitans become modern gurus and advisors, we struggle to find the time and space to mentally escape and turn our thoughts inwards. Gratitude, often a part of religious practices, is proven by Robert Emmons of The Journal of Positive Psychology, to be essential for happiness. Not only is it viral, but it significantly and positively influences our relationships and our own emotional status.

However, the people of Mumbai, where almost seven of ten are Hindu, seem to have understood the power of mindfulness long ago, and are already using their mornings to turn their minds inwards. Forty-three percent of Mumbaikars make time for self-reflection on weekday mornings, which much more than in any other surveyed city. Just more than half pray regularly during these mornings at least once a week, and it's more common to pray the older you are. Yet 47 percent of 18 to 29 yearolds also pray regularly.

Otherwise, the most common activity for morning self-reflection according to the survey is to take a shower or bath, which almost two thirds of Mumbaikans do. Additionally, half of Mumbai's residents listen to music and about two fifths exercise or take a walk. Meditating and thinking of something they're grateful for is also popular, with third of Mumbaikars self-reflecting in this way. Also, meditation and exercise is, like prayer, a little more common for older Mumbai people.

Mumbaikars also seem to make room for self-reflection in every room. The survey reveals that Mumbaikars who self-reflect on weekday mornings spend eleven minutes on average doing so in many of different areas in their homes. Meditation and thinking grateful thoughts is most common in the bedroom, while the living room is second runner-up. Praying is popular in other rooms, with almost two in five saying they pray elsewhere than for instance the bedroom, living room or kitchen.

This plentitude of morning gratitude for Mumbaikars is a part of the Hindu way of life. Not only do the people of Mumbai practice pūjā, but even samdhya, a ritual of worship and meditation performed two to three times a day. Hindus believe that adherence to a series of daily morning and evening rituals will find them in favour in life and will purify them for communion with God.

Ultimately, nine of ten Mumbai urbanites in the survey think it's important for their personal wellbeing to make time for introspection on weekday mornings. A majority of 55 percent even say it's very important. And considering they really make time for this, it's perhaps no surprise that a quarter of Mumbaikars feel they are most calm and peaceful in the mornings, more than any other city. ॐ

NURTURING NUTRITION

They say breakfast is the most important meal of the day. As many find it harder to make time for dinner together, could breakfast be as important for nurturing as nutrition?

Misal, poha, sabudana and upma. Maybe try a sali par edu, too. Maharashtian breakfasts are spicier than most, and more than many other surveyed urbanites, Mumbaikars spice up their morning meals with conversation and play. As breakfast is a perfect and often overlooked candidate as an occasion for social exchange, let's find out if Mumbaikars bond over breakfast.

Breakfast is central for the people of Mumbai. Nine of ten say this first meal of the day is important for their personal wellbeing – almost 10 percent more than in all other surveyed cities except Shanghai. And indeed, a large majority of the surveyed Mumbaikars do have breakfast at home, more than seven of ten. However, breakfast is eaten quickly, and lasts for an average of ten minutes. For a quarter of Mumbaikars it takes only five minutes or less.

While our Mumbaikars may munch through their mornings speedily, the survey shows they share these meals together, where three quarters of those living with others and who have breakfast at home usually eat with each other as well. Also, four in ten Mumbaikars who share their homes with somebody else also share generosity by making breakfast for those they live with. This is more than in any other surveyed city, which may be explained by the fact that almost eight of ten Mumbaikars think caring through sharing is important for their wellbeing.

The people of Mumbai living with others both talk and play during this early time of day according to the survey, where almost eight in ten Mumbaikars eating breakfast with others use the time to chat – and more than a third of parents living with their children aged 12 or younger use breakfast time to play with them. Yet somehow Mumbaikars manage to combine social interactions with worldly interactions, where almost half of Mumbai's breakfast eaters catch up on the news and watch TV, and a third use their smartphones or computers.

Research from psychologist and professor Sherry Turkle from MIT shows that while there are many benefits to talking with each other in many new and varied ways – through texts, emails, over the phone or social media - we shouldn't lose sight of what we get from having real life conversations. Such as the rich and more subtle connections we make when being able to look one another in the eyes as we talk, the skill and empathy required to read each others movements, and the ability to say what's truly on our minds as the conversation unfolds without filter. The people of Mumbai seem to have known this all along, and are bonding over breakfasts.

With that in mind, it seems that Mumbaikars have found the best of both the offline and online world. Family connections and caring for each other are already very present at the Mumbai breakfast table, but so are friends and a positive spirit. Among those who talk to others in their household while eating, one of the most common topics is friends and family, where almost seven in ten chat about their social ties, reveals the survey research. This topic distinguishes Mumbaikars from other surveyed urbanites. Also, what's on the agenda for the coming day is a major theme, where seven of ten share their thoughts about what they're doing during the day, and six in ten chat about food, a topic which is not as common among other urbanites. Mumbaikars, in other words, simply feed their soul while feeding themselves during mornings.

CUDDLE CHEMICALS

It's easy to forget each other during the stressful start of the day, where we might be more touchy with our smartphones than our loved ones. Are high-tech mornings contributing to low-touch lives?

This urban heart of Southern Asia of almost 21 million people is also India's most crowded. For every Mumbaikan there is about 1.1 square metres of open, public city space, 26 times less than New Yorkers. Being close to each other is something very common, yet how does this manifest itself in Mumbai homes, and does technology affect this closeness? Let's get in touch with how Mumbaikars physically connect with each other in the mornings.

Many Mumbaikans tend to share their homes across generations and they are physically affectionate with each other on weekday mornings. Almost nine in ten who live with others are sometimes or always physically affectionate with one another, whereas only nine percent are never touchy with each other on these busy mornings at home, which is less than in any other metropolises in the survey.

Our Mumbai couples take morning love seriously. As the survey reveals, when those living with their partners wake on a new weekday, 16 percent will usually linger a little longer for a hug or kiss in bed. And 13 percent report taking it a little further with morning sex – more than in any other surveyed city. Yet even though our Mumbai residents are getting their morning cuddles, a lot less cuddle than the share of Mumbaikars who would like to. Three in five living with their partner find cuddling in bed on weekday mornings important for their personal wellbeing and half think it would do their wellbeing good to make sure they have morning sex.

There are also a whole lot more cuddles between parents and their children on any given weekday morning in Mumbai than in any other surveyed metropole, where half do this. However, more Mumbai parents, almost nine in ten, would like to cuddle with their kids more on weekday mornings too than the ones who usually do.

A warm touch, a loving hug or even a friendly handshake releases the "cuddle chemical" oxytocin which helps us relax and lowers anxiety while simultaneously creating feelings of happiness and joy. Research declares that touch deprivation is a real thing, and whatever our relationship status may be and how much physical affection we are usually shown, we need more human contact than we're getting, according to Matthew Herenstein of The Touch and Emotion Lab at DePaul University. Also, whatever the reason, small intimate gestures can convey and spread compassion according to Dacher Keltner, Professor of Psychology at the University of California in Berkeley. And when it comes to spreading compassion during the first hours of the day, Mumbaikars are already on top, even if they would like to cuddle some more.

MULTI-MORNINGS

As we grow in numbers our homes get smaller, and as we get more connected our hours at work and home blur. With household multi-functioning and work multi-tasking, what do the walls of our home mean today?

With a population of 20 million and growing in the largest and most crowded Indian city, the urban world of Mumbaikans is becoming smaller. At the same time, their world has become mentally bigger due to digital expansion. With technology enabling continuous connections to friends, family and colleagues, and how work and the big world are just a click away, let's try to get a grip on how Mumbaikar's handle their work-life balance at home.

The Indian work day starts later than in many other countries, at around 11AM. This may be why Mumbaikars spend so much time at home between waking up and taking off for the day, and why about a quarter of Mumbaikars who are employed or students work or study at home on weekday mornings to a greater extent than in any other surveyed city.

However, this doesn't mean that their mornings are only filled with the coming day's work or studies. Those who work or study from home spend an average of 29 minutes on this task – slightly less compared to most other cities in this report. This might explain why one in five find it a big source of morning stress.

Technology can be both stressful and a tool for a more serene morning. It may help us keep things in check and getting tasks done fast, but may also be a distraction when trying to get our things together. A recent ten-city study from IDC Research reveals that 80 percent of smartphone users check their mobiles within 15 minutes of waking up. And our survey reveals that two in five busy Mumbai bees are stressed in the morning due to work and study related technology.

However, the most common place for Mumbaikar metropolitans to work or study in the morning according to the survey is the sofa. The bed and a specified work area are also popular home office spaces in Mumbai where two in five residents have chosen to get their business done respectively. Hitting the books or inbox is also common in the kitchen or eating area where a third have worked or studied. Even outdoors is popular, where a quarter of studying or working Mumbaikans have chosen as their place to check off their to-do list. Last but not least, one in ten Mumbaikars who work or study have used the bathroom or toilet to do so too. Overall, people the world over seem to be losing their beds and bathrooms as the last truly private areas of their home, according to the study.

As Mumbai continue to grow in the global business world, time spent on work or studies from home may become more of a necessity. And as Mumbaikars usually share their living space with many other people compared to for instance the Stockholmers in the survey, the areas in their homes also become more multi-functional.

PLAY INTO THE DAY

In today's society, being productive means being successful. Are we focusing too much on how much we can get done instead of what really matters?

Mumbaikars are masterful at taking time for self-reflection in the morning. Yet inner peace can be reached through another, more social way, such as closeness during play. Mumbaikars spend much time at home during the mornings, and already chat with each other over breakfast, and even make time for cuddling. But they want to spend more time on other playful activities, especially with their children. Let's discover how Mumbai residents prioritize play.

More Mumbaikars with children want to play with their kids on weekday mornings according to the survey. However, the biggest gap between what these parents want compared to what they actually do, exists among those who live with their kids who are 12 years old or younger. In this group, less than a third tend to regularly play with their children on weekday mornings, while almost nine of ten consider this important for their personal wellbeing.

On a more grown-up note, playtime in the form of cuddling in bed with one's partner is considered important for the personal wellbeing of most couples in Mumbai according to the survey. But there is a big discrepancy in how many actually do spend time kissing and hugging. For instance, 16 percent of those living with their partner usually hug in bed, while 62 percent think it's an important thing for feeling good on weekday mornings according to the survey.

And when it comes to a more sporty play in the mornings, exercising is also something Mumbaikars value. Almost nine in ten say it's important for their wellbeing, but only about half usually take the time to exercise.

Simply put, there are many different types of playtime during Mumbai morningtime, but the residents of India's largest metropole want to play more. Writer Laura Vanderkam may have a few tips about how to. Using time logs, she has dug into the mystery of mastering a so-called work-life balance, and found that writing down what you spend time on is a golden way of actually finding more time by rescheduling and daring to miss out and say no to other activities or duties that you thought you needed to do. She has changed her language and encourages others to do the same. Instead of saying "I don't have time", she now simply states "It's not a priority".

However, Mumbaikars are already on track for playful mornings, and play as a clearer morning priority seems to be a solution for a more fun and emotionally-giving start of the day. So ready, steady, go prioritize play!

TOMORROW'S MORNINGS

Prepping the evening before a new morning begins is often a suggestion for getting up on the right side of bed, but how much of our nights are do we invest in our coming days?

Few Mumbaikars think mornings are the most stressful time of day, compared to all other metropolitans, and they spend more time at home than most in the beginning of the day. How do they manage to handle these often stressful times, and are their calmer first hours connected to their preparations the night before? Let's take a peek at the plans Mumbaikars make for their mornings ahead.

Only 13 percent of Mumbaikars feel the most stressed in the mornings, according to the survey. In fact, most Mumbaikars are quite relaxed when waking up during weekdays and only a third feel very stressed. For those that do get stressed, the biggest concern is waking up too late, or thinking about the day ahead.

Solving the challenge of not waking up on time is perhaps shown in Mumbaikars preparations for their coming day the night before. On average they do five things to prepare, of which the most common activity is checking their schedule, where half of them do this, as well as deciding what to have for breakfast the next day. Both activities are done more in Mumbai than in any other surveyed city, according to the survey.

Compared to other urbanites, the surveyed Mumbaikars know what to do to get a good night's sleep. For example, it's more common to go to bed the same time every night and think of things to be grateful for before falling asleep. About a third of Mumbaikars also avoid using mobile technology devices in bed and don't drink late night caffeine or alcohol. These are all calming activities that are recommended by the US National Sleep Foundation for a night of quality slumber to help one be fully alert for the day ahead. For example, caffeine blocks sleep-inducing chemicals in our brain and speeds up the production of adrenaline, so should be avoided before bedtime. And going to bed at a similar time every night also helps regulate your body's biological clock so you can fall asleep – and stay asleep.

So when dawn breaks over the Gateway of India, Mumbaikars are well prepared. Not only do they wake up earlier and spend the longest time at home on weekday mornings compared to the other cities in the survey, but on average, seven in ten spend almost two and a half hours at home from waking up to taking off. Getting ready to get going after getting up, for our calm, compassionate and happy Mumbaikars doesn't seem much of a challenge.

NEW YORK

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EARLY BIRD MYTHS

We are most imaginative when we're sleepy, states new research in the journal Thinking and Reasoning. As we hurriedly get up, are we discarding our creative potential?

Slow risers have a bad reputation, but in today's creative economy, snoozing doesn't always mean losing according to recent research. New York is a powerhouse of culture and business with many people flocking to this port of potential and our New Yorkers tend to get up early. However research shows that groggy morning New Yorkers can power up their creativity even more. Let us reconsider the untapped potential of the late bird.

"If I can make it there, I'll make it anywhere" – these words made famous by Frank Sinatra when he first uttered them on record in 1979 still ring true for many. But what does it take to make it today? As Richard Florida, author of "The Rise of The Creative Class", points out: more traditional skills can be increasingly outsourced and automated, and it's those with creative skills that will be better positioned to make it. Globally, The Big Apple ranks as one of the top three creative cities according to a Barcelona Design Centre survey among creative professionals, but it surprisingly ranks number 31 behind other U.S. cities such as Boulder and San Francisco on The Martin Prosperity Institute's Creativity Index list, which captures a metropole's ability to succeed in a creative economy. In other words, there is room for creative improvement, even in the cultural capital of New York.

Is there a role for this during New Yorker's mornings? In a study published in the journal Thinking and Reasoning, it turns out that our up and at 'em morning approach is in fact the opposite of conditions perfect for open-minded thinking. Neuroscientists found that imaginative insights and inspired connections are most likely to come to us when groggy. This is good news especially for evening people, who may feel lesser for their lack of energy and alertness in the mornings. But their grogginess is in fact a good thing. It breeds unfocused, irrelevant thoughts that can help them see things from different perspectives and enhance their creative problem solving capabilities. Simply put, in a society which tells us that feeling sleepy isn't optimal for creative work, science tells us that we can be more creative by learning to let these groggy moments be.

But what does this mean for New Yorkers? At dawn, just over half of them start their day in America's most populous city before 7AM. However, six of ten evening persons are embracing a groggier start by easing into the day, which is optimal for making creative connections.

This research presents the opportunity for a more pleasurable morning experience for the 40 percent of New York's evening people since science now says it's alright to ease into mornings to stimulate more inventive thoughts. Annie Murphy Paul, author of "Brilliant: The New Science of Smart", writes that instead of jumping out of bed, evening people should set their alarm a little earlier, put their gadgets down and follow their mind where it leads, as well as linger a little longer in the shower, ignoring task-orientated thoughts.

Regardless of their current morning behaviour, our research shows that the majority of evening-orientated New Yorkers currently think that they're most creative in the afternoons, evenings or late nights. So what would happen if they tried out mornings to increase creative thoughts as well? Let's try to embrace the potential of the late bird. Because does the early bird really catch the worm in The Big Apple? Well, that probably depends on what kind of worm you're trying to catch.

GROOM OR GLOOM

Our bodies are a battleground for society's ideals – for both women and men. How are the morning moments we spend grooming and dressing making us feel?

Audrey Hepburn as Holly Golightly in her little black dress, gazing through the windows of Tiffany's, is one of the most iconic images of New York style. In a place where fashion and art are major economic drivers together with finance or law, according to author Elizabeth Currid in her "The Warhol Economy", let's look at how New Yorkers fix themselves up during wake up, and if these grooming sessions are a source of self-confidence or stress.

Amongst the modern maze of New York's streets, fashion lion Carrie Bradshaw found her true love through marriage – and her wardrobe. The TV-series Sex and the City featuring life-searcher and columnist Carrie was groundbreaking in the 90's, both regarding fashion and feminism, due to its individualistic approach towards both appearance and relationships. Yet if growing individualism on one hand empowers us to express ourselves through our appearance, trying to match the perfection we are bombarded with has become more difficult. This may be especially true in New York City, the metropolis that The Global Language Monitor crowns in first place as the most fashionable and stylish of them all.

Considering this, it's not a surprise that New Yorkers spend more time grooming on average than other surveyed cities, taking 16 minutes rather than 14 for this. These urbanites also shower or bathe more than others, except those in Berlin.

New York women spend more time grooming than their female city counterparts, clocking in at 19 minutes. They also shave more commonly in the mornings with every fifth woman compared to every tenth Stockholm woman and only every twentieth Shanghainese woman shaving. Putting on sunscreen during these sunrise hours is also slightly more common in New York than in European cities, and on the fashion side of things, women in New York spend seven minutes choosing what to wear.

However, only 16 percent find looks a big source of morning stress and 15 percent feel deciding what to wear is stressful. Those who tend to feel the most anxious about their looks are younger than average, and more often women. Also, anxious morning New Yorkers groom more than the average New Yorker. Yet even though they groom more, they also feel less confident than others about their appearance when leaving home. The question is – do New Yorkers feel less confident about their morning looks because they groom more, or do less confident New Yorkers spend more time grooming because they feel less confident?

Luckily though, mornings are not all anxiety ridden for everyone. Even though stress over appearance reigns in this stylish city, 13 percent of New Yorkers think mornings are when they're at their most attractive during the day. So in the City of Lights, there is some light regarding feeling good about your looks in the morning.

MEANINGFUL MOMENTS

Mindfulness, gratitude and spirituality are the buzz words of health media as our physical and digital lives blur. In today's fast life, how do we find time for reflection and moments of morning meaning?

In the USA's most populous city, the fastest growing religious group isn't religious. Being spiritual but not traditionally religious is the latest trend in New York amongst its melting pot of historic Harlem churches, Jewish enclaves and Catholic and Protestant landmarks. In the land that devotes a day to giving thanks, let's see what our US urbanites see as important for morning inner peace.

Change is the only constant in New York, and change can require reflection. But while it's one thing to turn things down a notch on vacation, it's another to do it on a regular weekday in a city famed for being ferociously fast-pace. Not least in a New York minute where change is around every street corner. But while it's one thing to unplug or turn things down a notch on vacation, it's another to do it on a regular weekday in a city famed for its ferociously fast pace.

The majority of New Yorkers believe that self-reflection is vital for their personal wellbeing – in fact almost three of five find it important and a fourth think it's very important. But only 13 percent actually make time for self-reflective moments on weekday mornings. This is however more than in other surveyed metropolises, but much less than in Mumbai, where two in five Mumbaians make take moments to self-reflect. The New Yorkers that do make this effort make more time to take time for themselves, spending an average of 14 minutes of their mornings on this.

But what do these moments of meaning look like? The two most common activities for introspection occur during a simple morning shower or bath, or while listening to music. Prayer is also central for New Yorkers, where people of all ages pray at least once a week on weekday mornings. In fact, New York turns out to be the second most common surveyed city for praying, after Mumbai. Reflecting while stretching is just as common as praying, and about one in five also exercise regularly or think of something they are grateful for as a way to self-reflect.

According to the survey, the bathroom is the most common place for morning contemplation in New York homes. Interestingly, another popular place is the bedroom where 60 percent of prayers are made, much more than the total global city average of 40 percent. And it is the bedroom in which people practice gratefulness too.

Robert Emmons of The Journal of Positive Psychology argues that gratitude is not only essential for happiness, but it is also viral and proven to significantly and positively influence our relationships as well as our own emotional status. Similarly, studies from the University of California in Berkeley show that practicing mindfulness fosters compassion and altruism, while also reducing negative emotions and stress – good news for the many praying people in New York.

Ultimately, many more New Yorkers think morning reflection is very important, than the number who actually do. Perhaps this because, only thirteen percent feel calm and peaceful in the mornings. But maybe this stress can become less if New Yorkers could bless themselves with more moments of meaning.

NURTURING NUTRITION

They say breakfast is the most important meal of the day. As many find it harder to make time for dinner together, could breakfast be as important for nurturing as nutrition?

Fluffy blueberry pancakes, maple syrup, melted butter and a cup o' joe. As Martha Stewart remarks: "there is breakfast, and there are pancakes". This classic American start of the day is often eaten in diners with others, but most New Yorkers eat breakfast at home, and many not together. This morning meal is often overlooked candidate as a time for social exchange. Let's find out if New Yorkers bond over breakfast.

Our dinners have long been the staple of home gatherings, especially the barbecue grill in America. But in our digitally connected times, with both genders in our modern workforce, we work more and we work later. When getting family gathered in the yard or rooftop for a tasty steak is getting harder, perhaps it's time to try to switch things around if we're finding ourselves fighting work-life windmills, and try to share a different type of meal together.

While more than eight of ten New Yorkers think having breakfast on weekday mornings is important for their personal wellbeing, 59 percent usually make time for breakfast at home - less than the 66 percent in all surveyed cities. And almost one third of New Yorkers spend less than five minutes at home on the day's first meal. That said, in the land that pioneered convenience food and to-go culture it may be that many are eating out on the town.

From a social perspective, half of those who live with others and have breakfast at home share this meal with each other, which is slightly less than in other cities, and eight in ten of those who do eat together at home use the time to talk to each other. Most talk about the practicalities of what they are doing that day as well as work or school, with many keeping it positive chatting about what they're looking forward to in the coming day. Tech joins New Yorkers at the breakfast table too. Morning shows, pioneered by the United States, are a present companion for half of New York's early eaters - a number only surpassed in Moscow. Additionally, 45 percent of all breakfast-eating New Yorkers use their smartphones or computers.

However, more than eight in ten of those living with their partner or children under 12 years old believe it's important for their wellbeing to have a conversation with each other on weekday mornings. And they may be right. Research from Sherry Turkle, Psychologist and Professor of Social Studies of Science and Technology at MIT, states that while there are many benefits to talking with each other in new and varied ways - through texts, emails, over the phone and social media - we shouldn't lose sight of what we get from having real life conversations as well. These include the rich and more subtle connections we make when being able to look one another in the eyes as we talk, the skill and empathy required to read each others movements, and the ability to say what's truly on our minds as the conversation unfolds without filter.

So instead of skipping breakfast and sipping lattes on-the-go, or listening to our morning hosts on TV, maybe there's a bigger place for the people we eat with over those pancakes.

CUDDLE CHEMICALS

It's easy to forget each other in the stressful start of the day, where we might be more touchy with our smartphones than our loved ones. Are high-tech mornings contributing to low-touch lives?

New York is social in many ways. With over nine million people, it seems easy to meet new faces and share a home in a brick building or tower, yet according to recent census data, singles make up about 40 percent of households in New York. There's no doubt technology and proximity in this major metropole creates connections, but let's get in touch with how New Yorkers physically connect in the mornings.

Whatever our relationship status may be, touch deprivation is a real thing and we need more human contact than we're getting, according to research from the Touch and Emotion Lab at DePauw University. And New Yorkers tend to agree that it's important to be physically affectionate in the mornings with their loved ones. For example, almost half of those who live with others always show physical affection towards the people they live with on a typical weekday morning, and a third sometimes do. Only a fifth don't at all.

Yet the first thing many of us do today when we wake up is check our smartphones, even before we check our partners or kids according to a multi-city survey by mobile testing firm SOASTA. And as our survey reveals, the amount we cuddle doesn't match how much we actually wish to. When it comes to parents, 83 percent of New York parents think it's important for their personal wellbeing to hug or kiss their kids on weekday mornings. However, the reality is that it's slightly more common for parents to turn to their mobile phones or computers on a typical morning, with more than half of them doing so, than to hug or kiss the kids.

On the couple side of things, loved-up New Yorkers are quite touchy feely with the partners they live with compared to other metropolitans – only in Stockholm and London do couples show more morning affection. In these romantic relationships, 53 percent of those living together regularly kiss or hug their partner in the early hours. Yet New Yorkers could probably use some more smooching, since almost nine of ten think it's important for those feel good feelings. Half of New Yorkers also believe that morning sex is important for their wellbeing, but this only happens for a lucky nine percent.

New Yorkers seem to be aware that small intimate gestures can convey and spread compassion, a fact backed by Dacher Keltner, Professor of Psychology at the University of California, Berkeley. And it is proven in study after study – the more physical contact we have with each other, the better we feel. The majority of New Yorkers want to hug and kiss more, so let the cuddling begin.

MULTI-MORNINGS

As we grow in numbers, our homes get smaller. And as we get more connected, our hours at work and home blur. With household multi-functioning and work multi-tasking, what do the walls of our home mean today?

With a population of nine billion people, our world has become smaller. At the same time, our world has become mentally bigger, where cell phones and computers remind us of friends, family and colleagues. When the rest of the Big Apple as well as the big world is just a swipe away from the moment we open our eyes, let's try to grip on how New Yorkers handle their work-life balance at home.

The areas of our metropolitan homes are getting smaller with over half of the world's population now living an urban life. New York is no stranger to shrinking apartments in which square feet are often sacrificed to save money. The city's housing problem, driven by the growing population of single and two-person households, inspired former Mayor Bloomberg to change zoning laws which now allow developers to build "micro-units" across the city at no more than 300 square feet, according to the Huffington Post.

It's more common to work or study at home at the start of the day in New York than in all other surveyed cities, except Mumbai. Fifteen percent do this on a typical weekday morning, and for almost half an hour. Six in ten of New York's employed and students find this important for their personal wellbeing, which is high compared to the other urbanites.

So what does this and smaller living space mean for New York homes? Interestingly, the bed or bedroom is not only a place of choice for many New Yorker's morning self-reflection – but also the most common place where they choose to work or study Monday through Friday mornings. Forty-three percent of employed or students have worked or studied in the comfort of their own bed before leaving home for work or school. Also, thirty-eight percent have hit the books on their sofa, and 36 percent have done this in the eating area. Thanks to technology, the bathroom has also become somewhat of a modern sanctuary to work or study within in today's world of open area floor planning. In fact, quite a few New Yorkers have no issue conducting their business where other business is traditionally done, with 17 percent having worked or studied in their bathrooms or toilets in the morning.

But unfortunately, more people in New York feel very stressed when waking up than other metropolitans, with Shanghai being the only exception, and a third of New Yorkers say they wake up feeling very stressed. Could this be due to that in New York, this city of multi-talent, multi-culture and a multitude of people, its residents have found office spaces everywhere in their homes. But what does the saying "Honey, I'm home!" mean to New Yorkers in the long run when work and studies seamlessly and wirelessly slip in the door to join for dinner – and hang around until the next multi-morning? Maybe multi-tasking, which has become an Empire State of mind, will eventually turn into single-tasking to lessen stress for these busy New Yorkers.

PLAY INTO THE DAY

In today's society, being productive means being successful. Are we focusing too much on how much we get done instead of what really matters?

New York, New York! Many a movie about The Big Apple feature playful dancing up and down the city's avenues. But how do New Yorkers play in their homes? Being closer to loved ones is something all metropolitans long for in the mornings, and New York parents want to play with their kids, but only one fifth do. Let's discover how our New York residents prioritize play.

New York is one of the world's busiest and competitive cities, and with busy business bees come full schedules, even in the morning, where playtime may not fit in. According to the survey, the biggest difference in what parents living with their children up to 12 years old think is important for their wellbeing and what they do, is playing with their kids. Only one in five usually do this on weekday mornings – while almost four in five consider this important for their wellbeing.

New Yorkers living alone tend to want to play around with more practical things on everyday mornings. Aside from having breakfast and showering, catching up on the news is the most important thing to do for 77 percent, while 42 percent actually do. And though 61 percent think it's important with physical play through exercise, only 18 percent do.

Wanting to play more, especially with one's children, is a pattern which repeats itself in all cities. We want to have more play time, and feel it is of utmost importance, but we rarely give ourselves the time to have this fun with our near and dear. Mornings are the time of day when we're often urged to prepare for the day in an orderly fashion. But what if we've got our priorities wrong?

Using time logs, writer Laura Vanderkam has made priorities in her research a priority, and dug into the mystery of mastering a so-called work-life balance. She found that writing down what you spend time on is a golden way of actually finding more time by rescheduling and daring to miss out on other activities or duties that you thought you needed to do. She has changed her language and encourages others to do the same. Instead of saying "I don't have time", she now simply pronounces "It's not a priority".

While not everyone, at least not all of the time, always has the luxury of being able to play in the mornings, perhaps New Yorkers could try to make playing more of a priority for their wellbeing.

TOMORROW'S MORNINGS

Prepping the evening before a new morning begins is often a suggestion for getting up on the right side of bed, but how much of our nights are do we invest in our coming days?

When one thinks of New York, early mornings are perhaps not top-of-mind – it is after all the city that never sleeps. New Yorkers spend more time at home on weekday mornings than other urbanites, with a third taking two hours or more from bed to front door. But despite this slow start and already packed bags, New York is most stressed at dawn. Let's take a peek at the plans New Yorkers make for their mornings ahead.

New Yorkers are a well-prepared bunch. They make lunches the night before, and pack their handbags and briefcases. The most common way to prepare for a New York weekday morning is to take an evening shower or bath, with 44 percent of The Big Apple's residents doing so. Also, almost one in three avoid caffeine and alcohol close to bedtime, equal to or more than those in other surveyed metropolises except Mumbai. These are great winding-down techniques that the US National Sleep Foundation recommends for a good night's sleep and alertness during the day ahead. Another recommendation is avoiding tech in bed. However, 13 percent of New Yorkers are happy to screen their screens in bed, making them the most attached to their technology of all cities besides Moscow.

A study published in the Journal of Psychosomatic Research in 2009 shows that positive pre-sleep thoughts have a good effect on slumber, and that gratitude facilitates these thoughts. So instead of dwelling on unpaid bills, you could think of that colleague who stayed late at work to help you. This is good news for the one in five New Yorkers who lull themselves to sleep with thankful thoughts, putting them second on the top city night gratefulness list after Mumbai.

When it comes to practicalities, New Yorkers also plan their meals for the next day more than others. Twenty-four percent prepare lunch for the next day, and almost 20 percent decide what to have for breakfast the coming morning. Our yankees are also helpful parents, where about half of those with children up to 12 years old make sure their kiddos are prepped for the next day. The traditional American brown-lunch bag may still be alive after all.

However, one of five New Yorkers still think mornings are the most stressful period of the day. And not everyone finds thinking ahead about the coming day encouraging, with two of five reporting it's their biggest source of stress Monday through Friday. So while the practical aspects of packing a bag or planning a schedule may not be for everyone, there are things we can do in the moment, like shutting our screens down, thinking grateful thoughts and taking a sleep-inducing warm shower, that will help guide us into a better next day. In the City of Dreams, we hope our New Yorkers dream sweet through using these techniques, to be able to continue working on that American Dream of theirs as they step out onto the pavement and perhaps hail a yellow taxi cab.

PARIS

1

EARLY BIRD MYTHS

We are most imaginative when we're sleepy, states new research in the journal *Thinking and Reasoning*. As we hurriedly get up, are we discarding our creative potential?

For many people, Paris is a city which breeds some of the most cultured and fascinating thinkers, artists and fashionistas. But as more cities are on the rise in a global creative economy, Parisians – a people that tend to get up late – could harness their creative history even more by sleeping in. Let's reconsider the untapped potential of the late bird.

The capital of France is the second most popular city in the world to visit, and many of us travel there to see and experience what people living in Paris throughout history have created. So when standing in front of the many paintings and sculptures in the Louvre one might wonder how such creative ideas arise. And is the answer to that question important for Paris to continue to be a creative and innovative city in the years to come?

Parisians wake up relatively late with the average alarm set for about 6:50AM, according to the survey. And only a few more consider themselves evening people rather than morning people – perhaps a surprise when there are brasseries on every corner, and dinners are served late in the evening. Furthermore, around half of these Parisians who aren't friends with the morning, are of course friends with the snooze button, hitting snooze at least once and slowly easing themselves into the day.

This may sound a little lazy to some, but Parisians have nothing to be ashamed of. A 2011 study published in the journal 'Thinking and Reasoning' suggests that snoozy mornings can in fact be the perfect moments for creative thoughts. It turns out that a quick-to-rise-and-no-nonsense approach to getting up can in fact be the opposite of conditions perfect for open-minded thinking. Neuroscientists have found that imaginative insights and inspired connections are most likely to come to us when groggy. This is good news for Parisians who love a sleep in, and of course snoozers, who aren't the most awake or full of energy in the mornings. Their grogginess is in fact a good thing. It breeds unfocused, irrelevant thoughts that can help people see things from different perspectives and enhance their creative problem solving capabilities. Simply put, in a society which tells us that feeling sleepy isn't optimal, science tells us that we can be more creative by learning to let these groggy moments be.

And as with many other cities, only a small eight percent of our night owls in Paris think that early mornings are their most creative time of the day. Perhaps the Parisian attitude of "laissez faire" may be just the trick for a more inspired morning approach.

GROOM OR GLOOM

Our bodies are a battleground for society's ideals – for both women and men. How are the morning moments we spend grooming and dressing making us feel?

Paris is the fashion and cosmetics capital of the world. And Parisian streets display the individuality and confidence of women and men living up to the promise of the city, from sunrise to sunset. But are these fashionable metropolitans as confident as they seem? Let's take a look at how our Parisians fix themselves up in the mornings.

Walking the streets of Paris you see confidence everywhere with women and men having the courage and attitude to be unique in how they dress. But to what extent, is this just an appearance?

Throughout the 20th Century, beauty standards have progressively become more unrealistic. On one hand growing individualism empowers us to express ourselves through our appearance. On the other, trying to match the perfection we are bombarded with has become more difficult. In Paris, being surrounded with beauty can also become a stress factor, so how much do the surveyed Parisians work on their appearances?

When it comes to grooming, Parisians do what all other city dwellers do, but more – and more vigorously. According to the survey, one third of women and men in Paris groom a lot, making them the most dedicated morning groomers of all surveyed cities. For example, two thirds of all madames and mademoiselles apply makeup every weekday morning, only surpassed by Moscow women. They also take more morning showers than others, except Mumbaikans. And when it comes to doing their hair and putting on perfume, it's more common for Parisians to do so than any other women in this report. Perhaps this is not surprising given Parisians special relationship with these little glass bottles – 150 000 bottles of fragrance are sold in Paris every day.

However, these puffs of perfume and makeup brushes of beauty don't seem to boost confidence significantly. Looks and appearance are in fact great sources of anxiety and stress for the surveyed Parisians, and these French urbanites feel the least confident with how they look when leaving home in the morning of all other metropolitans in this report, except Londoners. And after Muscovites, Parisians stress the most over how they look.

Simply put, living life as a fashionable Parisian simply seems more difficult than it appears, and being stylish resident in the fashion capital of the world might be harder than it looks.

MEANINGFUL MORNINGS

Mindfulness, gratitude and spirituality are the buzz words of health media as our physical and digital lives blur. In today's fast life, how do we find time for reflection and moments of morning meaning?

The Paris of today is a truly cosmopolitan city, attracting people of all ethnicities and traditions. Parisians are increasingly atheist and seeking spirituality in other forms. Let's see what the people in the French capital do for inner peace and self-reflection in the mornings.

According to the survey, half of Parisians use mobile technology or computers before setting off from home in the mornings, while only one out of ten make time for self-reflection. But finding the time for contemplation isn't a result of stressful mornings – Parisians just don't seem to see self-reflection as a morning must. Moments to self-reflect are for example seen as less important than watching TV or using social media, and six of ten surveyed Parisians say self-reflective practices on Monday to Friday mornings to be wholly unimportant.

However, studies show that there is value in taking time to pause and reflect. For example, researchers from the University of California in Berkeley show that practicing mindfulness fosters compassion and altruism, while also reducing negative emotions and stress. Research from the University of Illinois show that yoga improves focus, working memory and lowers blood pressure. And Robert Emmons of The Journal of Positive Psychology argues that practicing gratitude is essential for happiness, and is also proven to significantly and positively influence our relationships and our own emotional status.

Now before you start to think that Parisians don't self-reflect at all on working week mornings because of the low importance they place in doing so, only about one in three don't actually participate according to the survey. One out of ten people in Paris usually pray on weekday mornings. Additionally me-time is taken in the shower or bath for 43 percent of Parisians who take the time to self-reflect – making the bathroom the most popular place for introspection in Parisian homes. Also 32 percent of those who self-reflect listen to music to soothe their souls.

However, self-reflection seems to be the way of the future in Paris, as more young people between 18 to 29 years old find the time for it during their mornings. The survey found that these young people pray more by at least six percent, listen to music more by at least 17 percent and think about things they are grateful for by at least four percent than their elders. This suggests that the twelve minutes of me-time Parisians spend each morning will increase. And if the science suggested by The Journal of Positive Psychology is true, this me-time will contribute to more happy times for the people of Paris.

NURTURING NUTRITION

They say breakfast is the most important meal of the day. As many find it harder to make time for dinner together, could breakfast be as important for nurturing as nutrition?

With many books written about the great “French paradox”, Parisians are frequently studied for their ability to enjoy cuisine yet stay slim. Much points to their appreciation of a meal as a slow, shared moment of pleasure and conversation, as nutritionist Dr Françoise L’Hermite suggests. But is a slow meal reality even during breakfasttime and what does this mean for Parisians’ morning croissants, café and chats? Let’s find out if Parisians bond over breakfast.

Is our fast-paced world with late work hours and smartphones making us available at all times of the day, is breakfast an option for city dwellers in trying to find time with the family? Parisians tend to eat dinner late, and according to the survey rise late in the morning as well. As the day starts, the people of Paris are quite effective in their morning routines – so a social breakfast may not be on the top of their list. Two out of three Parisians have breakfast before leaving home, much like rest of our surveyed metropolitans. Yet this meal is over and done with rather quickly, taking an average 12 minutes, and for a fifth of the Parisians breakfast takes no longer than five minutes.

In fact, 55 percent of breakfast eaters in Paris living with others say they usually don’t eat breakfast at home together according to the survey. And Parisians have the least inclination to talk to people they share a home with over breakfast out of all metropolitans in this report. Also, a fifth actually don’t do anything else at all while eating - no reading, watching TV, using mobile technology or any conversation.

However, even if silence is said to be golden, conversations are gems for making our wellbeing sparkle. Research from Sherry Turkle, Psychologist and Professor of Social Studies of Science and Technology at MIT, states that while there are many benefits to talking with each other in new and varied ways – through texts, emails, over the phone or social media – we shouldn’t lose sight of what we get from having real life conversations. These include the rich and more subtle connections we make when being able to look one another in the eyes as we talk, the skill and empathy required to read each others movements, and the ability to say what’s truly on our minds as the conversation unfolds without filter.

But as the survey reveals, something deep seems to happen among the people in Paris who do talk to each other while eating breakfast at home together. More than in any other surveyed city, Parisians talk about what worries them over their morning meal, where over half say this is a common topic. Only people in Moscow come close to starting the day this way through chatting about worries.

Overall however, the Parisian breakfast eater at home seems to be a rather stressed, energetic no-nonsense person - ready and looking forward to the day - but wanting to just eat breakfast and be on their way, perhaps looking forward to lunch, but more than that, dinner at the local brasserie.

CUDDLE CHEMICALS

It's easy to forget each other during the stressful start of the day, where we might be more touchy with our smartphones than our loved ones. Are high-tech mornings contributing to low-touch lives?

Paris is known to many as the City of Love. However, in our modern world where love and affection can be shared digitally, what is the reality of romance as the people of the French capital wake up? Let's get in touch with how the people of Paris physically connect with each other in the mornings.

We don't mean to burst anyone's bubble, but the numbers of our survey show that Paris is actually not a City of Love – at least not during the mornings. In fact, compared to the other cities in this report, Paris is a city where the gestures of love have a small part to play in morning rituals.

Only four in ten of those living with partners in Paris actually have a conversation with their loved one in the morningtime. And only three in ten give their partner a hug or a kiss. Kissing and hugging is actually far less common for surveyed Parisians than Stockholmers, where Swedes are perhaps known more for their - rightly or wrongly - not-so traditionally passionate relationships. Parisians are also the least likely of all the surveyed metropolitans to cuddle between the sheets, where only eleven percent spend their mornings hugging in bed.

The Paris way to start the day instead seems to be a fast-paced effective routine of getting out the door rather than hanging out and spending time with family or a significant other. But Parisians want more of the "cuddle chemical" oxytocin, this warm hormonal rush which stems from a warm touch, a loving hug or even a friendly handshake. The rush is actually not all in one's mind, as the body releases oxytocin from physical contact, which helps us relax and lowers anxiety while simultaneously creating feelings of happiness and joy.

Recent studies reveal that touch deprivation is a real thing and we need more human contact than we're getting, according to research from the Touch and Emotion Lab at DePauw University. And our Parisians want to cuddle more. Almost eight of ten surveyed people in Paris living with their partner think it's important for their personal wellbeing to give their loved one a hug or kiss, and over half say it's important to have sex in the morning, while only eight percent usually do cuddle in this manner.

And while the importance of using social media or mobile technology in the mornings may be less important than cuddling for Parisians, these metropolitans cuddle up more with their tech than their partners. This is, however, not unique as 40 percent of smartphone users around the world use their smartphones before getting out of bed according to a recent Ericsson's Mobility Report. On one hand, the more time we spend on our tech lives in the mornings, the less time can be spent wholly giving our attention to the people around us at the same time. However, tech can also be used to make the morning more effective, so more time can be spent hugging and proclaiming our j'adore to the ones we adore.

MULTI-MORNINGS

As we grow in numbers our homes get smaller, and as we get more connected our hours at work and home blur. With household multi-functioning and work multi-tasking, what do the walls of our home mean today?

France is proponent for a healthy work-life balance, with its government even setting 35 work hours a week as the legal standard limit. But our fast-paced knowledge economy has taken hold of Paris, as it has all cities in our report, leading to smartphones and tablets blinking and setting off sounds no matter what time it is or wherever we are. Does a strict 35-hour workweek actually exist any more? Let's try to get a grip on how Parisians handle their work-life balance in the home.

Not only is the morning the most stressful period of the day for Parisians, it's also more stressful for Paris residents than for most other metropolitans according to the survey. The people of Paris seem to look for the most effective way of getting the day started and after the Shanghainese, Parisians are the quickest to wake up and leave home.

For the working or studying women and men in Paris, studies and work just have to wait until after they leave home. Only nine percent usually work or study on weekday mornings at home, which is less than in most surveyed cities. And three out of ten Parisians say they don't ever work or study at home in the mornings, which is high compared to the other urbanites in this report. For instance, in Mumbai 26 percent choose to use their morning time for hitting their books or inboxes.

But for those that actually do study or work in the mornings, the Paris flat offers many opportunities for these activities, as it simply has to. Paris is now the second most expensive city in the world after Singapore, according to the Economist Intelligence Unit's cost-of-living report from 2014. And expensive living usually means smaller living quarters, with a more fleeting approach to what should be done where. Accordingly our survey shows that the sofa is the most used work place in the Paris home. Even the bathroom has become a place for multiple businesses duties where one in ten Paris residents has worked or studied in the bathroom or on the toilet during weekday mornings. Not surprisingly, students prefer the bed, and almost two thirds have studied from the comfort of their pillows in their bedroom Monday through Friday mornings.

There must be other factors that contribute to Parisian's stressful weekday mornings, given that few Parisians work or study from home and only nine percent of those employed or studying say that work or study-related technology is a big source of stress in the morning. Simply put, the people in Paris don't let work intrude on their mornings, making home, more like home, in the early hours.

PLAY INTO THE DAY

In today's society, being productive means being successful. Are we focusing too much on how much we get done instead of what really matters?

Between waking up and stepping onto the streets of their city, Parisians do what many other metropolitans do – eat breakfast, drink coffee or tea, shower or bathe, and catch up on the news. And as many other urbanites, they use their mobile technology and social media to a large extent. However, for Paris parents with young children, playing in the morning is important for 71 percent, but only 13 percent actually do this. Let's discover how Paris residents prioritize play.

Of course, we can all do several things at once during our mornings, such as drinking coffee and checking Facebook, which Parisians also do. When asked what they typically do during breakfast besides munching on baguettes, Parisians answered that they use mobile technology, talk with the people they live with, watch TV and read the news. However, Parisians are not as multi-tasking as other urbanites, where many actually just concentrate on munching their morning meal.

Yet Parisians want to spend their mornings and breakfasts more on playtime. Like other cities in this report, there turns out to be a big discrepancy between what's important for the people of Paris and what they actually do. If they were to live out their wants regarding morning priorities, Parisians living with their partner and children would talk more with their significant other and their kids, give their kids and partners more kisses and hugs, and above all play more with their little ones. Seven of ten Parisian parents feel that playing with their young children in the morning is important for their wellbeing, but only 13 percent actually do this, shows the survey.

This is a pattern which repeats itself in all cities. People want to have more playtime, and feel it is of utmost importance, but rarely give themselves the time to have this fun with their near and dear. Using time logs, writer Laura Vanderkam has dug into the mystery of mastering a so-called work-life balance, and found that writing down what you spend time on is a golden way of actually finding more time by rescheduling and daring to miss out on and say no to other activities or duties that you thought you needed to do. She has changed her language and encourages others to do the same. Instead of saying "I don't have time", she now simply states "It's not a priority".

It would be quite fair to say that for Parisians, their guiding morning principle seems to be all house work and less play. So maybe playing house with the kids for a good time during morningtime is something that would be welcomed in the homes of Paris.

TOMORROW'S MORNINGS

Prepping the evening before a new morning begins is often a suggestion for getting up on the right side of bed, but how much of our nights are do we invest in our coming days?

Even though Parisians put time and effort into grooming during their first hours of the day, many less take their evening time to prepare for the coming day. Small preparations the night before may reduce the stress they feel come sunrise, so let's take a peek at the plan Parisians for their mornings ahead.

Studying the answers in the survey, the image of a somewhat chaotic and stressful morning for Parisians presents itself, where most find these hours of the day the most stressful. One of four wake up feeling very stressed, the biggest sources of stress being waking up too late and thinking about the day ahead. Also, the people of Paris don't spend much time at home on weekday mornings, taking about one and a quarter hours between waking up and leaving for their work or school quarters. Except for the Shanghainese in this report, Paris residents spend the least amount of time at home in the mornings, so perhaps it is no wonder they are stressed.

Part of the answer to a smoother morning can be found in the night before. While most Parisians do a few activities to prepare for the next day, they prepare less than other metropolitans according to the survey. And as many as twelve percent don't prepare anything, which is very little compared to Shanghai or Mumbai where only about five percent skip next-day preparations.

The one thing that creates the most stress for Paris in the mornings, as we now know, is thinking of the day ahead, and this aspect is also relatively overlooked the night before. Only three in ten Parisians check their schedule for next day before going to sleep, which is the lowest of all surveyed urbanites. They are also the least likely of all metropolitans in the survey to decide what breakfast to have every weekday morning in advance. However, when they do prepare before hitting the sack, the most common thing for Parisians to do is to pick out an outfit for the next day and have a bath or shower, perhaps reflecting that they do indeed live in one of the world's most fashionable cities.

All in all, Parisians tend to have more of a relaxed approach in their evenings, where what can be done tomorrow is indeed done tomorrow. But with just a little calendar check before turning off the lights in the City of Lights, they may be able to have a less stressful morning and be ready for whatever their city brings them in the day to come. Bon nuit!

SHANGHAI

1

EARLY BIRD MYTHS

We are most imaginative when sleepy, states recent research in the journal *Thinking and Reasoning*. As we hurriedly get up, are we discarding our creative potential?

Shanghai is the bustling business capital of Asia and the most cosmopolitan city in a country steadily on its way to becoming the globe's largest economy. Given the traditional Chinese emphasis on vigour and diligence it's no surprise that most Shanghainese consider themselves to be morning people, trying to rise quickly and leaving snooze buttons alone. But how does this early bird behaviour affect their creativity? Let's reconsider the untapped potential of the late bird.

The sun rises in the East. Nowhere is this more obvious than in Shanghai. But where much of Shanghai's phenomenal growth over the last few decades has been the result of the city's manufacturing prowess, this is about to change. Shanghai will speed up its efforts to become a global knowledge-intensive hub by the end of 2015, according to the twelfth Five-year Plan for Shanghai's Industrial Development.

So how can Shanghai reinvent itself as a creative powerhouse? In a study published in the journal *Thinking and Reasoning*, it turns out that the city's early bird approach is in fact the opposite of conditions perfect for open-minded thinking. Neuroscientists have found that imaginative insights and inspired connections are most likely to come to us when groggy. This is good news especially for the 29 percent of our Shanghainese who identify themselves as night owls, and who aren't the most awake or full of energy in the mornings. Grogginess breeds unfocused thoughts that can help people see things from different perspectives and enhance their creative problem solving capabilities. Simply put, in a society that tells us that feeling sleepy isn't optimal for creative work, science tells us that we can be more creative by learning to let these groggy moments be.

As dawn breaks over the Bund, few Shanghainese seem to have trouble waking up and hopping out of bed. After Mumbai, this is the city in our survey with the largest share of people who consider themselves morning people – and a whole seven of ten try to wake up as quickly as possible. But for these people, and of course Shanghai's evening people, there might be a call for taking it a little easier in the mornings to stimulate more inventive thoughts.

Most Shanghai residents would probably find this counter-intuitive as only a tenth of them actually feel the most creative in the morning. Among Shanghai's night owls that number even plummets to a mere four percent. This means that almost none of those who would likely benefit most from taking advantage of this creative morning grogginess probably do.

With the research on the table, Shanghai's evening people can keep in mind that a foggier morning approach can in fact be a more inspired morning approach. This could prove useful not only to prosper in one of the Asia's most dynamic metropolises, but also for the city of Shanghai on its journey to become one of the leading brain hubs of the world.

GROOM OR GLOOM

Our bodies are a battleground for society's ideals – for both women and men. How are the morning moments we spend grooming and dressing making us feel?

Emerging from a culture that has traditionally put less emphasis on individual expression, today's Shanghainese are crafting their own identities, particularly the younger generations. In Shanghai, there is an explosion in the number of spas, massage shops and beauty parlours. Let's see how the increasingly beauty-conscious and self-expressive Shanghainese fix themselves up in the mornings and if these grooming sessions are a source of self-confidence or stress.

Shanghai has in recent years taken the fashion throne of Asia from Tokyo's Harajuku fashionistas, according to a ranking from data research firm Global Language Monitor. This may be a positive thing for individual creativity, but throughout the 20th Century, beauty standards have progressively become more unrealistic, and trying to match the perfection we are bombarded with has become more difficult.

Even though Shanghai is now a stylish centerpoint, it may come as a surprise that Shanghainese in general spend less time grooming and care less about using makeup or doing their hair than urbanites in the other surveyed cities. In fact, they only spend nine minutes grooming compared to the global average of 14 minutes, and women do their makeup much less than other female metropolitans, where about a fifth do this compared to for example twice as many in Moscow.

While only seven percent of the Shanghainese in this report think mornings are their most attractive time of day, a mere ten percent of them feel anxious about how they look and consider this issue a big source of stress, which is a significantly lower figure than for most of the other cities. And though stressing over what to wear is as common in Shanghai as in the other cities, these Chinese metropolitans are very confident about how they look when stepping out the door in the morning.

So, how do the people of Shanghai prepare to meet the day with such confidence? Well, most of the grooming habits are focused on their health and the skin, according to the survey. For example, cleansing, moisturizing, using sunscreen or treatments and doing facial massage is more common here than elsewhere. Also, less Shanghainese use perfume than in the other cities, and only five percent use deodorant in mornings – compared to the global average of 61 percent.

The shower and bathing habits in Shanghai also differ from those in other cities in this report. Only eight percent of the Shanghainese usually take a shower or bath on weekday mornings. In this regard Shanghai is very different from the other metropolises, in which about half shower or bathe before tackling the new day. In Shanghai, showering or bathing is something you do as a prequel to going to bed instead.

Although sticking out in their grooming habits from the rest of the world, the people of Shanghai are doing something right, since almost eight of ten feel very confident when stepping out onto the busy streets. It appears as if the city's growing confidence on the world stage has rubbed off on its residents.

MEANINGFUL MOMENTS

Mindfulness, gratitude and spirituality are the buzzwords of health media as physical and digital lives blur. In today's fast life, how do we find time for reflection and moments of morning meaning?

When hearing the words "China" and "morning" one may think of inspiring images of well-kept squares with people performing tai chi, this graceful martial arts form that has helped the Chinese to strengthen their "qi" for centuries. With China being a cradle for variety of the world's most enduring religious-philosophical traditions, let's see what Shanghai urbanites see as important for inner peace in the mornings.

Today it's a challenge to find the time and space to mentally escape and turn our thoughts inwards, due to our longer work hours and digitally connected lives. Nowhere is this perhaps more true than in Shanghai, one of the most densely populated cities on our planet.

Studies from the University of California in Berkeley show that practicing mindfulness fosters compassion and altruism, while also reducing negative emotions and stress. And there are countless studies showing the positive impact of yoga on our wellbeing. For instance, research from the University of Illinois shows that yoga improves focus, working memory and lowers blood pressure. But does the time before Pudong's skyscrapers are abuzz with hardworking people provide the Shanghainese an opportunity for such meaningful moments? Or is this an unrealistic thought in a megacity that seems to constantly overwhelm the senses.

An old Chinese proverb states that "an hour in the morning is worth two in the evening" and as many as 48 percent of the Shanghainese say it's important for their personal wellbeing to make time for self-reflection in the morning, according to the survey. But only six percent actually take this time on weekdays, which is on par with allegedly less spiritual cities like Stockholm and Berlin.

In fact, the Shanghainese don't do much at all for self-reflection during the working week mornings, and only the people of Stockholm spend as little time contemplating shows the survey. Among those who do self-reflect – a quarter of those surveyed – the most common activity is listening to music. Other popular self-reflection activities include taking a walk, meditating and exercising. The Chinese love of outdoor exercise is mirrored by the fact that exercising or walking is usually done outside of the home, which differs from the other cities, where exercising is mostly done indoors.

Perhaps surprisingly in a country often linked with mindful practices and introspection, only a tenth of the people of Shanghai, between 50 and 60 percent, meditate. Are ancient customs giving way to new ones? Actually not at all, since as many as almost a fifth of young people between 18 and 29 meditate at least once a week, which could be an indication that traditional Chinese practices are making a comeback. And considering that the Shanghainese are the most stressed the moment they wake up out of all metropolitans in our report, a turn towards tradition could be exactly what younger generations need.

NURTURING NUTRITION

They say breakfast is the most important meal of the day. As many find it harder to make time for dinner together, could breakfast be as important for nurturing as nutrition?

In Shanghai, breakfast used to mean the "Four Heavenly Kings": pancakes, deep-fried dough sticks, steamed sticky rice balls, and soymilk. In other words, food one could spend much time on. But as breakfast traditions are moving on in this ever-morphing metropolis, is there still time for social exchange? Let's find out if Muscovites bond over breakfast.

In Shanghai, breakfast is not taken lightly. On the contrary, the survey reveals that almost everyone thinks having breakfast is important for their personal wellbeing. However, the cup of coffee billions around the world find essential to start the day is not on the menu for the busy early birds of China's most cosmopolitan city. Instead they prefer soymilk to accompany their bread or "youtiao", also known as the Chinese doughnut. And even though not all find time to have breakfast, most actually do. Eight in ten Shanghainese enjoy a breakfast on weekday mornings – more than in our other surveyed cities – and they spend eleven minutes eating it on average.

The social aspects and opportunities of being together during breakfast are promising. Research from Sherry Turkle, Psychologist and Professor of Social Studies of Science and Technology, MIT and author of *Alone Together*, insists that while there are many benefits to talking with each other in new and varied ways – through texts, emails, over the phone or social media – we shouldn't lose sight of what we get from having real life conversations. The rich and subtler connections we make when being able to look one another in the eyes as we talk. The skill and empathy required to read each others movements. The ability to say what's truly on our minds as the conversation unfolds without filter.

With the above in mind, do the people of Shanghai seize the opportunity of having real-life interactions with their loved ones over breakfast? The answer to that is emphatically yes. As many as seven in ten breakfast eaters living with others usually share this meal together and about two thirds engage in conversation. The most common topics surround the day to come, food, and what's in the news while eating. In fact, food is more popular to talk about in Shanghai than in other surveyed metropolises.

Spending more good morning time together over breakfast in Shanghai and being even more social seems to bring good things according to the survey. The people who live with others and usually make breakfast for others are happier than people who live with others and don't make breakfast for them – and they are both happier with life and with their mornings. That saying "what goes around comes around" seems to be true.

CUDDLE CHEMICALS

It's easy to forget each other during the stressful start of the day, where we might be more touchy with our smartphones than our loved ones. Are high-tech mornings contributing to low-touch lives?

With housing prices soaring in China's biggest city, it's no surprise that living space is a little tight in Shanghai. On the other hand, this makes for more closeness and intimate interactions. But does living close together make for more Shanghainese morning hugs and kisses? Let's get in touch with how those in Shanghai physically connect with each other in the mornings.

Of our five basic senses, touch is the most neglected. It's a well-known fact that a kiss or a friendly hug releases the so-called "cuddle chemical" oxytocin into our bloodstream. This hormone relaxes us and makes us happy. Unfortunately, the reverse is also true. Touch deprivation can lead to a condition where our skin literally hungers for the touch of another human being, in order for us to feel connected, accepted and whole. The scientific community agrees: "we need more human contact than we're getting", states Matthew Herenstein of The Touch and Emotion Lab at DePauw University.

Considering the proven positive effects of physical affection, it might sound unfortunate that the survey shows that only one in four people who live with others in Shanghai always are physically affectionate with each other in the mornings. That's about half of the share in other cities in the report. And perhaps more disconcerting is the fact that just about one in four of these Chinese metropolitans say they never do.

But there are signs that the Chinese tradition of not showing affection in a physical way, but rather through thoughtful gestures and other ways, is about to change. And it's younger people who are leading the way. Twenty-six percent of Shanghainese between 18 and 29 living with others always show people in their household physical affection during weekday mornings, compared to 15 percent among their elder peers between 50 and 60. And a recent report by the New York Times claims that "hugs are on the rise in China", due to "exposure to the West, especially huggy North America." Furthermore, in the city of Nanjing, schools have even instructed third graders to hug their parents as homework.

On the subject of kids and showing them physical affection, the evidence suggests that there is scope for more here too since only one in four of the Shanghainese parents give their kids a hug or a kiss on weekday mornings. In the West there is growing suspicion that personal technology, social media and our newfound 'work-everywhere' ethos is getting in the way of people expressing physical affection for one another. But this is not the reason here. Only 34 percent of parents usually use mobile technology/computers in mornings, which is well below the global urban average for all surveyed cities.

When it comes to couples, only about 20 percent of couples usually give their partner a hug or a kiss during weekday mornings and only four percent of the Shanghainese have morning sex.

But don't let these facts get you down. As we've already noted, the statistics are showing clear signs that change is on the way as younger people are much more inclined to cuddle. And many more, of all age groups, would like show their significant other physical affection with as many as three in four saying that it's important for their personal wellbeing to hug or kiss their partner during weekday mornings.

MULTI-MORNINGS

As we grow in numbers our homes get smaller, and as we get more connected our hours at work and home blur. With household multi-functioning and work multi-tasking, what do the walls of our home mean today?

Global urbanization marches on and the majority of people on the planet are now urbanites. In metropolises like Shanghai, with its population of 24 million, city living is ever-more compact and smaller. At the same time our world has become mentally bigger through our digital connections. Let's try to grip how Londoners handle their work-life balance at home.

Shanghai is the largest city on earth and this metropolis just keeps growing. The World Population Review projects that Shanghai will have more than 50 million residents by 2050, which is twice the current count. As demand for housing vastly outstrips supply, prices soar. The government has also decided to support initiatives facilitating working from home in order to cut down on pollution, contributing to merging work and home life.

So how do people in Shanghai spend their everyday mornings? As it turns out, more than half of Shanghai's employed and students find it important for their personal wellbeing to spend some of their mornings getting down to business, which is more than in most surveyed cities in this report.

There is however a downside to this early morning ambition. Two of ten Shanghainese who are employed or studying consider being occupied with work or study-related technology a big source of stress on weekday mornings – a figure only beaten by New York and Mumbai. And 40 percent claim to feel very stressed when waking up, which is a higher share than in any other city we've looked at. Also, the most common place for the Shanghainese to work or study is in a specified work area, where 32 percent of Shanghai's employed and students bunker down over their books and computers on weekday mornings. The next most popular place is the sofa.

With higher powers in form of government encouraging people to work from home, home inevitable becomes a kind of office. Does this mean that these multi-mornings are an inescapable consequence of modern, urbanized life in megacities like Shanghai? The data seems to lead us to think so.

PLAY INTO THE DAY

In today's society, being productive means being successful. Are we focusing too much on how much we get done instead of what really matters?

Playing is something most people find important, even in the morningtime, and Shanghainese with kids living at home want to play more with them. However, only about one in ten do. The Shanghainese however have very effective morning routines and long commutes, which can make finding the time for playtime in the mornings challenging. Let's discover how Shanghai residents prioritize play.

Shanghai is considered China's most competitive city according to the China Institute of City Competitiveness. And as in many competitive societies, the Shanghainese seem to put their priorities in being "busy". This megacity's size, relative wealth and position as a major port have made it one of the most cosmopolitan of Chinese cities. But while hugging and kissing may be the universal sign of affection from a European and American perspective, the same can't be said for most Asian cultures. Here people are traditionally more reserved about physical displays of affection towards partners and children. Shanghainese have, at least in the past, tended to express affection in different ways than a hug or a kiss, and in the survey many noted that they instead express their affection through words and how they greet each other in the mornings.

This cultural pattern also manifests itself in the way that Shanghainese parents play with their children. Among people living with kids up to 12 years old, 72 percent consider this playtime with their young ones in the mornings important for their wellbeing. However, only 12 percent actually get make this playtime happen during weekday mornings. The discrepancy between what the people of Shanghai consider important continues in the way they think about kisses and hugs. Eight of ten think it's important, but only one in four give their kids a hug or a kiss on a typical weekday morning. Yet 16 percent of Shanghainese parents usually make time for exercise before heading off to work, school or the day's activities.

There's not a whole lot of playful smooching and squeezing going on between adults who live with their partners in Shanghai either according to the survey. At least not in the mornings when only one in five find the time to kiss and hug. The fact that three quarters find it important for their wellbeing however suggests that there are other factors at play here as well. Is it perhaps the seemingly ever-present lack of time that tends to accompany life in the big cities?

It's fair to say that wishes and reality don't quite match when it comes to starting the day on a playful note in Shanghai, nor in any surveyed city. But for now, playful wordings to express affection may be enough for Shanghainese to make each other feel good in the mornings.

TOMORROW'S MORNING

Prepping the evening before a new morning begins is often a suggestion for getting up on the right side of bed, but how much of our nights are do we invest in our coming days?

Considering how quickly people in busy Shanghai go through their morning routines, it's a good thing they spend a lot of time preparing the night before. These Chinese urbanites are more than willing to invest a part of their night in order to win back the time the next day, more so than in other surveyed metropolitans, and it pays off time-wise. Let's take a peek at the plans Shanghainese make for their mornings ahead.

The people of Shanghai certainly don't dawdle about in the mornings. On average, a mere 56 minutes have ticked away between turning off the alarm and hurrying out the door to join the other 20 odd millions on the streets of China's biggest city. This is less time spent on getting ready than in all other cities in this report. Shanghai's residents also go through fewer morning routines on a typical weekday morning than other metropolitans, but there may be an additional reason to why the Shanghainese are so speedy.

This quick wake up and take off in Shanghai seems to be partly due to preparations done the night before. The most popular time saver for the Shanghainese is picking out what to wear the next day according to the survey, which almost six of ten do. Another smart way these Chinese metropolitans cut time from their morning routines is bathing or showering in the evenings, a practice that a majority of Shanghai residents have taken to heart. This also happens to be a great way for ensuring a good nights sleep, as warm water can help our body temperature drop, and make us sleepy. Chinese people seem to like routines on weekday mornings. Not only do more than half of Shanghainese go to bed at the same time every night, but most of them have even decided what to have for breakfast the next morning before going to sleep, according to the survey.

With all this prepping going on, one would perhaps assume that the Shanghainese breeze through their mornings without a care in the world. However, two fifths of Shanghai residents claim to feel very stressed when waking up.

So what's going wrong here? One plausible reason could be the long daily commute to work which takes an average 47 minutes in Shanghai according to the Chinese Academy of Sciences. This anxiety over running late for work and spending valuable morning minutes on congested subway trains during rush hour could cause anyone's pulse to rise. Therefore, when asked, it's no surprise that oversleeping is stated as the biggest source of morning stress among the hard-working Shanghainese.

To sum up, the people of Shanghai like to get up and out the door quickly, and careful prepping allows for this. And since many Shanghainese find late nights to be the calmest period of the day, there just might be something intrinsically relaxing in having some set routines to stick to, so the rush during the morning rush hour doesn't cause one's blood to rush even higher.

STOCKHOLM

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EARLY BIRD MYTHS

We are most imaginative when sleepy, states recent research in the journal *Thinking and Reasoning*. As we hurriedly get up, are we discarding our creative potential?

Stockholm is bursting with creativity, from music to technology, fashion to furniture. In fact, the capital's country tops The Martin Prosperity Institute's Global Creative Index. But in a world where creativity is a growing necessity, nurturing it is a must. Stockholmers don't feel creative during mornings, so how can they harness creativity even more as the sun rises? Let's reconsider the untapped potential of the late bird.

Swedish summers are the stuff of stories, especially in Ingmar Bergman's films, where the sun sets late and rises early. The people of Stockholm rise early too, where our research reveals that six of ten Stockholmers open their eyes before 7AM, compared to about five of ten residents in other metropolises. However, Stockholm is a snoozier city than the others in the survey, where half of Stockholmers hit the snooze button at least once and a third do even more.

Now, sleepy people are usually seen as lazy, but snoozing might not be as bad as society tells us. In light of a 2011 study published in the journal *Thinking and Reasoning*, it turns out that our up and at 'em morning approach is in fact the opposite of conditions perfect for open-minded thinking. Neuroscientists have found that imaginative insights and inspired connections are most likely to come to us when groggy. This is good news especially for evening people, who aren't the most awake or full of energy in the mornings. Their grogginess is in fact a good thing. It breeds unfocused, irrelevant thoughts that can help people see things from different perspectives and enhance their creative problem solving capabilities. Simply put, in a society which tells us that we can be more creative by learning to let these groggy moments be, we can be more creative.

Luckily for our Stockholmers, they do tend to be groggy in the mornings, despite rising early. Half of the Swedish capital's residents consider themselves evening people, where only one of three say they are a morning person. And a majority of these evening people, 53 percent, have their creative clock right by choosing to ease into their day and snooze away.

Are these sleepy Stockholm night-owls aware of their creative morning potential? Not really, given that evening people of Stockholm don't quite seem to like weekday mornings. Our new research shows just three percent feel that these early hours are their most creative and only ten percent feel very creative when waking up – less than in all other cities. Stockholmers also wake up the most stressed of all evening urbanites, except for those in Shanghai.

It's usually said that the six months of Nordic winter with its challenging darkness plays a great role in cultivating Swedish creativity. This might be because there is little to do outside in the icy cold, and when the sun refuses to rise before 9AM, it's no surprise that Stockholmers don't think of mornings as the best time for creative pondering. But what would happen if an already innovative city became more innovative with their mornings, by using their groggy, snoozy potential to create even more? The Swedish story continues.

GROOM OR GLOOM

Our bodies are a battleground for society's ideals – for both women and men. How are the morning moments we spend grooming and dressing making us feel?

Swedish style is known for everyday simplicity and every-wallet availability, meaning Stockholmers are surrounded by trendy, affordable items. With not just one, but two fashion weeks every season and a growing range of beauty brands Sweden's capital is a Scandinavian capital for appearances as well. Let's take a look at how Stockholmers fix themselves up during wake up, and if these grooming sessions are a source of self-confidence or stress.

Throughout the 20th Century, beauty standards have progressively become more unrealistic. On one hand growing individualism empowers us to express ourselves through our appearance, and Swedes are according to the World Values Survey among the most empowered individualists out there. On the other, trying to match the perfection we are bombarded with has become more difficult, not least for our Stockholmers who meet persistent viking stature and liberal blonde stereotypes.

But Stockholmers overall don't seem to be bothered by pressure regarding what to do for looking good in the mornings. According to our survey, they spend less time grooming in their early hours than most other city folk. And even though island-based Stockholm is known for its clean water, its residents shower or bathe for a shorter while than other urbanites.

Stockholm is also a contradictory place when it comes to equality in the looks department. Despite frequently being on top lists as the most equal country in the world, our numbers show that Stockholm's women groom more than its men, despite taking less time to groom than other urban women. Yet Stockholm women actually feel less confident about their looks when leaving home in the morning, no matter how much they groom and feel less secure than many other metropolitan women.

The people of Stockholm are quick groomers, and quick dressers as well. Choosing an outfit takes less than five minutes or less for eight of ten people. Stockholm women also dress quicker than other urban women, which may signal confidence or indifference, but wardrobe decisions are actually a big source of stress for one in four. Conversely, Stockholm men, known for their savvy style, are less stressed about their daily dressing than most other male urbanites.

Yet ultimately, the Stockholm residents are quite positive about their physical appearance when they hit their city's streets in the morning, with two of three feeling very confident about how they look – making them more self-assured about their appearance than New Yorkers, Parisians and Londoners.

That said, Stockholmers who groom a little or moderately feel at least as confident about their looks when leaving home as those who groom a lot – a slightly different pattern than in other cities, where the more you groom, the likelier you feel more confident about your appearance when leaving home. Swedish self-confidence seems to stem from somewhere else, beyond putting on makeup and dressing up when getting up.

MEANINGFUL MOMENTS

Mindfulness, gratitude and spirituality are the buzz words of health media as physical and digital lives blur. In today's fast life, how do we find time for reflection and moments of morning meaning?

Sweden is one of the world's most secular countries according to the World Values Survey. Therefore, many Swedes find spirituality in settings other than traditional places of worship. Mindfulness and yoga in all forms, for instance, are a major trend amongst Stockholmers seeking a happier, healthier life. Let's see what our Nordic urbanites see as important for inner peace in the mornings.

Sweden is one of the most digitally connected countries on earth, where almost all houses and businesses have access to broadband according to the World Economic Forum. Needless to say, Stockholmers check their social media, inboxes and apps often. Could this digital and social media influx mean that turning off and turning their thoughts inwards strikes a chord with Swedes?

Studies from the University of California in Berkeley show that practicing mindfulness fosters compassion and altruism, while also reducing negative emotions and stress. And there are countless studies stating the positive impact of yoga on our wellbeing. For instance, research from the University of Illinois shows that yoga improves focus and working memory as well as lowers blood pressure. Mornings, before the hustle and bustle of the outside world begins, are an opportunity for Stockholmers to make time for both their mindfulness practices and yoga.

But when it comes to meaningful moments for our Stockholmers, taking time for introspection is less of a priority on weekday mornings. Only a quarter of the Swedish capital's residents see it as important for their personal wellbeing, compared to the 44 percent total average in other surveyed cities. And only five percent of Stockholmers actually make time for it Monday to Friday, which is also less than what other urbanites do. Furthermore, for the few Stockholm residents who actually do take a moment for morning reflection, most do so for less time than all other metropolises, except Shanghai, pondering for just nine minutes compared to the global average of 12 minutes.

What Stockholmers occupy themselves with when they actually do self-reflect in the morningtime is hard to tell from the few who say they practice self-reflection, but from what we can see, taking a shower or bath, listening to music or thinking of something they're grateful for, could be the most common reflective morning rituals.

Simply put, our secular Stockholmers may not have the church as their room of choice for spiritual thoughts, but they find serenity in the shower or a song instead. Since mornings are the most stressful time of the day for the people of Stockholm, maybe a minute or two thinking grateful thoughts in that shower might help, too. Science is, after all, on our Stockholmers side.

NURTURING NUTRITION

They say breakfast is the most important meal of the day. As many find it harder to make time for dinner together, could breakfast be as important for nurturing as nutrition?

Museli with milk and banana slices or an open-faced sandwich. Don't forget the coffee, since Swedes sip coffee more than most in the world. This is often what's on the Swedish breakfast menu, and Stockholmers enjoy their morning meals for more minutes than most metropolitans. Breakfast is a perfect and often overlooked candidate as a time for social exchange. Let's find out if Stockholmers bond over breakfast.

In this digitally connected time, with both genders equally expected to contribute to Sweden's workforce, we all work more and work later. But our kids still need to – and us grown-ups still should – go to bed at sensible times. Our dinners have long been the staple of home gatherings, but perhaps it's time to try to switch things around if we're finding ourselves fighting work-life windmills, and try to share a different type of meal together.

For Stockholmers, making breakfast at home into a social meal on a busy weekday morning might not be much of a stretch. About two thirds of Stockholmers usually eat at home on weekday mornings. Compared to all other metropolitans except for Berliners, Stockholm residents munch their morning crunch for around 14 minutes, with half of them breakfasting at home for 15 minutes or more.

So what do our Stockholmers do during their long breakfasts? The residents of Sweden's largest city seem to use this time of day to catch up on the news, as 47 percent use mobile phones or computers while eating breakfast and 40 percent read the paper. Yet only 40 percent of Stockholm's breakfast eaters living with others usually share the meal with people in their household. Nine in ten of these social eaters take the opportunity to talk to each other while eating, and they usually discuss practical topics such as what they're doing during the day, as well as work or school.

On the other hand, about eight of ten Stockholmers living with their partner or children feel chatting over their museli is important for their weekday wellbeing, even if they don't always manage to. And they are right in thinking this. Research from Sherry Turkle, Psychologist and Professor of Social Studies of Science and Technology at MIT, states that while there are many benefits to talking with each other in new and varied ways – through texts, emails, over the phone and social media – we shouldn't lose sight of what we get from having real life conversations. The rich and more subtle connections we make when being able to look one another in the eyes as we talk. The skill and empathy required to read each others movements. The ability to say what's truly on our minds as the conversation unfolds without filter. Eighty-six percent of those living with their partner think it's important for their wellbeing to have a conversation with their partner on weekday mornings.

In other words breakfast, at least socially, doesn't seem to be the most important meal of the day at all for Stockholmers, even though a majority would like their weekday mornings to be more of a social time. And in this country which is chilly and dark for at least six months every year, the people of Stockholm want to warm up the mornings with a little bit of conversation over those long breakfasts.

CUDDLE CHEMICALS

It's easy to forget each other in our stressful starts to the day, where we might be more touchy with our smartphones than our loved ones. Are high-tech mornings contributing to low-touch lives?

Stockholm is one of the most digitally connected cities in the world. However, Sweden's capital is also ranked as one of the globe's loneliest places, where almost two out of three households are occupied by only one person, according to sociologist Erik Klinenberg of New York University. Let's get in touch with how Stockholmers connect with each other in the mornings.

It's a well-known fact that a warm touch, a loving hug or even a friendly handshake releases the "cuddle chemical" oxytocin which helps us relax and lowers anxiety while simultaneously creating feelings of happiness and joy. But touch deprivation is a real thing, and whatever our relationship status may be, we need more human contact than we're getting, according to Matthew Herenstein, Director of The Touch and Emotion Lab at DePauw University.

Stockholmers are more digitally attached than most other metropolitans in our survey. According to our findings, 60 percent typically use personal technology, like smartphones and computers, while still at home on weekday mornings. Thirty-four percent check their social media accounts before leaving home. On one hand, technology such as social media can be a positive force for all those single households in Stockholm to feel connected and loved – with about two of five single household Stockholmers using social media in the mornings. On the other hand, when living together, the more morning time we spend on our tech, the less time we're likely to wholly pay attention to those around us.

When it comes to parents living with young children, the survey reveals that it's more common for parents to use their mobile phones or computers on a typical weekday morning than give their kids a hug or a kiss. Almost eight of ten Stockholm parents think it's important for their personal wellbeing to cuddle with their kids on weekday mornings, and six in ten think it's very important, but unfortunately this happens a lot less, where only a half actually do.

Regarding romantic relationships, Swedes may have quite an active and liberal reputation stemming from the seventies. But the reality is that it's not that important for Stockholmers to have weekday morning sex compared to all other urbanites in our survey, except those in Shanghai who rate it similarly low in importance. In fact, only 35 percent think it's important for their wellbeing, and only four percent participate. However, 62 percent of these loved-up couples living together have morning cuddles, which is more than in our other surveyed cities. Not too far off from the 85 percent who think it's important for their wellbeing.

Whether Stockholmers know it or not, small intimate gestures can convey and spread compassion according to Dacher Keltner, Professor of Psychology at the University of California, Berkeley. Stockholmers may already be cuddly in the mornings, but they want to hug and kiss more – and their longings are scientifically justified. So let more cuddling begin!

MULTI-MORNINGS

As we grow in numbers, our homes get smaller. And as we get more connected, our hours at work and home blur. With household multi-functioning and work multi-tasking, what do the walls of our home mean today?

Like in London and Berlin, living in Stockholm is increasingly expensive, as the number of people moving there outnumber new housing, forcing many to wait in long cues for rental apartments. In these small flats, and of course in other homes too, our multi-function digital lives have spread out to most areas. Let's try to grip how Stockholmers handle their work-life balance at home.

Over half of the world's population now reside in ever-more crowded cities, and today's digitally connected people are no strangers to compact living. Multi-tasking in the home has become more common, and a recent ten-city study from IDC Research has revealed that 80 percent of smartphone users check their mobile devices within 15 minutes of waking up each morning. According to this survey, checking email is the most popular morning activity, with 67 percent getting updated, and that 40 percent sign on to their social media accounts.

Stockholmers, however, are not that into working or studying in the first hours of their weekday mornings, even if they are very digitally connected. Only one in ten employed or studying Stockholm resident usually does this. And of those few that do, they spend about half an hour checking their work or studying to-do-lists in the mornings.

The place to be for morning work or studies in Stockholm is the kitchen. Half of employed or studying Stockholmers have worked or studied in the eating area, which makes it more common than in the other surveyed cities. Maybe this is because Stockholmers see the kitchen table as a productive place in the mornings since they spend more time there than other metropolitans for things like reading the news.

Stockholm's sofas are first runners up as work and study hot home spots, where 42 percent study or work, and the bed comes in third place with 36 percent. For students, however, the bed tops the list. And a stand-out statistic in Stockholm is that a whole 17 percent of Stockholmers have worked or studied in the bathroom or toilet, and a whole fifth of Stockholm students have studied there. Now that's multi-functioning.

As a whole, Stockholmers seem to be quite relaxed about bringing work into the home. Not only do those working or studying find doing this from home in the mornings less important than in other surveyed metropolises, but only six percent of these consider work or study-related technology a big source of stress.

Perhaps this is related to Sweden's focus on social policies to reduce work-life conflict, such as flexible working hours and equality in the home, that may help to relieve people from the pressure of having to "do it all" in the mornings. And more nice news for Stockholmers: there is no notable difference between the stress levels of those who do bring work into their early mornings and those that don't. So for Stockholmers, they certainly have a good multi-morning.

PLAY INTO THE DAY

In today's society, being productive means being successful. Are we focusing too much on how much we get done instead of what really matters?

It seems that even in the city at the heart of the international parental leave debate, where women and men are given equal and generous rights to raise their children, mornings are still a time where cuddling and hugging one's kids is overlooked. Wanting to play more, especially with one's children in the morning, is a pattern which repeats itself in all surveyed metropolises, including Stockholm. Let's discover how Stockholmers prioritize play.

Stockholm's urban parents feel that the opening for playtime that mornings allows is of utmost importance, but they rarely give themselves the time to have this fun with their near and dear. However, writer Laura Vanderkam may have a solution to make time.

Using time logs, Vanderkam has dug into the mystery of mastering the so-called work-life balance, and found that writing down what you spend time on is a golden way of actually finding more time by rescheduling and – don't fall off your chair now – daring to miss out and say no to other activities or duties that you thought you needed to do. She has changed her language and encourages others to do the same. Instead of saying "I don't have time", she now simply pronounces "It's not a priority".

But what seem to be the priorities of Stockholmers? If you take a look at what is actually happening on weekday mornings, one could draw the conclusion that Stockholmers find technology a top priority. Six of ten use mobile technology or computers during weekday mornings, and about a third use social media. Three of ten usually watch TV between waking up and leaving home. However, only 14 percent of Stockholm parents play with their children, and about half give their kids a hug or kiss come morning time. Of those who live with their partner, less than half have a conversation with their partner, and a fifth spend time cuddling in bed with their loved one. Simply put, technology play trumps physical play for these metropolitans.

However, these activities don't reflect the wishes of Stockholmers. Stockholm parents want to play with their kids, since 55 percent consider it important for their personal wellbeing. Additionally, close to eight of ten Stockholmers find giving their kids a hug or a kiss on weekday mornings important in this way as well. Yet fewer compared to how many who find it important actually do take the time to cuddle with their children. The same goes for couples wanting to cuddle by giving their partner a hug or a kiss, where nine of ten think it's important.

The playtime wishes and morningtime reality of Stockholmers don't match, but the future of fun in Sweden's capital can look brighter if the people of Stockholm pause and consider what they want their morning priorities to be.

TOMORROW'S MORNINGS

Prepping the evening before a new morning begins is often a suggestion for getting up on the right side of bed, but how much of our nights are do we invest in our coming days?

Swedes are among the most digital and coffee-drinking people in the world, but social media and social "fika", as Swedes call their coffee breaks, aren't great for good sleep. Stockholmer morning stress might have to do with that few take calming steps at night such as avoiding caffeine and tech, and only 14 percent prepare for the next day. Let's take a peek at the plans Stockholmers make for their mornings ahead.

Even though Stockholmers can prepare global launches for tech start-ups and fashion brands well, they don't do much to prepare for their next day, compared to other urbanites. This might have something to do with the Swedish concept of "lagom", which roughly translates to "just about enough".

The most common preparation for Stockholmers is checking their schedule for the next day, where two thirds of those who prepare do this according to the survey. And though Stockholm is renowned for being style-conscious, only 25 percent of its residents pick out their next day's outfit – less than other metropolitans. Deciding what's for breakfast is also less of a habit for Stockholmers than other city folks, where only about one in ten do this. However lunch preparations are popular, with a quarter of Stockholmers getting lunch boxes ready.

Mornings are the most stressful time of day in Sweden's capital, where two of five Stockholmers worry about waking up too late. And Stockholm parents with small children up to 12 years old are mainly anxious about getting their kids ready – half say this compared to only a third of other city's parents with younger children. This may be because parents don't do much to prepare their kids' stuff the night before, or the fact that working parents need to get their children off to pre-school, where most young children start as early as one year old.

So what can our Stockholmers do to reduce stress and get a good night's sleep? According to the US National Sleep Foundation a warm shower or bath can help our body temperature drop, and make us sleepy. Going to bed at the same time every night, avoiding caffeine which blocks sleep-inducing chemicals in your brain, or putting brain-stimulating tech aside, are other recommendations for winding down. Also, a study published in the Journal of Psychosomatic Research in 2009 shows that positive pre-sleep thoughts have a good effect on our slumber, and that gratitude facilitates these thoughts.

Less than a third of Stockholmers to bed at the same time every night or cutting down on caffeine and alcohol. Even fewer think grateful thoughts, or avoid taking their tech to bed. While packing a bag or picking out an outfit isn't for everyone, there are things that can be done in the moment to wind down that will help guide our Swedes into a better new day, ready to take on the streets of Stockholm.

ABOUT THE SURVEY

The Data Mixing Board is making the data gathered in the new survey accessible for more to create awareness and interest in the morning life at home for people around the world. It is an interactive tool where users can test their own hypotheses about morning behavior and wellbeing.

Scope, method and data collection period

The Data Mixing Board is based on a survey in eight cities around the world; Berlin, London, Moscow, Mumbai, New York, Paris, Shanghai and Stockholm. The survey was conducted between the 8th and 22nd of April 2014 through online panels. The median time to answer the survey was 12 minutes and 17 seconds.

All in all, 8,292 answers were collected, with respondents evenly distributed between cities as described in the table below.

Answers were collected among people living in cities with access to computer, in ages 18-60 years. The results from the survey are valid for this group; they are not to be generalized for the whole population of each city.

CITY	TOTAL	GENDER		AGE SPANS			
		WOMEN	MEN	18-29	30-39	40-49	50-60
STOCKHOLM	1035	517 (50%)	518 (50%)	305 (30%)	218 (21%)	269 (26%)	243 (24%)
NEW YORK	1010	531 (53%)	479 (47%)	333 (33%)	263 (26%)	240 (24%)	174 (17%)
LONDON	1047	546 (52%)	501 (48%)	275 (26%)	310 (30%)	263 (25%)	199 (19%)
MUMBAI	1004	468 (47%)	536 (53%)	360 (36%)	304 (30%)	220 (22%)	120 (12%)
BERLIN	1019	529 (52%)	490 (48%)	241 (24%)	254 (25%)	282 (28%)	242 (24%)
PARIS	1026	530 (52%)	496 (48%)	275 (27%)	281 (27%)	265 (26%)	205 (20%)
MOSCOW	1059	585 (55%)	474 (45%)	310 (29%)	387 (37%)	223 (21%)	139 (13%)
SHANGHAI	1092	533 (48%)	559 (51%)	319 (29%)	315 (29%)	328 (30%)	130 (12%)

From the survey, key questions have been selected to be used as variables in the Data Mixing Board. There are topics described in the Life At Home Report that are not present in the Data Mixing Board. This is due to the necessity of creating a tool which allows the user to do many things while at the same time not being confused by the complexity.

Income variables in the Data Mixing Board

In the Data Mixing Board, it is possible to compare results between different income groups. To make this function meaningful, it is necessary to create spans that are somewhat comparable. This is challenging due to differences in currency, general income levels et cetera.

To make comparisons possible between cities, we have used the Big Mac Index as a benchmark. It is a good method since it mirrors the market conditions and the general purchasing power among the general public.

To produce the income span variable, we translated all currencies to USD and defined a general variable. This variable was then divided by the cost of a Big Mac in every country. The upper 25 percent and the lower 25 percent were defined as high and low income, respectively.

On general differences and similarities between cities

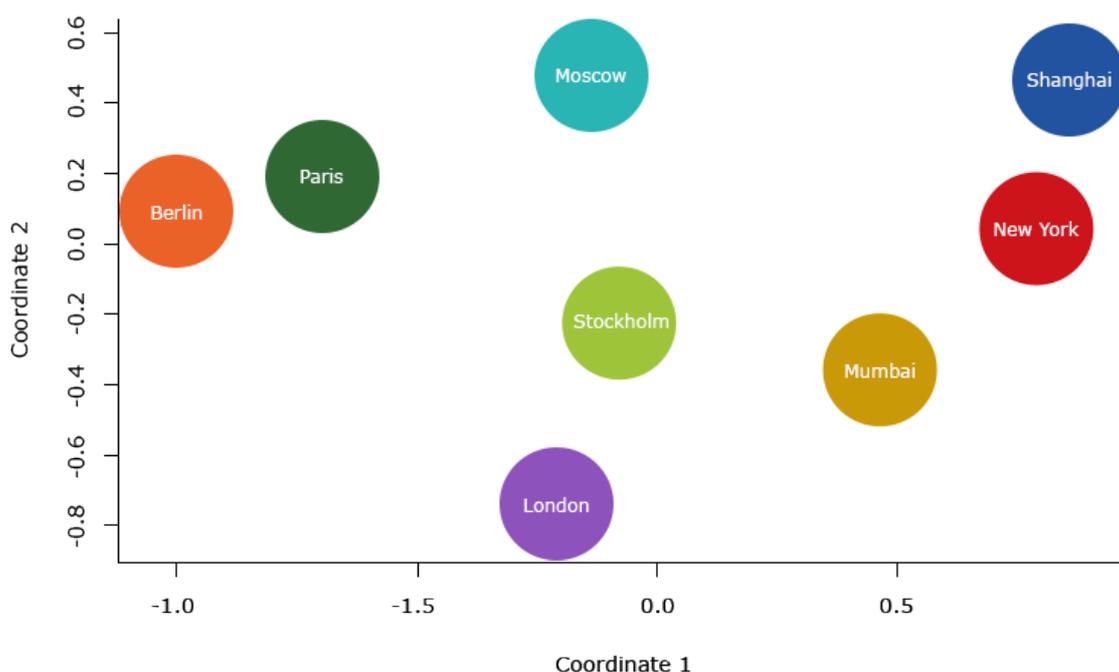
The survey focuses on different aspects of morning behavior and wellbeing, and shows both interesting differences and similarities between cities. One challenge when assessing differences between countries or demographic groups (e.g. men and women, age groups) tend to answer questions slightly different.

If we want to give a picture of all answers together, to find a "global average" (in our case meaning the eight cities combined), we need to take precaution of differences between groups. If one group is overrepresented in one city, biases could follow if that group also tends to answer questions in a deviant way.

To assess such group differences, we have analyzed the material using a random forest technique, creating decision trees to find the groups or combination of groups that create the most significant differences for the scale questions assessing "Life happiness" and "Morning happiness". We conclude that differences appear primarily between people with different occupations and living statuses.

When we control for these two demographic factors, we can look at the remaining differences between cities. Clustering the cities in two dimensions, based on how respondents answer the questions about happiness, we can produce a cluster map, showing which cities are closer related to each other in this sense, and which ones are further apart.

Closeness between cities, based on survey answers



In the Data Mixing Board, it is possible to produce graphs illustrating all cities collapsed into one population. This is done by "un-clicking" all cities in the top menu. When selecting a Morning Activity, pink bars illustrate all cities combined. In this view, answers are weighted on occupation and living status to increase comparison.

On statistical significances

The Data Mixing Board is an exploratory tool, meant to be used for testing hypotheses, while still being interesting and easy to use. It is not possible through the Data Mixing Board to validate statistically significant differences between groups or behaviors. The ultimate reason for this is that the data collection method has been online panels, which do not produce a random sample of responses (meaning that every person in a city

would have the same possibility of participating). A random sample is a necessary criterion for drawing conclusions about statistical significance between groups.

IKEA does not take responsibility for any conclusions drawn through the use of the Data Mixing Board.

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