

Health | August 31, 2017 | By Korin Miller

## Is it Actually Better to Shower in the Morning or At Night?

Let's settle this with science.



It's a massive debate that's been raging on practically since the invention of bathing: Is it better to shower at night or in the morning? You've probably had this discussion with your partner or friends at least once, and maybe it's even gotten a little heated. Even Reddit is filled with comments from people in both the morning and night camps—and everyone has a theory on why their way is best.

The opposing sides seem to have two major arguments. For the pro-morning people, showering in the A.M. makes you feel stimulated and can help combat bed-head. For the night devotees, showering helps you rinse off the dirt and grime from your day and the warm water can help you relax, preparing you for bed. Both make legitimate points, but is either truly healthier or scientifically proven to be associated with better outcomes?

## **Despite how strongly people feel about this topic, there's no really no science to say that showering at one time makes you cleaner than another.**

For most people, "there's no major difference or evidence that either is better" from a germ standpoint, Amesh A. Adalja, M.D., a board-certified infectious disease physician and affiliated scholar at the Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security, tells SELF.

But, he points out, when you should shower ultimately depends on what you're doing during your day. "If you worked a night shift in a garbage dump, wouldn't you want to shower when you came home in the morning?" he says. "If you're visibly soiled, you should clean yourself irrespective of the time of day." When you shower, you're just taking off visible dirt and making yourself smell better, Dr. Adalja says. "You're not taking off all the bacteria and germs, and most you wouldn't want to take off anyway," he says.

## **For most people, when you shower will depend on when you sweat.**

"For those with acne or acne prone skin, it's important to cleanse the skin after sweating and physical activities," **Gary Goldenberg, M.D.**, assistant clinical professor of dermatology at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai in New York City, tells SELF.

So for people who have a very active lifestyle or sweat at work, he recommends showering at night. Those who tend to sweat at night should shower in the morning, he says. "The point is to remove sweat, bacteria, and pollutants from the skin," he says. "In doing so, it prevents skin infections and irritation, as well as acne."

## **It also depends on how you actually feel after you shower.**

It's really about what you're going for, Miami-area licensed clinical psychologist Erika Martinez, Psy.D., tells SELF. If you need to do something important in the morning, a cool shower can help activate your body and mind to help you get going, she says. On the other hand, a warm shower at night might help you relax by washing off the day.

A sleep study published in the *European Journal of Applied Physiology and Occupational Physiology* found that people who bathed in the evening had less frequent body movements during the first three hours of their sleep than those who didn't suds up before bed. "The results suggest that a bath before sleep enhances the quality of

sleep,” the researchers concluded. This was a small study, so it’s hard to draw definitive conclusions from it, but if you feel like you’re struggling to get quality sleep, a nighttime shower might be for you.

And, really, you can do both if you're torn. “It’s OK to shower twice daily, as long as your skin doesn't get dry,” Dr. Goldenberg says. Provided you can find the time...

Ultimately, there’s really nothing that says showering at one time or another is better. So you can tell that to the next person who *swears* their night/morning showers are far superior to whatever it is that you do.