Waking up when it’s still dark: a winter-morning plan

Lull Dark-morning plan · instacalc.co

Dark-morning checklist: London and New York, 7:00 AM alarm

1. **One alarm time, every day.** The AASM's advice: the same time on weekends too.
2. **Room lights on when the alarm goes.** The main ceiling light, not just the phone screen: in London the sun is not up yet at a 7:00 AM alarm on 7 of the 8 dates.
3. **Outside within the first hour.** A walk, the commute or the school run in daylight. On the darkest date, January 1, sunrise is at 8:06 AM in London and 7:20 AM in New York: that is when your outdoor break can start.
4. **Bed at 11:15 PM for a 7:00 AM alarm.** That is 5 full sleep cycles plus 15 minutes to fall asleep.
5. **Last coffee by 5:15 PM.** A cup of coffee (about 95 mg) then leaves no more than 50 mg at that bedtime, from the caffeine cut-off calculator.
6. **Lights low for the last 1 to 2 hours before bed** (NIOSH).

Sunrise against a 7:00 AM alarm, London and New York, winter 2026–27

Date	London sunrise	New York sunrise
Nov 1	6:54 AM (alarm 6 min after)	6:26 AM (alarm 34 min after)
Nov 15	7:18 AM (alarm 18 min before)	6:43 AM (alarm 17 min after)
Dec 1	7:44 AM (alarm 44 min before)	7:01 AM (alarm 1 min before)
Dec 15	8:00 AM (alarm 1 h before)	7:13 AM (alarm 13 min before)
Jan 1	8:06 AM (alarm 1 h 6 min before)	7:20 AM (alarm 20 min before)
Jan 15	8:00 AM (alarm 1 h before)	7:18 AM (alarm 18 min before)
Feb 1	7:39 AM (alarm 39 min before)	7:06 AM (alarm 6 min before)
Feb 15	7:15 AM (alarm 15 min before)	6:50 AM (alarm 10 min after)

Figures as of Oct 2026 · latest at instacalc.co/learn/dark-winter-mornings-wake-up-plan.html

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