

Reflexive verbs are everywhere when you talk about a daily routine. They tell who does and receives an action at the same time: I get up, I shower, I get dressed. Below you will find a clear explanation of how present tense reflexives work, useful examples based on a typical weekday routine, a short paragraph in Spanish with English translation, and practice tasks so you can try them yourself.

What is a reflexive verb?

A reflexive verb shows that the subject performs an action on itself. In Spanish reflexive verbs always use a reflexive pronoun:

- **me** (yo)
- **te** (tú)
- **se** (él / ella / usted)
- **nos** (nosotros / nosotras)
- **os** (vosotros / vosotras)
- **se** (ellos / ellas / ustedes)

How to form present tense reflexive verbs

Take the infinitive, remove the -se, conjugate the verb in the present tense, and place the correct reflexive pronoun before the conjugated verb.

Example with **levantarse** (to get up):

- yo me levanto — I get up
- tú te levantas — you get up
- él/ella/usted se levanta — he/she/you (formal) gets up
- nosotros nos levantamos — we get up
- vosotros os levantáis — you all (Spain) get up
- ellos/ustedes se levantan — they/you all get up

Placement of the pronoun

The reflexive pronoun usually goes before a conjugated verb: **me ducho**. When you use an infinitive or gerund, you can attach the pronoun to the end: **voy a ducharme** or **estoy duchándome**.

Common reflexive verbs for daily routines

- **levantarse** — to get up
- **ducharse** — to shower
- **secarse** — to dry (hair)
- **maquillarse** — to put on makeup
- **vestirse** (e>i) — to get dressed
- **peinarse** — to comb one's hair
- **acostarse** (o>ue) — to go to bed
- **dormirse** (o>ue) — to fall asleep
- **sentarse** (e>ie) — to sit down

A sample weekday routine (Spanish with English translation)

Spanish:

Me levanto muy temprano, a las cinco, porque me gusta estar despierta cuando llego a la escuela. Me tomo un café, me ducho, me seco el pelo, me maquillo y me visto. Luego viajo al colegio en mi coche. Durante el día tengo que preparar mis clases, corregir exámenes y deberes, y leer muchos mensajes en el ordenador. Generalmente tomo un café por la mañana y al mediodía almuerzo. Después de las clases estoy muy cansada. A veces tengo reuniones; otros días puedo salir a tiempo. Cuando puedo, tengo citas, salgo con amigas o voy de compras. Ceno a las seis y después me gusta ver la televisión o leer. Me acuesto muy temprano y normalmente me duermo antes de las diez.

English: I get up very early, at five, because I like to be awake when I arrive at school. I have a coffee, I shower, I dry my hair, I put on makeup and I get dressed. Then I travel to school in my car. During the day I have to plan my classes, grade exams and homework, and read many messages on the computer. I usually have a coffee in the morning and at noon I have lunch. After classes I am very tired. Sometimes I have meetings; other days I can leave on time. When I can, I have dates, I go out with friends or I go shopping. I have dinner at six and afterwards I like to watch TV or read. I go to bed very early and normally I fall asleep before ten.

Notes on irregular and stem-changing reflexives

Some reflexive verbs are stem-changing in the present tense. For example:

- **vestirse**: yo me visto, tú te vistes, él se viste
- **acostarse**: yo me acuesto, tú te acuestas, ella se acuesta
- **dormirse**: yo me duermo, nos dormimos

The reflexive pronoun does not affect the stem change — the verb follows the same conjugation pattern as its non-reflexive form.

Quick tips

- Use the pronoun before a conjugated verb: **me ducho**.
- Attach the pronoun to an infinitive or gerund: **voy a ducharme, estoy duchándome**.
- Reflexives often appear in routines, emotions, and reciprocal actions: **nos hablamos** (we talk to each other).

Practice tasks

1. Conjugate the following reflexive verbs in the **yo** and **nosotros** forms (present tense):
 1. levantarse
 2. dormirse
 3. vestirse
2. Translate into Spanish using reflexive verbs and appropriate pronouns:
 1. I get dressed at seven.
 2. We go to bed late on Fridays.
 3. She combs her hair every morning.
3. Rewrite these sentences placing the reflexive pronoun after the infinitive:
 1. Me voy a duchar. → _____
 2. Te vas a acostar. → _____
4. Write a short paragraph (4–6 sentences) about your own weekday routine in Spanish, using at least four reflexive verbs.

Answers

1. Conjugations:

1. levantarse — yo me levanto; nosotros nos levantamos
2. dormirse — yo me duermo; nosotros nos dormimos
3. vestirse — yo me visto; nosotros nos vestimos

2. Translations:

1. I get dressed at seven. — **Me visto a las siete.**
2. We go to bed late on Fridays. — **Nos acostamos tarde los viernes.**
3. She combs her hair every morning. — **Se peina todas las mañanas.**

3. Placement with infinitives:

1. Me voy a duchar. → **Voy a ducharme.**
2. Te vas a acostar. → **Vas a acostarte.**

4.

For the paragraph task, check that you used at least four reflexive verbs and that reflexive pronouns are correctly placed before conjugated verbs or attached to infinitives.

Final note

Practise these verbs within your own routine. Talking about real actions you do every day makes reflexives feel natural. Try recording a short audio or writing your routine aloud in Spanish to build confidence with pronoun placement and stem changes.

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