Switching Off

Tips & Tricks for Fulfilling Sleep

Contents:

Introduction

Sleep is funny, isn't it?

We spend about 30% of our lives lying down with our eyes closed, doing nothing other than the occasional roll-over in bed.

That isn't all that's happening, though. In fact, sleep is a vital part of our lives and can have massive effects on our mental and physical health.

During sleep, there's plenty of activity going on below your consciousness. Our bodies need sleep to repair themselves, as well as form short-term memories and information into data you'll remember.

In this book, we'll explore the causes and effects of sleep deprivation and how you can give yourself the best chance of long-lasting sleep.
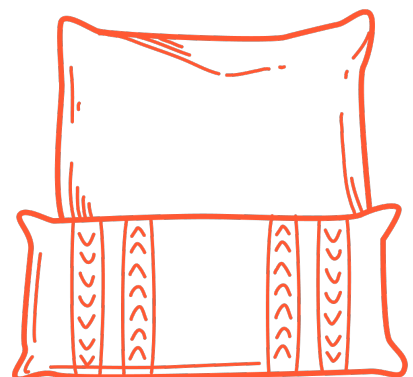
We don't want to give you a one-size-fits all template.

Instead, the ebook helps you explore all the possible tools to manage your sleep without medication.

Trust the process, follow the suggestions, and create your perfect, personalized routine.

Changes do not happen overnight. But repeat an action enough times, and it will become a habit.

Ready to start switching off?

Why does it work?

According to the CDC, one in three Americans suffers from sleep deprivation.

The top 3 problems associated with poor sleep are stress, poor work-life balance, decadent eating habits, and extensive screen time.

You might have trouble falling asleep, or maybe you don't feel rested even after 10 hours of slumber.

Is it anxiety that keeps you awake? Perhaps it's your pillow.

Our goal is simple: to improve your sleep quality and eliminate the most common causes of sleep deprivation, one by one, all while fixing your routines and establishing an environment in which you can flourish

What will you learn?

With this ebook, you will learn everything you need to know about the science of sleep

You'll learn to:

· Fall asleep at your desired time and sleep for 7–8 hours per

night

· Sleep throughout the night without waking up

· Fight sleep problems, such as acute insomnia

· Build effective and pleasant evening and morning routines

· Prepare your environment and yourself for a full night of sleep

In addition to this, you will spend around 15 minutes a day implementing practical exercises.

Let's get started

To begin, let's take a look at the sleep habit review, then we'll cover some quick bedroom fixes.

You'll need to:

1. Get yourself a pen and a notebook. You will use this notebook (or "sleep diary") every evening to write down your progress.

2. In your sleep diary, clearly state your goal. It can be as simple as "I want to sleep for 8 hours straight, from 11 PM to 7 AM."

3. In your sleep diary, write down your current sleep and wake-up routines. What typically happens one hour before you go to sleep, and what happens one hour after you wake up? Remember, there are no right or wrong answers – just be truthful with yourself.

Let's begin with preparing your bedroom for rest. Here is what you should do:

1. Change your sheets. There is no better way to start your journey than with a fresh set of linen.
2. If the climate and location are suitable for it – open the window. The lower temperature and fresh air are one of the easiest ways to straighten up your evening routine. Try to do this every evening right before bed.
3. Place electronics away from your bed. Ideally, put your phone, tablet, laptop, and TV in another room. Your bed must be dedicated to sleep.

Don't worry if you cannot fall asleep right away. This is just your first attempt! Keep practicing; you'll get there!

Causes of Sleep Deprivation

Wondering why you are tossing and turning every night?
Let's take a look at the root causes of sleep deprivation.
If you find it hard to fall asleep or sleep through the night, if even the slightest noise wakes you up, and if you wake up tired – it's an obvious sign that your sleep quality does not meet the standards it should.

This could grow into constant fatigue, mood swings, as well as cognitive and memory problems.

Insomnia, or an inability to sleep, can have two primary forms.

It's either:

 • Acute insomnia – or short-term insomnia – that usually lasts for a couple of

nights. Typically, it's triggered by a stressful event.

Or

 • Chronic insomnia that can last for weeks or months and can be caused by various

reasons.

Let's explore the 3 most common non-medical culprits of insomnia.

1. Stress and anxiety

It's hard to fall asleep before a big event, may it be a wedding, graduation, or starting a new job. This is your body's normal reaction to an event that is not typical for your routine.

Over thousands of years, human bodies have created complex mechanisms that help us deal with threats. Once we notice a problem, such as a dangerous animal, our brain signals to release adrenaline and cortisol hormones, which put us into the fight or flight position. After the threat has passed, our body is no longer tense, and we calm down.

But what if the stressors never end and you feel overwhelmed by life, in general?

• You might have to juggle work and take care of your kids or elderly parents.

• The money might be tight, and you worry about losing your job.

• You might have health problems that you put off solving.

Trauma, death, or divorce are some of the most tragic life events, but most stress and anxiety come from daily responsibilities and tasks.

Chronic stress has become a part of life, and it seems that you don't know where to start to solve all your problems, so you just shove it to the back of your head and wish for the best.

Sadly, even though it seems that you fixed the problem, your body doesn't feel that way. Your hormones might be off, your heart rate might be faster than usual, and that could be one of the reasons why you cannot fall asleep.
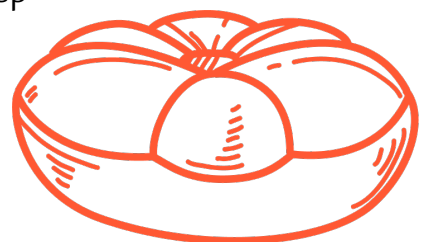
2. Lifestyle and environment

Your body follows a natural circadian rhythm (we will talk about it a bit later) that regulates your sleep-wake cycle and hormones that help you fall asleep. Basically, this rhythm follows the light.

You should feel sleepy when it gets dark and wake up with the first beams of the sun.

We all know that life doesn't work like that. We study late into the night, travel across different time zones and get jet-lagged, work changing shifts, or watch TV until late at night.

Research shows that Americans spend more than 10 hours of their day in front of a screen. Screens follow us from the first waking moment when we turn off our alarm clocks to the soothing TV murmurs just before we fall asleep.

Sadly, your body reacts to artificial light just as it would to natural light. As a result, the process of falling asleep gets disrupted.

Another environmental factor that tends to disrupt sleep is using your bed for anything BUT sleeping. We tend to watch movies, play video games, eat and snack, call friends, and work in bed. This was especially true during the pandemic

Combine bright and stimulating light with using the bed as your living room, add afternoon naps, an irregular sleep schedule, stimulating evening routine, and you will have constant conditions for insomnia.

3. Food and drink choices

If you eat heavy meals, drink caffeinated beverages and alcohol, or smoke cigarettes just before bed, you might have trouble sleeping. Why is that?

With food, it's relatively easy. After you eat, your food travels through your stomach and small intestine, where you digest it.

This process takes between 6–8 hours. Later, the leftovers go into the large intestine, where the colon absorbs water and eliminates the waste. The entire digestive process takes up to 36 hours.

The first 3 hours are crucial because this is the time when the food gets taken apart and absorbed into your bloodstream.

If you have a light snack just before bed, this might not be a problem. You will digest your yogurt and peacefully fall asleep.

If you have a steak, your digestive system will still have to go through the motions at full speed. Your gut is an overachiever that doesn't rest until you get the last bit of food from the stomach to your small intestine. If your stomach is not resting, you will not rest either.

Don't eat anything heavy for at least 3 hours before going to bed.

Another case is with alcohol. It reduces the quality of your REM sleep, which is essential for feeling rested and memory function. Caffeine and nicotine are stimulants that delay your sleep timing and reduce its overall quality.

Next up, we will discuss what natural processes impact your sleep and might cause insomnia.

Practical tasks for tonight

Let's get right into it!

In your sleep diary, write down which factors might be triggering your sleepless nights. Carefully cover the three main categories: a) Stress and anxiety, b) Lifestyle and environment, c) Food and drink choices. Which of them do you think would be the leading causes of your sleep troubles?

And of course, let's try a new evening routine:

 1. Destress in a bath or shower. Before going to bed, draw yourself a warm bath, or have a relaxing shower.
2. Dim the lights. Remember how light impacts your body? Make sure that before going to bed, you use only soft, ambient lighting. Maybe even light a candle or two!

Feel free to have a quick evening stroll, complete a couple of breathing exercises, or journal a bit more if you wish. And remember, no screens before bed!

Good night!

How Sleep Works

Let's look at the natural processes that might ruin your sleep and understand HOW sleep works.

Have you ever noticed that even if you sleep for 11 hours, you wake up even more tired than before, while 7 straight hours might be enough to wake up well-rested?

Our goal is to show you why sleep quality is more important than quantity. It all goes down to the sleeping stages.

What happens when you shut your eyes?

Each night, you go through 3–5 cycles of REM, or Rapid Eye Movement, and non-REM sleep:

- Stage 1 non-REM sleep happens over a couple of minutes while you move from being awake to being asleep. Your brain waves, breathing, and heartbeat slow down while your muscles relax.
- Stage 2 non-REM sleep helps you move into a deeper, more restful sleep. Your body functions slow down even more, and your body temperature begins to drop. Your eye movements stop. Typically, this is the longest stage.
- Stage 3 non-REM sleep is a deep sleep stage when your brainwaves, heartbeat, and breathing are at their slowest. You are totally relaxed and deeply asleep. This stage helps you feel refreshed and well-rested in the morning.
- REM sleep is marked by rapid eye movement and mixed brain activity. Your breathing becomes fast and irregular, and your heart rate and blood pressure increase. You begin to dream, and your body temporarily paralyzes your arms and legs to make sure you don't start to participate in your dreams. This sleep stage first occurs about 90 minutes after falling asleep. REM sleep is believed to help you with long-term memory.

The entire four stages can take up to 90–120 minutes. To feel well-rested, adults will need 7–9 hours of sleep and cycle through these stages. Equally important is to go to sleep the moment your body is ready to rest.

Your body clock and circadian rhythm

Your circadian rhythm regulates your body temperature and metabolism, as well as the release of hormones melatonin and cortisol.

The circadian rhythm follows environmental cues, such as temperature or light. Research shows that even without these clues, you would still follow similar sleep and wake patterns.

 Your body has a clock: it has 24 hours on it, and it developed over millions of years. Your ancestors honed the times when to sleep, how much sleep is necessary, and how to wake up without the alarm.

And then, the 21st century happened. Lights, screens, and constant stressors.

Let's figure out how to follow your circadian rhythm while navigating the complex modern reality.

Sleep-wake cycle and homeostasis

Homeostasis is a process that ensures no matter what happens outside your body, your internal conditions remain relatively stable. It regulates your internal temperature, the amounts of toxic waste collected, and the water content.

Homeostatic sleep drive regulates the intensity of your sleep and makes sure you feel sleepy overall.

If the circadian rhythm is the clock, homeostasis would be the alarm that makes you go to sleep if you are getting too tired and wake up once fully rested.

Daytime naps

Over the day, your need for sleep grows. In the morning, your body releases the hormone cortisol that helps you with alertness, while in the evening, it's time for melatonin, which puts you to sleep.

If your need to sleep peaks and you are not ready for it, you will automatically switch off and automatically fall asleep. This is your body's natural reaction to exhaustion. It might be a microsleep that happens if you are not ready to rest. You would fall asleep for 1–2 seconds, but these seconds might end tragically if, for instance, you are driving.

That's why it's better to always stop and nap for 15 minutes instead of trying to stay awake throughout the night. Napping for more than 30 minutes will confuse your internal clock because you would get too close to the REM sleep stage. Therefore, try to avoid long naps during the day.

Later, we'll discuss how to embrace these natural processes with proper sleep hygiene.

Practical tasks for tonight

Open your sleep diary and write down what things from today's lesson you didn't know before.

Let's try your evening routine:

1. Relaxing music. Put on some music that is calming to you personally, or try out different nature sounds (crackling fireplace, rain, or waterfall sounds).

2. Progressive muscle relaxation. Comfortably lie down in your bed. Try to relax as much as possible and breathe calmly. Starting with your toes, contract your muscles, hold them for 5 to 10 seconds, and then quickly release. Repeat this with your entire body, moving from the feet to your head: contract and release your feet, thighs, hips, stomach, back, shoulders, chest, arms, hands, neck, and face muscles. Repeat a couple of times until you no longer feel the tension.

Habit Building

We cannot talk about creating effective routines without diving deeper into habit building.

Let's see what science says about long-lasting behavioral change.

Behavioral psychology for better sleep

Behavioral psychology is a science that links your thoughts and your behavior. In part, it looks at how habits are formed and how they can be changed.

How does this apply to sleeping? For permanent and sustainable change to happen, you need to track your habits and start building better ones. The first step is to identify and understand your habits.

Each habit forms following the same structure. It starts with a cue, followed by a routine, then a reward. It's called the habit loop.

For instance, perhaps you have formed a bad habit of getting a coffee on your way home in the evening, impacting your sleep quality. You don't necessarily need the coffee, but it's a lovely ritual that helps you wind down after work.

The cue: Walking by the coffee shop on your way home.
The routine: Buying the coffee.
The reward: Drinking that freshly brewed cup and relaxing after work.

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Aim for a flow state

Have you ever been so immersed in your work or hobby that you forget everything around you?You might be preparing for an exciting presentation, gardening, or building a dollhouse for your kids. No matter the activity, the key here is the focus.

It's called flow state and is defined by total immersion in a pleasurable yet challenging activity. You forget everything around you and focus on one thing that is in front of you.

In his research, behavioral psychologist Mihály Csíkszentmihályi uncovered that the flow state is associated with overall well-being, health, and satisfaction with life. It is further linked to higher productivity, motivation, and loyalty.

By accessing this state through the recognition and development of habits and being more mindful, you can achieve the life you want, including sustainable and effective sleeping routines. When you transform your habits, you change your life.

At first, it will require a lot of effort. But eventually, it will become as effortless as brushing your teeth before bed.

To access this flow state, you might start by simply being more mindful. Ask yourself why you do things the way you do. It's becoming more aware of what you are doing rather than mindlessly or passively moving through your day.

Building lasting habits

The real question here is simple: how do you do it? How do you make sure that a healthy lifestyle becomes a daily routine instead of a dreaded chore?

Consider how a child learns to walk. At first, they are all wobbly and struggle to keep their balance. After some practice, they can stay up for an extended time and only fall down from time to time. Today, you don't even think about walking – you just do it.

Walking becomes a habit and doesn't require any effort. You are in a flow state when you do it. Healthy sleeping habits can become effortless, too.

How do we achieve this?

- Identify good and bad habits that impact your sleep. This kind of habit, "inventory," provides you with a starting point. If you are not aware of the issues, you cannot fix them.
- Replace bad habits with good ones. Instead of trying to eliminate bad habits, replace them with neutral or good ones. For instance, you should not try to stop snacking altogether – try healthier snacks instead.
- Utilize the habit loop. Once you choose the habit you want to replace, identify the cues for it and decide how you will change them.
- Focus on habit stacking. Once you establish one new healthy habit, capitalize on it by starting to stack more good habits on top of it. If you want to stop drinking coffee in the afternoon and begin to drink decaf coffee on your way home, maybe you could also take your water bottle to stay hydrated? After a couple of iterations, the action will become a habit.
- Always have a plan. If there is a particular behavior you want to stop, plan ways to prevent it or find a different reward. Eventually, you will rid yourself of your bad habits while stacking on new ones.

That's it for today! We will talk about sleep hygiene next.
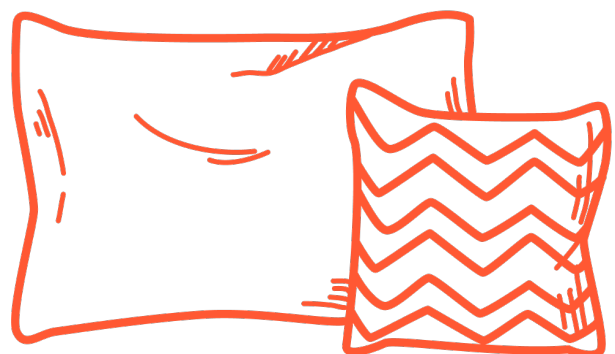
Practical tasks for tonight

What are your sleepy tasks for today?

1. **Open your sleep diary and focus on one bad habit that ruins your sleep.**
2. **Dim the lights, turn off the screens, and have dinner 3 hours before bedtime.**

Let's try another evening routine:

1. Stretching exercise: Child's pose. Comfortably come down on your knees and sit on your heels. Lean down until your forehead reaches the floor. Stretch your arms forward, breathe deeply, and relax. Move your arms to the left, stretch, breath, and relax. Repeat the same exercise on the right side.
2. Reflect on your day. Before going to bed, think about your day, especially the highlights. What did you do today that made you happy? Write down your thoughts if you choose.

That's it for today. Sleep tight.

Sleep Hygiene #1

How can you practice impeccable sleep hygiene? It seems that you don't need to learn how to sleep.

Right?

Wrong.

If you are reading this, you are probably having trouble falling asleep, and following a carefully planned sleep hygiene routine is the number one strategy that will help you achieve your goals.

Sleep hygiene is a combination of a streamlined sleeping environment and daily habits that empower uninterrupted and high-quality sleep. Poor sleep hygiene might be the root cause of your restlessness, sleep deprivation, or acute insomnia.

We follow personal hygiene routines to ensure we stay healthy in the long run. It's an investment in the future. Instead of dealing with teeth problems, we prevent them by brushing and flossing. Instead of risking catching a disease, we frequently wash our hands.

The same goes for sleeping hygiene: instead of developing chronic insomnia, we can set up different strategies in place that will help us prevent it.

4 telltale signs that your sleep quality is perfect

Sleep improves the overall quality of life, enhances physical and mental health, and supports every function of your body, from digestion to muscle formation to cognition.

How do you know that you have achieved the perfect sleep quality?

- You fall asleep in less than 30 minutes.
- You sleep for 7–9 hours each night.
- You sleep through the night, with no more than one time waking up.
- If you wake up during the night, you fall asleep in less than 20 minutes

Creating your sleep hygiene routine

In this book, you will find different techniques for optimizing your life for quality sleep. Today, we will give you a general overview of creating perfect sleep hygiene that will ensure your good night's sleep.

Optimize your sleep by creating pre-bed and morning routines that ensure you go to bed ready to sleep. Turn your bedroom into a pleasant oasis of calm and doze off without any problems. Make sure that during the day, you don't do anything that sabotages your routine.

Let's begin!

Flawless sleep schedule

Let's review the main principles of sleep schedules:

1. Go to sleep and wake up approximately at the same time. Follow a schedule because your body needs some structure due to the circadian rhythm and homeostasis. Select your waking time and subtract 7–9 hours from it: this will be your falling asleep time. You will need to start preparing to sleep 1 hour before that. Begin with unplugging from your devices.
2. No screens before bed. Working, scrolling through your social media, or watching movies before falling asleep makes you agitated and disrupts your sleep. The blue light on the screens blocks the hormone melatonin, which is responsible for feeling drowsy and going to bed.
3. Skip the afternoon naps. Everyone loves to catch up on their sleep with a nap, but you do not do yourself a favor if you nap for more than 30 minutes. Try quick 15-minute naps to get your energy boost.
4. Your circadian rhythm has no weekends off. Even though sleeping in is tempting on days off, you will get your best results only if you follow your routine consistently.

The most important tip? Start slow and ease into your new regime. It might take a while before you figure out how many hours you should sleep to feel well-rested. We want to create a routine that makes you look forward to going to bed. Try out different options, and don't forget to track your progress in your sleep diary.

Daytime essentials

Preparing for a high-quality sleep starts the moment you wake up.

Suppose you choose to spend your day eating healthy and nutritious foods, improving your stress response, practicing mindfulness, doing at least 30 minutes of physical activity and reducing stress.

In that case, you will notice that your sleep quality improves drastically. If possible, spend time outside and in the sun. We will talk about building better habits a bit later in the program.

You cannot do it all right away. Start with these simple yet effective habits to implement during the day:

- Have your final meal of the day 2–3 hours before going to bed.
- Avoid drinking alcohol, but if you decide to indulge yourself in some drinks, make sure to alternate them with water, and don't drink right before bedtime.
- If you love your caffeinated drinks, drink coffee or tea at least 6 hours before bed, ideally – during the first part of the day.
- If you smoke, make sure to do it no later than 2 hours before bed. Nicotine is a powerful stimulant that impacts your natural regime.

Daytime essentials

Your bedroom should be inviting yet dedicated to protecting your sleep.

If you eat there, you will start to feel snacky right before bed. If you work there, you might remember stressful assignments right before going to bed. If you watch videos or use social media, you will notice that you cannot fall asleep without a calming buzz of your favorite series.

Avoid this association in advance. Complete the following checklist before moving forward:

1. Remove the distractions. If you haven't done it yet, remove all the things that are not associated with sleeping from this room: no TVs, phones, desks, or sports equipment.
2. Enhance the experience. Take a close look at your pillow, mattress, linen, and sleepwear. A freshly made bed and a comfortable pillow make a huge difference.
3. Regulate the temperature. As you already know, your body temperature drops when you fall asleep. Let in the fresh air and reduce the temperature in the room before going to bed.
4. Reduce noise and light. One of the reasons you might not fall asleep is the noise and light from the street. Think about investing in blackout curtains or earplugs.

We will talk more about it a bit later. In our next chapter, you will find out more about creating your bedtime routine and morning ritual.

Practical tasks for tonight

What are your sleepy tasks for today?

Open your sleep diary and write down what things you will need to fix in your bedroom and what daytime habits you wish to improve during the day.

1. **Gratitude exercise.** Think about your day. In your sleep diary, write down 3 positive things you are grateful for.
2. **Mindfulness exercise.** Body scan. You recently tried the progressive muscle relaxation exercise. Tonight, we were hoping you could try a different version of this exercise. Lie down comfortably and start with your feet. Think about how you would describe the current condition of your feet. Are they relaxed, sore, or heavy? Once you decide on the definition, carefully tighten up the muscles in your feet, and relax them. Repeat this exercise (define, tense up, relax) with your entire body, toes to head.

P.S. Hope you remembered to dim the lights, turn off the screens, and have dinner 3 hours before sleep! Good night.

Sleep Hygiene #2: Night/ Morning Routines

Crafting the perfect evening and morning routines.

Previously, we talked about creating a flawless sleep schedule and preparing your home for a good night's sleep.

Our goal right now is slightly different. We will continue talking about sleep hygiene but will concentrate on setting a personalized routine before going to bed and right after you wake up.

Before we begin, let's discuss why you need to have morning and evening routines.

Willpower and discipline

Did you know that one person makes more than 35,000 decisions each day?

Our willpower is a limited and depleting resource. If you want to have some left in the evening for calmly falling asleep, you should automate daytime activities to ensure you don't use up your willpower before noon.

 How do you do this? You must reduce the number of decisions you make by building standard routines for different situations.

Most of the activities we do in our daily lives are routine. You wake up, eat breakfast, lunch, and dinner, go to work, commute, spend time with your family and friends, and go to bed each day.

If you want to ensure long-term changes, focus on creating the right environment, setting habits, and figuring out how to direct your willpower to build disciplined routines. Only then will you manage to make lasting change.

Night-time routine

Remember how we mentioned that you should start preparing to sleep one hour before your bedtime? You might think that it's tons of time, and it would be incredibly dull.

On the contrary! Together, we will make sure you spend this time effectively.

Let's begin with the structure of your nighttime routine. While half an hour is enough for the entire routine, we wanted you to allocate slightly more time, especially at the beginning of your journey.

Start with the basics:

1. Screens: Turn off all screens that emit blue light.
2. Lights: Dim the lights at your home.
3. Temperature and fresh air: Open a window to let in some fresh air and reduce the overall room temperature.
4. Food and drinks: Make sure you don't eat 3 hours before bed and don't have any caffeine, nicotine, or alcohol right before bed.
5. Personal hygiene: This goes without saying – a part of your nighttime routine should be dedicated to taking care of your health.

Your home right now is calm and worry-free. You might want to light up some scented candles or diffuse some essential oils for a more calming effect.

For some people, a clean home equals a calm mind. After all, uncompleted chores are visual noise that creates additional stress. We recommend you go over your home and set things in place before going to bed. Nobody wants to wake up to a mountain of dirty dishes or dirty laundry all over the place.

Once your environment is relaxing and calm, it's time to make sure you destress. You have already tried 8 different exercises, from an evening walk or warm bath to various mindfulness or breathing exercises. We will share more practices for you to try over. Feel free to include other calming activities of your choice.

After you try out all 14 exercises, we will ask you to fill in your perfect evening routine in your sleep diary.

Here are 3 sample evening routines you might want to try:

1. **Go for a relaxing walk.** Once you come back, have a bath in the candlelight. Complete a gratitude exercise.
2. **Read a couple of pages of an inspiring book** before bed, and after you turn off the lights, complete a progressive muscle relaxation exercise.
3. **Listen to relaxing music while journaling.** Complete the day with a mindfulness exercise.

Congratulations! You now have an evening routine. Don't be afraid to experiment with it and try out different combinations until you find the one that feels best for you.

Morning routine

Now, let's talk about your morning routine.

Why is it essential to start your day with a ritual? How does that impact your sleep?

First of all, a morning routine will help you be more productive and effective. If you know what exactly will happen after you wake up, you will not be tempted to oversleep. You will focus better, achieve your goals faster, and avoid mental fatigue.

We will offer you different productive habits for your mornings, and you will set up a routine that makes you ready to seize the day.

Here is morning routine you can try:

Listen to an inspiring podcast. Instead of starting your day with social media, get some inspiration from outstanding people! Find an exciting podcast in advance and listen to it while preparing and drinking your lemon water.

Practical tasks for tonight

What are your sleepy tasks for today?

Open your sleep diary and write down what your perfect day would look like. Start with the moment you wake up. What will happen? What will you do?

Let's try your evening routine:

1. Reading. Choose an interesting but not stimulating book, and complete a couple of pages before going to sleep.
2. Mindfulness exercise: visualization. Before going to sleep, imagine how your life would change if you woke up well-rested. Go through a perfect day and plan what kind of things you will be able to achieve.

How Eating and Drinking Impacts Sleep

The quality of sleep impacts the way you live your life, and the way you live affects the quality of your sleep. Having bad eating habits can drastically affect how well you sleep.

Eating certain types of foods before going to bed can make it harder for you to fall asleep or prevent you from getting enough deep sleep to feel rested the next morning.

The most common culprits

Typically, your sleep will be disturbed due to the following reasons:
- **Eating a heavy meal less than 3 hours before bedtime.**
- **Drinking alcohol or fizzy drinks late.**
- **Drinking caffeinated drinks in the second half of the day.**
- **Smoking cigarettes, which contain nicotine.**
- **Eating fatty, spicy, or fried food.**

All of these reasons can upset your stomach and lead to low sleep quality. That's why you must understand that your eating and drinking habits have a huge impact on sleep.

How poor sleep affects food choices

Feeling tired and exhausted all the time makes people eat more food than they need to. It also affects food choices, leading to weight gain, followed by many different health risks.

Put simply, if you don't get enough sleep, you are more likely to increase the number of snacks you eat every day. You will eat more unhealthy foods and forget about enjoying enough vegetables and fruit. While high-calorie food might seem tastier and more appealing, it will make it harder to fall asleep and get the much-needed rest.

If you have insomnia, restless leg syndrome, or obstructive sleep apnea, it might seem challenging to switch to a healthier diet.

You can break the cycle by ensuring you get enough physical activity every day and gradually switch from fatty, unhealthy foods to a healthier diet. Physical activity will allow you to burn through the extra calories you intake and help you fall asleep at night.

Healthy diet and sleep

There is plenty of evidence that proves that your eating and drinking habits significantly impact sleep quality. If you eat and drink low-quality foods and consume many highly processed carbs, you are likely to suffer from various issues related to sleep.

Too many sweets, energy drinks, coffee, pastry, and so on put your entire body into overdrive, which will likely affect the quality of your sleep.

Healthier foods such as whole-grain carbs, vegetables, fish, and so on are processed much more comfortably, and as such, they can help you improve the quality of your sleep tremendously. Furthermore, foods rich in the amino acid tryptophan affect serotonin and melatonin synthesis, helping you sleep faster.

We all know that caffeine is a stimulant that helps us focus and stay awake. Drinking too much coffee or energy drinks will surely make it harder for you to fall asleep. If you keep repeating the same thing every day for a long time, your sleep quality will deteriorate further. The same can be said about alcohol. While it might make you feel drowsy and sleepy, it will prevent you from getting enough deep sleep, so you'll wake up feeling tired and restless.

The Healthy Plate method

Of course, you already knew that. Everyone knows what healthy habits are. The question is HOW to seamlessly implement it into your daily diet.

 At first, you'd need to know your calorie budget or the number of calories you can eat to sustainably lose weight, considering your current weight, height, age, and physical activity level. You can learn this number after consulting with a nutritionist or using any of thousands of online calculators.

Let's say your number is 1,600kcal per day. After you learn your total number of calories, you will need to distribute them across your day. Around 45% of your calories should come from carbs, 30% from fats, and about 25% from lean protein. You should get 25–30 grams of fiber with your food.

How can we put this formula into more straightforward terms? Most nutritionists recommend the Healthy Plate method:

- ½ of your plate should be covered in non-starchy vegetables. Aim to have a variety of colors on your plate to ensure the widest selection of microelements.
- ¼ of your plate should be covered in starchy vegetables, whole grains, or beans. This will provide you with fiber and healthy energy.
- ¼ of your plate should be covered in lean protein. Lean chicken or turkey is the obvious choice, but don't forget fatty fish or plant-based protein

Best part? This is a proportion for the entire day, meaning that if you had a light salad for one meal, you might be able to indulge yourself with a dessert. Remember: balance is everything, and make sure to stay within your calorie budget!

Practical tasks for tonight

What are your sleepy tasks today?

1. Stick to your bedtime at all times and follow your chosen bedtime routine.
2. Open your sleep diary and write about your current diet. Would you say that you eat healthily? Plan your meals for the next week to make sure you follow the Healthy Plate method.

Here is your morning routine:

1. Three-part breathing exercise. Begin with a long, deep inhale. Exhale completely, focusing on your body and how it feels throughout. Repeat a few times. Then, slowly exhale to the point where it's twice the duration of your inhale.
2. Three pages. Read 3 pages from an inspiring book before looking at your phone in the morning.

Distress and Mental Relaxation

In this chapter, we will focus on destressing and calming your mind before going to bed.

Let's begin!

How to destress before going to sleep

Day-to-day worries, such as money woes, office tension, and even traffic jams, cause the body to tense up. One way to relax is by focused deep breathing that's simple and can be done almost anywhere, anytime.

Deep breathing as a sleep aid is a natural tool that can minimize anxiety and stress by decreasing the "stress hormone" cortisol and enhancing calmness and relaxation.

You can rest more easily because it will regulate your heart rate, reduce your blood pressure, and improve circulation as your muscles relax.

Imagine deep breathing to be the way to smoothen the creases on your mind. Focusing on breathing leads to a relaxation response and better sleep. There are various kinds of breathing, too. You've already tried the three-part breathing exercise. Let's see what else is out there.

Belly breathing

This is also called diaphragmatic breathing, abdominal breathing, and paced respiration. Breathe deeply. The air inhaled through your nose will fill the lungs. Your lower belly will rise. Then exhale through the nostrils.

Breathing with pursed lips

This exercise reduces the number of breaths and keeps your airways open for longer. Breathe in through your nose and breathe out at least twice as long through your mouth, with pursed lips.

The Papworth method

Sit upright in a straight position in bed. Breathe deeply, maintaining methodical breaths in and out for a count of 4 with each. Inhale through the mouth and exhale through the nose. Pay keen attention to your abdomen rising and falling, and ensure that your breath sounds are coming from your stomach.

Whichever breathing technique you choose, the next few points will help you get this routine right:

1. 1. Look for a quiet and comfortable place to sit or lie down.
2. First, take a normal breath. Try to breathe deeper. Finally, breathe out slowly through your mouth, with pursed lips or your nose. The key is to focus on your breathing.
3. Blend this exercise with helpful imagery or focus on a word or phrase that helps you relax.

First, don't try too hard while breathing deeply. The idea is to relax. Trying too hard could make your body stiffen.

Also, try to practice once or twice a day for 10–20 minutes, keeping the time of exercise consistent, especially before you sleep. This will build a rhythm for you.

Keep your eyes shut during the exercise to focus.

Why deep breathing works

Shallow breathing limits the diaphragm's motion. The lowest part of the lungs doesn't get the full share of oxygenated air. That can make you short of breath. Deep breathing allows full oxygen exchange. It slows the heartbeat, lowers or stabilizes blood pressure, and relaxes the muscles.
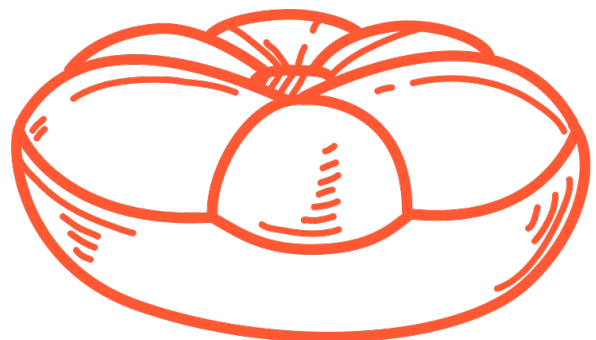
What's mindfulness?

Now that you have mastered deep breathing – try to blend this with mindfulness.

It can be challenging to detach or shut off your mind from work-related activities. Research findings suggest that mindfulness practices can improve sleep by calming your hyperactive mind.

If you regularly practice being aware of your thoughts, feelings, and bodily sensations without judgment, you will minimize negative thoughts and emotions, reduce fatigue and stress, and enhance relaxation.

It is an exercise in which you focus on being aware of what you are sensing and feeling at any given moment, without interpretation or judgment. Mindfulness involves deep breathing, guided imagery, and other ways to relax the body and mind. It reduces stress and, therefore, will allow you to sleep well.

Mindfulness is often used interchangeably with meditation. The two are not the same, though related. Meditation is a practice. Mindfulness is the result of a calm mind.

Clinical trials on meditation support its effectiveness in reducing stress, anxiety, pain, depression, insomnia, and high blood pressure.

From meditation to mindfulness

To become more mindful in your daily life, try these exercises:

- Pay attention to your environment with your senses of touch, sound, sight, smell, and taste. When you eat, take the time to smell, taste, and thoroughly enjoy the food.
- When you have negative thoughts, sit down, close your eyes, and breathe deeply. Focus on your breath as it moves in and out of your body.
- When walking, note the wind against your face, how your foot hits the ground, and your subtle body movements.

There are, of course, ways to achieve mindfulness through structured meditation. We have shared three techniques here:

1. Mindful body scan

Lie on your back, legs extended, arms by your side, palms facing up. Now close your eyes and focus on your breathing. Feel your belly expanding gently when you inhale and receding when you exhale. Then, focus on your left foot. Feel the sensations in this area. If your mind wanders, nudge your focus back to the foot without judging yourself.

If you notice pain, acknowledge it and any thoughts accompanying it, and gently breathe through it. Don't expect the pain to go away. Slowly, let go of the focus on your left foot. Now, move on to the left ankle and repeat the process. In this way, proceed throughout the body.

2. Sitting meditation

Sit comfortably, your back straight, feet flat on the floor, and hands on the lap. Inhale and exhale through your nose. Just focus on your breath. If physical sensations, such as pain or discomfort or other thoughts interrupt your focus, make a note of it and return your concentration to your breath. For your mindfulness exercise, you need to be in a quiet place. Try it every day for 6 months. Over time, achieving mindfulness becomes effortless.

3. One-minute meditation

While standing or sitting, close your eyes. Breathe in deeply and scan your entire body up and down, then again while breathing out. As you inhale and exhale, breathe deep into your chest, allowing your belly to fill with the air and listen to your breaths. Hold for a count of 5 and then exhale slowly, letting out all the air. Repeat for one minute.

Practical tasks for tonight

What are your sleepy tasks for today?

1. Stick to your bedtime at all times and follow your chosen bedtime routine.
2. Open your sleep diary and describe your day through the senses of touch, sound, sight, smell, and taste. What happened during your day that was memorable?

Here is your morning routine:

1. Mindfulness exercises. Try out 1 or 2 new mindfulness exercises.
2. Breathing exercises. Try 1 or 2 activities that are new to you.

Good night!

Falling Back to Sleep

How do we ensure you don't toss and turn for hours?

Top tips for getting back to sleep

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), in the United States, one in three adults doesn't get enough sleep.

If you're lying in the dark in the small hours of the morning with your eyes wide open, you'll know just how much sleeplessness can sap your energy and play havoc with your mood and cognitive abilities.

So, if you dream of good quality sleep instead of waking up tired and fuzzy-headed in the morning, we can help. Although there is no magic wand to make you sleep better at night, the following strategies will help you get back to sleep and stay asleep, ensuring you'll be as fresh as a daisy when the morning comes.

Clear your head

As difficult as it may be, don't focus on your inability to get back to sleep because it will be counterproductive. You'll be giving yourself extra stress, which encourages the body to stay awake.

In order to stay out of your own head, practice the previously discussed breathing exercises that act as a natural tranquilizer. For example, breathe in, then breathe out while saying or thinking a word or affirmation. Repeat the process several times.

Don't stare at the clock

When you look at a clock, you become more aware of time, and with nothing to do, each second and minute appears to move slower than average. This increases your anxiety and frustration, which will prevent you from drifting off again.

Therefore, turn your alarm clock to face the wall.

Postpone worry

If you wake up fretting about something, don't try and work through solutions. Make a note of your concern on a piece of paper and leave worrying about it until the next day.

Likewise, if a genius idea is keeping you awake, jot it down and nothing more. You'll be in a much better position to resolve worries and work on ideas after a good night's sleep.

When all else fails, get out of bed

If you wake up and you're still stewing 20 minutes later, wondering why you're not asleep, get up and do something relaxing in low light until you feel drowsy again.

This could be reading a book, listening to quiet music, or doing some relaxation exercises such as light yoga stretches and mindfulness meditation. Don't do anything that could stress you out, such as work or paying bills.

It is important not to stay in bed. The more you lie in bed fretting about being awake, the more your brain associates the bedroom with disturbed sleep. You want to break the connection in your mind between your bed and wakefulness.

Sweet dreams

Sleep issues are complex, and what works for one person may not work for someone else. Therefore, try each of these strategies until you hit on the one that works perfectly for you. It can take some time for new methods to work, so be patient and give them time to take effect.

Practical tasks for tonight

What are your sleepy tasks for today?

1. Stick to your bedtime at all times and follow your chosen bedtime routine.
2. Open your sleep diary and write down your strategy for when you have trouble falling asleep. Preparation is key!

Here is your final morning routine:

1. Visualization. After you wake up, find a sport where you feel comfortable. Think about the areas in your life you want to improve. Imagine in great detail what your life will look like once you achieve these goals.

2. Take a cold shower. A cold shower first thing in the morning is a highly celebrated habit of the most productive people. It increases your circulation, wakes you up, and boosts your immune system. Slowly ease into this habit by gradually reducing the water temperature until it starts to be uncomfortable. Stay under this shower for 2–3 minutes. The effects will be immediate!

Sleep well!

Sleep and Your Environment

Time for a recap? So far, you have:

- Tried different morning routines and chose the one that works best for you.
- You sleep for 7–9 hours each night.
- Found out effective strategies for falling back asleep.

Today, we will start talking about your environment. Let's find out how external triggers can impact your sleep.

The most common reasons for sleeplessness are shift work, late-night partying, traveling between different time zones, and a restless home environment.

If you experience these issues regularly, the chances are you have a hard time falling asleep and getting enough rest. Let's take a closer look at each cause and see what changes you can make to improve your sleep quality

Shift work

Shift work sleep disorder (SWSD) is a serious problem for many people who don't work traditional 9-to-5 jobs. They usually work in three shifts, making it hard for their bodies to get used to resting at different times of the day. Working in shifts negatively affects the natural circadian rhythm and can lead to sleeplessness and potentially other health issues.

SWSD is usually followed by symptoms such as having a hard time concentrating, frequent headaches, and lack of energy. It affects 4 out of 10 shift workers and can lead to further complications.

If you can, you should ask your employer to keep you working for only one or maybe two shifts until your body recovers and you get enough sleep. A month in the new regime should be enough to help you go back to normal.

Late-night partying

No matter how young and full of energy you might be, partying all night long can lead to chronic sleeplessness. That goes double if you party over multiple nights in one week. Going to bed early in the morning and not getting enough sleep can seriously damage your circadian cycle and leave you feeling tired and exhausted throughout the day.

Drinking alcohol also impacts the quality of sleep, and if you add the other negative effects, it's clear why falling asleep might become a problem.

If you recognize that you feel tired and sleepless frequently, you should stop partying at least until you recover completely. Skip a few nights in town and cut down on your alcohol until you're back to normal.

Some people need only one week, others need a few months to recuperate, but one thing is for sure – you must take a break if you want to live normally during the day.

Changing time zones

Jet lag is the feeling you get from changing time zones while traveling by plane. You fall asleep in one specific time zone and wake up in another one, where the time doesn't fit your circadian cycle.

Changing time zones puts your body into overdrive and can lead to feelings of insomnia and sleeplessness until you get used to the local time. That can take between two days to multiple weeks.

Let's say you travel to a place where the time is hours away from the time you are used to.

Try to stay awake until the early night and match your sleep schedule according to the local time. If that's not possible, try sleeping in one-hour shifts every three hours until your body adjusts to the local time.

Restless home environment

Even though you cannot impact everything that surrounds you, you can always take control of your immediate environment.

We have already talked about ensuring that your bedroom is a space streamlined for your sleep and sleep only. If the space is cluttered, your mattress is not comfortable, or the room is full of light during the entire night, you will not fall asleep.

Practical tasks for tonight

What are your sleepy tasks for today?

1. **Stick to your bedtime at all times and follow your chosen bedtime routine.**
2. **Follow your evening and morning routines.**
3. **Open your sleep diary and write down how your environment impacts your sleep.**

Good night!

Picking the Right Mattress, Pillows, Bedding, and Clothing

Your mattress, bedding, and clothing play a big role in the quality of your sleep. A quality mattress that supports your spine and evenly distributes weight helps you wake up feeling fresh and well-rested every morning.

 Your bedding and sleepwear can also improve your sleep by making you feel comfortable and helping you manage your body temperature while you sleep.

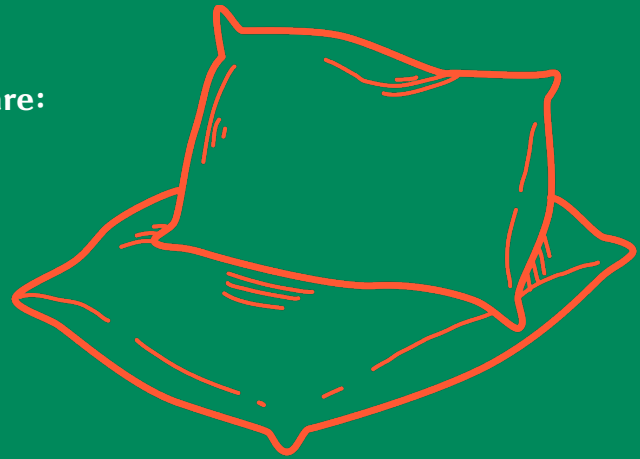Here's how to pick the right mattress, bedding, and sleepwear.

Finding your perfect mattress

The most important factors when choosing a mattress include:
- **Support**
- **Comfort**
- **Motion transfer/isolation**
- **Heat retention**

The main types of mattresses to choose from are:
- **Memory foam**
- **Innerspring**
- **Hybrid**

Memory-foam mattresses take on your body shape when you press against them, provide great support and pressure relief, and ensure proper spinal alignment. They have low motion transfer, so they're not bouncy, but they also retain more heat.

Innerspring mattresses are firmer, don't retain heat, and provide more support and pressure relief, but also allow greater motion transfer. Get an innerspring mattress with pocketed coils if you want to get better motion isolation.

Hybrid mattresses combine the best of both worlds. They provide the comfort and low motion transfer of memory foam and the bouncy feel and support of innerspring cores.

Consider the way you sleep to pick the right mattress for you:
- If you're a side-sleeper, get a medium-firm mattress, preferably memory foam.
- If you're a back-sleeper, get a firm mattress with a softer surface, perhaps a hybrid type.
- If you sleep on your stomach, a medium-firm mattress (dense innerspring or firm memory foam) that supports your hips would be your best bet.

Choosing the right bedding

Choose natural fabrics for your bed sheets, such as linen, cotton, and bamboo. They'll let your skin breathe and keep you warm in winter and cool in summer. Make sure the thread count is between 200–400 to ensure the sheets don't trap heat.

The most important bedding element is your sleeping pillow, as it ensures a proper alignment of your neck and spine.

Consider your sleeping position when choosing your pillow:
- A high-loft pillow is best for side-sleepers.
- A medium-loft pillow is best for back-sleepers.
- A low-loft pillow is the best option for stomach-sleepers
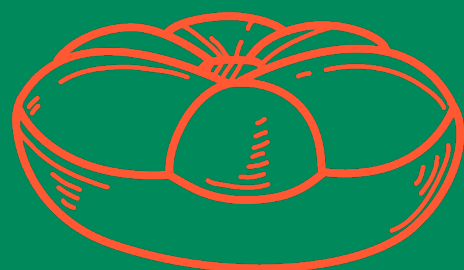
Picking comfortable sleepwear

To pick the right sleepwear, find something that feels comfortable to you. The materials should feel soft on your skin, let your skin breathe, and keep your body at a comfortable temperature.

The best materials for your sleepwear are:
- **Cotton**
- **Silk**
- **Bamboo**
- **Flannel (for those cold winter days)**

Make sure the clothing isn't too tight so as not to cut off your blood circulation while you sleep. Avoid pajamas with accessories that might irritate you during the night.

Don't forget to keep your feet warm because cold feet can disrupt your sleep. Keep some lightweight socks at hand to slip them on when it gets chilly.

Well, that's our quick guide to picking mattresses, bedding, and clothing that will help you get better sleep. All you need to do is find these items in a design pattern you like and enjoy your perfect bedroom.

Practical tasks for tonight

What are your sleepy tasks today?

1. Change your sheets, or buy new ones if possible.
2. Stick to your bedtime at all times, and follow your evening and morning routines.
3. Open your sleep diary and plan what kind of changes in your mattress, bedding, or sleepwear you could make to improve your sleep in the future.

Good night!

Choosing the Right Temperature

You have already tried all the different strategies for streamlining your environment for a better sleep quality:

- Eliminating the triggers
- Choosing the right mattress, linen, and sleepwear

In this chapter, we will share one more element of a restful night: the temperature of your room.

Just think of trying to fall asleep on a hot summer night, and you will immediately remember how unpleasant it is.

Humans need an optimal environment to fall asleep, and the temperature in the room as well as the quality of the air play major roles.

If your bedroom is too hot or too cold, you will most likely have a harder time falling asleep.

Also, if the air in the room is stale, your brain will struggle to stay in a deep sleep long enough for you to feel ested. Why is that?

The role of temperature in sleep

As we come closer to bedtime, our brains release melatonin, a hormone responsible for helping us sleep. During this process, our bodies lose heat, and when we finally lie down, our bodies cool down even further. In total, our temperature can dip up to two degrees lower than during the day.

The temperature change is one of the biggest reasons why we fall asleep. That's why some people prefer sleeping in cold rooms. They speed up the cooling process and help you fall asleep faster. In other words, creating the perfect temperature that's cool enough to help you sleep will certainly help you sleep better and wake up well-rested.

The ideal temperature is an individual thing, but a rough estimation of the perfect temperature is between 60–68ºF (15–20ºC). Also, make sure the room is dark and quiet, so your brain can relax and shut down.

How fresh air affects sleep quality

It's no surprise that the quality of the air also affects your sleep. Just think of a fresh breeze of air coming through the window during early spring. One breath of clean, fresh air can make a huge difference when it comes to sleep quality.

Since our brains prefer cooler temperatures to fall asleep, fresh air is just what they need to kickstart the process. Your temperature drops as you go through the first stages of sleep, and if the room is too hot, you will have a restless night.

Furthermore, apart from helping your body cool down faster, fresh air also promotes relaxation. Feeling cooled down and relaxed both help you fall asleep faster.

How to put this to your advantage

If you live in a city surrounded by buildings and loud noises, keeping your windows open through the night could actually make the situation worse. If that's the case, you should think about getting a white noise machine or using earplugs to mute the sounds that keep you awake.

On the other hand, if you don't like to keep your windows open, try experimenting with the air conditioner fan. If you find the perfect angle, a breeze from the air conditioner can give you the same benefits as an opened window.

Lastly, the changing seasons also affect the ideal sleep temperature you need to get enough sleep. Try to create a consistent environment throughout the entire year to keep your sleep quality consistent. Sometimes, you will have to open the window to cool the air down; other times, you will have to turn the heating on to level the temperature.

As long as it's between 60–68ºF (15–20ºC), you should be just fine.

Practical tasks for tonight

What are your tasks today?

1. Widely open the window 30 minutes before going to bed.

2. Stick to your bedtime at all times and follow your evening and morning routines.

How Light Impacts Sleep

Light and sleep are closely connected. Overall, light has a significant impact on our bodies.

As we've already discussed, light affects the circadian rhythm, the natural 24-hour cycle our body goes through. It involves various behavioral, physiological, and chemical processes.

Eating, social interactions, temperature, and exposure to light/dark all affect our rhythm.

Subsequently, the disruption of the circadian rhythm can alter sleep habits. There's clear evidence of how this happens, but before we get to that, let's see why the circadian rhythm is affected by light.

How light affects the circadian rhythm

The sleep-wake cycle is one of the essential circadian rhythms. All of the circadian rhythms have a master clock within the brain they are connected to. This master clock is in the suprachiasmatic nucleus (SPN), which is in charge of sending different signals throughout the body to trigger processes and activities.

But the signals themselves are released after being affected by the light. When it comes to sleep, being exposed to light makes the SPN send signals that the body shouldn't be sleeping. That's because, ever since the start of human existence, we've been dependent on light.

People didn't have artificial light, and we had to head out and find food during the day. The rhythm helped us stay awake and active during the day and sleep during the night while preserving energy.

But today, we live different lifestyles and have electricity that produces blue light.

How blue light impacts sleep

Sunlight is the primary source of blue light that affects our natural rhythms. Blue light is directly responsible for blocking melatonin production, the "sleep hormone."

However, modern devices like TV screens, LED lights, computers, and smartphones all produce blue light. Using these devices throughout the day doesn't do any harm, but when we use them at night, we prevent melatonin production, making it more difficult to fall asleep.

The lack of melatonin reduces the quality of sleep and makes us wake up more easily.
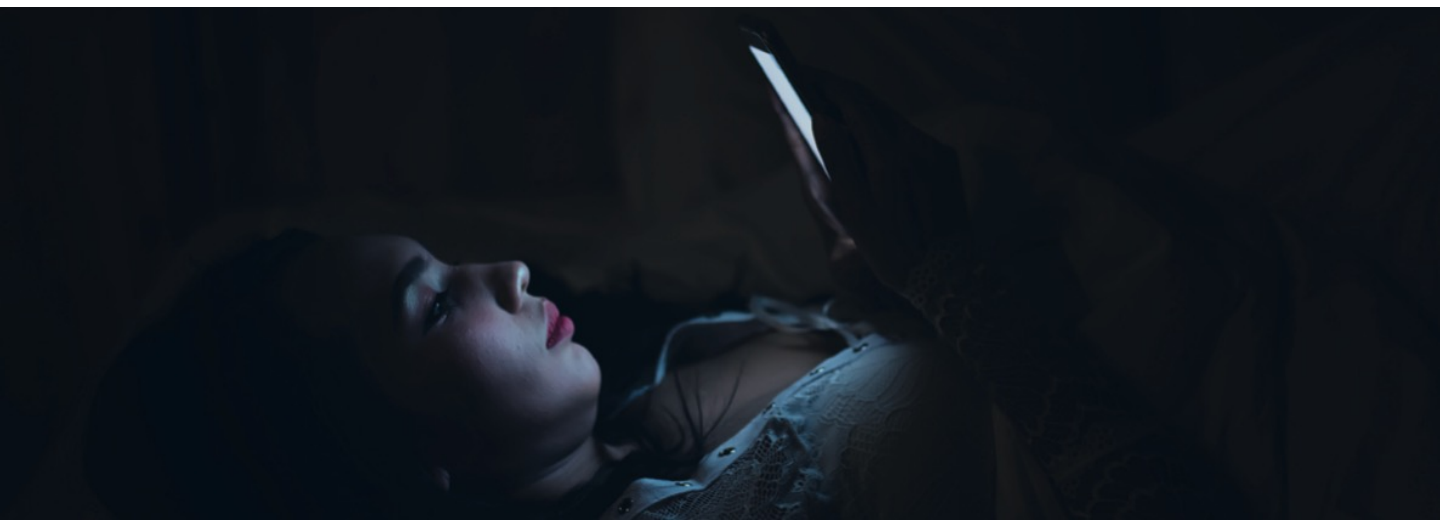
How to manage blue light exposure

The key here is the usage of electronic devices. We need to use them less to get better sleep. There are a couple of things you can do:

Limit your screen time
Make sure to reduce your screen time up to 3 hours before going to bed. If possible, don't look at any blue light source for an hour before bed.

Dim the light on your devices
All modern screens give you the option to dim the light. Make sure to do this on all your screens. It's not only about the amount of time we are exposed to but also the level of illumination or "flux."

Use red lights
Dimmed red lights are a good option for your bedroom. They produce less blue light.

Use glasses for blocking blue light
They are widely available and can completely prevent blue light exposure. The more you are exposed to light during the night, the more difficult it will be for you to fall asleep. We are just starting to learn about all the effects of light on our bodies and how we can properly manage these effects.

Practical tasks for tonight

What are your tasks today?

1. Turn off all bright lights in your home one hour before bed.
2. Stick to your bedtime at all times, and follow your evening and morning routines.
3. Open your sleep diary and plan how you can change the lights to ensure you sleep better. Implement those changes right away.

Good night!

How Sound Impacts Sleep

How did you sleep last night? Please rate your sleep quality on a scale of 1 to 10:

[1–10]

Sound is one of the key environmental factors that influence sleep. Your brain registers sound even while you snooze, which is why you're likely to wake up when it detects a loud noise.

Of course, that greatly depends on whether you're a light or heavy sleeper and whether you hear a familiar or unusual sound.

How sound impacts sleep

Even if you can sleep through noise, your brain still processes sounds. That's why you may not feel well-rested every time you wake up, even if you've got 7–8 hours of sleep.

If you sleep in a noisy environment, your quality of sleep might be negatively affected. Here are the primary ways sound impacts sleep:

Increasing stress

When any kind of sound (music, TV, loud talking, traffic noise, a crying baby, a snoring partner, etc.) prevents you from falling asleep at night, it can easily stress you out.

You may not get enough shut-eye because you've either stayed up all night or kept waking up between sleep stages, which can additionally increase your stress.

Higher stress levels impact sleep quality and duration, which can lead to various physical and mental health issues. That typically occurs in cases of disrupted and insufficient sleep for extended periods.
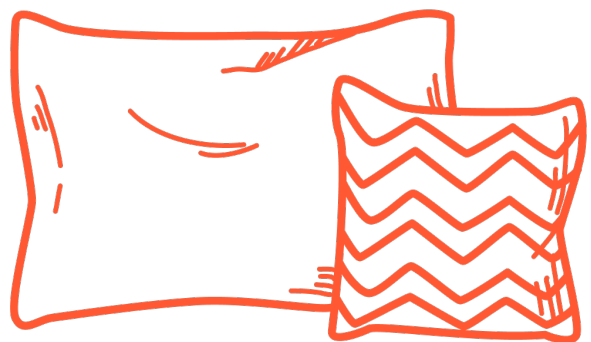
Causing restlessness

When your brain detects high noise levels while you sleep, it triggers your body's "fight or flight" response to alert it of a threat. Your blood pressure and heart rate increase, so you start twitching, tossing, and turning between different stages of sleep unless the noise wakes you up.

That restlessness during sleep leads to drowsiness, irritability, and mood swings during the day, as well as increased stress and low sleep satisfaction.

Familiar sounds vs. unusual sounds

Familiar sounds don't usually lead to nighttime waking because your brain is used to them and doesn't recognize them as a threat.

People living in urban areas aren't bothered by loud traffic noise. They can fall asleep quickly and sleep through all the sounds of sirens and car horns. Rural dwellers who find themselves in such a noisy environment often have trouble sleeping.

Other familiar sounds, such as your child crying, would likely wake you up and negatively affect your sleep quality.

Unusual sounds, such as car brakes or a smoke alarm, typically jar awake anyone. They're stress-inducing sounds that can prevent you from feeling well-rested in the morning.

How to minimize noise in your bedroom

To improve your sleep quality and satisfaction, minimize any distracting sounds that disrupt your sleep every night.

The simplest and most effective ways to minimize the noise in your bedroom include:
- Turning off your electronic devices before you hit the hay.
- Insulating floors, windows, and doors to ensure no outside noises can slip through.
- Hanging soundproofing curtains or drapes to muffle outside noises.
- Getting a white-noise machine for the bedroom.
- Wearing earplugs to block noise if you live in an urban area or sleep with a snoring partner.

Practical tasks for tonight

What are your tasks today?

1. Try out at least one strategy for a more silent home.
2. Stick to your bedtime at all times.
3. Follow your evening and morning routines.

Good night!

Outro

Well, would you look at how the time flies?

Congratulations on getting to the end of this ebook –
we're very proud of you.

How do you feel? We really hope you took some of
this salient advice to heart, as we know how
challenging life can feel when your lack of quality
sleep is holding you back.

Keep at it – you got this!

Take care of yourself