



How to Get Better Sleep

By Morning: Spirit: Wolf-D.R.M.

Some of us struggle to fall asleep, others to stay asleep, and others to make time to actually get enough sleep. If you're not getting enough sleep (6-8 hours), or good quality sleep (deep REM for 4 hours), you may have other problems as well. You'll be happy to know that there are plenty of healthy and natural ways to overcome sleep problems that are easy, effective, and non-addictive.

The Sleep Problem

Lack of sleep = physical stress = indigestion, weight gain, premature aging, hair loss, hormone imbalances, infertility, and lowered immune function.

Proper sleep hormone production (melatonin) depends on proper hormone function during waking hours (serotonin and others). As the endocrine system is a complete system, hormone imbalances anywhere in the body (especially pineal, thyroid, and kidneys) can lead to poor sleep and vice versa.

Stress hormones can have a tremendous impact on the sleep cycle as well, and it is a two-way street. Lack of sleep elevates stress hormones, and stress hormones can cause sleep problems.

Optimize Sleep While You're Awake

To optimize sleep during the night, one must also optimize factors during waking hours including food, supplements and exposure to light/outdoors.

Getting a quality night of sleep actually begins when you wake at the beginning of the day and there are many factors that can have a dramatic impact on sleep length and quality.

Foods for Sleep

Just as foods can impact health in other areas, foods can contribute to good or bad sleep. To help improve your chances of quality sleep, these are the best foods to consume:

- **Healthy Fats**– such as extra virgin olive and coconut oils (2 tablespoons of coconut oil melted in a cup of herbal tea per), duck eggs, avocado, and unsalted butter all help provide your body with the necessary building blocks to manufacture sleep hormones.
- **High Antioxidant Foods**– important for hormone production and removal of toxins that can impede sleep. Focus on vegetables, high nutrient fruits (especially apricots and those that start with the letter P), and herbal teas (chamomile, nettles, and alfalfa early in the day).
- **Quality Proteins, especially at dinner:** For best sleep, it is better to stop eating at least 4 hours before bedtime, and preferably by 7pm every night. Your evening meal should include proteins, such as organic and pasture raised bison, vegetables and healthy fats. Eating enough protein at this meal will help prepare the body to enter the sleep cycle.

Avoid Altered Foods:

- **Refined Sugars**– and carbohydrates, especially at night, can cause a blood sugar spike and crash that will lead to difficulty falling or staying asleep.
- **Enriched Grains**– have a negative effect on health, and if you have intolerance to grains, can cause physical stress, which alters the hormone cycle and can impede sleep.
- **Hydrogenated Vegetable Oils**–these artificial fats (margarine, and canola, peanut oils) can cause problems in new skin formation (skin cancer) and can cause problems in the hormone cycle too, which needs saturated fats for production.

Supplements for Sleep

Because it's difficult to get enough nutrients from foods grown in mineral depleted soil, and foods are picked before ripening so they can be shipped long distances, many struggle with health and sleep challenges. Whole plant supplements can replace key nutrients, and build better health and sleep:

- **Magnesium** - this particular deficiency can have a big impact on sleep quality. Taking 30-40 drops of Wheat-Magnesium about 30 minutes before bedtime can really improve sleep.
- **B-Complex vitamins** – not only give you energy, improve digestion, and reduce acidity and stress, it also promotes ease of falling asleep. Try taking 60-90 drops, or 1-2 tsp, twice daily.
- **Vitamin C** – helps to regulate balanced hormones, especially melatonin, and causes the body to settle into a more relaxed state before sleep.
- **Sleep Deeper** – for those with difficulty staying asleep or getting into deep sleep this formula can be taken 30-40 drops about 30 minutes before bed to arrest problems.
- **Hops** – to calm the brain, reduce inflammation, and settle into your comfort zone, this herb has been used for centuries to relax mental overload and promote sleep.
- **SFF** – Stress Free Formula for those who have difficulty turning the brain off at night, taken ½ hour before bed stops recycled thinking and curbs worry and mental stress.
- **Melatonin** – normally produced by a healthy pineal gland, melatonin slows aging, regulates sleep, and allows deep sleep. 5-15 mg, ½ hour before bed can do the trick.

Avoid Toxins

Toxins found in pesticides, plastics, household chemicals, and even mattresses can contain hormone disrupting chemicals that mimic hormones in the body and keep the body from producing real hormones. Cook in glass or non-coated stainless steel pans (no non-stick or aluminum), avoid heating or storing foods in plastic, and stop using the microwave – even to heat water or tea (it creates toxic free radicals). Eat fresh, organic produce and meat whenever possible and don't use chemical pesticides or cleaners.

10 Easy Sleeping Tips

Sleep is a beautiful thing. If you feel you're not getting enough sleep, or not enjoying quality sleep, these simple adjustments can help contribute to a more restful night.

Don't Sleep-in

It might seem tempting, but sleeping until noon on Saturday will only disrupt your biological clock and cause more sleep problems. Going to bed at the same time every night; even on weekends, holidays, and other days off, helps to establish your internal sleep/wake clock and reduces the amount of tossing and turning required to fall asleep.



Move It!

Researchers in Northwestern University's Department of Neurobiology and Physiology reported that previously sedentary adults who got aerobic exercise four times a week improved their sleep quality from poor to good. They also reported fewer depressive symptoms, more vitality, and less sleepiness during the daytime. Just be sure to wrap up your workout session several hours before bedtime so that you're not too revved up to get a good night's sleep.



Change Your Diet

Cut out the food and drinks that contain caffeine, such as coffee, tea, soft drinks, energy drinks, and chocolate, by mid afternoon. Make dinner your lightest meal, and finish it 4 hours before bedtime. Skip spicy or heavy foods, which can keep you awake with heartburn or indigestion.



Don't Smoke

A study found that smokers are four times more likely to not feel as well rested after a full night's sleep than nonsmokers. Researchers at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine attribute this to the stimulative effect of nicotine and the nighttime withdrawal from it. Smoking also exacerbates sleep apnea and other breathing disorders such as asthma, which can make it difficult to get restful sleep.



Say "No" to a Nightcap

Alcohol disrupts the pattern of sleep and brainwaves that help you feel refreshed in the morning. A martini may help you doze off initially, but once it wears off, you're likely to wake up and have a hard time getting back to sleep, according to Mayo Clinic.



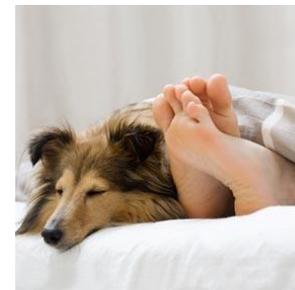
Become Amish an Hour Before Bedtime

A National Sleep Foundation (NSF) survey found that nearly all participants who used some type of electronics, like a television, computer, video game, or cell phone within the last hour before going to bed made it harder to wind down. Light from these devices stimulates the brain, so put your gadgets away an hour before bedtime to fall asleep more quickly and sleep more soundly.



Hog the Bed

A study performed by Mayo Clinic's Dr. John Shepard found that 53% of pet owners who sleep with their pets experience sleep disruption every night. And more than 80% of adults who sleep with children have trouble getting a good night's sleep. Dogs and kids can be some of the biggest bed hogs, and some of the worst sleepers. Everyone deserves their own sleeping space, so keep dogs and kids out of your bed.



Keep It Temperate, Not Tropical

Eighty degrees may be great for the beach, but it's lousy for the bedroom at night. A temperate room is more conducive to sleeping than a tropical one. The NSF recommends a temperature somewhere around 65 degrees Fahrenheit. Striking a balance between the thermostat, the bed covers, and your sleeping attire will reduce your core body temperature and help you drift off to sleep faster and more deeply.



Go For a Black-Out

Light tells your brain that it's time to wake up, so make your room as dark as possible for sleep. Even a small amount of ambient light from your cell phone or computer can disrupt the production of melatonin (the hormone that helps regulate sleep cycles) and overall sleep.



Make Your Bed a Restricted Area

Your bed should be associated with sleeping, not working, eating, or watching TV. If you wake up during the night, skip turning on your laptop or TV and do something soothing like meditating or reading until you feel sleepy again.



Happy Sleeping!