

“Sleep is golden chain that ties health and our bodies together” Thomas Dekker

Insomnia and poor sleep patterns are huge problems because stress, caffeine and sugar consumption is so high. But if we can first identify the habits we have that contribute to our sleeplessness and slowly change them, and at the same time add more relaxation techniques, we will sleep better

Sleeping is time for your body to repair and heal itself, it is vital that we have a good nights sleep. If you want to improve your health, get a good nights sleep! Many people experience poor sleep patterns, the problems are: taking too long to fall asleep and not staying asleep

Things you can do to help:

Go to bed about the same time every night. Create a routine that prepares you for sleep. You may already have some kind of program you follow before you go to bed—setting the alarm, brushing your teeth, maybe reading a little. A pre-bed routine is a way of telling your unconscious that it’s time to sleep.

Make sure that this routine is relaxing, not stimulating—winding down before bedtime increases the likelihood that your mind will let you rest. If you find the news disturbing, skip the late broadcast. Read something pleasant and soothing. Take a hot bath. Sit for a period of meditation. The trick is to calm your mind and quiet your nerves before you get into bed.

Routines are important, get up at the same time every morning, this will make it easier to fall asleep at night. Attempting to compensate for a night of disturbed sleep by staying in bed longer in the morning will simply further disrupt your sleep cycle. Get up on time, even if you don’t feel like you’ve had enough rest—you’ll have a much better chance of falling asleep easily when bedtime rolls around again.

Do a Relaxation Exercise

Taking a few minutes to do a short relaxation exercise just before getting into bed is an excellent way of letting go. This doesn’t have to be elaborate. Great benefits can be gained by simply lying on your back in the corpse pose (hands at your sides, palms upward, feet slightly apart). Close your eyes, and systematically address every part of your body. Start at your scalp and move toward your toes. Begin by softening your forehead, eyes, face, and jaw. Tensing and then releasing each muscle group help tight muscles loosen, especially those in the neck and shoulders. Continue giving attention to each area of your body—the arms, the trunk, and the legs—until you reach your toes. Surrender to gravity.

Stay in this relaxed state for a few minutes, letting the floor support you. Focus on your breathing, releasing all other concerns. Let your breath come from deep in your abdomen, and let it flow smoothly, slowly, and evenly. This simple exercise is a way of telling your mind and body that it is OK to stop thinking, working, and struggling.

Pay Attention to What You eat or drink at night

It’s best to eat a light meal in the evening. And don’t eat too late(8pm is the latest that you should eat, eat earlier, if you go to bed early). You will sleep more deeply if you have finished digesting your food before you go to bed. A rich, heavy meal close to bedtime will interfere with your rest and leave you feeling sluggish in the morning.

Avoid caffeine, especially after lunchtime. This includes coffee, tea, chocolate, and many sodas. Coffee has a half-life of four to six hours. That means it takes that long for half of the coffee to be digested, and

another four to six hours for the next quarter of it to be eliminated from your body. In other words, it takes twelve to fourteen hours for 90% of the coffee you have ingested to be eliminated. No wonder you still feel wide awake at eleven when you had your last cup after dinner.

Sugar can also cause problems. Consider avoiding refined sugar—sugar in tea, chocolates in the evening because it is absorbed immediately into the bloodstream. That's why it gives you a burst of energy and sometimes makes you feel a little high. Eating sugar near bedtime can make you restless and jittery and can keep you from falling asleep. If you need a treat at bedtime, a glass of warm milk is your best bet. (especially don't give children sweets and chocolates at night, if they are more hyperactive or take long to fall asleep).

Smoking near bedtime can also interfere with deep sleep. Likewise, you may associate tobacco with relaxation, but it actually increases tension. Tobacco is a stimulant that makes the heart race and blood pressure rise. It's best avoided altogether, but if you choose to smoke, avoiding it in the hour or two before bedtime will make your sleep more restful

Get Some Exercise

Studies of athletes have shown that they do not require more (or less) sleep than sedentary folks, but their ratio of deep to light sleep is higher. Doing some form of aerobic exercise at least three times a week also increases this ratio. Just be sure to avoid strenuous exercise within several hours of bedtime—it can be stimulating. But if you exercise at any other time, you'll sleep better.

It is recommended to do long, slow stretches near bedtime, for that will release muscular tension and prepare you for sleep.

Good and bad foods to help sleep

1. Good: Walnuts & Almonds

Almonds contain hefty doses of magnesium, tryptophan and melatonin, a trifecta of ideal sleep-promoting aids. Try eating a handful an hour or so before bed. Raspberries also contain a high amount of melatonin.

2. Good: Oatmeal.

Most of us only eat the stuff in the morning, but the benefits of eating oatmeal before bed might change your habits. Oatmeal is full of plenty of sleep-promoting nutrients, like magnesium, potassium calcium and phosphorous.

5. Good: Peanut butter

Peanut butter is high in minerals most of which are sleep inducing. Smear a little peanut butter on wholewheat crackers.

4. Good: Bananas.

With plenty of potassium and magnesium, bananas are an excellent late night snack and natural muscle relaxer. It also contains tryptophan, the same amino acid that gives turkey its famous sleep-inducing reputation. Try have a banana with a little low fat yoghurt or blend it into a glass of warm milk. Sprinkle with a little nutmeg

5. Bad: Greasy & Fried Foods.

People who eat fatty, greasy and fried foods in the evening tend to get less productive sleep than those who don't. Your stomach is working extra hard to digest the stuff, and can lead to indigestion and heart burn. It's fine to indulge in calorie-rich foods every once in a while, but try to do so at least 3 hours before you go to sleep.

6. Bad: Spicy Foods.

Spicy foods will certainly take a toll on your gut, but they also may impact your sleep. It's best to avoid spicy meals right before hitting the sack.

7.Bad. High fat Snack foods-crisps, cakes, chocolates

High-fat snack foods. These bring your serotonin levels down. Which causes sleeping problems.

Herbacure Sleep support

Dr Oz has spoken extensively about Valerian root, Valerian is most commonly used for sleep disorders- especially the inability to sleep (insomnia), as it helps calm the mind.

My favourite is Passionflower drops, Passionflower is used for sleep problems (insomnia), gastrointestinal (GI) upset related to anxiety or nervousness, generalized anxiety disorder (GAD), and relieving symptoms related to narcotic drug withdrawal.

I have combined **Valerian, passion flower, chamomile and lime blossoms** to aid sleep, the blend is called **Sleep Support**. Taken before bedtime, the herbal drops work quite quickly and relaxes the body quite noticeably. These gentle, relaxing substances help your body rest, but they don't affect your central nervous system the way prescription sleep medicines do, they are also non addictive..

Sleep support-place drops in a glass of warm milk with a sprinkling of nutmeg- it has definitely been my experience of helping one have a wonderful deep sleep.

For children who have sleeping problems, especially those who have a bed wetting problem, then My Nerve support is recommended. This is also recommended for babies.

If anyone has had a history of being on chronic medications for sleeping, rather come along to the health shop or book a consultation, as these formulas mentioned are self help for mild insomnia, but also remember that one dose of drops at bedtime is not the always enough, taking about 2-3 doses before bedtime, with a cup of relaxing chamomile tea.