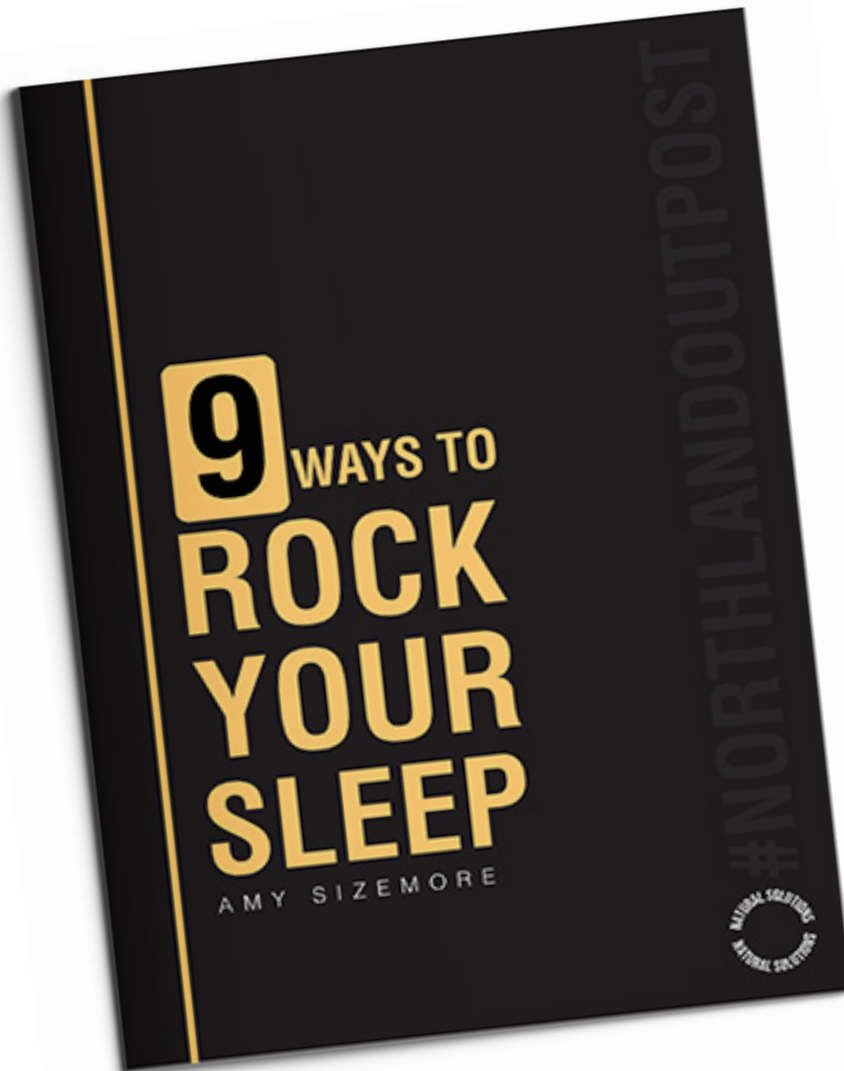


SCIENCE-BASED TIPS TO FALL ASLEEP FASTER



**NATURAL METHODS
THAT WON'T
BREAK THE BANK!**

INTRODUCTION

THANKS for taking the time to get your sleep right. You deserve it!

Good sleep is absolutely essential for optimal physical and mental performance. Yet, compared to diet and exercise, sleep receives little attention. Most people greatly underestimate the importance of sleep. Without good quality sleep, maintaining your diet and exercise regimen is nearly impossible. And, contrary to popular belief, you can not train yourself to need less sleep. While you may believe that you are capable of adapting to a lack of sleep, you are not. You continue to lose your ability to think, remember, reason, and/or learn with increasing sleep deprivation. So, make improving your sleep quality and quantity a priority.

Sleep restores the body, physically and mentally.

During the night, a normal sleeper cycles between different sleep stages, alternating between non-REM and REM sleep. Normal sleep architecture typically consists of four or five non-REM and REM periods.

In the first half of the night, your body gradually drifts into deep sleep (Stage 3 and Stage 4). Most deep sleep occurs in the first half of the night. As the night progresses, REM sleep gets longer and deep sleep decreases. During deep sleep, the pituitary gland releases a burst of growth hormone. This burst of growth

hormone works to stimulate muscle repair, tissue growth, and fat metabolism making you fitter, stronger, and leaner. Increasing the amount of deep sleep you get increases the amount of growth hormone that your body releases.

In the second half of the night, your body spends more time in REM (rapid eye movement) sleep, or dreaming sleep. While deep sleep repairs the body, REM sleep repairs the mind. REM sleep helps learning and memory. Loss of REM sleep hurts attention, memory, quantitative skills, and logical reasoning⁴ making you less likely to excel in the office.

Both parts of sleep are essential! Additionally, sleep deprivation increases the risk of high blood pressure, heart disease, obesity, and diabetes. Who knew?!



1

SET YOUR CIRCADIAN RHYTHM

Regulating your circadian rhythm turns out to be one of the most important strategies to get great sleep. If you regulate your sleeping schedule, going to sleep and getting up the exact same time every day, your quality of sleep will improve significantly compared to when you sleep for the same number of hours but at different times each day. Keep in mind that consistency is the key to success. Here is how you can do this:

Set A Regular Bedtime

Going to bed at the same time every single night is very important. Make sure to head to bed when feeling totally tired in order to avoid tossing and turning all night. Stick to this routine even on weekends when it is most tempting to stay awake late. If you find changing your bedtime inevitable, introduce your body to small daily incremental changes to help adjust it. Ten to fifteen minutes of change per night is ideal.

Wake Up at the Same Time Every Day

Most sleep experts believe that a person should be able to wake up naturally without the need of an alarm if he or she is getting enough sleep. If not, you may want to set an earlier bedtime. Just as with your bedtime, try to keep your wakeup time the same on weekends also.



Don't Underestimate Napping

Napping can be very effective, especially in making up for a few lost hours of sleep. Instead of changing your bedtime routine and sleeping early in a bid to compensate the lost sleep hours, it's better resort to a daytime nap. This ritual makes sure your sleep-wake rhythm remains unaffected, paying off your sleep debt significantly.

Steer Clear of Post-Dinner Drowsiness / Early Bedtime

If you feel like you're fighting to keep your eyes open right after dinner, much earlier than your scheduled bedtime, you may want to get up and engage in a mildly stimulating chore to get rid of that early sleepiness. Washing dishes, calling a friend, or laying out your clothes for the next day can be some really helpful ways. If you let this early drowsiness overtake you, you might find yourself tossing and turning later in the night instead of falling back to sleep once you wake up.

2

GET THE RIGHT AMOUNT OF SLEEP

Naturally regulating your sleep-wake cycle is of prime importance for getting an improved sleeping experience. Melatonin, a naturally-occurring hormone, helps the human body regulate the essential sleep-wake cycle. Light exposure controls its natural production and your brain is designed to excrete more of it during the evening, when it is dark, compared to daytime when there is plenty of light. What happens on a cloudy, drizzly day? Light is diminished and melatonin kicks in, making us drowsy and feeling the need for a little mid-day siesta. However, many aspects of our present day lifestyles can hinder melatonin's optimum natural production in many ways, disturbing your sleep-wake cycle. There are two ways to help your body naturally optimize its sleep-wake cycle; get exposed to plenty of sunshine during the day and avoid it at night.



Maximizing Sunlight Exposure

Early morning sunlight exposure: Don't forget to remove sunglasses in order to allow more light on your face early in the morning.

Maximize daylight exposure: Small activities like taking work breaks outdoors exposed to sunlight, exercising in the open or even walking your dog during the day instead of night, can help you significantly in maximizing

your sunlight exposure.

Light up your home/workplace: Open up the blinds and curtains during the day to let in more light throughout your home/workplace. Moving your desk closer to the window will also help greatly.

Light therapy box: You might also consider a light therapy box, especially during winter months with shorter days. It assists in simulating sunshine to help improve your light exposure on days when you are unable to take advantage of natural light.



Boosting Night-Time Melatonin Production

No electronic devices in the bed: Electronic devices are just great, but not when you are lying in bed ready to sleep. The blue light emitted from devices like television or laptops and ipads not only suppresses the essential melatonin production, but it has the potential to stimulate your mind rather than soothing it. Reading a book or listening to soothing music is a better option instead, or you can also consider relaxing exercises like yoga. You can always record your favorite late night show to view it later the next day.

Get rid of bright light bulbs: Bright light bulbs are to be avoided if you want some sleep-inducing ambiance in your bedroom. Replace these bulbs with some soothing low voltage bulbs. Remember: The darker the better! When it comes to sleeping, the darker the better; a bedroom with darker lighting will help you in getting to and staying asleep. If you are wondering how to sleep better, darkness is your ally.

But if you must use artificial light and electronic devices at night, consider this. The sleep-wake cycle is primarily governed by the release of melatonin. This hormone helps the body maintain good sleep architecture. And artificial light disrupts this release of melatonin.

Before the advent of electricity, most people slept when it was dark and were awake during the daylight hours. However, with unlimited access to artificial light at all hours of the day and night, many of us are destabilizing our own circadian rhythm by spending hours late at night in front of computer and television screens, which strongly prevents melatonin from being released into the blood stream.

Our bodies are naturally attuned to the day and night rhythm of each 24-hour cycle around the sun. By living a life that is in rhythm with the natural cycles of the day and night, you will be able to optimally support your overall health.



Many sleep researchers have determined that the blue light that is in a specific bandwidth has the strongest prohibitive effect on the secretion of melatonin from the pineal gland. Unfortunately, most of the light that is emitted from computer screens, tablets, televisions and cell phones falls into this bandwidth. Researchers at Harvard University have found that wearing blue light blocking glasses helps to block out most of the harmful blue light emitted by electronic screens.

Amber-colored glasses are particularly effective (95%) at blocking the melatonin-suppressing effects of blue light waves, which are emitted from many of our electronic devices.

3

DEVELOP A RELAXING BEDTIME ROUTINE

You will get to a deep sleep more quickly if you devise a relaxing bedtime routine. Serene bedtime routines signal your brain to wind down and get rid of the day's stresses.

Reduce The Noise From Your Surroundings

You may get rid of many of your sleeping problems by simply doing this. If you are unable to avoid noises from traffic, loud neighbors or barking dogs at night, you may try a fan or some soothing music or white noise for masking bothersome sounds. Earplugs can also come in handy.

Keep Your Room Cool

Most people find a temperature between 60° F and 65° F (with appropriate ventilation) to be the best for inducing better sleep. It's better to have a cooler room and use a heavier blanket than to have a warmer room.

A Comfortable Bed Is Also One Of The Top Factors In Achieving a Deep Sleep

It should not only be comfy and cozy with suitable pillows, but also spacious enough not to interrupt your sleep while trying to twist and turn at night. So, do not hesitate in investing in a highly comfortable memory foam mattress with



an equally comfortable set of pillows. You'll be spending a third of your life in a bed!

Associate your mind to the bed as a place to relax rather than a place to get things done. Reserve your bed for sleep or sex only, so that your mind gets the cue to either wind down or get romantic.

4

EAT A BALANCED DIET AND EXERCISE DAILY

If you are constantly worried about how to sleep better, mending your eating habits and exercising regularly can help you beyond imagination. Not only through the day, but you should be especially watchful about what you gulp down just a few hours before your sleep time. These habits will help you improve your diet and exercise routine to deal better with your sleeping problems.

No Big Meals At Night

Make sure you take dinner early in the night and avoid heavy, oily foods, especially within two hours of bed. Your stomach uses a lot of energy to digest this type of food, keeping you up late at night. You should also stay away from spicy foods in the evening, because they might cause stomach issues and heartburn, affecting the quality of sleep.



No Alcohol Before Bed Time

Contrary to what many people believe, a little alcohol is not a good but a bad idea immediately before sleeping. While it might help you fall asleep quicker, your sleep quality is affected due to frequent awakenings later on due to the drop in sugar levels after that spike that alcohol gives. To lower the chances of waking from drops in sugar levels, reach for a handful of nuts. The fats in nuts will give your body a slow and steady fuel for burning rather than the short-lived sugars in food heavy in carbohydrates.

No Late Night Caffeine

You will be surprised to know that there are studies indicating sleeping problems even after 10 to 12 hours of consuming caffeine. To avoid this, stay away from caffeine intake after lunch or slash your overall intake.

Need Another Reason to Quit Smoking?

Smoking can affect your sleeping routine in many ways. Nicotine serves as a stimulant for your body, disrupting your sleep in more ways than you can imagine. Smokers are also known to undergo nicotine withdrawal effects through the night, affecting one's quality of sleep significantly.



Make Exercise A Part Of Your Daily Routine

You don't need to work out like athletes for improved sleeping experience, just as little as 20 to 30 minutes of daily exercise can do the trick. If you find yourself totally unable to spare 20 or 30 minutes a day for exercising, there are many easy and effective yoga poses that you can do right before you sleep for improved results.

5

AVOID ANXIETY AND STRESS

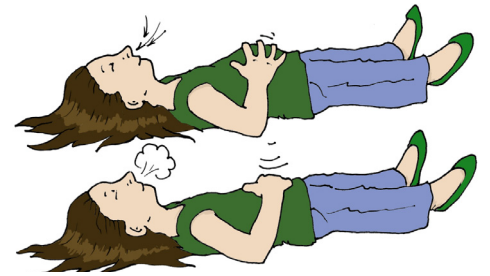
Whether you know and realize it or not, many of your sleeping problems can be a direct consequence of stress and anxiety. Residual stress, anger and worry, all three can affect your sleep quality.

These simple activities can help reduce stress and anxiety, especially at night:

~ Deep breathing can also help you cope with bedtime stress. Close your eyes and take slow deep breaths. Try extending each new breath even slower and deeper than the last. Counting as you breathe in and out will also act as a distraction.

~ Be watchful of what contributes to your worrying when you find yourself awake in the middle of the night or can't go to sleep at all. Try to identify the recurring theme. This will be helpful in figuring out how to manage your stress during the day, rather than having it affect you at night.

~ Learn to manage your thoughts so that you can stop worrying so much, especially about the things beyond your control. Devoting just five minutes per day, first thing in the morning, to frivolous worrying can make you feel like you've done enough for the day. Try to evaluate your worries to gauge if they are worth spending your time on. Many suggest developing a bedtime reading habit to keep your mind from wandering back to stressful thoughts.



6

TAME THOSE PESKY BEDTIME THOUGHTS

Waking briefly during the night is quite normal, so much so that good sleepers won't even remember it. But the problem starts when you wake up in the middle of the night only to find yourself struggling to fall back to sleep.

Get Out Of Your Head

This is the most important thing if you want to fall back to sleep again. So, 'keep calm' and maintain a relaxed posture in bed. The key lies in not stressing over and panicking about the fact that you are awake. Do not focus on your fear of not being able to sleep again. In fact, this stress and anxiety is what leads your body to stay awake.

Focus On Relaxing, Not Sleeping

If falling back to sleep is hard for you, cue your mind and body to relax rather than to focus on sleep. Different relaxation techniques like meditation, visualization and deep breathing can help you with that, not ever requiring you to leave the bed. Though not a total sleep replacement, you need to remind yourself that rest and relaxation still help your body and mind rejuvenate.

Indulge In A Non-Stimulating Activity

If you are unable to fall back to sleep for more than 15 minutes, perhaps it is about time to get out of the bed and indulge in a mild non-stimulating activity like book reading. But make sure to do so while wearing blue light

blocking glasses so that your body's clock is not cued to wake up. Keeping away from screens of any type – TVs, computers, mobiles, iPads – is an even better choice. Light snacking or a cup of herbal tea can also help you relax, but make sure not to eat too much, so that your body does not expect a full meal at that time.

Avoid Brainstorming

Sure, a great idea has the potential to not only change your life, but also that of all of humanity. But continually depriving your mind and body of sleep for extended periods of time has severe implications. So, you better jot down any ideas on a paper and get back to sleep. You can always fine tune and pursue your ideas the next morning with a fresh mind and body. Brainstorming and worrying in the middle of the night can seriously affect your sleep cycle.

7

JUST FOR NIGHT SHIFT WORKERS (AND NIGHT OWLS)

Shift works have a disrupted sleep schedule resulting from working night shifts or otherwise irregular shifts, leading to workplace sleepiness. It can negatively impact your mood, energy and focus. It can also be responsible for work-related mistakes, injuries and accidents.

There are different ways to help you deal with shift work sleep disorder, such as:

Minimize Irregular Or Night Shifts

In order to curb the implications of sleep deprivation on your health, limit the frequency and duration of your night or irregular work shifts. If your job does not offer this option, avoid frequent shift rotation in order to maintain a relatively consistent sleep cycle.



Lower Your Caffeine Intake

If living your life without caffeine is not an option for you, make sure you resort to caffeine products early into your shift hours, avoiding caffeine intake close to bedtime.

Take Frequent Breaks And Move Around

During your shifts, take small and frequent breaks – stretch, walk or even exercise if possible.

Adjust Your Sleep-Wake Cycle

Adjusting your sleep-wake cycle helps in optimizing your body's natural melatonin production. Use daylight simulation bulbs or bright lamps throughout the night in your workplace, while using dark shades when getting back home in the day so that your body and mind prepare to go into the 'sleep mode'. The deprivation from brightness will help induce sleep.

Strive For a Noise-free And Dark Bedroom

This might be one of the best treats to give yourself. Rely on blackout curtains to block the daylight and use earplugs to muffle sounds. Your favorite soothing music or a sound machine is equally helpful in blocking out daytime noise.



Take Advantage Of The Weekends

Weekends can become your best allies in paying off sleep debt, if you make sleep a prioritized task on weekends.

8

QUICK-FIX SOLUTIONS

The tips listed above are more like a lifestyle changes, which are very effective without a doubt. But when you need some real time quick solutions, try these:

Inhaling Through Left Nostril

If sleeplessness is bothering you and you are looking for an immediate effective remedy, inhaling through your left nostril might be just what you need. This is basically a yoga technique believed to be helpful in reducing blood pressure and calming down a person. Simply lie down on your left side, blocking your right nostril with your finger. Now take deep slow breaths to calm yourself down. According to experts, this technique is most beneficial for sleeplessness due to menopausal hot flashes or overheating.

Muscular Relaxation

Another helpful way of easing into sleep is by muscular relaxation, which involves a combination of controlled breathing and muscle relaxation. All you need to do is lie down on your bed flat on your back. Now take a deep breath slowly through your nose while squeezing your toes and imagining that you are curling them under your foot. Then release the squeeze as you exhale, as slowly as you inhaled. Now repeat the same breathing pattern, curling and squeezing your feet up towards your knees followed by relaxation of muscles and a slow release of breath. Then move onto your calves. Squeeze and relax your calf muscles while

you breathe in and out slowly. Continue this combo of breathing and muscle relaxation all the way up moving through your buttocks, belly, chest, and head. By the time you reach head, your breathing pattern should be steady, readying you for a restful sleep.

Trying To Stay Awake

You will be surprised to discover an adamant rebel deep inside you when you try to follow this. Your mind will simply challenge you and try to rebel against you when you intentionally try to stay awake, referred to as ‘the sleep paradox’ by experts. The human brain is known for not processing negatives very well. So, when you tell yourself “I will not sleep” keeping your eyes wide open, your brain will try to interpret it as an instruction for immediate sleep, tiring your eye muscles quickly, pushing you to slumber-land.

Flashback

Many experts are of the opinion that a flashback of the whole day, when lying in bed trying to sleep, helps induce sleep quickly. Recalling the mundane details of the whole day (including sights and sounds) in reverse order is believed to prepare your mind for sleep.

“Rolling” Into Sleep

What about rolling your eyeballs for a while with your eyes closed for drifting into a serene sleep? Well, doing so three times also helps significantly in sleeping, according to experts. This is because it is a simulation of how humans behave when sleeping naturally, thus convincing your mind to release the sleep inducing hormone, melatonin.

Visualization

Visualization meditation is yet another way to drift off with ease. Try to use at least three of your senses when practicing visualization meditation, picturing in your mind a tropical paradise, feeling the freshness of a cool breeze and the softness of sand below your feet. Experts believe that while exploring your paradise, seeing and feeling what's around you, your mind will soon relax and get ready to sleep.



Worry Listing

To-do lists are great, but not in the bed. Sleep experts believe pondering on to-do lists is one of the major causes of insomnia. This might be your brain's pre-emptive measure to make sure it does not forget essential things to do, but it can become a hurdle in your way to a peaceful sleep. So, it is better to assure your mind that you won't overlook what needs to be done by passing this 'worry list' onto a paper. This will make you calmer and ready for sleep, knowing nothing will be forgotten.

SUPPLEMENTS AND HERBS

L-Theanine

If you're looking for a fast-acting supplement to help ease anxiety and put you in a chilled out mood, this one's for you. This amino acid (a building block for proteins) is found in green tea. People use theanine for treating anxiety and high blood pressure, for preventing Alzheimer's disease, and for making cancer drugs more effective. Just 100-200mg of this super tea herb is very effective.



Melatonin

Of course, melatonin is on the list. And for good reason. When used properly, and in the correct dosage, melatonin can be a go-to hormone for its sleep-inducing qualities. Our bodies make, on average, 1.8 mg of melatonin each night. However, it is entering the bloodstream at a somewhat steady rate. So most melatonin supplements on the market aren't going to be able to mimic the effects of a slow and steady release. When looking for melatonin less is more. If a low dose is not working for you then try a lower dose before jumping up to the next dose. And be sure it is a slow release formula.

Magnesium

This little gem has been becoming more and more scarce in Americans for some time now. However, this element helps maintain normal muscle and nerve function, keeps heart rhythm steady, supports a healthy immune system, and keeps bones strong. Magnesium also helps regulate blood sugar levels, and promotes normal blood pressure. Lack of magnesium inhibits nerve cell communication, which leads to cell excitability. The result: a stressed and nervous person. Several older studies show that magnesium can improve sleep quality and reduce nocturnal awakenings. And as a bonus it keeps you regular!

Valerian

Most experts recommended this herb to reduce the amount of time it takes to nod off. Valerian seems to have sedative properties, and it may increase the amount of GABA, a compound in the brain that prevents the transmission of nerve impulses. That's a good thing.

Lavender Oil Capsules



Yes! Lavender for the win...again. Using a little lavender oil in a diffuser or smearing a little on your wrists or forehead are a great way to set the relaxation in motion, but have you tried ingesting it? Food-grade lavender oil capsules are a super safe way to get some chill before and during sleep. In a study of people diagnosed with Generalized Anxiety Disorder, 52% of those taking lavender oil capsules had at least a 50% reduction in anxiety symptoms. In addition, in a study of people with 'subthreshold' anxiety, 76% of those taking the uniquely prepared, pharmaceutical quality lavender oil capsules had at least a 50% reduction in anxiety or sleep quality scores. Now those are some amazing numbers. Way higher success rates than pharmaceutical medication statistics.

CONCLUSION

Sleeping is definitely one of the most important functions for a healthy and vital body and mind. Not getting enough sleep can significantly affect one's physical and mental well being. There are many things that you might do by yourself to deal with your lack of sleep, but you might also need full-time medical assistance. Every body is different and each may require its own sleep protocol.

The tips mentioned above are not only helpful for self-healing, but also give you a cue on when to resort to professional medical assistance, so follow them to reclaim that serene sleep you deserve.

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