

9 ways to

OPTIMISE YOUR SLEEP

TO THRIVE IN WORK & LIFE



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CHAPTER

01

why sleep matters



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WHY SLEEP MATTERS

Sleep is one of the most powerful performance tools we have, yet it is often the first thing we sacrifice when life becomes busy. In reality, sleep is not passive downtime. It is an active, biological process where your body repairs, restores and recalibrates the systems that keep you healthy, focused and resilient.

Good sleep strengthens your immune system, sharpens cognitive clarity and stabilises your mood. It also plays a critical role in regulating stress and supporting the balance between strain and recovery throughout your day.

In my work and in The Wellbeing Advantage, sleep consistently emerges as one of the strongest predictors of how well someone can cope with pressure.

When sleep is compromised, everything feels harder. When sleep improves, energy rises, thinking becomes clearer and your capacity to handle life's demands expands.

Small, deliberate shifts in your sleep habits can create measurable improvements in your wellbeing and your body will always respond to the support you give it.

These nine habits are simple, practical ways to optimise your sleep and help your system recover fully overnight. Choose one to start, experiment with what works for you and notice how even small adjustments can make a significant difference.



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CHAPTER

02

*9 ways to optimise
your Sleep*



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9 WAYS TO OPTIMISE YOUR SLEEP

Now that you understand the role sleep plays in supporting your energy and resilience, the next step is learning how to influence it through simple, science-backed habits. Sleep responds quickly to small changes in your routine. When you adjust your evening rhythm, your environment or the way you wind down, your body often gives you immediate feedback in how easily you fall asleep and how restored you feel the next day.

Most people assume sleep is something that “just happens”, but in my work with clients, it becomes clear that good sleep is something we set up. The choices you make in the hours before bed and throughout the day shape how smoothly your system transitions into rest.

Sleep is a physiological process, and these nine habits help you create the ideal conditions for your nervous system to settle, recover and rebuild your capacity for the following day. Think of these strategies as small levers you can pull. You don't need to change everything; you only need to notice which adjustments make the biggest difference for you. Your body will tell you when something works, through calmer evenings, easier mornings or a more settled pattern in your wearable data.

Here are nine practical ways to support deeper, more restorative sleep. Try them gently, one at a time, and pay attention to what shifts. Tiny changes often deliver the biggest results.



HONOUR YOUR RHYTHM

Going to bed and waking up at roughly the same time each day helps stabilise your circadian rhythm. This consistency supports melatonin release, improves sleep quality and helps your body shift more easily between alertness and rest.

Over time, your energy, mood and morning clarity all benefit from a predictable rhythm.

Reflection: Notice how your sleep feels when your timing becomes more consistent. Your body loves routine.



EASE INTO EVENING

Creating 20–30 minutes of calm before bed helps your nervous system shift from activation to recovery.

Light stretching, reading or quiet organising reduces mental load and signals to your brain that the day is done. A softer evening pace sets the foundation for deeper, more restorative sleep.

Reflection: Try slowing the evening tempo, even a small shift can improve how quickly you settle



DIM TO UNWIND

Bright screens and overhead lights suppress melatonin and delay your natural sleep drive. Dimming lights and reducing blue-light exposure in the evening supports your body's transition into rest.

This simple change strengthens your sleep–wake cycle and helps you drift off more easily.

Reflection: Pay attention to how your body responds when you soften the light in the hours before bed.





COOL FOR COMFORT

Your core body temperature needs to drop to initiate sleep. Keeping your bedroom cool, quiet and clutter-free helps your body move into a deeper stage of rest.

Small environmental tweaks such as fresh air, breathable bedding, darker lighting can make a meaningful difference.

Reflection: Consider one small environmental adjustment. Comfort is a powerful sleep enhancer.



CLEAR YOUR MIND

Mental overload is one of the biggest barriers to sleep. Writing down tomorrow's top priorities or clearing your thoughts with a brief journal entry helps your brain switch off.

This reduces cognitive strain and makes it easier to fall asleep without replaying the day.

Reflection: Notice how your mind softens when you give your thoughts somewhere to land.



BALANCE YOUR EVENINGS

Heavy or high-sugar meals close to bedtime can increase nighttime awakenings and make sleep feel less restorative.

Choosing lighter, balanced evening meals supports more stable energy and calmer physiology overnight.

Reflection: Track how different evening meals influence the ease and depth of your sleep.



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CUT LATE CAFFEINE

Caffeine has a long half-life, meaning afternoon consumption can still affect your nervous system at bedtime.

Reducing caffeine after lunchtime supports smoother melatonin release and reduces fragmented sleep through the night.

Reflection: Experiment with bringing your last caffeine earlier, your sleep may improve quickly.

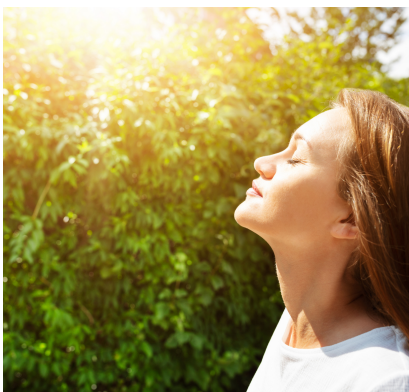


ANCHOR WITH DAYLIGHT

Morning light strengthens your circadian rhythm, while daytime movement helps regulate mood and supports deeper sleep at night.

These daytime habits act as anchors, preparing your body for rest long before bedtime arrives.

Reflection: Notice how days with more fresh air and movement often lead to better sleep.



RESET THROUGH THE DAY

Sleep improves when your system isn't overloaded by constant stress. Short pauses, breathing exercises or stepping outside for fresh air help prevent your nervous system from staying activated into the evening.

Rest throughout the day sets the stage for rest at night.

Reflection: Ask yourself: Did I give my nervous system space to settle today? Your answer often predicts your sleep quality.





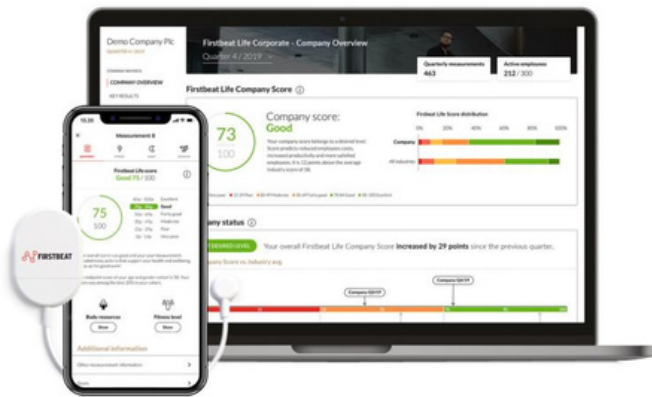
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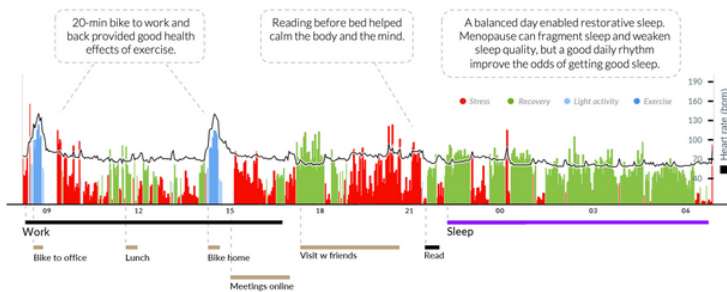
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CASE: BALANCED DAY AND GOOD RECOVERY



TRACKING YOUR SLEEP

Tracking your sleep gives you a clearer picture of how well your body is recovering, beyond simply knowing how many hours you spent in bed. Quality sleep is about depth, continuity and how effectively your nervous system settles overnight. Wearables make this visible, helping you understand patterns you might not notice yourself, especially during busy periods when your body is working hard to restore balance.

Sleep data can highlight whether your habits are supporting recovery or quietly adding strain. You might see that late-night work delays your ability to switch off, or that a calmer evening routine leads to deeper sleep and improved morning readiness. These insights are not about perfection; they help you make small adjustments that create meaningful, measurable change.

Understand Your Own 'Normal'

The key is to look for patterns rather than obsessing over individual nights. When you notice which habits help you settle, restore and wake refreshed, you can build a rhythm that supports your wellbeing consistently. Sleep becomes less of a mystery and more of a tool you can shape, one small choice at a time.

Want to Understand Your Sleep in More Detail?

I use Firstbeat Life, shown in the pictures above. It's a professional-standard ECG system, to help clients map their rest, recovery and sleep with exceptional accuracy. If you'd like to see your own "X-ray of the day" and understand exactly what your body is telling you, get in touch and I'll guide you through it.

Contact Janine:
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YOUR NOTES:

MORE ABOUT JANINE VAN SOMEREN YOUR WELLBEING COACH



Dr Janine van Someren is the Founder of The Wellbeing Advantage, an accredited wellbeing coach, performance consultant and author of The Wellbeing Advantage. With a background in high-performance sport, she helps leaders, teams and busy professionals reduce stress, prevent burnout and build sustainable resilience.

Blending physiological insights, wearable technology and practical coaching, Janine takes a people-first, science-led approach that makes wellbeing achievable in real life and real workplaces.

Outside of work, Janine loves walking along the Wild Atlantic Way in Sligo, Ireland, playing golf with friends and planning family adventures - simple moments that reflect the habits she teaches every day.



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