

The Improve Your Sleep Program

Develop healthy, life-long habits that will leave you looking, feeling and performing at your best.

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Hello!

I’m a Fitness & Nutrition Coach. Passionate about helping clients reach their health goals.

With 25+ years of experience, I create fitness and nutrition plans that get results. Dedicated to making healthy living simple and sustainable.

Let's crush those fitness goals together!

Welcome to The Improve Your Sleep Program

Understanding the power of sleep and how to get as much high-quality sleep as possible is one of the healthiest things you can do. This 2-week habit coaching program will help you plan a sleep routine and guide you towards all the benefits of sleeping better.

Day 0: Introduction Of Habit (Sunday)

Understanding the importance of sleep and how to improve its quality is crucial for good health.

Lack of sleep affects our energy, mood, decision-making, and stress management.

Make sleep a priority. Just like exercise and nutrition, it's essential for overall well-being. Despite requiring little effort, sleep offers numerous benefits and directly impacts your waking life.

How Can I Personalize This Habit?
Personalize your sleep routine by assessing how many hours you typically sleep each night, including weekends. Consider your bedtime and rate the quality of your sleep. Choose one area to focus on improving daily.

How Can I Make This Habit Easy?
Set achievable goals to make the habit manageable. Aim for a specific bedtime or duration of sleep that you're confident you can maintain for six days a week. Allow yourself one day off from the habit per week.

What Can I Piggyback Off Of?

Look for an event you can use as a reminder to do the habit: after your morning coffee, getting to work, after your workout, getting home from work, when an alarm goes off on your phone, whatever you want. Just pick a pre-existing habit to use as your reminder.

TO DO: Create your personal version of the habit to commit to this challenge!

Here's a template:

I am 90-100% confident that I will **[insert habit]** for 6 days a week after I **[insert what you're going to piggyback off of]**.

Here's an example:

I am 90-100% confident that I will go to bed at 10 p.m. and wake up at 7 a.m. every day for 6 days per week after I set reminders on my phone.

Day 1: Start of Habit Review (Monday)

How was Day One?

Did you complete a personalized version of the habit?

Today, after completing your habit for the first time, I want you to answer these two questions:

- What did I do well today?
- What did I learn today?

These questions are so important that I want you to reflect on them every day.

The truth is, the most overlooked factor in building new habits is bridging the gap between what you want to do and the behavior that you're trying to make automatic.

You've got to close the loop between your intention and your behavior, and it's as simple as answering these two questions.

So here they are for you again:

1. What did I do well today?
2. What did I learn today?

Day 2: Daily Lesson To Reinforce Habit And Accountability (Tuesday)

The study of sleep delves into its neuroscientific and physiological basis.

Sufficient and quality sleep has evolved to offer various benefits over time.

Sleep is a natural state marked by reduced consciousness and muscle inactivity.

In humans, sleep patterns are regulated by the circadian clock and, to some extent, by behavior. This internal clock aligns our biology and behavior with daily changes in light and darkness, influencing circadian rhythms.

The circadian clock operates on a roughly 24-hour cycle, resetting via external cues, primarily light.

During sleep, the brain oversees essential biological maintenance processes that improve health markers and aid recovery.

Sleep well!

Day 3: Daily Lesson To Reinforce Habit And Accountability (Wednesday)

Here’s a number of sleep promoting techniques and considerations that can be easily integrated into your evening routine.

GET A ROUTINE!

Syncing with the body’s natural clock, the circadian rhythm is one of the most effective methods we have for getting a good night’s sleep.

Getting into a strict and consistent routine of going to bed and getting up in the morning can have huge benefits.

It’s also important to experiment with different sleep and wake times, as various set ups will benefit people differently.
Aim to not only find the ideal length of sleep, but also the times your sleep should start and finish.

CONTROL THE ENVIRONMENT

In addition to establishing a consistent sleep routine, we can naturally influence our alertness or relaxation by controlling our surroundings. Melatonin, a hormone that regulates our sleep-wake cycle, is released in dark environments. Exposure to little sunlight during the day can trigger melatonin release, causing daytime sleepiness. Conversely, bright environments suppress melatonin production, essential for inducing sleep at night. The aim is to maximize daylight exposure during the day and minimize exposure to light, including artificial light, at night.

DEDICATE THE BEDROOM TO SLEEP

Optimize your bedroom for relaxation and sleep. Designate it as a space solely for sleep, sending a powerful signal to help you fall asleep quickly.

Key factors include:

- Eliminating disruptive noises
- Maintaining a comfortable temperature
- Removing electronic devices
- Ensuring adequate darkness
- Ensuring the bed is comfortable

IMPROVE NUTRITION AND EXERCISE

Good nutrition habits, especially before bed, can significantly enhance sleep quality. Considerations include:

- Avoiding large meals before bedtime
- Limiting liquid intake
- Cutting off caffeine in the afternoon (2-4pm is ideal)
- Avoiding alcohol before bed
- A small bedtime snack with protein, fat, and carbohydrates can aid sleep by promoting a sense of satisfaction.

Regular exercise can also improve sleep, but avoid vigorous activity too close to bedtime, as it can disrupt the body's natural sleep-wake cycle.

REDUCE STRESS AND RELAX

Daily stressors like work or family issues can disrupt sleep. Managing stress and using relaxation techniques can help.
Some techniques include:

- Writing down worries
- Deep breathing exercises
- Progressive muscle relaxation
- Avoiding stressful tasks or thoughts before bed
- Keeping the bedroom tidy
- Taking a hot shower or bath
- Engaging in enjoyable activities before bed

Try these techniques to improve your sleep quality. Sweet dreams!

Day 4: Weekend Win (Thursday)

It can be difficult to stay consistent with a habit if you have a lot going on in your life, or if you take a break from your normal routine.

The perfect example of this is the weekend. So let's set you up to win this weekend.

How?

By doing an easy version of your sleep habit for the weekend.

Today, I want you to plan how you'll stay on track with improving your sleep routine habit this weekend.

Perhaps you need to adjust your normal sleep schedule?

Perhaps you need to reduce how many hours of sleep each night you will actually get?

Day 5: Daily Lesson To Reinforce Habit And Accountability (Friday)

Here's some quick facts on how quality sleep helps you be more awesome:

RESTORATION
Sleep is restorative, and without it you are not able to work, learn, create or communicate at your highest level. Over time, lack of sleep can even lead to mental and physical breakdown. Sleep has been linked to the immune system. Sleep loss can impair our immune function, so by sleeping longer we can invest in strengthening our immune system.

When we sleep, our metabolic rates reduce and free radical production is decreased, allowing restorative processes to take over. The metabolic phase during sleep is anabolic, as we see a greater release of anabolic hormones such as growth hormone. This further adds to the restorative processes of sleep.

MEMORY PROCESSING
Numerous studies have been conducted into the correlation between sleep and memory. Sleep deprivation is linked to a reduction of 'working memory', which keeps information active for further processing and supports higher-level cognition functions such as decision-making, reasoning and memory.
So, the next time you forget to buy your protein powder, you know why!

PRESERVATION
It's been suggested that sleep can serve as a 'preservation and protection' system to reserve energy and to keep us out of harms way.



Day 6:
No Daily Lesson
(Saturday)

Day 7: Weekly Group Review (Sunday)



When you complete the habit today, take a minute to reflect on the past week or so of doing the habit.

- What was it actually like, as opposed to the fantasy you had about it before you started?
- What have you learned?
- What do you appreciate?
- What obstacles have come up, and are there ways to overcome them for next week?

Consider writing a short journal entry about these reflections, to solidify your learning.

Treat habit formation as a learning process, a way to learn about yourself, your mind, mindfulness, resistance and more.

Day 8: Adjustment Of Habit (Monday)

If you've been struggling with your sleep routine, don't worry. Minor adjustments can gradually improve your sleep quality.

For instance, if you have trouble falling asleep at night, establish a relaxing bedtime routine. This could include reading, taking a warm bath, or practicing relaxation techniques like deep breathing.

If you find yourself waking up frequently during the night, it's crucial to consider the impact of your sleep environment. This could involve investing in a comfortable mattress and pillows, blocking out noise and light, and keeping your bedroom cool and comfortable, all of which can contribute to a better night's sleep.

Finally, if you're experiencing daytime fatigue and drowsiness, try to improve your sleep hygiene. This means practicing good sleep habits like going to bed and waking up at the same time every day, avoiding caffeine and electronics before bedtime, and creating a comfortable sleep environment.

By making these small changes to your sleep routine, you can gradually improve your sleep quality and wake up refreshed and energized each morning.

Day 9: Daily Lesson To Reinforce Habit And Accountability (Tuesday)

This week is often the week that people quit doing the habit, even if they were fairly motivated and successful the first week. Why? The mind gets tired from continuous focus and effort, and wants to quit.

Today I want you to notice your resistance.

Watch for any resistance you have doing the habit today, or reflect on recent resistance you've seen in your mind.

Be curious: what does this resistance feel like?

Is there a way to accept the thing you're resisting, accept the discomfort, relax into it, and find gratitude for it?

What is good about the discomfort?

During sleep, we go through different stages, each important. There are two main types: Non-REM (NREM) and REM (Rapid Eye Movement) sleep.

Non-REM Sleep:

1. Stage N1 (Transition to sleep): Muscles are active, but activity slows down, making us easily awakened.
2. Stage N2 (Light sleep): True sleep begins, marked by changes in brain activity. It's harder to wake up, and body functions slow.
3. Stage N3 (Deep sleep): Known as slow-wave sleep, this stage is difficult to wake up from, and the body focuses on restoration.

REM Sleep:

During REM sleep, our eyes move rapidly, and it's when dreaming occurs. Body functions increase, but muscles are paralyzed. This stage repeats throughout the night.

Most deep sleep happens early at night, while REM stages lengthen later, explaining why some wake up after a few hours. Each sleep cycle benefits us differently, with deep sleep crucial for physical restoration and REM sleep vital for mental rejuvenation.

Both types of sleep are necessary for optimal health and function.

Day 10: Daily Lesson To Reinforce Habit And Accountability (Wednesday)

How much sleep do you really need?
With modern lifestyles people are sleeping less than ever, with the average person getting fewer than seven hours per night.

Whilst sleep requirements vary from person to person, this average is not enough for most, and is leading some people into chronic sleep disorder. Most people sleep as much as they need, but not as much as they should for optimal health and performance. In reality, most healthy adults need between 7.5-9 hours of sleep per night for best results. Young adults and children require even more.

There is no system to show exactly how many hours you should, and the best way is to evaluate it is how you feel throughout the day. If energy is low, memory is poor and you don’t feel alert, chances are you need more sleep.

A common sign that you require more sleep is that you always want to sleep in if you don’t set your alarm clock.

This is your body telling you that it requires more sleep.

You are essentially playing catch up. If you wake in the morning and feel like you could sleep a lot more, then you likely do.

Day 11: Weekend Win (Thursday)

Missing a day of doing the habit isn't a big deal, but if you miss a second day, it can sometimes trigger a downward spiral.

You might feel bad about missing two days, making it likely you'll miss a third day, and feel so bad that you just avoid thinking about the habit.

To avoid this downward spiral, you might create a new rule for yourself: never miss two days in a row.

So let's set you up to win this weekend and achieve your habit.

Today, think about your super easy, almost effortless version of the habit for the weekend.

How and when will you do the habit this weekend?

Day 12: Daily Lesson To Reinforce Habit And Accountability (Friday)

We’re almost at the end of the ‘The Improve Your Sleep Program’ habit challenge.

For the next few days, pay attention to your motivation levels – is it as high now as when you first started?

If it is dipping, this is probably because the reality of doing the habit for this long isn’t something you’re used to.

This is a great opportunity to turn from your expectations for this habit, to learning what other things can motivate you. Other motivations you could explore: the joy of doing, the pride of accomplishment, the feeling of satisfaction when sticking to something, tackling difficulties, the love of learning.

These are all great motivations to explore for any pursuit. Stay focused this weekend and remember to have some fun in the process!



Day 13:
No Daily Lesson (Saturday)

Day 14: End Of Habit Review (Sunday)

Over the last two weeks you've completed the 'The Improve Your Sleep Program' habit challenge – nice work!

Today, take a minute after practicing your habit to reflect again on the past week of doing the habit.

- What has the habit been like and how have you done?
- What have you learned?
- What parts or how much of this habit will you continue to do?

Consider writing a short journal entry about these reflections, to solidify your learning. Treat habit formation as a learning process, as a way to learn about yourself, your mind, mindfulness, resistance and more.

