



## Tips to Sleep Well.

A good place to start here, is from the beginning of your day. We have body clocks (circadian rhythms) for different organs and the Suprachiasmatic Nucleus is our master clock, like the conductor of an orchestra. Our body likes rhythm and routine and that's exactly what we should try to give it in order to function well.

- Wake up at the same time every day (give or take an hour). Set an alarm clock if you need to, yes, an alarm clock and not an alarm on your phone and do this even at the weekends. If you're struggling to wake up, switch on a light, our body responds to it and wakes us up.
- Sit near a window, patio, or even better go outside in the garden and soak up natural light. Why not take a hot drink with you? The natural light will release serotonin, our feel-good chemical. Try to meditate with an exercise of your choice for at least 5 minutes.
- Doing some gentle exercise and stretches can also contribute to making you feel fresh and awake.
- Make sure all your eating and snacking is consumed roughly at the same time of day. Make this a good and relaxed experience so that your digestive system works properly. It's important to eat within your 10 - 12-hour window (e.g., if you have breakfast at 7:00am, try to stop eating at 7:00pm). This will enable your digestive system to digest any food before you go to sleep and allow your gut to do its very important job of releasing melatonin as you drift off to sleep.
- Limit caffeine, alcohol and nicotine, all which effect sleep. Nicotine is known to stay in your system for 14 hours! It is advised that any caffeine should be consumed before midday. Do not despair! You won't need a 3:00pm pick me up if your lifestyle is a healthy one.
- Exercise daily for at least 20 minutes. It can strengthen circadian rhythms, promote daytime alertness and help bring on sleepiness at night. Exercise has also been shown to improve sleep for people with sleep disorders, including insomnia and obstructive sleep apnoea. Make sure any vigorous exercise is done by the early evening.
- Come off all devices by 8:30pm or 2 hours before you go to sleep. These give off a blue light which keeps us awake. Most phones do have a night-time mode which dims the light; however, we also need to think about winding down rather than responding to texts or emails, or whatever it is that is stimulating our mind. Tell family and friends. Mine know not to expect a response after 8:00pm, it's on charge in the hallway, out of my bedroom.
- Try not to have your shower straight before bed as it stimulates the body. Also consider having a warm bath once a week with Epsom salts and soak in it for at least 15 minutes with no soapy products. It's great for magnesium intake and really helps aching muscles.
- After your last meal, have a de-caffeinated herbal tea or hot water. This is good for hydration and can stop you becoming hungry.
- Make sure your bedroom is not too hot or cold. 17 degrees Celsius is the ideal sleeping temperature. Ensure a window is slightly open for fresh air.
- Have good blackout blinds or curtains. As we said earlier, exposure to blue light can keep us awake. This also goes for streetlamps. Television also emits a blue light; however, it doesn't have the same

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affects as a phone or tablet which is a lot closer to you. Having said that it's not ideal to have the T.V on, but if you do, make sure you're watching something light that isn't going to keep you alert. If you need a night light for children, I recommend a red/amber light as it has less impact on the circadian rhythm.

- Make your bedroom a comfortable place to be.
- If you like to read, it shouldn't be something which is going to keep you alert e.g. thriller.
- If you haven't fallen asleep within 30 minutes of trying, try a meditation. It's best to know it by heart and not rely on a device. Hopefully you won't get to finish it as you'll be sleeping 💜