

# SLEEP CHALLENGE

## SEVEN DAYS TO IMPROVED SLEEP

### OBJECTIVE IMPROVE SLEEP

Sleep deprivation impairs learning, decision making, emotions, and adds stress. It also raises risks of heart disease, Alzheimer disease, diabetes, cancer, obesity and more.

### LIFESTYLE

One of the best ways to improve your chances of a good night's rest is adopting healthy sleep hygiene habits. Research has found that certain behaviors, are associated with more restful sleep and reduced risk of insomnia.

### DAY 1: MAKE TIME FOR SLEEP

Most adults need between seven to nine hours of sleep each night to feel their best. Think about how long you usually sleep when you don't have to get up for anything, or what amount usually leaves you feeling awake and rested. Subtract that from the time you must wake up in the morning, and set a bedtime that allows you enough time to get ready for bed. Tip: aim for a 10pm bedtime.

### DAY 2: TIME DINNER/SNACK

Going to bed on a full stomach can make sleep less restful. The types of foods you eat can also affect sleep. Studies found that spicy and fatty foods can delay or make sleep less restful, while eating carbs in the evening can contribute to better rest. If you have blood sugar imbalances, choose smart bedtime snacks like banana rolled in sea salt & 5-10 cashews.

### DAY 3: SET ELECTRONIC CURFEW

Blue light emitted by televisions, computers, laptops and smartphones is known to disrupt melatonin, which has the effect of keeping you up later. They can also be distracting. Some sleep experts suggest turning the television off at least two hour before bed to keep sleep clocks on track, especially for children. Wear Blue Blockers if you work into the evening hours.

### DAY 4: SLEEP FRIENDLY SPACE

Check your bedroom for sleep stealers, an old or uncomfortable mattress, unsupportive pillows, or bedding that's too hot or too cold. Your room's temperature should be fairly cool, studies show cooler air supports faster, deeper sleep. The recommended range is between 65 and 72 degrees Fahrenheit. Keep room cool, dark and quiet. Use white noise. Hide clock. Use earplugs.

### DAY 5: START A BEDTIME RITUAL

Parents know that a set routine is helpful for getting kids to settle down for bed, but having a pre-sleep ritual also helps us adults. Keeping bedtimes and wake times regular helps normalize our internal circadian rhythm. Following a pattern can also tell your body that bedtime is coming. Calming things like a warm bath, relaxing music, light stretching, journaling or meditation help set the mood for sleep.

### DAY 6: SET YOUR MINDSET

Stress over the day's events and future to-dos both contribute to sleeplessness. If you find yourself tossing and turning, make an effort to decompress before bedtime. One technique many people find helpful is jotting down your thoughts or concerns on a bedside notepad. Other proven ways to reduce stress include deep breathing, mindful meditation, and visualization. Exercise and yoga are shown to help with stress management as well. We love vagal tone exercises before bed too!

### DAY 7: MAKE SLEEP LIFESTYLE STAY

Continue sticking with your healthier habits. Much of it goes hand in hand with healthy living, such as eating a balanced diet, exercise and practicing calming techniques. Please note: there can be other biochemical challenges involved in your sleep dysregulation. Consider functional testing: circadian rhythm, hormonal testing, blood sugar evaluation, gut health testing, food sensitivities, and sleep apnea.



It seems like more and more of us are struggling with sleep issues these days.

With the Time-Change around the corner, it's a good time to take a closer look at sleep and make sure you're getting enough.

Research has found that certain behaviors are associated with more restful sleep and reduced risk of insomnia.

To make the transition a little easier, we have put together a seven day plan for incorporating good habits into your routine.

## Sleep Challenge Day 1:

### **Make Time For Sleep**

Most adults need between seven to nine hours of sleep each night to feel their best. Think about how long you usually sleep when you don't have to get up for anything, or what amount usually leaves you feeling awake and rested. Subtract that from the time you must wake up in the morning, and set a bedtime that allows you enough time to get ready for bed.

For example, if you need to be awake by 7 AM and you need 9 hours of sleep, getting ready for bed between 9:00 and asleep by 10 PM would be a good target. Kids can have significantly different sleep needs, so be sure to take the family's schedule into account.

**Nourishing Tip:** If you wake in the middle of the night and have trouble falling asleep, that could be a sign of blood sugar issues, liver congestion, low melatonin or high or low cortisol. Reach out if you want to dive deep and begin to correct your sleep.

## Sleep Challenge - Day 2:

### **Time Dinner & Snacks**

Going to bed on a full stomach can make sleep less restful, and certain foods contribute to uncomfortable indigestion and bloating. The National Sleep Foundation's experts say it's best to eat dinner a couple of hours before bed so you still feel sated, but not full.

The types of foods you eat can also affect sleep. Studies have found that spicy and fatty foods can delay or make sleep less restful, while eating carbohydrates in the evening can contribute to better rest. Try preparing healthy, balanced dinners with moderate portions, and if you do get hungry later, choose a smart bedtime snack.

**Nourishing Tip:** Blood Sugar can play a big issue in our sleep quality. If you wake during the middle of the night, try this snack before bed: *Banana rolled lightly in sea salt and a small handful of cashews.*

## Sleep Challenge - Day 3:

### **Set an Electronic Curfew**

Blue light emitted by televisions, computers, laptops and smartphones is known to disrupt melatonin, which has the effect of keeping you up later. They can also be distracting, and even distressing.

When you head to bed, make sure you put your phone, computer and TV to sleep, too. Some sleep experts suggest turning the television off at least an hour before bed to keep sleep clocks on track, especially for children. This also includes smart watches. Use Blue Blockers if can't avoid blue light before bed. [Buy here.](#)

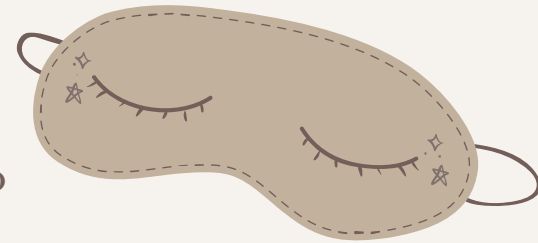
**Nourishing Tip:** If you have your router in your room or near your bedroom - consider turning it off at night. Likewise, if you have a smart meter outside your bedroom - consider moving your bed to another wall/ shielding the smart meter or having it replaced with an analog.

How is your sleep? Take our Sleep Assessment Quiz. Click [here](#)

## Sleep Challenge - Day 4:

### Sleep Friendly Space

Create a sleep friendly space. Check your bedroom for potential sleep stealers, to ensure it's helping and not hindering your efforts. An uncomfortable mattress, pillows, or bedding can all make it harder to fall asleep and stay asleep throughout the night.



*\*Children, animals and snoring partners can also be sleep stealers.*

Your room's temperature should be fairly cool, since studies show that cooler air supports faster, deeper sleep. Generally, the recommended range is between 65 and 72 degrees Fahrenheit.

Consider black out curtains. Let's break down why this may help support a good night's sleep. It wasn't too long ago, historically speaking, that no one had alarm clocks. People woke up when the sun came up and went to bed not long after it went down. These are the natural rhythms of sleep for most of human history prior to the industrial age.

**What this means is that the human brain (and also the human eye) are hard wired to associate light with "time to wake up."**

In fact, research has found that specific cells in your eyes are designed to pick up the presence or absence of light. These cells don't identify shapes or colors - just whether there's any light around you. These cells are particularly attuned to blue light, because that's the color of the morning sky. So, keeping your room free from light - during your sleep hours can not only help reset your circadian rhythm, it can help you sleep more soundly.

**Nourishing Tips:** If you are sensitive to noises - a sound machine or ear plugs can be a powerful tool to help drown out exterior sound. Hiding your clock can also help. Also, getting outside and exposing yourself to the sun first thing in the morning is a great way to set your circadian clock for the day.

## Sleep Challenge - Day 5:

### **Start A Bedtime Ritual**

Many parents know that a set routine is helpful for getting kids to settle down for bed, but having a pre-sleep ritual also helps us adults.

Most experts suggest no more than an hour of variation from day to day, even on weekends, to keep your internal clock running smoothly.

Keeping bedtimes and wake times fairly regular helps normalize our internal circadian rhythm, so you feel drowsy around bedtime and awake during the day.

Following a pattern can also tell your body that bedtime is coming, and including calming things like a warm bath, smelling essential oils, relaxing music, light stretching, journaling or meditation help set the mood for sleep.

**Nourishing Tip:** Stimulate your primal senses by training your brain with a particular relaxing scent; such as Chamomile or Lavender Essential Oils. Smell it about 30 min prior to bed-time. Continue this routine for a few weeks and your brain will log the smell and attribute it to winding down.  
Bonus Tip: You then also get the amazing benefits from the essential oil as well!

[Purchase essential oils here and receive \*freeshipping\*](#)

## Sleep Challenge - Day 6:

### **Set Your Mindset**

Stress over the day's events and future to-dos both contribute to sleeplessness, so if you find yourself tossing and turning, make an effort to decompress before bedtime.

One technique many people find helpful is jotting down your thoughts or concerns on a bedside notepad. Other proven ways to reduce stress include deep breathing, mindful meditation, and visualization. Regular exercise and yoga are both shown to help with stress management as well. Try different things and see what works best for you.

**Nourishing Tip:** There are wonderful therapeutics that can be a great resource at lowering stress before bed. I love Vagal Nerve Stimulation, Lavender, Passion Flower, GABA, Epsom Salt Baths and more.

## **Sleep Challenge - Day 7:**

### **Make Sleep Lifestyle Stay**

Now that you have begun to make lifestyle shifts that may help promote more restful sleep - you will want to make sure you continue with your new healthy habits. Sleep goes hand and hand with healthy living, such as eating a balanced diet, exercise, and minding stresses.

Once you have really nailed down these lifestyle adjustments and you find your sleep could use more refining - do know there are real biochemical challenges that may be playing a role. There is much research showing the following can play a role is sleep dysregulation.

**hormonal imbalances, blood sugar challenges, lack of nutrients, food allergies/sensitivities, gut dysbiosis, inflammation, circadian rhythm dysregulation and more...**

If you are looking to deep dive into correcting your sleep disturbances - know that there are some amazing functional testing options that can help pin-point the root of the imbalance.

**Circadian Rhythm Adrenal Test :** Our cutting edge Dutch Adrenal Package involves collecting four non-invasive samples (from your home) over the course of one day, from which the lab is able to generate results with a diurnal cortisol curve. This four-point graph reveals cortisol levels throughout the day and allows health care providers to pinpoint issues with adrenal gland function and create a supportive road-map to get you back to sleep. [Learn more](#)

**Food Map Food Sensitivity Test:** Eating foods you are sensitive to causes low-grade inflammation, day and night. Cortisol is an anti-inflammatory hormone and so it comes to the rescue to deal with that inflammation. When your body releases cortisol at night to combat inflammation from these foods, it wakes you up and makes it hard to go back to sleep. [Learn more](#)

If you are ready to deep dive and gain restorative sleep, be sure to reach out to us! Sleep is a speciality of ours and we know the detriment that comes from lack of sleep! Reach out - this is what we do!